The Third

NATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON ORAL HISTORY

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Walter Lord
William Manchester
James Rhoads
Louis M. Starr
Panel Discussants

THE THIRD
NATIONAL COLLOQUIUM
ON ORAL HISTORY

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I N T R O D U C T I O N

This colloquium was designed to meet the queries, "What's really going on in oral history?" and "How does one do oral history?" Participants (whose names are listed in the appendix), gathered at the Center for Continuing Education at the University of Nebraska November 22-25, 1968, in order to exchange views with each other and with some well known exponents of oral history. These exchanges were tape recorded and transcribed verbatim. In accordance with oral history procedure, the verbatim manuscript has been preserved, together with the oral record, in the archives of the Oral History Association.

It is the editor's intention to provide in the pages which follow something of the flavor and style of oral history transcripts. The verbatim transcript has been reviewed for accuracy of transcription by the speakers or by session chairmen and, on occasion, emended by them to obtain greater clarity. To conserve space and reader interest, your editor has exercised his prerogatives by striking some discussion which duplicated discussion elsewhere in the colloquium. Otherwise, the only omissions are a welcoming address by Dr. Joseph Soshnick, president of the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, a discussion of the lasting qualities of audio tape by William Jensen, and business meetings of the Oral History Association.

Thanks are due to speakers who assigned copyrights of their addresses to the Association.

These proceedings will be distributed to all members of the Association. Additional copies may be obtained, while the supply lasts, from the Oral History Association, Box 20, Butler Library, Columbia University, N.Y., N.Y. 10027, at $3.00 each, postpaid.

Gould P. Colman
Cornell University

UP TO NOW

Louis M. Starr

I see your president is on the program to talk about something called "Up To Now," a title that he concocted himself. And he will now deliver the speech. Unfortunately, he's about as well prepared to address this group as he might be to address the Nebraska Swine Commission, which is also meeting in these sacred premises at this moment. Because it seems the lot of the president of these mighty associations that he spend all of his time arranging little details, speakers, connections, and breakfast charges, and such other weighty matters that indeed, he doesn't have much time to prepare a speech to his flock. The Beef Carcass Evaluation Commission, or a sub-committee thereof, met in this room not long ago. And I suppose this could be addressed as well to them.

One of the things that made oral history go, in my own mind, was not just that the idea seemed pretty good. It was unquestionably the inspiration of Allan Nevins that made it go for all of us. But it was also that the project met with some condescension among scholars at Columbia in 1948. And one was moved, perhaps, as much by this as by the inspiration of Nevins, or the value of the idea -- moved by the "we-will-show-them" impulse, which runs strong and deep. One of the most valuable things that happened to us, for example, came one bleak day in 1954, when our telephones were disconnected because we were running in debt, and the general headquarters of the university was showing its regard for us. I think another thing that helped us a great deal was that the Columbia University Libraries, with which we had only a physical connection (our offices are in the main library, but we are independent), saw fit in 1959 to publish a catalog, in which there was an entry about the Oral History Collection. The catalog was titled _Manuscript Collections in the Columbia Libraries_. And we were nicely defined as we had existed some seven years earlier, in a total of eight lines of type in that catalog. Well, that totally unintended slight inspired us to publish a catalog of our own. We decided it would be handsomer, larger, and more widely circulated than _Manuscript Collections in the Columbia Libraries_, and we saw to it that it was all of those.

Perhaps this offers a cue for the Oral History Association. We at Columbia are no longer in our difficult infancy, but the Association, I think, is. Let it cherish what slights it can gather unto itself. And if you think that there are no slights, let me read one to you. This appeared in the American Historical Review of last June. I don't know how many of you saw it. It's a review of our first gathering, which it seemed to me was a very brave gathering, and, since I see him in the audience, and I'm not sure that everybody here knows him and I think everybody here should know him, I'd like to ask the man who had the inspiration and the courage to call the first meeting of the Oral History Association to please stand up -- Mr. James V. Mink. [Applause]

So, along came, after that meeting, Oral History at Arrowhead, the proceedings of that First National Colloquium. I will read the review with a few interpolations. "This volume is a verbatim record of what was said by those participating in this colloquium." So far there is no quarrel. "There was comparatively little in the nature of sustained, systematic analysis of the subject under discussion." Now, when I read the volume, I thought parts of it so excellent that I had all of my interviewers and transcribers sent marked copies. And a few days later, I had nice confirmation of this judgment in the form of a letter from Louis Dexter, who's doing a book on interviewing techniques, asking permission to reproduce some thirty pages of Oral History at Arrowhead. "There was comparatively little," it nevertheless says here, "in the nature of sustained, systematic analysis of the subject under discussion. Apart from some prepared statements that seemed to be somewhat in the nature of indoctrination or orientation lectures for newcomers to 'oral history,' this record of the discussions chiefly indicates the doubts and fears that currently beset the practitioners in this field, if, indeed, it has crystallized sufficiently to be called a field. Those who now call themselves oral historians obviously have many worries about the nature and validity of what they are doing. Reading these introspections and self-questionings one is reminded of an adolescent peering into a mirror, worrying about what he sees there, and asking himself, 'What am I?' 'Why am I not better known and more popular with my fellows?' and 'Where will I be ten years from now?'

"There is reason for the concern about identity. During the meetings, the Director of the Oral History Research Office of Columbia University spoke of the desirability of building a fence around the field of oral history." The sequence of these two sentences -- this one and the one that follows it -- interests me because we did publish in 1965 a little report called Oral History in the United States, in which we perhaps unwisely left it to the librarians themselves to define what they had that would fit the category of oral history, and admitted a few strays into the fold. I learned from that experience of the need for a fence, but by reversing the sequence, the reviewer contrives to suggest rank hypocrisy on my part. "The need for a fence is shown in a report published some time ago by his [i.e., the Columbia] office, a report that includes, among a list of oral history collections in the United States, a collection of tape recordings of folk music, tape recordings of symposia on the neuro sciences, tape recordings of discussions of Spanish literature. Apparently it is not the content but the recording medium that is the test." My talk at Arrowhead explicitly rejected that notion, not once but several times.

This, I think, Stephen Potter would cherish as one of the more priceless examples of "reviewermanship," because you want to kick your subject well in the teeth, and then, after you've polished him off, spin him around and pat him on the back, and say, "I'm on your side, after all, fella." So here comes the last paragraph, which we should meditate well. "The rehashing of the questions discussed at this meeting is still going on. But oral historians should proceed with their job, which is in my opinion, valuable and important. They will need to cultivate patience, acquire self-assurance, and be content to leave the proof of their pudding to the scholars who are its ultimate consumers."

That seemed to me to do it very nicely. I hope we all take sufficient offense to draw inspiration from this condescending notice. I had a faint intimation of what he meant at times last night, when we exposed ourselves, with what I felt were very interesting results, to the inter-disciplinary views of others in Sociology, Folklore, and Psychology for the first time, and found that some of the problems that have worried us in the past, indeed do occur to folklorists, to sociologists, to psychologists, and to those who've interviewed Indians. But I think we've progressed to some degree. I'm anxious to see what this reviewer has to say about The Second National Colloquium. And, of course, I'm anxious to see what will be said about The Third National Colloquium, because we have come quite a ways from Lake Arrowhead, as auspicious a beginning as that was. As proof of it, we have our next speaker: the Lincoln paper refers to him today as "famed author Walter Lord."

He is, indeed, famed, and justly so. I think mere mention of the title of his books is enough to establish it. I know few authors who have a happier touch. I'm sure his publishers don't name his books for him, because very few publishers have such good imagination. Day of Infamy. No one needs to be reminded what day that was. A Night to Remember, the first one, the one about the Titanic. And perhaps the happiest title of all, the one relating James Meredith's efforts to be enrolled at the University of Mississippi, The Past That Would Not Die. I could give you the background of Walter Lord, because it's nicely in front of me in the Lincoln paper, but I don't think you need it. What you need, now, is to hear from Walter Lord.

ORAL HISTORY AND THE MODERN HISTORIAN

Walter Lord

Perhaps it's not entirely inappropriate that we gather on the same premises as the Nebraska Swine Commission and the Beef Carcass Evaluation Subcommittee, because it has been said that occasionally in our work we listen to a lot of bull. But we also listen to a great deal of truth; and my only question at this point is why on earth I keep saying "we," because, in a sense, I'm a little out of place here. I'm reminded of Theodore Roosevelt returning from the meeting of the Harvard Overseers, when he said to his friend, Owen Wister, "I felt like a bull dog who had strayed into a Symposium of perfectly clean, white Persian cats." That's the way I feel, as I regard you with all your academic honors and attainments, and me with my none.

And if I needed any reminding of this fact, there's always last year's transcript, where I noted with great interest that it took approximately 45 seconds of the very first session before somebody called your honored guest, Cornelius Ryan, "an amateur." But he certainly paid you back, because I also noted with great interest his reference to, and I'm quoting him, "The very worthlessness of human testimony, unless it can be substantiated by documents supporting the testimony." I was really quite surprised about this because I regard Mr. Ryan as a superb craftsman in his work, and also I always associate him with interviews and interviewing.

In any case, I come to you with the opposite message, in an effort to stress as hard as I possibly can the value of the spoken word, as well as the written word. I was surprised at the fact that last year not just Cornelius Ryan, but so many of the speakers, seemed to limit the value of oral history and interviewing to anecdotes, the illustrative incident, the ambiance of the time, to clues on where to search further, or a mere feel for the facts, or that it mainly added light and color to events that can be otherwise documented.

I think it helps get the event itself. Just going over my own experience, I'd like to give you a few situations where without the benefit of interviewing the actual participants, we simply wouldn't know as much about the event as we are able to learn. We simply wouldn't know what really happened. Not color, or peripheral facts, or a feel for the situation, but the guts of the event, the heart of it.

The first situation is where, as so often happens these days, the telephone is everything. I felt that no point last year was more important than Professor Friedel's remark that the tape recorder helps redress what we have lost due to the telephone. The same can be said for any kind of interviewing. The telephone would have an awesome and awful effect on getting history down in the future if we had to depend completely on the written word. And last year Professor Leuchtenburg added, I thought, a very good example when he quoted what the late Senator Kennedy said about the Meredith case. (That, you recall, was the integration of the University of Mississippi by James Meredith with the help of the Justice Department and, in fact, the whole United States Army.) He quoted Senator Kennedy as saying that only the people who had been on the phone could tell you what really happened.

I can only say, "Amen." I worked on a book about that case for over three years, and there is absolutely no important incident in history where there is less documented material that goes to the heart of the matter. Here was the most important federal-state clash or confrontation since the Civil War. Yet it all was handled so extemporaneously that there are few records to speak of. The telephone was the arch villain, but it all goes deeper than that. It goes to the very way so many things in business and government are conducted today. The hasty meeting. The quick visit. The teletype. Any number of modern devices, modern methods of communication in this ever-shrinking world of ours, which has made paper less important.

Getting back to the Meredith case as a specific example, the very first problem for anybody who wants to study this important crisis in our national life is the whole question of whether James Meredith was hand-picked by the NAACP, or the government of the United States. Many people in this country are under the impression that he was. I believe he was not, but to get to the bottom of the case there are no written records to speak of.

There is, first of all, the account of the visit of Meredith to the head of the Mississippi NAACP, Medgar Evers, a marvelous man who was later shot and killed. That conversation is unrecorded anywhere on paper. Then there is the telephone call from Medgar Evers to the NAACP legal group in New York. There's no written record of that. Then the conferences back and forth between the people in New York wondering whether to support this effort or not — again no written record here. Finally there is a letter from Meredith to the NAACP, explaining why he wants to go to the University of Mississippi, and that is literally the only piece of paper on this all-important part of the whole subject. Following the receipt of this letter, Thurgood Marshall, now Justice of the Supreme Court, phoned Meredith, and there was a long exchange there, which again has no written record. You've got to depend on the people involved to get anywhere near the truth.

Once the decision had been made to back Meredith by the NAACP, and once the University of Mississippi and the State of Mississippi had stood up against this, the Federal Government was gradually drawn in. Then came the whole area of problems involving the Justice Department. The Department, with Attorney General Kennedy presiding, had to decide exactly how it was going to support the court decisions that ordered Meredith's admission. These decisions were not made by passing memos back and forth between members of the Department. They were usually made in Robert Kennedy's office, at small-group sessions between himself; Burke Marshall, the head of the Civil Rights Division; John Doar, Burke Marshall's assistant; and Nicholas Katzenbach, who was the Deputy Attorney General. These four men, with occasional additions, sat there and worked this thing out in session after session, but none of it is recorded.

They decided what they would do, very much the way I'm sure many of you reach decisions in departmental meetings in your colleges, universities, and historical societies. There is no written record of the decision to use federal marshals to enforce the court decisions. They just gradually came to the conclusion that they didn't want to use troops because the Eisenhower Administration had done that in Little Rock. They preferred a different image for the Kennedy Administration. The selection of marshals as the device went back to the use of marshals in the Montgomery riots earlier. All these little straws were the basis for the decision, but none of it is on paper. You simply have to interview the participants if you want to find out why the government adopted the policy that it did.

Then came the time of the negotiations between the Justice Department and the State of Mississippi. Again, there's no correspondence back and forth, no letters from Robert Kennedy to Governor Ross Barnett, no letters from Governor Ross Barnett to Robert Kennedy. It was all done in about 30 telephone calls. Now some of these calls were transcribed; so there is a written record in the sense that there's the transcription of these telephone calls. Yet the calls were full of nuances, referring to meetings which weren't necessary to spell out on the telephone, but which nevertheless a reader of the transcription cannot understand unless he had an opportunity to talk to the people involved. Besides this, seven of the calls were never recorded at all. Sometimes because they were made late at night at Attorney General Kennedy's home, or perhaps by somebody who was out of town, calling to the State Capitol in Jackson, Mississippi. Some of them involved Burke Marshall, talking to Governor Ross Barnett's unofficial aide at the time, a man named Tom Watkins, who is never mentioned in any of the written materials. But he is a key figure; he was probably the governor's most important advisor. Again, these calls are lost entirely. There are not even transcriptions of them.

One of these calls was between President Kennedy and Governor Barnett the night before Meredith entered the University of

Mississippi, and just before the riot began. It involved the President of the United States making a final agreement or pact with the Governor of Mississippi, yet there's not even a transcription of it. It happened that somebody trying to make a transcription flicked the wrong button, and the recorder picked up a family conversation involving Mrs. Kennedy and Caroline by mistake.

Finally, there was the question of bringing in the troops the night of the actual riot. And again, the decision was reached by a small group of men, sitting in the oval office of the President of the United States. President Kennedy, Robert Kennedy, Burke Marshall, and two or three other presidential aides reached this decision among themselves. There is no piece of paper; they never wrote anything about it. If they did, it was after the fact, in some sort of recollection, but I've never seen anything on it at all, except for the result of interviewing.

And this, I think, is one of the great values of the Kennedy oral history project, because so much of the New Frontier decisions were reached via the telephone or through informal conversations. It was their method of operating. So the telephone has become an arch villain to the written word in getting history down, but history is no less important than before the telephone. And if we are to reach the truth in these cases, the only way to get it is by talking to the participants in one way or another.

There are other cases where it seems to me especially important, not involving, necessarily, the telephone, but where, again, the record is blank. Perhaps personality is all-important. I recently completed a book on the Battle of Midway, the turning point in the Pacific War, and nothing was more important than the sudden unavailability of Admiral Halsey and the substitution of Admiral Spruance on the very eve of battle. Admiral Halsey was of one temperament; Admiral Spruance totally different. There's no question in my mind that the battle would have been handled differently if Halsey had led the fleet against the Japanese, compared to what actually happened with Spruance in charge. But to get the story of these personalities, to understand how it felt working for Halsey, and then working for Spruance, you really have to talk to the staff, who worked for both Admirals. And it's fascinating to listen to these men describe the differences in their opinion of how the battle would have been handled if Halsey had been in charge, as against the way it was handled under Spruance. There are no written records on this, where the human element comes in to that degree. People don't have memos or documents of one sort or another. The only way this can be captured is by talking to the men involved. Yet it goes to the heart of the story.

Perhaps it's a matter of security that leaves the records blank. But the event is no less important. Again, in the case of Midway, the heart of the U.S. Navy's strategy goes back to breaking the Japanese code. Well, this was under tight security, and even today the exact method in which it was done is under security.

Because there was so much security, very few records were kept. And those records that were kept, such as the actual radio transmissions of the Japanese, as broken down, are still under security. The only way that we can investigate this at all is through interviewing participants.

Perhaps, you know, the lack of written record might be due to the event moving too fast. It seems to me that this is especially so in the case of modern battles, with their awesome speed and destruction. Again, going back to the Battle of Midway, nothing was more important in winning our victory than a tactical decision reached on board Task Force 16, on the launching time of our dive bombers. Admiral Spruance initially felt that the dive bombers could not be launched until 9:00 in the morning. Actually, they were launched at 7:00. This two-hour saving was all-important in winning the battle. The man who was responsible for it, who persuaded Admiral Spruance that it could be done, was a Captain named Miles Browning. Miles Browning appears in no battle report on the Battle of Midway. Yet he was all-important in reaching this decision, and everybody I ever found who was at Midway stresses this. There's no argument about it. Yet there is no written record of it. The only way to learn this important fact is by talking to the participants.

There's another case where the record is blank. It's one of the most intriguing. And this to me is where it's not so much an event that's important, but a non-event. You might recall if you're a Sherlock Holmes fan, the famous exchange between Holmes and Inspector Gregory in the case of the disappearance of the race horse Silver Blaze. Inspector Gregory asks Holmes, "Is there any incident to which you would wish to draw my attention?" and Holmes answers, "To the curious incident of the dog in the night time." Gregory says, "But the dog did nothing in the night time." And Holmes says, "That was the curious incident."

Sometimes the non-event is every bit as important as the event in a story. And yet there can be no record of a non-event. Take as an illustration the night before Pearl Harbor. There is a legend that this was a wild night for the American command, a Saturday night when everyone was out on a binge, and no wonder we were attacked by surprise the following Sunday morning. Well, I've interviewed people ranging from Admiral Kimmel to the companions of General Short, and Army commander in Pearl Harbor at that time. They were unanimous in saying that it was not only a quiet evening, but an awfully dull evening, and if any of you have ever spent Saturday night at the Halikelani Hotel in Honolulu, you know it's not very lively. All the available evidence indicates that nothing happened. Yet this evidence is available only from talking to the participants. There is no written record of the fact that nothing happened the night before Pearl Harbor.

There are other cases. I've been mentioning cases where there are no records, but there are cases where there were records and the records have been destroyed. It seems to me that anybody trying to develop the Japanese side of a battle or action in World War II faces this problem. At the end of the war, either our B-29's burned all their records, or they burned them themselves. But the net effect is the same. There are very few written documents from the Japanese side of the Pacific War. Just to give you one illustration, I'd always been intrigued by the Japanese decision to send part of their fleet to the Aleutians at the time of Midway, because I felt if that part had been added to the central effort, they might have been more successful. This has always been written off by most historians as a diversion, an attempt to draw our fleet to Alaska so they could attack Midway more successfully. That didn't add up to me, because to divert the fleet from Pearl Harbor to the Aleutians was really diverting it in the direction of Midway. It would have taken them right to the scene of the battle. Moreover, since the whole point of the battle from the Japanese standpoint was to trap our fleet into a massed fleet action, why on earth divert it at all?

When I was out in Japan I began asking about that, and finally talked to several members of the Japanese planning groups who had developed Midway. They said that the Aleutian phase wasn't really meant as a diversion at all. If it confused the Americans, so much the better, but the real purpose was a political sop to a faction of the Japanese Naval Command that had always wanted to go to the Aleutians anyhow. Well, this was confirmed by several different sources, and it made so much more sense than the diversion theory. Again, this whole exploration would be impossible if we were relying on written records. The only way to get at it is to talk to men like Commander Tsunoda of the Japanese War History Office, who was in on the planning at the time, and Captain Watanabe, who was on Admiral Yamamoto's planning staff. There is no other way to reach this, and this is their opinion.

There are other cases that I want to mention, not where the records are non-existent, not where the records have been destroyed, but where there are records and they're simply no good. It's a curious way that people have of equating documents with facts. There was an awfully kind and generous comment in the Naval Institute Proceedings, not too long ago, about my book on the Battle of Midway. But, you know, an author is never satisfied with 95 per cent favorable publicity; he wants it all the way. This comment ended up by saying, the only trouble with Lord is, he listens to interviews too much, and doesn't spend enough time with "documented facts." Well, just because something is documented doesn't mean it's a fact. There was never a document that I could find that I didn't read about the Battle of Midway. But I didn't necessarily buy everything.

I want to give you three illustrations. The first involves the U.S. Strategic Bombing Survey interviews that were conducted in Japan by a team of our specialists after the war. These men talked to various Japanese leaders to ascertain not only the value of the bombing but the whole Japanese side of various actions. Some of these interviews are excellent, but some of them are not, because occasionally members of our team really weren't that good as linguists. They didn't know all the nuances of Japanese, which is a very complicated language. They did a fine job with their knowledge, but they simply didn't have the fluent knowledge of Japanese that was necessary.

And on the other side, the Japanese were scared to death. This was September to November or December, 1945. They were willing to say almost anything at that time. They were terrified. They only wanted to please the Americans, and they only wanted to get rid of us. So you had a situation of interviewing that was anything but conducive to highly accurate accounts. And often, these interviews go off base, as evidenced by whatever material you can find in other ways today. The same Japanese interviewed today will say, "Well, it really wasn't that way, but what could I say?"

Another type of report, which I think often strays afield, is the action report of squadron commanders and ship commanders right after a battle. You know, the very man you want to lead you into battle if you're a pilot, or on a destroyer, is not necessarily the ideal man to write it up when it is over. And so it is with many of the action reports. Often the man, perhaps a really good squadron commander, is rather bored with all this paperwork end of his business. He will do it faithfully because the regulations say so, but you won't necessarily get a very clear, articulate account of what happened.

A third kind of dangerous documentation is the unit history that was so often written up after V-J Day, when we were engaged in a sort of narcissus operation of happy self-contemplation. The writers at this time were usually men who hadn't been in on the action, which had often taken place two or three years earlier. And they were almost always men who were just counting up their points until they could get home themselves. As a result, the unit histories -- while a glowing, once-over-lightly account -- are full of inaccuracies. But there they are in the Naval Archives, or in the Air Force Archives, or in the Marine Archives -- nobody's exempt. There they are, sitting in their precious folders, as though they were the final, gospel, Bible truth.

The danger of all this came home to me on the whole question of who hit what at Midway? The climax of the battle came when three of our dive-bombing squadrons plunged down on the Japanese carrier force, and put three Japanese carriers out of action in a matter of six minutes. This was witnessed by the men in the dive-bombing squadrons who survived, by hundreds of Japanese Naval Officers and men. Yet to this day, nobody's really sure which air squadron got which carrier. I decided the great way to attack this would be to read the action reports of each of the squadron commanders. They certainly would know what happened. So I got out the action reports of the three dive-bombing squadron commanders involved, and all three claimed the Japanese flagship, or the other largest carrier. None of them claimed the smaller Japanese carrier. She presumably got back to Tokyo. Yet there she was at the bottom of the Pacific.

Well, being a great rooter for oral history and interviewing, I decided to see these three squadron commanders, who are all very much alive and kicking today. I spent a good part of a day with each of them, and by this time I had something to help guide me. I knew that the island, or control tower, on one of the Japanese carriers was on the port side; whereas on the other two, it was on the starboard side. So if I could find out which squadron hit the carrier with the island on the port side, I would at least eliminate that and be part of the way home. It would simplify my problem. So, without telling the squadron commanders this, I asked which side the island was on the carrier that they happened to bomb. All three came back and said there were a lot of things about Midway they didn't know, a lot of things they couldn't hope to tell me, but one thing they were absolutely sure of was that the island in each case was on the starboard side. Yet the flagship, the one they liked to claim the most, had its island on the port side. She too presumably got back to Tokyo, yet there she was at the bottom of the Pacific.

This, incidentally, shows that oral history isn't infallible. Yet, plunge deeper, and you come to something that might be a straw. I never solved this problem beyond a shadow of a doubt, but I did finally come to a pilot in one of the squadrons who remembered his dive very clearly. He said he had always had, as so many of us did at the time, a quaint notion that the Japanese did everything backwards -- take their way of writing, for instance -- and as he dived down, he said to himself, "Isn't it just like the Japanese to have a carrier with the island on the port side."

Well, that had a ring of authenticity to it, you know. And after adding certain other things that I discovered, I felt I was finally able to do a fair job of piecing together this jig-saw puzzle. But it certainly wasn't with the help of the documents, or the written evidence. So, there's no doubt in my mind about the value of oral history, even on the guts of the story. The very heart of the matter can often be embellished and enlarged by the interviewing technique, the spoken word as against the written word.

The real question, it seems to me, is not so much whether oral history has any value, but how to make it better. I thought I would give you some things that I have experienced, and feel I've learned. Not that they are infallible, but that they might be interesting to you. Then, in the various question-and-answer periods that we have at our disposal, we can swap these ideas back and forth. Just to start the ball rolling, I want to give you a few thoughts that have occurred to me in the course of the past ten years at this kind of work.

First of all, it seems to me that setting the stage is important. Last year I read with great interest and amusement, Dr. Cole's account of the John Foster Dulles project -- the whole job of getting that going -- and how, at the very start, he gave a great deal of thought to stationery. This struck a warm, familiar chord, because I too give a great deal of thought to stationery. After all, these people you want to interview are giving up their time, and you want to come with your best foot forward. And in that connection, a university sponsorship, which so many of you have, is really invaluable. A scruffy fellow like myself doesn't have that; so stationery is all the more important.

I've also learned how important it is to have some form of prestigious backing, because anybody being interviewed has a certain suspicion in their minds. When I wrote my book on the Titanic disaster, I worked hard as I could to find survivors. Ultimately, with tremendous scraping, I came up with about 65. Then the J. Arthur Rank Company decided to film the book, made a press announcement, and 65 more turned up. Just the thought of an association with a name they knew and understood meant so much more than that of an unknown writer. Hence, when I worked on Pearl Harbor, it was invaluable to have an association with Life magazine, and use some of their expensive stationery. And in working on the Battle of Midway, I found it equally valuable to have Look put its best foot forward for me. So, don't write down these colleges and universities that give you such small budgets.

Next, after setting the stage properly, it seems to me that it is all important to know the subject cold, and I'm surprised it's even necessary to say that. But Dr. Evans last year, in his very interesting talk, suggested that sometimes the interviewer can know too much about the subject. As a result, he felt, the interview gets bogged down in detail, and you get so close to the trees that you can't see the forest. Well, it seems to me that that hazard is small, compared to the advantages. First of all, thorough knowledge enables you to ask the best questions, not things that are already in the record. Why take up this precious time that you've worked so hard to get with the interviewee by asking questions that can be answered elsewhere?

Secondly, it seems to me, that to know a subject saves time on a lot of simple things. When a member of the crew of the Titanic says that after the crash he went down the working alleyway, up the forward companion, and out by the officers quarters, if you know where all that is, you save a great deal of time which can otherwise be spent in exploring things of greater significance. The same goes especially when working on battles and actions, where there are so many technical terms. Midway, for instance, was full of terms like "ready room," "plotting board," something called "Point Option," and a communication device called "YE-ZB". Well, I could have asked Admiral McCluskey, Air Group Commander of all the Enterprise planes, to explain these things, and since he is a very patient man, he probably would have done it. But how much better to save that time for discussing the battle itself by doing a little homework first.

It also, I think, builds the interviewee's confidence when you know the lingo. If you know the subject, and you talk to him in a way that shows that you obviously have done your homework, your man has that much more confidence that he isn't wasting his time, and I think is that much more likely to open up.

In building confidence, incidentally, I think it's particularly helpful to give the interviewee something he doesn't already know as a way of starting conversation on a particular point. In talking to dive bomber pilots at Midway, I found that it was awfully effective to show them the little sketch that their squadron commander had made of the disposition of the Japanese carriers when the bombing attack began. These pilots had never seen that. It was submitted in June, 1942, by the squadron commander, and he didn't show it to all the boys. They may now say, Yes, that's exactly how it was, or they may say, No, he was crazy; but in any case, they've got a little nugget they hadn't seen before.

Another natural at bringing out our men, I felt, was to tell them the story of their Japanese counterparts. One of our many attacks on the Japanese carriers at Midway was by four converted Army B-26 bombers -- a really very gallant action by men who were flying planes that weren't remotely planned for torpedo drops. I told one of these pilots about the reactions of one of the Japanese fighter pilots that was trying to shoot him down, and he showed great interest in this particular confrontation. This kind of incidental detail is fascinating to the men who were involved in these great stories. And again, it can only come from knowing your subject.

The corollary is to know the interviewee's role as well as you can, because, of course, it helps you know what to ask him. Beyond that, it helps you know what his bias is. And in doing this, it's especially helpful to know some little-known, out-of-the-ordinary point. In the case of the Meredith integration case in Mississippi, some of my most productive times were spent with the Assistant Attorney General for Civil Rights, Burke Marshall. He is a great public servant who gave his time most generously to me. At one point he recounted to me his role in some of these telephone calls I was discussing with you earlier. But he did not mention two calls that he had had with the Mississippi Attorney General -- either inadvertently or, perhaps, because he was trying to protect the Mississippi official. I don't know what the reason was, but he didn't mention them to me, and I only discovered them by chance, down in Mississippi, when I came across the Mississippi Attorney General's own account of these conversations.

I came back to Mr. Marshall, mentioned these two calls, and asked him, How about those? He immediately opened up and went into great detail about them. Well, again, I think if I hadn't done this type of exploration -- if I hadn't brought up something that very few people knew -- I would have gotten far less information. It gave him much more interest in that particular interview, and encouraged him to open up more. So, I do think that it's enormously helpful not only to know the subject but to know the interviewee.

Getting back to Midway, to know a man's squadron mates was often helpful. One of the most pleasantly rewarding experiences I had was bringing some of these pilots back together with their own rear seat men, with whom they hadn't been in touch for twenty years. It meant a lot to them, and again, it paid them back in a certain kind of coin for all the time they were giving me.

Now, for the interview itself. Preparation, after all, is only pre-game practice, and the time finally comes when you must play the game. And at this point I have a dreadful confession to make: I don't use a tape recorder. But I don't believe that it's time yet to stone me out of here, because I do feel that my case is a little different. First of all, my interviews are for my own use. If I were doing this as a service to future historians, or taking interviews to be kept in archives for the use of other students, I don't see how I could fail to use a tape recorder. But in my own case, and for my own use, I know what I want, and for the nuances and the feeling of the person, and all that, my ears provide some of the services that a tape recorder would.

Another reason why I don't use a recorder is much more arguable. I feel that so many of my people are unused to being interviewed at all, that it would, perhaps, increase their reticence to have the tape recorder around. We went into all this in great detail last night, and I've got nothing to add, because so much was said on both sides. But I do feel this.

In fact, I feel it so deeply that I don't even take notes during the interview. But I don't consider myself a human tape recorder. I just rely on a couple of crutches that, to me, are an important help in insuring accuracy. One is the amount of memorizing work I do the night before the interview. Usually, I only interview two people a day. And the night before is really like Study Hall. First of all, I work out a list of questions in the order in which I want to ask them; then I memorize that list. I memorize it the way a schoolboy memorizes a Shakespeare sonnet. So that when I go into the interview, I have this list in my mind, absolutely cold, and it serves as a framework in asking questions later on during the interview. Still later, it serves as a framework in writing up the answers after it's all over.

It keeps me in line, so to speak, and the interviewee can stray off as much as he wants. In the case of Admiral Spruance, we went off and looked at his garden for awhile, but then we came back, and I picked up the next question on my memorized list. This is a technique that I've found in my own case very helpful. I don't think it really involves most of you, because you do use tape recorders for your particular work, and bless you, I can well see why you should. In fact, where I've used interviews taken by other people, I find the ones that have been done with a tape recorder are much more useful than the ones that were simply based on notes. But in my own interviewing, I am doing it for my own use, and I want to reduce the situation to as few tensions as possible.

Now, I realize I lose a lot by not having a tape recorder. I know I'm giving a certain amount of yardage. I lose a lot of interesting and valuable quotes, for instance, that could be actually incorporated into the book. But I do feel that I gain in candor. I've listened to things that wouldn't have been said if a tape recorder had been spinning. Things I wouldn't dream of putting into my book, but which I feel were terribly important to me in understanding an event. Where do I draw the line? It's a matter of discretion.

A great deal has been asked about ethics and discretion, and what you do and what you don't do. It seems to me it's a matter of good taste and good manners. You don't need to sit and puzzle over this in a scholarly way forever. We shouldn't be in the business if we don't have enough good manners and good taste to interview properly. That is a matter of personal judgment, and I'm happy to say that in doing interviews for 12-13 years, I've only had one complaint. This was over a very minor matter in the State of Mississippi. One of the Mississippi officials told me, or I felt told me, that feelings became so heated during the Meredith controversy that angry letters went to the Mississippi Historical Society, demanding that conciliatory statements once made by Robert E. Lee be erased from the walls of the old capitol in Jackson. I included this in my book to show the fever that was raging. I did not attribute it to anybody. Shortly afterwards, I got a message from this official saying that wasn't so...and yet the official seemed to know exactly where my information came from. I now feel that this letter is another example of a case where the written record is wrong!

In the course of an interview, I follow another rule, which I'm sure goes without saying in your work, for you're professionals, and I had to teach myself. That is: never argue with the interviewee. If he says something which you feel by this time in your own mind couldn't possibly be so, that still is no reason for arguing. You're there to get this person's story, not to give your own thoughts and views. In the case of the sinking of the Titanic, I sometimes feel that I've never talked to a lady who escaped from the ship who didn't insist that she was in the very last lifeboat. They just haven't built the lifeboat that can hold all these ladies. But you know, I wouldn't dream of disputing this.

To a certain extent this sort of exaggeration is perhaps a little bit of vanity, or a little bit of making yourself the center of an exciting event, but also, part of it is perfectly honest, which again points up the importance of knowing the subject. On the Titanic, the lifeboats were divided into four different clusters, and no cluster was in sight of the other. So that if you were in the lifeboat that was the last launched in that particular group of boats, you might honestly feel, without embroidering at all, that you were in the last lifeboat on the ship. In any case, beware of ever challenging a lady who was on the Titanic that she wasn't in the last lifeboat. It's like asking her age.

Getting back to the matter of taking notes, on those occasions where it is necessary, in my own case, to jot something down on paper -- like a name, or the correct spelling of something, or a technical instrument -- I always ask permission. It is unfailingly granted, but it just seems to me it's a nice amenity.

Finally, when the interview is over, instead of sitting around with cookies and tea, I get out of there as fast as possible before it all leaves me. This, again, is a great advantage of using the tape recorder. You can stay around for a little hospitality, because it's now all on the record. But in my case I don't have enough faith in my memory to sit around for small talk once the interview is over. I get out and get back to the motel and get to work writing it up as fast as I can. This can be a long process. In working on the Meredith case, I interviewed General Edwin A. Walker in Dallas. The General talked at great length, and I wanted to get it exactly right. I saw him from 4:00 to 6:00 in the afternoon, maybe a little longer than that; got back to the hotel around 7:00; and I worked until 10:00, sweating it out, trying to make sure I got his views right. I'm happy to say that he didn't have any complaints.

As I mentioned earlier, this technique means that I do miss -- because I'm not using a tape recorder or notes -- some of the extraneous comments that would add color to the interview and the actual writing of the book. But I don't miss them all. Occasionally, something will be said that is so perfect that it sticks with any listener perfectly. In the case of the Battle of Midway, one of Admiral Nimitz's top aides told me about an exchange in the code-breaking room at Pearl Harbor. A staff officer was questioning whether the code breakers could really tell from a brief intercept where a certain Japanese warship was bound. "How do I know," asked the officer, "that she's not just going to her home port, instead of heading for Midway?" The crusty commander in charge, Joe Rochefort, who's one of my favorite characters, replied, "Well, if she is, that would be doing a tonsillectomy through the rectum." This is a quote that you don't forget, even if you lack notes or a tape recorder. So you don't miss them all.

In any case, I don't for a moment mean that my formula is foolproof. There are some days when everything blows apart, and I never knew a better example than the afternoon in Japan when I went to see Mitsuharu Noda, who had been Admiral Yamamoto's yeoman at the time of Midway. A knock at the front door brought Mrs. Noda. She took one look, crashed to her knees, and put her head on the floor. I was utterly unstrung. I've had many pleasant meetings with ladies in the United States, but none of them had ever done that. Finally, Yeoman Noda came forward, and she got up. Apparently the whole scene was just an expression of Japanese graciousness and hospitality. But I was so unstrung, I forgot whatever my list of questions might have said. I just went blindly on, and oddly enough came through with what I thought was a reasonably good interview.

So, I don't mean for a moment that what I've been saying to you is the gospel. But I do mean to say that -- given today's lightning pace of events, given the use of the telephone, the quick little gatherings, the way decisions are reached -- the modern historian not only can use oral history for background and color. He should go far beyond that. Oral history often throws light on the very heart of his subject, and my point is, he can't do without it.

Question: Mr. Lord, I'd like to ask you if you returned your notes back to your interviewees?

LORD: No. I never have. I've always been ready to face the music if they didn't like what I said.

MR. STANFORD, Minnesota: I've wondered whether, in your interviewing of people at secondary levels, you ran into any reticence to get their version lest it refute or contradict either the official version or that of their superiors, colleagues, or friends? Did you ever feel that your respondents distorted or held back in any way?

LORD: Held back, yes. Not so much distorted. I think the people I've interviewed were honestly trying to tell the story from their point of view, and often would say that there was another point of view. Certainly there was often reticence on delicate matters. I noticed in the transcript of last year's Proceedings that Cornelius Ryan mentioned that in the case of talking to officers you got words of praise or positive statements if the man hoped that he might be promoted. And if he had been passed over, you got a lot of sour remarks. I haven't found as much of that as another danger and hazard, and that is the esprit de corps that exists among so many service men. They don't like to knock another guy. But again, while that tendency exists, there are always the men who do come forward, even if you have to go to, say, three or four men before you come to that particular person. Then if you go back to the others, they begin to open up too.

Question: How much difference is there between an interview that you have and the actual documentation in the military archives?

LORD: Sometimes the interview confirms, sometimes it contradicts, but more often it adds an element that just hadn't been there at all.

INTERDISCIPLINARY VIEWS ON ORAL HISTORY

Philip Crowl, Chairman

I was asked last spring to get together a panel that was to be called Interdisciplinary Views on Oral History. Whenever I hear the word interdisciplinary, I think of Social Scientists, and it was natural for me to turn to that wonderful and heterogeneous discipline, or sets of disciplines to select my panel. I must say I was delighted -- somewhat surprised, but still delighted -- to discover so many people, within a radius of no more than 50 miles of this spot, who were engaged in so many interesting and, to me, surprising enterprises in the field of social sciences. We have with us tonight a folklorist, two sociologists, and an anthropologist, and they've all promised me that tonight, at least, they would speak English. Some of them I think are perhaps a bit more at home in some of the obscure dialects of the Plains Indians and the Cajons, but they have, nevertheless, made this commitment for us this evening. I'm terribly impressed by the vitae of all of them, and I was terribly impressed when we had a little dress rehearsal last week, and the conversation, as I guess it does among anthropologists all the time, quickly got into the smoking or eating, whichever it is, of peyote. I am a simple historian, and in pursuit of my scholarly endeavors, if that's what you want to call them, nobody in my life has ever invited me to take LSD or peyote or anything. So, as I say, I find these people fascinating. I find the subjects that they're working in fascinating, and a little frightening, but nevertheless fascinating. And with that I will shut up and introduce my first panelist, Professor Roger Welsch, who is Professor of Folklore and German at Nebraska Wesleyan University. His publications include books called <u>Treasury of Nebraska Pioneer Folklore</u> and <u>The Sod Walls, The Story of the Nebraska Sod House</u>; he has <u>cut a number of recordings</u> and, <u>let me say quickly,</u> that there's a recording called Sweet Nebraskaland of Nebraska folk music, and two others are being cut by the Library of Congress and Folkway Records. And though I haven't heard them, I'm sure that I can recommend them highly to all of you. Maybe at a local bookstore you can pick one up. Roger.

