Selections from the Fifth and Sixth

NATIONAL COLLOQUIA ON ORAL HISTORY

ASILOMAR CONFERENCE GROUNDS
PACIFIC GROVE, CALIFORNIA
NOVEMBER 13 - 16, 1970

INDIANA UNIVERSITY
BLOOMINGTON, INDIANA
OCTOBER 8 - 10, 1971

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held at Asilomar Conference Grounds

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Edited by Peter D. Olch and Forrest C. Pogue

The Oral History Association, Inc.

New York

1972

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New York, New York 10027

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INTRODUCTION

The proceedings of the first four annual colloquia of the Oral History Association (1966-1969) were published practically verbatim and included speeches of welcome and of appreciation to local committees and local hosts as well as the introductory remarks of the various moderators and numerous questions from the floor. Most of this material has been omitted from this publication. Therefore we wish to express our deep appreciation to the program chairmen and local committee members whose names are listed at the beginning of these combined proceedings. Several factors, including the similarity of numerous presentations through the years, led the Executive Council and Publications Committee of the Association to publish a selection of papers presented at Asimomar in 1970 and Indiana University in 1971 in this single volume. The editors take full responsibility for the selection and express their appreciation to all the individuals who presented papers at the Colloquia and are noted in the list of participants at the end of this volume.

It is proper to recollect that a special tribute was paid to Oscar O. Winther, former President of the Oral History Association, at the Bloomington session which he had arranged not long before his untimely death in June, 1970. The session at Bloomington was dedicated to his memory.

In the future, it is proposed that the Association will produce an annual publication featuring highlights of the annual colloquium combined with invited and submitted articles which will be reviewed by an editorial board prior to acceptance.

Peter D. Olch
Forrest C. Pogue

ORAL HISTORY AND THE WRITING OF BIOGRAPHY*

T. Harry Williams
Boyd Professor of History
Louisiana State University

I'm not sure that I'm going to conform in my remarks tonight exactly to the advertised title of the lecture which I think is "Oral History and Biography." This title was coined largely by Mr. Mink in correspondence with me. He said, "What do you want to call it?" and I said, "Oh, why don't you give it a very general title and say something about oral history and say something about biography, but give it the kind of title that will allow me some latitude because, although I'm going to talk about oral history, I also want to talk about this very remarkable man, Huey Long, the subject of my oral history biography." So I am going to talk about oral history as I understand it, but I also want to talk to you at the end about Huey Long. Besides, you look like the kind of audience that would like to hear some good Huey Long stories. [Laughter] You're supposed to clap at that or something to indicate approval.

I'm not sure, really, that I am an oral historian. I've been reading your guidelines lately and I'm not sure that I conform to all of them. For one thing, I don't know how to work a tape recorder but my wife does, and so together maybe we make an oral historian. I may say that she not only worked the tape recorder, but she reduced all of the tapes to typescripts. I know too now, after reading your guidelines, that in my interviewing I did not follow all of these lines. For example, I did not inform the interviewees of the rights that you suggest that they be informed of. I told them that I was there to interview them about Huey Long, that I was going to write a book about him, and that I wanted to know what they knew about him and I would cite their names in the footnotes unless they objected, in which case I would say "confidential communication" and that is all I told them. I did not let them see the typescripts to edit--none of them asked to see them, but I never offered to let them see them and I'm not sure this is such a good idea that an interviewee should read the typescript and then edit it. Also, we did not save all of the tapes. In the interest of economy, we used some over and over again, but we did make a master tape of----well, some of the voices that we considered particularly good and some of the episodes that we thought were particularly revealing or that I might need proof of. And we do have this master tape but all the tapes were reduced to typescript and I have placed them in the Louisiana State University Library under a temporary time seal. I said--pulling a figure out of the air, so

* Delivered at the Asilomar meeting on November 15, 1970.

to speak--ten years, but I could shorten that if I wanted to. But I did this because in so many of these interviews there is a statement or several statements that somebody did not want used or didn't want his name used with, and for that reason I put this time seal on the typescripts but eventually they will be available to other scholars.

When I started research on this book in 1955 and 6, I was a neophyte in the whole technique of oral history. I had recently learned about the Columbia Oral History Project and I gave my debt to that organization in the Preface which Mr. Starr tells me they display very prominently in his office. Actually, the origin of the book is directly related to my knowledge of the Columbia Oral History Project, but I knew very little of the technique of oral history. And I wrote to Louis Starr to ask him what he could tell me about it and he made some helpful suggestions, but he said, in effect, "Use your common sense, feel your way, develop your own techniques." He recommended that we get a long-playing recorder so that we wouldn't disturb the interviewee by changing the tape, and I think he maybe even recommended the recorder which, as I remember, weighed thirty pounds. I lugged it all around New Orleans one summer with not very grateful feelings toward Mr. Starr. [Laughter]

But, as I have said in my Preface and as I say on every possible occasion, the idea for the book came to me after I learned about the Columbia project, and I learned about it, I think, because Mr. Nevins wrote me when the project was first being launched and said that they were trying to get university library subscribers and he wanted to know if I could get the LSU library to subscribe. And being like most libraries--short of funds--they weren't able to do it, but that is how I learned about the project. And the idea behind it seemed so sensible to me: that in the recent period because of the influence of technology that the customary sources relied on by historians--manuscripts, diaries--would not be present, at least in such degree, as they had been in previous periods. And I still think this is true. I think one of your speakers last year said that plenty of manuscripts were still coming in and this may be true in certain areas, but I'm not always sure of the quality of some of these manuscripts.

Well, regardless, I was sold on the idea of oral history and I think that the idea of using the technique of oral history to do a life of Huey Long must have germinated in my mind gradually, for I remember asking several people if they knew of the location of any sizable body of Long papers and learning that apparently no such body of papers existed. And I think the idea that came to me, I can't say definitely exactly when, that one could use oral history to do a life of Huey Long. Then, coincidentally, I had a letter from Senator Russell Long. Somebody had just given him an autographed copy of my recently published life of the Confederate General Beauregard, and he wrote to say that he had read the book and enjoyed it, that he liked

biography. I answered him and said, in effect, "Don't you think it's time that a life of your father should be written?" and I explained to him that anybody who did it would probably have to use the technique of oral history. His reply was he had long wanted a life of his father to be written; he had hoped it would be done by a scholar because he knew that if it was going to stand it would have to be done by a scholar. I told him that I would have to get a lot of my material by interviewing people that knew his father and that he could help me by asking these old friends of his father to speak to me frankly and openly. He said that he would do this. However, I stressed to him that I would have to have an absolutely free hand in interpreting the facts. He agreed and signed a written statement to the effect that, although he would cooperate with me, he had no power of censorship over anything that I wrote. I told him that I would let him read the manuscript and he could make his suggestions and I would take them or not as I saw fit. You can see I did not make the mistake that William Manchester made. [Laughter] I let Senator Long read the manuscript and, of course, he naturally--all along when I was working on it, he tried to influence my opinion of his father--and when he read the manuscript, came up with a number of suggestions. Some of them were well-founded and others weren't. The latter I rejected. There are a number of things in the biography that he does not like; nevertheless, he observed the agreement.

Mrs. Williams and I began this research in 1955 I guess, really, 1956. Some of it was at first in conventional sources because my knowledge of Huey Long was relatively limited. I had to learn something about him and what he did, but I also felt that I had to start the interviewing as soon as I could because so many of the people who knew him were dying. In fact, several on my list died before I could get to them. Just last week a young graduate student at Louisiana State University in New Orleans came to see me. He was working on an M.A. thesis on the founding of the LSU medical school which Huey Long really established. He wanted to know some people he could talk to. I got out this list of people I had talked to and I was shocked--I hadn't realized this--to discover the number of those people who had died since I had interviewed them. I would hate to say how many, but some of the best people, I mean as far as knowledge is concerned, had died.

Now, however, the fact that I started on the interviewing so quickly in a sense was a handicap because I did not know as much about Huey Long as I should have, and I didn't know as much about the interviewees as I should have--that is, to ask the right questions. I know now that if I had had more time to get this knowledge, I could have probably, in many cases, in some cases at least, secured better results, but time was the one thing I did not have. But I learned by doing. As Louis Starr predicted, I developed my own techniques. I discovered how to jog the memory of a person by suggesting names and

events, and I discovered how to get a person started to talk; often this was the greatest difficulty. "I don't know anything." I had to get a flow of conversation started and often I would do it by saying, "Tell me about yourself; how did you get into politics?"--everybody likes to talk about himself. If you can get the conversation going, it's like a break in the dam; that's all you need. Or I would say, "Tell me about the first time you met Huey." Everyone of these guys could remember the first time he met Huey Long, and he would launch off into that and then I was away. I learned, too, how to deal with the man who wants to get rid of you by making a speech at you. One of these men was a very important man in the Long organization--his name was Seymour Weiss; high up in the Long councils and at the time I interviewed him, the owner and manager of the Roosevelt Hotel in New Orleans, and a very busy man and a very theatrical man. But he had consented to be interviewed, and when we put the microphone in front of him, he seized it, made a profile and launched into a speech, which had a little information in it, but not very much. Then he paused and looked around as much as to say, "Now is that all you want; will this do?" And I said, "Well, Mr. Weiss, what about such and such an episode?" He looked at me--and I'm sure many of you have had this experience--with a kind of dawning respect, as though he were thinking "this guy knows something so I'd better give him my side of it." And then he related this; then I asked him another question and again, that look of respect and the feeling, I think in his mind, that he'd better put his part of the story on record. I think I developed, too, an instinct--I think a lot of this is instinct--for spotting the congenital liar; the man who knows too much. I had several cases like this. You're looking for answers and here's a guy who's got not only the answer to one of your questions but to <u>all</u> of your questions. He just rattles on and on. You take it down, but you don't use it; at least I didn't.

Well, over the years we interviewed almost three hundred people. Politicians, members of the Long family--I was the first biographer that the Long family consented to talk to. Businessmen, planters and farmers, reporters and editors, bodyguards--bodyguards for Huey, that is--doctors, football players and coaches, university administrators, Negro musicians, ordinary citizens. All the different people in the different walks of life whom Huey Long touched in one way or another. The spectrum of people that he knew and came in contact with was amazing. Sometimes I thought that he must have known everybody in Louisiana because people would come up to me and say, "You want to know something about Huey Long, I knew Huey. He said this to me once." And, of course, I think this was one of the secrets of his power in the pretelevision age when personal contacts were so important. We interviewed these people in courthouses, homes, offices, bars, sometimes out on the street. I may say one thing here--it's not directly related to what I am saying--but--well, let me lead into it this way. I compiled this list of people that I was going to interview partly

from the names furnished me by Russell Long, partly by names furnished me by friends of mine in the state, and partly from my own knowledge and research into men and women of that era who were still living. What I would do when I would go to a particular town in Louisiana, I would have Russell Long write a letter to all the old Long leaders in that town saying that I was coming and asking them to cooperate with me. And here's where I was going to lead into this aside. In 1959, I was President of the Southern Historical Association and gave my presidential address on Huey Long, and Senator Russell Long, his son, asked me to get him a number of reprints. I didn't know why he wanted them; I thought he wanted them to give to his friends. Well, it turned out what he wanted them for was to send to these people I was going to interview and I'd get this weird experience sometime. I'd question these people and what they were saying was awfully familiar as far as the interpretations were concerned. They had given me back my own stuff. [Laughter]

I wrote to Russell; I said, "For God's sake, don't send out anymore reprints, please." But whenever I went into a town I would also get somebody in that town--a friend of mine, former student, whatever the case might be--to suggest people I should see and then to say to these people that I was going to be there, that they could trust me and that they were to talk to me. I found this very important, that I was vouched for by somebody, either Russell Long or somebody in the town, because many of these people were not going to talk to some stranger who just suddenly pulls into town and says "tell me about your career in politics." Now, however, I made one mistake here and, as I say, we all learn by doing. But in order to get all these people, I went through somebody. Unfortunately I tried to do that when I wanted to see Earl Long, Huey's brother and heir and three times governor. I asked somebody to ask Earl if he would see me and Earl said, "No." Now, the excuse he gave was he said he didn't trust them "writin' fellows." But I think this was his real reason. Earl was the head man. He wanted me to come directly to him. I think that if I'd gone down to his office and told his secretary I was out there and wanted to see him, he would have seen me and maybe he wouldn't have talked to me right away but I think he would have eventually. But I don't think he wanted me coming to him through any intermediary.

Well, it was the most fun research I've ever done. I found that most of these politicians were remarkably frank in telling what they had done and often, after they had retired, very reflective about what their role in politics had been. They thought about it and they wondered about some of the things that they had done--wondered critically about them. Here I thought I'd tell you about a few experiences we had in these interviews. One of them------some of these experiences I think maybe reveal something about the technique of oral history research and I hope some of them also have entertainment value. I have to say, too, that in making some quotes here, particularly when

I'm quoting Huey Long, I'm going to have to use some profanity, so any of you who are going to be shocked, now is the time to leave or do I detect an added interest! [Laughter] One of my principal sources was a very wonderful old man who lived in Winnfield, Huey Long's home town, and his name was Harley Bozeman. He's the self-appointed historian of Winn parish--a parish, county in Louisiana--and he'd written many articles in the Winn parish paper about the parish and about Huey Long, and of course he talked to me at length and in his conversations he was much franker than in his newspaper columns. But he didn't write about anything after 1929 although he was elected to the legislature in 1928 when Huey was elected governor. He was one of Huey's leaders. He had a state job; in Louisiana at that time a legislator could also hold a paying state job. And then in 1929, Huey bounced him, and Mr. Bozeman didn't want to write or talk about anything after 1929, but he wouldn't say why. He didn't want to admit that he had been fired. The story was that in 1929 there was an attempt on the part of the anti-Longs to impeach Huey, and I'll say more about that in just a minute. But Mr. Bozeman, according to what I think is very good evidence, went into Huey's suite in the Heidelberg Hotel in Baton Rouge and said to Huey, "Governor, you ought to resign, otherwise you're going to bring us all down." And Huey could fire a man and take him back, but he could never forgive a man who ran out on him. And according to this one witness, who, I think, is right--Mr. Bozeman denies this--Huey was sitting on the bed paring his toenails when Bozeman said, "You ought to resign." Huey looked at a piece of nail on the floor and said, "Bozeman, I wouldn't give the price of that piece of toenail for a son of a bitch like you, you're through." Mr. Bozeman told me, "You know, I don't think you should have printed that story because it isn't true." But I think it is true and one reason I think it's true--and this shows, I think, how you can maybe test oral testimony against something else. There was a Senate investigation of Louisiana politics, and Mr. Bozeman was a witness. During the testimony this business came up about was he fired or wasn't he and Huey yelled at him, "You are a lying scoundrel," and Mr. Bozeman yelled back, which was hardly a denial, "You are another one!" [Laughter]

One thing that I wanted to find out concerned a famous episode in the impeachment. In 1929 the conservative anti-Long faction tried to impeach Huey, the House brought impeachment charges and the trial was in the Senate. It was ridiculous attempt, ill advised, and it failed. But it failed because Huey, in a brilliant stroke, got fifteen senators to sign a statement known as "Round Robin" stating that they would not vote to impeach the governor, and this was two more than one-third of the Senate. You see a two-thirds vote was required to find guilty, and fifteen was two more than a third. This was dramatically announced soon after the impeachment trial started, and the antis had to give the thing up. The Round Robin was esteemed, of course, to be what it was--a brilliant coup--and the big question was:

Who thought it up? Various people over the years claimed credit for it, and, of course, I wanted to find out who it was. I talked to various people, and some guy said, "Yeh, it was me," and it didn't ring quite true. Many people thought that the man who probably thought it up was somebody I'm sure many of you here have heard of--a man who died recently--a man by the name of Leander Perez, also known as the dictator of Plaquemines and St. Bernard parishes in Louisiana. A brilliant lawyer, he was at that time a relatively minor figure in the Long organization, but one of Huey's lawyers in the impeachment trial. Many people thought that Leander Perez had thought up the Round Robin.

Well, I went down to see him. He'd asked me to come down to St. Bernard parish to dedicate a monument he'd erected to General Beauregard and I went in order to be able to interview him. [Laughter] It was a fascinating trip. He took Mrs. Williams and me down from New Orleans, and the minute we passed the St. Bernard line, motorcycle cops started coming out from behind fences, bushes, and we rode down through St. Bernard parish in a cloud of motorcycle cops--el candillo in a Latin American country. [Laughter] I met Mr. Perez at the Roosevelt Hotel. He's a tremendously intelligent man and a tremendously arrogant and egotistical man. I may say about this Round Robin that there were two Round Robins. The first one was a fairly lengthy statement. It was a legal demur to the legality of the impeachment trial and then when fifteen senators signed up or agreed to sign up, they destroyed the first Round Robin, wrote a shorter one, saying that they wouldn't vote to impeach and these fifteen senators signed it. So there were really two Round Robins, but not many people know that. And I said to Mr. Perez--Judge, he was always called--I said, "Judge, (we were sitting at a table) you and I are probably among the very few men who know that there were two Round Robins." And he said, "Yes," he knew it. I said, "Well, Judge, I'd like to get your version of the whole Round Robin affair." And he stood up--a short, stocky man and as I said, arrogant, egotistical--he said, "What do you mean my version?" He said, "What I am going to tell you is the truth and the only truth and if you don't believe it I will walk off. We might as well not talk any more." Well, you have to be humble sometimes you know. I said, "Judge, all I meant was your version was the whole truth, you know, please sit down." But now, the interesting thing is this and I want to contrast it with something else in a minute. I said, "Some people think you wrote the Round Robin or thought of the idea rather." He said, "Do you want me to say that I thought of it?" He said, "I didn't. I didn't." He continued, "Huey and I were talking one day and I think the idea came simultaneously maybe to both of us. It came up from our conversation, you see." The Round Robin--the first one, I think--was written by present U.S. Senator Allen Ellender, who at that time was the Long floor leader. And I talked to Ellender and Ellender told me that at Huey's request he had drafted the Round Robin. Huey said, "Allen, you know how to do these things. You write it." Now, I was talking to Forrest Pogue about this the

other night. Just before I came out here, I looked at the book Southern Gothic by a man called Sherrill--Robert Sherrill. It's a study of various southern politicians and the first chapter is on Leander Perez. Mr. Sherrill at one time had been a newspaperman in New Orleans--I don't know what his origin was, but at this time I think he is a correspondent for the New Republic. Now, he doesn't say in this chapter on Perez that he interviewed Perez, but the implication of everything in the chapter is that he did and he quotes Perez as saying, presumably to Sherrill, or to some other interviewer, "I thought up the idea of the Round Robin. I thought it up." And then Sherrill quotes Senator Ellender as having said, "I sat down and wrote it one day and showed it to Huey and he looked at it and he said, 'that's great'." Now you see, to me Perez denied authorship or at least sole authorship. To me Ellender said he was mainly a draftsman. And yet when they talked to Mr. Sherrill or whoever is the source in quotes, their roles suddenly become enlarged. Now I don't know why this is. Whether they thought that because I lived in the state I would be a more critical witness or would know more or because they were trying to put off an outside correspondent. Forrest suggested sometimes people will tell an interviewer what the interviewee thinks the interviewer wants to hear. And here is Leander Perez, Dictator of Plaquemine and St. Bernard, you see--Big Man! And here is a reporter who thinks Leander is a big man, and I'm sure Leander said, "Well, I'll tell him I thought up the Round Robin; that's what the guy wants to hear anyway." At least that's what Forrest and I decided.

Another thing I wanted to find out was whatever became of what was known in the Long organization as "the deduct box." You know southerners emphasize the first syllable--the DEduct box, I'll say. The deduct box was the campaign chest of the Long organization. At first, of course, it was for state usage, eventually for national usage. According to many people who claimed to know, and I think they do, in 1935 it had in it close to a million dollars for a campaign fund which, of course, at that time was pretty big. Some of it may have been in pledges but at least it was there, plus affidavits very damaging to the personal life of Franklin D. Roosevelt, but a lot of money. And after Huey Long's assassination and death, the deduct box disappeared, presumably. It was never found. Toward the end of my interview with Mr. Seymour Weiss, the man I just told you about a short time before, we got right to the end and I saved this question until the end. I said, "Mr. Weiss, I'm going to ask you something and maybe you're going to kick me out of the office, but I want to know this." I said, "I have been told that on Huey's deathbed you kept asking him for the keys to a box. Was that the deduct box?" And he said, "Turn that thing off a minute." [Laughter] You know what you do then, you have a little pad down here in your lap and you scribble away. He then proceeded to tell me this fantastic story. He said that the box was originally kept in Huey Long's suite at the Roosevelt Hotel, but when Huey went to Washington as a senator it was taken with him. And that

Huey kept it first in a safety deposit vault in the hotel where he lived and later he transferred it to the Riggs National Bank. And he recalled that September day in 1935 that Huey Long came back to Louisiana. He came first to New Orleans, and Seymour said, "Huey and I played golf and we talked about the coming campaign in the state and the presidential campaign, and then we went to the Roosevelt Hotel and we were having a drink. Huey said to me, 'by the way, Seymour, I have moved the box'." And according to Mr. Weiss, at this moment the phone rang and it was somebody from Baton Rouge, the legislature was in special session, they said, "Senator, you've got to come up right away." Huey said, "I'll be right up." And according to Seymour Weiss he never said anything more about the box. Seymour said he thought he would get the location later. Then Huey went to Baton Rouge that Saturday and that Sunday night he was shot in the capitol. And of course, was taken to a hospital. Seymour said that he went to Huey on his deathbed and shook him. He said, "Huey, you've got to tell me, where did you move the box?" Huey tried to rally and answered, "Later, Seymour, later." But he never was able to talk. And said Mr. Weiss, "The box was never found until this day. Mrs. Long sent agents all over the country and Canada and Mexico, but the box was never found." Now, however, there are some people in the Long organization who think that it was never taken out of New Orleans. That it remained in the Roosevelt Hotel. And these people think that somebody in the Long organization got it. Now, of course, here in the book I could only recount what people said. I recounted what Mr. Weiss said, I recounted what these other people said, and I left it there. That was all I could do.

In some of the interviews I, of course, knew that with some of these people you had to avoid a question or you'd scare them off. For example, we went to interview Mrs. Long, and found her, at first, very nervous and scary, and I think this was because she was afraid I was going to ask her whether she thought Huey ran around with other women. Of course, I didn't ask her this and I'm sure she would have had a heart attack if I had. One Long leader--I recount this largely for its humor--there was one question I was not going to ask him. His name was Isom Guillory and he lived in a little town called Eunice, a very shrewd Frenchman. In 1934 Huey--Senator Long--got mad with his floor leaders and changed them around and he had appointed Isom as one of his new floor leaders. Isom was smart, but he was new to the ways of leadership. Huey had a tax bill up and, although he was a senator he still ran the state as I'll recount here in a minute, and he was standing in the back of the House of Representatives chamber. Isom was championing this new tax bill, when one of the few antis got up to make a rare objection and he said, "Well, Mr. Guillory, won't this tax be passed on to the consumer?" And Isom said, in a lordly fashion, "Aren't all taxes passed on to the consumer?" This bit of stupidity was too much for Senator Long, who was prancing around in the back of the chamber. He yelled, "Sit down, Isom." Mr. Guillory is very sensitive about this, and this is one thing I didn't ask him.

But I think the strangest interview Mrs. Williams and I had--I'm going to try and not say the man's name here because he's still alive and I don't want to mention his name, but at that time he was a sheriff of a south Louisiana parish. Mrs. Williams and I went to this town--parish seat--and went to the courthouse. We asked for the sheriff and the secretary said she'd get his deputy. When his deputy came out, it turned out to be his son, and he said, "The sheriff's in running a trial; I'll get him." Soon the sheriff came out and sat down, and we gave our names and identified ourselves. I said, "Sheriff, I think Russell Long wrote you a letter about me." He leaned back and said, "Maybe he did, I don't remember." And I couldn't get anything out of him, not a thing. Just very vague answers. And then the door opened and a young lawyer came in--I had taught him at LSU, Mrs. Williams had also taught him. He had some business with the sheriff. When he had finished--he knew why we were there--he turned to me and said, "Are you gettin' what you want?" And I said, "No, he's not puttin' out." He turned back to the sheriff and said, "They're all right," and then he left. The sheriff leaned back and said, "Now I do remember, Russell Long did write me a letter about you!" [Laughter] And then he was very good, but all the time he was talking to us his deputy, his son, came in to get the instructions for the judge! [Laughter] If you want justice, come to Louisiana, I'll tell you! To get instructions for the judge, and the deputy finally came in and said, "The judge wants to know whether to fine him or imprison him." And I'm sure that poor guy who was up for trial, he just caught hell because the sheriff was showing off before the visitors. The sheriff banged his hand on the table and roared, "Both, by God, he turned out some votes against us; this'll teach him a lesson!" [Laughter]

I came out of this experience with a--I don't mean this one experience, the whole interviews--with a profound belief in the validity of oral history, and I hope this book inspires other professional historians to believe in it and use it. I had a letter from Admiral Morison [Samuel Eliot]; I'll have to quote the compliment here, to read what he said: "A magnificent biography which at long last demonstrates what can be done with oral sources." But I think, and I'm sorry to say this, that oral history will come slowly with the professional historians because they're a most conservative lot and very suspicious of new techniques. Their doubts about oral history spring perhaps from a dictum they heard in the graduate schools, namely, distrust reminiscent accounts, trust contemporary accounts. And they are, of course, thinking about memoirs. But oral history is different, say from the memoir of some Civil War general who, twenty years after the war, sat in his study and told it the way he wanted to remember it, because here you are sitting across from the source and you can cross-examine the source. He knows you're going to talk to other people. How many times I've heard somebody say, "I know you're going to talk to so and so, and he will tell you such and such, but this is what I am going to tell you; this is the way I think it was." The professionals also think that a reminiscent statement is self-conscious,

that is made to prove a point. But a letter or a diary can be self-conscious. I think many of the diaries in American history were written for a purpose to prove a point. And a contemporary source can be inaccurate. I think of the diary of Robert Keane, a high official in the Confederacy who after the war was over, or even during it, would write on the margin: "I was wrong about this; that day I said it I thought this is what happened. Now I know it was wrong." As far as accuracy goes, it seems to me oral history is much like any other source--it has to be tested against other oral history records, against other records. But it has many and great advantages. The historian using it, as I was, on a specific topic--of course I realize that some of you here collect materials on broad areas, I was researching a particular topic--but the historian using it as I was is not restricted by the sources that have happened to survive. He can walk all around his subject, so to speak, and ask anything he wants. Imagine if you could have interviewed 300 people who knew Abraham Lincoln twenty or thirty years after his death, of the great material you would have found. But the greatest advantage, I think, that oral history offers is the opportunity to discover something, at least in politics, that otherwise could not be discovered. I am convinced that people will <u>say</u> things they <u>never</u> would think of putting on paper. They can <u>say</u> the words, but they could never, I think at any time, have written them down at the time they happened or later. And I am also convinced that even before the age of technology--the telephone and the automobile--that the inside story of most political episodes was not put in any record.

Of course, I used other sources--conventional sources. I have a fantastic story about a late discovery of some Long manuscripts; I don't think I'll go into any detail about it here. I examined, at the LSU library, what was supposed to be the only significant body of Long papers surviving. They went up only to 1928; they dealt mainly with his legal career and on the public service commission. The people at the archives--and I won't say what I think about their efficiency--said, "Well, this is about it." And when the book was in press, I had a letter from one of my graduate students who had recently taken a job at the archives, he said, "In the basement of the old Library I found so many filing cabinets of Long papers, as many or more than the cabinets you examined." He said, "They go past '28." Well, this is the kind of thing that gives an author heart failure. I mean, here your book is ready to come out, you can't change it and a new body of manuscripts is discovered. Well, it turned out when I got back that this new body of manuscripts was <u>not</u> particularly significant. It would not have caused me to alter in any way my basic story. But the episode reinforces the argument for oral history. The folders, <u>the folders</u> were there but the papers, in many cases, had been removed and destroyed--like "jobs promised during the impeachment" says one folder--not a thing in it, not a thing in it. Of course, I was able to find this out from oral sources, but this is what often happens, I think, to the written

record. I may say also this is the first book that I ever had the manuscript read for libel. And I won't say anything more about that now; if anybody wants to ask me about it later I can say something about it. But never before have I had to have a manuscript read for possible libel.

Now I want to say something about Huey Long himself, a man who had a relatively short political career, at least on the national stage. He was elected in 1918 to the Louisiana Public Service Commission where he made a statewide name by attacking the great corporations, notably Standard Oil. He ran for governor in 1924, narrowly missed it--ran again in 1928 and was elected. In 1930 he ran for the Senate of the United States, assumed his seat in 1932--he had a delay I'll explain in a minute, and was in the Senate from 1932 until 1935, when he was assassinated. And yet in that relatively short space of time, he became in the eyes of the Washington correspondents and political observers one of the two most important politicians in the country; the other, of course, was Franklin D. Roosevelt. And everybody knew that he had national ambitions and intended to be President if he could, and although he aroused adoration and admiration in many people, he aroused hatred and fear in others. To many people he seemed to be the first great American facist or dictator--an American counterpart of Hitler or Mussolini. And this is the label of him, I think, that has survived for so long until our own time.

In the book I attempt to dispel the many myths that have grown up about his career. One is that the Long family was abjectly poor. You see this in everything that's been written about him, that they were abjectly poor. Interestingly, this myth was largely created by Huey himself, partly out of mischief to tantalize northern reporters, partly to let his followers know that although he knew their hard life, he had risen above it. And this enables me to tell one of my favorite Long stories--it's the way I open the book, in fact. When I first heard this I thought it was too good to be true, but I was assured it was, and I may say that part of the background for it was that the Longs were Baptists. The story concerns the first time Huey campaigned in south Louisiana--Latin, Catholic south Louisiana--where he was to make speeches at a number of small towns. The local leader who had him in charge said, "Huey, you want to remember one thing in your speeches today, you're from north Louisiana but today you're in south Louisiana and we got a lot of Catholic voters down here." Huey said, "I know." So all that day in speech after speech he would say, generally near the beginning: "When I was a boy, back in Winnfield on Sunday, I'd get up at six o'clock in the morning and I'd hitch our old horse up to the buggy and I'd take my Catholic grandparents to Mass [Laughter] and then I'd bring them home, and at ten o'clock I'd hitch our old horse up to the buggy again and I'd take my Baptist grandparents to church." And this went on all day with a very good effect on the voters. And that night, coming back to Baton Rouge, the local

politicians said admiringly, "Why, Huey, you've been holding out on us, we didn't know you had any Catholic grandparents." Huey said, "Don't be a damn fool, we didn't even have a horse!" [Laughter]

Another of the myths is that he said: "I buy legislators like sacks of potatoes," and this has been repeated over and over. He really said it about only one legislator and he was making his brag; he said, "I bought him like you would a sack of potatoes." He really hadn't bought the man at all. He got him on his side by giving him a reward--a customary procedure at that time in Louisiana politics. But like so many politicians, he was putting the brag in extreme language. And so it's believed, it's been believed ever since, Huey said, "I buy legislators like sacks of potatoes"; even his brother, Earl, believed Huey had said that. In fact, Earl said, "Huey was wrong to buy legislators the way he did!" Earl said, "I don't do that, it's cheaper to rent them."

Well, this is a very entertaining man and the biographer has to be on his guard against him. You can get beguiled by an entertaining man. I wanted to tell you a couple of more stories here if I have the time. And these are stories that illustrate something not only about Huey Long, but the culture of Louisiana--that wonderfully corrupt Latin state!--where corruption is admired if it is executed with style and a jest. A. J. Liebling, the New Yorker correspondent, was fascinated with Louisiana. He said it had a Mediterranean psychology, sensual, speculative, devious and, in a flash of inspiration, he described it as the westernmost of the Arab states!

These stories concern what might be called the arrangement of the vote in Louisiana. In 1930 Huey ran for the Senate, defeating the incumbent senator, a venerable planter-statesman of the old school, Senator Ransdell. In St. Bernard parish, Ransdell received only nine votes. This occasioned some comment plus the fact that the vote for Huey was larger than the total population of the parish--men, women, children, white and black, and, of course, at that time Negroes didn't vote. Huey explained this by saying, with some justice but not complete by any means, that many of the inhabitants lived on houseboats in the bayous and the census takers couldn't find them. But St. Bernard was widely criticized, and it reacted to the criticism in an odd fashion. There was a state election in 1932, and Huey had a ticket up of nine state candidates for state office, and St. Bernard went down the line, unanimous for every candidate on the Long ticket. The sheriff was Dr. Mereaux, and shortly before the election Huey said to him, "Doc, how many votes is the opposition going to get in St. Bernard?" And Sheriff Mereaux said, "About two!" That night in Huey's suite at the Roosevelt Hotel, the returns from St. Bernard came in unanimous and Huey said, "Doc, what happened to those two fellows?" Sheriff Mereaux said, "They changed their minds at the last minute!"

In 1932, a United States Senate committee came down to investigate what was going on in Louisiana, and it had a noted counsel, Samuel Ansell, one time the leading legal light for the Department of the Army, a man of polished irony and wit, and it was expected he'd be able to cope with Huey. Huey was going to be the lawyer for the senator whose election was being contested--this was the so-called Overton hearing. And the committee went into a great fishing expedition. They really didn't investigate very much about this particular election of Senator Overton; they went into a great fishing expedition about Huey Long's whole career--accumulated a wonderful set of facts for historians, but it had nothing to do with the election. There were wonderful moments in this inquiry. For example, the committee was anxious to find out about the financing of the Long machine, and particularly the deducts. All state employees, during the campaign, had to pay ten percent of their salary into the Long campaign chest for maybe two to three months. And the committee was trying to find out about these deducts. They had the Long leader from Orleans parish, Dr. O'Hara, and he was very willingly describing how much money had been put up--he didn't mind telling that. But this wasn't what the committee wanted to find out, and Mr. Ansell said finally, "Doctor, what we want to know is, were these contributions compulsory?" Dr. O'Hara said brightly, "No sir, they had to do it voluntarily!" [Laughter]

The committee also hauled before it the so-called "dummy" candidates. Now, this doesn't refer, as you might think, to the mental capacity of the candidates. At that time in Louisiana, every candidate got so many voting commissioners, and this was very important because the commissioners could help people vote and vote right. And so the system had been devised on. If an organization or a candidate put up so many so-called dummies for any office, the organization would pay their fee and then at the last minute they'd "pull down" as the phrase went, but they (the organization) still got their commissioners. Huey didn't invent this dummy business, but he gave it more system than it had ever had before. And in the Overton election there were thousands of commissioners that Huey had got through these dummy candidates. Ansell had some of these guys up there. Most of them were very ignorant uneducated people--they worked for the dock board, most of them--and some of them had put up for congress, Ansell just shrivelled them. He said to one guy, "Who's the Speaker of the House of Representatives?" The guy says, "I don't know." He says, "Who's President?" The guy thought a minute, and as if making a great discovery answered: "Herbert Hoover!" He really knew something. Ansell just shrivelled these people, but one of them did him in. A very clever man by the name of Charles Suer, who said he worked for the New Orleans Scientific Laboratory, which turned out to be a bug exterminating outfit. [Laughter] He volunteered that he'd gone through the third grade in New Orleans, but he couldn't remember at what school! And he was really leading Ansell down the garden path, and the polished Ansell didn't

know it. He prepares to move in on this guy. He said, "Well, Mr. Suer, you decided to run for congress." And Mr. Suer said, "Yes sir." Ansell said, "Well, Mr. Suer, why did you decide to run for congress?" And Mr. Suer said, "Well, I guess I sort of thought I was just qualified." And Ansell said, "Now, I guess you thought you could convince other people you were qualified, eh?" Mr. Suer said, "No, I didn't because the truth is I never told anybody I was running." Ansell was just staggered at this. He said, "You didn't even tell your wife?" Mr. Suer said, "No, you know how it is with a woman, you tell her things and it gets around!" Ansell said, "Well, you made some speeches about your candidacy." Mr. Suer said, "Not a one." Ansell said, "You took out some newspaper advertisements?" Mr. Suer said, "Not an advertisement." Mr. Ansell said, "Well, you had some posters." Mr. Suer said, "Not a poster." Then Ansell moved in for the kill. He asked, "Well, how did you expect to get elected then, eh?" And Mr. Suer, very judicious, pauses, the audience leans forward, and finally Mr. Suer spoke and he said, "That's the chance you take." [Laughter]

Here was a man, Huey Long, with a great sense of destiny. When he was barely past his majority, he told the girl he was going to marry that he'd first have a secondary state office and then he'd be governor, then senator and then president. And at the time of his death he's executed all but the last part. When you write about a man, you have to attempt to give him some kind of classification. And I won't go into it here, but in the book I reject the terms demagogue, dictator. I adopted a term suggested by Eric Hoffer, the mass leader. The mass leader is a man who has a vision of a holy end, in his view--some great end--and he leads men or he drives men to that goal. In Hoffer's phrase: "He harnesses man's fears and hungers and frustrations in the service of this holy cause." According to Hoffer, there are three types: the man of words, who prepared the way for the revolution; the fanatic who drives it through and then goes to excesses; and then the practical man who takes over and keeps enough of it to make it stick but modifies it. Sometimes, to paraphrase Hoffer, you may have two in one. The man of words may also be the fanatic, and on rare occasions, you get all three combined in one leader. When that happens, dictatorship is likely to result. This may have been the one American leader who had the three characteristics in one.

He was elected governor in 1928, he put through a program that, in the context of that time, would be called liberal or progressive; he ran for the Senate in 1930, he beat the incumbent. He couldn't take his seat right away; he'd fallen out with his lieutenant governor and he wasn't going to let that man succeed him. He had to stay out of the Senate until he could arrange a succession. He was criticized for leaving the seat vacant. Huey replied: "Hell, it's been vacant eighteen years. What difference does a few more months make." He assumed his seat in January of 1932. Herbert Hoover was President and

on the way out. Franklin Roosevelt was President-elect and on the way in, and the shadows of the depression were deepening over the land--to my mind, a time of great and dangerous crisis. A greater crisis, I think, than any we face today because then you had a possible majority that was bitter and frustrated and ready to accept an extreme leader.

Huey Long used the Senate as a forum to advertise himself for the presidency and his program to the country and he called his program, to the horror of conservatives, "Share our wealth." It called for a heavy capital levy tax on estates that would restrict any family in the United States from owning a fortune of more than five million dollars, and a heavy income tax schedule that would prevent any family in the United States from having a yearly income of more than one million dollars. As he said, he was going to "cut the great fortunes down to frying size." With this money, the government would embark on a public works program, a tremendous program of financing education, but notably the government was going to guarantee to every family a homestead of $5,000, a debt-free home, a car and a radio and a guaranteed yearly income of between two and three thousand dollars a year. I don't have to point out to you, these are things we have not come to yet. It was, I think, a program of the left, and he said that it was of the left and that he was of the left. To my knowledge, he is the only major American politician who dared to adopt the label of the left. In fact, in one speech he said, "If America is to go forward, it has to go left."

He had, I think, a real feeling for poor people. He once said he would not stop his endeavors until the lives of these people "are made decent and respectable." I think it's worthy of note that in his economic thinking he included the Negroes, and this was pretty rare, particularly for a southern politician at that time. Other southern mass leaders--Bilbo, Vardaman--saw the Negro as a vague group on the fringes of white society or a menace to be conjured up at election time. They didn't even think about them otherwise. Of course in Huey's time, civil rights, the vote was not an issue. Probably not more than three or four thousand Negroes in Louisiana voted. But he said, "The Negroes are poor; the poorest of the poor and they have to share in this economic program of 'share our wealth'." Older Negroes remember him gratefully as a white leader who opened the door somewhat--not too wide, maybe, but then he didn't have to open it at all. He did it willingly.

In order to carry out his program he had to break with the leader of his party, the President of the United States, Franklin D. Roosevelt. I was going to tell you a story here, but I see I shouldn't take the time, but------all right, thank you. It concerns his first meeting with Franklin Roosevelt. He thought at first that Franklin Roosevelt was a soft man that would be under his domination. He found

out, of course, that here was a great politician--fully as great as Huey was himself. His first meeting with Roosevelt was in the fall of 1932 when he was asked to come to Hyde Park. He was going to campaign for the Democratic ticket, but Jim Farley didn't want him to go in certain states--they weren't quite sure what would happen. But he came to Hyde Park at Roosevelt's invitation. The Roosevelt family hadn't arrived yet, and he stayed around in front of the house talking to reporters and soon Mrs. Roosevelt drove up. He chatted with her and then she went in the house. And Huey, showing that despite his alleged low background that he had all the grace and hypocrisy of any southern gentleman, said, "She is a very beautiful woman!" [Laughter] Soon, Roosevelt arrived and Huey went in--there was to be a luncheon. I may say Huey had learned a great deal about how to dress by this time, but sometimes he got on the God-awfullest outfits. As one reporter said of another occasion, "he looked like an explosion in a paint factory!" And he got himself up this way for this meeting with the Roosevelts, I think--I'm not sure--to show that he didn't care about the Roosevelts, the aristocratic Roosevelts. Well anyway, came the luncheon--and Huey and Roosevelt were at the head of the table, where they're carrying on one of those conversations--head to head about the campaign. Everybody else at the table knew that he wasn't supposed to be listening in so there was an attempt at animated conversation. But you know how it is, every once and awhile there's a lull in these things, and in one of these silences Sara Delano, Franklin's mother--very starchy mother--could be heard to say in a loud whisper, "Who is that man sitting next to my son?" [Laughter] And everybody starts gab, gab, gabbing. Huey probably heard it, although he gave no sign. He came back to Baton Rouge and somebody asked him what he thought of Roosevelt. He said, "Oh, he's a good man; not a strong man, but he means well and I like him, but I feel sorry for him, he's got even more sons of bitches in his family than I've got in mine!" [Laughter]

Roosevelt came to believe that if the New Deal failed to meet the problems of the depression, there would be a violent reaction in America led from the left by Huey Long or from the right by Douglas MacArthur. In fact, according to Rex Tugwell, Roosevelt once said "the two most dangerous men in the country are Huey Long and Douglas MacArthur."

Huey was condemned by conservatives. But I think this is significant, he was more fiercely denounced by the New Deal liberals who denounced him for his methods. He for his part came to think that the New Deal liberals were more concerned with preserving the forms of democracy than with enlarging the welfare of the people. And in Louisiana, after 1932, he almost dispensed with the substance of democracy. He erected there what I think is the most daring and dangerous power structure ever erected in any American state. He not only <u>created</u> his own machine, a superb one, but he did what no other politician I know of tried to do--in one-party Louisiana--he set out to

destroy the opposition machine by depriving it of sustainance, patronage, finances, so that he would have no organized opposition. And at the last he had almost brought it off. His machine controlled all three branches of the state government. A compliant Longite governor sat in the executive chair, Oscar K. Allen, symbolically known as "OK." Earl Long, who didn't like Governor Allen, said once OK was sitting at his desk in the capitol by an open window signing documents and a leaf blew in on the desk and OK signed the leaf! [Laughter] There was a Long majority of more than two-thirds in the legislature and the majority of Longite judges on the Supreme Court. It was one-man rule. Louisiana was to be his base. He didn't want any trouble here when he operated on the national scene. But he was introspective enough to wonder about what he had done. Once he said, "They say they don't like my methods. I don't like them either. I wish I could do it some other way." "But," and this phrase occurs over and over in his speeches, his remarks, "you sometimes fight fire with fire. The end justifies the means. I would do it some other way if there was time." If there was time---- He was a man in a hurry, and he had come to believe that the lives of the people could not be made as they should be, in what Tom Wicker has called, "the slow and manipulable workings of democracy." And so he went outside the rules; he smashed them up. He seemed at times willing to go outside the system. And this is why, I think, since the publication of this book he has become something of a hero to many of the young of today who have that same impatience. Professor Frank Freidel, at Harvard, put this book on a reading list on a colloquium on the New Deal, and he found it very interesting that the New Left students went for Huey and equated him in a trinity with Huey P. Newton, who was named after Huey P. Long, and Che Guevara as men who were willing to attain their ends outside the system.

But how was it all going to end? Was he going to be a good mass leader or a bad mass leader? Was he going to lead the people to slavery or to freedom? I don't think he knew himself. He may have been Mr. Hoffer's three-in-one man. But I think he poses a fundamental problem--one we're concerned with today--which is: Can fundamental change be achieved within the democratic system? He thought that it could not be and so he was willing to subvert the system. And this is a problem, of course, we have to deal with; <u>can</u> fundamental change be achieved within the democratic system? I think we must say yes, if that vaguely identified structure known as the establishment is more receptive to change than it sometimes has been and itself initiates and guides change. And if those who want change most ardently show more restraint than they sometimes have and stop short of destroying the system, for if order is destroyed then any hope of orderly change is destroyed. But if we don't want to do it this way, we might reflect that a great impatient charismatic leader, as yet unidentified, may be waiting in the wings who will emerge onto the center of the stage and take over the direction of the play, a man who will fight fire with fire. Thank you. [Applause]

Question: Your candor is very infectious and it stimulates me to try to ask a question in the same vein. You brought out very clearly that thieves in government are hesitant about maintaining written records for fear of indictment and possible conviction. What should the oral historian do, if prior to the exploration of the statute of limitations he were to come into possession of information which might be potentially indictable? How does he respond as a professional and as a citizen with that kind of information on his hands?

WILLIAMS: You mean if it was given to him orally?

Questioner: Yes, that's correct.

WILLIAMS: Well, like I was getting certain information and should I use this information in the book? Is that the question, really?

Questioner: Yes, and beyond that. What are the ramifications with respect to law enforcement?

WILLIAMS: Well, I'm not sure that I can answer it. I had certain information here that I felt that I had to use, therefore, I used it and I relied on the fact that I would be immune from libel because of certain court interpretations. I can think of only one episode that I did not use and this was because the man who told it to me told it (and I wish people wouldn't do this) but he said, "I don't want you to use this and if you do I will say you are a liar and you won't be able to have any substantiation for it whatsoever." It was a significant incident, but I could do without it. But I think the historian has to make his own test here as to what he thinks he has to say. He certainly should preserve it, I think, because like this incident I talked about, I preserved it of course although I didn't use it. I don't think I'm coming to what you're asking though, really, am I? I'm not answering it.

POGUE: I believe, Harry, what he means is if you find two years before the statute of limitations, which would put one of these people in prison, somebody has told you information that would still permit him to be indicted, should go and tell the FBI --------

WILLIAMS: Oh, I see, yeah. You know, I never even thought about that. [Laughter] I can't answer it because it has never come to my attention before and I don't think I could give a considered answer without thinking about it. I just don't know.

Question: Jim Farley and Roosevelt thought that Long would get at least six million votes in '36, if he had lived, do you think he would have run and would he have run on the union party?

WILLIAMS: No. Well, I mean "no" to that last question. In 1936, what he wanted to do was run a third party candidate. He preferred not

to be that candidate himself because he didn't think he could make it. The idea of the third party candidate was to take enough votes away from Roosevelt to throw the election to the Republicans and they, he thought, would do an even worse job of handling the depression than the Democrats. I think this shows his calculation: Let the country suffer four more years so he could save it. Then in 1940 the country would be crying for a strong man and he would come along and save it. But we know what happened, of course, in the election of 1936, but here we're dealing with an episode with one of the actors removed. Would he have changed it? He had his huge campaign fund. He was going to campaign in an airplane--the first candidate to do this. Of course, he was very skilled in the use of the radio; he was going to use the radio. Would he have been able to alter the result? Well, I really don't think so. I think he would have been reelected. And then, of course, in Roosevelt's second term we get the emergence of a new issue--foreign policy--and this was not one of Huey's specialties. And the government begins to spend a great deal of money on defense contracts which takes up the slack in the employment--you really begin to get pump priming with a vengeance. So that by 1940 his big pitch, the depression, was largely alleviated. So what would have happened to him then is hard to say. He might have followed the path of Tom Watson and become an embittered reactionary which is the path that radicals often take when they are frustrated--they become reactionaries. Or as Otis Graham has suggested, he might have carved himself out a position still farther to the left and remained as a left-wing critic of the New Deal even during the war. But that's all we can do is conjecture, but I doubt that he would have made it as president.

POGUE: One question back on the oral history, and of many fine speakers we've had who talked about their books, you have probably more than any other that I've heard of these speakers have stuck very closely to the techniques we know a great deal about and awakened a number of responses to it. But will you take that last chapter of yours and tell how you ran down these myths about Huey possibly being killed by his own bodyguard.

WILLIAMS: Yes. Well, like some of the other great American political assassinations you get a folklore about the Long assassination, and of course the direction it takes is that the act was not performed by the guy who everybody supposed had done it. Many people claimed they witnessed him do it. Over the years, the folklore took a different turn, or the interpretations. One was--and many people in Louisiana still believe this--that Franklin Roosevelt had the assassination done. Another twist is that the Roosevelt administration had told the Long organization that it was going to carry out prosecutions for income tax frauds and Huey had said, "They can't prove anything," but many of the Long boys were scared. And according to this interpretation they or somebody in the Long organization told one of the bodyguards if he

got a chance, to shoot Huey. And all of this, I think, is just completely screwy; there's just nothing to it. There are two very good books about the Long assassination. They reach opposite conclusions, but a lot of the work that I otherwise would have had to do was done by these two men. And one of them was a man by the name of Anthony Zinman, a newspaperman, who was the first one to interview the members of the Weiss family--the assassin was a young doctor, Carl Weiss--and Zinman was the first one who was able to interview the members of the Weiss family. So, I mean, he used oral history and accumulated some very revealing material. And then the other was by another New Orleans newspaperman, Hermann Deutsch, who concluded that Huey had been killed by Dr. Weiss; Zinman, on the other hand, concluded he had been killed by a wild shot from one of the bodyguards. The evidence in these two books and some additional evidence that I was able to gather shows that this was impossible. When Huey was shot he screamed, "I'm shot," and he reeled around and went down the stairs from the rotunda into the basement of the capitol. The assassin fired two shots, one that hit Huey and one that hit a bodyguard and then two of the bodyguards fired at him, so only four shots could have been fired while Huey was on the scene. But like with the Lincoln assassination, you get some loose ends and you can't tie some of these ends up neatly, and if you want to take these loose ends and unravel them still more, you can come up with all kinds of theories as to who did it. You can reject the simple and obvious solution. But so many people were there and saw it. They recounted their story at the time. They told the same story to different investigators twenty years later. I just can't conceive that they lied to begin with and then lied with such fidelity to falsehood over the years. I just don't think this is right. And so I reached the conclusion that the simple explanation of the assassination was the right one. It was this young doctor, a very intense young man, who decided Huey was a tyrant and that he would kill him, and did.