<u>ROGER WELSCH</u>: Thank you. Folklore is a step-child which finds itself <u>variously</u> assigned to foreign language, English, anthropology, geology and history departments. And while it does have some things in common with all of these disciplines, it also has its own distinct character. I will, for the purpose of this commentary, ignore Ambrose Bierce's definition of the historian as "a broad-gauged gossip," and history as "an account mostly false, of events mostly unimportant, which are

brought about by rulers mostly knaves and soldiers mostly fools." I might note, out of a sense of fair play, that the closest Bierce comes to folklore is ethnology, which he defines as, "the science that treats of the various tribes of man, such as robbers, thieves,swindlers, dunces, lunatics, idiots and ethnologists." I shall also try to establish some kind of psychological similarity between us since we seem to be engaged in the same kind of activity, and the general consensus seems to be that folklorists are anal retentive, accumulating all this material and holding it to themselves, but the term "oral historian" seems to be a direct contrast. So I'll just ignore that and leave it to somebody else on the panel. I was told to leave some strings dangling so they could pick them up.

I note, in the published Proceedings of the Second Annual Colloquium, the distress of Cornelius Ryan commenting on the unreliability of the oral informant, that is, the discrepancy between the truth and reality in the beliefs of tradition. Although this doesn't seem to come out the way I want it to, the folklorist is not at all concerned with the truth. He is concerned, instead, with all materials that are transmitted primarily through unsophisticated means, which have sufficient currency in time or space to be considered traditional. It doesn't matter to us that a legend does not correspond with historical fact, or that some technique of folk belief is discounted by the physical sciences. Not only is the correspondence of the material with truth irrelevant, but historical and scientific fact, in quotes, have a way of changing now and then, and frequently come to support the traditional contention. The folk memory recorded in legend, belief, song, and tale, sometimes proves to be more accurate in a stylized format than formal history. Witness the recent discoveries of an archaeological evidence of a Camelot, or modern medical borrowings from folk medicine, like quinine and penicillin.

Our definition of folklore uses the phrase, "unsophisticated means," and that is primarily orally. The folklorist's prime collection tool in the field, then, is the tape recorder. Indeed, John Greenway, prominent folklorist and anthropologist, at the University of Colorado, told me that he feels the two most important figures in the development of the scholarly study of folk music and primitive music are Thomas Edison, because of his contribution to the development of sound recording, and Moses Asche, for making possible the widespread dissemination of field recordings through his Folkways Record Company. Laborious transcriptions caused impatient informants, before the age of the tape recorder, to abbreviate, to distort, to bowdlerize their materials. Transcribers made errors in their haste. But with accurate, portable tape recorders, material now can be collected in the most adverse conditions, and transcribed and studied in the leisure and comfort of one's office.

It cannot be forgotten that there is also more to a song or a story in folklore than words and music, which are transcribed in written form -- dramatic pauses, timbre, volume changes, vibrato, ornamentation, can only be appreciated in hearing the music itself. So that some publications in the area of folk music and primitive music, like Ethnomusicology, the publication of the Society for Ethnomusicology, for example, have issued recordings with some musicological studies so that the reader can actually hear the materials under examination. These are just small recordings that are included in the mailing of the journal itself. One of my primary interests is material culture -- folk arts, crafts and architecture. So some of my recording is more about folk lore than of folk lore, per se. I photograph the materials themselves, and I talk to informants about how they built the barn; or the dulcimer; what life was like in the sod house; folklore being the house rather than the commentary; how a particular wine recipe was developed; and so forth. And I've found in this work the strikingly articulate nature of the people. A folk tale, riddle, proverb or song has a distinctive phrasing, which is that of the tradition, not the informant. Part of the nature of folklore is that it is structured by tradition, and only slightly varied by the carrier. When expressing reminiscences about folklore, I have again and again been profoundly moved by the verbal skill of my informants. For example, in talking about the blizzard of '88, whereas the historian might talk about the dates of it, the economic loss, the temperature ranges, the rapidity of the temperature drop, and so forth, in folklore we encounter stories that are perhaps less accurate, but a good deal more dramatic. One man who was in the Blizzard of '88 Club here in Nebraska, a dwindling membership of people who lived through the blizzard, told me that he couldn't remember much himself, but he did remember his father telling that it took four men just to hold a blanket over the key hole of their soddy during that blizzard. And just the day before yesterday a man told me that his father had told about his mother coming in from milking the cows during the blizzard of '88, and when they tried to turn off the lantern, they found that they couldn't, because the flame had frozen onto the wick. These, of course, occur in the form of jests, but there are also other comments that are not meant in jest, and are meant quite seriously, but are nonetheless articulate. For example, one man, when he was asked how the pioneer on these plains could ever make it, considering the hardships that he encountered, he said that it was a little bit like the dog that climbed the tree when a bobcat was after him; it wasn't because he could, it was because he had to. And as an example of this verbal skill, I want to read a passage from my book, Sod Walls, which was based primarily on oral reports, and this one is from a woman called Leota Runyan. She was describing some of the weather that they encountered on the plains. Most of these people came from Europe and had scarcely ever encountered any kind of weather with the ferocity that they found here.

> One evening when my oldest brother was old enough to go after the cows, a cloud came up quickly. Mother, who was worried about my oldest brother, watched it anxiously. Soon he came over the hill in sight. Big drops of rain started to fall, then an occasional large hail stone fell. My brother began to pick up the hail stones, not thinking what was behind them. When the hail became very thick and large, Mother saw my brother fall. She quickly grabbed the fuel basket, dumped the contents on the floor, and dashed out the door with the basket over her head. She got to my brother, and the two got

> under the basket for protection. My father was in the field with four horses hitched to a disk. He unhitched the horses and raced toward the barn. He reached the granary first and stopped in its shelter. That helped him hold onto the others, while they reared against the pounding hail. But Dad held onto the reins with one hand out in the storm through it all. In the meantime my little brothers and I were in the house, but the windows on that side of the house crashed in and glass flew all over the house. My little brothers screamed and I ran to get pillows to hold to the window. This calmed the boys. When the storm was over my oldest brother came in with a bump on his head the size of a goose egg. One of my dad's hands swelled to twice its normal size, and my mother had a cut on her forehead that was bleeding so badly that her face was covered with streams of blood. At the sight of this my brothers and I set up a terrible scream again. I was always afraid of hail after that. When a cloud came up I would always ask Mother if it was going to hail. How comforting it was when in her judgment she would say, "No, there's no hail in that cloud." Or sometimes she would say, "Oh, this is August. It seldom hails in August."

That mother knew that it hails frequently and hard in August. The informant knew this, and knew that I knew it. But in this very subtle way she told me of her mother's desire to protect her brood from the agonies of fear. Any creative writer could take a lesson from her skill. The historical importance of this passage is not in the fact of the hail storm, one of thousands, or of some minor injuries to people who never did anything of singular historic importance. But rather the importance lies in the representative impressions of pioneer life.

I've also used the tape recorder to record my own impressions after the fact. For example, a little over a year ago I was initiated as a member into the Omaha tribe in the Spring, and (here comes what Professor Crowl said always comes up) I attended a peyote prayer meeting. I knew that it would not have been considered proper to record the meeting, but as a folklorist, the material was far too important to me to let pass. The sessions went from 7:00 P.M. Friday to 9:00 the next morning. The ritual was very intricate, stylized, totally alien to my previous experience. I was tired and cold and my back was killing me. This took place in a tepee on a rainy night, and there isn't anything to lean up against in a tepee. My stomach was protesting the strong tobacco smoked as part of the ceremony, and the bitter taste of the cactus buds, and my mind was blurred by the mescaline. The next morning, after a night of kaleidoscopic impressions, I had to drive 150 miles home. It would have been difficult, if not impossible, to recall everything after the drive and a good sleep, so I put my portable tape recorder on the seat beside me in the car, and recounted as carefully as I could, from memory, everything I could recapture of the prayer meeting. Upon waking the next day I listened to the recording, and I found that I had already, in less than 24 hours, forgotten a good deal of the material that I had recorded immediately following the fact.

Professor Crowl also asked for some of the more mundane logistics of folklore recording, and one thing in particular that I thought of were the arrangements that we folklorists have with archives to obtain recording tapes and also machines. The Library of Congress and the National Museum in Canada have been very generous in providing tapes for field work. But I think the finest arrangement that can be obtained for the folklorist is with the Archive of Traditional Music at Indiana University, because they provide very sensitive tapes for field recording, which you then send in to them immediately after the field work, and then they make copies for you on a tape that is specifically designed to avoid print-through for storage. And so you have your copy on good tape and they have their copy on sensitive tape and everything works out very well. This is the cheapest way they can get these materials without sending out their own field workers. And secondly, the use of our materials: in folklore, we prefer as much as possible to use them intact, as I've shown here. Just to take the transcriptions and use them as much as possible, in the words of the informant, because of their very articulate nature, and the interest that it tends to lend to the materials.

Folklorists and historians have many interests in common, and I assume the areas increase when the historian is an oral historian. There can be no question that I record a good deal of oral history. I presume that you record some folklore now and again. It is therefore clear that the sharing of techniques and collectanea between the folklorist and the oral historian would be mutually helpful, and I thank you for permitting me to be part of this particular exchange of ideas.

PHILIP CROWL: Our next speaker is Professor Jack Siegman, Assistant Professor of Sociology at the University of Nebraska in Lincoln, Ph.D. in Sociology at the University of Illinois. Jack's field is Industrial Sociology. His publications include a large number of articles, those that are most relevant to our conversation this evening are several articles on the consequences of automation on labor forces, and on industrial or organizational structure. With that I'll turn the session over to Jack.

JACK SIEGMAN: I'd like to discuss this paper in three parts. The first part being the functions and the use of the tape recorder as a method of in-depth technique. Secondly, the tape recorder and the setting of interviews, and third, the method of inquiry itself. In certain types of studies, especially exploratory ones in the field of sociology, open-ended interviews serve as the beginning of the study by testing initial assumptions and exploring for new findings so as to give parameters to the inquiry, and increase the scope of that which you are trying to understand. This method allows the researcher to gain an understanding of the system and the participants (persons and/or groups) he wishes to study. In effect, exploratory studies are hypothesis-producing vehicles. From this perspective, the less closure at the beginning of such studies, the better. This does not mean that the researcher is totally unprepared or totally ignorant of that which he is studying. It means that he allows the greatest latitude for new information to influence his future study techniques.

One method suitable to this approach is through the use of an open-ended in-depth interview technique. It is here that the tape recorder can be an important tool, especially in contrast to the use of hand-taking notes. Some of the reasons for this are as follows:

1. Taking notes by hand hinders the gathering of verbatim statements and in-depth answers. Associated with this is the problem of immediate interpretation of what the respondent says and what the researcher puts down on paper. In many cases, with hand note taking, one puts down what one is looking for and not the unexpected.

2. Taking notes by hand hinders the free-flowing discussion between the researcher and the respondent, and because of this, note taking may not allow for verbal discussions away from the main thrust of the questions. In addition, with the use of tape recordings, the researcher can give primary focus to the interviewee and not be distracted by writing answers to previous questions. Time, under a tape session, is less intrusive. The session takes on, or can take on, the character of a discussion, rather than a question and answer period. The time between the respondent's answer and its recording is not lost, and so there can be a free-flowing exchange which allows for greater probing.

3. The third factor is that with a complete verbatim statement of the respondent, later content analysis is facilitated in that many of the items and parts of the discussion, possibly overlooked during the interview, can be resubjected to analysis. This cannot be done by hand-taking note methods. A significant part of the content analysis is not to find what you are looking for, but rather to explore new areas and so gain new sources of information. The more total the recapture of the interview, the greater the possibility for further exploration. These are some of the positive benefits.

On the other hand, the use of a recorder present and obvious during an interview can present difficulties in the collection of data. For just as a recorder may enhance free-flowing discussion as it does away with interruptions between interviewer and respondent, so it may also instill a fear that a verbal document exists, and could be heard by others who may be the subjects of or related to the discussion. Thus the possibility of a private document becoming public could very well put the respondent on guard as to what he's willing to discuss. In a study I conducted and one I will discuss briefly, all respondents were assured that as soon as the tapes were typed -- and here is where I guess sociologists would proceed differently from oral historians -- the recordings would be erased, and that I would be the only person in charge of the tapes at all times. The recorder, then, can be looked at as a "third party" to the interaction. As a stranger, not defined, but yet present. For it is the recorder that could make private knowledge public.

In addition the recording is a tape of the actual voice of the respondent, so that this can be viewed as a permanent document of the person. The recorder represents, then, a potential fear of the unknown. The respondent may feel he is speaking to others, undefined at the moment, and possibly later, under uncontrolled circumstances.

Another aspect of this, one that I'm really not very capable of dealing with, since it's not in my expertise, however, is that the voice is part of one's being and one's body, and being separated from the rest of one's body may lead to a trepidation on the part of the respondent.

To overcome any such fears to shyness, in my study, I conducted a preliminary informal discussion with each of the respondents before the actual interview started. They were informed of the procedures and were shown how their voices were recorded, and a brief discussion was held with them. In this case study, this was the first experience for most of the people with such an event, that is, to have their voices recorded. To many it was a novel and somewhat shocking experience. "Is that really my voice?" or "Do I really sound like that?" were typical types of responses. Here we see the first reaction to the separation of voice from body. In my first few tries at this technique, I noticed that even though the machine was placed equidistant between respondent and myself, at the beginning of the discussion, they would generally speak in low and whispered voices. It was not until a few minutes after the interview proceeded that the embarrassment and the novelty of this device wore off and the voices resumed their normal pitch. Familiarizing them to the techniques of investigation allowed them to get used to the instrument, and therefore allay some of their fears.

Another difficulty is the tape recorder as a distraction. Again, in this sense, a "third party" to the interaction. Keeping the recorder in public view before the respondent tended to make him concentrate on the tape recorder, while keeping it private, completely out of his view, tended to make him view the tape recorder as a stranger, a presence that was not seen, and thus, again, something to be feared. Thus a technique in using the tape recorder is to neutralize the visability of the recorder so that it does not enter significantly nor effect that which transpires.

Now let me talk about a second point of the interview setting. Where do you record the information? At the site of the activity you are studying or away from it so as to give the respondent a feeling of distance, and possibly some objectivity, so that the constraints of the system of which he's a part are lessened in their influence on his answers. In my case, there was no choice, in that management, which gave permission for the study, stipulated that all interviews must be done at the work premises. The reasoning by management was based on the nature of the study. It was a study of automation and its effects upon the work system as well as the employees in this Civil Service organization. Given the secrecy with which many government bureaus operate, and given the perception and the fear of automation, management was afraid of any possible negative consequences if any information were to become public knowledge. To conduct interviews with employees at home, they feared, could exacerbate any wrong impressions or false information the persons would have of computer systems. If the interviews were held at the respondent's home, the possibility of other members of the family and friends being present could influence the employee in the discussion. In sum, management felt the employees would be more constrained to "stick to the facts" if the tape-recorded sessions were conducted at the place of work. That this was a somewhat real apprehension was indicated by the fact that the person in charge of the bureau was a political appointee himself, highly attuned to public pressure. In addition, at the time of my entry, computer plans were entering the final pre-installation stage, and the organization and its employees would be undergoing some rather profound and possibly unpredictable changes.

This restriction was accepted, but with an accommodation as to the actual location of the interviews. It was felt on my part that if all the interviews were held in the unit, and in public view, the reverse results would follow. I felt I would get little information from the employees if they were interviewed right on the floor. I anticipated they would be too constrained, with supervisors and others present, and in listening distance, to discuss openly their feelings about their jobs, their superiors, and their reactions to the changes they were undergoing. This, plus the noise of the machines, would make the recording session impossible.

As an aside to this, but one I would consider significant, in terms of the validity of certain types of research methods, a formal and public questionnaire was given to all the employees at their place of work. This particular instrument was included to replicate the findings of another automation study, based on survey techniques. Many survey techniques, and many survey types of instruments, are designed to be used once, and the respondents are asked to choose among pre-set answers felt to be applicable to the question at hand. A poll, for example, is the use of a survey technique that I'm indicating. Interestingly, the results of my survey were almost identical to that of the other study. If the study were ended at this point, then we could have said that the results of the first study were valid and replicable. However, on the basis of other methods utilized in this study, open-ended in-depth probes and other behavioral measures, which allowed the respondent to use his own terms, and not be forced to choose answers from a closed pre-structured questionnaire, the initial results of the survey were invalidated. The survey answers in no way corresponded to the behavior or the feelings of those persons interviewed. My interpretation of this is not a blanket denial of the usefulness or validity of survey techniques in contrast to in-depth types of interview methods -- I've used them myself -- but rather the technique must fit the reality of the situation. Before we use survey techniques, we must know about the system being studied. Without that knowledge, relevant and meaningful hypotheses cannot be constructed, and fact gathering as such can be illusionary and misleading.

But to get back to the point, as to where the tape-recording session was going to be held, it was obvious an accommodation on both sides had to be made. A neutral site, one which did not jeopardize management concerns nor mine, was chosen. It was decided that all the tape-recording interviews would be held on another floor of the building, away from the unit studied. Privacy was assured and confidentiality was promised. On this point, the use of neutral or supportive territory to conduct in-depth interviews facilitates the willingness of respondents to enter the interaction needed in an interview session. The physical as well as the social constraints and props that are part of the everyday environment tend to be lessened and hence open up probing opportunities. The question of territory can be crucial to the whole data-gathering process. This concern is rather common in many institutions, and many institutions are aware of it as they seek to set the proper stage or arena for the participants of the interaction of the interview. For example, the Catholic Church has its confessional booth, the police their grilling rooms, and hospitals their psychiatric rooms. The territory seriously affects the nature of the transaction that goes on within any interaction interview.

And finally, let me talk about the methods of inquiry. Before any of the tape sessions started, I familiarized myself with the work of the unit, as well as all the employees and management. The purpose of this was to identify the researcher as a neutral agent, an observer who took no sides, and certainly was not a management spy. In the use of tape-recording interviews, as well as other methods, it is crucial that rapport be established, and the researcher is perceived as being an interested but outside spectator. Trust must be built up before depth exploration can occur. This is part of a reciprocal obligation between researcher and respondent. The researcher and his task must be deemed worthy, so as to honor the trust placed in his hands by the respondent, who will relate to him at times types of knowledge, which, if publicly identified, could have negative consequences. The cost in time it takes to build a rapport with respondents is reciprocated by the rewards received in gaining knowledge of the behavior, recollections, attitudes and perceptions of those interviewed. After these preliminary steps were completed, each respondent was asked permission to have his answers and discussion recorded. This procedure was decided upon because of the desire to have the interview take the form of a discussion rather than have only a formal response to each question asked. There was, however, a questionnaire guide, in which the same open-ended questions we used for all respondents of the same category. However, since this was an attempt at an in-depth approach of attitudes and perceptions, the more spontaneous the discussion, the more thoroughly could we explore their feelings. In this free, but somewhat controlled atmosphere, it was felt that many of the respondents attitudes and perceptions would come to the surface without directly questioning them. The researcher in this situation guides the interaction as he picks out areas of further elaboration, stemming from the on-going discussion. This technique allows for a continued expansion of the original set of questions as new areas of relevant information become known to him. What is found in one interview discussion and thought to be relevant to others is then applied to other respondents to see if this is the case. In this manner a larger body of information is acquired than that which could come only from the original set of questions.

This, in effect, is the method of probing, in which one starts with a set of open-ended questions, which purposely then allows the respondent to react and elaborate as he defines the questions in his own terms and his own experience. In turn, from the answers the researcher looks for generalities to be found across respondents of the same category. Thus from starting from the general probe, the inquiry moves to narrow down and categorize responses into a meaningful order. If, however, the responses are found to have no clear and general agreement across the population study, then it becomes obvious that that which the group shares in common has not been elicited and further probes and explanations are needed.

A related problem in the use of interview discussion techniques is that of minimizing the expertise of the researcher in collecting his data. I mean by this the inadvertent possibility of the researcher, during the interview period, to structure the answers for the respondent by subtly cueing him to answer in terms of the categories which the researcher has established. One method of minimizing this effect is to use the language of the respondent and not that of the discipline. The less structured the verbal interaction, the less the possibility of the researcher redefining the perceptions of the respondent in this type of research. Using this approach allows the respondent to focus the study and point the direction for further data gathering. Now this does not imply that the researcher remains passive in this situation. As these impressions, attitudes and perceptions occur, they do not automatically enter into the researcher's conceptual development without further sifting and analysis. What this does mean is that as data is collected from the interview sessions, the researcher is comparing, reordering, and relating the data to his previous knowledge of the subject matter, both theoretically and empirically. Thus, what may turn out to be an important focus of the study may never have been thought of conceptually before the study began. In this case the researcher can and does develop new ways of conceptualizing the phenomena under study.

This interview methodology can be described as a sequential process, where part of the analysis is being made while the researcher is still gathering data, and further data gathering takes its direction from provisional analysis. In this manner a field study grows and develops conceptually, as the development of propositions and models takes form to explain the phenomena that is occurring. Each field study using such techniques can be looked upon as a process in discovery. A discovery of phenomena or its reordering, that was either not accounted for in previous theories, or where its significance was not seen as clearly under conditions that were not as easily observable.

PHILIP CROWL: Margot Pringle Liberty, now Assistant Professor of Anthropology at this University, is a young woman who is new to our campus. She came here this fall from the University of Minnesota. Mrs. Liberty's primary fields of interest are Plains Indian ethnology and history, legal acculturation, and modern Indian problems. Her publications are far too numerous to mention, but one has made some impact, even in the rather remote field of operation that I move in. It was written in conjunction with a man of one of the loveliest names that I have ever heard, John Stands in Timber, called Cheyenne Memories, published last fall by Yale University Press. Mrs. Liberty.

MARGOT PRINGLE LIBERTY:

I think on all that, I need a glass of water, or something!

I come into this discussion with a kind of anomalous position. Persons concerned with oral history are for the most part historians; I am not. Historians in my understanding, tend to focus upon the unusual person, the "great man," and his leadership in shaping the destiny of his people. Anthropologists on the other hand (and I am generally in their camp) tend to focus more on the "typical man" -- and the ordinary, everyday pattern of life which he describes. (I may speak wrongly for the sociologists here, but I think this has also been their emphasis.) When confronted with the new technology of tape recording, each of us has tended to follow his own bent. It sounds all very theoretical and neat.

The only trouble is that I was confronted with a "great man" in the wrong field of enquiry. I had been working among his people, the Northern Cheyenne Indians, for several years as a schoolteacher in Montana, and had been drawn increasingly into research as a sideline, or as background for my job. Then I met John Stands in Timber, who had concerned himself for something like 50 years in talking to and interviewing the great people of his tribe, in the effort to remember what it was that they felt was good about their history, and what it was that they remembered down into the present time.

I met John about ten years ago, when he was 75. He, at this point, posed me with a sort of dilemma but it was very soon settled, because I quit the government job and went to work helping him record on tape the memories of his people. And the experience was unusual, from the anthropological viewpoint, in that I did have a highly intellectual and a highly distinguished person to work with who had made history his life avocation. He was a very intellectual member of a, really, pre-literate tradition, and his great mission was to somehow record what the old people of the tribe knew of their history, and to get this written down, and to have a book of his own, before he died. Now, he had been consulted by very many researchers in his particular field, who had come to him for information, and he had served as an interpreter and all the rest. I'm sure some of you are aware that the Cheyennes had a rather flashy and lurid history, among the Indians of the Plains, and he was much in demand. But he had been looking for someone for a number of years who could really take the time to help him do this. And at this point tape recorders were just beginning to become functional, and I said, "Well, sure, I'll do what I can." So it wound up in my quitting the government job, and undergoing a number of other personal crises related to this particular situation. But it was an important thing, getting this man's material before he died. He may very well have been the last of his kind.

So I had an unusual informant; and an unusual work situation. When I was working with John he became very quickly adjusted to the fact that a reel of tape, a single one, would run about half an hour. And when he got going with Plains Indian traditions or stories that he was familiar with, he would talk for 25 minutes, then he would see the tape running out, and then he would sort of give me a wigwag to say, O.K., shut it off. Then we would turn it over, and we would go on again for another half hour on the other side. And aside from the most really unexpected interruptions, this man was able to talk all day long, for eight hours a day solid, or ten or twelve or whatever amount of time one had to sit and listen to him. It was very much like being in the clutches of an Ancient Mariner who could talk forever in terms of his particular passion, and you simply went out of your mind, you just could not sit and listen.

This was why nobody else had been able to do this particular job. The whole point and beauty of having a tape recorder was that one could record the whole show, and meanwhile sort of go to sleep, because he would wigwag after he had gotten through a perfectly endless story about a fight between the Cheyennes and the Shoshonis, say. You could then go back and type it off the bloody tape somewhat later, and you had the thing, in his own words, as he told it, and you had not had to sit there and stay awake the whole time, which I did find very difficult from time to time.

We set the house on fire once, and we blew up a trailer house once, when...We had two barrels of gasoline. One was gasoline, one was fuel oil, really. The type of oil that you use in a little stove in a trailer house. And John had at one time gone out and gotten a whole large five-gallon can of the wrong kind, and poured it into, unfortunately, the stove in the trailer where they were living with one of their grandchildren. They came to stay with me in this very isolated community in Montana, and the whole damn town practically went up in a huge rocking explosion. Anyway, this was just one of the episodes of the winter.

("Did you get that on tape, Margot?") No! We did get it on tape when the house caught fire, because I've never known how to keep a coal fire burning properly.

But anyway, we got <u>most</u> of it on tape. We had something like 30 reels of tape going, which of course John could use up in about four days of average performance. At which point I would send him back off to his agency town to -- you know, well, I had to do something with him, I just didn't have 500 reels of tape at this point. And I would then type it off. I can't type. I can type with two fingers, looking all the time. But anyway, he spoke rather slowly, which was good. So we got hundreds and hundreds of pages of initial narrative from this. And as soon as I had typed the tapes, he came back and began all over again, and in four days I had another two weeks' work, and this went for essentially about a year.

This brings me to the subject of tape recorders, pro and con. The advantage, as I think Jack was saying, of working with a person who puts you to sleep, is that you can go back and listen when you're awake. I think the great disadvantage, as I'm sure everyone here is aware, is that you get much more stuff than you can use, and that most of it has to be gotten rid of. And often all you've done by taping is to postpone the issue of sorting out what is essentially useful and what is not. I think in my particular situation it was a very fine thing that we did have a tape recorder. I suspect that in many people's situations, a tape recorder is more of a hazard than an asset, because I think you get so much that you don't really need, and the old selective process has got to come into effect sometime or other. I think sometimes the sooner the better. My father Henry Pringle used to not even take a notebook to an interview. He said it made people nervous. The thing to do was study the person very long and hard first, and listen to him when he was talking, and then rush out and write down everything he said afterwards.

In my case of dealing with a particularly single-minded individual who very much wanted to tell this material, the tape recorder was essential, because nobody could have stood it for months and months without some mechanical device to help him get it all down. Nobody who was not a dedicated, passionate Cheyenne Indian historian could possibly sit and listen to this for more than 24 hours straight hand running. (Besides, he had diabetes, and he'd get so fascinated with history that he'd forget to take his insulin and then he'd go into insulin shock, and we had various other difficulties. On Indian reservations in the western part of this country in the winter, it becomes quite difficult to get to hospitals in times of critical personal illness, and things of this sort. And then, of course, the trailer blew up.)

But I am trying to say that tape recording can be a tremendous asset in recording a total story. And it can also be a liability in postponing the act of creative judgment, often till the material is cold.

Finally, I would like to comment on technique. If a notebook makes a man nervous, a tape recorder makes him worse. The damn thing (excuse me) can be very intrusive at times. I think it's been brought out by my predecessors on this program. There you are talking to this evil machine, which is taking down everything you say. Speaking from the anthropological point of view, people used to hate to have their pictures taken, because someone had a part of your soul and he was likely to take it away and do very bad magic with this particular part of yourself. I think very many people feel this way about tape recording at the present time; if you say something, there is the Thing grinding away. Well, nobody feels comfortable with the situation unless he's been with it for quite some time. So anything that can be done to diminish the tape recorder on the scene is a good thing. I've personally found that if you have two or three people talking to each other, (and never mind the quality of the sound) -- if you can somehow get something going, in which the tape recorder stays in the background, you may get a lot of bumps and scratches and stuff on the sound track, but you may have some real material, which never comes out if people feel they are personally talking with this Awful Thing. I think all of us have had the experience of trying to get particular material on tape, and the moment you turn it off, everybody begins to talk at a great rate. And here's all this, exactly what you wanted to have on tape, coming out the moment that you turn it off, because nobody really wants to be on the verbal record. Anyway, my experience was that if you could get maybe the tape recorder over here, and you as an interviewer over in the corner, and the microphone somewhere unobtrusive, you could very often get the person to talk to you, and forget about it. And maybe the quality of the sound would be very bad, but you might get a lot more information. As a second point, my experience was that you could sometimes get two people talking to each other. At which point the quality of the sound would be even worse, but you might get a great deal more information. Very often the quality of the sound decreases as the quality of the information goes up. So that some of the most interesting material I've recorded (aside from John) has been from people talking to each other, sometimes in another language, which I could not understand a single word of, which gave them a great sense of saying what they wanted to say to each other, and not to me. Later on I had an interpreter translate from the tape, and give the narrative as it appeared between two people, who really did almost forget that this machine was cranking away. They knew it, but the intrusive effect was less.

In looking back at what I've been trying to say, I think we have to consider what we're trying to get. Are we working with a very dedicated person, who is willing to go through this performance for a long period of time? If not, the minimizing of machinery, or of anything which upsets the person giving information, is very important. It's very easy to let the machine take over, to the point where you're sort of thrusting microphones into people's chins. I don't think very many people who have not had years of public experience are able to carry on in a normal fashion when something is stuffed into their mouth that they're supposed to tell the ultimate truth to. So technique is important in getting worthwhile material to begin with, and not dozens of hours of nothing. And then of course the editing problem comes up, later on.

PHILIP CROWL: I preface my introduction of our next speaker by advising those who don't know it, and that probably includes all of you, that we at the University of Nebraska are at the moment undertaking the job of forming one university out of two. The University of Nebraska and the former University of Omaha have recently merged. None of us really know what to do about this, but we all have a feeling we should do something, and at least fraternize with each other, if nothing more. And it is for that and many other reasons that I am particularly happy that our final panelist has come down from Omaha to be with us this evening. He is Wayne Wheeler, Professor of Sociology and Director of the Urban Studies Center at the University of Nebraska at Omaha. He is a community sociologist, with a special interest in ethnic communities. His field work has included work among Czechs and Swedes. I guess it's still all right to say Swedes, isn't it? One never knows these days. Czechs and Swedes and Acadians in the United States and in other communities in Sweden. He has also been active in opinion survey research. And with all these credentials, I think he is eminently qualified to finish up this panel discussion. Wayne.

WAYNE WHEELER: Thanks. I was earlier defined as anchor man on this panel, and I discovered how anchor men are chosen for panels. They're chosen in the same way that secretaries of groups are chosen -- they don't show up for the organization meeting. [laughter]

The interview has two kinds of functions in my view. The most important, immediate and obvious function of the interview in sociology is that of data collection. And of course Jack Siegman has discussed this at some length.

A second function derives from the fact that the interview as a method is also the essence of the subject matter of sociology. That is, the interview is a circumstance in which social interaction takes place. Because the interviewer and respondent engage in social relations, they comprise a group. As a group they engage in social interaction, and as they engage in social interaction they are subject to all the pressures and expectations that occur in social relations generally. In addition to being subject to general expectations from one another, there are specific expectations and conventions in the interview situation itself.

For the sociologist-interviewer, there is an additional accompanying feature. As with all interaction the sociologist learns to know himself better. The sociologist comes to see himself as the respondent sees him and insofar as this occurs, the sociologist is able to perfect his techniques of interviewing and his comprehension of social relationships and social processes.

I think in general the interview techniques that have been most useful to me stem from my point about heightening social awareness and response. Involved in the interview as I've used it is what we in sociology call participant-observation. This is somewhat like the ethnographic method that many anthropologists use, and is a little less "scientific" than the open-ended questionnaires or schedules that Jack talked about. The participant-observer is in a position to relate the actual behavior of individuals to what they say has happened, and what they say they have done or witnessed.

Starting here, then, the sociologist is able to make his interviews more productive as research by making his questions more attuned to the realities of the situation in which he is doing his work. He is able to ask questions that are relevant to the situation and to the information which the respondent has to impart.

The sociologist also finds especially relevant as part of his technique the conventional definitions of what the interview is, and to exploit these conventional definitions for his own data-gathering purposes. Now the conventional definitions of the interview, of course, are all around us because we see interviewing going on all the time, on television. We, ourselves, are interviewed many times during our lives.

A further aspect of the interview as technique that I've found exceedingly useful is related to participant-observation. This is in establishing by the interviewer equality with the respondent, and Jack touched upon this problem too. If the interviewer establishes equality with the respondent, he refrains from being a social psychological threat to the respondent. As a consequence of minimizing this threat, the interviewer will find that the respondent is more willing and more able to impart the depth and the breadth of information which the interviewer desires.

There are several corollaries of establishing equality between the interviewer and the respondent. An interviewer can be threatening in two main ways. The first of these is probably more obvious than the second. He can threaten a respondent if the respondent feels that the interviewer is condescending or patronizing, or is unwilling to accept the respondent's statements at the level that the respondent expects them to be accepted. This is the most obvious kind of threat.

However, there is another kind of threat that arises from a situation in which the respondent is of a higher social status than the interviewer. In this instance, the respondent can feel threatened because the interviewer does not have at stake the same amount of prestige as the respondent. Consequently the respondent can feel threatened if he feels that the interviewer will violate the canons of confidentiality. The respondent can feel threatened if he feels that the interviewer does not have as much stake in the information imparted as the respondent has. Further, he can feel threatened if he feels that he is wasting his time with the interviewer. The interviewer can represent a threat if he is not prepared for the interview, or if he does not, and this is an important key for interviewing persons of high status, or if he does -- the interviewer can represent a threat if he does not represent an organization or person who has prestige equal to that of the respondent or the respondent's organization. I would think this can be an important matter for historians who expect to interview persons who hold or who have held very high positions of power and prestige.

Another general technique of interviewing that is very useful is what might be called depth-interviewing. The interviewer who does depth-interviewing essentially helps the respondent to get over his psychological hang-ups in such a way that he is able to remember events, times, and places which for one reason or another he is apt to forget or suppress. Many times the interviewer will be confronted with acquiring information about situations which have been very traumatic to the respondent. In these instances, the interviewer must establish himself as something akin to a therapist, as someone who is sympathetic in the usual sense of the word, and by virtue of the interactive nature of the interview, can achieve a considerable amount of empathy with the respondent.

The interviewer must be careful about placing himself in a position of judging the truth or falsity of statements within the interview situation as such. The value and relevance of his data depend upon a large number of interviews and interpretations of personalities and events. The objective analysis of a quantity of data is the point at which the relative truth or falsity of the information is determined. The objective analyst, who is not always the interviewer, makes the determination as to what did or did not happen, or what the person is like, or is not like.

One of the prime tenets, and this follows from the previous point, of interviewing is that it takes information to get information. If one builds a picture from a series of interviews, one does not necessarily impart to respondents that he has certain information, but he uses previously gained information as a means for formulating questions for respondents, which in turn helps him to broaden his knowledge of the subject of the investigation.

The tape recorder is extremely valuable in the conduct of interviews. The best interviewing, I feel, that I've done has been in the presence of a tape recorder. This is because rapport has been established and the respondent allowed to understand that the recorder is an instrument which will allow him to be fully heard, and allow him to state his case fully. The actual process of recording the interview does not interfere with the interview itself. The interviewer is free to concentrate on the theoretical and data collecting perspectives which motivate his research and upon the techniques that are necessary for maintaining the continuity of the interview itself. He can concentrate on the respondent so that the respondent can get a sense of his own importance in the interview, and the importance of the information which he has to impart. The tape recorder is useful because it allows the interviewer to follow up the subtle clues of information obtained in the direct social relationship that exists between him and the respondent, without his getting bogged down in writing out the interview or risking the breakdown of rapport.

From the point of view of the respondent, the greatest value of the tape recorder is that he is assured that he will not be partially quoted or misquoted, or that the selective process that Margot talked about will not take place. His words will go on record precisely as he intends them to go on record. The tape recorded interview, because it is less selective, can be subjected to analysis by persons of varying perspectives and varying points of view. And furthermore, the nuances and inflections of language are also available in the tape recording.

The real value of the tape recorder, to sum up, is that it allows the interview to be recorded without the mechanics of the recording hampering the social relation. It helps to maintain the rapport between the interviewer and the respondent. And it enables the interviewer to concentrate on the information-gathering functions of the interview.

I believe in making transcripts and in not keeping all copies of transcripts in the same building, or in the same house trailer. There are other ways of preserving transcripts. Transcripts can be deposited in relevant archives, they can be microfilmed and placed in secure places such as my grandmother's closet, who, by the way, was born in a sod house and went through the blizzard of '88. In an era of academic empires built on single personalities or single events, the transcripts of tape recordings are often preserved by being sat upon by project directors who act as mother hens and who incubate them until they hatch into the traditional academic rewards. /laughter/

In my personal view the chief principle in preserving transcripts should be to diffuse duplicates as widely as possible to prevent the loss of information contained therein, and this is even more important, to enable as wide a range of disciplinary perspectives as possible to be brought to bear upon the data that are contained in the transcripts. In an age of mass opinion survey and similar data gathering methods, the records of interviews are being increasingly codified and computerized. The data bank, or information center, for example, for metropolitan areas as a means of preserving data and making them readily available to a wide range of scholars and public policy makers, is a major consideration in the preservation of interview data.

Sociologists have a wide variety of means of incorporating interview data into published studies. If the interviews are the result of survey research, then the coding of responses and the tabulation and statistical analysis of large amounts of data can be incorporated into published studies without fear, for example, of violating rules of confidentiality. In my own case, because my major interest is in community sociology or what some people would call social anthropology, and because I wish to convey through direct quotations from respondents their values, their social psychological views, and the nature of the social organization and social systems in which they live, I find appropriate longer or shorter quotations that help the reader to place himself in the social context that is being depicted, and at the same time to gain a detached view of what it is really like to have lived in a particular time and place.

Of course, the social scientific analysis must use theoretical and conceptual perspectives to organize interview data that enable the reader to gain omniscience that is very difficult or impossible for the native of a community or the participant in an event, or the associate of a personality to achieve. While the sociologist and the historian often have different disciplinary perspectives and objectives in their analyses of data, they will often find common cause in the study of social change.

In studying social change, I've found that interview data coupled with those of participant-observation are useful in determining the recent manifestations of trends, the beginnings of which are recorded in documents such as letters, life histories, ledgers, organization reports, minutes of meetings, and the like. Actually the interview and the transcript of it are technical modes of extending the perceptions of human organization, personalities and events that have always existed to one degree or another in written records.

WELSCH: I do have a question. It's really addressed about as much to you as it is to the panel members, and I think we touched on it up here several times tonight. At Bloomington, Indiana, last week at the American Folklore Society meeting, we had a long and heated session dealing with ethics in field work. And it centered primarily around the use of the tape recorder. I haven't resolved in my own mind, but at least now I'm asking myself the question, and I hear the same thing here from the other panel members. I, too, practice this thing of making the tape recorder as unobtrusive as possible. But now that I'm thinking about this, I hear these statements that are kind of scary: putting the tape recorder apart so that the informant says things that he would not normally say with the tape recorder in front of him. I think this isn't quite so dramatic in Jack's case, where he extrapolates material from his corpus, but in my case, at least, where I use the material that I collect, I wonder about the ethics of this. Is it a just thing to do to your informant? Now, on one hand, you can make guarantees of security, but I wonder if these aren't irresponsible.

I've worked for the last few years investigating traditional techniques for manufacturing potable alcohol, and there's a very interesting pattern developing. There are those alcohol manufacturers who know the law and disobey it, and they're not going to talk to you at any rate. In fact, when I was photographing log cabins in Sioux reservations out in South Dakota in the summer, and Indian agent said, If you get close to a deserted log cabin and you smell mash, retreat hastily because the Sioux believe that the only good revenuer is a dead revenuer. It was kind of interesting. Then on the other hand, there are those who do not know the law, but feel that they do. There is a very real folk system of beliefs about alcohol manufacture and I suspect that you share most of these. For example, you can manufacture as much beer as you want, you can manufacture 200 gallons of wine. Some people believe that you can manufacture distilled alcohol for family use. All of these things are wrong. It is absolutely forbidden to manufacture any beer. It is forbidden to own a still. It is forbidden to manufacture any wine unless you own a federal permit.

So I find myself interviewing these people and becoming privy to incriminating evidence, and so I've entered into a dialogue with the Internal Revenue Service about this problem, and they have said that if they find themselves in a position where a violation is reported, and I have information regarding this violation, they will go after that information. They have to. No matter how small amount it even is. If someone is violating the law in terms of two or three gallons of wine, they still have to pursue it to the full length, and while right now they are not after wine and beer manufacturers, which I'm primarily interested in at this point, they're only interested in distillers, because this is where the prime resource of revenue is, the time may come when they want that information. At that time they would not be the least bit reluctant to get a court order out after it. This is being tested, I believe, right now with the girl who wrote the series of articles on the West Coast about drug usage on campus. They demanded that she name her informants. She would not, and I believe that right now she is either serving her term or it is being appealed. So we can guarantee our informants security, but I think we must understand that we are then either putting ourselves in jeopardy, or them, and we have to, I think, realize this problem at any rate.

CROWL: Any questions from the floor or comments?

BENISON: I have a statement and a question addressed to both Mr. Welsch and Mrs. Liberty. First the statement. I'd like to say that not all historians are interested in famous people, but there are many historians who believe in the anonymous, particularly the people who deal with ethnic history, people who deal with questions of immigration, and of course the people who are interested in the history of artifacts. So not all of us are interested in so-called famous or important people. Indeed, in the history of science, you only write half a history if you only deal with the Nobel laureates. Or you'll not learn very much of molecular biology if you only deal with Max Delbrook and forget the guys who never achieved the famous quality that Delbrook has achieved.

The second statement is a reference to sound. I think we are too cavalier about sound. But sound is the one thing that I feel that we've not paid too much attention to, and it has much to give us. For example, I think we make a mistake in not saving the complete tapes of people, because these tapes are psychologically revealing. You know that you can take an explative and give it one inflection and it will be a term of endearment, and you can take an explative and give it another inflection, and it will be an invitation to war. And I think sound is one of the aspects of history that historians have not yet examined. We speak a great deal about environment, and yet one of the largest components of our environment we pay very little attention to, namely sound. We live in an envelope of sound. And I think oral historians could pay a great deal of attention merely to recording aspects of sound of daily life, including speech. I would say the sound of a village, I would say the sound of Lincoln, Nebraska, in 1890 is quite different from the sound of Lincoln, Nebraska, today.

The question is: I'd like to know how Mr. Welsch and Mrs. Liberty prepared for interviews with pre-literate peoples, or peoples who have no literature or writing background. In other words, how are they prepared for their interviews? What kind of materials do they use and how do they conduct their interviews?

LIBERTY: I'd like to say first that I've never prepared adequately for this kind of interview, and I think that what you say is extremely important in that very much, at least from my point of view, the message is not in the written word. And I think that therefore we have to get back in mind to the issue of oral versus written language. I couldn't agree with you more. This is highly significant, and much more should be done with it. In my situation I was not prepared. I got sort of catapulted into the position of doing what I could with what I had at the time. Much of this has been lost, which could have been utilized to a much greater extent. So that I think what you're saying about the message of recorded language or recorded sound is extremely important, and that not enough of it was done with it in my case. I think that people who are working effectively in linguistics today are taking more account of this, as I understand it, and that this material is being analyzed from this point of view. But certainly I agree completely that not enough has been done, and that further preparation should be done. I think that sometimes one is in a position of getting a body of material when one can, under what circumstances one can, and it isn't done the way it ought to be. But sometimes it's better to do it than not to do it, even if it's done sort of horseback, in a sort of galloping fashion. You do what you can at the time, wishing very much that you had done more. I think this is a very important point that you've made. I think oral versus written language is something that we're all concerned with here, because once you reduce a spoken communication to lines of type, you've lost a great deal. I think this is very important.

WELSCH: Well, first of all I'd like to say that it's part of the folklore of history that you deal with important people. That may not be true, but that's part of the folklore, at any rate. In preparing for the kind of work I did, for example, with sod houses, I had worked with other forms of houses before. I was interested in the construction of the house, the construction techniques, the form of the house when it was finished, and what life in the house was like. So in that broad framework, I had some questions I knew very specifically I wanted to ask about construction. Then, in the way of preliminary research, I read everything I could get hold of and the State Historical Society here has a collection of almost a thousand sod house pictures. So I could begin to get an idea of the construction of the house, the kind of questions that I wanted to ask, and the kinds of artifacts that were in the house that I could ask about. And then, from there on, it was a matter of developing my questionnaire as I talked to these people. First, two things. The construction of the house, and the form of the house when it was finished were to be put on computer cards, and so I had a set of questions that I asked them going through this, and then any additional data that came up. I left as much room as I could on the cards, so that I added things throughout the interview. Then the last section, life in the sod house, I just pretty much let them go on and tell me about things, steering them as much as I could on questions I specifically wanted to have answered from the questions that had arisen from the prior reading and examination of photographs, and from the interviews that had preceded that one.

BEN FRANK, Marine Corps headquarters: I must say, this concept of... we've got a great new tool, and we've got a new means of recording history, and yet we've got to hide the microphone, and we've got to do something to take the interviewee's mind off the recording. I must say, I certainly don't have as much experience with this as many of the members of the Association here in conducting interviews. However, I must say that I've never yet had this fear show up, and I don't know why it should be a matter of concern on the part of anybody who is conducting an interview that the tape recorder and the microphone is an intrusive matter.

WHEELER: I'd like to comment on that, and I can see in terms of your question that at least I may have been misunderstood. I never, and would never, under any circumstances, hide a microphone or hide a tape recorder. My procedure is to let the respondent know that it's there, but as one gets into the interview situation, the tape recorder continues to be there, but does not interfere with the main objective of the interview, and that is gathering the data, and maintaining the rapport in order to get the data.

CROWL: If I may interject just a point here, I think the placement -- this has been my experience -- the placement of the machine, and particularly the placement of the microphone, is, oddly enough, very important in the degree of relaxation which the interviewee or the respondent feels. From my own experience, and for what it's worth, a coffee table was the best thing. It was low; it was out of the direct vision, that is, the interviewee and the interviewer look at each other, and if this gadget is at a lower level, they rather miss it. The worst possible experiences I've had in this connection were when the machine had to be placed on an office-sized desk immediately in front of the man who was being interviewed. For some reason, well, for obvious reasons, I guess, this almost always made him clam up. I think these little matters of technique sometimes tell the difference between a good interview and a lousy one.

QUESTION: I'd like to ask Mrs. Liberty, in this depth interview, how do you know whether this is a concoction of his imagination, or whether it has some veracity?

LIBERTY: Well, that's a very interesting question, because for my purposes at the time that I began collecting this, I sure didn't know. And then when it came to the matter of publishing this with a reputable university press, they were very much concerned with whether this was verifiable. So I did have to do five years' additional research, looking up everything he said, in the published record concerning the Cheyenne Indian wars and other things. So that there was a great deal of checking and counter-checking at this time. I think to some extent, sometimes what people tell you as maybe perfect poppycock can also be extremely significant, because they're telling you that at this time. And maybe either they believe it, or they think they're getting you to believe it. Either one of these things is sometimes interesting in terms of the situation. In other words, what is absolute truth? Are you after absolute truth? Is absolute truth ever obtainable from any human being? I think it's highly unlikely. And that all you can ever get to is an approximation from one person's point of view. In other words, maybe some great windy that you were told by some individual at some time may be more significant to what you're trying to find out in certain areas, like anthropology, than something which is provable, documented, historical fact. In other words, somebody tells you something at some time, maybe this in itself is valuable, because it comes up. My depth situation would have been valuable if this man had been a total liar, because he bothered to spend a couple of years really talking from his heart all the way. At which point, what he said, spending that much time talking that intensely and passionately, would have given a picture of a person at a certain time, which I think would have had a value of its own. It turned out that it was historically valid. But that was a fringe benefit.

COLMAN: I wonder if there's something instructive about the sort of questions that we've been asking the panel? They gave us a rather broad framework in which to operate, yet the questions seem to have been of two types. One has been related to the production of recordings, as contrasted to the content of recordings, the other the old problem of evaluating what is said. Mr. Wheeler very early in the discussion, in what I thought was a very potent way, raised the problem of the ethical framework of the interview. Do ethical considerations go beyond the legal stipulations that govern the interviews? None of us followed it up, and I wonder why. Is it because it really isn't that important?

SIEGMAN: I think it's a very good point in that in many ways codes of ethics have become subjects of discussions. I think all of us make some sort of decisions on our own. For example, in my own study, I told management, as I told the workers, that the subject and the content of every interview was private, and even though management, for example, had asked many times to see the interviews, they were told that this cannot be done; the assurance of privacy, and also privacy and other factors all would be maintained. Now, in terms of the other point that Roger brought up. In my own studies, I've never really been faced with this problem in terms of public knowledge and its consequences both for the researcher and for the respondent. However, this is a very significant problem in sociology, especially for those sociologists who work in the area of deviant behavior, drug addiction, criminal behavior, and so on, and this has been in California and in New York a great subject, and I'm not sure as yet of its resolution. However, it has been brought to the courts; it has not been resolved as yet. I think the reason why we're probably a little touchy about handling it is because I think most of us really at this point don't know how, and there is really no @odification as yet of the situation.

Also I think a sociologist may have less problems than you would, Roger, or you would, Margot, in that we usually have a large sample. The anonymity then is almost assured, and no respondent is ever identified. The problem, however, is much more crucial when you have single respondents.

ORAL HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM

Charles Morrissey, Chairman

CHARLES MORRISSEY: This session has as its title Oral History in the Classroom. Quite unintentionally, I find myself on the podium here. I told Louis that I am teaching for the first time a seminar in oral history techniques, and I needed some help from others who had done this sort of thing, and so I'm chairman. And I have a hunch that those of us at this end of the room will depend more on all of you; many of you I'm sure have had experience that would be very helpful to us. Let me just outline by way of introduction what I have tried to do as a neophyte teaching oral history. I should explain I have only five students, two of them graduate students, two of the other senior history majors, and the fifth is an auditor, an English professor at a neighboring college. I teach at the University of Vermont, and she teaches English at Trinity College in Burlington.

We started out the seminar by discussing how historians use conventional sources -- newspapers, diaries, correspondence, government reports, and so forth. And from that we moved to the subject of evidence from memory, as I put it; that is, reading memoirs, and recollections, and evaluating them for their reliability, and how historians have dealt with people who have written memoirs but in them have mis-stated or misinterpreted the events they were a part of, and so forth. Some of you might know Dorothy Borg's book, The Far Eastern Crisis, 1933-1938, in which she discusses FDR's quarantine speech in October, 1937, and she points out how six or seven of the Roosevelt memoirists made the point which you all know, that FDR was horrified by the response against his speech, and retreated somewhat from urging this nation to take a more internationalist position. Well, then she points out how the memoirists were wrong. If you look at the newspapers reporting Roosevelt's speech, you find very few actually were critical of it, and a great many were in favor of it. But how could all these people be wrong? That's the type of problem that I put in front of my students. For example, we read books like Saul Benison's recent biography, Dean Albertson's book on Claude Wickard, Felix Frankfurter Reminisces, and we read some of Oscar Lewis' stuff, the Paris Review essays. We spent a long session on Mr. Manchester's book and the controversy pertaining to it. To consider the problems of writing recent history, I put in front of these students such things as John Hersey's recent book, The Algiers Motel Incident. They all read Emmett Hughes' Ordeal by Power, and some of the critical commentary written about that book -- Richard Rovere's piece in the New Yorker, for example, and one that Malcolm Moos did in the Political

Science Quarterly. We've used the Proceedings of the oral history colloquia. They've read the various and scattered literature about oral history in all its phases that I've been able to get to them.

Also, surprisingly, there are a great many local resources that I've been able to call upon. For example, I had one of my students read Rosenman's Working With Roosevelt, and Sam Hand, my colleague, is writing a biography of Rosenman, so I can bring Sam across the hall about three steps and have him sit down and discuss the question of how much reliability lies in Rosenman's memoirs. Dr. Paul French of the College of Medicine at the University of Vermont is doing oral history interviewing; he's done about six interviews so far on the history of that college. And I had him come in. Two days after the election in November, we had three newspaper reporters who covered the 1968 campaign in Vermont, and also went to both national political conventions, discuss how reliable and accurate they felt their reporting was. That's something we've done twice now. We did it in 1966 after those elections and again this year, and it's a very interesting, entertaining and informative session. Next Tuesday when I go back, my students are dividing into teams and my guest next Tuesday afternoon will be first assistant to our retiring governor, Philip Hoff, who was the first Democrat in over 100 years to be elected in the State of Vermont, first in 1962, and then again in 1964 and 1966. Two of my students will interview Mr. Ben Collins, Hoff's first assistant. I'll run the tape recorder. I haven't burdened them with the physical superintending of the interview, and they are going through this past week the ordeal of trying to prepare what questions do you ask and so forth. The following week the person who pretty much put together Vermont's response to the Kerner report will come in to be interviewed in similar circumstances.

Our governor was coming back from the governors conference in Cincinnati, read the Kerner report, and since we have a Negro population in our state that totals I think about 500 people (is that right, Sam?) in a state of 420,000, he felt that perhaps there was something we could do, and he and Mayor Lindsay got together to bring some black children up from New York into Vermont for the summer, the point being not so much to help the black kids, that's important, but to educate the white Vermonters about the dimension of this national problem. A very controversial program, I might add. He came in for a great deal of criticism from more conservative quarters. But whether or not this program continues and so forth is an open question. The person who has headed the program will be interviewed on that. The reason I'm doing the interviews in class is that we don't have sufficient equipment to turn the students loose with tape recorders to wander around Burlington or the State of Vermont or elsewhere. And also I have the feeling that I've cooled my heels so many times in so many oral history situations waiting for the person who agreed to do the interview, and 60 minutes going by while you're waiting in the outer office. I thought it would be unfair to turn some of these kids loose on people they might like to do and people who should be interviewed. It's like assigning a paper to a student when there's nothing in the library on the subject you've assigned the paper about. So I'm having my people come into the class and being interviewed in somewhat phony circumstances, but I think for classroom purposes this is nonetheless valid. I might mention too, that I did an interview a week ago yesterday and today, two sessions, in Auburn, New York, the first interview of a new project I'm concerned with. And I brought that in last Tuesday to explain the circumstances that brought me there and why I was asking certain questions, and so forth. And I think that was quite valuable.

I might say some of the students are really turned on by oral history. But one is definitely turned off. She can't wait until the course is over. I can't wait until the course is over so I can get rid of her. She just doesn't believe that what most of us believe in is actually a practicality, that you can get people to sit down and talk candidly about matters of historical importance. Let me just add one more remark on this theme and then I'll call upon the two panelists here to kick around these ideas. I got very interested when I got to Vermont with efforts to improve the teaching of history in our schools, all the way from primary school, where my kids are, through to graduate students in college. Our teaching is so bad that they had Fathers' Day on Lincoln's birthday in my home town, and I went down to the first grade to visit my son's class, and the teacher was reading them a story about Abraham Lincoln. She had them all gathered in a semicircle, so I joined the circle. And the teacher said, Mr. Lincoln was President during the war when the man wrote the "Star Spangled Banner." But what primarily excited me is that there is a move afoot that I support very much to get students away from the textbooks and reading various documents and other materials, many of which conflict with each other, and the students therefore are supposed to interpret evidence that doesn't fit together very nicely, that's not suggested for him already as is the case in so many textbooks.

Oral history interviews are documents of a sort, and we often have people offering conflicting testimony, and since there's a certain vividness in oral history tapes, I've wondered if oral history as a classroom tool is not a workable idea. For example, I'd like to have two people in Burlington, Vermont: One to talk for five or ten minutes on a tape about all the wonderful things the New Deal did for Burlington, and then someone else come on and talk about all the terrible things it did to Burlington. Then use this for half my lecture in the U.S. Survey course on what the New Deal was all about and why people got very emotional either supporting it or criticizing it. And perhaps there are other ways in which this can be used. I simply mention this as a second minor theme as to how oral history might be used in the classroom. The first major theme in this discussion would be how do you teach oral history, if indeed you can teach it. Now I'm sure others are doing what I'm trying to do now. We know that Jim Mink has been involved with a library oral history institute at UCLA last summer. Gould Colman has taught oral history at Cooperstown. I think all of us have been involved in the business of trying to train people to go out and do interviews. So in the larger context I think you can see how the classroom situation fits into the general training of oral history interviewers. I'll ask Saul to speak for a little while, and then Jim, and then we'll throw it open for general discussion.

<u>SAUL BENISON</u>: I really don't know where to begin because I was asked to talk about oral history in the classroom. What that precisely meant I didn't know. And speaking to Charlie yesterday hurriedly didn't inform me further. And speaking to Jim was no help. So in a sense I come to

you unprepared. But I'd like to tell you of some of my experiences and some of the experiences of friends of mine and perhaps to use those to underline what I conceive oral history to be and how it should be used, in what direction it should go. I think a lot of us looking at oral history tend to be mesmerized by the technology and tend to date the beginnings of oral history for that technology. Or even going back a step further in time, to my very wonderful preceptor, Professor Allan Nevins, and giving him credit for the oral history idea. I'd like to suggest that these are one of the roots of oral history. That is, a most recent root, the root of Nevins, the root of a development of a new technology. But there are older roots and there are deeper roots to oral history which are significant for those of us who would take oral history into the classroom.

I would like to suggest that one of the oldest components of oral history is autobiography, and that has been going on for a very, very long time. Going back to Greek and Roman times, its renaissance as an art form during the Renaissance Period, its further development during the Enlightenment as one of the vehicles for finding the development of the human mind. Indeed, you might say that Herder and Goethe had projected oral history programs in 1790 to illustrate by human autobiography the development and unfolding of the human mind. Now this certainly is one of the roots. Another, of course, is the contributions that have been made by other social science disciplines other than history. And I would like to bring to your attention particularly the role of the anthropologist. The anthropologist has been doing oral history for a very, very long time. And I think one of the most charming descriptions of oral history is by George Bird Grinnell in the introduction to his Pawnee Folk Tales where he speaks of going to see Eagle Chief, who was Chief of the Pawnees at that time, in 1888, and suggested what amounted to an oral history program to get at the history of a people who had no written literature. And the chief saw the validity of the program, and invited Grinnell to collect the folk tales. I might point out that people, psychologists working in the history of psychology, have collected the autobiographies of psychologists to demonstrate the development of their new field. And in 1930 Carl Murchison published three volumes called A History of Psychology and Autobiography, and this has still been going on because only last year a volume was added to that distinguished number of volumes. Now this is certainly another of the roots.

And I might say that just before Allan Nevins, growing out of New Deal activity, we had an extraordinary number of oral history programs under the WPA project. And for the older of those in this room, I would just chance to remind you of the collections that Ben Bodkin did of the reminiscences of old slaves. There are literally hundreds of feet of these interviews in the Library of Congress, and for a short version, there is the beautiful book that the University of Chicago Press brought out called Lay My Burden Down. I might say one of the great histories of the Negro in Virginia grew out of an oral history project in 1940, which is entirely based on oral history interviews, called The Negro in Virginia, by the WPA Federal Writers' Project.

Now the reason I mention this is to indicate that there is an extraordinary literature that can be used in the classroom for purposes of instruction. Not only the Murchison volume, not only the Bodkin volume, but volumes that deal with the theoretical problems that we, as historians, have to face.

Now, in effect, if you go to the classroom, you have a literature which you can bring with you for training purposes, outside of the literature that you would depend on as historians dealing with particular problems. Now let's go to the classroom and I'll tell you how I conceive a project, how it works out, and on what levels a project can work out. Let me say to begin with that I do not believe in training oral historians. I believe in the training of historians using oral history techniques. And this is quite a different kettle of fish. I believe that oral history has much to give to the training of historians, and I would suggest that one of its contributions, one of its great contributions that oral history can make is in the training of historians. Because, in a sense, by the use of the tape recorder, you have made of recent history a laboratory, a place where you can examine recent history, a place which brings into conjunction the primary documentary material which you seek out before you interview, the secondary material that you seek out before you interview, the living memory of the person who helps interpret, and gives the first ordering with the help of the historian, and first production with the help of the historian of this large mass of data. And it also gives an opportunity, as I will point out by some of the new activities of the American Institute of Physics, of testing and developing materials for future interviews.

Now one of the ways that oral history can be used on a graduate level is to establish seminars around particular topics. And I would suggest that these seminars be small seminars. There is a virtue of this in that you get seven or eight young graduate students who immediately immerse themselves in a secondary material, since they're dealing with the same over-all problem that is universal to them all. And then this material becomes differentiated by the primary materials that they have to seek out in doing the interviews of particular people. And so the detail that modifies and qualifies broad tendencies of development in history are not only brought out, but they are also shared. In addition, I think one of the functions of oral history, which is sometimes overlooked, is that it can be used in an extraordinary way to enhance the libraries of various institutions that historians are attached to. In other words, the oral historian also has, if you will, an archival function of gathering materials prior to making his oral history interview, and by the way, helping to order these materials, make inventories of them. Because I think the memoir is enhanced when it is put in conjunction with the primary and secondary materials.

On the graduate level I think it is important for the instructor of the seminar to do an oral history interview first. Now for this he needs the permission of the person whom he is interviewing. In other words, the person whom he is interviewing has to be told that he is a guinea pig in a teaching situation, just as a patient has to be told that he will be demonstrated in a hospital at a given clinic before young interns and residents who are learning their craft. I think you can get such permission. I know I have been successful in getting such permission. I know that Charles Weiner of the American Institute of Physics has been successful in getting such permission. Now what you do in the seminar hour is essentially from time to time to play the hour of interview that you have done, and make the students aware of the primary and secondary materials that you have used, and then to put yourself up as a target to answer, "Why, on the basis of this material, did you develop these questions?" Because one of the most important things in oral history, or indeed in any other history, is formulating the valid historical questions, the valid historical problem, instead of question, to be pursued. This is indeed a very difficult and extraordinary task. And I don't want to minimize the difficulties of the task.

Now once you have done that, and this goes on, say, for a six months' period, then you can send your students out to perform their own memoir. One of the validities of this is not only that they will have to do the research, the gathering, the interviewing, but also most important, the editing. I think that one of the things that young historians have to learn is that their material, somehow or other, has to be conveyed, it has to be read, it has to be in a readable and understandable form. And so I have grave doubts when people speak to me broadly of raw materials. I cringe when raw materials are mentioned. Now frequently we have been content, as oral historians, to consider our job done when our material is gathered, edited, and put to the archives to sleep. And Dr. Weiner of the American Institute of Physics has instituted an innovation I think that bears following. He's been able to do this mostly because he's been funded by the National Science Foundation, who supports his project. After an interview is done, Dr. Weiner will ask the narrator, and I like that term better than interviewee, to give an hour's talk about his career or problems in his career to an audience of his peers. And what happens in the course of this kind of exchange are a whole series of new critical problems that the oral historian can take for the development of his next interview. It's another aspect of a schooling process that could be used in the training of your oral historians.

Now, finally, I'd like to tell you of a program that I have recently become involved in, in which oral history is used on a secondary-school level, and for a purpose of educating drop-outs who want to go to college. There is at Queen's College, federally funded, a program called SEEK, which is run by a retired probation officer named Joe Mulholland. And Joe Mulholland deals with children of the ghetto, Puerto Rican children, white children, black children, who have dropped out of high school and who now, at age 18 to 24, think they want a college education. And somehow or other they have to be prepared to be accepted into college. And I persuaded Joe Mulholland to use oral history for the training of his young drop-outs. And the training program is quite simple. One of the problems that Mulholland has is that his students don't like to read. No one is sufficiently motivated to read. They have excellent vocabularies, but these vocabularies are essentially oral. So they can be highly articulate, use a first-rate vocabulary, and yet, if presented with this vocabulary in a printed way, they do not recognize it. It is difficult for them, and they don't have any desire to sit down and learn how to read. And it was my belief that oral history could furnish such motivation and, moreover, be helpful to them in training them, not to be historians, but to learn what history was about. To teach them that there were such things as primary and secondary data, to teach them that they, in fact, could create history, and that there was history worth capturing in their daily lives. And so we've organized a program on a very simple level that kids who live in South Jamaica can try to get at the history of their block. There is a general secondary training that they get in urban history and Negro history. But some of the training that they get is highly unorthodox. They are taken, for example, down to the County Clerk's office and shown wills, shown land records, shown mortgage records, and so on. And tell them, for example, if they wanted to find out how someone on their block had registered, whether for the Democratic or Republican Party, it would be in the election records. Here is, in fact, a way for them to formulate questions when they came to examine the lives of perhaps their parents or next-door neighbors. And they have begun to use these records. The purpose is to teach these kids something of the materials that exist in history, how to be critical of primary and secondary materials, and to demonstrate to them that they have a possibility of creating something. There is the possibility that this project won't begin for some time, but because I'm eternally optimistic, I say it looks promising.

JAMES MINK: I was asked to come and talk to you briefly, I hope, about the institute on oral history that we had out on the West Coast this summer. I thought, after I left Arden House, that my problems were over. Our office struggled with getting the Association underway, with holding the first National Colloquium on Oral History. We hoped that when we got back from Arden House last year we would be able to get down, or get back down to work, just as I know Louis is looking forward now to getting back to doing oral history at Columbia. But I was not in the office more than one day than the first life member of our Association dropped by -- that's Professor Raymond Wood of the UCLA School of Library Service -- to tell me that the Dean of the Library School had appointed him to coordinate a number of institutes which the Library School wanted to offer on the UCLA campus, and that we would be applying for a federal grant from the U.S. Office of Education to fund these institutes. An institute was proposed in oral history librarianship. Now it had to be called a librarianship institute because it was being funded by the library training section of the U.S. Office of Education. I would have preferred simply oral history institute.

At any rate, we went to work on a proposal, and what we proposed to do was to bring to UCLA about 20 participants to span a period of two weeks of intense training in oral history. Now it's a good question as to whether oral history really can be taught. I think Professor Benison has raised an excellent point. I was rather skeptical myself as to just what we would be able to accomplish. And then we see in the Newsletter that it was termed a success. Well, there were problems, and I'll try to tell you what some of them were. We said that the major objective of the institute was to provide intensive, practical training in the techniques of oral history performed by individuals in the process of organizing or about to organize an oral history program in a library or archive situation. We had approximately 46 applications, out of a mailing list of 2300 institutions in the United States. Of the 46 we chose 20. And these individuals, with few exceptions, had not only a professional library degree and library training but, in addition to that, graduate training at the master's or the doctor's level in various subject areas. And I think we were quite fortunate in the caliber of people that we were able to attract. In fact our administration complimented us on the people we had, and this was really a delight to have these people here and to be with them for this period of training.

The proposal that we submitted combined both theory and practice. We kicked off with an orientation lecture, which was centered around the question of oral history programs in library situations, and intended to point out some of the problems that might be encountered by basing an oral history program in a library. Now, whether we like it or not, whether we think that an oral history program ought to be in a history department, or whether we think it ought to be an independent operation, libraries are starting oral history programs. And therefore the library profession feels, and I know that the Dean of our own library school feels, that somehow the teaching arm of our profession has to make some response to this demand. Now whether these programs that are being started will continue and grow strong is a question that at this time we can't answer. Is oral history simply a fad? Will it pass? Everybody's getting on the bandwagon now, what will it be like 10, 15, 20 years from now? It's hard to say. I hope that it will continue to flourish and I hope that libraries will continue to assume the responsibility.

We tried to point out that creating oral history materials would provide a means for the acquisitions librarian to play a creative role in the acquisitions process, rather than simply a role of acquiring books. An acquisitions librarian might be called upon to run an oral history program, with the objective in mind of acquiring oral history materials as well as manuscript collections for graduate research by faculty, graduate students, and so on. After this introductory session, the students were introduced to an intensive discussion, lecture-discussion, on the history of the library of the University of Los Angeles. And this was done in the evening of the first day. In the afternoon of the first day, they were introduced to the equipment that they would use. For the institute we leased 20 tape recorders with transcription attachments, and we spent the afternoon familiarizing the students with the use of their equipment. The next morning the participants were turned loose into the University Archives. We had brought all the material, records, and so on, covering the history of our institution in its present form, from the beginning in 1923 (the library dates back actually to 1883, but the records themselves cover the period from 1923), to approximately the present. And these records were brought from the University Archives and placed in one room, and the students were turned loose in there with material which had been prepared for them.

Let me explain now what we did in advance of the students coming, so that we could go on from this point. First of all, we had sent to each of the students the Proceedings of the First and the Second National Colloquia, and a bibliography of oral history articles with starred articles in the margins. These were sent at least three months in advance. And the participants were warned that they would have to study this material very carefully, because of the limited time at the institute. Then we selected for each of the twenty participants a professional librarian in the library who had spent a long period of time there. These were mainly department heads, administrators. And each one of the participants received an assignment sheet which listed appropriate records and told where they would be found in the Archives. These records consisting of correspondence, annual reports, various statistical information relevant to the units or sections that were under consideration by the participants. Next they were provided with a list of informants who were people in the library who were willing to talk to the participants about the individuals that they would be interviewing. Next they were given a set time when they would go and have a preliminary interview with their prospective subject. Also entailed was bringing to that preliminary interview certain key letters, documents, which they had perused, to discuss with the individual they were going to interview, and to inform that individual that these documents would be used in connection with the interview. Questions would be asked about them.

Next we had a session dealing with the techniques of interviewing. And this was just a lecture session lasting about two hours. And then after that each individual went and did his first interview. Following that there was a session on transcription which pointed out the problems involved in transcription. Then the participants transcribed the first hour of interviewing. This is where we ran into some trouble because some of the participants couldn't type, and for this we had to use back-up office help in order to keep them abreast of our schedule, which was very tight. Following the transcription of the first interview, we had a session on editing, the techniques of and problems of editing, and then each of the individuals edited their first hour. Following this there was some time for discussion of the various aspects of oral history, its relationship to archives, its relationship to manuscript collections. Then after that, which took us through the first week, we began a second hour.

Now during the process of transcription and editing the participants had ample opportunity to talk with the staff about problems they had encountered, and the staff could show them how these might be corrected and discuss with them the kinds of questions they were asking, and to put them on a better track if they needed to be put on a better track. Now the second week was the same as the first, except that they were going back over their second hour, and following that, they were given instruction in how to prepare a document which we prepared in the UCLA oral history program known as the history of the interview. And after that they were all brought together in a final session to talk about what we had done. And this was very interesting. We taped it, and the comments were quite candid. Most of the participants, in fact eighteen, felt that they had been given the kind of instruction that would enable them to begin an oral history program. Many of them felt, however, that there was not sufficient time for any of the various processes. And in the final report the staff agreed that if such an institute were to be given again we would have to extend it possibly to three or maybe to four weeks, and that we would probably want to limit it to fifteen or maybe even ten, rather than twenty. (To handle these people, we broke up into groups of five; each member of our staff had one group. I tried to get to all groups and to talk to all individuals at all stages of the process.) Now we're faced with another problem. Once the material was obtained, the question arose as to what is to become of it. The individuals of the library who were interviewed, professional librarians, were quite concerned. They didn't want this material to be made available. So at this point the material is sealed until the retirements of all the people who were interviewed.

CHARLES MORRISSEY: The floor is now open for questions.

HARRY HENSLICK, Cal State, Fullerton: I'd like to just mention that in the program at Cal State we seem to have done almost exactly what Mr. Mink has done at UCLA, only we started last spring and the program lasted a full year, a two-semester program. And instead of a given topic, we were on local history. We were trying to build in our school research documents rather than finished documents or book. So rather than giving a reading list of the type that you suggested, we had a copy of the various articles that so many of these people here have written on oral history. And then we had a wide discussion on the problems involved, etc. And I think it's been a very successful program, and I think that we missed your problem of not having enough time. And we have been very successful. We had nineteen students in our first class. We have seven now in the second beginning class, and we have, out of the twelve that were still in school of this beginning group, we have ten of them back in doing the editing, and making this material available to research.

JAMES MINK: I would just like to comment that I think this is by far the better route. It sort of reminds me of last month when I was up at the Ottawa meeting. There was a session on training archivists, and the archivists haven't managed to get along very far beyond the institute level of training, as Professor Ernst Posner pointed out. Dr. Posner is perhaps the founder of archival training in the United States. These are many programs, and they're a lot like miniskirts, you know, they show a lot but cover very little.

QUESTION: Is there anything unethical in using graduate students to test them out, from the point of view of the person who's being interviewed?

CHARLES MORRISSEY: No, I don't think it's unethical to do that. I've seen graduate students who I wouldn't hesitate to send out for oral history interviews, and I've seen colleagues who I would hesitate to send out for oral history interviews. But I would like to say that we shouldn't regard material that is used for training purposes the same as we would regard material that we prepare professionally. Some graduate students have extraordinary capabilities and have produced excellent memoirs, and when they produce it, say, for an oral history program, as people hired professionally to do a job, because we think they have the competence to do a job, fine. But I would hesitate to do the reverse.

JOHN H. POWELL: I have the uneasy feeling that I am absolutely alone in my interest in this. It goes, however, to the issue of oral history in the classroom. As an antiquarian, and as a graduate director, I am impressed with the fact that what you are teaching, Professor Morrissey and Professor Benison, is a technique — an historical technique of the criticism of evidence, of what the historian does, which is what the historian should do. It very specifically applies, of course, to today's materials. Technique is never a substitute for talent. Let us hope that you are developing and fostering the talent these students have. And my question as a graduate director to you both is this: Have you ever gone on from there to persuade these students, or to see what happens when these students who have learned this interesting technique, which I am beginning to learn these last few days and genuinely to be excited about, apply this technique to those materials of the remote past which are perhaps oral in nature, or susceptible of analysis from the technique which these talented students have learned? Indian treaties, printed by Benjamin Franklin, a volume available everywhere, which is the record of oral dialogue of the court trials in which evidence has been taken to the daily protocols of diplomatic negotiations, supplemented by letters from the different diplomats involved which comment on the debates of the day. Surely, I do indeed agree with Professor Benison that we must in every aspect train historians, not oral historians, but historians, in the concept of the evidence, particularly when, at the most sophisticated level, what we are creating is evidence. Has there been a follow-up? Would it not be a legitimate follow-up to turn people thus trained to those few of us remaining who are antiquarians, who have a very difficult professional job of the interpretation of evidence? Would not these people with their ears so well developed, with their sense of the proper question to have been asked, have a better sensitivity in dealing with whether or not the proper question was asked, whether or not the evidence was available? I am impressed with the necessity of stressing the difference between preserved gossip and historical record creating.

SAUL BENISON: I would like to say that some of the students who have been through the process strangely, from my point of view, do not want to continue acting as oral historians, but rather want very much to engage in monographic exploration or a subject that they've opened through use of oral history technique. And in particular, one student of mine has decided that he would re-examine the Parkman murder case of 1849-1850...

JOHN H. POWELL: In which the evidence is excellent.

SAUL BENISON: ...where, as you know, the key evidence is the trial record. Now the interesting thing about that trial record is that there are four different versions of the trial record -- two different versions having been printed, one an enormous version of over 1,000 pages, and the other a very short version of 500 pages. And it raises all sorts of questions of the accuracy of the transcription. One by a man named Stone has the very interesting notation that it was transcribed by a phonographic method, and one hesitates to say what this method was, unless it was a particular shorthand...

JOHN H. POWELL: It was.

SAUL BENISON: ...of Mr. Stone's, and then Bemus' record is quite different. So I'd like to say that those of my students who've engaged in oral history have not continued as "oral historians" but have rather gone on to monographic exploration, and not of most recent materials, but of material over 75 and 100 years old.

AMELIA FRY: Charlie, could I just bring out some points here from the point of view of a possible consumer of your product, because just this year we've been training one girl in our office. We've done a lot of examining and re-examining of what you want in the way of an oral historian. I don't know yet exactly what the ideal type of training would be for someone who would just come and work in our office at Berkeley, but my feeling at this point is that maybe the most important thing is that they have this critical insight that you speak of, the ability to understand how to use all kinds of primary materials, and to judge their significance in relation to whatever it is she's trying to do. So there has to be a certain maturity of judgment there. And another thing, of course, is the personality. She has to have an interviewing personality. These two things are terribly important, and I wish that these people could also have a facility with the English language so that you can assume that they will be able to organize ideas, to see how ideas should be organized, because we edit our interviews and put them in a logical order, and we also index them. All of these things which are kind of basic skills which one should get out of college or out of good history training. To me, these are the most important things. We give her first some in-service training. Because of our low budget she has to work in with what has to be done in our office, so the first task she does is to copy an interview that I've edited. She makes a clean copy of this to send to the interviewer to check, and this is her beginning initiation. Then she transcribes an interview. Then she usually edits one that isn't very long. So it's easy to work her into the office process this way. She gets all this practical stuff like that. But I just wonder if maybe in training these graduate students that some of these basic things could be attended to.

HARRY HENSLICK: I'd like to say that I think in our program this is exactly what we are doing. We are doing our own transcribing, our own editing, and the final document is footnoted, indexed, and a clean copy is made for the final disposition. I think that the reason our program has been very successful is that we've been selective in whom we have picked to be interviewers. And I'd just like to say that I think it makes no difference if the good graduate student is getting paid for it, or if he is a student. I think that if he is a good graduate student he can do the job.

ELIZABETH CALCIANO: Are yours undergraduates?

HARRY HENSLICK: About half and half.

ELIZABETH CALCIANO: And how do you pick them? If thirty come and enroll in the course, how do you pick them that first day?

HARRY HENSLICK: We're only in the second semester of the program. It has been a very selective process, through other professors and that type of thing. They have to talk to Dr. Shumway before they can enroll in the course. He sits down and talks with them and tries to evaluate their abilities.

GOULD COLMAN: Are you interested in other dimensions in oral history in the classroom?

CHARLES MORRISSEY: I think so.

GOULD COLMAN: I asked that because maybe what I have to offer is so far out that it really isn't relevant to anything but the subject. [laughter] This course began with this problem: In a professional college, or at least a college that performs a professional training function and where the courses are highly specialized, what is there in that college that attempts to synthesize and integrate the information and skills that students get from the various courses? For the student it is sort of an additive process, you add up enough courses and one graduates. Okay, that's the problem. In our case it was focused on a college of agriculture. The problem was felt there, and for a variety of reasons we moved ahead there. Okay. A focus for getting at this seemed to be the decision-making process in farm families. This is the ultimate constituency of, or one of the constituencies, of every college of agriculture. Now, how can you develop source material for such a course? This is one of the roots of this project that we had going on farm family decision making. Now there are research implications also -- research purposes, but the first one that we thought of, the one that we started with, was this idea of teaching, and that we would develop a body of material based upon these open-ended interviews, and we would use this as the basic source material for the course. This would be interviews with eighteen farm families (every family member over seven years old) relating to the structures and processes of decision making in these families. And then we would give them a bibliography on research in decision making. And so basically the pitch is, "Here is what happened, as best we can establish it, in eighteen families. Here's your bibliography on decision making. What we'll do is bring in to class about six specialists from a number of fields to help you work through this material in relation to your purposes and skills." We've got to the point in this project that we actually have this material, and we should now try to find the five or six people who will come in and work together in actually making this thing go. So this is oral history in the classroom, where oral history will hardly get mentioned. And by the way, we're not just giving them the oral history interviews. We're giving them documentation on the perameters of the decisions described in the interviews since a decision cannot be understood independently of the resources which are available to the decision makers. A perfectly obvious statement. And so, we're collecting business records, non-business records, soil surveys, other measurements of resources. Our hope is to give students this large stack of material and say, "Go to it, kids." Well...now keep in mind we haven't done it yet.