Question: Allowing for literary license, is All the King's Men a pretty accurate account of Huey Long's career?

WILLIAMS: Yes. The question was: Is Willie Stark, the hero of Robert Penn Warren's novel All the King's Men, is he like Huey Long, I guess. Is that right?

Questioner: Yes.

WILLIAMS: I think the answer is yes. I think it's a great novel and I think it's a profound political analysis. And Warren, in the novel, was telling us something we don't like to admit, which is that in politics if you want to do good you have to do some things you don't want to do. He put it very dramatically, you may have to do some evil. Willie Stark was a good man--he wanted to do good--but in order to do good he had to do evil and then he was led on to do more evil to do

more good until finally he was possessed by the evil and his story became a tragedy. Huey Long, wanting to do good, grasped for power. Of course, all politicians have to have power; you can't do anything without power. That's what politics is all about. But he had to have more power and I think in the end the power and the good got mixed up in his mind--not the good and the evil--but the power, in the end, got mixed up in his mind. He wasn't sure which one was which. But I think Warren's novel is very close to the truth here.

KEYNOTE ADDRESS*

James MacGregor Burns
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FORREST POGUE: Ladies and Gentlemen, I am particularly grateful to the speaker for agreeing to address us tonight. I first heard of him as a combat historian in the U.S. Army in the Pacific when I came to the War Department in Washington in 1944 to join one of the combat history teams which was sent to the European Theater of Operations. Later, Jim Burns and other combat historians drew on their interviews for the first combat volume put out by the Department of the Army, Okinawa, The Last Battle.

Of course, all of you know of his Roosevelt: Lion and the Fox, published in 1956. And you heard a great deal more about him with the publication of Roosevelt: Soldier of Freedom, which won the National Book Award and the Pulitzer Prize. I asked him to talk to you tonight not only about his experience in interviewing but also something about things he found out in writing the biography of Roosevelt. I give you an excellent writer, a great teacher, a good citizen, Jim Burns.

JAMES MACGREGOR BURNS: Mr. President, ladies and gentlemen, you all know the story about the new preacher who went to the president of the board of deacons and asked how long his sermons ought to be, and the president of the board of deacons said that he could preach as long as he like, but experience indicated that no souls were saved after the first twenty minutes. And there is a counterpart to this, I think, in this association, at least from what Forrest Pogue has said to me very diplomatically, that speakers on this occasion are asked to speak for a few minutes about their experiences in oral history, but since everybody has had his own experiences in oral history, this indulgence is supposed to be rather limited. But I would like to take advantage of this opportunity to begin on that note, because it is a privilege to share successes and failures. I would like to tell about one success story, one partial success, and one absolute flop in the field of oral history broadly conceived. The success story relates to a little story some of you may remember in Churchill's volumes, and it has been picked up in other volumes. It is a story about the time when Foreign Minister Molotov visited Berlin, meeting with Hitler and with Foreign Minister von Ribbentrop. While he was negotiating with Ribbentrop, who I gather was about the most detestable diplomatic figure in the annals of modern European history, British bombers came over Berlin (Churchill

*Delivered at the Bloomington meeting on October 9, 1971.

wanted to be represented at this conference too), and they were forced to go into a bomb shelter. And the whole approach that Hitler and Ribbentrop were taking toward Molotov was that Germany had won the war, had beaten Britain, and Russia ought to cooperate. Down they went into a shelter where Ribbentrop kept up this tremendous pressure about how they had beaten Britain to her knees and Molotov sat there silent, with that glacial look that Molotov was famous for, while Ribbentrop went on with his propaganda. Finally there was a pause, and Ribbentrop looked at Molotov for an answer, and Molotov said, "Well, if you have defeated Britain, why are we in this shelter, and who are dropping these bombs up there?" Well, this story that Churchill tells is one of those perfect stories for an historian, but just a little too good. It illustrates a point so well that one has to be rather cautious, and Churchill is not above embroidering tales to at least a small degree. It is one of those stories that an historian would love to use, but he hates to say, "This is an apocryphal story." So I wondered if I might use it. And I was in Moscow and talking with diplomats and journalists, and I knew that only Ribbentrop or Molotov could tell the story, except there had to be an interpreter. The interpreter present that time had been named Berezkof. And at a meeting in Moscow I met a man named Berezkof and with a wild leap of hope I said to him, "I always wondered about Berezkof and about the story." And he heard me out and stuck out his chest and said, "I am Berezkof and that story is true." So, this (I felt) permitted me to use the story in my book. But this kind of happy coincidence is not very frequent as you well know.

The partial success came in a strange little episode in a visit to Russia. On another research trip to Russia, I was working under an arrangement by which I was lecturing to the Institute of History, and in response the Soviet government was supposed to let me go more or less where I wanted within limits, and I wanted to go to Yalta. And they couldn't understand why I wanted to go to Yalta. They knew that it was the scene of the great conference, but what was there? And I didn't know what was there, but I simply wanted to see Yalta. So at great pains and with a great creaking of the bureaucratic machinery, they finally gave me, with great misgivings and great skepticism, permission plus the ticket for me and my interpreter to go to Yalta. So we went down to Yalta, and sure enough the place was completely transformed. It had no image or atmosphere reminiscent of war. It is now close to a resort city. And we went to the palace where the conference took place. That is now a rest home. There was a little plaque. I had hoped there might be people around who had been there who might remember the conference but nobody remembered; nobody seemed interested. I saw where Roosevelt had slept, it didn't look very interesting. The palace wasn't terribly impressive. So we left, but on the way out of Yalta, the driver who had previously been silent pointed ahead to a mountain that was amazingly like the head of a bear, with the bear's mouth down into the sea. And all on his own he asked if I would like to hear

the legend of the bear. Of course, I would. And he said the legend was that years ago bears had lived there. And one time a beautiful maiden was left on the beach, and the bears had adopted her and raised her, and she had become the great prize of the bears. But one day pirates had come across the Black Sea, I suppose from Turkey, and had abducted the beautiful young maiden. And suddenly the king of the bears had realized this, seeing the pirates go back across the Black Sea. And he had put his mouth down to the ocean to drink it dry to see if he could prevent them from sailing off with the girl. And he had drunk, and he had drunk, and he had drunk, but he had not rescued the maiden. And just as he told me this, I realized that if not from an historical standpoint, from a literary standpoint how superbly symbolic this was of the problem, among others, that Roosevelt faced at Yalta. And I wondered, in fact, whether he had been able to look out on this mountain of the king of the bears, and as I said in my book later, the great question of whether this hungry bear voracious for land after its terrible sacrifices of World War II would act as had the king of the bears. So, when I went back to Moscow all I had to report from Yalta was not great historical researches or oral histories, just one interview, but one that happened to mean a great deal to me at least literarily.

The flop, I have to be quite diplomatic about. As some of you know a widower in Roosevelt's cabinet married a very young woman while he was a member of the cabinet. And this was a very outspoken member of the cabinet who later published three diaries about his life. And the diaries stop with Pearl Harbor in 1941. (This all has to be very anonymous.) Any historian of the war period, as I am sure Forrest Pogue and others here will grant, missed having his diaries for the war period, (I often tell my students of government that if they want the real inside view of Washington to read these diaries, because the author simply says what every cabinet member feels. He simply barked into his diary at the end of the day all his hatreds and frustrations about life in Washington. It is really a superb set of diaries.) So, first I was hoping very much that either the later diaries would be published or that I could have access; or secondly that at least I could get some materials from his widow. His widow is still a relatively young woman, a very attractive one, living in Washington. So I got in touch with her. In fact, she finally invited me up for lunch to talk about the possibility of either seeing more diaries or at least getting more information. And I presented all the arguments that historians are used to presenting about how her husband deserved to have his full place in history and that it was important that all of this information be put out and how valuable the diaries were. She wined me, and she dined me, and told me something about her husband and his life, but gave absolutely no response on the diaries. As far as her own memory was concerned, it was a perfect example of something that I am going to get to in a moment, and that is that I did not have the documents from which I could ask her the important questions about

World War II. I could only ask her general questions about World War II, and she could only give the haziest answers. Well, that was a flop. And I wish one of you much greater luck. In fact, I am quite serious about this. This problem should be solved. There is a great reservoir not only of World War II but of post-war information in those diaries, and they really should be published. And somebody has got to use his persuasive power more effectively with this lady than I was able to do. And I cite that because, of course, there are similar problems with other people. Indeed, all of you know the famous admonition to anyone writing the biography of a great man, "Kill the widow."

It would be very presumptuous of me tonight to say anything to a group of people who have probably had more experience in history than I have about this fascinating, diverse, sophisticated and burgeoning field of oral history. What impresses me about oral history is the many dimensions of it, how marvelously flexible an instrument it is and how it is being applied in so many different areas. I would like simply to talk about one aspect of it that particularly interests me. And I would like to start off by saying something more about my first encounter with it when it was not called oral history. Mr. Chairman, this does not come under the anecdotage part of this; this is historiography and epistemology that I am talking about now, not anecdotage. My first experience came, as Forrest Pogue has said, in the Pacific when Colonel S. L. A. "Sam" Marshall was pioneering, I believe, with the technique of interviewing men in combat or just after combat. He was very impressed with that old adage that on the day of battle truths lie naked, but soon they put on their uniforms. And he was very anxious to get at "the truth" as soon as possible before memories flagged and legends sprouted. So what we would do was first go in as soon as possible to see as much of the action as possible and to rescue documents and to get prepared to do our interviewing. And then Colonel Marshall hour after hour would call together squads and platoons and sometimes whole companies of infantrymen. And what to me was remarkable about this procedure were two things: first, it was possible to reenact small unit action--and, of course, in the Pacific in the early days it was very small unit action. It was possible to put that together much as a good courtroom drama puts together the details or scenario of a crime. And secondly, what impressed me was that first we would perhaps hear from a first sergeant or a platoon sergeant who would give an account from his perspective, which might have been a hundred yards back from a particular action, and it would seem so authentic, and like the whole story, and consistent with our documents. And then we would begin to call on the corporals and the privates who would each stand up, and this was very low level. It was who was shooting from that tree, and what tank came over here. What impressed me was how the perspective changed as we moved from actor to actor and got so many perspectives on what looked initially like so simple an action.

Well, this lesson has stayed with me all through my life and particularly interests me in relation to the one area of oral history that I am concerned with and would like to say a word about. Professionally in the field of political science, my field is the study of political leadership. And here again what strikes me about political leadership as a discipline or as a study, as a field, is the tendency to overemphasize the individual leader. I think leadership at least at the top levels is a far more collective and far more complicated activity than most of us realize. It is the structure of leadership that has to be studied. This is something that, I think, is peculiarly open to work by oral historians. And it is a very difficult field. Let me cite two or three complicating aspects of the study of the structure of leadership as operating on a particularly important high-level decision like, say, the missile crisis. First of all, and all oral historians will recognize this readily, the central person, particularly if he is a presidential politician, if he is a high-level, sophisticated politician, is likely to be a role taker in the social-psychological sense. This, of course, is especially true of Roosevelt. Roosevelt is a baffling person to study because of this incredible capacity he had to move from role to role quickly, mercurially, that a visiting British general would come and see one aspect of him and others through the day would see other aspects. Not that he tried to deceive people, but he was amazingly capable of responding to the different types of people who came in. And if Harold [J.] Laski came in he could talk socialism with him, and if Lord so and so came in it would be about old homes in Britain or America. And so it would be through the day, always talking as though he knew at least as much about a subject as did his visitor, and, of course, that was often true. So, you have first of all the problem of simply trying to understand the multiple roles of a complex personality.

The second kind of complication is something that I call reverse role taking. I have been struck in studying particularly the people around a leader the extent to which they shift roles in coming into positions of power, particularly if they achieve the reputation in the media for being a particular kind of person, perhaps being the house radical or the ideologue or the hawk or the dove. They are very sensitive to this label. They are very sensitive to the possibility that people they are working with type them or label them with that particular image. So you find frequently that much of the motivation of a person coming into a high staff position is to change that image and to surprise people and hopefully please people by not being the house radical, by not being the house dove, by taking a hawkish position--you know, I can be tough too, this kind of thing. And this gets very difficult to check out because you don't find the consistency of personality that is so helpful to an historian or a biographer.

And the third is the even more complicated problem of the psychological relationship between "number one" and any of the people around him. We need only to look at a book like the Georges' study of Woodrow Wilson and Colonel House, that fascinating relation between the two, or John Blum's study of Woodrow Wilson and Joseph Tumulty to see something of the baffling problem of two men, one obviously the master and one the servant, but the servant in the house has power too, and the master sometimes doesn't have so much power. One has only to read the kind of letter that Tumulty wrote Wilson when Wilson was on the verge of firing him to get a sense of this psychological dependence that runs both ways. And that kind of thing, I think, also is not something to be found so much in the documents as in probing and subtle interviewing.

Well, that kind of work in the structure of leadership first of all obviously calls for a rare quality of understanding and sensitivity on the part of the interviewer. He has to develop something the French call le sens de l'etat, that is, a sense of the complicated strands of influence of a personal relationship; this calls for an ability to work through people and understand this elaborate structure of pressure, persuasion, bargaining, trade-offs which operate between, let's say, a president and his staff or between cabinet members in an administration. And that particularly calls for interviewing in depth, obviously not just of the top man or even of the top men but going down into the line and staff relationships that make up the foundation of the structure of leadership.

Secondly, this kind of work at this level focusing on crucial decision making episodes calls for access to documents. And this, I think, is a problem for oral historians even though on the surface it would seem not to be. As I said in the case of the widow of this famous secretary, it was because I lacked documentation that I was not able to conduct a very good oral history. To me the most fascinating aspect of my historical research has been shifting back and forth between documents and oral histories. There is no better oral history, for me at least, than one conducted when I have had access to the sources perhaps much more recently that the interviewee and can approach him with questions very closely related to documentary information, just as there is no better way to approach the documents than to have talked a day or two before with a Sam Rosenman or a Thomas Dewey or an Eleanor Roosevelt. And I particularly want to make a point about this tonight, because documentary historians, if we can call them such, at this point are very much in need of help from oral historians. Documentary historians have a problem, which I think you all know about, I am asking you to help do something about. And this, of course, is the problem in contemporary history, and after all we are mainly concerned here with contemporary history, the problem of the availability of classified governmental documents.

I don't want to go into that in detail because there has been a lot said about it. I would like to make clear that this whole issue about the release of classified documents, this issue that has been brought so dramatically before us with the Pentagon Papers episode this year, is not a battle between historians and archivists. It is a battle between historians and archivists on the one hand and the kind of anonymous someone on the other that is very hard to track down. I realize others take a different view, but my experience with archivists is not only that they were wonderfully helpful to me in my work but that they, too, are devoted to the craft of history, that this is their professional occupation. Why would they be archivists unless they wanted to see the archives used? I suppose there are a few archivists like the famous librarians, the occasional librarian, who loves her books so much she doesn't want anyone to take them out of the library. There may be archivists who really love their documents so much that they don't want them handled, but I haven't run across these people. But this makes our job no easier, because archivists and historians are jointly under great constraints and restraints, particularly the archivists. But it seems to me that at some point historians have got to stand up as a united body with great long run influence and demand their rights to use archives which bear on the most crucial decisions of this nation in recent years, as in the case of the Pentagon Papers, and not depend on the occasional purloining of documents. What a hell of a way to run a railroad! But we have to depend on this for the Pentagon Papers when we are a quarter century behind on the availability of documents that relate to crucial postwar decisions. And my feeling is that unless historians act this year or next while the Pentagon Papers still interest the journalists and the public in general, we are not going to get very far. And I think it is time we stood up, and I suppose the appropriate time to do this would be at the next meeting of the American Historical Association, and demand through that association and other historial associations, and possibly through this association, that the government make an effort to at least roll back that long period. History is speeding up. I think we could tell a lot about Vietnam if we knew more about Korea. I think we could know much more about current security problems if we knew more about the foreign policy actions or adventures, if you will, of the last ten or twenty years. So, I would in passing, ask you to be alert to any efforts that are made and to join in those efforts in the months ahead.

And then finally, as perhaps is implicit in what I have been saying, I think that interviewing into, probing into, the structure of leadership involved in a crucial decision calls for an interviewer commitment that we have hardly seen so far. We are all familiar with the very excellent oral history materials collected on individual lives, such as the ones at Columbia, but now, of course, we can, I presume, speak of scores of institutions. And these oral histories are fascinating to read, beautifully indexed and tremendously important, but ideally what I would like to see when I read the oral history relating to a particular leader is

a whole structure of interviews with the people around him, his wife, his secretary, his staff, his business or political or legal associates, and ideally I would like to see the interviewer or interviewers moving back and forth, and this would take a long time I grant, between the documents and the interviewers but particularly between the interviewees themselves and going to a particular interviewee with very precise questions. The kind of advice we had this afternoon, I think, relates to oral history generally, the capacity to pinpoint things, to refresh memories. I know these are things that interviewers are very used to doing, but I am really calling for a more intensive effort on the score, because I think it would be tremendously rewarding to look into how these decisions were actually made. Because I think what ultimately we are doing here is we are probing for, to put it very grandiosely, we are looking for causation in history. We are looking for the "why" of these things. And I think that if we approached oral history and documentary history with this kind of commitment--and I know it means a commitment of funds, and I know that funds are hard to come by--we would find that the interaction, the feedback back and forth as one moves through these different realms of action and documents, immensely broadens one's understanding of what happened. It immensely enriches the whole field of history. Because I think many of us, perhaps all of us, do have a kind of ideal. We have heard all the admonitions about how limited history is, how distorted it is, how history is just a pack of lies that the living play on the dead; we have heard all that from our cynical teachers. But I think we pursue an ideal which is that we can understand more than we ever have before, that the kinds of modern techniques and indeed mechanical techniques that have been developed, the whole expansion of techniques of quantification and measurement, the kinds of new developments represented by this relatively new association, the funds that this nation through its archives and through its presidential libraries and the millions upon millions of dollars that this nation collectively is committing to the study of history in this way and that is being committed through, of course, private sources, this tremendous span of research and use of modern techniques I think should make us less cynical and pessimistic about the possibilities of history and much more hopeful that we can do what the layman expects us to do, to learn from history. I am sure many of you are as amused as I am when a journalist throws up his hands and says, well, we can't decide this, but history will decide. History will decide this or that question; history will decide about Vietnam. Well, what is history but a bunch of people like us feeling and fumbling our way through these incredibly difficult areas. But my point is that I think we are doing more than feeling and fumbling. And what I am really asking tonight is that you and all of us carry on our labors, and broaden them and have the daring to go into the toughest of all areas as I see it, the areas of where the life and death decisions about this nation are made. Thank you very much.

POGUE: Jim would now like to invite questions on his writing of the Roosevelt books as well as on the gathering of interviews.

QUESTION: I have one question since Dr. Pogue and you are here and you both did biographies of famous men. Dr. Pogue got a chance to interview General Marshall quite extensively. Of course, you were not able to interview Franklin Roosevelt. Now, you two have talked, and I am working on a project of a man who is also deceased. And we want to put together his story. Now, what ideas can you gove to me possibly about the difference in what I will find since I am not able to interview the top man. We have his papers, and I will just interview people around him such as you did. Could you explain the difference in what I will find?

BURNS: Well, in my case I would just repeat my main point, which is at least you will have still something of a structure of leadership, a very definite structure in that case, to work with, and I would simply try to do in that situation what I would urge if General Marshall were still alive, and that is to go back and forth between the people around him, among the people around him and between them and the documents. Maybe Forrest will speak on that from the perspective of the subject being very much alive.

POGUE: You don't always get what you want even when the subject is alive, because there are certain fields that these men prefer not to go into. At the same time, as I have suggested in one of the workshop sessions, you are able to settle certain points of facts by asking what sometimes seem like rather silly questions, but you say: "Were you there? Who did you talk to? Whose advice did you follow?" A number of times when I asked about such questions as the relocation of Japanese on the West Coast, the questions of our relations to the French and our postwar occupation policy, General Marshall would say,"I relied on the advice of Jack McCloy; ask him what he had in mind." I don't mean that he was trying to slough off the question, but he was trying to say that this particular piece of advice was what had influenced him most. When you don't have that type of clue, you must go to the second man if he is still living and the third man or the fourth man. The wonderful thing in this case is that at the time that I began fifteen years ago on this project or the time I began on an even earlier project late in 1945, the Eisenhower command in Northwest Europe, which led to my volume, The Supreme Command, I was able to interview the British and American chiefs of staff who had worked with General Marshall. I didn't know at the time that I was laying up treasures for myself for later days in writing the Marshall biography. It was possible soon after the war to piece together great parts of that. But, Jim, even in later years, you have been able to see a great many people who were around Roosevelt or acquainted with him to fill in many of these same gaps.

BURNS: Yes, I would just say that it is amazing how many people take part in decisions in a nation like this which has a fragmented governmental system. A lot of people have to be brought in. So, if you go at this you will find an awful lot of people who had some part and who saw a great deal.

QUESTION: Yes, in this business of constructing the leadership, sometimes you get into situations where you find the leadership around the central figure, but you don't know the central figure. The reality is not there; the man is not there; his substance. How do you make the link from the leadership around to the man himself, the central figure?

BURNS: Well, I go on the theory that the man is there, that hard though it is to find him in that circle, that he is in that circle and that circle is in him. This is what I mean when I talk about the psychological and, well, simply the psychological relation between the leader and the circle around him. And the only way I can go about that is to get into the context of the circle and perhaps to act with a certain amount of empathy. Once one gets to know a figure by studying him at length he has some feel for the interaction between the central man and the circle around him. But you see I hypothesize, and this may be a mistake, and this is why I call it a structure of leadership, I hypothesize a series of interactions between that circle and that leader that make it possible for me to see the leader through the circle. That has certain pitfalls, as I am sure you are aware, but I see no other way to do it. Perhaps we could come back to that if people want to make further comments on it. It is a fascinating problem.

QUESTION: I would like to raise a question associated with the point about classified materials. I have an interesting dilemma. There is a man in Washington who is still alive, a retired army colonel, who was chief of Army Research and Development from 1943 to 1953, and he was responsible for the classification of a good many documents which now in 1971 are still classified and which the Army is dragging its feet on declassification because the Army feels that it will embarrass itself if it should declassify those documents. The man will not submit to interviews, and the Army will not submit to releasing the documents, and I am puzzling where does one go and what does one do in such a case?

BURNS: A situation of complete frustration. Forrest, can I hand that one to you? You are closer to this, to the mechanics of this sort of thing.

POGUE: Sometimes you can find a third person who knows part of the story. If you don't, I don't know any way to dislodge it. I have had to go through this in several cases and occasionally by continuing to track down the people near the individual who won't talk I have been able to fill the story in to the extent that I

could go back and persuade the reluctant individual to answer questions. On a few occasions they decided that they would like to see that their side of the story was represented. As to decision making, I agree that the more one studies high-level strategy the more one recognizes the truth of what Jim said, that no one man makes these decisions. A great asset to me in my study was that with the exception of General Arnold I have been able to talk with all the men who sat with General Marshall in the Combined Chiefs of Staff meetings when decisions were being made. And little by little I was able to get a picture of many of the factors that went into particular decisions. I found, however, that if you find someone who is security-conscious to the point that he won't do more than talk in generalities, you are stalemated. Recently the Marshall Library received the papers of Colonel William F. Friedman, who built the machine that helped to break the Japanese diplomatic code. Colonel Friedman was almost obsessed with the question of security, and it was extremely difficult to interview him. It was practically impossible to talk with him on the telephone because he felt it was very difficult to carry on a conversation about the whole field of cryptography without revealing something that was still classified. So I had to write about him in my second volume on the basis of his sworn statements in the Pearl Harbor inquiry. And although we have his papers and his books, I doubt if we will ever get the full story of his part in that particular code breaking activity.

QUESTION: In the question of history there is the separation between the researcher and the writer. The two don't always go together, of course, although in both of your cases they do. From the standpoint of the researcher, what is the cutoff point? At what point, say, if you are doing an examination of the causation of Franklin Roosevelt, his experiences with polio, the influence of his mother, do you decide to stop your search for information? Where do you draw the line especially if you are just gathering material and you are not going to do the writing?

BURNS: A good example of that is not only the polio but Roosevelt's later illness, which, by the way, if I had had more time on personal memories I would have told something about the gratifying experience of going to a doctor who has not said a word about Roosevelt all of these years and is publishing an article about what really happened with Roosevelt medically and was willing to tell me all that he had said in the article, in fact, give me the article before it was published. You can't expect more cooperation than that. But to get back to the main point, all I can say is that the writer simply has to exploit the researcher on the score and do what he can. But on the tough point of causation, to answer that question would be to answer the question of causation in history. And my hope is that after we have amassed enough

information, let's say, in the leadership area, we can do enough systematic studies of leaders that we can develop a theory of political leadership. This is what I am working on these years. But it depends on a mass of information and the kinds of studies that Erikson and others have done as well as ones we have all participated in. But I don't think we can answer in the case of a Roosevelt this question of causation except to look at the total stream of influences, that is, I take a rather eclectic approach. I wish I could believe in some kind of trauma theory. It is so dramatic, the polio episode in Sunrise at Campobello implies that there had been a rather soft man who had this terrible experience and out of it came the man that comes forward at Madison Square Garden to make that speech. Then you look at Roosevelt's two years in the New York Senate, and you discover that you have practically a farmer-labor senator somehow in 1910 to 1912, way back at that time, and you just can't go along with this theory but at the same time you know that polio had some impact on him and so it goes. So, Endicott Peabody or Groton, or the influence of Eleanor Roosevelt. This book that has just come out by Joseph Lash indicates that Eleanor Roosevelt was much more an important a part of the White House than we had realized. We knew she was very important in the nation with all that she did, but she was just a constant needling, pressuring force in the White House. How much credit to give that? If we could answer those questions, I suppose we could erect our theory of history. But I do tend to be rather eclectic, and I think until we have worked out more systematic theories of history and of the relation between leadership and power and between political power and history and between conscious plans and planning and history, I think we should be eclectic; I think we should draw in as much information as we can and perhaps build the foundation for more systematic theorizing in the future. I don't think we are yet at that point. So, maybe I sounded a bit utopian up here, but you make me sound rather practical compared to this really utopian question you have raised.