QUESTION: In what sense is it history?

GOULD COLMAN: It's history with additional pay-offs from a single piece of research. I started this thing because my thing is agricultural history, and we do not have adequate source material. Most agricultural history does not deal with farm people. It deals with agricultural services, marketing, supplying of goods and services. So that what usually passes as agricultural history may be a history of some grain company or farmers' cooperative. So what I wanted to do was get comparable material from a number of farm families that were systematically selected in order to attack a number of variables that seemed to be important in agriculture. So it's history in the sense that we are getting records each year. To use Louie Starr's phrase, they're warm, it's history warm, and then this will be preserved, so ten or twenty or thirty years from now we'll have the kind of historical record that was never available previously. Now, I think that's an adequate justification, at least I felt that that was adequate. But some faculty people thought of the other implications, so I'm getting what I started for originally, other people are getting something that's useful to them also. But the basic part of this whole bundle is the oral history interview. Now, I'm afraid that we haven't used historians, Saul, in the interviewing. I did in a few interviews, but basically you have to have people who can communicate with farm families, and that isn't where historians are strong.

LOUIS STARR: Charlie, I wouldn't want to have this fascinating session end without a reference to one of our members who works on the opposite end of the educational spectrum, Harry Kursh of Peekskill, New York. I hoped he would be here.

HARRY KURSH: I promised my kids that if I said anything I'd let them hear what I said. When I first came here Friday night, and as I sat here today, I heard an awful lot of things that I disagreed with violently, and at times I could feel my blood pressure rising. I was reminded of the time once when I had to do a biography of Andrew W. Cordier who is now the President of Columbia University. At the time he was Executive Secretary to Trygve Lie of the United Nations. And I began, as usual, by first interviewing those who best knew Dr. Cordier. And one of the most difficult persons I had to nail down for an interview was General Romulo of the Philippines, who at the time was Ambassador to the United Nations for the Philippines. I finally caught up with him. The interview had to take place in the back of a limousine that was shuttling him from his hotel to the United Nations headquarters, and this was one occasion I was grateful for clogged New York traffic, because it gave me about a half hour to go about ten blocks. And I was also grateful for a portable tape recorder, because up to that point I had been lugging around a 40-pound Webcor. But it was in the limousine when Dr. Romulo told me the story that has been going through my mind here. He told me of an occasion when he was asked to be a guest speaker before the Chamber of Commerce in Houston, Texas, and they sat him deliberately in the midst of some giants of Texas -- I don't mean intellectual giants -- I mean physical giants. It was supposed to have been a joke, as he told me. Most of the Texans sitting around him at the table were 6'5", 6'6", etc. General Romulo stands about this tall. /indicating a man short in stature/ But of course he has quite a reputation for having been a fighter in many ways. And when the Chamber of Commerce President got up and introduced him, he turned to General Romulo and he said, "General, how does it feel to be among the giants of Texas?" General Romulo got up and he looked around the audience, and looked very carefully and deliberately at every man at the table, and he said, "Mr. President, I'll tell you how I feel. I feel like a dime amongst a bunch of nickels." /laughter/

Quite frankly, this is the feeling I had when I came here, except the reverse. I felt like the nickel. But now I'm getting to feel as if we're on a par. I don't feel inferior any more. I had some trepidations about being in the midst of people who were my academic superiors. I was concerned about how foolish I might look talking about an oral history project among seventh and eighth graders whom I teach in a middle school known as the Lakeland Middle School. We're near Peekskill, but we're not part of Peekskill. There are many things I've heard that I disagree with, but perhaps I would focus on the one thing I disagree with most. And that is the general tendency here to disparage technique. I heard, for example, the gentleman in the back denigrate technique as being useless without talent. But so often I have seen talent completely artless because it had no knowledge of technique. I believe there is a substitute for talent. Enthusiasm. And enthusiasm can be taught; it can be conveyed. Because a lot of us have a lot more talent than we think we have. And I doubt if there's anyone here who's such an intellectual giant anywhere in the world that he could cast the first stone at someone who is less talented than he is.

I don't know how we could measure talent. Whether we could measure it quantitatively or qualitatively or both ways. There's a certain talent that kids have that none of us have here. But I don't want to get into a philosophical argument about talent. I still want to stick to technique. And here again I'd like to recite a story which is true and illustrates to me the importance of technique, and I've seen it so often among people who do interviewing, both historians and journalists. A few years ago I had occasion to have dinner in Washington with Tom Wicker, who at the time was a mere reporter for the New York <u>Times</u> in the Washington bureau, where competition for advancement is really keen. If you're to get anywhere in the Washington bureau of the New York <u>Times</u>, or the New York <u>Times</u> generally, you're probably going to expect to live there for a generation, and maybe by seniority gradually work your way up to be chief of the bureau of the New York <u>Times</u> in Washington, as you can imagine that's probably its most important bureau outside of the main headquarters in New York. Tom had come from a comparatively hick-town newspaper in North Carolina. I was sitting with him and another woman reporter from his home town in North Carolina. I listened to Tom talk for about an hour about the various stories he had covered in Washington and how he had covered them. And I made this remark which I hope you'll believe me is really quite true. I said, "Tom, I earnestly believe because you understand the technique of gathering news in Washington, within one year you're going to be Chief of the Washington bureau." It was precisely a year -- it was fantastic prophecy -- it was precisely a year from the date of that dinner that he was named Chief of the Washington bureau. He jumped over the heads of many of his colleagues who had much more seniority. And only recently he was named one of the editors of the New York <u>Times</u> in New York. I'm sure that many of Tom's colleagues in Washington have as much talent as Tom has if not more. But he gave great emphasis to and placed a great value on the technique of getting a story, which is so important.

As far as oral history is concerned, I believe technique can be taught. And in this regard perhaps I can give a brief outline of what I'm trying to do with seventh and eighth graders at the Lakeland Middle

School. We began our oral history project a year ago in the face of considerable derision from my colleagues in the educational system and from others who had heard what we were trying to do. Up to this point I was very impressed with oral history, had been for a number of years, had followed the course of oral history at Columbia as Dr. Starr knows, had had some correspondence with him, had done some research and read whatever I could, and I felt it could be an enormously valuable tool in our educational system, not only in the classroom but even from the point of view of generating a future supply of oral historians, beginning in elementary school, generating the interest and hoping that they would be your future students in college, and perhaps our future oral historians, who may have been trained, so to speak, from the cradle. I organized the oral history group in school, as an after-school activity, which it still is, specifically as an oral history project, and made it clear to the kids this was not a club -- there was going to be no elections of anybody, there was going to be no dances, and stressed that the word "project" means a job has to be done. There is work to be done and each of us is going to share in this work. If you don't work -- out. I'm the boss. I had to do this in order to get started and to impress upon the kids that we were going to be serious about it, but we also intended to have an exciting and interesting experience. As part of an oral history project, therefore, in a grade school, I felt it was important to try to teach the kids techniques of interviewing, as well as techniques of researching. And after we had gone through some of the fundamentals, and had learned some of the motions of organizing a project and soliciting interviews, and so forth, we selected as our first project something related to our curriculum. One of our objectives in this was to try to gather oral history materials, and I don't cringe at the words, Mr. Benison, raw materials, to gather some raw materials related to our curriculum on immigration. We agreed that all our oral history projects would be related to our curriculum. And in seventh and eighth grade curriculum in our school we concentrate on New York State history, history of the Indians in New York State, government and the period of immigration, and another period we call the age of homespun. Consequently, in regard to our studies of immigration, we found through research a man by the name of Mr. Ferro, still living, in his 80's, who had been the Chief Immigration Inspector during the height of immigration in the United States, in the early 1920's and the early 1930's. The kids solicited the interview with Mr. Ferro by writing to him and following up with telephone calls. Mr. Ferro said he'd be delighted to give us the interview.

The interview lasted about three hours. The only reason we had to cut the interview short (we could have gone for eight hours) was because I had to get the kids back from New York to Peekskill. Now, the results of that interview were really amazing. In the first place, there were some ironies attached to it. We convinced ourselves through our research that nobody had ever really gotten into the intimate, behind-the-scenes personal details of the immigrants, and the processing of the immigrants on Ellis Island. We could find nothing in the history books. We could find, in fact, no history of Ellis Island of any value. On the very day that we arrived for our oral history project interview, we were impressed with the fact that our objectives were important, because that morning he had received a letter from the Secretary of the Interior, in which he was told that the Department of the Interior had decided to do a history of Ellis Island, and since he is one of the few remaining who could recall some of the intimate details of processing of immigrants on Ellis Island, could he please sit down and dictate a memorandum. And he did prepare some notes for us and he said this was going to be part of his memorandum and perhaps our tape might be of value to future historians. For that reason I sent a copy of our tape to Columbia University. I believe there is some great value in that tape of historic importance.

We got there just in time because two weeks later Mr. Ferro died. At the time he granted our interview he knew he was dying. He had cancer. He had been told by his doctors that he probably only had weeks to live. For that reason his whole family had gathered to sit in and listen to the interview and watch. One of his daughters was an immigration attorney, married to an immigration attorney, and it turned out in the interview Mr. Ferro himself was an immigrant, had arrived in this country with an immigrant family. When we got back from the interview, we analyzed our interview. As we always do, we went for a great deal of self-criticism to see what kind of questions we should have asked, how we should have followed up, how we should have been more logical, more sequential, and so forth. May I take a moment just to read the reaction of the newspaper reporter. In the last paragraph of the story, which was headlined in the local newspaper, "Eighth and ninth graders," (that's an error, it's seventh and eighth graders, which is typical of indolent journalists. Incidentally, I guess that's why some of them will never be historians). In the last paragraph this reporter writes, "Mr. Ferro complimented the student historians for their alertness and plethora of questions. His wife, standing by to bid farewell to the students at the close of the interview, expressed surprise to learn that they were from a public school."

<u>QUESTION</u>: How many were there?

<u>HARRY KURSH</u>: On this trip? About twenty. Of course you can see there are problems in conducting an oral history interview with a group as against face to face, but we shouldn't sneer at these things, because I believe oral history, and I'm convinced of this now, is in its rudimentary stages, and I think all of us are experimenting and all of us are learning. And I think that oral history as a classroom technique and tool should and will improve group interviews, and group interviews can generate a great deal of valuable raw material. Since you raised the question, I might point out what we do. We have a lot to learn, but before we go on an interview, all of the kids have to do a lot of research, and this is a serious and important part of our work to them and one of great value, and of course this is something I have to teach. I learned that many history teachers don't know how to do research. And as a result of my teaching the kids know how to do research and the history teachers and the rest of the school district have asked me to give an in-service course next year on how to learn history research. Because the kids have been coming into their classes

from my oral history project mentinning techniques of research which put the teachers on the defensive, and they had to use circuitous jargon to get out of some perceptive questions. [laughter] This part of the tape I won't let the kids hear. I'll edit it. [laughter]

The purpose of the research, as the kids know, is to get to know their subject as best they could, because an uninformed interviewer, I try to impress upon them, will come back with a worthless interview, because one of the grave results of an uninformed interviewer is you tend to develop a dull, bored narrator, and it's deadly. You get virtually no information. You just get a narrator who's anxious to get rid of you, and after a while you can sense that and you want to go yourself.

After the research is done, however, we sit down as a group, and the kids must submit in writing the kinds of questions they think should be asked. And we learn, and we've learned this is quite important, we've learned that part of the technique of the interview is never to digress from the subject. This is important in a group. An individual can digress, because he may have a reason for doing so, and he may know why he's doing it, he may know how he will allow that digression to get back, but in a group interviewing it's deadly. We learned, therefore, to group our questions. And this is what we do. We print up the questions in groups. The kids have the groupings of questions in front of them as we interview. Then to avoid repetition of questions, the kids make notes.

<u>QUESTION</u>: You don't ask them much yourself, you have the students ask the questions?

<u>HARRY KURSH</u>: I sit there, and before we go in for the interview, we discuss our research and questions thoroughly. I tell the kids that I'm going to be the moderator, that I will single out the ones who I want to ask the questions, and they ask their questions. We have to do this in order to have control of the interview. And this gives us an orderly interview too. Sticking to the subject and asking the questions in sequence and grouping ... by having this list of questions in front of them, they're told that you just don't ask the question the way it's written out on the paper, that this is merely the nature of the subject that we want to probe. Phrase the question in a way that you think is appropriate to that moment. For example, in interviewing a former slave, sometimes the question had to be rephrased several times before the woman understood the question.

Getting back to the classroom: we use our tape in class with regular history classes. The effects of this use have been fantastic; they've just flabbergasted me. For instance, whenever we play the tape, and you know seventh and eighth grade kids, you have discipline problems all the time, they don't just sit there like businessmen who are learning the secrets of how to make tomorrow's fortune. They're just looking at the clock all the time; no matter who the teacher is, I think they're always anxious to get out, especially if next period is lunch or study hall. But one of the things that has absolutely amazed me is the way listening to the tapes mesmerizes them. They actually don't look at the clock. And they ask a fantastic variety of questions. Among the kids in the oral history project itself, the enthusiasm this has generated is really amazing.

Someone asked do I transcribe. No, the kids transcribe. They don't type, of course, some do, but they work by hand. They work in teams. One kid writes, has a headphone, the other kid operates the machine, the kid that's writing says start, stop, start, stop. And they take turns. But let me tell you, it is really amazing what they can learn and what they are learning. The type of information, the raw material they're generating through their seemingly simple, naive questions is really amazing. And the response of interviewers to kids is just amazing.

OSCAR WINTHER, Indiana: Do the kids cross-examine the interviewee at all? Are they permitted to pursue their questioning?

HARRY KURSH: Yes, oh yes. A kid doesn't ask just one question and stop. Unfortunately, in this particular tape that you'll hear we had audio problems. CBS barged in on us with their crew, shoved their microphone next to ours, pushed ours a little bit out of the way. The woman, a 116 year old woman, was somewhat disconcerted by it. I had trouble reaching the controls to pick up her sound as she spoke, and also because of her age you can understand she too found it difficult to articulate. I don't mean lucidly, but in a way that could be easily understood, especially on tape. But if you listen closely, I think you will hear one of the kids questioning her. It happened to be a Negro boy, who has experienced a drastic change in his life as a result of his oral history project work. He's in one of the history classes I have we call "G class." This is the slag heap. These are the kids they don't expect to ever make it. These are our future porters and manual laborers. And in the "G class" I'm given complete freedom to do what I please with them. The presumption is that it would be a waste of time to try to educate them. And it's quite a presumption. George, one of the three Negro boys who was on this trip, has enormous personal problems in his own life and his family life, and as a result is a stutterer. He's one of the kids you will hear trying to ask a question. You may be able to hear the answer, when he tries to ask the woman whether the plantation owner was mean to her, and the question was to the effect, sometimes nobody's perfect. And then he tried to follow up with one or two other questions, but each kid in the interviews we've conducted so far invariably takes the lead from his written question and follows through with an amazing variety of questions. And in order for me to avoid any monotony, to avoid any possible boredom, as soon as I think that kid is exhausting his supply of questions, I single out another kid and he can start asking his questions, and then they follow up like this. It has never failed yet that in all of our interviews we've always left all of our interviews with the feeling that we could have gone on for another 24 hours. Our regret is always that we just have to get the kids back home. [CBS tape recording played]

May I just conclude, we're now working on a project to interview President Johnson. I knew you'd laugh, but a year from now maybe we'll be laughing. We're at the first stage of preparing this project. Our usual way is to solicit the interview. The kids have to write letters. We compile the best of each letter and send it as one letter from the group. I thought you'd be amused at one letter. I have several here. One of the Negro kids in the project started his letter to the President this way: "Dear Mr. Johnson, It has come to my attention and others of the Lakeland Middle School oral history project that you are leaving your duties as President." [laughter] And this will impress you. This is another one of my "G class" kids. Trying to get a kid in a so-called "G class" to write one single line, one sentence, is a week's project. In the letters the kids have written such things as, oh, one kid writes, "Oral history has made my work exciting." These are in the letters to the President. And they explain why they want the interview with him and so forth and so on. There is so much that has resulted from this oral history project that, skipping everything, all I can say is that those of us who tend to look skeptically on oral history as a classroom tool should re-evaluate our thoughts, and I just want to conclude, Mr. Morrissey, by saying that I read your article to them from Social Education, and then I tried to break it down into lay language and summarize it for them. I told them that, essentially, the conclusion was that there was a lot of skepticism among the professionals about the value of oral history in the classroom. I told the kids about my coming here, and that when I come here I will try to convince people in the academic world at the college and university level that there is value to oral history in the classroom, and one little kid in the back jumped up, completely spontaneous, and he said, "Sock it to 'em, Harry." [laughter and applause]

CHARLES MORRISSEY: Thank you very much, Mr. Kursh, on behalf of all of us. Jim Mink has given to me some mimeographed reports on an oral history library institute at UCLA this past summer if anyone wants to look at these. I want to thank Jim. I want to thank Saul. I understand that coffee is being served downstairs.

SOME PERSONAL MEDITATIONS ON ORAL HISTORY

William Manchester

I seem to have the singularly bad luck with academic audiences outside my own state. The last occasion was a commencement in Massachusetts. It was held outside, and as I approached the lecturn the sky was darkening. I looked down at my salutation, and among those that received honorary degrees was Richard Cardinal Cushing. And so, after his name, I impetuously added, "Into whose hands I entrust the weather for the next forty-five minutes." In five minutes it was raining -- hard. The rain fell on the just and on the unjust, and on everyone except His Eminence, who, knowing his craft better than I knew mine, had craftily sidled under a canopy. So perhaps from your invitation to me to speak tonight, I can only infer a kind of institutional death wish.

I confess that when I first heard the term "oral history," it lurked awhile on the periphery of consciousness, like the name of an emerging nation, say, or a Vice President of the United States. Somehow I vaguely associated it with oral primacy, oral reticulation, oral character -- and their opposites -- phrases which suggest that our era is preoccupied with the orifices of the body, and that about all we have to look forward to is the discovery of the erotic uses of the human ear. Perhaps they have already been perceived. Possibly Mr. Harold Robbins has found them -- though I think it likelier that he is writing a roman à clef about a Greek shipping magnate. I refer, of course, to Themistocles.

You can appreciate my embarrassment when I realized that I myself was an oral historian, and had been since twenty years ago, when, as a graduate student, I began groping toward the techniques I now use.

That quest began by chance. I wanted to write my dissertation on the literary criticism of H. L. Mencken, but graduate schools of English would not accept theses on critics who had not predeceased them. Harvard -- rather disdainfully, I thought -- suggested a School of Journalism. Columbia rejected me on the quite reasonable ground that I showed no promise whatever of mastering the crafts of research and writing. The alternative was the University of Missouri, and it was there, early in 1947, that I became troubled by certain inconsistencies in Mencken's work.

The solution was obvious. Mencken was alive and well in Baltimore. I wrote him; he replied, inviting me to Baltimore; and thus -- a year before Allan Nevins launched the world's first oral history program at Columbia -- I began a series of Mencken interviews which were to end with his death eight years later.

In retrospect I can see how primitive many of my methods were. At first, for example, I sent him written questions and he dictated replies. I needn't tell you how unsatisfactory that can be. It permits misunderstandings, lacks flexibility, and, above all, does not provide for follow-up questions. Since those early days with Mencken I've used it only once, with President Johnson, at his insistence. And there the results were even worse.

Another trap -- invisible to the naive graduate student, but obvious to the more sophisticated -- is an occupational hazard for the oral historian: the artless belief that famous men are generous toward one another. The opposite is likelier to be true, and if one is dealing with living men -- particularly men at the end of their lives, who may be obsessed with what subsequent generations will think of them -- he may find himself tripping over invisible wires.

I had assumed, for example, that George Jean Nathan was Mencken's friend. Nathan thought of himself as Mencken's competitor, however, and this became disquietingly clear when, at my request, he went over a draft of my manuscript with a fountain pen.

Wherever I had referred to Scott Fitzgerald, Nathan had written, "Fitzgerald, Nathan's discovery," and after the name of Eugene O'Neill he had scrawled, "who was and is the close personal friend of George Jean Nathan." In another passage I had mentioned several of his undergraduate clubs at Cornell. It turned out that he had belonged to twenty-one Cornell clubs -- and he had written all twenty-one in.

He had even altered my description of his own hair -- "white" -- to "gray." Most bewildering of all, he had crossed out a paragraph in which I had ascribed the decline of THE AMERICAN MERCURY to the Depression. Not so, said Nathan -- it faltered because Nathan had withdrawn from it. Unless I incorporated his changes, he said, he would sue. Morris Ernst, Harper's lawyer, wanted to print 1,000 copies showing Nathan's changes and sell them for $10 apiece, on the ground that there were that many people in New York alone who would pay that much to see Nathan make a fool of himself. Unknown to either Harpers or me, Nathan retaliated by informing the NEW YORK TIMES BOOK REVIEW that he would be delighted to review my book on Mencken when it was published.

Thus, though the book's appearance was accompanied by gratifying reviews, there was one disagreeable exception. An old Massachusetts political adage runs, "Don't get mad, get even"; and

Nathan had chosen to get even. His notice was a vehement attack on me. Indeed, it was so bitter than Francis Brown decided to run a rebuttal page of letters, from Burton Rascoe and others. I recall thinking philosophically: I suppose there has to be one literary controversy in every writer's life; I'm glad mine is behind me.

The thought may have struck some of you that such trials are less the lot of the oral historian than of the contemporary historian -- the difference being that the first may put his tapes and transcripts under seal, to be used by writers a century hence. I suggest that the two really are germane.

First, whether or not you publish is of small consequence to the subject being interviewed. You can tell him a thousand times that no one will see this material until his grandsons are in their graves. In one small corner of his mind he won't believe you. The motives of scholars will forever remain complex to laymen. Ten weeks after the tragedy in Dallas I announced that royalties from THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT would go to the John F. Kennedy Library. They laughed when I sat down at the typewriter, and three years later they laughed even harder when I repeated my pledge during the controversy. Then, last June, the Library received the first check, for $750,000. Mrs. Kennedy wrote me and then telephoned me; she said she was overwhelmed. I told her she shouldn't be; that had been my intention all along. After we talked it occurred to me that this was a $750,000 misunderstanding. Harpers informed me that the figure would grow to about $5,000,000, and five weeks ago I explained that to Eunice Shriver. There was a long pause. Then she whispered, "But <u>why</u>? You could buy a yacht!"

"<u>Why</u>" is a question which will echo in the minds of nearly all interview respondents. "What is this fellow up to? Doesn't he want his own yacht?" Those who don't wonder will raise other problems which oral and contemporary historians must share. Like George Jean Nathan and Lyndon Johnson, they will be eager to have their grandsons see them as they see themselves. The remedy is to check their recollections against the memories of others. That is why I had to question so many people before writing my account of the President's assassination. If six people were in a Dallas motorcade car, I talked to all six, and at Parkland Memorial Hospital I interrogated doctors, nurses, orderlies, administrators, and switchboard operators. In reconstructing a crisis, confirmation by a maximum number of eyewitnesses is essential.

Another reason oral and contemporary historians are wedded is that traditionalists see them as new, and therefore suspect. Of course, they are not new. When Professor Starr defines oral history as "simply the record of what someone told someone else," he is echoing Thucydides, who wrote that he rested his narrative "partly on what I saw myself, partly on what others saw for me." Over the past two millenia Thucydides' example has been followed by Davilas, de Thous, the Clarendons, and Winston Churchill; each recorded a present which he knew would eventually become a memorable past. Meanwhile, unfortunately the concept of the historian had become corrupted. As Arthur Schlesinger observed, "The tendency to regard what was more remote as more 'historical' increased...." Nineteenth Century German scholars, obsessed with methodology and their conviction that they were a separate caste, fortified the wall between the past -- which they regarded as their private fief -- and the present, which, in Schlesinger's phrase, was left to "a disorderly straggle of memoirists and journalists."

It is our task to rescue our present from that straggle. Naturally we treasure valuable memoirs and encourage the contributions of serious journalists, though I suggest that reportorial submissions be subjected to ruthless scrutiny. In my years as a foreign and Washington correspondent, I gathered much which I believe to be both significant and true from men like Walter Reuther, the Rockefellers, U Nu, Nehru, Nasser, the first Senator McCarthy, Adlai Stevenson, and Churchill. At the same time, I was painfully aware that many of my colleagues were contributing to journalism's reputation as an inexact science.

Sixteen years ago I was in Egypt, writing a 15,000-word "Letter from Cairo" for THE NEW YORKER. Actually it was a history of the previous summer's revolution, which ended when King Farouk fled and General Mohammed Naguib -- as Colonel Nasser's temporary puppet -- assumed power. Quite by chance, I was the only outsider present when Naguib and Sir Ralph Stevenson, the British Ambassador, signed their February 12, 1953 treaty, ending the Anglo-Egyptian condominium and creating a new nation-state. Indeed, there is a photograph of me standing between the ambassador and the general. In it I look rather stunned, and no wonder. The Egyptians thought I was British; the British thought I must be an Arab.

Two weeks later in Ankara I picked up a newsmagazine. At the time of the signing, the periodical's closest correspondent had been in Beirut. Nevertheless his opening paragraph read, "At 11 o'clock one morning last week, Sir Ralph Stevenson's funereal black limousine drew moodily away from Cairo's ornate El Gezira palace. Inside, gloating over a freshly-inked, blue-paged pact, Strongman Mohammed Naguib tremblingly held aloft a black, 98¢ fountain pen. Cried he, 'I will send this to the museum!'"

It hadn't been 11 o'clock, the limousine was gray, the treaty wasn't blue, Naguib didn't say that -- actually he wept while pocketing the pen -- and the ceremony was held in the Cairo Presidency, another place altogether. It is impossible to call the author an historian of any sort. Our difficulty is that there are those who use such spurious accounts to discredit all who write of the present, and who -- forgetting Carlysle -- will insist that any chronicler who dwells upon details, valid or otherwise, should be barred from the brotherhood. The counter-argument, a conviction central to my own work, is that detail is essential to the recreation of history, and that only by reliving the past can we learn from it.

The real distinctions between journalistic entertainers and serious historians lie in intent, approach, and the depth of research. Before interviewing a major figure I read everything he has written and everything of significance which has been written about him; and I also interview between forty and fifty people who know him well. It takes time; but there is no alternative. Otherwise the interviewer cannot ask the right questions, or recognize, in a casual answer, a thread which must be seized instantly. I spent four years in the documents before I sat down with Alfried Krupp. Both he and Paul Hansen, one of his directors, described die Firma's projects in underdeveloped countries, notably the building of whole factories and teaching natives to man them. As an aside, Hansen said, "Of course, we couldn't have done it without our Berthawerk experience."

Only a researcher who had done his homework could have picked up that muttered allusion. Because I had read the 14,000-page transcript of Krupp's Nuremberg Trial, I knew that the Berthawerk, a huge wartime howitzer plant in Silesia, had been erected and then manned by Auschwitz slaves or, as Krupp's intrafirm memoranda of that time called them, "Baujuden" -- "building Jews." To me the casual reference was a signal; this was the precise moment to open a fresh line of questioning.

Naturally my subsequent account of the Berthawerk wasn't based entirely on Krupp's own version of slave labor atrocities. Others had done that, and had therefore betrayed their readers. Those who record events of other centuries may lean heavily on a single diary, say, or the correspondence of one man. Our great strength is multiple sources. We have everything they have, and we use it. Having studied those sources, however, we then move on to interviews, questioning the diarist about his memoirs, the soldier about his battlefield sketches, the photographer about his pictures. And the more diligent we are, the closer we come to the truth. I have often wondered how our textbooks would read if we had transcripts of first-rate interviews with everyone who was in Ford's Theater that April evening in 1865. Not only could baffling incongruities be resolved; we should have a far better understanding of those pivotal events and their impact on Lincoln's contemporaries.

The fact that those interviews couldn't have been taped is impertinent. Indeed, I wonder how essential the machine is. In quoting Professor Starr earlier, I omitted the second half of his definition of oral history. The record, he writes, is "sometimes only on tape, more commonly in the form of a tape plus a typed transcript that has been edited for accuracy, indexed, bound and catalogued." Recorders are fine if the subjects are public figures. I have so used them. Neither Mrs. John F. Kennedy nor Robert Kennedy was intimidated. When I called on Mrs. Kennedy's mother, however, I left my Wollensach behind, and it was well I did; she told me that had I come in the front door carrying it, she would have fled out the back.

Even if such a respondent doesn't abscond, the results may be highly unsatisfactory. If you plug in the device, announce, "You are about to enter the cathedral of history," and invite your subject to speak, the first thing you are likely to hear is a gagging sound. Like the witness who has sworn to the court that he will tell the truth, the whole truth, and nothing but the truth, he is terrified of compromising himself. Therefore he may say as little as possible. Lawyers conducted the Warren Commission interrogations; I remember reading the transcripts in my Warren Commission office and thinking how barren they were. Over a two-year period I interviewed the same respondents, usually in their homes, where they were more at ease. The difference between my transcripts and the Commission's was striking. The same distinction could be drawn between the Nuremberg Trial transcript and my interviews with Germans who testified in the Justizpalast. It would be flattering to believe that the interviewer's skills were responsible for the improvement, but obviously the credit must go to the method. Cross-examination is the worst possible technique for eliciting historical facts. If a man has information and you want it, he should never be driven into a defensive posture. Instead he must be reassured, and the farther he has lived from klieg lights the greater that need for reassurance will be.

But prosecuting attorneys and oral historians are linked by one bond: they must observe a witness' rights. Before I flip a switch or open a notebook, I explain that an individual may put any remark off the record, not for attribution, or not for use under any circumstances. This is easier with shorthand; I may use parentheses, brackets, or astericks -- or I may pocket my notebook and pencil after crossing out material which the subject wishes to withdraw. This is more difficult if one is working with tapes. Since the mike picks up everything, the only solution is hand signals. The interviewee taps his chin and I turn the machine off.

But this protection is inadequate. If genuine rapport has been established, a subject may blurt out confidences which have no conceivable relevance to history or even to the line of inquiry which has brought the two of you together. Sometimes you find yourself cast in the role of a confessor; you are privy to secrets which have never been revealed to anyone else. You don't want to hear them, but to say so, even gently, would be to silence your subject. So you listen. Afterward the question arises: what are you to do with such material? It is all very well to say that warts should be left in, and if the transcript is to remain under seal for a hundred years, by all means do that. If it is to be used as a source for contemporary history, however, you are obliged to edit it very carefully. Indeed, in extraordinary situations you should type the transcript yourself. Disclosures about an incumbent President, for example, ought not to be shared with anyone. This exercise of discretion is a professional obligation, of course. No one will ever thank you for it. On the contrary; after shredding 200 pages of manuscript you may find yourself sued for invasion of privacy and denounced as a scavenger of secrets. There is absolutely nothing you can do about it. You can hardly say, "See what I omitted!" Instead you must lean on that worn but serviceable crutch, the verdict of history.

Hostile respondents pose an entirely different challenge to the conscience. To adopt the jargon of espionage, all interviewees are either

"Friendlies" or "Unfriendlies." Naturally one prefers to question Friendlies. The sessions are more pleasant and are likelier to be productive. But certain sources cannot be ignored, however distasteful the prospect. I have travelled a lot in this line of country lately. To be sure, most of the people whom I interviewed for THE DEATH OF A PRESIDENT were Friendlies -- many, indeed, were friends -- but even on that project I had to seek out H. L. Hunt, General Walker, Roy Truly, and Marguerite Oswald. Afterward Mrs. Oswald told Jean Stafford I had been with her just ten minutes. I defy anyone to limit a Marguerite Oswald interview to ten minutes. Actually I spent the night with her -- from twilight one evening to dawn the next. Her parting remark suggests what our session had been like. As we stood outside her screen door, waiting in the crayoned light for my taxi, she turned toward me abruptly and grinned. She said, "Well, nobody can say my son wasn't a good shot."

A far larger proportion of my Krupp interviews were hostile. Here I was dealing with men who had held positions of great power in the National Socialist regime. Some -- like Krupp himself -- had been convicted at Nuremberg for war crimes. They were wary of me, and resented any prying open of the crypts of the past. At times it seemed that the tension could be relieved only if I extended my arm in a Hitlergruss and shouted, "Wir lieben unsern Führer!" Instead I tried to keep myself tightly sheathed in what the SS admiringly called "Sachlichkeit" -- objectivity. Whenever they tried to elicit my opinions, or to learn how much data I was gathering elsewhere, I looked blank; and whenever possible I arrived accompanied by a witness.

At the outset I doubted that this approach would work; I chose it because I could think of no other which would be consistent with honor -- I cannot agree with those who argue that any research technique is justifiable, that a man may lie his way to the truth. Astonishingly, impassivity succeeded beyond my farthest expectations. It suggested dignity; they respected it. And some, like Marguerite Oswald, were compulsive talkers. I remember one long afternoon with Fritz von Bülow, who had directed Krupp's 100,000-man slave labor program during the war. As Alfried's viceroy, Fritz had been responsible for the selection of Sklavenarbeiter at Auschwitz, for the fuse factory inside Auschwitz, for the Berthawerk, and for Krupp's 138 private concentration camps, including, notably, one for adolescent girls and another for small children. As American troops approached the Ruhr, the girls were shipped to Buchenwald's extermination center and the children were buried under six-inch gravestones bearing the work numbers the Krupp firm had assigned to them. I knew all this. Six of the girls had escaped -- I had interviewed them -- and I had found the headstones, photographed them, checked the numbers against Krupp records, and interviewed German eyewitnesses. Therefore I thought my meeting with von Bülow would be a sterile formality. Instead he talked on, hour after hour. Now and then he would pause for breath and whisper, "I shouldn't be saying these things." Each time I would reply, "You don't have to say them." He would stiffen, close his eyes -- and continue.

Why do Unfriendlies agree to be interviewed? Compulsion is one reason. Yearning for a place in history -- a kind of immortality -- is another. Self-justification, coupled with the conviction that they can persuade you that they have been misunderstood, is a third. It is the fourth, however, which usually brings the shrewdest Unfriendly around. If he is aware that research has been extensive, he will realize that you are going ahead anyhow, with or without him. And so he grudgingly consents to participate. Obviously he will reverse field and withdraw if he detects bias in your questions. Equally obvious, objectivity must be real if you are to hold him. I scarcely need point out to this audience that the interviewer who lacks objectivity will invite the scorn of later generations -- and that no one has a greater investment in the approval of unborn scholars than the historian himself.

I daresay that my mention of bias shaped certain questions in your minds. Since my published work is more passionate than detached, you may have suspected conflict. Certainly there is ambivalence. The oral historian and the contemporary historian may coexist in the same man, but if he believes the two roles are one, he is deceiving himself and forfeiting serious recognition. Each of the two tasks has its imperatives. In the first -- the gathering of information -- he must suspend judgment as best he can. If the material is as vascular as the Dallas tragedy or the Krupps, absolute detachment may be impossible. Nevertheless, hard facts can be filed without comment. Afterward the harvester of those facts may assessthem and write a book based upon them. He cannot evaluate that book; indeed, his contemporaries may also be disqualified, since they too have been taught the idiom of their time. In the long run it may turn out to be a bad book. In that event, he struck out the second time. But whatever his limitations as an author, his first contribution stands. Using his files, another author may write a better book later.

Clearly the value of either account depends upon those archives. Therefore we cannot be too scrupulous about our methods. I've already suggested certain reservations about the tape recorder as a research tool. At its best, it is incomparable, but there are times when it becomes useless baggage. Neither H. L. Hunt nor Alfried Krupp would submit to it, and I'm afraid that if I had taken mine to Fort Worth and Bredeney, I would still be the prisoner of either Mrs. Oswald or Herr von Bülow. Those are human problems. Other objections are technical. Machines break down. They cannot be taken anywhere. After Adlai Stevenson's first presidential defeat I spent three weeks with him in southern India, reviewing his campaign. Had I brought a recorder, it would have rotted in its case. Furthermore, the tape only records sounds; without some description of a respondent's gestures, certain passages are meaningless. Incorporating such descriptions in a notebook is easy. Filling in the silences on a tape is not so easy, and may destroy forever a mood which you have been establishing for an hour.

I'm not proposing that recorders be scrapped. I do suggest that more thought be given to shorthand as an alternative. If both are available, option should depend upon the subject. Robert F. Kennedy detested my machine. I never should have exposed him to it. He kept glancing at it uneasily, and from time to time he would break into a question by asking, "Is that thing working? Will I have to go through all this again?" In a good interview, the interviewer's voice is seldom heard, but I found I was talking more than he was. Playbacks left him uncomforted; he improved only when it had been unplugged.

Jacqueline Kennedy, on the other hand, was admirable. Here I was the skittish one. I knew in advance that I would want to glance down from time to time to make certain that the light was flickering. Therefore I put the recorder on the floor and arranged chairs so that I could see it and she couldn't. That way, I reasoned, she might forget about it while I, with an occasional glance, could reassure myself that the thing was working. It was a good plan. It had only one defect, which was revealed to me when she took the wrong chair. The little light didn't bother her; she looked off into space over my shoulder, and her responses were superb. To be sure they weren't being lost, however, I had to hunch up and peer down. It was a peculiar movement. I needed an excuse for it; otherwise I would be distracting her. The excuse lay on a little table between us. It was a cigarette box. As of that evening, I hadn't smoked for two and a half years. In the nearly five years since, I haven't gone a day without cigarettes.

I console myself with the thought that my session with her that evening, and the sessions which followed, produced a unique contribution to history. Her performance was the chief reason for the triumph; she can be highly articulate, and she possesses that rare gift, a visual memory unwarped by retrospect. Of course, I like to hope that technique played a part, too. Before conducting a major interview I spend at least a half-hour in rehearsal, reviewing the ground to be covered and establishing rapport. Since I knew the Kennedys, rapport was already there. But rehearsals were important, all the same. I had Jacqueline Kennedy Secret Service schedules, for example, setting forth exactly when she had gone from A to B; while the reel spun she could refresh her memory. Moreoever, in this, as in all sessions, the warmup period built mood ever higher. That escalation is essential — and so, to my mind, is the de-escalation after the machine or notebook has been put away. The first is important to the interview; the second, to the subject. A rapid parting makes a subject feel exploited. Often interviewers forget how trying an interview can be for the interviewed. The very least they owe their respondents is a soft word.

In closing, I should like to de-escalate here by repeating an absurd story I heard last month in Paris, adapted for the occasion. I offer it, despite its total lack of significance, simply because I think it may be diverting.

The story is that Louis Starr was covering the Exodus for the Oral History Association, interviewing Moses daily while the Israelites toiled toward Mount Sinai. Abruptly the journey was blocked by the Red Sea. The great Lawgiver was distraught; the Pharaoh's army was only six hours behind them. While Professor Starr plugged his tape recorder into a palm tree, Moses called over his Chief Oceanographer and asked him what to do.

"I've been with you all your life," the old Oceanographer said. "I was studying tides while you were in the bullrushes. But crossing those waves? Impossible. You'd have to walk on water, and we're just not ready for that yet."

Moses went off to one side and brooded. The Egyptian tanks were now four hours behind, and he beckoned to Chief Engineer Aaron. Aaron shook his head.

"I've given you the best years of my life," he said. "Forty, to be exact. I can engineer like anything. But Moses! A sea! There are limits! It can't be done."

Again Moses pondered. But time was running out. By now the Egyptians were just two hours away. Already, in that extraordinary Biblical sky of forget-me-not blue, one could discern the vapor trails of the jets General de Gaulle had loaned the Pharoah. The Lawgiver crooked a finger at Louis Starr.

"Professor," he said, "I'm desperate. The goyim are really after me. Can you think of a way to cross?"

The oral historian finished changing reels and retired behind a burning bush. Finally he said, "Why don't you put your left hand out like this" -- he demonstrated -- "and the sea will bunch up that way. Next you put your right hand out like that" -- again he showed how -- "and the sea will pile up on the other side. Then we can just stroll across."

"That's a colossal idea!" Moses cried. "But will it work?"

The oral historian looked up from his machine's flickering light. "I don't know if it will work," he said, "but I'll tell you this -- if it does, I'll give you a chapter in the Old Testament."

Question: How did you retain your objectivity in writing about matters in which you felt intensely?

MANCHESTER: I have always felt that it would be unforgivable and unprofessional to display emotion in the presence of a respondent. There are, of course, extremely difficult moments. This was certainly true in the interviews for each of the last two books. I remember that I tracked a young girl who had testified at Nuremberg. I found her living in another country under another name and interviewed her about her experiences. At that time Krupp had had his fortune returned to him, on the ground that you could not confiscate property, and all she had left of her family was a snapshot. Everyone else had perished at Auschwitz. And so she was asking me, why is it that you cannot confiscate property, but you can confiscate life? It was extremely difficult. There really wasn't any satisfactory answer. And I was disturbed. In those circumstances, I think, the very best thing you can do is to suggest a postponement, a resumption of the interview, and then just get out of there, because there are times when you have to pull yourself together, though I believe that at no time should you ever break or display approval or disapproval. If you do, this corrupts the record. I find that it's very helpful, at the outset, to have a very quiet talk with someone, explaining the rules, inviting suggestions. If you've covered everything, there are usually no suggestions, and then, of course, you have to hew, too. You've noticed that I did not discuss the actual content of any of the Kennedy interviews. That is something that is just not to be discussed. And it is true of others. I think that a person must have absolute confidence that you are going to respect certain remarks.

<u>Question:</u> Do you ever find it necessary sometimes in an interview to play the devil's advocate?

<u>MANCHESTER:</u> Each person should use the approaches which suit him best. I know that that is a very useful technique for some interviewers. What I do is rather a velvet glove version of that approach. If I have a great deal of information, some of which the person does not like, or has forgotten, merely alluding to it casually is usually enough to trigger quite a strong reaction. I think it is important to anticipate certain answers to questions. I mean, you don't go in with 40 questions and ask 1, 2, 3, 4, 5. Some questions may never get asked. Some are key questions and must be asked. I think one of the most difficult subjects I ever had was President Kennedy, because President Kennedy was a born interviewer, and he was quite capable of turning an interview all the way around, so that you found that you were responding to him and giving him information. And it's very difficult when the subject is the President of the United States to say, "Look, who's boss here," because you know who's boss -- and you aren't.

<u>Question:</u> Where did you learn the shorthand you use to record interviews?

<u>MANCHESTER:</u> Mine is largely my own invention. Since no one can read it except me, if I wanted something to be transcribed I'd have to dictate it to a machine from my notes. But it's also very useful, in that the notes are of absolutely no value to anyone else. And there are times, of course, when someone else may look at your notes, and if they can't read them, it gives one a certain sense of security at times.

<u>Question:</u> Mr. Manchester, you mentioned the intimidating character of the tape recorder. Did you ever find that taking shorthand was as intimidatory? Did you ever find yourself in a situation where you wished you had brought the recorder in the room rather than your pencil and paper?

MANCHESTER: I think a notebook tends to be less intimidating, and it is much more flexible. There are times when somebody is intimidated by any reminder that he is being interviewed. I don't think it's right to put the notebook away and then note later what is said when it is not in full view, but I think there are times when you can put the notebook away, switch the conversation entirely, then go back and say, "Now, do you really want to withhold that?" Offer an option and it usually brings people around.

One of the great advantages of the tape recorder is that the subject is told that he may see and edit a copy of the transcript. Is this ever done with shorthand? The answer is yes. People usually pass up this opportunity. The same thing was done with every deposition in which the Warren Commission took, as a matter of routine, and very, very few people took advantage of it.

STARR: I'm glad this has come up, because word seems to get around that we have absolutely filiopiestistic regard for tape recorders. I think oral history people should be concerned about creating source material that wouldn't otherwise exist. And it doesn't matter a great deal whether you do it by shorthand, by coaxing a person into writing something that he would not otherwise have written, but for your initiative, or by tape recording him. And I gather there are some who feel that it isn't really oral history unless it's on tape. I think that Mr. Manchester's point about shorthand underscores that the validity of this material is just as great as the tape.

MANCHESTER: But there are certain people who are just terrified, even terrified of a notebook. With them, you can't start right off the bat. It's just one way of freezing a subject and there just isn't anything that's going to come out of that, and yet I have seen people do that and it's most unfortunate. But I think you should lead into the interview and lead out of it afterwards.

Question: Mr. Manchester, do you have any way of showing a voice inflection, of showing the kind of feeling that a person puts out so that you know where the accent came; in other words, so that you are verbatim when transcribing it?

MANCHESTER: There is no real substitute for the tape recorder there. You can indicate emphasis, but there, obviously, the tape recorder is supreme. My plea is that the oral historian have both tools available to them and that he may find time when one can be used and the other cannot. Each has its advantages. I do believe that the shorthand interview is reliable.

ORAL HISTORY IN THE LIBERAL ARTS AND STATE COLLEGES

Knox Mellon, Chairman

KNOX MELLON: When the program was being made out, six or eight months ago, it seemed to me, and I feel it more strongly now, that there should be an opportunity at each annual Oral History Association colloquium to provide a panel or panels, or speaker or speakers, who would deal with various uses for oral history, in addition to a program such as that of Columbia, Cornell or UCLA, or the University of California at Berkeley. Everyone admires and respects the efforts of these institutions, and they pioneered the Oral History Association. It occurs to me, on the basis of talking with many of you over the past two or three days, there are other uses for oral history.

One of those is a classroom use, another may be a training and techniques program. I think it has applicability in the elementary school and the secondary school, and in the junior colleges, as well as in senior colleges and universities. So it was agreed that we would begin at this third annual colloquium with a program somewhat loosely titled Oral History in the Liberal Arts College, but there weren't enough people from liberal arts colleges who indicated they were coming, so we added state colleges, and there weren't enough from state colleges, so we added universities. At any rate, I hope you understand that all the individuals on this panel have participated in rather different kinds of oral history programs, and that's what they're going to talk about: how they've used oral history on their respective campuses. Then of course we'll throw it open to discussion. Dr. Starr has asked that we also make available in the discussion an opportunity for any of you to talk about your own unique projects, and I know from looking at three or four of you that indeed you have them at your respective institutions, and it may well be that if you didn't have an opportunity earlier this afternoon to talk about them you could do so at this session.

The first speaker is Professor Bill Wyatt, who is the Director of the Center for Western Studies at Augustana College in Sioux Falls, South Dakota. Bill is to be envied, for he has succeeded in getting two grants for his oral history program, something that everyone aspires to. One a federal grant, and the second a private grant, so that, in and of itself, should distinguish him. But in addition he's done some tremendously creative work with oral history, and I'm delighted to have him tell us about it.

BILL WYATT: Thank you, Knox. There are two things, really, that I would like to speak to you about very briefly this afternoon. I feel that I have been engaged, and I say very fortunately here, in two very interesting and I think very challenging programs, and I have personally enjoyed them immensely. But over and above that, I think I would like to spend more of my time speaking to you about what I think is a very significant role that a small liberal arts college and its personnel can play in the sort of oral history program that I think collectively we envision here. Briefly the first. I have been exceedingly fortunate to have acquired two grants, one initially from the very prestigious Rockefeller Foundation in New York, the second of these from the Foundation on the Arts and the Humanities. The first of these enabled me to conduct a reasonably broad, at least in terms of South Dakota and its area, study of changing attitudes and thought processes on subsequent generations who live on what we call today South Dakota's lingering frontier. In other words, I asked questions of three generations, grandfather or grandmother, mother, father, grandson and granddaughter. I asked questions out of five areas, interested in assessing here the changing thought and attitude as it was carried over through these three generations dating from about the turn of the century to the present time in western South Dakota. I ran several hundred interviews with these people. We at present have all these tapes at Augustana College. They, of course, were invaluable to us in writing our report for the Rockefeller Foundation. But over and above that, I have found they're even more valuable for information extraneous to that project, which we are happy to share with, and have been sharing with other scholars.

We asked the old timers various questions that they would often answer with an anecdote or a story or a tale. The materials that we have kept are unedited in terms of tape and transcript here, but a number of people can utilize them, as they have, and will in the future. Out of this project, in turn, we were fortunate to receive a grant to assess the impact of television in those same areas (the government, I know, would say culturally deprived areas). We doctored it up a little bit, and when we went before those people we said we were assessing the impact in rural and small-town America, which, I think you will agree, sounds much better. We had found in the initial program that attitudes and thinking had changed considerably, and one of our thoughts here was that it was television that had done so. And now we have a grant to carry this out and are at the present time engaged in computerizing all of our findings from this summer. Incidentally, one of the young men who helped me with that program is seated in the audience here; came down to this conference because of his interest in oral history. This has been the nature of my work to this point, but I want to say in conclusion something more about what can be done at our level.

Knox and I talked last year about whether or not the small liberal arts college really could play a role. Could we, for instance, really make a meaningful contribution? How, for instance, could Augustana stack up against Columbia or UCLA? Well, I think very briefly it can be answered this way and I'd like to do so. I'd like to believe that the larger universities and colleges don't have all the creative faculty talent in the country. Certainly they have a vast share of it, just in terms of numbers, and I'd be the last to argue that. But I think even the smaller colleges have their own faculty talents. I think because they have, these people have the sort of creative ideas that they can carry out and utilize through the new medium of oral history as again we've all seen it explained. I think there's much to be said for this. I think Augustana can play a role just as I think a lot of other small colleges can, simply because of where they're located, what they're adjacent to, and what their possibilities in that location are. For instance, Augustana College is close to what we call the lingering frontier, just in terms of physical proximity. And we can do a job that maybe Indiana or Northwestern couldn't do, simply in terms of proximity. Those people send their sons and daughters to Augustana, and they know of us and our reputation. This is true of Dakota Wesleyan and a number of other schools.

We're in a position to do this, and I think at Augustana we have kicked off something that at least in that area is going to be reasonably contagious, for Augustana College oral history to this point has given rewards that nobody there anticipated. For instance, these old timers were so gratified over simply being interviewed that they began to send in checks to Augustana for its development program, to such an extent that we have endowed the Center for Western Studies. We are working on an endowment for this center, which I direct. Money has come in. We raised money that we never anticipated seeing, simply because of their reaction to the program. Now they were not in a position to judge its inherent worth. Most of those people have never read the final report, which some probably wouldn't like. But they see a contribution being made; they have sent in money. We have money coming in. With the indirect funding that we have through this last grant, I am somewhat removed from the classroom, and we have been able to bring in new teaching talent in history, and thus we are exposing our students to new personalities in history, and new teaching offerings, and I think to the benefit of those people who are being released for some research, and to the students who have new courses that they are being taught. I think there are all sorts of possibilities; I think we have explored a few at Augustana; I think we have been very well satisfied with the kind of work we can do, even with limited resources.

I think if you have a creative idea and a good imagination, you will be surprised how responsive some of these foundations will be. Don't hesitate because you're in a small college to prepare a grant proposal. Don't even be fearful of sending it to some of the more prestigious foundations. I'm sure that if I knew then what I know now I never would have approached the Rockefeller Foundation. I didn't realize how little I knew about the whole business. They're looking for some creative ideas and some different thinking, and even if you come from a small liberal arts school in a very isolated region, in many, many ways, I think there might be something in this business for you. I'd encourage you to think along those lines.

QUESTION: Who do you use in your program in the interviewing and transcribing? Do you use students, graduate students, or undergraduates or what?

BILL WYATT: In the initial Rockefeller program I did the interviewing myself. The program that we're now running on television, I selected three people who did the interviewing. They are all high school teachers with a background in history that I personally selected and helped train.

KNOX MELLON: The second panelist is Professor Gary Shumway who is a distinguished lecturer in history and director of the Oral History Program at California State College, Fullerton, California. For those of you who aren't familiar with the geography of Southern California, Fullerton is located some 35 miles east of Los Angeles. The State College at that location has increased by leaps and bounds, as have all state colleges in California, and Gary has initiated what, to me, is again an immensely creative program in the training and techniques of oral history which he'll tell you about. One of his graduate students paid his own way to come across the country three or four days ago from California to participate in this session. He's turning out a whole raft of historical talent, some of whom will go on with their graduate work in history, others who will not, but all will take away, it seems to me, a feeling of enthusiasm for historical research, and enthusiasm for the techniques of oral history.

GARY SHUMWAY: Thank you, Knox. I'm sure we can exaggerate both my titles and what has been accomplished at California State College in Fullerton. But we have had the opportunity during the last year, during last spring semester and this semester, to develop what is just the beginning of a program, and I came to the colloquium enthused about the possibility of sharing some of our ideas with yours on what could be done here. We have had a glimpse of what we can do.

A year ago, Professor Warren A. Beck, chairman of the History Department at Cal-State, Fullerton, called me into his office after I had just come to the college, and asked if I would be interested in working with students conducting oral history interviews as independent study projects and seeing if there was any interest in developing a program at our college.

I immediately told Dr. Beck that I would be most enthusiastic about such work, and he said that if I could find nine students who would be interested I could have three hours of released time to work with them. That afternoon I went to one of my classes and talked over the possibilities of this with the class at the close of the session. I told them that if any of them (this was a 400 level senior-graduate student class) would be interested in oral history, to come down to my office during office hours and let me know of their interest. I had eleven students from this class come to my office and indicate that they definitely were interested in an oral history program. And after the first time, they came back to make sure that they would be included because they knew that only nine students could be in the class and they didn't want to be left out.

With this kind of enthusiasm, this beginning, I went back to Dr. Beck and told him what kind of initial response I had from one of my four classes (with me being one/twenty-seventh of the History

Department). He thought it over, talked to the president of the college, and told me that if I could get another nine students I could have two sections of oral history. I had no trouble with just my own classes in finding enough interested students, and so we started last spring semester to develop a program.

I talked to Linda Herman and other members of the special collections division of the library, who would be handling the archival end of the program. They were just as enthused as the students. We went to the Patrons of the Library, a support group who had some money and a great deal of interest in the college, and they said that they would support us to the extent of finding a source of tapes for us (and they found a very excellent source, Chevron Research, which has been very kind in giving the tapes we needed), in providing some tape recording equipment and additional financial help. They also from the beginning lent their enthusiasm and other kinds of assistance that they could give as community leaders.

With the interest shown by the History Department, the students, the Patrons of the Library and the personnel of Special Collections, we felt that we had something that we could go ahead with. What we have done, briefly, during the last two semesters is to develop a two-semester course in which, during the first semester, the students come, spend the first eight weeks in very intensive preparation in oral history. They first read most of the articles that have been written on oral history. Next, they prepare themselves with a background in Orange County history. They prepare themselves with as good a background in local history as possible, then develop interviewing techniques by interviewing each other and other persons. I listen to these tapes and suggest improvements in interviewing skills, but the tapes are not kept.

During the last six weeks of the first semester, the students go out and collect twelve hours of interview; two hours per week, with the interviewee being someone who we feel is significant in local history. As the students hand in their two hours of tape each week, I listen to them and rather forcefully correct at the beginning any faulty techniques, suggest improvements in approach, and areas that should be stressed in later interviews. The students then take these suggestions into account as they return for further interviews. I might state that with seventeen students who remained with us throughout the beginning semester I found this to be quite time-consuming. If you are going to listen to thirty-four hours of tape critically, you are going to have to spend at least thirty-four hours each week doing it.

By the time the first semester was over, the students were so enthusiastic over their projects that even though we hadn't envisioned this in the beginning we decided to continue the process the second semester. The students themselves were responsible for this. They came to me and said, "We have only done the interviewing; we would like to finish these documents ourselves. We would like to carry these through and have the experience of going from the interviews through to the finished document." With this response from the students, we were able to begin a second phase of our program this semester, with the college giving me released time to work with these students as independent study.

Phase two of our oral history program is designed to permit the students to carry their work through to completion this semester. They transcribe the tapes (and as we met for our first session this fall, I asked for a report of the students' progress and found that over half the class had transcribed part of their tapes on their own time over the summer). They then use the editorial policy we have devised to provide the initial editing of the verbatim transcription. This is then taken to the interviewee for his corrections and deletions, if he wants to delete anything. Then the interviewer provides the final editing to make a finished product. And at this point, we have decided to carry the editing process farther than most programs do. We have decided to append footnotes identifying every important person, place or event that is mentioned in the document, as well as to make other explanatory comments. With the interviewee still living, and with our being so close to the events being discussed, we believe that we can provide this information much easier now than could some historian wanting to use the material at a later date. It also permits the editor to clear up errors of fact in the interview. After the interview is thoroughly edited, the final copy is typed, which includes an introduction describing the editorial policy and the interview situation, the significance of the topic and other information, a picture of the interviewee, and at the end, an index to the interview.

The students now are busily engaged in this work; frantically engaged, I should say. Two of them accepted the challenge to have their work completed by time for the colloquium, and I brought their final copies with me, which will be bound and placed in Special Collections. The students would be very thrilled if some of you would show an interest afterwards in looking at these. I would be very happy to report your interest.

This is the program at California State College, Fullerton, up to this point. At the end of this semester we will have 126 hours of the documents finished from beginning to end. We will also have another 84 hours that another beginning class this semester will want to go on and finish next semester. They will finish them in very good quality for graduate students and seniors, for they have put their heart into this.

Beyond these documents, though, we have found that we have corollary advantages come from the program. One of these is the amount of photographs, journals, diaries, books, artifacts of different kinds that we have collected. The things that people have that they feel are important as part of the documents. People have been very helpful in this way. Another advantage is the training of these students. They are enthusiastic. They are only partly trained as oral historians, but they are anxious for more. Also, they have been given an insight into the development of history, into the nature of historical documents and what history is made of, that they might not get by just reading about it in a historiography class.

Also, we have accomplished something that has been important to California State College, Fullerton, as Bill Wyatt has mentioned in regards to his own experience. In Orange County we have an old population of families who have been there since the 1860's and 1870's, of people who came and settled down, very proud old California families. Then we have the people who have come since World War II, as a matter of fact, since the late 1950's and early '60's. Los Angeles County has simply spilled over into Orange County, and even though some resent the term, Orange County has become a bedroom of Los Angeles. These new people have come with no appreciation for the old fine families with their prestige and their background. They have no appreciation and little interest; they are there because it is a place to live while going to Los Angeles to work in the morning; a place to come home to at night and complain about the smog.

California State College, Fullerton, has been plunked down in their midst because of the influx of people. So many of the old families didn't even know that the college existed. Then one day they get a phone call from me, and I tell them that I have a student who is very interested in their experiences in this respect or that. When they learn of the preparation the student has made in learning of their contribution, they are delighted. In every case, these people have been enchanted with the idea that someone is interested in the Orange County that used to be. They have come to the college and have seen what we are doing. They have become interested in and involved themselves in what is happening at Cal-State, Fullerton. And they have learned to appreciate the college more. If we had time, I would like to tell you of some of the ways they have shown their appreciation. It has been most gratifying.

I might mention a contribution to the Oral History Association. We have had twenty-five student memberships come as a result of the program.

This is the small program that we have initiated. We have enjoyed it very much, and think there's some kind of potential for growth in the future.

QUESTION: Gary, do you use graduate students and seniors exclusively, or are the classes open to lower division students?

GARY SHUMWAY: The first semester two freshmen students wanted into the class very much. I had known both students, had known their abilities. I thought it over at some length and let them in. They have done well. I think, however, from now on I would want students to have had historiography first, as well as Western U. S. history and as many other history classes as they could to help give them a better orientation in the kind of questions that should be asked.

QUESTION: Does each student have one person that he interviews exclusively?

GARY SHUMWAY: One or more. I shouldn't stress that we are just collecting biographical sketches of the old residents of the county, however. As we started the program, we had a number of important persons who were becoming very old. They weren't senile, but they were not going to be around too long. For example, Senator Kuchel's mother, who was one of the persons interviewed, passed away a couple of weeks ago. We have had two of our interviewees who have passed away since we began last semester. Realizing the pressure of time, we put priority this first semester on these persons (we didn't tell them this, of course), because they were to the age where they might well not be around much longer.

This will not be the emphasis in the future, however, As a matter of fact, this semester, one of the students is interviewing a number of persons conversant in the area of the Brown Beret movement, or Mexican-American militancy. Another is interviewing the Japanese-Americans in Orange County, getting their feelings, their responses, their preparations between December 7, 1941, and February of 1942 when they were removed from Orange County. A very limited time space, but there is a great amount of data to gather.

QUESTION: I was just wondering how you arrange these two-hour-a-week interviews. Also, if in your critical analysis you find that the interview is virtually worthless, are you calling again on these people, and how does this set?

GARY SHUMWAY: We have not indicated that we are going to set up a series of ten interviews or something like this. I make a phone call, tell the person that I am Professor Shumway from the History Department at California State College, Fullerton, and that one of my students in his research has become very interested in the person's activity in the development of the avocado industry in northern Orange County, or in the oil field boom during the 1920's in Huntington Beach, etc. I ask the person if he would be willing to have the student come, sit down with a tape recorder and collect their feelings and their reminiscences about this, and then encourage them to bring any kind of supportive documents that they might have along with them. Before the interview is held, the two meet in a pre-interview session, where some of the problems you have mentioned can be worked out.

QUESTION: Do you indicate to the prospective narrator that they might have the privilege of sealing all or a portion of the tape, and if so, is there any reticence on the part of the narrator to reveal anything of value?

GARY SHUMWAY: At the outset, we point out that none of the interview will appear in final form until they have had the opportunity to delete anything they want to. We take the transcription back to them before it is typed in final form. We emphasize this in the pre-interview, and they are aware of this policy during the interview. Then, when we go back with the transcription, we de-emphasize it, and ask them if they would be willing not to delete anything unless it is something that in their wisdom they feel just has to be deleted. Or which, since the interview, they have realized is incorrect. This is the first safeguard they have. Beyond this, we let them know, although we have had no one who has asked us to do so, that we would be willing to put a red binder around the tape, put it in a vault, and not open it until that binder said that it could be opened. They realize they could do this. Like Manchester said yesterday, I am not sure this would provide the kind of security that the person would need if he did have something that shouldn't be told. Most of our interviewees, if they have something such as this, either don't realize it, or they simply don't tell us.

KNOX MELLON: I think we should move on to the third member of the panel who is Miss Carlotta Herman. Carlotta's a graduate of Immaculate Heart College and worked with me for three years in one of our oral history projects. She grew interested in oral history, attended the Arden House meeting, has gone on to graduate school, is working for a Ph.D. in Claremont in History, and combining that with a continued interest and enthusiasm for oral history. She'll be looking for a job soon, so if you hear of any, you might pass the information along. I'm delighted to introduce her.

CARLOTTA HERMAN: Thank you. Bill, I was really delighted to hear your closing remarks, because I think one of the aims of our program is to show that a small liberal arts college does have a role to play in oral history. And we have three fields in which we're working, (1) gathering material for future use, (2) training students in historical methodology and research and in the techniques of oral history, and (3) providing materials for classroom use.

As far as the projects that we've initiated, they fall into two categories. One is those dealing with senior theses and faculty research, which occurred before we officially established our program. This is in various fields of local history -- socialism, political and humanitarian figures, and people of some interest or prominence in the community.

Then in the Spring of 1967 we officially established our oral history program, concentrating on land use in Southern California because this is something that is of especial interest to people in our area, something which hasn't been worked in before, and which we feel has value to the community. We've worked in various fields of land use, such as interviewing real estate brokers, property manager, people in finance -- trying to find out the relation between finance and real estate -- planned communities, zoning and planning, the rancheros, the boom and bust periods, especially in the '20's, and what's gone on in the 1960's. Generally we're trying to find out trends in real estate, and just what's developing in the 20th century.

Now the second major program that we have, which has just been initiated this past semester, is a techniques and training course in oral history, in which we have about twelve students, juniors and seniors on the college level. Our purposes are primarily to train them in the technique of historical research, teach them the various materials that are available, how to analyze and criticize the data that they have before them for its validity, and also to train them in the techniques of oral history so that perhaps some day girls who are in our program may find work eventually in established oral history programs throughout the country. We also feel that materials gathered can be used in the classroom, that tapes collected in various interviews could be used to teach one phase of history.

In the training of these students, we give them a wide variety of materials to read, such as the colloquiums and various bibliographies on oral history. Then they are taught, as well as anyone can be taught, various techniques of interviewing: the do's and the don'ts and the problems that they'll face. Obviously, we all know that each person that we interview is different, and you can be as well prepared in interviewing as possible and the interview that you conduct at that time can be a complete flop, because the person is so different from anyone you've met and responds in a different manner. But we try to prepare them as well as can be done. Most of the girls are working on the topics, What It's Like to be Old, and What It's Like to be Young, and then there are a few students doing special projects in relation to senior theses, such as the Sunset Strip and the Brown Beret movement. Now the girls each have an hour interview to conduct during the semester. They are prepared for this interview as well as can be; they formulate questions and talk among themselves to see what types of approach might be used. Then they go out with their tape recorders, get down the materials, and then they bring it back. Sometime during the semester they make a report in which they give a biography of the person interviewed, the circumstances of the interview, play parts of the tape, and tell generally what was said. After this, each girl will transcribe her hour, then edit it, and turn in the edited copy, as well as the refinished copy. At the end of the course, there's a general evaluation of what problems you encountered, what you think of oral history generally, and what you have found out about the methodology of historical research. And what I'd like to do right now is to give you a sample of one of the girl's interviews. You'll have to keep in mind that it's a student who's never been acquainted with oral history before. It's her first interview. It may be some way of judging our project. This tape is on the Sunset Strip. [5 minute tape played]

We found that the girls had come up with some really interesting tapes. One girl was talking to an elderly woman, and she was telling the student about how she had seen Jesus. I would have brought it to play, but it's very soft and couldn't have been heard well. Topics that we're working with probably are not topics that we can bind and store in libraries for future use, yet some sociologists or psychologists may want to listen to what this woman is saying, may want to know about this for social history or for psychology; so that it could maybe provide some information, although our main purpose, I'd like to emphasize, is to train the girls in historical methodology. So just in summary, I'd like to say that the materials that we collect, through my interviews on real estate, though they may not be as professional, and I'm not as well trained as the people at Columbia, are materials that otherwise would not have been gathered, or that, if we talked to people that would still be alive at a future date, the people who pick up our interviews can go back to them and pick up on the initial questions and get more information, but at least they have something to start with, something that they wouldn't have had otherwise. So we feel that this is some justification for our program. And then, too, we are training students in historical research, and we're providing materials for use in the classroom, for other teachers to bring into their classes, because, I think it's been brought out in several discussions, especially the one on Oral History in the Classroom, students respond very well to tapes.

KNOX MELLON: Thank you, Carlotta. I might just add one thing, and that is that in the training and techniques class the girls tape considerably more than one hour's worth of interviews. But they only turn in one hour's worth, twenty-five or thirty pages in their edited transcript, in their finished transcript, so obviously in that course you're not going to have any finished material that will be of great value to future scholars. It's a learning process for the girls.

The last member of the panel is Professor Charles Crawford, who is an Assistant Professor of History at Memphis State University in Memphis, Tennessee, and Director of the Oral History Research Office.

CHARLES CRAWFORD: When Knox introduced this idea, he said something about speaking either theoretically or practically. I know nothing about theory, I haven't been in this work long enough, so I told Knox it would have to be practically. What I have to say concerns a few practical details of our experience in organizing an oral history program in one specific university. I don't know how applicable it would be to some other place, but at least this is the way it was done in one institution.

The idea came to the attention of the president of our university in late 1966. Memphis State is a comparatively new place, lacking in history and traditions, actually, but with something like 16,000 students, quite a number of interested faculty, and located in an area rich in historical resources. I think the lack of tradition was really of value, because the president didn't feel that a thing had to be traditional to be accepted. And we were able to sell him on the idea of oral history. The Oral History Research Office was instituted and arbitrarily divided our activity in getting this started into six parts, which I think occupied most of my attention. And I'll try to give you a few sentences about each.

The first problem that I had was that of gathering information. The major problem to contend with was ignorance, since I knew nothing about oral history, nor did anyone else in our institution to any degree. So the first problem was learning something about it. And there were two basic sources for that. First I found a rich source of published articles, many of them, to be sure, contradictory, but quite a collection. And the first process was to have this material copied. We xeroxed all of it, at least all that we could locate, and that was quite a number. And I had the material then bound for use in the office. Perhaps I shouldn't admit this, since Charlie Morrissey's in the back row. One of his articles is here. I think there is no copyright problem, since there's only one copy, and it can't be purchased. But this is one volume of the collection. We did find published materials to some degree. Secondly, while no book had been written specifically on oral history research to my knowledge, we found somewhat useful references in other things. My second exhibit is a book which helped me a great deal. This is one called Magnetic Tape Recording distributed by the government, the Federal Scientific and Technical Information Clearing House. This makes use of a great deal of information the government has gathered in the NASA operations, where they do tape recording in the face of considerable difficulties. So we were able to find some published information.

A second source, obviously, was to visit existing programs, and I set out then to examine a few programs. I feel this is an opportunity to extend thanks to a few people who deserve it. The first pilgrimage naturally is always to Columbia, the archtype, and perhaps parent of all of our progress. Ben Frank in the Marine Corps headquarters in Washington also gave some valuable information. So did the Tulane University Jazz Archive and the Director, Richard Allen of New Orleans. Then the Library of Congress provided some useful information, particularly on the storage of magnetic tape. I made contact with Woody Maunder, and he also was very kind in supplying information.

My third source, I might say, that came to my attention later, is the Oral History Colloquium itself, the first in Arden House; I missed the Arrowhead meeting. And the second here, which I found to be very instructive concerning the work that we're doing.

Well, eventually we acquired enough information to get the program launched. Then there were a few other matters to be dealt with. One of them was that of personnel. In our operation we have a Director, or perhaps half a Director, since I teach half time and devote half time to this work, one secretary who is a full-time employee, an Advisory Committee which meets with me once a year and either gives advice or says that they don't know, and an archivist who is the regular University Archivist and extremely helpful in providing permanent storage for the tapes and transcripts. Also, we have a stenographic pool which fills in for the typing, in addition to my secretary, and last but not least in importance, the interviewers, at a given time, about teh. Normally, they're faculty members drawn from different academic departments, although I've used a few graduate students, who often are better than faculty members, and a few undergraduates, in which my experience has not been too successful (but maybe that's not the problem of the students), and a few people who are not connected with the university at all. These people are not compensated.

The next matter that I gave some attention to was that of public relations; and we did consider this important since no one had heard of oral history and our entire operation was new. I think that there is a very valid rationale for this. It has helped us a great deal in securing prospects to interviews and program information. Also it helps me in finding interviewers, or people in the academic community or nearby who are interested enough to do this interviewing. The media that we have used are newspapers, regular news stories as often as possible; occasionally there are columnists who are looking for material, and I think oral history offices generally have the sort of project they are looking for. I have an exhibit where I suppose I owe a footnote to California State, Fullerton. Someone had mailed a copy of one to Gary Shumway which he passed along to me today. This story's rather old though. Also there have been opportunities to be interviewed for television and radio in the local area, which opportunities I always accept. And there is also opportunity for speeches, both by the Director of the program on oral history and by specific interviewers on their projects, which local organizations often find of a great deal of interest.

Another matter which occupied some of our attention, and I gather occupies yours as well, is that of financing, which in our case is done entirely by the university. We do hope to receive grants; certainly we'll not turn any down, but due to having adequate financing from the university, I've not been driven by necessity to seek any very vigorously. As to the way we spend this. First of all, there is the Director, whose salary is one-half time for oral history research, a secretary full time, as I said, interviewers, and I suppose that we normally pay the salary of about one faculty member for interviewing, since normally we'll have about four faculty members whose load will be reduced by one-fourth, or normally three hours, so that it amounts to one full person. In addition to that, there is the matter of office space and furniture supplied by the university, equipment which of course includes an electric typewriter, five recorders presently in use, others we'll pick up, a Uher 4000, Sony 7800's, and one Concord 330. Also there's office supplies, paper, carbon in quantity, magnetic tape, travel, a modest entertainment fund, mailing costs and so forth. Now that accounts for our receipts and expenditures.

In regard to projects, we limit them to the region. We consider ourselves involved in regional work. And we define this rather curiously in the opinion of many people. I define our sphere of work as being in the mid-South, the lower Mississippi Valley, which is something no one has ever defined. That allows us to go as far afield as we like. Now our projects are generally fairly regional. We usually don't go outside the South, although we've had to pursue one as far as Philadelphia and Cincinnati to find them. Generally, our work is in our region, and the selection of projects is made by the Director, although the initiative may be taken either by me or by interviewers. For example, Professor X may come and say, "I'm doing research in contemporary material, what can you do to help me," which gives me a chance to tell him. On the other hand, occasionally I find a project and then try to match an interested interviewer to it. Our coverage is over a wide topical spectrum, and I'll read a few of our titles to give you some idea of what we cover: History of Organized Labor in Memphis; Interviews with Seven Writers, in which an English professor was my interviewer; History of the Memphis Jewish Community; Documenting Memphis Jazz and Blues, which I'll admit I've never understood yet, but we're getting a fine collection of music; History of Memphis State University (I think we all have to undertake the inevitable institutional history); The Development of the Tennessee Hardwood Lumber Industry, in which I have a very knowledgable economist; and last but not least, projects concerning events in Memphis in 1968 including the strike, the boycotts, the marches, the demonstrations, and Martin Luther King's assassination.

Last of all, procedures. I have defined them rather carefully in guidelines to be distributed to interviewers. We give a great deal of attention to legal aspects. The university is cautious about that. And we do use legal forms for restriction or release, designed by our university's attorney. Three of them, one concerning information to be sealed, the other information to be opened, and the other concerning information for which financial compensation is given.

In concluding, I consider opportunities for research in colleges and universities practically unlimited. I'm sure that all of you are located in areas as rich in contemporary and recent material as we are. They're simply waiting for someone to get them, and I think this role can be filled by practically any college or university that cares to do so.

QUESTION: How many transcripts have you completed in these various endeavors?

CHARLES CRAWFORD: I can't give you an exact answer. I would guess around 300 at this time.

QUESTION: When did you begin the program, Charles?

CHARLES CRAWFORD: Early 1967. Actually, interviewing started after my trip to Columbia sometime in the Spring of '67.

QUESTION: What was the procedure involved in getting the grant through the Office of Education?

BILL WYATT: You're speaking about this last grant from the Foundation on the Arts and Humanities. Very simple. I simply put together my thinking on the matter in which I was interested in having funded, and wrote what amounted to no more than three pages in terms of a proposal with an appended budget, which came to four pages, and mailed in to that office, and they contacted me very shortly on it, suggested one or two revisions in procedure as well as funding, and I suppose within a matter of, oh, two months, the grant was made available to me. So this is the manner in which I carried it out.

QUESTION: How much did they give you?

BILL WYATT: Twenty thousand dollars.

QUESTION: Did they specify how you should spend this money or...?

BILL WYATT: It was pretty much spelled out in the budget. There is considerable flexibility. As a matter of fact, just two months ago, I sent in an appended budget, to the first appended budget, and suggested that we had discovered there were areas in which we'd be spending a little more money, and some areas in which we'd be spending less, and they were very gracious about okaying this.

QUESTION: What was the key in your proposal that made it possible for them to justify giving you twenty thousand dollars?

BILL WYATT: Well, I'm not sure, very honestly, that I can answer that. In fact I've not explored it with them on why the proposal itself was funded. As I say, this second was an outgrowth of this initial project in which we had suggested that one of the reasons for the great change in attitude on the part of subsequent generations, in what is still in many ways a very isolated area, was television. And we would like to explore this impact. And they basically bought this supposition.

QUESTION: Well, maybe I ought to elaborate a bit. It's my understanding that the Office of Education, when they give grants, the ultimate objective for their grants is for research to generate materials that will be of value to educators throughout the country. That's the only way the federal government can justify its involvement in education. What is there in your proposal that made it possible for them to justify it on that basis? In what way would your materials be of value to educators?

BILL WYATT: I suspect that the great concern here, with the people who did the funding, was that individuals, especially young people, might be reachable in an area like this by television better than anything else. And a number of our questions here concerned what their reaction would be to, and what their support would be of educational television in that area. This was, just to be honest, a small portion of this. And again I say, they never really explained to us any very particular facet here that they thought was better than any other part of it.

QUESTION: Maybe we can get a clue out of it. What kind of provisions did they suggest?

BILL WYATT: Provisions suggested were that we bring in a few more television consultants from ETV networks, that a little less money be spent on travel, and that per diem be jacked up a little, which didn't tell us an awful lot. The educational consultants are affiliated with the ETV channel in Minneapolis and St. Paul. And these people, in conjunction with myself, helped to devise the questions that we utilized. I was looking at it very distinctly from the point of view of the project which we had just concluded, and they were interested in, in a sense, furthering our general research, because we had suggested that we thought television was a very meaningful thing here in this area.

QUESTION: I have a question for Professor Crawford. Most of these projects seem to make use of graduate students in interviewing, and sometimes faculty. And I was going to ask whether you have found any significant difference in the problem of training people to go out, as between graduate students and faculty?

CHARLES CRAWFORD: I'll tell you what happens when faculty members go out. I get a call Sunday night at 9:00 P.M. at home telling me the tape recorder won't work. Yes, there is a problem. Most of the students I've found to be more docile, more teachable, but I think I rather prefer professors, because I do insist that they know all there is to know about the subject, and all that can be learned about the interviewee. And people doing research in this field already, as in the case of the economist or the English professor, are more likely to have that knowledge. They're a little less inclined to follow guidelines, that is, they are more likely to run the tape recorder at the wrong speed, to fail to put down the necessary preliminary data, and so forth. There are problems, yes.

QUESTION: But you at least have guidelines, so they have something to start with, they don't just go out cold.

CHARLES CRAWFORD: Yes. Everything is spelled out in very elementary form. Even professors can understand it.

QUESTION: Addressed primarily to Mr. Crawford. I was very interested in your remarks about public relations for an oral history project. We haven't discussed this sufficiently in my opinion in previous colloquia, and I wondered if in the future we might not have a session on it. What bothers me is that by stirring up interest in oral history, don't you also stir up problems, people that call you up and say, you must interview me, reporters who want to know who's saying what about them, pressures perhaps of other sorts upon you, as well as taking an awful lot of your time?

CHARLES CRAWFORD: Yes. It is a problem. I think the advantages far outweigh the problems, because we are so totally new, so completely unknown, and we have to depend on the community to help find these projects. Also, on winding up the first project that I had, I discovered that I had accepted 52 speaking engagements on my work, and I had turned many down. I suppose there were probably 100 or 150 invitations to speak, and I graciously accepted as many as I could because many of these people we had worked with and they were interested in it, and it was fine from many points of view. At the same time, many of these people who came to hear me speak would mention the fact that they had memoirs or diaries or letters that they would like to refer me to, and I read a number of those. We weren't collecting them, but we made a record of where they were, so that if we couldn't personally utilize them, other people could, and some people have, and I daresay will continue to. At the same time, there were many people who came forward who said, yours is a fine project and I'm going to aid and abet you. I bought a tape recorder, and I have an old aunt. So there were a lot of people that were suddenly out interviewing people. It works both ways, but it can be a vital thing.

GARY SHUMWAY: I have an example of this also. In trying to fit these 34 hours of tape into a crowded week, since I also taught two other classes, I used to carry this tape recorder with me everywhere I went and play it anyplace I could plug it in. I went to the barber shop one day, and just the barber was there, and it wasn't a confidential tape, and I asked him if I could listen to it while he was cutting my hair. And he said yes. And so as he was cutting my hair, I was listening to this tape. And I hadn't noticed, but three old fine senior citizens had come into the barber shop. Along towards the end of the interview I discovered they were just entraced with it. As I got ready to step out of the chair, they said, tell us what's happening, so I told them what we were doing. And as I walked out these three gentlemen stood up, just as if I were the President of the Mormon Church or something, just this kind of treatment, you know, that you usually don't get as you leave the barber shop. However, I learned that this public relations aspect did have some drawbacks, because the last time I went in, or the next to the last time, just before the election, my barber, who's a fine, upstanding Democrat in the middle of the Nixon belt, had gone out to all of the neighbors, to people who had known Nixon when he was smaller, and had interviewed them concerning all these scurrilous stories, you know, and he forced everyone as they came in to listen to these as he cut their hair.