QUESTION: Our speaker this afternoon suggested that it would be interesting if we accumulated more data on private lives of public figures, especially, as you know, information about their sex lives. How political opponents often gather this information and then make a deal straight off to keep it out of the public arena. Would you care to comment on that?

BURNS: Yes. I will do it both generally and in relation to one of the two people we mentioned, Franklin Roosevelt, although I thought it was a bit unfair [for the speaker] to couple Roosevelt and Warren G. Harding. Generally I don't think there were any explicit understandings or even perhaps implicit understandings. I think he was wondering if people might actually sit down and make a deal, and I don't think they ever do that. It may be that

one side fears to do anything because it has something on its conscience and doesn't want to be vulnerable to the other side. I think it is much more a defensive mechanism operating from the beginning. But beyond that we know that while they may be quiet publicly, they are very busy at the rumor mills privately, whatever deal may have been made implicitly. And, of course, this all, conceivably could come up next year, if, say, Senator Edward M. Kennedy were nominated for President, which I don't consider out of the question; I would not predict. But this would be a good example. I think one would find the Republicans would be publicly quiet about this and privately very active and I think the Democrats would do exactly the same, incidentally, if it were the other way around. The real fascinating enigma on this matter of silence is shown in the case of Lloyd George whose sexual life--I was surprised it didn't come up this afternoon--was absolutely prodigious. He was absolutely, unbelievably active. And yet as far as I know, and this may be the difference between Britishers and Americans, this never hurt Lloyd George politically nor did the famous business about Prime Minister Gladstone and his hobby of picking women up off the street and taking them home where he and Mrs. Gladstone would take these girls in. I can't imagine this being done these days without much whispering, but that never seemed to hurt Gladstone. But to return to Roosevelt, I think it is terribly intriguing personally. It is terribly interesting in relation to Eleanor Roosevelt and Roosevelt and this young fetching lady. I don't see it as at all historically important. Here was not a mistress role in which she influenced decisions, indeed one of Lucy Mercer's great attractions for Roosevelt, I think, was that she was not interested in getting involved in matters of state. But I don't see it, just to take this particular case, as being historically very important. I think Eleanor Roosevelt is historically important. I think what happened between Roosevelt and Lucy Mercer did have profound implications for Eleanor Roosevelt and for her relation with her husband; that is important. So, I think it is more of an Eleanor Roosevelt question than it is a Franklin Roosevelt question. And I will just end off with an intriguing little psychological aspect of this: When Eleanor Roosevelt was a girl along with her other troubles and miseries she had to wear a back brace for two or three years partly because they thought she had a curve in her backbone but partly to make her walk straight. And years later, I don't think Lash mentions this, Roosevelt burst out at her one day, not angrily but in exasperation, "You don't have any bend in your backbone." So, psychologists, I hope, could make something of that.

QUESTION: Last night we heard some criticism against oral historians and historians in general about their preoccupation with elite history, with their history of elitists, the elite, as opposed to the non-elite. How do you feel about this, or have

you expressed yourself already? Is there a mix, a proper mix or what proportion, what is your attitude?

BURNS: Well, the impression that I get, if only from your very informative publication, is of the tremendous sweep of oral history and the extent to which it is getting into what, I guess, you could call "non elites." Incidentally this term "elite" is really more vague than leadership. It doesn't help us very much even though it is a fancy term. But, you know, you people yourselves can answer this question. Look at how much is being done as we saw today in non elite exploration. How well it is being done and how thoroughly, I don't know. I just talked to a woman in New York yesterday who was very active in black programs who says, well, if you are talking to the oral history people please tell them to have more black interviewers interviewing blacks. I pass that on for what it is worth. But I gather from what you said that there is a great deal of oral history being done with black movements and organizations. But if you are asking where I think emphasis should be placed, I would simply have to say that as a student of leadership, as a believer in leadership, as a person who feels that this nation needs more leadership, that we don't really understand leadership and that we cannot yet systematically generalize about leadership, I believe that we have got to put lots of these leadership studies together, that leaders have the power to destroy this nation, that leaders have the power to help make this nation great, even though as a democrat with a small "d" as well as a capital "D" I see the ultimate, crucial role of government by the people. I would end up saying that we need more leadership studies. After all, in my field of political science we have massive studies of non elites in the voting studies that we have done and the public opinion studies. This is a pretty good way to study non elites. You get a real cross section. Or the Kinsey work with its failings at the lower levels, as [Doctor Gebhard] mentioned, is still a very broad study. So, all and all I would not accept that criticism. Obviously you have to do all these things, but we have got to do them more perceptively and informatively at the top leadership level. These people are just too important, and we just don't know enough about them.

QUESTION: One of the questions that has recurred this week is that of reliability. And I would like to try to focus on the specific part which relates to attitudes of personalities about history and how they affected the specific events that the historian is studying. If a person writes a document, and it is a document of the present time of about, say, an event of 1940, we call that historical interpretation, at least now. If we have forty years hence we might tend to call it history. But if we have a recording taken at the present time of someone who was there we tend to call that oral history. Now, beyond the semantical

thing, if you don't have documents which give you information about the attitudes of the people involved at the time, how can you test? What are some of the ways that you can test the reliability of what a person's attitude in 1971 is about the event in 1940 when you are trying to write a history about what his attitude was in 1940? Is my question clear?

BURNS: Yes. The question is clear; it is the answer that is difficult. Let me just say one thing, and then I hope somebody here might comment out of his greater experience. I have no answer except what I suggested, and that is cross checking; that is, it is out of the collectivity of that decision that I would hope to find people whose memories could be checked. But I think it is a very risky and difficult area. And I have no glib, simple solution, because legends grow up, and people feed off one another, and the whole memory bank can be distorted in that way. Does anyone have a more helpful comment on that than I have been able to give out of all this experience here? Forrest, would you want to say anything about that?

POGUE: General Marshall once asked me how I could be sure if what he was telling me in 1957 was not something he had made up recently or that it did not reflect something that he thought about only recently. And I said, as some of you heard me say before, "About every tenth question I give you is on something to which I already know the answer from your testimony in the 1940s or letters you wrote at this particular time." (That is why so much that I have to say about this particular oral history project is probably of no great help to many of you unless you are working in a man's papers and can check them against his memory.) Occasionally I would run into his reconstruction of a conversation or conference in the early 1940s that seemed a little too good to be true. And then fortunately I would run into a diary or a letter which would confirm it. On three occasions Marshall told me exactly the same story about a meeting with Secretary of Treasury Henry Morgenthau shortly before the fall of France, and he said that in his discussion with Morgenthau of some of the Army's defense problems, Morgenthau got so upset about it that he arranged a meeting for the two of them with the President. General Marshall told in detail about the nature of that interview and how the President kept trying to get him off of the subject by berating or teasing Morgenthau about something else. And I thought perhaps this was a little exaggerated until John Blum's edition of the diary of Morgenthau for that period appeared. Morgenthau's entry in the diary fairly fully confirmed Marshall's recollections of what had occurred at the White House. When there is no diary confirmation one must talk when possible to contemporaries. You can't have the advantage that we had in combat interviews, Jim has told you, we talked not to one man but to dozens of men and found

that they would agree on the battle on their narrow front but would possibly disagree on what happened to their right or to their left. I am sure that he had the same experience in the Pacific that we had in the European Theater of Operations. Nearly every time one asked a man in the fighting about the support his unit received he would say "Those S.O.B.'s on the right and left did not come up and do what they were supposed to do." Fortunately we could just move over to men who had fought on the right or left flanks and ask them, and they had much the same impression--that they were doing all the fighting. There is time for a couple more questions.

QUESTION: In your book, Professor Burns, I was amazed with the scope of your research and the broad span of your book, and your trips from theater to theater and coverage through the years. I am just wondering not only how you had the time to do the research but where you went. You said you went to Russia, and you obviously went to the Roosevelt Library. Could you tell us some other places that you went to get some of this information, especially on the Asia campaigns?

BURNS: Well, I had no magic formula on that. I simply thoroughly exploited the work that has been done by the Forrest Pogues and many other people here. I didn't do a great deal of traveling. One thing I did do was to talk to historians in Britain, France, Germany and Russia, but that was for perspective not facts. The materials are tremendously available. This is one of the wonderful things about documentary histories, again, as many of you know. It is just what one can get and what the U.S. government does for many of us. I would take a two hour trip from Williamstown down to Hyde Park. Here was this incredible institution that had been laid open to writers, where trained people could go in and get, say, the Harry Hopkins papers. That is the heart of the work, plus the use of other books that have been written. This really enables me to make the point again that there was no simple formula that I had. It was just very basic plugging with the use of really superb material--the Henry L. Stimson material at Yale, for example--that was valuable. So, again, I think we are very lucky in what we have. I think with all of our problems we are lucky in what we have. I think with all of our problems we are lucky to be able to do interviewing, and then have the documents that we can get, and I think we just ought to live up sometimes to our sources. Thank you.

POGUE: Jim, alluded in his last statement to something that I am sure all historians do to some degree: his interviewing of scholars here and abroad to get perspective. (And more than most writers he gave full credit to people he talked to.) I think this is a kind of interviewing historians should do more and more. Quite often a student will ask you about sources or something of the sort, but in this case, and I recall our pleasant visit, Jim, there was an attempt to try to find out if so and so is a sound deduction or is there a better approach. And I found it very stimulating for

my own piece of work. I think this is something that people who write biography or parts of history may want to think a great deal about. I am sure that all of us have profited from the address tonight, and I am sure that I speak for you in thanking Jim Burns for a very interesting evening.

THE ORAL HISTORIAN AND THE FOLKLORIST*

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In the United States students of history and students of folklore have shared little common ground. This is less true in Europe, where history lies enshrouded in a traditional past and folkloristics is recognized as an authoritative branch of learning. If American history has not yet been extended back in time to embrace a mythical Indian past, its boundaries are being stretched to include large sectors - blacks, ethnics, mountain whites, city folk - whose stories must be sought through oral and traditional rather than through printed and written sources. And folklore as a scholarly discipline has made spectacular gains in American universities in the 1960's. Consequently the old rigid polarization between history as scrupulously documented fact, and folklore as unverified rumor, falsehood, hearsay, old wives' tale - often equated with myth and legend in similar senses - is beginning to break down. Historians are moving closer to the methods of the folklorist through the new departure of oral history, and folklorists are becoming more history-minded as their discipline solidifies.

A word first about the growth of folklore studies in the United States over the past decade. Indiana University established a doctoral degree program in folklore in 1949 and awarded the first Ph. D. in 1953. This degree was administered through an interdepartmental committee until 1963, when folklore received departmental status. Since coming to Indiana University in 1957 as professor of history and folklore and chairman of the folklore program, I have directed some thirty dissertations in folklore, and have about that many now in progress. The recipients of Ph. D's in folklore have obtained positions at universities around the country, and in foreign countries, and developed their own folklore courses. Meanwhile the University of Pennsylvania and University of Texas have initiated the doctorate in folklore, while the University of California at Los Angeles and at Berkeley, the University of North Carolina, and the Graduate Programs at Cooperstown, home of the New York State Historical Association, award a master's degree in folklore. Harvard University five years ago was the first in the nation to develop an undergraduate major in folklore and mythology. Folklore courses are very popular in today's climate of opinion and attract hundreds of students.

*Delivered at the Bloomington meeting on October 9, 1971.

A similar ascending curve of interest can be plotted for the American Folklore Society. In the 1940's and '50's it hung on to the Modern Language Association and the American Anthropological Association, with whom it met in alternate years. Now it meets independently, most recently (November 1971) in a four day session at Washington, D. C. where it ran three concurrent sessions of a hundred and fifty papers. Furthermore, the membership has increasingly become professional, as the new and prospective Ph. D.'s give this society their primary allegiance. There is some parallel in the recent growth of the American Folklore Society with the upsurge of the Oral History Association, except that the OHA is young and the AFS much older, being founded in 1888.

Folklorists by and large have not been very history-minded. Most of them lean toward literature on the humanities side and toward anthropology on the social science side. Since my own doctorate was in History of American Civilization, I have always supported the symthesis of folklore and history, and have found some response among our graduate students, notably Lynwood Montell, who in the dissertation eventually published as The Saga of Coe Ridge combined the two methodologies. A second member of our panel, William Ivey, majored in history as an undergraduate at the University of Michigan, came to Indiana University as a graduate student in folklore, with a strong minor in American history, and is currently writing a dissertation on a local history tradition in the Upper Peninsula of Michigan. The third panelist, Henry Glassie, majored in cultural geography at Louisiana State University and then took a folklore M. A. at Cooperstown and a folklore Ph. D. at the University of Pennsylvania. His dissertation, published as Pattern in Material Culture in the Eastern United States, depends to a considerable extent upon historical and regional factors, and Dr. Glassie has appeared on programs of the Pacific Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians, as well as having served for three years as state folklorist with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission.

A few historians could in turn be cited as having sympathy toward the folklore approach, notably Theodore Blegen in his too neglected Grass Roots History, but only with the advent of oral history is the historical profession making a turn toward the methods of the folklorist. Up until the new oral history, a sharp line always divided the documentary record that served the historian from the oral flotsam that he scorned but which, for some curious reason, the folklorist devoured. Wresting himself from the library and the archives, the retooled oral historian now marches forth with tape recorder to interview live people face to face. And to his astonishment he discovers, at some point, that this technique of obtaining information is the particular speciality of the folklorist. Some of my history colleagues, bent on establishing an oral history archives on campus, were surprised when I told

them that there already existed at the university an extensive folklore archives for the depositing of tape-recorded interviews. These tapes, as well as separately housed manuscript collections, contained chiefly songs, tales, and other folkloric genres, but they held their share of oral history.

Before the oral historian and the folklorist can compare notes over the tape recorder about interview techniques and archival systems, they need to consider large divergences in their concepts and methods.

In respect to method, the oral historian interviews while the folklorist in the field collects. It would never occur to a practitioner of oral history to set out in the morning toting his Sony or Wollensak or Uher with little or no idea as to whom he will meet and record. Such action would appear to be not historical research but some species of madness. Yet this is exactly the way the folklorist operates. He follows up one lead after another, frequently stumbling down blind alleys and reaching dead ends, in his search for articulate bearers of verbal traditions or savvy expositors of traditional life styles. On locating a good informant - the technical term for the folk narrator or folk singer - he may of course revisit him frequently. Yet he must continually be ferreting out new informants in the effect to cast his net as widely as possible, in his search for a broad tradition. Collecting techniques vary according to the personality of the collector. Two of the most successful fieldworkers in the United States used quite opposite techniques. Cecil Sharp, the Englishman prospecting for old English and Scottish ballads in the southern Appalachians, employed the pointblank approach; climbing to the mountain cabin, he asked the surprised family if they knew old songs and if they did promptly wrote down words and music. Vance Randolph, lifelong resident of the Ozark hills, adopted the participant-observer strategy on his home grounds, never posed the frontal question, but hung around a likely informant waiting till he uttered items of folklore, then excused himself and surreptitiously wrote them down in his notebook. Recently a retired Episcopal clergyman, Harry M. Hyatt, has produced an extraordinary two-volume tape-recorded collection of esoteric Negro magical beliefs, Hoodoo, Witchcraft, Rootwork, Conjuration, which he obtained by chasing down and directly interrogating Negro hoodoo doctors and their clients throughout the southeast. As a compromise between the two field strategies, some folklorists are now proposing what they call the "induced natural context" to create so far as possible a spontaneous story-telling or folksinging situation without waiting indefinitely for it to arise. All this is far removed from the interview situation in which the oral historian poses questions in the living room to a political or business or labor leader about his personal career.

Besides the schism in their methodology, the oral historian and the folklorist differ appreciably on their basic concepts. The one seeks personal data of contemporary history, the other hunts for folk traditions. The small number of history-minded folklorists will keep their ears open for folk history, that is, the versions of past events that have remained in folk memory and folk tradition. This folk history has little in common with the elitist history that prevails in professional historical circles. The guild of American historians operates within the conceptual framework of a national political structure, which determines the chronology, the cast of characters, the issues and topics that bore history students from primary school through graduate school. Students run on a treadmill that never takes them beyond the federal government, presidents and senators, the national economy, international diplomacy, reform legislation. Of the people's history, they hear nothing.

In an essay oft-cited but never followed, "Everyman His Own Historian" (1931), Carl Becker spoke for a personal rather than a national view of history. The guild praised it, but anyone looking at the flood of historiographical works on American history over the past decade - by Higham, Garraty, Cunliffe and Winks, Noble, Hofstadter, Eisenstadt, Schlatter, Skotheim, and others - can very quickly recognize the overwhelming force of national, elitist history as practiced by all leading American historians. While revisionism is much in evidence, it is revisionism of the research methods, interpretations, and judgments of Frederick Jackson Turner, Charles Beard, Carl Becker (who never pursued the injunctions of his own essay) and other giants of the profession, national historians all. Revision of their subject matter is not broached. Oral history faithfully follows the elitist emphases of the guild, naturally enough, for the broad outlines of nationalist, federal government-structured history are clear and familiar, and those of folk history are fuzzy and obscure. For until someone records folk history, we do not even know its shape and content.

One encouraging sign for the development of interest in oral folk history can be seen in occasional expressions by the professional historians of disaffection with elitist history. A. S. Eisenstadt comments on the concentration of American history writing on a narrative of well-known events in political history dominated by major American presidents, as in Allan Nevins' Ordeal of the Union and Arthur Schlesinger's The Age of Franklin D. Roosevelt. Yet Nevins himself declares that the most fascinating part of history, and the most difficult to obtain, is the story of how plain men and women lived and were affected by the economic, social, and cultural changes of their times. Samuel P. Hays asks for a shift from "presidential history" and "top-level affairs" to "grass-roots happenings." Speaking on the colonial period, Jack P. Greene rues that historians have spent so much time studying the elite and thereby ignoring other elements.

One school of American historians has in the past few years expressly called for a rejection of elite history and a revolution in historiographical attitudes that will bring about concern with the inarticulate mass of the people. These are the historians of the New Left - Staughton Lynd, Eugene Genovese, Jesse Lemisch, Barton J. Bernstein - and they scoff at pretended revisionists who merely swap heroes of business for heroes of politics. Yet they themselves fall into the same nationalist trap and attempt to write about history from the bottom up using the same old tired categories of the American Revolution, Jacksonian democracy, the Civil War, the rise of industrialism, and so down to the New Deal and the New Frontier. Valiantly attempting to make dead men who have left no records tell their stories, they bemoan the difficulty of getting at ordinary folk. Now here is where the folklorist can aid, for he does make dead men tell their tales - through the lips of their living descendants, who relay family and local history passed orally across the generations.

One New Left historian, John J. Williams, did discover the folklorists and presented a paper in the radical historians panel at the December 1970 meeting of the American Historical Association, on "The Establishment and the Tape Recorder: Radicalism and Professionalism in Folklore Studies, 1933-1968." Looking into the folklore scholarship of the past three decades, Williams perceived a watershed dividing the non-academic Old Left folklorists of the 1930's and '40's, notably represented by the Almanac Singers, and the academic establishment folklorists of the 1950's and '60's, ignobly epitomized by myself, and he quoted various statements of mine to illustrate my establishment tendencies. Now the New Left historians and folklorists in general do share a common premise, that the folk, the mass of the people, possess a culture and a history well worthy of study. But as a folklorist I do not correlate my interest in the folk with a radical ideology - or with a liberal or conservative or any other ideaology. The folk fall into all these camps, and outside them, and I listen to what they have to say without prejudgment. In Negro folklore you can find bitterness against whites, certainly, but you can also find tales preferring the southern white man to the northern white man, and you can find traditions a-plenty that are shared by both blacks and whites.

How then is the oral historian to benefit from the techniques and concepts of the folklorist? The view of oral history must be enlarged to embrace oral folk history. Oral history as currently practiced is still elitist history, and so misses the opportunity to document the lives of anonymous Americans. Writing in the Oral History Association Newsletter of July, 1971, on the Texas Oral History Project devoted to the life and times of Lyndon B. Johnson, Paige Mulhollan stated that

"oral history testimony . . . is intended to supplement, not to replace, traditional documentary research." This is indeed the case. Oral traditional history, on the other hand, seeks out the topics and themes that the folk wish to talk about, the personal and immediate history with which they are concerned. We have no way of knowing in advance what are the contours of this history, except that they will bear no resemblance to federal government-structured elitist history. Local personalities are the actors, local events form the chapters, but this is not state history following state political boundaries, nor local history embalmed in township records, but folk history preserved in tradition. The incident that engages the attention of the folk may appear ludicrous, trivial, bizarre, and grotesque to the documentary historian. The anthropologist Robert Lowie roundly asserted that Indians possessed no ability to distinguish the sublime from the ridiculous in their historical records. Near the top of their list of memorable events, for example, they placed titanic drinking orgies. Scarcely of the same noteworthy character as the Wilson-Gorman Tariff or the Webster-Ashburton Treaty! But it is not for the historian of the people to prejudge what the people consider important. On a field trip to the Upper Peninsula of Michigan I heard talk of several events celebrated in community remembrance: the lynching of the McDonald boys at Memoninee; the "stealing" of the courthouse at Iron River by the men of Crystal Falls; the highfalutin speech Pat Sheridan delivered to the iron ore trimmers of Escanaba; the incendiary Italian Hall fire in Calumet (about which William Ivey will be commenting). Each one of these episodes has a base in historical fact thickly coated over with legendary accretions, but otherwise they possess little in common. One involves a scene in a brothel, a killing, and a grisly lynch party; another is a comic saga of political rivalry between townships competing for the county seat; a third centers on a piece of unintentionally humorous rhetoric; a fourth deals with a disaster that led to charges and counter-charges between striking copper miners and mine operators. The folk historian is as keenly interested in the legendary growth surrounding these happenings of six to nine decades ago as in the solid nub of fact, could he establish it, for the play of tradition upon the events leads us into the folk mind and the folk conception of the meaningful past.

Any folklorist engaged in fieldwork will stumble upon this folk history, whether he is looking for it or not - and most often he is not. While collecting Negro folktales I continually encountered historical traditions, usually obscure to me and removed from any familiar context. James D. Suggs told in close detail of the Ku Klux Klan killing a Negro brakeman on southern railroads in 1914, and of the public burning in Mississippi in 1904 of a colored man who confessed to killing two white men.

B. L. Smith recounted exploits of his slave grandfather, Romey Howard, who outwitted and outran "patterollers" and bloodhounds. Mary Richardson related brutalities she had observed on a "colored prisoner farm" near Clarksdale, Mississippi where she worked as cook's helper.

> I seen them whip one man to death. He was a slim, skinny man, and they whipped him 'cause he couldn't pick two hundred pounds - that was his task and he couldn't never get it. So they whipped him morning and night until he couldn't work at all, just lay in his cage. The prisoners all slept in one room with double-deck beds 'side the walls. He couldn't even get out of bed to get his food. The feeder wasn't allowed to unlock the door, and each man had to come and get his pan; so he'd leave the sick man's in the window. I'd take the bread and roll it up in a piece of paper and throw it to his bunk, like a puppy. They told me I'd get prison for life if they found that out.
>
> He died and they buried him in the farm cemetery, just like he was; didn't wash or change him. 'Cause the hole was too short they stomped on him, mashed, tramped, bent him down in there, and threw dirt on him.

Here is black experience from a black source, and because so few black sources are written, this and many sources equally informative are oral. Suggs, Smith, and Mary Richardson were all deft storytellers of traditional tales, but they were also all expert transmitters of oral history, precise with names, dates, places, settings, fluent and yet unemotional in their narratives, telling their grim narratives factually and without editorializing. The recollections at first-hand of Suggs and Mary Richardson we can call oral personal history of the non-elite, or the folk; the saga of Romey Howard as told across the generations by Smith, as well as accounts I was given of slave escapes on the Underground Railroad, fall under oral traditional history. Together they comprise oral folk history.

The oral folk historian will search out articulate members of the folk community and interview them for their personal and traditional history. Rewards obtainable from this kind of quest can be seen in the books of the skilful radio and television interviewer, Studs Terkel, who in Division Street America and Hard Times, an Oral History of the Great Depression, printed his taped interrogations of a number of people from different backgrounds concerning their own lives and outlooks. In the first work he confined himself to Chicago and eschewed celebrities, while in the second he cast a broader net,

geographically and socially, for his speakers, and directed his questions more specifically to their recollections of the depression and its impact on them personally. Hard Times is consciously history-oriented, but in the national sense, so that Division Street America, centered on a Chicago neighborhood, conveys more the sense of personal folk history. While each Chicagoan possesses his own gestalt, he often shares certain common, traditional attitudes with his fellow residents on Division Street: one theme that echoes throughout the confessionals is the nostalgia for the good old days, when people walked, a true neighborhood existed, and the races interacted peaceably.

There are also sharp conflicts of attitude disclosed in these retrospective statements, and here lies a key aspect of oral folk history: the traditions collide. Or to put it another way, more than one folk exists, and each folk group regards events and personalities of the past through its own particular lens. Jesse James and Billy the Kid are hero-villains, depending on whether you talk with midwestern farmers or southwestern cowpunchers. As a Robin Hood, Jesse held up banks and trains, the agencies of big business, and gave their tainted money to widows and the impoverished. As a desperado, he shot helpless cashiers and trainmen in cold blood and stole the widows' money they guarded. Billy the Kid as Sir Galahad protected the open range and the freedom of the grazing cattle from encroachers who would fence in nature's bounty, but as a badman he slaughtered in the manner of a sadistic gunman and moronic punk. Examine local-history traditions and see how often they splinter into two or three reenactments. Legends of Beanie Short, a guerrilla leader in the Cumberland Mountains of northern Tennessee during the Civil War, portray him both as a rebel renegade and as a freedom fighter, with a blending of the two roles; some Cumberland families boast that Beanie stole supplies from their grandparents. Did the McDonald Boys kill their man only in self-defense, and were the lynch leaders who denied them a fair trial the real murderers, as the ballad made out? And whose blood permanently stained the jail cell wall from which they were removed by the mob, the blood of a McDonald or the blood of a lyncher? Or was there ever any bloodstain? Folklore consistently notes an ineradicable blood stain where murder has occurred. Men and women in Crystal Falls and Iron River agree that residents in the first town "stole" the courthouse (i.e., its blueprints, or building fund, or the county papers) from the second town, but where a native of Crystal Falls regards the deed as high derring-do, the property owner in Iron River thinks of it as the worst skullduggery. Was Pat Sheridan who defied the ore-boat owners for his nascent ore-trimmers union an heroic workman finding his voice or an inept buffoon tongue-tied when he tried to rise above his station? These ambiguities permeate folk history.

If there are such differences of opinion in the folk memory, how then can the folk memory ever be trusted to transmit a consistent historical record? The question of the trustworthiness of oral traditional history has been endlessly debated in a variety of scholarly disciplines, with judgments ranging the whole spectrum from complete rejection of verbally relayed testimony to its acceptance as gospel. Every folklorist knows how floating motifs creep into any orally repeated report, no matter how firmly grounded in historical fact - the Icelandic sagas are a case in point. Yet, under given conditions, the historic kernels endure and are identifiable. These conditions, in brief, involve such matters as continuity of residence in the area of the tradition; reinforcement of the tradition with reference to surrounding landmarks; and the training, formal or informal, of oral chroniclers within the society. Folk memory may prove surprisingly reliable. In collecting oral accounts of the lynching of the McDonald Boys I was puzzled by two variant descriptions as to where the bodies were strung up, one saying on a railroad crossing sign, the other on a pine tree; but ultimately I learned they had been lowered from the railroad sign, dragged to the tree, and hoisted up again. What the oral folk historian wishes to record is not the plain unvarnished fact but all the motions, biases, and reactions aroused by the supposed fact, for in them lie the historical perspectives of the folk.

A word should be said about the divisions or classifications of oral folk history. The commonest terms here, as employed by the folklorist, are legend, anecdote, memorat, family saga. Legend signifies a tradition of an historical happening shared by a group of people. Anecdote refers to an historical incident befalling an individual, whether a local eccentric or a popular hero. Memorat is the term introduced by the Swedish folklorist Carl von Sydow to describe a remarkable or unusual personal experience related by the person to whom it happened. Family saga covers the miscellany of reminiscences about pioneer times, immigrant crossings and culture shock, black sheep characters, and ancestral ups and downs that the family unit treasures as its own unwritten - and hitherto unsought - history. These are some of the kinds of spoken narratives for which the oral folk historian will cast his net.

In so doing, he will be recording fresh and valuable information for what now becomes his oral folk history archives. Into such an archives will go tape recordings of community, neighborhood, ethnic, black, Indian, occupational and other orally transmitted history. The interviewer will become a collector, or will add a collector to his staff, and he will plan ways of tuning in on the folk history of his area. An anthropologist on the American Universities Field Staff who spends much of his time in

Afghanistan, Louis Dupree, became interested in planning an oral folk history project after visiting our Folklore Institute one year, and on returning to the field retraced the route of the British army's retreat in 1848 from Kabul to Jalalabad, carrying his tape recorder with him and collecting traditions of the battle all along the way. His findings, published in an article in the Journal of the Folklore Institute, and to be developed into a book, present the Afghan folk view of the war previously known almost entirely from British documentary sources. In the United States we have plenty of our own Kabuls and Jalalabads to keep us occupied.

THE ORAL HISTORIAN AS FOLKLORIST*

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More and more the notion of oral folk history as a viable and valuable research tool is coming to the fore. Folk legendry as a repository of living regional history was long neglected in American folklore research, in much the same fashion that the more pedantic historians dismissed the idea of using oral testimonies as documents in historical research.

A symposium held at the University of California at Los Angeles in June, 1969, was devoted specifically to scholarship dealing with American folk legend. This significant conference pointed up new vistas in folkloristic research, and accentuated the need for well-documented collections of oral historical legends from all parts of the country, surveys of various legend types, and finding-lists to reveal the untapped legend repositories in regional America.

My own investigations into the intrinsic value of tenacious oral historical legends demonstrate that, with due caution, the investigator can turn profitably to the folk themselves for their history. Despite strong counterforces, such as the constant interplay between fact and fabrication, understatement and embellishment, it is still possible for the researcher interested in local history, who has a keen perspective of the folkloristic nature of oral tradition, coupled with the research methodology employed by the folklorist, to place the component parts of oral historical legends in proper perspective. With D. K. Wilgus I utilized the folkloristic approach in reconstructing the story of Beanie Short, a Civil War guerrilla from the hillcountry of southern Kentucky whose exploits and violent death were celebrated in both legend and song. The story of this rebel raider reveals to a surprising degree what life and times were like in a small geographical portion of the Upper South where the tension of the war years was especially heavy because of the impact of bloody fratricidal conflicts. In some of the accounts, there were narrative embellishments that had to be carefully analyzed, and there was some historical distortion in the oral documents due to the phenomena of patterning, telescoping, and legend displacement, but the always present core of truth was fairly easy to discern.

*Delivered at the Bloomington meeting on October 9, 1971.

My long-standing interests in oral folk legends led to a book-length study, The Saga of Coe Ridge: A Study of Oral History, of a racial island in Cumberland County, Kentucky comprised of a people who called themselves Negro, but who freely and proudly admitted to an early blood intermixture with the Cherokees of western North Carolina and a later infusion of white blood on multiple occasions on the Kentucky frontier. This racial group was concealed from the glare of the outside world in the hill-country of southern Kentucky near the point where the Cumberland River disappears into Clay County, Tennessee. It was here that the now legendary black bastion flourished and withered, then perished before the relentless onslaught of the white man's world.

Placed on Coe Ridge as a result of slave emancipation following the Civil War, the black racial island withstood for ninety years the attempts of resentful white neighbors to remove this single blot from the culture landscape of an otherwise homogeneous white society. The black Coe people fought a group of local rednecks so fiercely in defense of their lives and property that by the time the settlement finally succumbed to economic and legal pressures in the late 1950's it was notoriously known in folk legend across the upper South as a place of refuge for white women shunned by their own families and communities and a breeding ground for a race of rather handsome mulattoes, as a stronghold of moonshining and bootleggers, and a battleground for racial and interracial feuds that produced a harrowing list of ambushes, street murders, stabbings, and shootings. After absorbing countless raids, arrests, and skirmishes with federal revenue agents and local lawmen, the Negroes' resistance was broken and they departed their hillcountry settlement for the industrial centers north of the Ohio River.

The study of the Coe Ridge racial enclave, which was based on the inveterate oral traditions collected from former members of the Negro colony and their white neighbors, begins with an account of the ways in which oral narratives have been regarded by scholars across the years, especially in the present century. It is pointed out that some view this vast body of oral history as almost totally fallacious because of the inability of the human mind to retain essential facts over a long period of time; others see it as embellishmental detail on the actual event in history; still another group regards it as a mirror of history that really transpired; and a fourth position feels that every historical tradition is grounded in fact and may indeed be an accurate recounting of the event in question.

My own thesis is that oral folk history can complement written historical literature in any situation in which the human side of history is involved, i.e. when the stress is on the individual as a person, not as a statistic, and most especially

in those geographical areas where written historical documents are at a premium. I conclude the study of the Coe settlement on the positive note that the proper means of gathering, analyzing and synthesizing oral historical traditions opens up an untapped reservoir of local and regional American history.

By "proper means" I refer to the careful and discriminate use of camera, tape recorder, pencil and pad, and depth interviewing among hand-picked informants. This entire data-gathering procedure involves the researcher's going into the area in advance of collecting, when possible, in order to establish rapport with the community and its people. If it is a rural area, as mine was, let as many persons as possible know the nature of your mission. This way, there is no reason for them to suspect you as a revenue agent, tax appraiser, or antique thief.

The historian who is additionally skilled in the research techniques employed by the folklorist both in the field and in the study is able to separate the core of fact from the intrusive folk narrative motifs and floating legends, and to assign them to logical time-spatial sequences. Many county histories contain an account of the pioneer heroine who eludes the vicious panther on the roof of her cabin, or which gives chase only to have her outwit it by shucking off garments and tossing them into the path for the panther to smell in her successful efforts to slow the animal down. A variant of the Panther in Pursuit legend was mailed to me for inclusion in my recent study of Monroe County History, 1820-1970. The contributor was offended by my refusal to accept it as factual history, caring little that I could document it as a migratory legend which had been reported from oral tradition on several earlier occasions.

This leads us into a summary consideration of the actual validity of oral historical recollections. The veracity of oral legends can be gauged with an apparent high degree of accuracy if the tradition to which they address themselves has persisted across the years in the same geographical area, if the tradition exists in more than one racial group, and if it attests to a local occurrence of a widespread phenomenon recorded in regional historical literature. The presence of either of these three factors is strong attestment to the general validity of an oral tradition, and the presence of all three presents a very strong case indeed.

An internal test may also be applied to a body of folk legends dealing with the same historical event or situation. Rarely is one informant able to provide the full account of a specific event. It generally becomes necessary to query as many persons as possible and collate their traditions before the complete story can be derived. Varying descriptions, however, are

not generally incongruous. Rather, each account is a depiction of the event as known by the narrator. A closer analysis of each document (text) will demonstrate that it represents that portion of the story to which the narrator could naturally identify through personal or ancestral association and perception. True enough, the folk may improvise or embellish details of an event to preserve its core of truth, but these details, which are unessential to the historian, can be carefully and cautiously scrutinized by the meticulous scholar and peeled away to expose the factual kernel of truth. The folklorist is additionally interested in these extraneous substances of oral historical legends, but that facet will not be considered here.

In his orientation to the study of oral history, the folklorist places stress on that large number of folk, living or dead, whose lives, mannerisms and orientations are unknown to the world at large. This is the crucial distinction, as I see it, from the oral historian whose subjects of investigation must be living persons belonging to the elitist socio-economic class. There is a need to record the oral recollections of the great Americans who helped to make history, but this leads to the same pitfall that older historians are now in -- that of dealing with the "great men" syndrome. Meaningful history will have to be couched in more relevant terms in the future. American oral historians and folklorists could enjoy a very fruitful relationship by focusing full attention not on the industrial magnate or political boss who made history but on the grass roots Americans who too often were used in the making of history.

A FOLKLORISTIC THOUGHT ON THE PROMISE OF ORAL HISTORY*

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Had Clio's inspiration been sufficient we would have now but one social scientific discipline. Its name would be history. But as history intensified its concentration on political greatness (greatness it will be remembered from Jonathan Wild is the product of dishonesty and violence) enormous gaps were left in the record of man's past that needed to be plugged by the development of new disciplines: social history, art history, economic history, agricultural history, archaeology, anthropology, cultural geography, folklore; in its youth, folklore, like so many disciplines, dedicated itself to remembering the people and events that history had forgotten.

History as found simply leaves almost everyone out of consideration: while Balboa was discovering the Pacific, what was going on in Micronesia? This fact has prompted many--and among them are many of social science's profoundest thinkers--to forget the past: it is impossible to do history, so attention would better be turned to synchrony. Others have endeavored valiantly to fill out the record, bringing people like ourselves into the chronicle, and they have provided us with some historiographic delights. The tiny darts of light John Demos shoots into the dark Puritan homestead are to be cherished. After an admirable analysis of the artifacts recovered in a dig of a nineteenth century ranch in Arizona, it was surmised that perhaps Johnny Ward's ladyfriend was pigeon-toed. Now, that is the kind of fact that transports us empathetically backward, but it would take a near infinity of such facts to enable history to account for the past fully and systematically. What is needed is not a particularistic accumulation, but generalizing theories of culture in time.

The theory that provides momentum through most of historic writing is that of progressive chronology, the linear drive through periodic maladjustment to betterment. This fine old eighteenth century model, slick in its ability to account for change post facto, necessarily omits most people, for most lives are more accurately characterized by stability than change. Despite some ideologically generated rants, the people most

*Delivered at the Bloomington meeting, October 9, 1971.

ignored by history are not the radicals, but the workaday conservatives that the folklorist quaintly terms "the folk," the nonparticipants in the zeitgeist, the people who are rejected as being "behind the times" (that being a notably absurd defense for a simplistic definition of "the times.")

The history of the people who are behind the times, the great majority of people, can come only from themselves. Some historians have said that these people are not worth interviewing because they do not know anything important; that is to say, the questions that spring from the tacit paradigm of the interviewer are irrelevant to the people whose history he is supposedly recording. We keep asking people about main events, about politics and disasters, when the main events are just not as important to those chaps that Trevelyan said were the stuff of history as sex or recreation or making a living; Laslett has commented on the irony of our ignorance of life and death in the past (than which nothing was more important to the people themselves): "why is it," he asks, "we know so much about . . . kings, statesmen, generals, writers, thinkers, and yet we do not know whether all our ancestors had enough to eat?"

The enormous depth of the past impresses the historian and his subjects differently. The change-oriented historian labors endlessly at detailing the characteristics of the temporal strata that underlie the present, but for the person whose idea of history springs more from peasant fatalism and medieval faith than from theories of catastrophic progressionism, the view of the past is that of a continuity that foreshortens temporal space. At a little country store which materialized as a square of amber out of a densely obscure night at the end of miles of unmarked Kentucky country roads in the winter of 1969, I asked the owner, in the company only of his wide-eyed grandson and the radio's country and western station, where in the world I was. His answer, "Rabbit Hash," naturally suggested to the folklorist that he inquire about the origin of the name. Solidly seated on a crate behind the counter, he mistook the request for a place name legend as a request for the place's history which, without stopping to worry, he provided: "Well, first there was dinosaurs here; left their bones in a swamp. Then, Daniel Boone come through. And here we are." Folk time because of its immenseness is short. Our questioning about the intricacies of chronology may prove frustrating, but that frustration should be instructive: for most people the past has not been one of successive waves of disruptive change but one of overwhelming continuity.

When we are lucky enough to find one of those people who has preserved oral traditions concerning one of those violent events that historians seem to like, we worry first about validation. On its surface the tradition may be false or

true; it is always an authentic expression of its author's personality and culture. In this way the oral history text and the formal history book are the same; both are artifacts available for analysis.

More important in oral history than the accumulation of oral documents, that relate clearly to history's established sequence, is the collection of data to create the record of what actually happened in the past. Most people today care less about Vietnam than they do about the quality of their television reception; the same was true in the past: while the papers were full of news about the Spanish-American war, what was on the mind of the Pennsylvania Dutch farm wife? The generalizing theories that could prove useful in the attempt to balance change with stability, the exotic with the commonplace, will likely come from conceptualizations of culture and culture change. These theories which have been brought to great sophistication in anthropology, folklore, linguistics, sociology, and psychology, can be applied with productive neatness to human units of inquiry: the individual, the family, the group, the community. Instead of pestering a person to discuss what does not interest him, he could be interviewed in his major area of expertise: his life history could be taken down. If the questioning swings around universals and is directed so that the conversation is less an idiosyncratic ramble than the expression of a member of a society and a carrier of a culture, the resultant document can be powerfully valuable; one needs only to read one of the many life histories of American Indians assembled by anthropologists, such as Leo Simmons' Sun Chief, to see how the concept could be usefully extended into oral history. The exhaustive, personal but generalizable, life history of a red dirt Virginia farmer, an immigrant Slovakian steel worker, a suburban housewife, or any other person would be a wonderful contribution to our historic comprehension. The community, as Lynwood Montell has ably demonstrated, is another convenient unit for oral historical research. Were the interviews organized by ethnographic concepts after the fashion of European ethnology, the history of a community or one of its institutions would be a significant offering to scholarship.

The determinant of methodological efficiency is the object of study and, with regard to history, the most important aspect of the object is the directness of its expression, its closeness to the people it is being used to understand. There is no cause for believing that journalism or official reminiscence were any more accurate in the past than they are today, and the search must always be for culture's most direct expressions. For the cultures of the colonial period we have the official statements of the leaders, people like Cotton Mather; from them we can get at their personal culture through analysis; but we have neither right nor reason to assume that they

spoke for anyone but themselves. To find the expressions of the majority that we undemocratically denominate the followers we must turn to the inventory and the will, the rare diary, and mostly to the artifact. For the life of the past century's majority our best recourse is to the oral tradition where one may find himself close to genuine human patterns in time. For events taking place today the best source is one's own observations. There is, then, a hierarchy in research; from the most to the least efficient, the methods are: observation, interviewing, analysis of artifacts (including written records).

Whatever is recorded should not be taken at its face value, not so much because it may be untrue as because the deeper that analysis drives, the greater and richer is the data that is recovered. An oral historical text increases its value after it has been subjected to structural, stylistic, and componential analysis. The principles isolated through the analysis of historic texts, whether oral or literary, can become the means for generalizing from specific documents, and, therefore, the means for saving studies of the past from the strong and serious criticisms of some anthropologists who maintain that history is impossible, of some philosophical methodologists who see history as an unscientific sort of whimsy, of some spokesmen for minorities who dismiss history as a mythic reinforcement for an oppressive status quo.

Historical archaeology has failed to produce a natural and necessary revolution within history by wasting time on wrangles over technique, and by submitting to history's bookish tradition; Ivor Noel Hume has defined archaeology's role as that of adding material trim to the extant structure of linear literary history. Oral history, it seems, could perform similarly; it could squander precious energy in fretting about trivia of taping and transcription, leaving theoretical introspection to languish, and it could passively accept history as it stands, merely popping a few new facts into the extant firm structure. Oral history can either contribute to the perpetuation of the progressive myth, or it can contribute, as I hope folklore and archaeology will, and as I suspect anthropology might, to the creation of a revolution in diachronic theorizing and to the development of an understanding of what people really did in the past.

THE FOLKLORIST AS ORAL HISTORIAN*

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My own approach to oral history began with a folklore collecting project in the spring of 1967. It began, in fact, with a methodological error - one which I hope has been corrected in subsequent fieldwork.

In 1967 I visited Calumet, Michigan, s small town near the tip of the Keeweenaw Peninsula, on the south coast of Lake Superior. I was investigating an event which took place in this mining community in December of 1913. The event occurred at a Christmas party given on the afternoon of December 24 by the Women's Auxiliary of the Western Federation of Miners. The party was for the benefit of the children of workers who had struck the Calumet and Hecla Mining Company. The strike had begun in the summer of 1913, and the months between July and December had witnessed considerable violence from both parties to the labor dispute.

The party was held in the second-story ballroom of the Italian Hall building. While the party was in progress, someone shouted "fire" in the crowded hall. The throng rushed to the main exit, which was located at the bottom of a long flight of stairs. The doors at the bottom of the stairwell open inward, and those people who reached the exit first were pressed tightly against the doors, jamming them shut. Bodies piled up in the stairwell, and seventy-two persons - mostly women and children - were suffocated or crushed to death in the panic. There was no fire, and the identity of the person who raised the alarm was never discovered.

More than fifty years after the event occurred, the story of "the 1913 disaster" was still widely known in the community. In addition, general knowledge of the circumstances of the disaster seemed to result from oral tradition alone, for printed accounts of the event were scarce, and the disaster was not discussed in local primary and secondary-school history courses.

*Delivered at the Bloomington meeting on October 9, 1971.

I initially approached the narrative as if it were a local legend, and collected some thirty-five versions of the story in the spring of 1967. My subsequent analysis of these tape-recorded narratives convinced me that the story was in fact a local event legend, and that the story had circulated in oral tradition for more than fifty years. The story was known by citizens of all ages, and my informants included both high school students and "Senior Citizens" more than 70 years of age. The results of this initial investigation were published in an article, "' The 1913 Disaster;' Michigan Local Legend," in the July, 1970, issue of the Folklore Forum.

Narratives of "the 1913 Disaster" were elicited by very direct means, and it was my use of directed interview techniques which constituted my methodological error. Informants were asked if they knew of the event, and were asked to supply details such as the exact number of persons killed, the time of day which the party was held, the name of the sponsoring organization, the identity of the individual who shouted "fire" in the ballroom, and were also asked to speculate as to who was to blame for the disaster. It was during the course of these detailed interviews that an interesting facet of the narrative began to emerge. In several versions, "the 1913 Disaster" was linked causally to a general interpretation of the history of Calumet. These statements - which were not elicited by my very pointed questions concerning "the 1913 Disaster" - connected the disaster with the defeat of the Western Federation of Miners in its strike against the Calumet and Hecla Mining Company, and in turn connected this defeat with the general economic decline of the community.

As a result of these unsolicited interpretive statement, I decided to approach the community's history in a more general way, in an attempt to collect an oral folk history of the Calumet area. The detailed interview guide I had employed in my first field trip merely discouraged the kind of general, interpretive statements I was now seeking, and I modified my approach significantly. Where I had initially requested narratives of specific historical fact, I now asked only general questions about the community's past, in the hope that the structure of the folk interpretation of its own history would emerge. I approached informants in a relaxed, conversational manner, asking: "When were the good days in Calumet? Were there any turning points in the history of the community? What makes good times good and bad times bad? What was the single most important force in Calumet's history? In what ways is the community of today like or unlike the community of fifty years ago?" The answers to these questions were surprising in the depth of historical thought and understanding they revealed, and were intriguing in their divergence from "standard" historical interpretation.

To the trained historian, Calumet, Michigan, would seem a most fertile field of research for a specialist in American labor or American economic history. Though the area was first settled in the 1840's, Calumet literally grew up in the late 19th century with the copper mining industry and became an established community under the paternalistic control of the Calumet and Hecla Mining Company. Calumet was the major national center of copper extraction by the 1890's, and the city reached a population peak of nearly 50,000 persons in 1898. The community endured a bitter labor dispute in 1913-14. The region underwent a period of economic growth through the First World War, but began to decline in the early 1920's as a result of the post-war depression and increased competition from open-pit copper mines of the West. The population declined sharply in the early 1930's as a result of the Great Depression and, despite a brief period of recovery during the Korean War, mining activities have narrowed in scope over several decades, and finally ceased entirely with the closing of the Calumet and Hecla Division (now a division of Universal Oil Products) in 1968. The story of the community's rise and decline can be told in the history of labor disputes, the condition of the national economy, the growth of open-pit mining, and the gradual exhaustion of the Michigan copper lode. Such an understanding can be supported by an examination of labor histories, census statistics, newspaper accounts, geological reports, and data on copper prices.

As the result of open-ended interviews with citizens of Calumet, however, it is clear that the folk interpretation of the community's past does not always agree with an interpretation which can be derived from an examination of these standard, non-oral historical source materials. Most significantly, the folk divide the history of Calumet into distinct periods which do not coincide with a periodization which might be employed by the standard historian. The strike of 1913, and "the 1913 Disaster" within the strike, is seen as the turning point in the history of the community. All informants agree that the days preceding the 1913 strike were the best days of the community although standard historical sources suggest that the best days, in economic terms, were during the years of World War One, when the price of copper was at an all-time high, and that the greatest period of decline came years after the strike during the Great Depression.

The selection of 1913 as the watershed dividing good days from bad illustrates two facets of the folk image of the community's past. First, the national chronology of war, boom, and depression which is clearly indicated in statistics on the copper business and population flow is abandoned by the folk in favor of an interpretation which stresses a single event that has impressed itself deeply on the mind of the community - namely, a violent labor dispute and the tragic deaths of many citizens in an apparently meaningless disaster.

Second, the use of the strike and "the 1913 Disaster" as points of division indicates that, in the minds of Calumet residents, difference is more important than degree of difference. Informants stressed that the strike of 1913 forced some miners to leave the community. Local residents ignore the fact that the greatest decline in the community's population came in the 1930's, and the fact that Calumet enjoyed something of an economic boom during World War One, in order to focus on the point at which limited economic difficulty and limited emigration began.

In line with the community's feeling that 1913 was the important turning point in Calumet's history, events of national significance either are not mentioned in the local chronology, or are introduced only in a localized form. Though most informants were intellectually aware of the stock market crash of 1929, nearly all those interviewed saw 1932 as the beginning date of the Great Depression, for it was in that year that the community was first struck by the national event. In a similar interpretation, when asked to date the end of the Depression, most informants commented that, in Calumet at least, it never ended, and that the community had declined continually since 1932. Statistics show, however, that the Korean War brought a short-lived resurgence of prosperity.