VIDEO-TAPING NOTABLE HISTORIANS

Joe B. Frantz

PHILIP CROWL: It is my privilege to introduce a friend of a great number of you and a very distinguished historian to talk to you tonight both on the subject which was originally programmed for him and also to talk about something in the way of a distinguished new direction in oral history. Joe Frantz really needs no introduction. I sometimes wonder, knowing Joe, whether one dares really introduce him because of the reprisals that there might be. So all that I can say is that I have been very, very proud to know Joe for a number of years, and have been very, very, thrilled to have had the opportunity of listening to him as he has talked about a number of subjects that attract the professional workers in history.

JOE FRANTZ: A Ford Foundation representative visiting the University of Texas for whatever vague and essential reasons that motivated either him or the University paid a courtesy call on the late Walter Prescott Webb on his way out of Austin. As he left Webb's office he said, in effect, "By the way, Dr. Webb," (I should, I suppose, say what you know, and that is, non-academics and new Ph.D.'s always insist on using the title of doctor, even correcting themselves in mid-sentence when they slip and call a man mister, just as though he were as good as everybody else. I never knew an historian worth his salt who insisted on being called doctor, only M.D.'s, dentists and chiropractors. Webb always insisted, I might say, that a Ph.D. isn't worth a damn thing, it's your work that counts, an attitude in which some of the people that we will see and mention, men like Arnold Toynbee, Arthur Schlesinger, Jr., Allan Nevins, and J. Frank Dobie, none of whom bothered to get one, would concur.) But I digress, a chronic disease of professors, and frequently the only time that I ever say anything that my students are likely to remember.

Back to Dr. Webb, the Ford man said, "If you ever have a project in which we can help, don't fail to get in touch." Webb, who usually felt his ideas were too logical for foundation support, replied, "Matter of fact, I have an idea right now. Men like me are going to disappear and you will have no way of recapturing them except through the written word. Furthermore, teachers everywhere are always interpreting parts of history as laid down by the experts, and often their interpretations bear little resemblance to what those experts said or meant.

"Why not," Webb continued, "preserve through television a course on American History, in which the experts, each in his own specialty, would tell his portion of the story? You'd have a course that would be unlike any other in the world, the whole fabric of history as taught by men who knew the most about it." The visitor liked the idea, requested that Webb submit it as a formal proposal, and the University of Texas and the Ford Foundation were shortly joint sponsors of a television project whose name I don't care for, but for which I've been unable to deliver an acceptable substitute: American Civilization by Its Interpreters.

Beginning in late Fall of 1962, and continuing until the Summer of 1964, 41 lecturers video-taped 94 lectures in the field of their specialty. Whatever value the series has as a course, its archive and spot potentialities are enormous. What wouldn't we give to have Herodotus or Cicero or Clio preserved through video-tape? Or Gibbon or Macaulay? Or at a later date, Turner, Beard, Herbert Bolton, Henry Adams? Parenthetically I might say that I was running along on this line one afternoon to an apparently interested amateur, who stopped me by saying, "Well, why don't you see if Ford will give you more money? Maybe you can get them yet!" Lacking vision, of course I haven't tried.

So we don't have Herodotus and Parkman, but we do have Toynbee, Samuel Eliot Morison, Henry Steele Commager, C. Vann Woodward, Thomas Clark, Merle Curti, David Potter, Oscar Handlin, and a whole host of others who have influenced the profession, and whose work will be consulted and even reinterpreted as long as their specialties interest men. The group includes all the living presidents of the American Historical Association in American History, including the next most recent one, Julian Boyd, and the one just finishing, Vann Woodward. Likewise it takes in most of the presidents of the Lincoln-founded, and once Lincoln-based Mississippi Valley Historical Association, recently renamed the Organization of American Historians. Its participants have won numerous Pulitzer prizes and Bancroft awards, and one, Ralph Bunche, even holds a Nobel prize. It is truly an all-star squad, with some regretted omissions occasioned by lack of time and money (this happens with all-American squads in sports other than History).

The one big name who was missed live was a former president of the American Historical Association, who just happened to be the only one ever to emerge from the University of Texas, Walter Prescott Webb, which is the old case, you know, of living in San Antonio and never going to see the Alamo. We do have Webb by splicing him off some other things. When the project was hardly one-fourth completed, Webb was killed in an automobile wreck, on March 8, 1963, before he could be preserved for this course. As the historian who probably worked most closely with Webb on this project, I became Director.

Now my purpose here is not to sell you on the project, as I feel it needs no selling. Currently it has undergone a four-year academic test, telecast over closed circuit every Monday, Wednesday, and Friday at 11 o'clock in the morning to seven colleges and universities in Central Texas. I think it has succeeded. Instead, my purpose is to continue as I've begun here, to look at these lofty intellects who were involved, as people. I might even say as people under stress. Primarily, each shared two strains: that of distilling a lifetime of research and writing in one to three 30-minute lectures, Toynbee is the only one who did more than three; and that of facing television cameras with their often rigid demands.

Only a few of the participants had any considerable television experience. Almost no ground rules were invoked from the Austin end of the operation. A man could approach his chosen topic, which, except in the broadest outline, was left to him, anyway he chose. In his first lecture he was encouraged to say something about how he came to be what he is, and he was asked to observe the 30-minute time limit, which, not surprisingly, bothered our historians more than anything else about their experience. We all talk, you know, beyond the hour. All but three of the lecturers were video-taped in Austin, where some uniformity of their production could be maintained.

Several generalizations could be made. All displayed surprising social skills, and went away admired even by that most cynical of practitioners, the office secretary. Likewise, whether a lecturer was a classroom spellbinder hardly seemed to matter. Each was so thoroughly and profoundly at home in his subject matter that he came across with a display of reserve strength that left the auditors feeling the pull of the speaker's power. As one listener said, "It's just hard to beat a man who knows what he's talking about."

Appropriately enough, Arnold Toynbee touched off the series with four lectures on the antecedents of American Civilization. In fact, by the time he finished, he almost proved that there is no such thing as American Civilization. But we went on anyhow. Toynbee also furnished us with one of our more homey memories, as well as one of our more embarrassing ones. We were all set to roll the cameras when Mrs. Toynbee stepped out in front of the camera, stopped everything, and went over and brushed his hair down. It wasn't sitting to suit her. Everything stopped until she made him more presentable.

His visit was kept a secret, because we were hitchhiking onto an official visit he was making at Rice University, which had invited him as chief speaker for its semi-centennial. Not wishing to impair the impact of his presence at Rice, we agreed to tell no one, but to slip him in and slip him back out. We also neglected to tell one of our secretaries, who was more noted for being related to Jayne Mansfield than for her historicity. Like Jayne Mansfield, I might add, she's more than just another pretty face. But secrets won't keep, and the correspondent for the <u>Dallas Morning News</u>, somehow tipped off, called our office. Since no one he knew was in, he talked to the secretary.

"Is it true that Toynbee is coming in quietly?"

"Who?" she asked.

"Toynbee. Arnold Toynbee," he said.

"I'm sorry, but you'll have to speak up."

"Arnold Toynbee," he said slowly and carefully.

"Would you spell that last name?" she asked. He spelled it.

"I'm sorry, he doesn't teach here," she said politely. And then helpfully, "He's not even a teaching assistant."

We made out a list of names that even secretaries related to Miss Mansfield should recognize.

Everyone connected with the program agrees that the three champion talkers were Commager, Carl Bridenbaugh, and Richard Morris. The real champion would have to be chosen from the latter two, as Commager didn't stay long enough for most of us to realize he'd been there. He's in the position of a man disqualified from the NCAA punting championship because his average is computed on fewer than fifty kicks. We felt that he could have won, but he just didn't play enough. All three disembogued from the plane talking, and they left the same way. We interrupted to introduce them to their director, and then we just turned on the cameras and sound for 30 minutes at a time. The amazing thing about the performance of each is that the talk never flagged in its interest -- in its interest for others, not only for them. It was invariably stimulating and suggestive.

Some men talked from notes. Some from complete scripts. A few from the briefest of outlines that were never referred to once the production got under way. Some tinkered regularly, right up to camera time, while Constance McLaughlin Green, the recent Pulitzer prize winner, rewrote hers entirely in her hotel room the night she arrived in Austin. But alas, she wrote it on memo pads, hotel stationery, backs of envelopes, and any other scraps she could find in the room. Nothing matched physically, so that fugitive fragments of foolscap kept heading to the floor as she walked to the lectern. The program began, and Mrs. Green apparently was doing beautifully, when from the director's glassed-in booth at the back of the studio came, "Cut!"

"Mrs. Green, are you breaking glass or something?"

She wasn't breaking glass, but as she finished each so-called sheet, she would crush it and sweep it to the floor outside camera range. As the action recorded on the sound track, a sound-effects man couldn't have done a more superior job of emulating the smashing of windows. The next scene is that of a covey of studio hands and your speaker tonight, on their haunches, gathering up paper while Mrs. Green uncrumples and tries to determine in what order the sheets belong.

The most polished performer has to be Eric Goldman, an old pro at televising history. On the other hand, George Pierson of Yale had never been on television before, did not own a set himself, and was about as untainted by the black box as if he lived alone on an island 700 miles beyond the range of the nearest channel. Before we began, he stood at the lectern, almost rigid, and as stern as an old Connecticut Congregationalist. But then the cameras began to roll, and the Pierson who has fascinated even his own contemporaries, which isn't easy, took over. The result of the transformation, if you prefer, led to two of the most intimate and overpowering lectures of the series. He couldn't communicate more personally if he were holding a seminar for three students in his own living room. It is teaching at its grandest, and in my opinion, he illustrates that teaching is an art form. He also illustrates that the great teachers can adjust to any medium, no matter how unfamiliar.

As everyone who keeps up with show business, with sports, or with politics knows, an advertised last appearance is frequently a bid for more invitations. The Marx Brothers used to make a running gag out of their annual last motion picture. So when Samuel Flagg Bemis announced his availability for a last appearance before our graduate students at a local chapter of Phi Alpha Theta, we were delighted to have the former president of the American Historical Association, but took no notice of the fact that it was to be his last public address. You can imagine my surprise when a year later Professor Bemis, or Professor American Flagg Bemis, as he said his detractors called him, wrote that he had been invited to speak at the University of Hawaii, he was eager to visit that Lotus Land, but that he would not accept the engagement until I had released him from his statement to our graduate students that this was his last public appearance. Naturally, I told him I was glad to set him free, and I thought he was foolish if he didn't go. I certainly would have gone, without writing anybody. As it turned out, he became ill, so that his Austin appearance, as far as I know, is still his farewell address. I feel this must be so, because with his sense of integrity he would have told me if he had accepted someone else's bid.

As I said earlier, I requested that each man tell something of his background in his opening lecture. I think you'll get a little bit of that in the portion of the TV tonight from John Hope Franklin. The whole result is a study in how historians are made, because they certainly aren't born. Ray Billington said candidly that he became a foremost historian of the West because a publisher asked him to complete a textbook whose original author was stalled. When the publisher told Billington there was money in it, Billington accepted. The original author dropped out, and Billington's Westward Expansion became a commercial as well as a critical success. This success inspired another publisher to suggest a book on the Far West, and a hint that there was money in it. And so Billington had a second book on the West. And in Billington's honest words, captured forever, he represents a triumph of commercialism, and he hints that if publishers will continue to have astute merchandising ideas, he will continue to turn out books of import.

Leonard Arrington, the historian of the Mormons, became an economic historian because as a farm boy, neither he nor his father could understand why potatoes, which sold so cheaply in Idaho, cost so much when they bought them on a trip to California. He took courses, he said, to learn why.

On the other hand, Bell Wiley, the chronicler of Billy Yank and Johnny Reb, ate his way into history. As the son of a small-town Protestant minister in the South in the 1920's, he had to spend many a

Sunday afternoon over prolonged parsonage dinners and after dinners. With regularity two old gentlemen showed up, one a Confederate veteran, and the other a member of the Grand Army of the Republic. The boy would sit listening to one or the other recount the Civil War as they remembered it, or had heard about it, or thought it ought to be, and he just naturally absorbed Civil War lore until he moved into being a Civil War historian as a full-time occupation.

And Avery Craven, who usually has his tongue in his cheek, avers he took up history because of the uncertain tenure of being a football and track coach, which he was. In fact, his first college teaching position at College of Emporia in Kansas specified that he assist with football, at no extra salary. I wonder what this would do to our present-day history recruiting procedures.

Three of the lectures have heavy, but contained emotional content, because of the times in which they were delivered. Dexter Perkins, another former president of the American Historical Association, and owner of the Fanny Farmer Cookbook copyright (and he showed it), video-taped his lectures on American foreign policy, including his especial field of the role of the Monroe Doctrine, right at the moment that President Kennedy was confronting the Russians over their missile bases in Cuba. Arthur Schlesinger, Jr. had been supposed to give his lectures in December, 1963. As you know, years ago President Kennedy, for whom young Schlesinger (and he'll still be young Schlesinger when he's 89) had been a special White House assistant, was assassinated. When Schlesinger did come then, the following spring, he, like most of the remainder of us, was still somewhat in a state of shock. Nonetheless, as an historian of the age of Jackson, and the age of Franklin Roosevelt, he assayed a critical estimate of the age of Kennedy, which couldn't help but be shot through with deep feeling and even suffering.

The third man, Ralph Bunche, came to Austin during the outbreak of the Cyprus crisis. In fact, he left Austin en route to Cyprus the day after. For a man who has won all sorts of international acclaim as well as criticism (some right-wing group distributed denunciatory handbills outside our Student Union while he made a public appearance), he is a remarkably humble man, so grateful for little attentions, and so eager to do his chores well. As he talked on the difficulty of 20th Century peacemaking, Cyprus threatened to blow into a world conflagration in his and in all our faces.

Dr. Bunche also told one anecdote on President Johnson which demonstrates one of the assets this tall Texan, and that adjective describes just one of the ways in which he exceeds me, possesses. After President Kennedy had been buried on that melancholy Monday, President Johnson, you will recall, held a reception for all the visiting heads of state. When you also recall how depressed and concerned all of us were after those four now chaotic, now sad days, we can only imagine the weight of the burden on President Johnson. And yet he had to greet, with proper polish, a host of sensitive dignitaries from Le Grande Charles right on down. Somewhere along the line came the United Nations delegation with Ralph Bunche. Bunche approached the President, Mr. Johnson thrust out his hand, said something like this:

"So good to see you, Dr. Bunche, and, say, don't forget you have a date in Austin in March!"

Insisted Bunche: "For the President, under the circumstances, to have been able to remember such a detail was startling. I should be on my way to Cyprus right now, but, you know, after that, I just had to keep this date with you."

Of course, what we in Austin never could figure out was not how the President could summon such detail, because he's well known to hook people through a grasp of their involvements, but how he ever learned about the date.

John L. Franklin, on the other hand, possesses an effervescence that is irresistible. Before a TV camera, I have a blue beard which makes me look like an unwashed Richard Nixon. Consequently, I lard on pancake makeup as if it were pure gold, and I was one of Goldfinger's heroines. While a studio hand worked over my face, Franklin stood watching.

"Thank goodness," he observed, "I was born with my makeup already on."

These vignettes could go on and on, and I could tell of Paul W. Gates, the historian of public lands from Cornell, who visited Austin for the first time, thinking like so many others, that all Texas is ultraconservative, if not downright reactionary. Everyone he ran into, though, tended toward liberal politics, and to cap it all, we spent three hours with the late J. Frank Dobie, who both practiced and preached the free mind. As I told Gates goodbye, he said, "You know, if I depended on this Texas visit alone, I'd go home convinced that this state is nothing but a nest of damn liberals."

Richard Hofstadter learned something about Texas, but in his case the information was negative. A whole file of letters passed between Austin and New York before we could convince him that no train runs between Houston, the South's largest city, and Austin, the capital of Texas. You can't even get train stations in Texas to answer the phone. So, while Hofstadter will not ride anything but a train, in Texas he flew.

And finally, perhaps somewhere something should be said about that one-man gang, the absent Allan Nevins. A mild, almost gentle man, forever living with a gargantuan work compulsion, he also is a believer in the benefits of walking. This was before he had had his first heart attack, or, as he said, the flu. He had to be met in San Antonio, to which we sent a graduate student employed by the project. The trip back to Austin proceeded genially enough until Nevins spotted Austin over the rise, about five miles ahead.

"Let me out here and I'll walk in," Nevins said. The graduate student protested, perturbed that he had somehow inadvertently insulted his passenger.

"Sir, they'd never forgive me if I let you walk," he said.

"No, I mean it. Let me out."

"I'd like to do what you say, sir," our hero said, "but I have my orders to bring you in, and that's just what I'm going to do."

And he did.

If there's a moral in this, it's simply that not even such a redoubtable and persistent man as Allan Nevins, as most of you professors have learned, can win out against a graduate student who has his mind set. I hope you'll find some comfort in that.

And so the parade passed, forty-one of them, not a single one less than a person. Each with his differences, but each notable as a man who has worked and who has thought. But that work and those thoughts have influenced people who never heard of them; have revised attitudes; have rendered our world richer; and have illuminated the stage of the continual drama that is history. I think that we have captured something that will be more valuable a generation, a century from now than it is currently. For whatever it's worth, I do think it was a good adventure, and as(you know the old saying) when Oscar Levant asked George Gershwin,

"George, if you had it all to do over again, would you still fall in love with yourself?"

I kind of feel that way about this. I would still take the time to do it again. Now you can see some samples. /Showing of brief video-tapes of Arnold Toynbee, John Hope Franklin, and Ralph Bunche./

PHILIP CROWL: I'm sure you all enjoyed that, both the initial presentation and those very splendid films. I, personally, feel that it's tremendous to have the personal reflections that we had from John Hope Franklin and Ralph Bunche, and they are among the most significant things, I'm sure, that we might preserve. I've never before enjoyed the privilege of being chairman of a double header. Now I've got the very, very happy privilege of making Joe understand what happens to Darrell Royal's quarterbacks on Saturday afternoon. We've had the half-time show, Joe. It's time again for you to play, and tonight we're going to hear something about a very exciting new dimension in oral history.

JOE FRANTZ: I feel this is double jeopardy on your part, or indecent exposure on my part, or something. But I suppose I should pay Louis for the telegram to Allan Nevins, because I'm thankful. It's the first time I ever got to succeed myself as a speaker. Usually I see myself running out of the place.

What I want to talk about very briefly, and if any of you want to talk about this other, incidentally, I can expatiate on that all night but won't. It is distributed right out of Lincoln, Nebraska, by the Great Plains Television Network, and they're the ones that can tell you all about it, really, because they know what's going on, and I don't, since distribution is not my business. I don't know what my business is, but it's not distribution.

Both the American Historical Association and the Organization of American Historians, and their collective wisdom at the top, started petitioning Mr. Johnson about 1965 with some exchange of correspondence to get a history program underway while he was still in office. Now then, everybody knows the tragedy of Viet Nam, which also overrode history in the professional sense. So nothing happened until March 31 of this year, when Mr. Johnson announced he was not going to run again, and then he began to get ready to think about making his shop tidy.

You've gotten some intimations of this, because someone phoned me from up here that one of the Lincoln papers had had a diatribe against it 'way back in June. I think Roman Hruska sounded off. It's not the first time. But we are getting political. I think it was misunderstood. Time had a nasty little thing, I know, comparing Mr. Johnson with all the people back through centuries who tried to doctor their histories. Actually, without being at all an apologist for him, I think he has a strong sense both of history and of what the historian is up against. And one thing he's up against, you know, is this absolutely overwhelming mass of material and activity, of whom I suppose President Johnson is the worst perpetrator, or sinner, or something, of them all.

Where do you start? How do you get at it? Even if you know what questions to ask, how to get through it. So, 70 agencies were asked to start an administrative history, telling, in effect, where they were in November, 1963; where they were going to be in November, 1968; how they got from 1963 to 1968; what they got done in the interim; what they failed to do; what their successes were; what their failures were. It was to be as depersonalized as possible, the idea being that this would be a wonderful guide, wonderful for the Nixon administration, though we didn't know it was going to be the Nixon administration.

Further, it would give historians (you can go in and look at one of your 70 agencies or all 70 of them) an idea for finding out just what questions you do ask. In other words, to bring some order out of his history. Along with this, and here is Mr. Johnson I think at his most Johnsonian, he realized how little was in some types of records that were of major importance, either because a program succeeded or didn't succeed; because it might be groundbreaking or because again it might represent a misdirection on his part.

To give you just one example, and we have been working along this line for some time now, the Model Cities program was started, but in the midst of it the Housing and Urban Development Department was created by Congress, and about four months later Robert Weaver became its Secretary. He came into a brand new department in the first place, one that was four months old and already was out of hand, and he told Mr. Johnson in effect, "This Model Cities is just one more thing than I can handle. I've just got more right now than I can possibly do correctly," after which the President said, okay, that kills it, at least for the time being. But there were two administrative aides completely anonymous to the ordinary outsider. One was an administrative assistant to Senator Muskie, and the other one was there in the White House itself. They thought this was a good program, and though they were nobodies in the government hierarchy, they kept the pressure on; they wouldn't let the thing die, and they just kept haranguing people with it until finally the time was ripe when Weaver said to the President, I believe we can do it. The President said, Get going. And now we've got a Model Cities program.

Okay, I don't care what you think about Model Cities. But this is about a three-year story, and you have a few memos on it. Of course much of this is done back and forth, and nowhere, if you stayed with the documents, would you get much in the way of the actual story. And Mr. Johnson realized this as he said, in effect, that you're going to have a memo in which this thing is first projected, you may have one or two memos somewhere along the way, and you're going to have a memo at the end saying, As of this day we have agreed to do thus and so. And then you have the Congressional hearings and the law and that's it, and what have you got? Well, you've got something, but you don't really have a story.

And so he was primed for oral history, and I went up at the end of May to establish an oral history program. The idea was not fully formed at the time. The President just thought it needed doing, and my interest in it was to keep my own professional skirts clean, in a sense to protect him. However, he was lambasted nonetheless on this, but we wished to keep this thing out of any kind of White House governmental operation. The University of Texas, of course, is getting his library, and wants it to be a good one, and Mr. Johnson is by nature the type who takes a great interest in anything that concerns him, so he in a sense is head librarian. So, consequently, he is interested. And the result was that I spent the summer mainly doing two things. One was drawing up lists of people to be interviewed, which hit around a thousand, and setting up the paraphernalia to go with it, including going up to Columbia to see Louis Starr's operation, and the co-director from the Dulles project came down from Princeton and visited with us, and we learned what we could with John Stewart.

And of course I saw the other archives people with considerable regularity, trying to learn somethihg myself. And more particularly, trying to work out a funding program that would be absolutely independent, which has been done, and which is now under the University of Texas, and I have received no federal government funds, no White House funds, nothing like that. We have kept the project then clear of any sort of government aegis, sponsorship, or whatever, and it is set up, as of right now, for three years. I don't know what it entails, because Mr. Johnson came to Washington in 1931, and immediately moved into the middle of things, and he's been there now for 37 years.

We are running primarily two types of interviewees, one set being those like James A. Farley, Senator Saltonstall, Senator Carl Hayden, men in their 80's and 90's and so on, who go 'way back to when; and then the other being the current high-level operators. Somehow we'll get back to the middle of his Senate majority days, and his Vice-Presidency, and his period in Congress, etc. etc. We do sometimes incidentally pick up those types. It is, I think, an ambitious project. It gets worse instead of better as far as the names are concerned, the matter of taking off names, because every time we see someone, as you know, as on this Model Cities program, you come home with three other names that you never even heard of that you've got to go check out and probably go see.

And we're doing two types of interviews. I suppose in the old elementary economics textbooks you'd say one vertical, one horizontal. That is, we go see somebody like Carl Hayden, and start him in with the year 1, when he was born, and bring him right up to the present, particularly in his association with Mr. Johnson. The other is to take a program and then go back and see people over and over as they reappear in other programs for perhaps short interviews, but always to the point: What did you do in this situation? As we learn about these situations, we're following through. We have, I think, the usual collection of experiences, anecdotes, and so forth.

One of the things I did was build a staff. The staff consists of three young assistant professors and one former newspaper woman from Boston. These are the full-time people who do interviews, and then there are some part-time people, one a graduate history student at the University of Maryland, another one a young assistant professor of government at Princeton, another one a young assistant professor of government at Wisconsin, or political science, if you prefer. And we use them for spot work in fields of their specialty. We tried to choose people in different fields so that they would bring a little bit of expertise.

I don't know how long it goes on. In one quote from Mr. Johnson to me on this when we were talking about it, he said, "Well, Joe, if you don't do anything but interview my enemies, you'll be 20 years at this damn' job." Nobody has planned on 20 years, but we'll stay with it.

<u>PHILIP CROWL</u>: Mr. Frantz has said that he would answer some questions. But we do have other things tonight, and I'm going to suggest that we keep it fairly short, and there'll be a little time outside when we finish here before the next session when you can collar Joe and ask him your questions there if you don't get a chance here. But who has a question: Will you say it as loud as you can, and, Joe, that microphone I think is live, and you can sit and answer right there.

<u>QUESTION</u>: How are you going to handle the classification of interviewers and also the tapes?

<u>JOE FRANTZ</u>: Everyone connected with the project has been thoroughly checked out by the FBI and interested agencies, and has been cleared for handling all the way up to Top Secret. We will, of course, have to follow the usual restrictions that they have on other projects on material that is classified. I've run into one unexpected obstacle, which doesn't answer your question, but is a matter of interest. I interviewed James A. Farley two or three weeks ago, and didn't get very good material on President Johnson; got somethings, but to a certain extent just let him run on. As you know, he has that beautiful gift of recall, even yet. And he got going on some of the New Deal problems, particularly when he, in a sense, broke with Franklin Roosevelt after 1940, and some of the troubles he had on appointments, and so forth, and he

stopped and looked at me, and he said, "You know, I've never told any of this before, because it would injure people;" and he said, "I want to look at this; I'll probably want to hold it off. In fact, I may want to just throw down the whole thing, because the more I think about it as I talk on, I think I may write a book." So he's going to restrict it to see if he's got another book in him. But in answer to your question, why, the interviewee, as you know, has, first of all, the right to put whatever restrictions he wants on it, and these people generally are pretty sensitive on just how much they can divulge, and what use ought to be made of it. And so, consequently, to a great extent they will handle that, and I imagine they will check that out, when you give them the transcript, with the security people. But we follow their lead, yes sir.

QUESTION: Are you considering this pure raw material for future historians, or are you attempting to evaluate this material?

JOE FRANTZ: Louis and I've talked about this. By and large it's raw material without any editorializing on our part. You get a little shaky on this. We've got a good Texas example that some of you know, J. Evetts Haley, who's just plain irrational, rabid, mad dog on anything political. He's an old friend of mine, and he'd say worse than that about me, so it's all right. We've fought well over the years. His book, A Texan Looks at Lyndon, is just scurrilous, to put the nicest word on it. There's nothing that really stands up under any examination. Do you see Haley or don't you? You won't get anything that really is factual, and yet he is a picture of the times. We rather thought if he'll see us we'll see him, on the basis that (I don't want, I'm not trying to compare Johnson with Lincoln, but somebody here has heard of him) Lincoln had his detractors, but more than that, he had his downright enemies, some of whom did him some immediate harm, but over a period of time the truth winnowed out, you know, and I think that people, given a length of time, can tell what is false, what is mean-spirited, what is worthwhile, what's truly solid, and so on. And so I think you just put your faith in the future on that, and go. I know that Richard Challener has talked about this. Princeton, for various reasons, did not get started on the Dulles project until 1963, which turned out to be a bonus, because if they had done it immediately, started it in Dulles' latest time or right after his death, they probably would have asked very few questions about Viet Nam. Again onthat hiatus of five years, between whatever it was when Dulles died and their beginning, of course Viet Nam became the number one question and so you ask practically everybody what he knows about how Dulles got involved in Viet Nam. You can't outguess the future. All you can do is try and saturate the whole place if you can afford it, and thus far we've got hopes that we can afford it.

QUESTION: Since President Johnson is the first President to authorize an oral history project while he is still in office, I just thought, Joe, it would be of some news interest to all of us to have a rough estimate about how much has been done to date.

JOE FRANTZ: Well, you can give statistics which don't mean a great deal, but we have had (I'll put this in round numbers) roughly 85 interviews, not interviewees, but interviews. Unfortunately we sent the Boston girl reporter to interview Cliff Carter, a longtime Johnson employee, and Dorothy is rather attractive, and we have six tapes now, six one hour and a half tapes, in which he's calling her honey. I don't think he'll ever let her go! When she leaves he starts telling her stories so she'll have to come back next time. But, aside from that, I mean, quite seriously, we have about 88 hours of interviews, we have about that many more scheduled to date. We're trying to keep interviews scheduled roughly a month in advance so that we can do the proper anticipation and research and so on. We've had, I might add, tremendous cooperation from the White House staff, and they have been, particularly the veterans like George Reedy who has a great understanding on this sort of thing, and a bright young chap named Larry Levinson who's not too well known, but Levinson's another one of these quiz kids types that never hesitates for a name or a date or anything else. He remembers everything that ever happened since he got there. He's second or third echelon, though. But they have worked out the fifty most important programs in the Johnson administration from, as I say, conception to completion, or whatever its current status is, over a several-year period, and everybody involved in it. About once a week, we send them the list of interviewees over the next three weeks, and then we go see them and talk over what they know about it, quite apart from our own library and other research work, trying to get this just as full as possible, but the word is out from the top down that you cooperate with this completely. For instance, there is a complete file of all of Mr. Johnson's telephone calls. Okay, any of us can go over to his office on any day and pull out the file under Louis Starr, and there are the 94 phone calls he's had with Louis Starr, and the subject of each one. Most of them are just chats. But there will usually be four, five, or six in there that say as of May 7, 1964, he talked with Louis Starr for ten minutes on this topic, and you've got enough of a lead there that you've got a good question. This is just one of the services, one of the advantages of getting started on a man <u>before</u>, rather than trying to recapture <u>after</u> the event. I just wish, from an historian's standpoint, this is <u>not</u> political, I wish he were going to be around for four more years, because I'm afraid we're not going to get this cooperation from the new administration. I can't see why they would cooperate in getting on with Mr. Johnson's story. But you do have this sort of built-in advantage, that you can get at people that probably later you won't be able to. You can get information you probably won't be able to. Although the President has done a good job, basically, imbuing his staff with the idea that history is important. You've got some nameless women, one named Dorothy Territo, for instance. She can almost always tell you what you want to know. When you say, "Dorothy, I need to know about so-and-so. His name just appears somewhere at random." "Oh, yes." And then in a minute she comes up with the whole information. Very alert group.

INSIDE ORAL HISTORY OFFICES

Elizabeth Mason, Chairman, with Willa Baum

ELIZABETH MASON: Up until now, what we've been considering primarily, and what we've been talking about is the interview itself. And for this afternoon session, our assignment (Willa Baum from Berkeley and I from Columbia) will be to tell you something about what in our respective cases is going on before, during, and after the interview itself. We thought of how best to do this. What we're going to do is discuss three or four topics which are common to all oral history projects and ask you to scribble your notes and your questions and then give them to either or both of us afterwards, and we will have a roundtable free-for-all with your questions. We would hope to be fairly brief in what we have to say; and if you want to know anything further, go ahead and ask it; or if you want to take issue, please feel free to do so.

We thought the way we would start would be to explain a little bit about how our different offices are set up. We realize that all oral history enterprises, or most of them, evolve like Topsy. All that we've ever heard of or have had to do with are quite different. All we can really speak from is our own experience and where our own empiricism has driven us. So bear in mind that you will have to adapt to your situation, and your questions will come out of your situations, and we will try to answer them in any way that we can.

Control

I suppose the place where we ought to begin is in terms of who established policy -- the general control or general direction of the office. In the case of Columbia, both Dr. Starr and I hold presidential appointments. The Office is autonomous, is not a part of any school or any department, bows to no man; but, incidentally, receives no budgetary support from any school or department. The only support from the University is in terms of a portion of his salary and a portion of mine. This, of course, cuts both ways. We have a good deal of independence, and we have also sometimes a feeling of being rather naked.

We have, also by presidential appointment, an interdisciplinary committee of advisers. They represent, under the chairmanship of Professor Nevins, a number of different schools and enterprises at the University. The schools represented at the moment are the Department of History, The Director of the Library, a professor of physics, a professor from Teachers College, one from the Law School, one from Public Law and Government, and one from Political Science. Some years ago there was a man from Fine Arts and a man from the Music Department. They serve a three-year term. And they are useful to us because they feed us the kind of perspective that we probably would not be able to achieve on our own for the program there at Columbia. They're also very useful in sending us candidates for interviews and sometimes graduate students as interviewers for a particular field. When we have a legal question of any kind, we can go to the member of the committee who is a professor in the Law School with a special "in." We could go to a professor in the Law School anyway, but we can go to him and really ask him for advice and really get it.

Aside from that, and aside from the fact that our material goes into the Library on deposit, we really are fairly free-wheeling. I think that's a little bit different from Willa's set-up. Over to Willa then.

WILLA BAUM: The Regional Oral History Office (we call ourselves ROHO) is at the present time, and I believe permanently, a department of The Bancroft Library. The Bancroft Library is the historical manuscript-collecting branch of the University of California (Berkeley) Library. It was a long-established private library which is now part of the University. In our seventeen years of existence we have been in various locations on the administrative chart. We have been part of the General Library; we have been a separate project of the College of Letters and Science; we have been headed by a faculty committee; we have had a history faculty director. At this time the Director of the Bancroft Library is the director of our office, but for the past two years Bancroft has been without a director.

We receive a small budget from the Bancroft Library which is sufficient to employ myself and a secretary, both part time, and to pay for our housing, telephone, etc. All of our interviews have to be conducted on outside funds, so I think, Betty, we are almost in the same position as you are. We have partial payment of two half-time persons' salaries and we do have a room, and we are attached to a very distinguished library and university.

As to selection of interviews, our interviews must all be what would be considered to be academically proper — that is, not vanity biographies. That's one thing we must avoid. We ordinarily develop our series programs from within our staff or from recommendations from the faculty or often recommendations from our interviewee. If we wish to pursue one interview or a series of interviews (and we prefer to do our interviews in series), we have to get a faculty adviser, and we want to do that anyway. We will usually get several faculty members who are interested in advising us on a particular group of interviews. We can then take the proposed project to the Director, and in this case the assistant director of Bancroft Library, to see if he approves; and since by this time it has already been checked out with the faculty, he will invariably approve if we can get the money. So, as a matter of fact, our controlling factor is financial. If we can get the money, and if it's an academically acceptable project, we probably can do it. That's about all I can say on control.

We do not have a faculty advisory committee, and I think that's a loss. We hope to set up one shortly. We have for a year been without even a University Librarian. We now have a new University Librarian, and he has suggested that maybe we should have an advisory committee similar to what Columbia has. I think we will try to develop that, and that it will be extremely valuable. It is very easy for us to get faculty advisers for series. What we really need is somebody to help us raise funds. It is much harder to find somebody who is willing to help you raise funds.

Procedure

Betty and I thought we would divide this discussion up into four units. First, we would talk about what we considered control or where we fit into the institution; (2) the procedure of the office; (3) personnel; and (4) finances.

So I will continue on to the second section, how we go about organizing a project. I've already mentioned to you that our interviewees are often suggested to us by a faculty member or by other interviewees or by our staff members who see a need and decide that something must be done and come up with a list of persons who are available and could be interviewed. We investigate each person, check somewhat into his importance, what other materials are available on him, what his health is at the present time, and whether he is maybe too elderly to speak.

Another crucial point is: do we have or can we hire an interviewer who can handle this interview properly? We will not take on a series unless we are sure that we have a qualified person who can take complete charge of the series, or maybe two persons, and do a good job on it. I feel that no series is any better than the interviewer. So that we sometimes have a difficult situation. We develop an idea; then we have to be sure we have somebody who can carry it through. We can't hire that person, if they're not already on our staff, until we can get the money; and it's very hard to get these things all going at the same time.

Assuming that we have got the project going, first we go and talk to the prospective interviewee. We may ask him about the subject, and we may ask him about papers. But the real purpose in going to talk to him is to see for ourselves in what shape he is, and if we think he would be a valuable interviewee. If we feel that he would be, the interviewer will then broach the subject as to whether he would be interested in participating, explain the project, get his informal consent.

Then he will receive a letter from me, and we have sort of a form letter which is tailored to each interviewee. The letter draws up in a number of paragraphs what we want him to talk about, how the interview will proceed, what his rights are as an interviewee (that is, that he will have the privilege of seeing his transcript before anyone else does; he will have the privilege of editing it; we will retype it from the edited version as he returns it to us; he has the privilege of deciding whether he puts part or all of it under seal, and he will be presented with this option at the end of the interview; that he will receive a bound copy of his interview at the end). All of this is in a letter, and we send him two copies of the letter -- one for him to keep in his files, the other for him to sign and return to us if these conditions meet his approval. This we feel is sort of an informal contract that he can check at any time and see what he's agreed to and also be reminded that he has indeed been informed of all the steps and he knows what's coming next.

The next step is that the interviewer will go and talk to him and work out an outline with him as to how they are going to proceed. Probably the interviewer will bring a brief outline in hand when she appears, and they will together fill it in as to other things that he wants to speak about. This is still a very rough outline. He will mention papers that are available, people that maybe we ought to talk to before we talk to him, but all of this planning is done in conjunction with the interviewee. The outline is put together by the interviewer and the interviewee working together; so that all the way along he knows that he is working on this; he's a working member. And that's why I resent the word "respondent," which almost sounds like he just answers questions. The man has to put a great deal of work in before the first question is asked usually.

The interviews will go on then. We try to schedule them one week apart, no longer than one and a half hours each. In between each interview -- at the end of each interview session, the interviewer and the interviewee will speak a few minutes about what they will talk about next time. The interviewer will race back to the University and do rapid research on that specific subject for the entire week and come back with more specific questions. In the meantime, the interviewee will receive, probably two or three days before the interview time, another brief outline as to what is going to be covered in that session. This is never in the form of specific questions. They are always just outlines of the subject material that will be covered in that session.

The material is then transcribed. We do not return any material to the interviewee until we have completed all of the interview sessions although the transcribing is going on as rapidly as possible.

It is then edited by the interviewer, and we try to do as little editing as possible. On very long interviews, if there has been a lapse of maybe six months between two interview sessions, there may be a lot of repetition that needs to be cut out or rearranged. If they go along on a very regular basis, there is usually not much rearrangement necessary. We do put chapter headings in.

Then we send it to the interviewee along with a letter again telling him what he is to do with this. One of the things we ask him is: "Please do not formalize the material," (a subject that we have probably brought up at every interview session). "This is a spoken document. It has been transcribed, but it is not a written document." We often insert additional questions that we ask him to answer in writing if we feel we've missed some subject.

Getting the material back from the interviewee may take a long time; it may take a lot of sitting with him and going over the material. Some interviewees return the material rapidly; some of them want to call you, they want you to come back and fill in some more material. Some of them become quite dependent, I'm afraid, on the interviewer. She has become their best friend for maybe six months, and they want to spend a lot of time.

The material is then final typed as returned to us by the interviewee. We photocopy our material now, because we have found it easier than typing the number of carbons we need. So we type two copies, the ribbon copy that is going to be photo-offset, and the carbon copy that we will use for indexing and proofreading. That is indexed preferably by the interviewer, if possible, because we like the same interviewer to carry through every process, including supervising the transcription, doing all the editing — we feel this one interviewer is the person who knows the subject material, who knows the person, and that for anyone else to do this is not quite as valid as the person who is working with him, almost as his ghost writer.

Then these materials are deposted in the Bancroft Library, the Oral History Office, and one copy immediately goes to UCLA's Department of Special Collections. It comes out as a bound volume like this. [shows bound interviews] Most of ours are about 500 pages. We do collect photographs. This interview is with a fine printer and poet. We have collected a sample of his poetry and fine printing to add. We add a few little odds and ends, if we can collect them from the person, that are illustrative of the person.

This photograph in the front of the volume was taken by the interviewer at the time the interview was done. We do try to do that, but some of our interviewers are photographers and some are not. We do always ask the interviewees to give us several photographs of himself at different stages in his career if we've discussed that.