Most informants agreed that the most important causal force at work in the community's past was its economic well-being (or, more directly, the economic well-being of the local copper industry). All, however, were unwilling to assign the titles "good times" or "bad times" to any year on the basis of economic factors alone. Nearly all informants were ambivalent in interpreting the Great Depression. Though all saw it as an era of suffering in the community, most informants felt that the suffering brought families, neighborhoods, and the community as a whole into closer, more personal contact. The notion that adversity improved family contacts was stressed by all, and some informants felt that community spirit was at its best during the Depression years.

The attitude of Calumet residents toward the Calumet and Hecla Mining Company was also ambivalent. One historian, in a discussion of the strike of 1913, suggested that the basic cause of the strike lay in community resentment of a powerful, paternalistic mining company. Calumet residents of today express little open resentment of the company, even though, in recent years, the company has ceased to be a direct force in the community. There is an expressed longing for the days in which the company provided houses, hospitals, and library and recreational facilities, and informants most often place "the good old days" in the era of strong company dominance, namely the years before the 1913 strike. This attitude seems significant, for it serves to defeat an approach to Calumet as a community of oppressed proletarians. On the contrary, most local residents see

the mining company as a force for good in the community's past, and long to see another mining empire established. Their hope is voiced in an almost formulaic expression: "There's still a lot of copper down there, and someone will come along to get it out."

I have sketched only the broadest outlines of this community's concept of its own past. The general point to be stressed here is that people of all ages in Calumet share certain basic concepts about the community's past. The main features of this view are passed along in oral tradition: in family conversations, in the casual talk of friends, and in the telling of jokes, anecdotes, and personal remembrances of the past. Legends, anecdotes, ethnic jokes, memorats and proverbs are used to support a complex web of folk historical thinking. It is this set of historical ideas which provides the community of Calumet with its own chronology, its distinct watershed, its unique set of causal relationships, and its special, private view of its own past, present, and future. This is a set of relationships which cannot be divined from any set of documents, but one which can be gathered with ease from the mouths of those individuals who keep this set of ideas alive.

Folklore scholarship has developed over many years a deep regard for the truth of the spoken word. While the folklorist admits that oral tradition may at times distort factual detail, he sees in oral evidence a cultural, social, or psychological truth. Oral history has too often viewed itself as a second-rate subsitute for documentary evidence. By approaching oral data from a more positive perspective, fresh insights into the past can be obtained. The folk of Calumet, Michigan, possess a distinct, ordered view of their own past. The collection and analysis of folk history - which can only be approached through the use of the techniques of the folklorist and oral historian - can significantly improve our understanding of the full variety of the American past.

SECURING SENSITIVE PERSONAL INFORMATION BY INTERVIEWS*

Paul H. Gebhard
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Paul H. Gebhard: First of all, I will introduce myself, I am Paul Gebhard with the Institute for Sex Research. Bliciting and recording of confidential information, particularly when sensitive personal issues are involved, requires a special effort and expertise on the part of the interviewer. Now what I have to say derives, of course, from our experience in obtaining sexual case history data. But much of what I say, could apply equally well to any sensitive subject matter. The process of obtaining the desired information may be divided into three consecutive phases. First of all there is the prologue phase in which the necessary introductory information is given to the respondent and some degree of rapport established. And second there is the lengthy phase of data gathering. And thirdly there is a concluding phase. And I might add the importance of the concluding phase is generally underestimated.

Starting with the prologue phase, the respondent is entitled to some sort of basic information as to what is going on and what is expected of him. The nature and the purpose of the interview should be explained openly and honestly. The respondent should not be hurried into something that he doesn't fully understand or his ability and motivation to cooperate will be reduced. The interviewer should give his name, of course, as well as his affiliation. The interviewer may wish to present himself as an objective, anonymous robot simply serving some scholarly cause, thinking that this distancing himself from the respondent may make it easier for the latter to divulge sensitive information. This is a fatal error. The respondent is going to react to you as a person and not merely as some anonymous agent. Moreover, since you will be asking him about personal matters at least you can give him your name and if he inquires something of your own background. The interviewer who can't stand to have the tables turned on him will be a poor interviewer. Not only is the respondent entitled to know something of the person to whom he is entrusting confidences, but in providing such information helps

*Delivered at the Bloomington meeting on October 9, 1971.

the interviewer to increase rapport. Elderly ladies will forgive an interviewer his youthfulness if he can tell them that he is married or if he has children. This used to occur when I was much younger and working for [Alfred C.] Kinsey and found myself, at say, age thirty confronted with a seventy-five year old married woman, and I would have to ask her about her sex life. One of the first questions they would ask me with a very suspicious look, "Are you married?" And when I would say, "Oh, yes, I am married," you could see the tension relax a little bit and then they would always say, "Do you have children?" "Oh, yes, I have children." And then you would see them relax still more, and you got the idea that they were forgiving me for being thirty years old. In fact, any length or parallel experience to the respondent helps rapport, even if it is only a trivial thing as having visited the respondent's hometown or being able to make some favorable comment about his current residence or occupation or something else.

One must stress the importance of the information which the respondent can contribute, because in this way it justifies his spending the time and effort. Try to show also that the importance extends beyond the immediate confines of your project and that you are not asking them to spend their valuable time and effort for some small scholarly thing, but point out that this has ramifications and a worthwhileness that goes beyond your immediate concern. Very often a respondent will protest that he or she has little value to offer and it is not worth interviewing. This protect may be a genuine humility, but more often it is an excuse to avoid being interviewed. In such cases the interviewer should assure the respondent that it is likely that he or she can make a worthwhile contribution, and that any amount of information, however small, is appreciated, and that some seemingly inconsequential piece of data may actually prove to be a valuable link or a lead in some historical continuum. Elderly people can be made to feel that due to their age and experience that they are a particularly valuable source of information nowhere else to be found. A reluctant respondent may be pressured into cooperation by suggesting that it is his social and moral obligation to contribute to a project which will benefit history, science or humanity in general. This is a justifiable ploy that we have used in sex research when we are confronted with some highly conservative or devoutly religious person. If we encounter such a person who obviously is quite resistant, the way we do it is this: (And this is a nasty thing to do in a way, but it is so effective I think that I should pass it along.) [If] you get a person like this, you bring up the younger generation, and say, Do you think that the way young people are behaving today is acceptable. The answer is invaribly negative, no, they don't like the way things are today, and they don't like the way the younger generation is behaving. Once they have admitted to this, you have them in your trap, because the interviewer then proceeds to point out that any remedial changes have to be made on the basis of factual knowledge, and so it is the respondent's obligation to help build up such a requisite body of knowledge.

In our society some elderly people and most poorly educated people are frequently made to feel that their opinions and ideas are of little consequence. And they feel ignored and rather lonely. Consequently when an interviewer solicits their cooperation and listens attentively, such people are generally delighted and flattered and consequently may be unusually cooperative. Such persons more often divulge sensitive information than do individuals of higher social status who are less motivated to keep an appreciative solicitor on the string.

In the prologue phase, it is important to observe the social amenities. The anxiety involved in discussing matters can be ameliorated by treating the respondent as though he were a guest and not a guinea pig, making coffee, drinks and tobacco available if possible. Of course, if the interview is in the respondent's residence or office, that is a bit out of the interviewer's control. But the least he can do is offer the respondent a cigarette or suggest a coffee break when tension seems high or other little bits of grease for the wheels of social interaction.

Throughout the prologue phase the interviewer should seize every opportunity to emphasize his objectivity and neutrality regarding sensitive issues. Respondents who are uncertain as to the interviewer's objectivity, as most are, and who fear that he may be making value judgments, will sometimes force or try to trick the interviewer into making such judgments. They will make remarks like, "Don't you think that it is terrible today how people are losing their moral standards?" If you agree to this statement, you are labeling yourself as a conservative, and, hence, the respondent is unlikely to admit any unconventional attitudes or behavior. On the other hand, if you say, "No," you are labeling yourself as either amoral or possible immoral, and thereby you alienate a conservative respondent. When they try to put the interviewer in such a bind and force him to make some value judgments, the solution is to neither agree nor disagree, but instead make some objective neutral remark, such as saying that, "Well, with the stresses of rapid social and technological change. . . ." Then you can conclude by saying that because of this it is all the more vital that we have sufficient historic and scientific information made available.

Lastly and perhaps most important, when giving sensitive information the respondent must be guaranteed suitable protection. During the prologue phase agreement should be reached as to how this can be accomplished. In extreme cases a promise may have to be given that the data will not be published and will not be shared with anyone else. In less extreme cases it may suffice simply to keep the source of information anonymous or agree not to make it available until certain events have taken place or until a certain period of time has elapsed. It is also vital that the information be stored under adequate security measures. Too often

tapes, transcripts and notes are available to colleagues or even to secretaries. And you should tell the respondent you are taking adequate steps to preserve it. It is unforgivable, really, to promise confidentiality and then have a transcript typed by somebody else or to store it in a file that is accessible to unauthorized personnel. One must agree in advance as to who should have access to the information and be informed as to what safeguards will be employed in storing it. When an interviewer is asking a respondent to divulge information which could adversely affect the respondent's employment, reputation, and even marriage, the interviewer is ethically bound to agree to whatever stipulations the respondent wishes. If, in the interviewer's opinion, such stipulations would result in erroneous impressions, he should point this out to the respondent and try to persuade him or her to modify the stipulations accordingly. If the respondent refuses to ameliorate his harsh stipulations, the interview should either be abandoned at that point or else an explicit note should be made on the record pointing out where misinterpretation or error is likely because of these harsh stipulations.

This brings us to the data gathering phase. Interviewing is an art as well as a technique, and the interviewer's personality is consequently very important. And I must admit I think there is some truth to the adage that interviewers are born and not made. Certainly sensitivity on the interviewer's part is a sine qua non. He must be alert for small clues indicative of the respondent's feelings and modifying his own questioning and behavior accordingly. He must recognize when to get off of a touchy subject and when to later reintroduce it. He must sense when to interject reassurances or when to say, "I know this isn't easy for you, so I appreciate your cooperation all the more." And he must recognize the first signs of evasiveness or discomfort. Out of regard for respondent's feelings many interviewers make the mistake of asking a question with such delicacy that the question is unclear, or worse the respondent may receive the impression that the interviewer himself is ill at ease with the subject matter, and this is the kiss of death. Questions should be forthright and clear. And areas of possible ambiguity should be remedied by explicit definitions. Above all, euphemisms must be avoided. A euphemism can not only result in misperception but it shows that the interviewer is embarrassed, and once again this can be somewhat disastrous. I might add my former colleague [Wardell B.] Pomeroy not only avoided euphemisms himself, but he wouldn't let a respondent use them. If a respondent would say, "Well, yes, I slept with her." He would say, "Really, and did you have intercourse?" Another example is a case of where a euphemism backfires. Supposing the interviewer says, "Were you and she intimate?" And the respondent says, "Yes." One still doesn't know whether or not there was sexual intercourse, or there might have been sexual intercourse, but the relationship may have been otherwise so superficial that it really doesn't merit the label of intimate. So, one must be very precise and direct in phrasing the question to avoid euphemisms.

In addition to avoiding euphemisms, there are a number of words and phrases that should be avoided like the plague. For example the phrase "did you ever" has really negative terms. It immediately suggests that the phenomenon under discussion is unusual or atypical or bad. Another and even more deadly example is to use the words "indulge in." You never indulge in anything good. To make it easier for the respondent to admit to taboo behavior, we at the Institute phrase our questions so as to make admission as easy as possible. We do not ask, for example, "Have you masturbated?" We ask, "How old were you when masturbation began?" You note we make the assumption that it began and this assumption is not lost upon the respondent. We assume that it began and we also depersonalize the question by suggesting that masturbation begins like some natural event rather than being the result of any illicit behavior on the respondent's part. Similarly, when we inquire about adultery, we simply say, "Since your marriage, with how many other women have you had intercourse?" In other words, we put the burden of denial on the person rather than the burden of admission.

When a respondent reveals some highly personal, sensitive information, the response of the interviewer is of critical importance. Obviously there should be no sign of shock or negative reaction. This can be in the form of a very minimal clue. For example, a lifted eye brow, a twitch of the lip, or even the hasty interjection of some other question may ruin the rapport. People when divulging sensitive information watch you like a hawk for your reaction. On the other hand while you must avoid a negative response, a cold, impassive reaction is almost as disastrous. When somebody tells you something highly sensitive, and you sit there like a robot, that is bad too. The interviewer should act interested and if possible sympathetic. And once the respondent has divulged some sensitive thing, one should immediately reward him by saying, "Oh, I am glad you remembered that," or "that is interesting." Or one can simply nod and say "good." Occasionally we have had a person say, "What's good about it?" The answer to that is "It was good that you remembered it." Sometimes you may have to add some reassuring supporting remarks such as, "Oh, yes, I can understand why that happened."

When speaking to a respondent who has just made some sensitive revelation, we find that it is rather important that you look him in the face. If he has just told you something that he considers horrendous, and you avert your eyes in speaking to him, he gets the message. Interaction of the eyes is a very important thing in all interpersonal relationships in communication. You should look the respondent in the eye as much as you can without appearing to stare at him blatantly. Just looking at them fairly frequently suggests both interest and honesty. This brings up another little axiom, never wear dark glasses. Talking to somebody in dark glasses is like talking to somebody who is wearing a mask.

It is surprising how often even experienced interviewers make two simple mistakes. The first of which is if he gets interested and excited he may ask a double question, a question that has two parts to it. This not only confuses the respondent, but when he answers you can't ascertain whether the answer applies to the whole question or just to one part of it. Another common error is asking a question with a lack of precision which results in your having to rephrase and repeat the question. For example, if we wish to learn the age at which masturbation began, we very clearly ask, "How old were you when masturbation began?" We do not make the mistake of simply asking "When did masturbation begin?" Because the respondent might say, "When I was frustrated," making it necessary to ask again to get the age.

Turning now to the structure of the interview, it is best to have a list of subjects to be covered routinely, either in mind or better yet a written checklist. In this way you can assure yourself that you are not omitting some subject. There is nothing more exasperating than an interview in which, you shake the person's hand and leave him and then look back at your notes and discover that you left out some vital point. A fixed sequence of questions and subjects is an ideal to be worked toward, but it is difficult to perform with some individuals, particularly if they are garrulous, authoritarian or senile. However, I still think that a fixed sequence is good, particularly because if it is in fixed sequence the interviewer can begin with the least sensitive topics and gradually as rapport builds up escalate to the more sensitive topics. However, even though one may want a fixed sequence of interviewing, if a respondent is doing well and talking freely about one particular subject, it is better to let him go on and exhaust that subject even though it may lead you far afield rather than to interrupt him and force him into your preconceived sequence. Nevertheless, although the interviewer must accommodate to the respondent, the interviewer should remain in control of the subject matter, hopefully inconspicuously. While some irrelevancies have to be tolerated, if the respondent persists in taking the interviewer away from the desired subject matter, the interviewer simply has to interrupt and get back on the track. The way we often do this is to just simply interrupt and say, "Well, now that is very interesting, and I do want to go into that later, but now let's --" and then you switch it back. Strange to say, you can do an enormous amount of interruption without apparently angering the respondent if you make the interruption seem not a hostile interruption but a consequence of your great interest. If a question in a sequence appears to disturb a respondent is is often wise simply to drop it temporarily and, of course, ask it at a more propitious time later. If an answer or a discourse by the respondent is lengthy and complex, we have found that it is a good idea to condense it and rephrase it and then ask the subject if one's condensation is essentially correct. So, at the conclusion of some complicated response,

you can say, "Well, now, wait a minute, let's see if I have got this straight," and then give your condensed version and say, "Have I got it right?"

The point of a question must remain fixed. The phraseology of the question can be altered to suit the educational level and social role of the respondent. With the better educated, the interviewer can be professional and polysyllabic, which is all right and with the poorly educated, he should use clear, simple language, and he should at all cost avoid being artificial and condescending. If you talk down to someone, they pick up on it immediately and rightfully resent it. The poorly educated expect the interviewer to use a vocabulary suited to his status, but oversimplification is interpreted as an offensive con job. A modest amount of vernacular or argot can be employed to show that the interviewer is conversant with the milieu of the respondent, but it is generally wise not to initiate the use of such terms but let the respondent use them first and then you pick up on it and continue. If you start using the argot or the vernacular in the beginning, this is interpreted as being alien to your role as a scholar, and they think that you are trying to con them. Don't attempt to use argot to any great extent unless you are reasonably familiar with it, because if you misuse it, it will either confuse the respondent or else again make him feel that you are trying to put something over on him or trick him. If the interviewer is unfamiliar with a word he shouldn't hesitate to simply ask for a definition. Admission of ignorance is not harmful to rapport, but pretense is harmful, because pretense is generally discovered, and it is damaging. We use argot quite a bit when we are working in subcultures that have their own argot, like prostitution, homosexuality, the drug culture. An occasional bit of argot used accurately indicates to the respondents that you know quite well what you are talking about and tends to prevent them from trying to pull your leg.

Sometimes getting the correct ages or chronological sequence of events is difficult due to memory failure. In such cases some degree of exactitude may be achieved by referring to salient reference points in the individual's life such as school, marriage, change of residence, military service and things like that. So, if the respondent seems uncertain as to his age at a given event or when something happened, the interviewer can ask, "Well, now let's see, was that before you got married," or he can say, "Did that happen while you were still in Chicago," or a question of that sort. In extreme cases, though, you may get a respondent who is quite reluctant to hazard an estimate. Then you have to say, "Well, your guess is certainly going to be better than mine." If they still refuse to give an estimate, we apply what

we amongst ourselves call a squeeze technique, a range reduction technique. For example, let's say that a respondent cannot recall or pretends to be unable to recall the number of sexual partners. So, the interviewer then should offer him a range of numbers far beyond what the interviewer anticipates is true. For example, somebody says, "Oh, God, I don't know how many people I have had it with. I wouldn't want to guess and so on." The interviewer can say, well, "Did you have two or three women or, say, two or three thousand women." This ploy shows the respondent that a high number is acceptable and not something to be concealed. His response is likely to be, "Oh, good Lord, not a thousand." The interviewer then jumps in and says, "What do you think would be closer, fifty, a hundred, five hundred or what?" The respondent will then generally seize upon one of the numbers you have given. He will say, "Well, maybe a hundred." The interviewer should take an arithmatical tack and say "Well, you are twenty-five now, and you began to have intercourse when you were about fifteen, so that gives you ten years. Now if there are a hundred girls in ten years, that is nearly one new girl a month. Does that seem about right?" Then the respondent will say, "Well, gee, that is kind of high. I usually went with a girl a couple of months at least." I would say, "Well, if you went with them a couple of months, that would cut it down to about six a year, right?" And he would say, "Yes, that is more like it." I would say, "All right, ten years, six a year, the number would be sixty." "Yes, sixty is about right." So, you have taken a man who isn't going to venture an estimate or who wants to slough you off with any answer that comes to mind, and by this squeeze technique you have gotten him down somewhere to a reasonably accurate thing. This laborious process -- this is kind of a pain, but it is good because it converts no information to at least reasonable information. And in addition this process demonstrates that the interviewer is seriously interested in accuracy and that he is not going to be easily put off.

Of course, the interviewer must continuely face the possibility of error due to honest memory failure or due to deliberate deception. Fortunately any sort of case history or any historical sequence of events has to display some internal consistency. And if the respondent's answers conflict or if they seem highly improbable, the interviewer must continually take appropriate steps. Inconsistency should be noted and brought to the respondent's attention. If you think memory failure is involved, approach the problem gently and patiently, and the inconsistency generally can be worked out. However, if you have reason to suspect deception, a more aggressive approach is required. The respondent should be told the interviewer is not passing judgment on his behavior or on the behavior of others; the interviewer is interested solely in obtaining factual data, and misleading information is worse than none, and if the respondent cannot trust the interviewer enough to give him accurate information there is no point in continuing the interview. It is strange to say this aggressive approach doesn't very often drive people away. It shakes them up a

bit, but then you can settle down again. Generally it is only younger persons, young tough guys who are the ones that may give you a hard time, often by bragging. You have to be pretty merciless about crushing braggadocio when it first rears its head, or you may have females who put on an air of false modesty, and you smash that as quickly as you can too. For example, what I have done in some cases is simply to stop if I thought I was being deceived and say, "Look, I don't give a damn what you've done or what you haven't done. Right now I know your face, and I know your name, tomorrow I will have forgotten your name, but I could recognize your face. The day after tomorrow I will have forgotten you completely. What you are telling me is anonymous, and I am going to forget you. So, you have absolutely nothing to lose by trusting me with these confidences, or you have nothing to gain by trying to build yourself up in my impression. So, for heavens sakes, you know, let's have factual, straight information, or we will forget this business." And when you put it to them as bluntly as that, it is remarkable how they generally straighten up.

Then there is checking on honesty by means of internal consistency. I can give an example of that. For example, a college girl is being interviewed in California. She had reported living in New York until age nineteen and then had moved to California. We ascertained that intercourse had begun at age eighteen and had continued at uniform frequency up to her present age. Now, when asked as to the number of males with whom she had had coitus, she replied "One," but she replied a little bit too hastily. I got the impression that she knew this question was coming, and she was all set for it. Well, that alerted me. Secondly, there was a little change in voice tone. The voice got a little bit high like people's voices will get when they are in distress. So, I immediately realized that there was something wrong. So, by remembering what she previously had told me, I realized that if her answer was correct and she had indeed had intercourse with only one male, it would have meant that her New York male had simultaneously moved to California with her. Now, this is possible but not terribly likely. So at that juncture, I simply brought the matter to her attention. I said "This doesn't make too much sense, and I just want to say, I don't care how many males you have had it with. It makes absolutely no difference to me. Now tell what was it." And then I exaggerated like I mentioned earlier. I said, "Tell me how many were there, five, ten, twenty?" I knew perfectly well it wasn't that high. But she said, "Oh, no, not that many, three," a number that she had regarded as shamefully high until, the interviewer suggested that there might be even a greater number. Working on internal consistency is a great way of cross-checking.

While deception cannot be tolerated, one must, however, appreciate the position of the respondent who feels he cannot ethically divulge certain information, particularly if it concerns other people. In such cases, it is best to temporarily suspend the interview and try to ascertain what topics the respondent is unwilling

to discuss and then continue. While this results in incomplete data, at least [it] avoids erroneous data or prevents the respondent from trying to deceive you.

In this matter of dealing with improbability or inconsistency, the interviewer must be forthright and direct. He must not try to trick or trap the individual as people do in police interrogation. One's approach is that of honesty. Attempting to trap the individual into an inconsistency would show that you not only mistrusted him but that you weren't above being deceitful yourself. So, if the interviewer is unsatisfied with the response, he should say so and point out why he is unsatisfied. This bluntness and honesty pays in high dividends.

Throughout the interview the interviewer has one task -- it is difficult but vital -- and that is he should keep in mind what the respondent has already told him. This is not only for the purposes of cross-checking on internal consistency as I have mentioned, but it prevents asking questions that were previously answered out of sequence. For example, it is embarrassing to ask a woman if she has ever been married when twenty minutes earlier when discussing her occupational history she mentioned that she had had to become a secretary after her husband's death. Such a faux pas suggests to the respondent that her information is so unimportant that you can't bother to remember, or it suggests that you are not really interested in them as a person at all, that you are just asking them a checklist of questions. And this error, of course, is all the worse if you happen to be on a sensitive subject. If the interviewer does come to a question, and he has some dim recollection that maybe it has been answered before and he is not sure, he should simply ask for confirmation. Lastly, if the interviewer does make some embarrassing mistake, he should not try to ignore it or attempt to gloss it over. He should admit the mistake, apologize if necessary, and resume the interview. An open admission of a mistake makes the interviewer seem both honest and human, and this enhances rapport.

Now, one comes to the concluding phase of an interview. Only too often after the data gathering is complete, and particularly if the interviewer is behind schedule, the interview is terminated rather abruptly with just perfunctory thanks. Now when the respondent has been dealing with highly emotionally charged subjects for some time, such a departure will leave him in a rather distressed condition and with a sense of having been drained and exploited. There should be a cooling off period of nondirective conversation during which the interviewer can again reassure the respondent about confidentiality and adherence to stipulations and things of that sort. Since your appreciation should be expressed particularly if the experience has been a trying one for the respondent, one way of introducing

the cooling off period is simply to tell the respondent the formal part of the interview is over, thank him, express appreciation and then inquire if he has any additional comments or if he wants to elaborate on something. This is good because if they do this then when they stop that puts them in the position of having terminated the interview and not you. However, this technique of asking them if they have anything else to say occasionally backfires, because once in a while you will get somebody who is extremely verbose, and you find yourself being trapped into a lengthy conversation.

Having discussed the concluding phase of the interview, now I have to come to the concluding phase of my talk. While there are all sorts of sensitive personal information and while I have used sex for my examples, I realize that there are some issues that are even more sensitive than sexual matters. For example, information involving high governmental affairs, power struggles within corporations, misuse of office, things like that perhaps are even touchier than sex. I imagine it would be easier to get some railroad executive to confess to adultery than to admit that his railroad is on the verge of bankruptcy, particularly if he is a big stockholder. Nevertheless, we must not regard sex as some sort of adjunct apart from the mainstream of historical events. Sex frequently plays an important role either indirectly or directly in history. For example, matters of indirect influence are many, especially in the arts where careers and productivity and whatnot cannot be adequately understood without some grasp of the sexual lives of the artist, writer or musician. A historical study of men such as Proust, Tchaikovsky, Cocteau, Maugham and others that would be truly superficial if one did not have an understanding of a role that homosexuality played in their lives. The direct impact of sex on history is seen not only in the influence that mistresses exerted on ancient kings or something like that, but it is quite clear in modern life. There are, of course, the notorious scandals, such as the Profumo case and some of the spin-offs of the McCarthy investigations. But behond these there are numerous hidden influences like the power struggles within organizations and matters of international and business espionage where sex plays a very vital role. Lastly, since history is basically the story of interaction between humans, an historian can ill afford to ignore sex as a vital element in the development of friendships and enmities.