These materials can be deposited in other manuscript libraries. This interview on fine printing we have deposited in other libraries throughout the United States that have fine printing collections. The depository has to pay the costs of photocopying.

Office Record-Keeping Methods

All of these various steps make quite a problem for the office manager, and we have set up elaborate flow charts. We have a chart that is nailed to the wall. We have at this time 59 active interviews. And the office manager has to keep track at each point: has the interviewee received his letter of invitation?, the interviews are going forward; they are being transcribed by so-and-so; they have been edited; they are in his hands; he has signed his legal agreement; he is writing about something; we have collected his photographs. There are many steps, and some of these interviews may take as long as three years to complete. At this time, as I say, we have 59 that are progressing and 21 that are stalled at some point or other. It is a great deal of work for the office manager just simply to keep track of where everything is.

Now, we have a similar chart, a time chart. Each employee works on a number of interviews, and so each employee has to keep a record of her time as to what particular interview she is working on:

is she working on research, if she's an interviewer, is she doing interviewing, is she doing editing, is she doing conferring with the interviewee? We keep a record of all this time, so that eventually we can come down to an hour breakdown on how long things last.

Another crucial thing is that each interview is funded under a different fund, and we have to make sure that the number of hours that we charge against each fund has actually been worked on that interview. So we have a very elaborate time-keeping, budget-keeping, flow chart operation, which is all handled by our office manager; and she has a tremendous job. We have an office manager who has been with us for about a year, and she's the one who put us into this well-organized state. Before that we didn't know where we were.

Charts are also kept for each interviewee, who may be interviewed as many as twenty or thirty times. We have to keep the chart as to who the interviewee is, what series it is and what fund; and then here is (1) research and arrangement, date, how many hours worked, (2) interviews, date, travel time, how many hours worked, (3) editing, (4) indexing, (5) introduction. One page is for costs that have to be put down for each interview, such as copying, photographs, photo-offset, tape, different kinds of costs.

Typists fill in a blue sheet every day when they do a job: they transcribed for how many hours on which interview. So we have worked out elaborate forms in that way.

We keep little cards on each interview. These are our quickest reference to who is being interviewed and what his telephone number is, the number of interviews; and then when we finish, how many pages, what legal agreement was signed, where the location of extra copies is — a quick reference to the history of the interview.

In addition, our office manager now has a large job of keeping track of institutions that have requested an interview to be deposited in their library, and they may request as much as nine months before it's finished; so she has to keep track of how many requests have come in. Then we have to make sure that the interviewee has given his permission for that interview to be deposited in that library. So we have a form letter that we send out to him saying that there has been a request for an interview somewhere, and he has to sign it and return it, saying that that's all right or that's not all right.

And then we have billings of all of these depositories for reproduction costs. This is an entirely new aspect; we have not made these interviews available until the last year, so we're not sure how it will go. It's going quite rapidly at this point. I hope it will slow down, because it's quite a job for the office.

QUESTION: The interviewees do not make dispositional limitations, do they?

WILLA BAUM: They may. The interviewee has the right to determine whether his interview can be deposited anywhere else. We ask his permission each time it is requested before we put it anywhere. He also, in his legal agreement, is guaranteed the right of getting, at his cost, as many copies as he wishes for his own family. We just delivered an interview to a man before I came here, and he ordered copies for all his grandchildren for Christmas, and now we've got a tremendous job trying to photocopy all those things up and get them bound and ready for him to wrap as Christmas gifts.

All right, Betty, do you want to tell what your procedures are?

ELIZABETH MASON: Well, I won't repeat the things which we do in common. I'll try to think through the things which we do rather differently at Columbia, and you must take it for granted that we do a great many of the things that Willa has described in some detail. We don't do all of them.

To start with, we don't have to go for approval for a project unless we choose to consult and ask advice. This is a responsibility which our office exercises in its own right. Our mistakes are ours, and our credits are, too. So that this is one of the major points where we would diverge.

In procedure, we are not bound by having on tap the right interviewer when we dream up something, because if we decide we're going to undertake a particular interview or series of interviews, and we think it's the right thing to do, then we will go out and find the right interviewer to do it if we don't have one we think would fit this particular bill. In this our position is different again. So that we may have a large number of interviewers working on a large number of projects or a large number of interviewers working on few projects or any combination you like. This is part of the flexibility that comes in.

I guess I would defend the term "respondent," because although we would like to feel that many of the persons being interviewed are participants from the very beginning in all the levels of preparation, realistically I know that this is not true. To the extent to which these gentlemen will give their time and their files and their efforts -- great; we love it; and then they shouldn't be called respondents in a passive sense. But many people are not able to give the kind of preparation that Willa has described, and just on that account we would not cut them out of our collection. So some of our gentlemen and ladies would be respondents in the real sense. They would be responding to questions which they probably had no hand in designing. We hope that they will give us access to all their material ahead of time so that we may frame good questions. If they don't, we may still go ahead and try it and see what we can get. We have sometimes gone in blind and cold, and sometimes it works; so that I don't know that I would object to "respondent" in some instances.

Now, the conduct of the interview has been described a number of times. Our initial approach to the subject is in the form of a letter, but we don't ask him to sign it and send it back. We put the bee on him. We say, "We will be in touch with you within the next few days." The rate of acceptance is in the 90 per cent range. It's a very rare person who will turn down an invitation for an oral history memoir -- in our experience. For example, in the Eisenhower Project, which we presently have underway, out of 200, we had four who refused the first invitation, and one of those said "not now." That's not an unusual sort of ratio from our point of view. We don't give them a chance to think very long about it. We go quickly in on that and try to get them interested and committed to the thing. Then we may do a good deal of background work with them, but we may very well go for a quick interview before the person is thoroughly caught into the project and see if he won't be caught in. Some respond and some don't.

Once the interview has been taped and is transcribed, our original transcript is the final copy with us in most instances. We transcribe in multiple copies in typescript with carbons in a limited number, and one of the carbons is given first to the interviewer and from him to the subject for correction and editing. We ask that the editing be factual and not for style, and some do that and some don't. It's usually left to the interviewer to decide whether it's a good thing to give it to him now or wait for a couple of weeks or wait till the end of the series. We feel that their relationship is so special that the interviewer ought to be the judge. Will he jeopardize or help his next interview if he gives the man this to look at now? As a general rule, I think the first interview is usually the worst, and therefore it is wise not to give that to him right away, but wait until you've had two or three good ones before you begin to feed material back to him. But, as I say, we leave that again to the situation to determine.

When we get back the corrected copy -- and this is, of all the links in the chain, the most difficult to forge... You see, from the subject's point of view, he's gotten what he wants. But from our point of view it's useless until he has given us back a corrected copy and a release and some terms on which it may be deposited and eventually used. He has had the emotional release of telling his story and seeing it come back to him and gotten over the shock of what it looks like to see himself in typescript, and he's begun now to get rather fond of this whole thing. He doesn't want to give it up. He doesn't want to give it back to us in that form, so that we may transfer his corrections to the other copies, because this is the way we do it -- the hard way by manual labor in our office: we transfer by hand his corrections to the other copies. When this is finished, we have three or four copies which are identical with handwritten, interlinear corrections, indexed by proper name. Two copies are deposited in our library. One goes to the person being interviewed. And if there is a sponsoring institution, as in many cases there is, one goes to the institution. The reason that we do not reproduce en masse is that Columbia holds that the ownership belongs by common law copyright to the respondent, to the subject, and we act as custodian and trustee to carry out his wishes. We really did have one man who used his for a Christmas card, let alone a Christmas gift for his grandchildren. He sent it to his Christmas card list. I won't tell you his name, because you would know it. The manuscript runs to some 330 pages, and I shudder to think what it cost, but it was not my problem — it was his property. He had it beautifully bound. We don't, I must admit. Our final product I did not bring. But it is sad compared to Willa's beautiful one, because our final copies are typescript with handwritten corrections. They are as close to a primary source in appearance as we can get. This is in effect the way Columbia proceeds.

Now, because of the ownership resting not with us, we do not authorize copies or reproductions. But if the subject asks that this be done, of course we do it for whoever wants it and will pay the bill. But it's his determination, not ours. This has so far worked out quite well with a minimum of headaches for us.

We only run one flow chart. You pretty much have to maintain some sort of visual control if you have as much happening at different stages. I had one secretary who adored colored pencils, and so she color-coded up the whole thing, and it was kind of fun and very colorful. But we do not go much for forms and division of hours.

Personnel:

You have beheld two-thirds of the Oral History Office at Columbia. We're here. The other third is in the office, and she is our secretary -- our clerical help. All the rest of the work -- all of the interviewing, all of the transcribing, all of the final typing, all of the indexing, and any additional special research that must be undertaken for any particular job is farmed out. All of our interviewers -- none is on staff. All are on piece rates, and our unit is the hour of recorded tape. This is our unit of production; it's our unit of finance; it is our unit of pay. We know what it costs to produce; we know approximately what it costs for every one of those operations. We work it out every year by averaging out our production and our costs and figuring out it's gone up 3¢ a page or whatever.

We are able thus to expand or contract the volume of work at any moment very quickly. We are not bound with any salaries. If all of a sudden we discover that we've run out of funds, the only funds we have to worry about are the balance of our own salaries -- how we earn those back. This year our budget is 12% from Columbia, and the rest we earned. We can often expand rapidly, and this has been useful to us on many occasions. We've been able to give a quick answer when a project was presented to us. "Can you undertake it? This needs 400 hours, over a year and a half. Can you do it? Have you the facilities?" Our answer is usually, "Yes," with a quick breath, "we can have the facilities by the time the thing comes through," and we probably can. We have done it in the past. We've been able to double and triple very quickly and then contract back again. It isn't without its growing pains and contracting pains, but these are the normal birth pains of any project, it seems to me.

We have on the average about 12 to 15 interviewers in the New York area. Now, some of them are working almost full time. Some of them are working minimally. Some of them will be fairly regular. Some of them will be occasional. Some of them will be crash. Some of them will be nothing except weekends, because their jobs require it that way. But none of them is depending on us for eating money. This is extra. And they do it in like measure for a very small rate -- I sometimes think too small -- but they do it in part for the intangibles. Some of them get a great kick out of it; they're interviewing in their own field. Columbia is getting them in to see people who are their "greats," and they get from it an emotional satisfaction and an intellectual excitement which makes them willing to work for that kind of hourly rate.

We have six transcribers regularly, and then I have a kind of a stable of typists and indexers on whom I can draw as needed.

This means that the whole business of the flow chart problem that Willa has talked about is absent for me because of the invoices that come in to me from all of my people. This is where my administrative work comes in very quickly. It's in the twice-a-month financial payment: how many hours, how many minutes for this, for this, for this -- for interviewing, for transcribing, for whatever. I have them all on invoices, and I can debit them to the necessary accounts without any problem or any difficulty. These invoices have been used in the office for the last ten years I've been there and for another four years before that, so we can trace every transaction, because every transaction was paid for as an individual thing. We know the time, and we can work out almost anything if we want to. We don't bother to work out an awful lot of it until we need it. At the end of the fiscal year I do a certain amount of bookkeeping gymnastics just to find out the answers to what is happening to our average costs. Are they growing, and what's the answer if they are? But as our average production grows, and it has, then the unit cost goes down; so that it all has averaged out to a great extent.

I guess that's all on personnel, except I have never met a more varied group -- men, women, retired, undergraduates, graduates, in all kinds of fields and special interests. That's what they're there for -- their special knowledge and their excitement about the idea. If it doesn't pan out, it's no loss -- no more assignments. That's it. It's that easy, and, again, that flexible. I guess that's all on personnel. If you want to say something more on personnel, then a quick word on financing, and then let's go to questions.

<u>WILLA BAUM:</u> I don't think our personnel situation is as different as Betty thinks except that we do not pay on piece work. We have on our staff at this time nine interviewers, which sounds very large. However, they work on an hour basis when they have an assignment. And so of these nine, at least three of them do not have any assignment this month at all. We have a large number of interviewers because each one is a specialist in his field. I do think maybe the difference is that our interviewers are an integral part of our staff inasmuch as they work with us on developing series. They work on raising funds. They help us in putting together our catalogs or publications or anything. We all work together as a team. Oh, we have some people who are assigned to one job that I don't consider staff interviewers. But we consider ourselves long-time permanent staff, with a varied number of hours per month.

For our interviewers, we require a minimum of a master's degree. As an educational requirement, I think they need research ability. I hope they have training in the field that we're assigning them in or something closely related. But primary is that they have social expertise -- that is, how to get along with interviewees, how to put together a series, how to try to raise funds. So that we do not use any undergraduates. We have used some graduates on an assigned basis for a certain job. We sometimes use people who will only be around for a year, but we try not to have any short-term people because this person has to put a lot of research into the field, and we have paid for their research since we pay them by the hours of work they put in. We expect to get our money back by having them work for a long time.

For our typists we use students. I think all of our typists are at a graduate level. Or we use typists working at home. And we have tried more and more to put the transcribing and the final typing out into the home on an hourly basis. That's just simply because we're crowded. It also works out better because, as Betty described, when we have a lot of work, a person can take as much work as they can handle and keep going; if we don't have any work, we don't have to worry about explaining why they don't have a job this month.

Costs

We wanted to talk about budget a little bit. I want to explain to you that we have to keep records for cost accounting purposes on all of our series. Almost all of our interviews are financed by outside funding. We have by no means the large number that Columbia is handling.

Someone asked what kind of series we have that are funded from outside our own small budget. We have two series going on forest policy. One is from a Resources for the Future Foundation grant, which is a national foundation. The other is for the Forest History Society, and this is kind of a commission job. We handle certain geographical areas of their work. We have a continuing small grant from the Alumni Association, and this is in University history; every year we do a number of interviews with outstanding people on the University staff, and we have included administration, student problems, and professors.

We have a large series, which is almost finished, on water resources that was funded by a University department. We interviewed a number of water resource engineers. Our longest one was one with Walter Clay Lowdermilk, a well-known soil conservationist, which will run to a thousand pages, and includes the collection of all of his papers. That's being funded by a number of University departments, since it became so extensive, and now private people are contributing. We still don't have the funds to finish it.

We're just starting a maritime history unit on the San Francisco Bay area. The money for this was contributed by the family of a satisfied interviewee who had been prominent in the maritime industry, and when his family saw his interview, they gave us enough money to do some of his colleagues in order to expand the significance of the material.

We have an agricultural history series starting, and that funding again comes from an interviewee who wanted to see more done in the field he himself had worked in.

And we have various odds and ends of contributions to partially pay or wholly pay for an interview. Occasionally it has been by the family, and this is often to finish up an interview, because unfortunately our interviews sometimes get stalled in that we have no funds to continue them or final type them. They sit in our drawers for years until somebody bails one out with a few hundred dollars, and we can finally get it put into shape and delivered to the interviewee. Sometimes a group will contribute money to have somebody that they wish to honor interviewed.

ELIZABETH MASON: Our sources of finance haven't changed from the report which Dr. Starr made in a long presentation in the second colloquium. Many of you were there, and all of you have seen it, I think, probably in the Colloquium Proceedings. In the past, when we were an experiment, it was easier, because then they give you money to prove whether you ought to be or not. But when they decide that you ought to be, and cut the apron strings, foundations do not give you unrestricted grants. Then the grants that you get are tied to specific projects and you have to account for them in those terms; so that at present the great proportion of our work is either a grant for a specific purpose or a contract relationship, which we have in some instances. Or the alternative is that we produce something which is later purchased. All these variants can be worked out ahead of time -- whatever agreement you find necessary.

Our present costs run in the neighborhood of the percentages that Dr. Starr gave in his report last year. /c.f., Second National Colloquium on Oral History/ On the average, we still find -- and this is a statistic you might like to have -- that you will get 27 3/4 pages per hour of recorded tape provided it is pica type, double-spaced, with fairly wide margins. That allows us to figure back, you see, how much it costs us an hour, how much it costs per page, and we average out the fact that we pay some people more on an hourly rate than others -- it depends on the expertise they bring. It depends on what their time is worth to us. Sometimes we have to pay for an expert, and then we do.

I think you can start questions, and you ask them of either one of us, if you'd rather, or both.

QUESTION: You said 27 3/4 pages from an hour of tape, and that's double-spaced.

ELIZABETH MASON: Double-spaced, pica type, wide margin.

QUESTION: I was just wondering. We do the same thing, and we get 60. How do we get twice as much?

ELIZABETH MASON: I would guess how you get twice as much; you do not have an awful lot of fairly solid response.

QUESTION: Sometimes interviewees speak much faster.

ELIZABETH MASON: Oh, yes. You see, this is the average. The slowest I ever clocked was eleven pages to the hour, and the fastest was 60. And that's a page a minute, and that's awfully fast. But if you have a great many short answers and short questions and a very broken-up page, then that's something else. It's a question of the number of words to the page. But on an average that's what we get. We've proved it out over a number of years.

ED BEECHERT: I was wondering how you and Mrs. Baum handle the question of a session or a series that's going to be sealed, and you know it's going to be sealed.

ELIZABETH MASON: Well, everything is presumed sealed until we get a final decision. We give them the option ahead of time, but we ask them not to make up their minds. Wait till you see how you feel about it after you're finished. Many of them feel differently when they are finished.

ED BEECHERT: How do you handle the matter of security then when you farm out, as you both do, with your typist at home or in other offices? How do you control this kind of thing?

ELIZABETH MASON: I farm it out to a typist in whom I have that kind of confidence. The transcriber who has been with us longest has been with us 18 years, and I trust her. But you have to trust somebody who's in the office under lock and key, too. In the end, it's your judgment of the person's integrity, and this is what we have to go by. I don't have any other answer, do you, Willa?

WILLA BAUM: No, and I'm sure that Columbia has interviews that are more often sealed, and of more interest to somebody who might want to steal them than we do. Most of ours, I'm afraid, we don't have to worry about anybody trying to steal them or read what is said there.

ELIZABETH MASON: We have tried very hard to make people feel responsible about this. We have tried to set up high standards of responsibility in this area ourselves. We have bent over backwards to be meticulous. A man writes us and says, "My memoir was deposited in 1952 closed for five years after my death, and I would like to have a change on page so-and-so." We write back and say, "Neither of us has ever seen it. This was deposited before we came to the office. We have no knowledge of the contents of the pages in the vault. Will you authorize us to do this, to look at it for this purpose?" We go through a good deal of that kind of very careful, meticulous correspondence. I think this kind of thing has an effect not only with the subject of the interview, but with the people in the office and peripheral to the office, who see that we take our own restrictions that seriously. And we do. This we really do. Now, I don't say it's foolproof, but nothing is.

QUESTION: I was interested in the fact that you give your interviewees a rough transcript to edit. What's their reaction to this? We work similarly to the way Willa's program does. We give them a semi-finished product to work over, and if that isn't in good order, some of them will complain; and I wondered about how yours reacted.

ELIZABETH MASON: Some of them do complain. This is one reason why I say we don't give it to them as a general thing right off the bat. But what we do is to prepare them somewhat ahead of time for the shock which it may be, and then we try also to have the interviewer to sit down with them, as Willa does, and go over this. We warn them that this is the way people sound; this is really the way we speak. In the last analysis, we refer them to the transcripts of Presidential press conferences. And in national affairs and the political scene, that usually answers the bill, because most of them are about that level of articulateness. Most of us speak in incomplete sentences. I've had two men in my time there whose rough transcript, absolutely raw as it came off the tape, was finished, polished prose -- complete sentences, periods, and you could tell where the paragraphs belonged.

Most of them get used to the idea, to answer your question. Most of them are shocked at first. But if they read enough, and if you can get them over the initial shock, most of them come to it quite readily; and eventually we get them to the point where they won't try to change every other word. I don't know if that's any help, but we've been able to do it. I think the interviewer and his relationship with the respondent is key to this, with the backup which we try to give of previous experience and so on from the office. Other than that, I don't know that we do anything special except to say, "We're all in the same boat."

QUESTION: You must have some splendid typists.

ELIZABETH MASON: We have three of the finest transcribers it has ever been my joy to work with. They are great.

QUESTION: As a matter of course, are all interviews deposited or are there certain quality considerations?

ELIZABETH MASON: There are certain quality considerations, and there are in our files, as there are in Willa's, a few of those old nightmares and scarecrows which sometimes haunt one's 3 a.m. thoughts. These are some which, quite frankly — no. But very few, increasingly fewer as time goes on.

QUESTION: In the case of a product which is unsatisfactory, have you investigated the reasons for it?

ELIZABETH MASON: We try very hard to do our own post-mortems. This is the kind of training which we try to give to our interviewers. We don't require of them a specific course of training, because we don't give it. But we do try to do a fairly intensive critique of the interviews, particularly the first interviews with a given subject or the first interviews that a man does for us; so that we can sit down with him with a tape and a transcript and a cup of coffee and spend as long as we need to spend thinking it out. No two interviewers are alike. They can't be. Your interview with one man is not your interview with another. I have to know enough of the interviewers, because I work with them constantly, and there are, as I say, about 12 active now. There is another body of perhaps 30 in the New York area that I have worked with and might call on for something else if it came up, plus a number of graduates who have now gone to teach at Grinnell and and some in California and hither and yon. If something comes up and we need something there, we write and say, "Dear Joe: How about it? And mail us the tape." So we also have some work that is being done outside the metropolitan area without our sending our people out, because they're not all free to travel. But I try to know a fair bit about them, a fair bit about their interests, background, capabilities, how they will set themselves in an interview, how closely and how quickly they can achieve rapport. This is a very sensitive area, I think, in the administration of any oral history office -- matching up the right interviewer with a respondent. And I don't know a set of rules for it other than simply trying to be aware of some of the major possibilities. The ones that you are unaware of are the ones that throw you, but you try to guard against the things that you can foresee -- naturally. We have achieved some wonderful combinations. I have yet to play Cupid, but I'm not unambitious in that line.

QUESTION: I have two questions. One: Willa mentioned something on photo-offset or photocopying. Do you do both? Photo-offset is one way.

WILLA BAUM: I'm no specialist in photo processes. We use Bruening offset. It costs 40¢ a page for the number of copies that we order, and it has worked out cheaper for us than having the typist erase the three or four carbons that it would take if she just typed the copies rather than going through this process, and the fourth copy comes out as nice as the first.

QUESTION: My other question is to both of you. On your records that you keep now -- what you might call the deposition -- how do you keep these?

ELIZABETH MASON: Our submissions are done in triplicate with the original to the officer of the Library who is the head of gifts and acquisitions, because this is a gift of the person who owns it and who has retained control of it; so it is of record as a gift to the Library. The first carbon goes to the Department of Special Collections where the actual physical deposit is made, and where the physical control is kept once the memoir is completed, and the third copy remains in our files. So there is a triple record of these submissions.

QUESTION: After this, do you then sort of make a clip sheet much like Willa's flow charts and put them all on together? Or do you destroy all the work sheets?

ELIZABETH MASON: No, I don't destroy all the work sheets. I have all the work sheets, because the work sheets are actual invoices. They are the invoices submitted by my assorted people for the particular jobs they have done, and they work out at so much a minute. Those I have, because those are the financial records of the office, which are in effect the production records, too. They tell you the whole story -- if you put it together. Once a year I put the whole thing together on an annual financial summary. Once a month I do a production report, which has only a running financial element to it, so that we know roughly how we are running. One of our major problems is to have the controller's office catch up with us, because they run at least six months behind.

QUESTION: How does yours work, Willa? In much the same way?

WILLA BAUM: Well, we keep a complete correspondence file on the interviewee, and this always remains in our office.

ELIZABETH MASON: I do that, too.

QUESTION: You do put them all together then probably by the interviewees; is that it?

WILLA BAUM: That's right.

ELIZABETH MASON: We have the files of correspondence with interviewees, but I would also have the financial record, which is essentially the key one for us.

WILLA BAUM: For our legal agreements, four copies of this go to four offices in the University. We have a copy, the Bancroft Library has a copy, the interviewee has a copy, the Regents have a copy...

QUESTION: Have you ever had it happen that an interviewee has deposited his interview and everything is fine, and several years later he comes and says he wants it back?

ELIZABETH MASON: Yes.

QUESTION: That's horrible.

ELIZABETH MASON: Try to find out why, to start with. Try to enter first into either a face-to-face explanation of what's the matter. Once upon a time, this was all right. What's gone sour? And if that is not possible, because the distance is too great, into some sort of correspondence relationship; if possible -- and if the relationship was that good -- send back the interviewer to find out what the story is; or if not, send back a sympathetic interviewer who is experienced and can try to see what is wrong now. In my own experience, this has often been the result of the aging process in an individual and a changing on his part because of probably physical change, although not always so. Sometimes there are other reasons. Usually what we have tried to do is to offer whatever kind of reassurance is possible, and I would think that we have salvaged most of them. But it's taken a lot of time, patience -- and there is no set answer; it's special in every case. You've got to try and see what was the matter. Was it something somebody else said? Or is it senility or is it vanity? And then you begin to try to answer it.

QUESTION: After all this that you have gone through, and they still feel the same, then it goes?

WILLA BAUM: I'd like to speak to that, and here is where I disagree with Columbia's legal agreement, which I have brought up before. We have a different legal agreement in which the interviewee turns over the ownership of the interview to the University of California. And he can, if he wishes, retain publication rights for any period he wants, and we can give him an agreement whereby he turns over the rights to the University and the University turns back to him all publication rights until this stipulateddate. He can also, even though he turns over the ownership to the University, stipulate it should be sealed or whatever kind of arrangement he wants to make. That is still his privilege.

He also has the privilege to be notified if anybody wishes to quote -- this is for an open interview, but it cannot be quoted for publication by anyone until he is notified and given thirty days in which to respond, and this continues until his death. If he wishes to respond and say he doesn't want it quoted, okay. In his legal agreement he has the right to edit, and by edit we feel that he can edit the whole thing out and say, "No, I won't allow that."

However, we do feel that since the University has spent possibly several thousand dollars either of University money or some donor's money or some foundation's to produce this material, that the interviewee is not free to say, "You can't use it." Now, we've never had this occasion come up. We've never had it tested. And, I suspect, that, as a matter of fact, we would have to at least put it under seal for 200 years or something, but we certainly wouldn't take it to court because the public relations would be so bad that it wouldn't be worth it. But we do feel very strongly that we don't want to deal with heirs. So this is the reason that the Regents insisted that it must belong to the University eventually, so that we never get into the problem of heirs, estates, etc., trying to trace them and so on trying to get permission to use it.

LEILA JOHNSON: You said that the ownership is retained by the individual. What happens if another college wants a copy or somebody else wants one?

ELIZABETH MASON: We answer all such requests by referring them to the interviewee.

LEILA JOHNSON: What about when he dies?

ELIZABETH MASON: He can either stipulate that it remains a part of his estate or he can give it back to us and vest the right to decide in us.

LEILA JOHNSON: Then you are dealing with heirs.

ELIZABETH MASON: We do. We try to keep it minimal, but we do on occasion.

QUESTION: Do either of you have the interviewers make notes on the interview?

ELIZABETH MASON: No, not as a standard practice, but I do not refuse ever to sit down with an interviewer and to thrash out with him his impressions -- good, bad -- or his problems or whatever. I may very well know quite a lot about this, but as a matter of formal practice this is not a part of the interview nor required as a standard procedure. It's entirely optional with the interviewer how much of that kind of subjective judgment he chooses to give back to us. It does not become a part of our written record.

QUESTION: Users never have access to it?

ELIZABETH MASON: No, he will know where, when, who, but he may not know all the whys.

WILLA BAUM: This question came up, I think, especially at the Arrowhead Colloquium. We have always prepared an introduction by the interviewer, and this introduction describes why the person was interviewed and the setting and something about the way he responded and such. It is a public document. It goes in the front of the interview and he gets it, too. It is always couched in positive terms. You can try to say what you want to, but it always has to be in positive terms. Lately we've been asking more often a colleague to write the introduction on the person which sort of sets his place in the field. And then we have written an interview history -- we call it. (An idea we got from UCLA.) And that just lists why the person was selected, who the interviewer is. In the back of all of our most recent interviews there is a biography of the interviewer, so that you know why this person was selected to do these interviews. The interview history then will indicate how many interviews were done; was the wife present or were other people; were you all by yourself...

ELIZABETH MASON: We always indicate that -- if there is a third party present. We will indicate that and who it is. We don't include an interviewer history.

ELWOOD MAUNDER: Does your agreement with a respondent cover all of the content of the bound final copy or only that which is the interview? Does it cover the introduction?

WILLA BAUM: No. And we had this case come up once. We had gotten an introduction by an outstanding colleague, and a museum wanted to put in an exhibit of the interviewee's work and wished to use the introduction that was written by the other colleague as the frontispiece for the catalogue for the exhibit. Well, the introduction belonged to the man who wrote the introduction. We did not have ownership of that through the contract with the interviewee. We referred the people who wanted to use it for their catalogue to him to get his permission.

ELWOOD MAUNDER: What I'm trying to get at is: there is an exchange of correspondence very often between your interviewer and the interviewee. Very often copies of these letters are added to the bound volume as addenda. Does the agreement you have with him cover these materials as a part of his papers?

WILLA BAUM: It doesn't specify in the contract. I don't know. Yes, that's right. Sometimes we include correspondence with the interviewee. Often when he sends back his interview he'll say, "I was very pleased with the way this went," or "I really wish I'd had more time to do it," or something like that. And he often puts down quite a bit about how he feels about the interview in the letter to the interviewer; and if it seems pertinent to it, we will include this in the volume.

QUESTION: In the initial establishment of your oral history offices, did you consult legal advice and drawing up these conditions? Because you seem to differ a good deal on the conditions you have established.

ELIZABETH MASON: We did.

WILLA BAUM: Yes, we did -- different legal advice.

QUESTION: I suppose a copyright lawyer or a copyright expert would be the sort of a person to approach.

ELIZABETH MASON: We discussed some of this at the Arden House conference, as many of you will remember, when we had Douglas Hamilton speak, particularly on the question of libel but also of common law copyright; and I think Luther Evans in his summary was very helpful in trying to set this in frame. You may find something helpful there. The people who worked out the restriction form and the general relationship which govern the Columbia office were professors in the Law School, who were at that time on the advisory committee to the Oral History Office, and who were trying to make it both general and flexible and still offer sufficient protection to Columbia as well as to the individual involved. It is ambivalent and contradictory but it has nevertheless stood up in practice.

QUESTION: Your program is twenty years old now. Would there be any value in oral historicizing the development of that program?

ELIZABETH MASON: This has been considered and some of it has been done.

QUESTION: I have a question for both of you about the transcript development. Willa, do you make any comment in a transcript if you leave something out or if it's been edited?

WILLA BAUM: No. Usually they can see -- it's crossed off. We don't retype it before we send it to them.

QUESTION: I mean in the final transcript.

WILLA BAUM: Oh, yes, we do try to indicate in this interview history or in the introduction (and again we say it in a positive way). We may say, "There was considerable repetition," this is a very hard thing to write -- "We rearranged the material and cut out some repetition." Or we indicate whether the interviewee made extensive changes. Again, we say in a sort of a positive way that he went over it with meticulous care and checked every detail and corrected all the errors, something like that; or we say that he went over it very quickly and left it in almost verbatim condition, only making a few corrections. So we do try to indicate the degree of editing that was done, and whenever possible, we try to leave it exactly the way it was spoken, and we indicate that.

ELIZABETH MASON: As far as ours is concerned, of course, since we try as far as possible to use the original transcript, you can see the changes that are made and exactly the editing that takes place.

QUESTION: Do you distinguish between the editing...?

ELIZABETH MASON: Yes, between the editing of the interviewer, which is really very minimal -- and this is really a credit to the transcribers, because all that really is is to catch obvious transcription errors. It's only to present an accurate verbatim report to the subject. He's the one who wants to change the image. You can tell if you compare. You see the original typescript with a line crossed out. You heard it last night from Mr. Manchester. Now, some of them say to us, "I want these pages retyped so that this will not show," and we retype them. But then it's perfectly clear that this is a retyped page, and it's up to the user to make up his own mind what was removed, what was changed -- we can't do it. This is the final version that the subject wanted. But it is clear that this is quite different from the interlineated pages which follow and precede it.

QUESTION: You don't use dot, dot, dot.

ELIZABETH MASON: We do when the tape-recorder is turned off and then on again, and very often this is implicit and explicit in the conversation that goes on. Where this is the case, and this is clear from the tape, we indicate with asterisks that there has been a break here, and it was resumed. Sometimes this is purely tea. Sometimes it's quite different. We don't make any distinction as to which it might be.

QUESTION: Do you always accede to a request for retyping a page?

ELIZABETH MASON: Yes, because it's his property. Now, we try to persuade him not to demand that the whole thing be final typed, because this raises our costs terribly. This is why we're able to produce at that rate, because we can keep retyping to a minimum. But we have been told -- and we ourselves think -- that it gives an authenticity, a kind of a flavor. I try to see to it that the corrections are legible and clear and usable. It's not always easy on a long manuscript with many corrections. This is a constant job at the office. When you're not doing anything more vital, you're correcting manuscripts -- in four copies.

QUESTION: How do you get your interviewers to edit the transcript in a way that will distinguish their editing from that of the person interviewed?

ELIZABETH MASON: Well, you can tell the handwriting when we get it back, and usually it's different ink. But in any case, I make the interviewer come in and sit with me if there's any question in my mind.

QUESTION: In transferring to the other copies, do you distinguish also?

MASON: Yes, we try to. I'm not sure that this is always as satisfactory to the user, but we try to indicate as far as possible the difference. I have often had the subject change the interviewer's corrections and go back to an earlier version which the transcriber had heard correctly and the interviewer cleaned up. The subject goes back and puts back what he said in the first place.

QUESTION: On the matter of transcribing, do you have the transcriber go over the tape and their product, or do you assume that they are doing it correctly?

ELIZABETH MASON: Well, I don't monitor tapes on any of my transcribers now unless I have a particular situation that arises, and then sometimes I do. Occasionally you have a tape which is of such significance and such importance that we want to be triple sure that it is absolutely verbatim, and then I may go into that; but as a general practice we don't. I trust the transcribers. I will get a backlash if it's wrong. And they're pretty good. They've been doing this, as I say, for many years.

QUESTION: You don't run into the problem of heavy accents or...

ELIZABETH MASON: Oh, yes, and mashed potato mouths and false teeth and all the rest of it, and people who talk with their hands over their mouths like this and who rock back and forth on office chairs and who knock their pipes out on the microphone and fire engines and cuckoo clocks and...

QUESTION: Vacuums upstairs.

ELIZABETH MASON: And air-conditioners -- above all, air conditioners.

QUESTION: I guess our transcribers are just not experienced enough.

QUESTION: Does either Berkeley or Columbia use the team concept in preparing questions or the structure, the form, that the interview should take? From everything I'd heard, one person is assigned to this and does most of it. Does a team ever do this?

ELIZABETH MASON: I can't think of an instance where that has been the case at Columbia. In general either Dr. Starr or I or both of us, maybe a liaison person from the sponsoring institution, would sit down with the interviewer for quite an extensive layout of the general project initially, and then we would be checking as we go along and reading the finished product to be sure that this is following the general pattern. We don't prepare set questions ahead of time. We try in preparation for an interview to block out a chronological period of time, and within that area and that general emphasis, both interviewer and interviewee know what they're going to be talking about in general. But unless we're asked for it, we don't provide a specific set of questions. We probably would work out a general outline with the interviewer, but not a set of questions; he may consult people if he wants to to build up his own background, but he probably won't go in with a prepared set of questions anyway. I don't know of any specific effort at Columbia to use that team concept beyond the informal kind of thing which I have described. We have on occasion had two interviewers present, but I agree with Elwood Maunder's one to one, if you have the choice. And we have, of course, on various occasions had two or more respondents present. Again, I do not care how skillfully conducted, you get a very different interview if a third party is there -- especially wives.

WILLA BAUM: I think that you would call our faculty advisers a team sometimes. I guess we've never had more than two interviewers working on the same project, but they certainly work together closely and sometimes very closely with the faculty adviser, who talks to them just before they go to the interview, and as soon as they come back; he wants to know what happened and how they can develop more material that he's particularly interested in. So I think sometimes the faculty advisers are a team really.

ELIZABETH MASON: I think the maximum we have had is five interviewers working simultaneously on the Eisenhower Project, which involved interviews with at present about fifty persons. And because of the time element and so on, we did have that number of different interviewers; and although they know each other and they're in contact and they have a good deal of interchange among themselves, they do not sit down formally as a team to plan their various approaches. They do keep an eye out... They know that So-and-So is talking to Herbert Brownell, and so if something comes up over here which might be helpful to him, he will ask permission to use it and will pass it on. But this is quite informal. This is not a sitting down on Monday morning to do this.

WILLA BAUM: Does anyone here in the group have comments to make on any of these, because we're not any more expert than some of you are.

ELIZABETH MASON: I do have one other topic that has not been raised that we didn't get into and that nobody has asked questions about, and that's a word on the user and the indexing. We at Columbia index at present by proper names only. We have a master biographical index of the whole collection, and we don't know how big it is — we think it has about a half a million entries. We can only do it by measurement and estimating so many per inch. This is the key to the whole collection. We began with an attempt at a topical index, and that bogged down within a few months. There is an infinity of problems. It can be done, but it takes extensive indexing time, which we have not committed to this particular project. We see as the direction the machine, of course. This is the way that this, I think, will have to be handled. It will have to be turned into key word-in-context, data processed material, so that you can ask your question and get your answer in a print out. The program is perfectly simple to devise for an index the size of ours. But it will require a capital outlay which we do not have, and we have so far not been successful in interesting any donor.

ART OF INTERVIEWING

Gould Colman, Chairman

GOULD COLMAN: I would like to introduce Mrs. Alice Hoffman, Pennsylvania State University, who is directing an oral history program which is concentrating on labor; labor-management relationships, and more particularly on the steel workers. She is going to speak on how she is tapping the expertise in her institution on the subject of interviewing. Here she has presumably the entire resources of a university; surely given all of this wisdom, all of these disciplines, somebody should have something which is of use to her. Alice.

ALICE HOFFMAN: Well, I thought when I came last night, and realized that we were going to have four distinguished social scientists talk about their experiences in interviewing, that my thunder would be stolen in terms of talking about an inter-departmental approach to the art of interviewing. But I discovered that Dr. Crowl chose four different departmental approaches to the ones that occurred to us. I suppose thereby hangs a tale, because one of the things which we have to guard against is the selection of questions or the selection of structure, such that the results are already predetermined by the very nature of the questions.

Shortly after we began our project, we became very much concerned about all the obvious difficulties inherent in collecting primary historical data on the basis of the collective memories of people preserved on tape. We were concerned with faulty memory, with the bias of the interviewer, with the bias of the interviewee, and with the understandable tendency to "tell stories in which I am the hero," and also, conversely, excessive modesty. All of these things distort the record, and render it less valuable.

However, one justification, I think, of the whole process is illustrated by the following story. I was doing an interview with a man who had been the young assistant to Governor Pinchot on the Pennsylvania Commission for Conservation in the early '30's. He told me how he and the Governor were going over the records of the minutes of the Commission for Conservation. The Governor shook his head very sadly, because the Governor apparently had some feeling for historical purity, and said to his young assistant, "Oh, my, this isn't what we did, this is just what we decided to say about what we did." So obviously there is a great deal of data to be collected by the oral process which corrects and expands upon the written record.

I'm also reminded of the story about the gambler who comes into town and engages a colleague in conversation.

First Gambler: Is there any action around?
Second Gambler: Yeah, Roulette.
First Gambler: You play?
Second Gambler: Yes.
First Gambler: Is the wheel straight?
Second Gambler: No.
First Gambler: Well, why do you play?
Second Gambler: Well, it's the only wheel in town.

So on this basis, with these kinds of justifications, with the thought that imperfect as it is, oral history is one of the few means available to us to find and preserve information, we went ahead with our project. But we thought it might help if we understood the process better. So we decided to pull together a group of people at Penn State, all of whom are involved in the interview process somehow, and talk to them about what it is that they do. The four people that I selected were a professor of Journalism, who teaches a course in reportorial techniques; a lawyer; a person from the Speech department who is interested in speech as communication; and a psychologist.