QUESTION: Are you concerned about the probability of psychological damage as a result of these interviews?

GEBHARD: This doesn't happen too often but once in a great while we do badly disturb someone through causing them to face the realities of their past. And when we do that then we simply have to launch into a little impromptu therapy. Most people, I should say, find the whole interview kind of a catharsis and a therapy and come out at the end feeling happy.

QUESTION: Do they ever ask you about your sex life?

GEBHARD: Yes, they frequently do. And we have a devastating return to that. We say, "We keep our own sex lives as confidential as we will keep yours, so I won't tell you about it."

QUESTION: How do you handle during the course of the interview an interviewee who seeks either approbation, condemnation or reassurance?

GEBHARD: Yes, we generally lean heavily in the direction of reassurance, but not to the point where we are willing to lie. For example, if somebody at the end says, "Tell me, Gebhard, what do you really think about homosexuality? Do you think we really should be tolerated?" I try to give a reassuring answer but an honest one at the same time. I will say, "Yes, I think it should be tolerated. Apparently clinicians can do little about it when it is firmly established. We know that it is nobody's fault. Nobody deliberately chooses to be homosexual. So, toleration is the only humane and rational thing." I say, furthermore, "We think that what consenting adults do in private is their own affair." But then I will also say that "On the other hand I must frankly admit that being a homosexual in a society that is hostile to them makes life very difficult, and if it were possible for me to divert someone away from homosexuality I would do it because life is tough enough as it is without having additional burdens." Now, occasionally someone asks my feelings about a very bizarre behavior and I usually reply "If this gives you gratification, and it doesn't hurt anybody else, that is your decision to make. On the other hand, you must realize that you are running quite a risk in this matter. So, you have got to balance the pros and cons as to what you are going to do. No matter what course of action you take, you are going to get some lumps as well as some rewards."

QUESTION: Now, I have a double-barrel question. First, do you pay respondents?

GEBHARD: The only respondents that we have ever paid have been of three classes. We have paid some very poor people who were working on hourly wages and where taking an hour or two off the job meant a financial loss for them. In that case we find out how much they were getting, and we reimbursed them for their time off. On some occasions again with people who are nearly indigent we pay their cab fare between their place of employment or their home and where we were interviewing. And we do pay prostitutes a small honorarium for their time.

QUESTION: My other question is: is there a problem that the kind of person who would be willing to be interviewed introduces a systematic bias in your studies?

GEBHARD: There would be bias if one relied entirely on volunteers. This is an objection which, of course, has been leveled at us from the beginning, and it is an unanswerable question because in the final analysis everybody is a volunteer. But actually the majority of our respondents have not been volunteers in the sense that they wanted to talk to us. They were persuaded to talk to us, or in some cases they were forced to talk to us. I will describe how we avoided volunteer bias by giving a typical example. Supposing we looked at our samples and decided we needed more middle-aged businessmen. A good source would be the service clubs, Rotary, Kiwanis and things like that. They were always after us for lectures. So we would approach some such club and say, "We are willing to give a lecture if you will allow us to proselytize and try to get interviews with your members." We would give the lecture, and at the conclusion of the lecture we would make our sales pitch for people to sign up for interviews. Let's say there were a hundred people in the group, somewhere between fifteen and twenty would come up at the conclusion of the lecture and sign up. These were the ones that were either bold or extrovert or neurotic or had some sexual problem. They were a very biased group, those first fifteen or twenty. Then we would go back to the hotel, and we would get a few more who would telephone in. These were people that wanted to cooperate, but they just didn't have the courage to stand up in front of everybody else and sign up. So, by the end of that first day we would have about a third of the group signed up. Then we we interviewed these people we would say, "Look, you are our ambassadors. All of the other people in the group are going to be asking you, How was it? What are they?" We would say, "I want you to go out of your way to tell the other people in the group about the interview and your experience and what you think about us." The response is generally very favorable. Consequently when we phoned people up, (we always obtained a list of their names), we were able to get them because they had been softened up by their predecessors. When we got to about the fifty percent mark, then something that I really don't understand always happened. Suddenly the group would begin working for us, almost as though we had become a hobby, and individuals would begin to pressure the other members. A man would say, "Hey, George, have you talked to those Kinsey people yet? Well, Bill and I did. Go on and be a sport," or sometimes a person might get a little more hostile about it and say, well, now what have you got to hide anyway? Thus the sampling starts to snowball and it snowballs very successfully until all but about the last fifteen have been interviewed and then we run into real resistance. Out of every hundred there will be about fifteen who desperately do not want to be interviewed. With them, we had to start playing rough. We would persevere with telephone calls. We would phone up and say, 'Oh, Mr. Smith, I see you haven't had an opportunity to sign up for an interview yet. How about next Thursday? Oh, that is bowling night. Well, Friday will be all right. Oh, you are going to your sister-in-law's. Well, I will phone you again tomorrow and perhaps we can set something up Saturday." Sometimes we would refer to their friends

or the local clergy and say, "Well, we would certainly appreciate it if you would tell Mr. Smith that we would like to get a hundred percent of the group." But the greatest pressure was exerted by their peers. These last few holdouts were really under incredible pressure. We were not only harassing them, but there would be an undercurrent of conversation in the group as to why Smith won't be interviewed. So, generally we manage to get nearly all of the group. Thus we feel that we don't have within such a group any volunteer bias. I will admit that in our choosing the groups, there is another possible source of bias, and we suffer from that. A part of our sample is badly biased, particularly at lower social levels.

QUESTION: Biased toward the middle class?

GEBHARD: Yes, we are biased toward the better educated. I would stake money on the accuracy of our figures for upper class and upper middle class. For middle class and lower middle class, I think our data is somewhere near accuracy. For lower social level the sample is bad. And for that reason I have never allowed the male volume to be republished, because I am not at all happy about our lower social level sample.

QUESTION: Do your hold-outs prove to have ample justification for holding out?

GEBHARD: No, you know the funny thing about them is, when we do finally get them, it turns out that they either felt they had too little sexual activity, and they were ashamed of that, or else they felt they had far too much. And generally these people turn out to be about like everyone else.

QUESTION: For what reason are you skeptical about the lower group?

GEBHARD: Well, for several reasons. One is when we began working at lower social level, Kinsey looked upon prisons as a great reservoir of case histories. So, a high percentage of our lower social level sample we picked up from prisons. Kinsey wasn't worried about these. He said, "Well, at lower social level, a substantial number of people spend time in prison anyway, they are probably no different than anybody else." We have subsequently discovered that the lower social level people who go to prison are quite unlike the lower social level people that don't go to prison.

QUESTION: Now, I wonder if you people do any drug research -- on the use of drugs -- and have found similar sensitivity for the type of question that is asked?

GEBHARD: Yes. It is very analogous to interviewing about sex. We asked everyone routinely about drug use. And it is helpful here too if you can throw in an occasional word of argot that shows that you have some expertise.

QUESTION: How do you choose interviewers?

GEBHARD: In the first place in choosing people, we try to choose those who had interviewing experience and who have dealt with other people and not just an intellectual who has been insulated from the world. While we seek persons with degrees in the behavioral sciences, we also desire sensitive compassionate people who know something of life. Then we train them to interview by having them do simulated interviews. When we have gotten them through this training interview phase we turn them loose on the easier groups like college students who are cooperative. It is only after we are pretty sure of an interviewer's capability that we turn them on to anything really difficult like lower social level groups or a group of sadomasochists.

QUESTION: Don't your interviewers sometimes get upset by some of the tragic things they hear?

GEBHARD: No, most of us have been able to compartmentalize, you have to or you will tear yourself up emotionally. This used to be one of Kinsey's problems: he was such an empathic, sympathetic man that some of the tragic cases that he got really got to him. I have seen him at the end of a day just exhausted with tears in his eyes. While you must be sympathetic during the interview, you just can't let this stuff get to you too much or you will lose yourself. And so we distance ourselves a bit from it.

QUESTION: Is there any particular group that makes more use of your information?

GEBHARD: Clinicians and social workers make much use of our data, and so do some attorneys, educators, and ministers. Some groups, of course, are quite resistant to anything we say. We were never able to make much of a dent in most prison administrations, or guards or influence certain religious fundamentalists. Tough, authoritarian groups feel they know all the answers anyway and are not about to be influenced by scientific finding.

QUESTION: Did you tape record interviews?

GEBHARD: Rarely. Instead we have always recorded in writing. There are several reasons for this. One, I think, was Kinsey's original feeling, which I now do not agree with, that recording bothered the respondent. Of course, when Kinsey started, there weren't any tape recorders anyway.

Another reason why we seldom use tape recording is, if you have data on a sheet you can refer back rather quickly to see whether you have covered the question, or you can see any

gaps in your schedule of questions, whereas with the tape you can't do that. You simply have to rely entirely on your own memory. However, I see no reason why a person who had a good memory and covered the subject matter at length, couldn't use tapes for interviews kept under security. We are now getting anecdotal material on tapes about the case histories themselves. Sometimes when we find someone who has a wealth of information on some special aspect of sexuality we will ask him or her to talk about it while we tape record.

QUESTION: So you don't tape record your standard interviews?

GEBHARD: Yes, we only use the tape for this sort of informal, folkloristic material. For the interviews which are highly structured and where we have got to cover all the routine points, we stick to written recording.

QUESTION: Do you think today's young people will be liberal as adults?

GEBHARD: Conceivably. We have noticed that liberality decreased with age. There were people who were quite sexual and liberal when we talked to them in their teens and early twenties, and then later on when we re-interview them again in their thirties, they had become more conservative. Moreover, nearly all individuals have two standards, the standard that applies to themself and the standard that applies to other people. And these can be quite different.

I think that what we are seeing now is simply part of a big change in recent years, a big social wave that was evident back at the end of the last century, and it is involved with individual freedoms and concepts of freedom, the equality of women (women are now becoming human beings with their own recognized sexual needs and the struggle between freedom and censorship). There were individuals in it who played powerful roles such as Havelock Ellis, Sigmund Freud, and to some extent Kinsey too. There is this ground swell towards greater rationality and permissiveness in sexual matters. And the thing has accelerated enormously in recent years but more in terms of attitudes and not so much in terms of behavior. There hasn't been a sexual revolution in behavior, but there has been a revolution in attitude.

QUESTION: Doctor, how is the Institute funded and how is your research made available to professionals who want to use it?

GEBHARD: Well, taking the first question first. We are funded from three sources. First of all, the university's contribution is essential. They give us all of our physical quarters. They pay the salaries of our key personnel, most of whom hold joint appointments and also teach. We get some use of the computing

center, we get utilities, etc. So, as far as keeping us in business, the University is our mainstay. However, the University does not put money into specific research. So, we are always going out and attempting to get outside grants for our research projects. In recent years the bulk of our money has been federal, mainly the National Institute of Mental Health. The third source of support is our own money. Up until recently we had a policy where all book royalties, all lecture fees, any income whatsoever went back into the Institute coffers. It did not accrue to any individual. In recent years, we have dropped this policy of having royalties revert, and instead we make ourselves some money by having a summer program which we give annually here and for which we charge tuition. And now to my chagrin I find that I forgot the second part of your question.

QUESTION: How is your research made available to people that want to use it?

GEBHARD: Primarily just through publication, books and journal articles. But in addition to that we have within the last year set up what we call an information service, because we were getting more and more requests for data and bibliographies and information for people. Also in our teaching and off-campus lecturing we disseminate our research findings.

QUESTION: What other countries beside the U.S. do have so many studies of the basic research on sex, if any?

GEBHARD: Very few. Apparently a country has to be very wealthy to afford sex research, to put it crudely. In consequence, nearly all the research is being done in this country, and abroad there is relatively little research. There is only a handful of research organizations dealing with sex. One is connected with the medical school at the University of Hamburg and another is being founded in Germany at the University of Giessen. A third medically oriented institute is in Prague, Czechoslovakia. Some smaller sex research organizations exist in Holland, and one is to be founded in a medical school in Geneva. There are, of course, a considerable number of clinicians and scientists doing research on a smaller scale, but the above are the only sizeable organizations.

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWING IN RECENT SENSITIVE POLITICAL SUBJECTS*

John F. Stewart and staff
John F. Kennedy Library

Because demonstration of recent sensitive political subjects could not consist of samples for display, representatives from the John F. Kennedy Library presented the following paper, organized by William W. Moss, Chief of the Library's oral history program. Other staff members on the panel included John F. Stewart, Director of the Library, Mrs. Ann M. Campbell, and James A. Oesterle.

I. The Perils of Premature Disclosure

In the Kennedy Library oral history program we have two primary obligations that are sometimes in conflict. We are obliged to acquire, preserve and service oral history interviews related to the career and administration of President Kennedy. We are also obliged to make these available in a manner responsive to public need. The demands of our public are large, and we cannot satisfy them without jeopardizing the acquisition of a useful collection. Premature disclosure of the confidences of former officials and friends may be counterproductive in that people may hesitate to be candid or refuse to be interviewed at all.

Since candor is essential to a useful interview there must be trust between the interviewee and the interviewer and his program. The interviewee must be protected from irresponsible exploitation of his candor. To establish this trust we must understand an interviewee's expectations, explicit and implicit, with respect to use of the interview.

A necessary and continuing caveat to the use of oral history interviews is that they should be checked against other evidence. Exclusive focus on one account may be historically misleading, and it may even be damaging to personal careers or current policies. Not all of the general public will use the degree of care and balancing of evidence that we expect from scholars. So, when material is opened to research our program is vulnerable and the sense of security of our interviewees may be shaken.

We are particularly vulnerable to the use of interviews for articles in popular journals. The sensitivity of our information,

* Delivered at the Asilomar meeting on November 15, 1970.

its topical freshness, and its uniqueness yield quick rewards from hasty perusal. The very mischief that is inherent in an isolated account may be the most attractive thing for popular publication.

Our responsibilities to the interviewee, the government, and those interested in the Kennedy Library argue for a conservative policy in opening materials for research. There is no way of knowing how damaging precipitous disclosure may be to a specific program or to oral history in general. We know one case of a potential interviewee who cancelled an interview after reading of other (unrelated) interviews in the press. How much the publication of information from interviews inhibits candor is also immeasurable; however, we believe that nothing may be more damaging to oral history in recent sensitive political subjects than the suspicion that confidences may be out of the interviewee's control once the interviewer leaves his presence. This suspicion is both emotional and rational, and no interviewee is entirely immune from it.

The chief inducement to candor and the chief protection of confidence that we offer in our program is a respect for the wishes of the interviewee as to the future use of his tape and transcript. It is a pledge that no unauthorized person will have access to the interview without prior consent of the interviewee. The interviewee may set any restrictions he deems appropriate on the use of the interview. We try to translate even his implicit expectations into the explicit terms of a legal agreement that will truly protect the interview against unauthorized use. In most cases we have found that fears of irresponsible use are allayed by these guarantees.

Interviewees are growing more sophisticated about this as oral history becomes better known, but not all recognize the dangers, and it is sometimes difficult to convince a man that his transcript ought to be closed for a time. Views as to what is appropriate for opening at any given time will vary. What one person considers innocuous may appear to be mischievous to another, and reading of a colleague's confidences in the press may cause potential interviewees to confirm their doubts about the wisdom of committing their candor to the vicissitudes of time and oral history.

That the interviewer may himself use the interview to his own advantage has also caused people to refuse interviews. The trust between interviewee and program must extend to assurances that the interviewer will not abuse his privileged access to confidential interviews for the Kennedy Library. Our staff members have concurred in a gentlemen's agreement not to themselves publish from interviews or otherwise abuse this privilege.

The integrity of the interviewer and his program may be transmitted to the interviewee in many ways. Candid explanations of

the rules of our game and of past performance are important. The attitude of the interviewer is critical. He must show that he is fully conversant with the subject at hand without betraying confidences gained through other interviews. By so doing he can infer that he and his program are trustworthy and can induce trust in the interviewee. Word of mouth recommendations are invaluable to a program's reputation.

It is our conclusion, based on the past six years' experience, that the only way to maintain the essential trust between ourselves and our interviewees that is necessary to acquire a good collection is for there to be an acute sensitivity on the part of interviewers, staff and users in protecting the confidence of the interviewee and the integrity of the program.

II. Cataloging the Population "Interviewee Politicus"

It is evident that whatever the skill of the interviewer, the interviewee must still provide the sum and substance of a useful record. We have noted some attributes that recur amongst the population "interviewee politicus," and we offer them to you for your instruction and perhaps for your entertainment.

The reticent interviewee is unwilling to cooperate fully because he either senses some personal danger in being candid and spontaneous, or he is fundamentally doubtful of the propriety of the process. We interviewers are dangerous beasts, akin to journalists. Who knows when what a man says will boomerang on him? Are his flanks well-guarded? Has he maligned anyone? Has he undercut a friend's position in history? We are seen as gossipmongers, collecting the foibles and failures of decent people to provide an obscene feast for some not too distant gathering of historian ghouls. His sense of propriety is outraged, and he becomes very circumspect in his remarks.

Reserve in an interviewee may proceed from a desire to be accurate, knowing full well that personal perspective limits objectivity. Such a man will couch his remarks in generalities, protected with counterbalancing observations so that the substance of his offering evaporates under careful scrutiny. The reserved interviewee may suspect the interviewer's objectivity, the interviewee being certain that he knows the truth and doubting that the interviewer has sufficient sophistication to perceive or appreciate it. The interviewee wastes little time in what appears to him to be useless exercise. He gives minimal answers to the probings of his interlocutor.

The reluctant interviewee feels that he has nothing to contribute. He so minimizes his own role that he doubts an interview

would be worthwhile. He is amazed, and not altogether pleased that he has been asked to contribute his recollections. He may think that the grandeur of history is a mockery of his own career and may suspect that the interviewer and his program are a sophisticated burlesque in which he will inevitably (if unintentionally) be the butt of an historical joke. He may also have a genuine and simple doubt as to the proper role of history. As some have said to us? "Something must be left for the historians to guess at."

No less difficult than lack of enthusiasm is the problem of too much enthusiasm and redundance. An interviewee, far from being reticent, may have an exaggerated sense of his own contribution's significance. He will proceed to discourse in minute detail upon the progression of antecedent events from the fall of Adam to the latest devaluation of the pound sterling. Sometimes there are germs of insight lost in the crowded circumlocutions, but finding them is a maddening task for the future historian.

There are several types of bias to be found in interviewees, each requiring a different response from the interviewer. A man may have a professional bias. A lawyer looks at the world through a lawyer's eyes, and a doctor through a doctor's. His values are those of his profession, and an interviewer should identify it early so that the future researcher may take it into account.

A man may also have a natural and personal bias. His background and training contribute to a specific view of the world. He interprets things from this special perspective. The responsibility of the interviewer is to identify the bias, but its very nature makes precise identification difficult, and requires careful probing to bring to light.

Deliberate bias may be the self-serving kind in which the interviewee colors events and people to his own advantage, or to the advantage of his personal heroes. Deliberate bias may also derive from a dogmatic world view that the interviewee has accepted as his measure of truth. In both cases, the interviewer may identify this for future researchers by deliberately posing questions based on premises diametrically opposed to those he suspects lie at the base of the interviewee's account. The reaction from the interviewee is usually illuminating.

One of the more frustrating interviewees is the bright fellow who says he can't remember. He may have chosen to forget, which is a kind of bias; but, what we refer to is a phenomenon common among men "on the way up." Each new task requires such concentrated attention that they purge their memories of previous data in order not to clutter up their minds with matters extraneous to what is at hand. Not even citation of specific data by the interviewer evokes more than a vague memory of the event, person or problem in question.

Many successful men who have held high office have acquired the habit of prepared answers on every question imaginable. Interviewing such men is often little different from reading their public pronouncements. They are so out of the habit of being candid and spontaneous with any but the most intimate friends that when confronted by an interviewer they trot out all their shopworn phrases, sentences, and, yes, even paragraphs.

There are, of course, many other characteristics of interviewees that can be identified. Many are most cooperative and understand our process and are very helpful. Nor would we contend that each interviewee fits neatly into any one category. The population is exceedingly cross-bred. The interviewer may find them anywhere and at any time. He must learn them well, and respond almost instinctively to the best advantage of an illuminating record.

ORAL HISTORY IN THE GHETTO*

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I must say in the beginning that I feel like an amateur in a gathering of this nature because I stumbled into the use of oral history techniques. It was nothing for which I had any particular training. As a matter of fact I have a tremendous lack of mechanical aptitude and the mere use of a tape recorder is the limit of my mechanical capacities. While oral history techniques played a very big role in some of my recent endeavors, I am not an expert in the field.

One thing that impressed me as I began to get acquainted with the young people, particularly in ghettos like Watts or barrios like East Los Angeles, was the fact that the youngsters have a unique capacity to express very insightful and very perceptive observations in a strictly verbal sense which never get transcribed and never get preserved in any formal sense. It seemed to me that one of the paradoxes of the educational system in the ghettos and barrios was that the schools are dealing with youngsters whom I feel, on the basis of personal knowledge and direct observation, are tremendously articulate. Yet when we define articulateness in terms of what is written down rather than in terms of what is said, the schools categorize them as being nonverbal or inarticulate. This is absolutely untrue. As a matter of fact, in the ghetto (as you can infer) what might be called "rapping" on the street corners, just talking on the streets, is one of the ways you kill time. So many of the young people develop a tremendous ability to express themselves in language and slang which is unfamiliar to people who come from areas other than the ghetto. Nevertheless, it conveys very worthwhile and valuable thoughts. This was the first thing that impressed me as I began to wander through Watts and undertake some more or less formal studies.

I got into this "bag" back in 1963 or so when the Institute of Industrial Relations at UCLA was commissioned by the Federal government through the Department of Commerce to do a study of social and economic conditions in the South-Central and East Los Angeles areas which are the segregated and barrio areas. It was long before the riot of 1965. I started out as all academic researchers do by relying on the traditional techniques, utilizing census figures, making formal surveys and interviews, and making historical and statistical analyses. Much of that report was made up of material developed

* Delivered at the Asilomar meeting on November 14, 1970.

through that kind of traditional approach. Somewhere along the line, I ran across two youngsters who went to Jordan High School in Watts, who had appeared briefly on a TV news program because they had their own organization called the Student Committee for Improvement of Watts and they were doing their own thing. I was tremendously impressed by this and a brainstorm hit me. I thought it would be a good idea if, instead of my coming in from the outside and doing just the traditional analysis, why didn't we get some of the people of Watts to articulate their own ideas, their own perception of the community from the inside? I thought that I would talk to these two young men, one who was 15 and the other 16. We did get together and talk and they were not only tremendously verbal but tremendously incisive about all of the problems. They suggested to me certain considerations that I had never thought of and certainly didn't come out of any of the formal censuses or surveys. We asked them to write a report which was called "Watts: Its Problems and Possible Solutions." We included that verbatim in the formal report sent back to the Department of Commerce in Washington. We paid them as consultants, which would have driven the University bureaucracy wild, but fortunately they did not know that these were high school youngsters from Watts.

At about the same time as we got together and they wrote their report, I began to get acquainted with some of the other young people of Watts and through the young people, some of the older people in this community. This was mainly done through the operations known as Teen Posts. Teen Posts are recreational centers funded by the Poverty Program and they include a wider spectrum and diversity of young people. This includes the youngsters who don't do well in school, very often because they are so damned creative and innovative that they are way beyond what the teachers and schools are offering, and they get into trouble. As a result of these two things: getting acquainted with the Teen Post youngsters and getting acquainted with these two young men from Jordan High School who were considered among the top students at the school, I began to change my conception of what I ought to be doing in terms of studying the problems of Watts.

I was going to undertake a relatively standard study which would be historical and statistical and would utilize some interviews with agency and organizational people who were identified as the leaders and spokesmen for the community. I would have ended up with a view of Watts from Malibu where I live! I began to realize that we might be able to put together a book that would be written in a sense by the people who live in Watts. I would serve as a catalyst and an organizer and do a little editing, but it would be a book written by the people in the community who have been acted upon and have been the targets and subjects of all kinds of studies, but have never really participated in the process itself. As I got more and more acquainted socially with the youngsters and through them the parents in Watts, we began to talk about doing a book. I realized that they could write

a book that would be much more meaningful and much more effective than any book that I could ever write. The job was to capture their perceptions on paper. This was around 1966 and I had known most of these youngsters for a couple of years in most cases.

We initiated some taping sessions, and I thought that this was a rather unusual kind of approach because I wasn't taping anybody that I hadn't known over a considerable period of time, so hopefully we were avoiding the journalistic difficulty of not knowing each other and not being able to judge the sincerity on both sides. It was difficult to decide what kind of framework we should build around in this book. I had a number of choices. We could have tried for the Oscar Lewis kind of approach and sit down and tape the life stories of all the youngsters, which in some ways would have made for a more interesting kind of book, but I really wanted to do something a little bit different. That was to take an area where a major riot had occurred and where a lot of government programs had come in and you had a tremendous amount of publicity about the impact on the community. I wanted to take a careful look at that from the inside and to be able to come out with something which indicated how the people in the community perceived the problems and the programs and the institutions.

So I organized the book around the problems and the institutions in the community: the police, the schools, the question of "pot and pills," the perceptions of leadership nationally and locally, the whole question of welfare, etc. The idea of the book was to get together something that would tell from the inside how people in the community of different ages reacted to and perceived a lot of these programs that had come into Watts since 1965. Was there really a fundamental change in the community perceived by people in the community, as you often inferred from articles in the newspaper? So I chose that more organized approach.

The trickiest problem was and remains the delicate problem of security. In order to get frank and open responses, it had to be absolutely clear to the youngsters especially that I was not a policeman myself. By the time we started taping we had pretty much gotten over that hurdle, but there was still the problem of how to get them to respond very frankly to questions, especially those dealing with police and narcotics problems, and to protect them from the Los Angeles Police Department, which I did not in the least trust. Almost all of the youngsters were on probation at the time, with the exception of the Jordan High School students I mentioned earlier. They were talking quite frankly about their attitudes toward the police and their experiences, and a great many of their activities were unlawful or illicit. It was agreed that no real names would be used in the text. Most of the people I talked to wanted to get some sort of recognition, so we compromised on this and I used some of the real names (where I

got consent) in the front of the book but in the body or text of the book I used fictitious names. It was a real problem but I think we managed to overcome it. As I was a white outsider coming into the community, there was considerable difficulty in assuring myself that I was reaching the most alienated of the residents.

The first necessity was making the taping sessions as informal, comfortable, secure, and convenient as it was possible to do. Much of the taping was done on the UCLA campus but a great deal of it was done in Watts in the homes. Some of the most effective interviewing was done by the residents themselves, particularly the young people. We would simply lend a tape recorder to some of the residents who would go out on their own and interview others. Another somewhat different technique we utilized was loaning a tape recorder to an individual who would record his own commentary at his leisure without the presence of an interviewer. Frequently our subjects were "high" when interviewed and as I was interested in feelings, emotions, and perceptions rather than straight factual material, it resulted in some unusual advantages of the individual being very relaxed and uninhibited. My editing, which was as minimal as possible, would attempt to gather the same subjects together, but keeping the same language intact. Many of the taping sessions were group sessions. There were advantages and disadvantages to this technique. I found the youngsters were very intolerant of someone who exhibited too much guile or hypocrisy in the discussions. In editing the tape I had to note the slang expressions which I did use in the text but defined in a glossary. Aside from dividing the comments by topic, doing an initial historical chapter on Watts, and inserting introductory and transitional comments of my own, I did relatively little editing. I reserved my own individual thoughts for a final chapter which distilled my thoughts and observations as an outsider who had wandered through the community over about a five-year period.

Quite early in the process we decided that this was to be a book authored by the people of Watts. For that reason we not only identified the people of Watts as being the authors of the book, but we set up a special arrangement in terms of royalties on the book so that they are distributed equally among all of the contributors to the book.

On the basis of my experience with this book, I would offer a couple of suggestions. Looking at the value of the oral history technique with the tape recorder as I experienced it, I think it was a great educational value as well as a transcribing value for historical purposes. I have wondered why it is that the school system cannot find the ways and devices by which this tremendous verbal facility can be translated into written literary skills. Good teachers in ghetto and barrio schools could begin to build on this direct verbal facility and introduce gradually the more formal requirements of

literary expression. By starting with the tape recorder and transcribing the commentary, one can review the material and edit it with the student and assist him in developing some of the literary skills. The next step as I see it would be for the residents of segregated areas like Watts to become the surveyors, the interviewers, the editors, and the authors, rather than having it done from the outside. While I am not dissatisfied with the book in terms of what I wanted to do, I would rather not do it again. I would rather be able to identify people in the community who could very easily use these techniques. Through some of the Black Studies programs, some of the younger people could be trained in oral history. I have a couple of tentative projects now that will involve the use of oral history techniques. I would like to see a book done consisting of the experiences, observations, and perceptions of blacks who have been through the military experience in Viet Nam. Such a book could be done by these black youngsters.

I also would like to try to extablish a panel of Watts area and East Los Angeles residents to work with us in examining the process of labor market entry, the whole question of what are the influences and forces (if any) that determine why a particular youngster entering the labor market for the first time chooses a particular kind of job or career. Or does he make any kind of choice at all, or in some areas are choices made and in others no real choice at all, but rather a matter of chance, whim, or the particular government program at the time? I would like to use this information in manpower research by drawing upon the youngsters themselves to sit down and give their own experiences and to interview other youngsters.

ORAL HISTORY AND THE CIVIL RIGHTS DOCUMENTATION PROJECT*

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Washington, D.C.

I would like to say first, that I have been subjected to a little bit of intimidation from the moderator who has advised me that I must be brief. I must say that that is sometimes difficult for me. In addition, having been dean of an undergraduate college for two years, I think I can also say that I am now battle hardened and not easily intimidated. Nevertheless, I shall attempt to be brief.

In January 1967, I was invited by Frank Bowles, then president of the Fund for the Advance of Education, to be the director of one of the last projects to be financed by the Fund. This project became known as the Civil Rights Documentation Project. The purpose of this project was to collect in one place, many of the source materials previously unavailable and not published relating to the civil rights struggle in America. The policy of this project is determined by a committee, the chairman of which is Ralph Bunche and whose other members include John Hope Franklin, an historian at the University of Chicago; Benjamin Quarles, an historian at Morgan State College; Sidney Forman, librarian at Teachers College, Columbia University; Peter McKnight, who is the editor of the Charlotte Observor; Margaret Mead, an anthropologist; Steve Wright, vice president of College Entrance Examinations Board; Frank Bowles, and Bill Griffiths, of the Ford Foundation.

Obviously, I had had no experience in the area of oral history. So my first undertaking was to try to find out what the project ought to do. For a period of approximately six months, I talked with people who worked with other oral history projects around the country. In addition to that, and it seemed extremely important, I met with people in the civil rights field so it would be easier for interviewers to gain access to some of the persons who ought to be interviewed. Further, we needed additional insight into the kinds of information that this project ought to be obtaining. I am sure you would agree with me that it would not be our purpose in an oral history project to be obtaining information which could be obtained through other channels. It would not be particularly useful to interview people and to come out with the kind of thing which you might see, for example, in U.S. News and World Report. So one of the first things I did as director of this project was to talk to a number of civil rights leaders. Among such persons were the late Dr. Martin Luther King,

* Delivered at the Asilomar meeting on November 14, 1970.

Roy Wilkins of the NAACP, [the late] Whitney Young of the Urban League, people from SNCC and some of the other varied organizations that you find in the civil rights field. After several months of this, and getting some idea of how we should approach our task, we were then about ready to open the doors.

It was clearly understood that our Policy Committee would, indeed, be a functioning Policy Committee. I have never at any time had any hesitation to discuss with them the general direction in which we were going to move, although on some occasions some members of this committee might have felt that the director had undertaken some things not quite in their minds. For example, those who conceived of this project initially, thought in terms of our interviewing largely those persons who had made significant contributions in what might be called the traditional civil rights movement. However, as director, and as time moved along, I had some other thoughts in mind. Among them was the fact that the traditional civil rights movement, if not dead, at least had been changed in a number of significant ways so that there has been a real change in the pattern of our interviews in the last three years. I can point out to you that it is perfectly clear that the work we are doing is being done as objectively as possible. There is no ideological content to what we are attempting to do. It is our job to travel out and gather information as we find it. We have no case to prove. We interview people who have been involved in civil rights activity, whether their activity has been in support of or against, and if you look at the 700 interviews which we have at the present time, you will find that we have covered the spectrum of civil rights interest in America. We have interviewed people in Congress and government agencies who have supported civil rights legislation or who have been involved in the implementation of departmental decisions which have had a civil rights thrust. We have interviewed legislators at the state level, city councilmen, members of boards of education, leaders in civil rights oriented organizations. We have also interviewed persons, whom I suppose most of you would agree have not been exactly valiant in their support of civil rights. One such person, for example, is the former Governor of the State of Georgia, Lester Maddox. We have interviewed members of the Ku Klux Klan. We have interviewed people who have worked with SNCC, with CORE, with the Black Panthers and more recently we have begun to give our attention to student activists, particularly on college campuses.

I think it could be said now, at the end of a three-year period, in this total of 700 interviews that we have in fact covered the traditional civil rights movement in terms of representation of those persons who have made their most significant contribution in the period since 1960. Let me illustrate this in some way. Let us look at the NAACP. We have interviewed Roy Wilkins and most of the leading members of the New York staff and many persons involved in NAACP activities throughout the country. In the case of the Urban League,

we have interviewed Whitney Young and similarly the New York staff and many others throughout the country. We interviewed many of the leading officers of CORE, an organization which is no longer as active as formerly. We can certainly give you the story of SNCC from its beginning in 1960 up to the present time. However, there are many younger and more militant leaders of civil rights groups who are not interested in being interviewed unless they are paid. We are not so well financed that we can pay for interviews. In this connection, I should tell you that we have found it relatively easy to reach the people whom we wished to include in our collection. One of the reasons for this is, first of all, the fact that up to the present time we have played our operation at a low key. Relatively few of you have known of the existence of this project. We have sought no publicity whatsoever. In addition, we have on our interviewing staff different kinds of people. We have some who would be particularly adept at interviewing student radicals or members of nationalists groups. Some other persons would do very well with the NAACP or the Urban League, but couldn't get very far with the student radicals of today.

Our basic staff at the moment totals eleven, having recently increased as a result of our efforts to enlarge the transcribing staff. All of you are knowledgeable of the enormous task of transcribing 700 interviews which have been gathered in a period of three years. Some of these interviews are quite brief, and others very extensive. As oral historians, you will understand that we encounter a variety of languages as we go about our task. Surely you can have some notion of the language, some of it very colorful, which you will find in some of our transcripts. Some of the young ladies who are involved in transcribing on occasion have a very real treat!

At this time, our collection of tapes and transcripts has not been opened to the public. This is the result of a deliberate decision. It was a decision based, first of all, on the notion that we should be about the task of building up a collection so that we would have something worthwhile. Additionally, it would be distractive and unduly burdensome upon our relatively small staff and facilities to make this collection available. Ultimately, it will be open, of course, and will be presented to some institution for preservation. An institution which is concerned with the study of the history of the civil rights movement.

I've indicated that our emphasis has been on the period from 1960, but obviously many of our interviews cover events which occurred many years ago. One of the persons that we have interviewed is A. Phillip Randolph, and his initial interviews covered a period of at least fifty years. We are delighted to have such material in our collection. Another such individual was Lester Granger, who had been secretary of the National Urban League prior to the appointment of

Whitney Young, and his interview covers many years prior to Young's appointment.

Now the subject under which I am allegedly speaking this morning is rather strange to me in a way. I am to speak of oral history in Black Studies. Here again, there has been no definition of terms and I am not certain what you have in mind when you speak of Black Studies. There is considerable interest in this country in Black Studies. What are Black Studies? Are these the studies of the history of black people in America? Do Black Studies include the study of African history? Let me say to you that when many black students speak of Black Studies, they are normally speaking of studies which have an ideological thrust. It is not our purpose in our project to be developing materials to support a particular ideology. Our materials, however, will be useful to those who might be engaged in what I could call Afro-American Studies. There is a difference. Howard University is one of those institutions which has had courses in the area of Afro-American Studies since its establishment more than a hundred years ago. Therefore, to be involved in studies of this kind is not to be embarking upon a new task for us. Nevertheless, last year we did decide to open at the University, a Department of Afro-American Studies, very carefully defined and set apart from our program of African Studies, which began in 1954. In our Department of Afro-American Studies we offer a major. We suggest to the students who major in this department that they take a minor in one of the traditional disciplines. Some of the students who major in one of the traditional disciplines, minor in Afro-American Studies. We began the Afro-American Studies program with the firm understanding that the program be absolutely academically sound, and not a political response to political demands, and that what we do will be of long lasting value to the institution and to the students whom we serve. Our program is interdisciplinary. We involve members of other departments including the social sciences, the humanities, the fine arts, engineering, and medicine. A large number of courses are offered through this department.

You should also bear in mind that the study of the Afro-American experience is not in itself a discipline. Thus, we would have no intention of offering a program of this sort which would be exclusive in its nature and which would tend to leave our students intellectually crippled when they left the institution. I would like to say something about the development of Black Studies throughout the country. You will bear in mind that it was the high school students in this country who initiated some thoughts about Black Studies. High school students, because of the barrenness of programs for black students at the primary and secondary levels! It was the college students, following the leadership of high school students, who picked up this burden of having a program of Black Studies. Most of the demand for a program of Black Studies occurred on the predominantly

white campuses rather than on the black campuses. This came about, I believe, because of the special interests and needs of the black students on white campuses. I think all of you would agree that a handful of black students in a large body of white students have some special problems which I would not need to spell out. I think it is only natural and possibly long delayed that during the period of the late sixties, they began to make certain demands. I would agree with some of you that some of these demands rang a little strange in my ear. I had been a black student on a white campus, too. I would say that I never thought that I would see the day when black students would be demanding separate dormitories and dining room facilities, even classes, but they did. I must say that I can see some value in this in a sense, though I would not personally completely accept it because my own personal philosophy is one in which I would still hope for the ultimate success of integration. However, as my students would observe, I did use the word "ultimate"; "integration" is not quite around the corner. And it is because this objective is not entirely in sight that I would hope that our Civil Rights Documentation Project would continue to be funded by somebody. I have indicated that our project has gone on for three years and obviously, the Fund is closing its door, though the Ford Foundation may consider continuing it for a time.

One of the importances of what we are doing is that the problem of race in America has entered its most crucial phase. You could observe at the time of the recent mid-term elections that Viet Nam had receded into the background as a major political issue, but the matters of our economy and of race relations persist as the overriding problems of the day. It would seem to me that the kind of heat and passion which we know are experienced with matters of race are at such a level that they will have to be resolved in one way or another in the period of the next five years. I do not think that the country could endure for many more years the travail and the crises which we experience in this area. It is, therefore, more important than ever that we should record the history of what is happening in this all important area of American life. There is no lack of printed words bearing on the subject of black people in America. There is no lack of material in the field of Black Studies or Afro-American Studies. We can load up a moving van with the literature. However, it is also a fact that much of this material is suspect. It seems to me that in studying the history of Negroes or Blacks in America, oral history is of prime importance. We are dealing with a people who have not made it a habit to write everything. We are dealing with a people whom, when written about, were frequently written about in such a manner that the product was something less than scholarly and objective. Therefore, I do believe that the kind of operation in which we are engaged will continue yet for sometime. The kinds of materials that we develop will be useful to persons who teach courses in the field of Afro-American Studies.

How good is our material? This, frankly, is a question which is always on my mind. I have spent many hours raising the question with myself, whether all of these tapes represent so much garbage. I would say that in the final analysis, I cannot be the judge. We are the producers of material and users will have to tell us what the value is. In an effort to have some kind of feeling for what we do, we do bring in some persons from time to time and ask them to listen to some tapes and read some transcripts. What kind of people? They are not oral historians. Some of them are civil rights activists. Persons who are knowledgeable about the subject. It is a subject-oriented project.

So what do we have now? Do you want to read something about the history of the 1963 March on Washington, the Freedom Rides in the South, voter registration campaigns in the South, Operation Breadbasket in Cleveland and Chicago, the history of certain civil rights legislation? All of these are recorded. If you want to read something sensational which may not be terribly objective, I would turn your attention to interviews with persons who shall remain anonymous, who participated in the riots in Washington, D.C., or perhaps an interview with an individual who was a guest of the City of New York in one of their institutions which was recently seized for a few hours by the prisoners. So you see, we attempt to bring into our collection a variety of things, some of which are clearly "scholarly" and "objective" and others which are not. Tapes of Black Power conferences and certain speeches are also included in our collection.

In addition, our project has the objective of obtaining unpublished written material. This is the area of greatest concern to me, for our collection is not growing as rapidly as I think is required. But we do collect handbills, posters, memoranda, letters, etc. from a variety of people and a variety of organizations who have been involved significantly in civil rights activity.

I do not know where the project will go after January 1971. The question of funding is still undecided. I do not know where the collection will be housed. I obviously would like to see it at Howard University, because we already have a large collection in this special field. However, it need not go there.

The experience which I have gained as the director of the Civil Rights Documentation Project has been one of the most interesting periods of my life. I have met many people and kinds of people whom I would not ordinarily have met in my travels. Of particular interest to me at this moment is that as a dean working with young people, new minds and fresh ideas every day, that my ventures in recording the history of the civil rights struggle has provided me with an understanding and an insight which I otherwise would not have had. It is my hope that persons who have the opportunity of making use of this collection will be able to say that they have similarly profited.

VARIETIES OF ORAL HISTORY IN THE WEST; AN OUTLINE SUMMARY*

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Within the limits of oral history there is room for many widely divergent types of projects, and in the region I have conveniently labeled "the West" the varieties of oral history projects can be divided into five types.

I. General Projects supplementing a major historical documents repository.

A. The project of the Regional Oral History Office of the Bancroft Library, University of California at Berkeley, begun in 1953. The primary purpose has always been to produce research material (tape and transcript) that could be added to the resources of the Bancroft Library. Deposit of papers is encouraged, but it is only incidental to the taping.

B. The Oral History Program at UCLA was begun in 1959 as part of the Library's Department of Special Collections. An immediate first step was to set up an exchange of manuscripts between the programs at the University of California, Berkeley, and UCLA. All interviews by either project (except those under seal) can be found in the libraries of both the University of California at Berkeley and at UCLA.

At the present time, the UCLA program is concentrating on interviews in subject series. Current emphasis is on local history and politics, University history, a history of the performing arts, and a history of education. An extramurally funded program on California water resources has been completed. A history of the motion picture industry funded by the National Foundation for the Arts and the American Film Institute is nearing completion.

C. Like the programs at Berkeley and at UCLA, the primary purpose of the Oral History Program at the Claremont Graduate School, founded in 1962, is the creation of transcripts for the Library's Department of Special Collections. Although patterned after the Columbia University program, it is a sub-section of the Graduate School's History Department.

* Delivered at the Asilomar meeting on November 13, 1970.

II. Single subject projects whose activities extend beyond the scope of oral history.

This type is well typified by the Forest History Society at Santa Cruz, California, and the Duke Indian Oral History Project centered at the University of Utah.

A. The Duke Indian Oral History Project -- now operating at the Universities of Arizona, Florida, Illinois, New Mexico, Oklahoma, South Dakota, and Utah -- was established to give the American Indian an opportunity to express his interpretation of American history, and to provide repositories for the end product and make them available for scholarly use. The projects come under the supervision of the History or Anthropology departments at the several universities. At the University of Utah it is administered by the Center for Studies of the American West.

B. The oral history program of the Forest History Society was begun to supplement the program of the Forest History Society which gave comprehensive coverage to all aspects of forest history from conservation to the lumbering industry in the United States, Canada, and to some extent, Europe. It was developed with two related objectives: first, to provide primary source material for the student of forest history; and second, to provide reminiscences having popular interest.

III. Regional history projects, with the dual purpose of gathering regional history and providing a community service.

A. Mary Ellen Glass, head of the Oral History Project at the University of Nevada at Reno, defines their purpose "as gathering research material that will aid scholars in placing Nevada in perspective in western American history."

B. The Regional History Project at the University of California, Santa Cruz, was organized to help supplement the other collecting activities of the Library's Special Collections Department in the field of central California coast history. It includes the history of the development of the University.

IV. Teaching Projects in which instruction in oral history methodology, as one form of historiography, is considered the primary goal, and the collecting of primary research material is a close second. Two of the major teaching projects at the college level are in California -- Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles, and California State College at Fullerton.

A. The Oral History Office at Immaculate Heart College is headed by the treasurer of the Oral History Association, Knox Mellon. Funded by an $8100 grant from the Department of Health, Education and Welfare, the program involved ten students, each of whom received seven units of regular academic credit. All of the traditional oral history steps, such as interviewing, transcribing, editing, and typing of the final copy were examined in detail.

B. An oral history program was initiated at California State College at Fullerton in 1967. The dual purpose of the program was to involve students in the collecting of historical data and in the preservation of relevant materials that could not be obtained in another manner. The program is under the jurisdiction of the school's history department.

V. Volunteer Projects of local historical societies, libraries, museums, or special subject historical societies concerned with, for example, cattlemen, aviation, or ethnic groups. The unique quality of these projects is that most of the oral history will be done by volunteer committees and that their primary goal is to preserve information about their own community for that community's use. It is my belief that these groups can provide an important second line in the acquisition of oral history materials.

BIBLIOGRAPHICAL IDENTIFICATION AND DESCRIPTION OF ORAL HISTORY RECORDS*

Arline Custer
Editor, National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections
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List of bibliographical elements that should be in standard use in identifying and describing oral history transcripts and tapes.

A. Essential points of information required to identify an oral interview in the form of a transcript or of a tape

1. Title of the interview, i.e., the phrase by which the interview is to be known. In addition to the name of the interviewee, it should contain, either as an integral part of the title or as a subtitle, information regarding the topic of the interview

2. Name of interviewer

3. Place, date, and circumstances of interview

4. Number of volume or number of reel

5. If series, title and number

6. Name of sponsoring office and location and date (year) of transcript

7. Statement (legal agreements) of approval of transcript or authorization

8. Statement of access

9. Occupation or outline of career of interviewee

10. Resumé or abstract of scope and contents of the interview

These points are suggested for use in the introductory pages of transcripts and for formal introductions on tapes. The title page of a transcript should give points 1 through 5 in that order, each in brief, succinct form. If the transcript consists of more than one volume or the tape consists of more than one reel, the specific volume number is given on each unit.

* Delivered at the Asilomar meeting on November 16, 1970.

Points 7 and 8, describing the legal situation, should be given prominence by being presented next. Points 9 and 10 can follow in general explanatory remarks.

Title page information is repeated on each volume or reel but explanatory information is usually given in the first volume or at the beginning of the first reel of tape and is not repeated.

B. The preferred order of the information identifying a final or bound transcript is:

Title page

Legal page

Preface (series description, something about the office)

Introduction (about the interviewee and his significance, often written by a colleague. The presence of an introduction and the name of the person who wrote it may be noted on the title page)

Interview history (place of interview, dates, those present, amount of editing, research material consulted, where other papers are located)

Resumé of interview (events, dates, and chief persons discussed)

C. Elements of bibliographic description. Most of the elements apply equally to transcripts and tapes; however, some obviously refer only to one. The elements are suggested for the basic record in a finding aid, a catalog entry, or a guide to an oral history collection. The applicable elements may be given in as much detail as local policy permits and the format may be arranged as desired but the sequence given here is that of the usual card catalog format.

1. Name of person interviewed and his birth and death dates

2. Title as recorded on the title page

3. Name of interviewer, name of organization under whose auspices the interview was made, circumstances and dates of making the record, or the like

4. Place, name of body responsible for the production of the record, and date (year) of producing the transcript or tape

5. Collation:

   a. Transcript: Number of pages or number of volumes

   b. Tape: Number of reels, diameter of reel, speed (inches per second), width (if other than 1/4 inch), number of tracks

6. Series, name and number

7. Medium: Typewritten, phonotape, videotape, phonodisc, etc.

8. Length of recording (listening time)

9. Characterization of interviewee, e.g., occupation, resumé of career, place of residence

10. Contents: Abstract, or resumé, include subjects, events, geographic locations, and periods covered in the interview, and names of persons and firms, institutions, or government bodies discussed at length

11. Accompanying documents or bibliography of material consulted

12. Note of index, guide, or publication that amplifies or reproduces whole or partial contents

13. Circumstances of making the record, e.g., study of special topic, relationship of interviewer to interviewee

14. Presence of a vita of interviewer is noted

15. Restriction on access

16. Knowledge of literary rights

17. Provenance, i.e., how and when acquired

18. Location of transcript and/or tape; location or existence of other copies; etc.

D. Use of the bibliographic description

1. Catalog cards to interfile with book records or union records (see example)

2. Publication of a list or guide to holdings

3. Publicity--bases for press release and notices of acquisitions to periodicals, and reports of groups of interviews to periodicals, and reports of groups of interviews to the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections

4. Form for bibliography or footnote listing (see example)

EXAMPLE OF CATALOG FORM

Carter, John Carson, 1878-1944
Oral interview with John C. Carter conducted by Leslie Smith in 1940 as part of the Raphael Brown College Oral History Project. Canton, N.Y., Brown College Foundation, 1944.
453 p. (Studies of New York artisans, no. 3)
Typed transcript from 3 reels of 2-track tape.
Carter, a silversmith, worked in Silicia and Antwerp, New York, first as an apprentice in the Joshua Hamilton Manufacturing firm and later independently. He discusses the techniques of working with silver and the changing styles of domestic patterns especially in the 1910's to 1930.
Index, bibliography, and copies of some of the interviewer's notes on silversmithing in the 20th century.
Vita of interviewer who was Carter's grandniece and a project staff member.
Only one copy of the transcript was made and given to Raphael Brown College Library in 1946 along with the 3 reels of tape, 1 1/2 hours listening time. The tape is to be used only with permission of the librarian.
Information on literary rights available in the library.

EXAMPLE OF BIBLIOGRAPHY OR FOOTNOTE FORM

Carter, John C. Oral interview with John C. Carter, typed transcript of a tape-recorded interview conducted by Leslie Smith, Raphael Brown College Oral History Project (Canton, N.Y., 1944) 453 p. In Brown College Library

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November 13-16, 1970*

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