I just want to open this up for discussion and possible questions. I don't want to try to tell you in five minutes what they said, except that I will summarize in this way. These four people, with the possible exception of the speech person, feel that interviewing is an art. It cannot be taught; it must be caught. They pointed out that in their disciplines interviewing is observed by the neophyte potential interviewer and he learns what he can, what he's able to absorb by reason of his own training, intelligence and past experience, and then he goes out and just does it: sinks or swims. There is very little training provided for a young reporter, or lawyer; he learns by doing.

However, there were some interesting studies that were cited to me by the psychologist, and by the speech person, which I think have relevance to what we're trying to do. I'll just tell you about a few of them. One of these was a study done on President Kennedy's press conferences. By the simple technique of comparing the length of his responses to questions with the length of the question, it was determined that if you ask a long question, you will get a very much longer answer. This was done when President Kennedy was just starting his presidency and was also done at the end of his presidency. At the end, there was a greater tendency for him to answer at length and in depth to a long question. A short question would get a short answer. I think this has some rather obvious relevance in terms of our preparation of questions.

The other study that they told me about is rather scary in its implications for the control of verbal behavior. In this study a psychologist sent interviewers out to talk to students at random on the campus. The objective was to get them to talk about their father. This was accomplished by engaging the student in a casual conversation that had no focus whatsoever; it might occur in the student union, it might occur on the steps of the library, any place. But when the subjects began to talk about their family, the interviewer would evidence interest, immediately, and would say, "um-hum." And then when the subjects began to talk about their sisters in their families, no interest at all. When they began to talk about their brothers, um-huh, more interest, you see. Eventually, most subjects were talking about their father. In short, simply by saying, "um-huh," and evidencing some interest, you can get people to launch into a dissertation on any subject you choose, and this occurs without even suggesting what it is that you are interested in. This obviously has very strong implications for our work because we are very likely to collect what we as interviewers are interested in simply by reinforcing the subject for what we want to hear. Obviously, if our goal is to conduct impartial interviews, we will have to analyze very carefully what our own bias is, what our own thinking is, and attempt to avoid reinforcing it.

Finally, the last study that was cited to me by a psychologist again, was a pigeon study. He told me that he wouldn't dare apply this to the human situation, but since I'm not a psychologist, I will attempt to say that there might be some implications here. He had done a study on the retention of memory in pigeons where he paired a tone and shock. He asked the question: How long after this experience has occurred in the pigeons' history will he continue to be fearful of the particular tone which he has learned to associate with a shock? This is a longitudinal study which so far has been done over six years, and so far there has been no forgetting at all. The pigeon is just as fearful of this particular tone, which has not been paired with shock now for six years, as he was when he was originally taught to associate this tone with pain. And I think that the significance of this is that if we can recreate the emotional climate, and this has been my experience again and again with an interviewee, the whole thing will come back. And this of course argues for being well prepared. I have often had the experience of going to do an interview, and the man has said, "Well, that was thirty years ago, and I don't remember that period well." But as we begin to talk, and I ask him about whom he was associated with at that time, and I ask him about the particular events that occurred at the time, very often his whole face, posture, everything will change, and he'll say, "Ah, yes," and it all comes back. Often it comes back with all the associated emotions that were experienced at the time -- a person can become very angry, or very sad, happy, and so on.

And so I think on the basis of our experience a great deal may be gained from contact with other disciplines that are involved in similar processes to our own. (Interestingly enough, those who participated in these discussions at Penn State responded that since what they're doing is partly an art they look now to oral historians to help them gain some insights into their own processes.)

GOULD COLMAN: Thank you, Alice. There are a number of doctors in our membership, some of whom are real and some of whom are medical! We are fortunate when we can have one that will combine all of the skills of the real with all of the credentials of the medical. Of course I'm referring to my colleague, Dr. Peter Olch, associated with the National Library of Medicine. He is going to tell us about problems and solutions in interview preparation.

PETER OLCH: When approached by Dr. Colman to participate in the "Art of Interviewing Session," my first inclination was to insist that this topic, which has been covered in both the First and Second National Colloquia, had been beaten to death and drained of all its vital juices. However, on reviewing the proceedings of these two delightful gatherings, I felt that another ten minutes could be profitably spent discussing or stressing the need for adequate preparation before you enter into a dialogue with the respondent.

Before I proceed any further, I must remind you of my definition of oral history and the goals of the oral history program at the National Library of Medicine. In our program, oral history is looked upon as a technique to capture the recollections and interpretations of those participants in contemporary medicine who are judged to be knowledgeable about the subject under study, whether it be an individual or a subject area. It is a process with the unique ability to supplement the written record with candid commentary, to create a collection of information about a subject in those areas where a prior record does not exist, and to capture a sample of the personality of the person being interviewed by preservation of the audio-tape recording and in the future by selected use of filmed or videotaped segments or summaries of the interviews.

I would also stress that the NLM Oral History Program is physicially and conceptually related to the Modern Manuscripts Acquisition program. With rare exceptions, our "autobiographical memoirs" are accompanied by the respondent's personal papers, as we feel very strongly that one supplements the other. The oral history transcripts and tapes in fact are cataloged in the manner of manuscript material and are filed in a common card catalog.

To my way of thinking, barring a recalcitrant respondent, the preparation for an interview is the key to a successful interview. The amount of time spent and the thoroughness of one's research is certainly mirrored in the commentary of the respondent in the transcript. In fact, if I may be so bold, without the Science of Preparation, there is little need for the Art of Interviewing. The most polished, sociable, confidence-inspiring interviewer can certainly get on first base, but without thorough preparation his path will be a straight line to left field rather than second base!

With this introduction, permit me to share with you an example of preparation drawn from my limited experience as an oral historian. It was decided that Dr. Albert Baird Hastings, former Professor of Biological Chemistry at Harvard University Medical School was an excellent candidate for an oral history memoir because he was actively involved in the important transition of medicine from a qualitative science to a quantitative science with the application of biochemical and physiological knowledge to the understanding and treatment of human disease. His active career included association with numerous academic institutions and a myriad of physicians, scientists, and administrators who were worthy of comment. His own scientific contributions were substantial and certainly had to be touched upon in some manner without merely duplicating his published works. Where to begin?! And I mean quite sincerely, where to begin?

Reference to the American Men of Science and examination of the respondent's six-page curriculum vitae provided a skeleton to build on. A request for Dr. Hastings' list of publications produced a 21-page item listing 282 publications! However, much to my delight and of great value were the annotations. He had voluntarily checked off those publications he felt were significant contributions and differentiated further those papers (or more correctly those scientific contributions) that were important in his life. This reduced a list of 282 articles to a core of approximately 80 articles which I then made every effort to at least scan and frequently read from cover to cover.

An autobiographical approach as this was to be is really ideal for structuring one's preparation. Once you have dispensed with the family history and background ("dispensed with" only in the sense that there is rarely much information you can gather on this subject before the interview -- unless the man has kept his personal family letters with his papers), one can approach the interview with some background knowledge on educational institutions, teachers, curriculum, etc., gleaned from published works such as University Catalogs and the occasional published history of an institution such as the Rockefeller Institute.

As we began our first week of interviewing and I had access to 18 filing case drawers of correspondence and departmental annual reports, staff meeting minutes, etc., I had the background gained from the published works to guide me in my perusal of this material. Whenever we were not recording, I was buried in his files, taking notes where possible and xeroxing copies when more practical.

After the first several hours on tape, I had a fairly good impression of how Dr. Hastings' thoughts were organized, and by mutual agreement we adopted a loose and rather flexible framework on which to build our interviews. We roughly compartmentalized his career into periods -- the Rockefeller Institute, the University of Chicago, Harvard University, Scripps Clinic, etc. In each instance, we tried to discuss the scientific setting in which he found himself, i.e., the men and their work, his scientific work at that institution; his interrelationship with the science and personalities in that particular environment.

As Charlie Morrissey has pointed out, I believe in the Proceedings of the First Colloquium, in the course of the interview one has to keep one step ahead of the respondent. You should be well enough prepared that you can be flexible. If your subject wants to narrate a segment without interruption, you will know it soon enough -- make a notation and ask your question at a logical breaking point in his narrative. If he is not a ready talker, your work is cut out for you as you must frame questions that will draw him out rather than questions that can be readily answered "yes" or "no." This, of course, is easier said than done. However, if you supply the text with which your respondent may agree or disagree, it soon resembles a memoir of yourself!

There will be times when, try as you might, you will find yourself a recorder rather than an interviewer. This can be very frustrating, particularly when you are well prepared and full of questions. Your respondent knows what he wants to tell you and what he does not. You can make a reasonable effort to dig deeper or get behind certain closed doors, but some will just remain closed. AN URGENT MESSAGE -- if you are a "recorder" rather than an "interviewer" during an oral history session, find a hard chair or sit forward or keep moving! DON'T DOZE!

In closing I would like to quote a delightful statement from a book by Allan Seager entitled A Frieze of Girls: Memoirs as Fiction. And this merely to make the point that has been stressed here and will be stressed again. With thorough preparation, with a competent interviewer, and with a responsive interviewee, your memoir is no more and no less than one man's interpretation of a series of events or past occurences in his life. It is not the gospel truth, and God forbid that any of us should ever try to insinuate that this is the final word on a subject or an individual.

Permit me to close with this quotation from Allan Seager: "I am old enough to know that time makes fiction out of our memories. Some people, some events, it pulls front and center. It stores others in the attic until we find some use for them. It discreetly buries a few forever. Can anyone remember his life accurately, objectively, the way a camera and a tape would have recorded it? I doubt it. We all have to have a self we can live with, and the operation of memory is artistic, selecting, suppressing, bending, touching up, turning our actions inside out so that we can have not necessarily a likeable, merely a plausible identity. In this sense we are all always true to ourselves." With that I would close and hopefully open up the discussion.

GOULD COLMAN: I have promised my colleagues that I won't say anything. Their challenging presentations encourage me to talk, but I fear if I talk I may not say anything, which brings me back to where I started. So let's have some questions from the audience.

WILLIAM R. WYATT: On the basis of my own recent work in oral history I have something I would like to ask Dr. Olch. I am very much impressed with your statements regarding preparation. I think certainly this is very basic to this whole operation, but at the same time is it not true that there are some people who just can't produce for you? In other words, are there some people, even with intensive practice and training, who simply are not going to function as effective interviewers?

PETER OLCH: Well, I'm sorry I can't provide an experienced answer to that question because our in-house program is a one-man operation at this point, and he is sitting in front of you at this moment. We do have a limited number of oral history interviews being done under contract for the National Library of Medicine, such as the one in the capable hands of Professor James Harvey Young of Emory University. However, I'm sure this is the case. There are some people who for one reason or another cannot be good interviewers in spite of some form of training. I am really not competent to say what is needed in the training of interviewers.

I found myself that reading has not been terribly helpful. Coming to these sessions has been stimulating and thought provoking, but it is truly a matter of getting out there and getting your feet wet. Interviewing other physicians or scientists is a different kettle of fish than interviewing a farmhand in western North Carolina. I interviewed a gentleman who had been caretaker of the estate belonging to the subject of a proposed biography. I was amazed and shocked at what a miserable job of interviewing I was doing. For two hours I attempted to formulate questions at a level and in a frame of reference he could understand and to which he could respond with elaboration and clarification and not a mere "yes" or "no." I was loaded with key questions that I practically found impossible to get across without putting words in his mouth. This was one of the most frustrating experiences I've had. So obviously much depends upon whom you're talking to as well as the methods you use, how you structure your questions, etc. Perhaps an interviewer can be trained. Certainly they can be provided with guidelines, but I think they just have to learn by doing.

ALICE HOFFMAN: I would agree with that, and obviously some interviewers are more receptive to training than others. But I think each interviewer develops his own style, and one of the creative things that you can do is to spend a good bit of time with your interviewers, and then try to match interviewers with interviewees. The question that I thought you were asking at first was, are there some interviewees who are impossible? I think this is also true. We make a great deal of the skill of the interviewer, but the interviewee has a skill to contribute to this whole process, also. Some have very organized minds. They have minds that are very balanced; they're very willing to call a spade a spade, and when we find such a person we just try to milk him dry.

WILLIAM WYATT: I think we often tend to overlook the fact that common sense in the final analysis is often the great determinant. That reminds me here of something Walter Lord said this morning about the approach. It's nice to have a strong foundation or a university name behind you when you move out here. The first project I directed was funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. We were interviewing pioneers and frontiersmen in western South Dakota, and this was a tremendous asset. These people would invariably say, "You mean there's Eastern money poured in here?", and their faces would light up. The second project was funded by the Foundation on the Arts and Humanities, and it was federal money, and this we didn't mention unless we absolutely had to, because the response was, "You mean I'm paying for this time I'm spending?" Again, it often boils down to common sense, and I appreciate very much your points here.

JEANNE SPIEGEL: I wanted to ask what you think about arguing with or contradicting the interviewee. If the interviewee makes a statement which contradicts something he said in print ten years before, shouldn't you point out his change in position to him?

ALICE HOFFMAN: Well, I certainly think you ought to confront him with all the documentation that you have available to you, and ask him to refute it, agree with it, or to expand upon it. Very often I think contradiction in the written record is a good justification for doing an oral history. Often when you ask for the explanation or for amplification on it, it turns out to be more consistent than it seemed at first, and I think most respondents very much appreciate the opportunity to set the record straight.

PETER OLCH: I would essentially agree with this. I would say you play it by ear. An out-and-out argument has no place in an interview. You will soon lose the interest and support of the person from whom you're trying to get information. But certainly you don't just sit there and take everything for the gospel truth. This is where your preparation is important. If you know he is saying something that goes against the record, tactfully confront him with it. If you have a written document at hand, all the better.

SAUL BENISON: Do you ever demand preparation on the part of the person who you are interviewing, or do you hit him cold on any given interview?

PETER OLCH: I tell him what ball park I wish to play in for that session. I tell him the general areas I wish to cover. I have never given an individual a list of questions to study beforehand. I have a limited set of specific key questions written out for myself beforehand and numerous notes on specifics to be covered. I sometimes give the interviewee a folder of papers to study, or he will ask for certain documents from his files to review before he goes on tape. In general, I find that most of these individuals are quite concerned about what they say for posterity and will do their homework beforehand.

SAUL BENISON: The reason I raised this, because in my own work I spend a great deal of time not only preparing myself but making that preparation available to the person I'm interviewing beforehand. So I might say to a physician or a scientist, we are not only going to talk about the period, say, from 1914 to 1918, but here are some letters I would like for you to look at, because they bear on questions that I will ask you. Here are some papers that you have written that I would like you to refresh your memory about, because one of the things I take for granted is that what I'm getting from this person is interpretation. He at least should have the benefit of some refreshment before he begins to speak with me. And in that sense, there is an added factor to the preparation. You not only prepare yourself, you ask of the person you are interviewing to be prepared for an interview. And I think it underlines the seriousness of what it is you're doing.

PETER OLCH: I don't do this regularly, I must admit. During the course of the interview, I will give him a series of letters and state that he might want to refer to these before the next day's session, but I haven't done this routinely.

ALICE HOFFMAN: I think this is essential and very desirable, but unfortunately we find respondents who don't have the time or don't take the time to do this kind of preparation. But I feel that this is so essential that if I run into a situation where I'm about to conduct an interview with someone who has not prepared, then I ask him for whatever documents he may have or present him with whatever documents that I have with me, and we spend some time going over these together. Sometimes they're pictures from a scrapbook, but we use whatever we have available to us in order to try and get him back in the scene.

GOULD COLMAN: I might just try out something schematically here, putting some of these questions into a framework to see if this makes sense or not. Presumably any problem in the academic business begins as a problem or series of questions, so we start with that. Let me be specific. How was this colloquium planned? There's a specific. Now presumably "how" involves both structures and process, so we spell out here what we mean by how, so the questions are clearly in mind that we want answered. Now there's much relevant information. We have some records. Perhaps these records are an obvious place to begin. I suspect most people would agree. After examining those records we know the structures that were used for planning, but we don't quite understand the processes, the interaction that occurred between people within the structures. So we say, all right, some type of interviewing is needed. It may not be an oral history type of interview that is needed, but perhaps it is. All right, so then we get down to deciding there are certain people that have the information that we need. These are our targets that we selected after we examined alternative ways of getting the information. Now the art of interviewing involves many decision-making points. We've already made one series of decisions in identifying the information we need, another in selecting our targets. Now we make another: we select interviewers who can get the information that is sought. So here comes the problem of matching that Mrs. Hoffman mentioned. We have had the experience at Cornell that we could not do an adequate job of matching the available interviewers to the target respondents to the information sought and dropped the project. That was the end of it. Usually you end up with interviewers who can do a job. But do they really do the job? Here we come back to the information that one is after. Developing a method for analyzing the adequacy of the interview is another decision-making point.

Does the interview produce or doesn't it? If it doesn't, something is wrong along the way. We should be able to determine what that something is. This is the sort of thing that I suspect we go through consciously or unconsciously. Now some of you can say you are not directing projects, you're doing interviews on your own, but I still think these decision-making points appear. You may well ask whether your energy and talents meet the requirements of the job. And if they don't, maybe you're the wrong interviewer for that project. Or it's even conceivable, though God forbid, you're in the wrong business. Well, for what it's worth.

ALICE HOFFMAN: Well, Gould, I'd like to make one comment. I think you often discover that you did not get what you were after, but that what you got was perhaps better than what you were after.

GOULD COLMAN: This is a good point. This is serendipity. You decide after you get this product that, really, this is better than the questions you were asking in the first place. So you set up new questions.

SAUL BENISON: Let me raise a particular question. I think it has nothing to do with personality to begin with. Namely, what do you require of your interviewer before he begins the job? That is, what professional skills do you want him to have? Do you want him to be a trained historian? This becomes a very knotty question. If you begin with a person of no particular training as a historian, I think you're in trouble. A tape recorder does not make a historian. A tape recorder is merely an instrument. And so if I were hiring anyone for any particular project, the first question I would ask is, What's your training? And I think this is the most important question that you have to begin with.

PETER OLCH: May I respond to Dr. Benison here? He and I are friends of a number of years and have argued this point over many a cup of coffee. I disagree with Saul. I have been concerned about this very problem and have given it a fair amount of thought and have finally resolved it in my mind in this way. I don't think there are enough trained, or, if I may use the expression, "establishment historians" interested in oral history to cover what should be covered before it is no longer available to be covered! I truly think that an individual who has some degree of historial perspective, who has the time and the willingness to prepare, who has the financial backing and the support to do this, be they librarian, historian, or renegade physician like myself, can collect information which is vital, which is important, and which can be very useful. I don't expect to ever be able to do a "Saul Benison" type interview. I don't have the time with my other responsibilities for that amount of preparation. But as I have said in a recent review of Dr. Benison's book on Tom Rivers, the more closely we approach his perfection, the more valuable will be the product. But I don't think that it has to be a trained historian to do this job.

SAUL BENISON: I have all sorts of agreements and disagreements. The first thing I would say is you're going to lose a lot of people through the natural attrition of death. That's given. If you don't have people trained historically who are interested in doing oral history, by God, train them historically and then engage in your work!

PETER OLCH: I again would say this may be an ideal to strive for, but I don't think oral history interviews by non-historians should stop or be discouraged. I agree with you in the sense that the more historical perspective, the more historical training you have, the better job you obviously can do.

SAUL BENISON: But you can do the same thing! In the process of training they could start doing their oral history, but at least subject them to the discipline of doing it.

PETER OLCH: If you and I were to interview the cardiac surgeons, Christian Barnard and Denton Cooley, I think you could get one type of history of what they have been doing in the past 18 months, and I think I could get another type of history of equal value because of my background in surgery. In other words, some historical perspective coupled with a background in a technical field can develop a meaningful record. There is so much to be done and so few people to do it. I really think that we must be flexible and strive for the ideal, but to keep moving while we're striving.

GOULD COLMAN: On that note of flexibility, let's call on Professor Young.

JAMES HARVEY YOUNG: This is sort of a mediating position. One of the big points that I try to keep making with friends in other disciplines is that historians have their expertise too. It isn't so apparent, because other disciplines have either an esoteric body of knowledge, or an esoteric vocabulary. But when one talks to physicians who have been very successful physicians but who have never written history, a historian sees many things with his training and experience which he can provide to them, which they don't know and which are really important, even though the language in which they're expressed is a language of common everyday usage. So I think what Saul is pleading for isn't something that you're unwilling to do. I think that what he's pleading for is that if you have a graduate student instead of a Ph.D. who's going to get involved in this, since manpower is so short, that you make him an historian. Let him into the cult through some type of beginning basic training, even if he isn't already a four-star general. And this I think is terribly important.

PETER OLCH: I agree with you, Harvey. Possibly the point I am making is beating a dead horse. We should try to do as you suggest, but it is not always possible. I do think that a collection of "raw data" can be collected by people who do not have this historical training, and it can be a valuable collection of material.

THE ART OF INTERVIEWING

Amelia Fry, Chairman

AMELIA FRY: Each of the panel members is going to throw out a description of some of the stickier problems in interviewing; so everyone can then contribute his own ideas. I introduce Ed Beechert first, who is from the University of Hawaii in labor history. He is working on a book on the history of the Hawaii ILWU. He's been committing oral history for about three years, and the problems he has run into are rather unique. He is going to comment on the structuring of an interview, a very thorny problem -- some people require a great deal of structure and others require very little.

By the way, each of us is going to try to limit our comments to about seven minutes, so I'll thump on the table when your time is up, Ed.

EDWARD BEECHERT: As she said, I was "committing oral history" and without being aware of the offense. I backed into it as a matter of convenience in starting on my book on the history of the ILWU, the International Longshoremen's and Warehousemen's Union, sometimes known as Harry Bridges' Union. They also organized farm workers. With his Marxist approach, Bridges figured out that the majority of their work in San Francisco came from Hawaii. So they started, actually in 1937, to organize the source of much of their work. They wanted to control all the conditions. So I started first by talking to sugar and pineapple field workers so they could get to know me (I had many connections in the labor movement, having been an organizer before I was a professor), and I felt that by this process I would become known to the leadership there, who kept a close eye on everything. I had to have access to their files.

It took about a year and a half interviewing the field hands -- the plantation workers -- with two purposes in mind: (1) the history of the Union, and (2) a hobby of mine, the history of work -- what is work, how do workers regard it, what do they regard as their essential skills. So I was really doing two things at once.

Everyone laughed when I said I planned to use the Union's files, but I finally got into the Union. Then it took about another year and a half to go through their files before I made my first interview with any of the leadership -- and that is the phase I'm now working on, taping interviews based on their files.

I've had two separate problems. I work in the traditional way of the oral historian with the leadership -- if you can speak of tradition in such a new organization: I prepare an outline of what I want, based on what I know, and I give this to the leader. And there is a very serious problem here of establishing a level of confidence. The leadership of the Union, from Harry Bridges down to the lowest level, have been and still are the subject of attack, because many of them are socialists, some of them very radical socialists, and they are opposed to the status quo. Many myths and legends have been created about Bridges and his omnipotence and Jack Hall's (Bridges' counterpart in Hawaii), and their very skillful use of politics. They just had one of their members appointed to a state commission, for instance, which has caused a great deal of uproar. And so I have a difficult problem. I came in as a stranger, and I had to convince them somehow that I wasn't going to harm them, because I'm dealing with an on-going operation. It's a very important business and one in which they must watch every step, lest they expose a weakness that will be immediately siezed by a large number of people. It means that the interviews with the leadership have to be very carefully structured, and then I have to spend a considerable amount of time convincing them that I'm not going to ask any harmful questions nor that I have harmful purposes in mind.

I then thought of the technique that I use with the rank and file. I do not give them a structured account of the interview beforehand, and they don't have any chance before the interview starts to actually know what I'm doing. I simply make appointments with them, meet them, talk with them over a bottle of beer. (Everything in Hawaii is done over a bottle of Primo -- the only beer made in Hawaii and you'd be destroyed if you had any other kind in your possession. They'd have no confidence at all in you then -- they'd know you were a "Mainland Haole" -- the worst kind of person you could be.) So I just talk with them, and then when I think we are ready, I start the recorder and we just continue the conversation. The rank and file tell me a lot of things about themselves -- the different places they've lived, their education, I just keep feeding them these questions, getting them to talk. And in about 15 to 20 minutes they are at ease. I've only had a very few cases where they remain tense throughout. And then we talk about the job, and here have three goals: to provide material for our brand new Labor Archives, which at the present is housed entirely in my office -- but we're getting new quarters soon; to get information for my book; and to get material on the history of work. And so I have to be careful how I proceed because it can be very difficult and occasionally impossible to meet all three demands. In that case, I have to decide which, at the moment, is the one I want. But basically, with the worker, it is just a matter of establishing some kind of friendly atmosphere in which you make them feel that they are important and what they have to say is significant.

When it regards the major project, you get a lot of mythology: strikes in which they participated, for instance. They've had very large strikes, and, for Hawaii, very catastrophic strikes such as the waterfront strike which closed the waterfront for six months --

a fear-producing kind of situation when you live on an island because you can't jump into your car and do your shopping in the next city. There are naturally lots of legends about who did what when and why, but I have come to the conclusion that if you can just stimulate the flow concerning their view, their perspective of such an event, that in the end you will have a fairly good picture. I was very happy when Mr. Lord made the point beautifully about the differences in the points of view of the participants, and how by putting all of them together, it's like the peek-a-boo system of information retrieval: you have a massive amount of information, you put the cards together to see where the coincidence is of two of those little holes. That's what you are doing in this kind of an interview. You don't care if an individual interview is accurate or not, because by the sorting process you can actually find yourself, on the basis of your knowledge, what the whole picture was.

In the other interviews with other unions, now beginning, we are trying to retrieve the story of the organization of labor because Hawaii until 1937 had never had a successful labor demonstration of any kind. Every one had been successfully smashed by the plantations, or by the friends associated with the plantations. Even very massive demonstrations were smashed. So we hope to do quite a bit more on this front. It never fails. [laughter] So, with all these problems, then, we have to build up a methodology. We haven't had much trouble so far. I suspect that as we go further afield we'll have new problems which we'll have to solve. That's one reason we have become a part of the Oral History Association, because we are at the point where we are going to need a lot more resources than we have ourselves.

AMELIA FRY: I'll introduce Woody Maunder next. He's from the Forest History Society of Yale University, and has been in oral history since the early 1950's. He's going to make a few comments on how to establish rapport with your interviewees.

ELWOOD MAUNDER: I suppose, Ed, that an occupational hazard we all face in this business is to put ourselves in the way of old demon rum in the process of getting things rolling in our interviewing. I find that in my field the potables are usually of a little different variety than yours. Old Forester keeps cropping up. [laughter]

It seems to me that oral history is part of the human need to communicate. I think we all recognize that. It's a means of communicating how we remember our times, our part in those times, our observations of our contemporaries, and perhaps something of our notions of how our story relates to the mainstream of history of which we are a part, and how in turn it has been molded. Now here is the marvelous gadget, the tape recorder, which has opened Pandora's Box and prepared the way for preserving remembrance of things past like never before in human history. Right alongside it comes this big electronic brother the computer, which sets in motion the storage of vast amounts of data -- all of which emphasizes our growing need for greater manpower to process, program, analyze, and interpret the horrendous flood that is already flowing into archives and libraries. To know that our contribution to this revolutionary tide of information is to be scrutinized and subjected to the most rigorous analysis makes us -- or should make us -- all concerned with the quality of what we put in the bank.

This concern, it seems to me, is at the heart of one of those old basic problems that keep coming up repeatedly at our colloquiums: How do we establish good rapport with those whom we choose to interview? Too often I feel that in our discussions we become overly concerned with the interviewee's reaction to the tape recorder, the microphone, and whether it is visible or invisible, and I can truthfully say that in my experience in the last several years of making between 150 and 175 interviews with professional foresters, conservationists, and representatives of the forest industry, that I have had very few experiences in which this is a problem. I think you can overcome this problem very easily in the process of your preparation of the man you are interviewing, before you actually launch into the interview. You can explain to him what a tape recorder is all about, you can test his voice, and the shock of initially hearing the way it sounds because we all sound different from what we think we do, and you get him over that concern with the apparatus. I've found that this is always a good preliminary to get out of the way, possibly even in a session that precedes the interviews themselves.

It seems to me that the rapport problem is chiefly concerned, not with equipment, but with the matter of trust. I'm talking now about trust in two areas: I think first of all you have to establish trust in your ability to conduct an interview on a high level of confidence and with a good knowledge of the subject matter that you and the interviewee are going to work on together. Trust, also, is needed on another level: adhering to the letter of your oral and written agreements on the basis of which this man consented to give you this interview.

So first of all, let's deal with how well equipped the interviewer is to create, in concert with the interviewee, the revealing, useful kind of record that we insist is his responsibility to lay bare for posterity. He has probably in his lifetime had a good many experiences, good and bad, with the talents of others who have been called upon to help him in the process of communicating his ideas, and the word "interview" conjures up a very mixed bag of feelings in the minds of most people. I think especially in the minds of those who have achieved some degree of prominence in their field and consequently have been on the receiving end of a great many demands for information in the interview situation. It takes only a few bad experiences with so-called "interviewers" to make any man contemptuous of amateurs or of poorly prepared professionals. He will accept the challenge of doing a tape-recorded memoir only if he is convinced that you are well acquainted with his career and with the subjects that both of you agree in advance to examine during the interviews.

I think we have to remember that oral history is still relatively unknown. All of us here devoutly believe that the quality and value of our product is increasing, but I don't think that we have yet reached any great pinnacle of prestige either among our friends in the academic world or those outside it. Certainly we are not yet revealed as some special elite to be called upon whenever an interview in depth with historical information is in prospect. Therefore, each interview we seek demands first of all that we establish our special competence to conduct it. This, in my view, is the most critical requisite of rapport. We must distinguish ourselves from the many many seekers of information; an oral historian asks for a much larger investment of an interviewee's time. Rapport is critical in the planning, in the taping, in the editing, and sometimes we even carry over into the process of publishing all or part of an interview.

I approach an interviewee personally first of all, to sound his interest in the whole idea that is involved in oral history, and to acquaint him with the historical work that has already been done in the field with which he is associated. Also, I try to lead him gradually into seeing how an interview which might be recorded with him will relate effectively with other interviews which have been made with his peers. I think that then, if he shows interest in participating, the interviewer can go on to discussing any fears he may have about the oral history method or the uses of the finished product. Here one can give him the guarantees of security that may be necessary in order to bring him to the making of the interview.

Let me say right here that it is important to indicate to the interviewee the great need for the interviewer to have access to his personal papers or diaries or business files, so that the oral historian, in the preparation for the preliminary planning session, can really come through with an outline that clearly establishes the fact that you are not just coming in with a scatter-gun interview that will lead to nothing.

AMELIA FRY: I almost don't have the courage to do now what I was told to do: give my own comments on the art of interviewing. I think that, since time is short, I'll just go through what I've prepared and give you the topic sentences, in outline fashion, on how to handle sensitive interviews -- or sensitive points in interviews.

This whole question of interviewing keeps returning to the point that interviewing in oral history is more than just a process. It's an attitude. It stems from the fact that in oral history the interviewer is not the final, definitive historian: I am just there to gather this information for other people who may use it. He and I are in this boat together, both of us committed to establishing a record as near as possible to the way he sees it, the way he remembers it, and as close as possible to the facts I can dig out about it.

When you come to a sensitive topic, first of all you have to know in advance that it's going to be sensitive. As Walter Lord said, you have to know his biases. And you have to feel in your own heart that this topic is worth the hassle -- that its significance merits the effort and pain. If it is significant enough, in your mind, it will help prevent the risk of a ludicrous dialogue in which an obvious controversy is approached, then shied away from. (Like the rather macabre joke of the young interviewer who said, "Yes, yes. But...ah... after that, Mrs. Lincoln, how did you enjoy the play?") [laughter]

One way to approach a sensitive topic is -- off-tape -- to talk about whether you can talk about it. In most cases, this seems to help the interviewee -- and perhaps myself, too -- to see how we mutually can handle it. This has worked, for instance, in a poet's account of her son's death, and in a scientist's story of his denial of a U.N. assignment because his loyalty was suddenly and inexplicably questioned during the McCarthy period.

Then, in an interview itself, it seems to help to build up questions around the sensitive topic in order to lay a groundwork of justification of why his questionable or controversial action was necessary -- such as in accounts of price-fixing or lobbying techniques that today aren't always acceptable.

A third way is to challenge him. I don't do this; it does not work for me. There is just too much risk of making him close up completely and even get mad and refuse to release the interview. But one can offer questions or a point of view from another source that challenges what he says, such as, "This New York Times editorial says that..."

Another technique that seems to have crept into my bag is that of mentioning two facts that cannot be reconciled. For example, "I don't get the picture," I might say to him, "when the official you wanted to oust was so inadequate, yet received such good press. This is apt to confuse any future scholars. Do you have any explanation for this?"

The main thing, once again, is the attitude: that you are both in this together, to create as accurate a record as possible.

Now I'd like to open the discussion to the audience.

Question: I have one for Professor Beechert. You mention that you give a rather complete outline to the labor leaders, at least implying the topics and questions you are going to discuss. Doesn't this tend to produce either loaded responses or guided responses, if they have time to plan a response? Doesn't this alter the validity of the response?

EDWARD BEECHERT: Yes, it does sometimes. In a few cases (only one, fortunately), a man held rigidly to my outline of questions and gave simple answers to questions that were actually for the purpose of providing a direction. In most cases, you can divert it from the simple answer routine and lead the discussion into other areas. The sheet of questions is largely a confidence-building mechanism, and, as Mr. Maunder indicated, this is necessary in these days of the television interview -- there must be hundreds of Mike Wallaces who clutter up the airways with the exposé type of interview, where they work for the confusion of their interviewee. So we have to break this image down. I haven't found the prepared answer to be a serious problem.

ELWOOD MAUNDER: I would agree with Ed on that: that the advantages are greater than the disadvantages. By giving a man an outline of what you are going to cover in a given interview, you give him a chance to ponder what he is going to say, to prod his memory several days or weeks in advance of the session. And that's a great aid to recall.

HAROLD J. JONAS: Mrs. Fry, I understand that you are producing interviews for archives -- for other people's use. Do you prepare any special instructions for those who will be using these materials, and what do they look like?

AMELIA FRY: Yes, we do. I brought along a sample interview which you can look at afterwards if you wish. We have begun putting in a page of information on the date and conditions of each session, what changes were made afterwards in the editing, and so forth. Also, we have always written an introduction to the interview which tells more about the man, gives my impression of the man, assesses his significance, and lays down in narrative form the circumstances of the interview and amount of editing. This gives you the feel of the person.

We also state in the front of the interview what the legal restrictions of use are. In most cases, this is simply an explanation of where the scholar will write in order to get permission to make direct quotations.

GARY L. SCHUMWAY: In our project in Orange County, California, we usually ask the interviewee to bring with him papers and records that will aid in his own recall and which can be used as documentary evidence for the interview. We find this very helpful, not only in the interview itself, but in the collection of papers.

ELWOOD MAUNDER: Yes, one of the great values of oral history is that it serves as a great prod to loosening manuscript materials that otherwise would never get into archives.

ELIZABETH MASON: --Or that never would be preserved at all. We at Columbia have 84 cartons of Madam Perkins' official correspondence which were in her garage.

WILLIAM CUTLER III: In my own interviewing at Temple University, I've found that the assurance of legal restrictions upon sensitive material is the key toward establishing rapport for candid response.

But that won't help me in the problem which I have now. You mention race problems in Hawaii, Mr. Beechert. Temple University is trying to establish an urban archive; Temple is located in the middle of an urban ghetto, Negro, in North Philadelphia, and it occurred to us in the History Department that this would be a most valuable source of oral material, particularly because there are black-owned businesses in the area. In any case, I am speculating that we won't be able to get to these people and get their permission to even begin discussion on the project because Temple is "Whitey's university" -- a problem that has been exacerbated by the fact that Temple, like all urban universities, has created friction in the neighborhood through the process of its own physical expansion. So not only does there arise the problem of racial tension, but in addition the friction from the growth of the university plant. Have you had any experience in this regard at the University of Hawaii, and can you give us any ideas on how to get into a situation like this, how to get started, how to get them to say yes?

EDWARD BEECHERT: My experience, I'm afraid, is somewhat limited in this area. I do happen to know of an effort being made at the University of California in sociology, where they followed a course of least resistance: they hired a black man who was a good community organizer. In Hawaii, we do have racial conflicts, but there our racial differences have not led to the kind of human-consuming ghetto that you have on the Mainland. It amounts to verbal abuse more than anything else. I would suggest that you do what may be next to impossible these days, and borrow my experience. I can talk to labor people because I have been in labor most of my life, and I know their talk and their interests. In your case, you will probably have to find a black man -- or at least a white man who enjoys their confidence.

ELIZABETH MASON: May I comment on a somewhat similar situation in a Columbia Crisis project which we undertook beginning the night of April 30 [laughter] -- which we have described briefly in our current annual report. We set out immediately to try to get the stories of the participants, knowing very well that we were dealing quite literally with raw wounds, and that we ourselves were handicapped because we were obviously viewed as part of the Establishment, so we had that to add to the disadvantage of being white. So I understand what you are talking about.

Our experience, as we began to work it through, is that we got full cooperation and willingness to talk from all groups in the faculty -- and there were a large number of groups and factions and interests involved -- and from all the administration who were willing and even anxious to be as frank as they possibly could. They were given the right to seal, and some of them took it; some of those tapes were remarkably candid, I thought. But with the students we had the greatest difficulty from the beginning. We used as interviewers, incidentally, students from a neutral area, the School of Journalism, which was not involved in any of the episodes on campus and which continued to function when all the rest of the buildings were on strike. They did this in terms of, "We are the newspapermen here on campus, we are the reporters, we are the people who ought to stay neutral and tell the story and not take sides." And in that way, we got some of the white students to cooperate and give us their recollections, but we couldn't even get an answer, not even a no, from the black students. And we could not find a black student who would serve as an interviewer.

The only way this can be accomplished, it seems to me, is through such a group as is not here this time but which was represented at the Colloquium -- black documentation people. There are a number of black groups making an attempt to make their story a matter of record, themselves, and they are going to control the tapes. All right, that's fine. Because this is something I don't think we can do. I think we can only provide them with any technical help they may need, with any expertise they need, and with funds, and with financial support -- then cut them loose. You can't "do something." The gap is too wide right now.

WILLIAM CUTLER III: We could hire a black man; there is no question about that.

ELIZABETH MASON: That isn't enough; it won't do. You've got to let the black people do their job. All you can do is to set them free to do it.

[Exchanges become quite rapid, with several speaking at once.]

EDWARD BEECHERT: I think if you look around this room, you get a large hint as to your problem. There are very few black people in the academic world. That's not an accident.

ELIZABETH MASON: But this has not been true in past Colloquia; we have had quite a few representatives of black projects in oral history.

EDWARD BEECHERT: You have to select the RIGHT black man, one who knows how to ask the questions.

ELIZABETH MASON: And even then he is going to be suspect among his own fellow blacks if he is working for you. YOU can't do it.

EDWARD BEECHERT: I can put you in touch with a man in Berkeley, a graduate student at the University of California, who is interviewing people in the ghetto on the problems of the ghetto. He is a very good organizer out of the South -- his way of fighting whitey.

ELIZABETH MASON: There is a lot more of these projects going on than any of us knows. I run onto it all the time with casual inquiries that come into our office in New York from various organizations whose name gives no indication of their make-up or purpose. I usually say, "Well, come see me and we'll sit down and talk." And I'm getting a number of these now who won't necessarily say that the direction of their efforts is to document life in the ghetto. But they want to know how to do it. And we try to say, "This is how we do it. You do it, adapting how you can." There are a great number of groups who are quite conscious that the tape recorder is cheap enough to carry on projects like this. So this is happening.

But it isn't going to happen through the Oral History Association and it isn't going to happen through Temple University -- or Columbia.

ELWOOD MAUNDER: Elizabeth, I can't believe that with all the current emphasis on black history, that other institutions, black universities, don't exist where seed money couldn't be planted to GET the job done.

ELIZABETH MASON: Yes, there has been oral history work done at Howard University.

WARREN ALBERT: Four things we might ask the panel to talk about: We haven't discussed the effect of the age of the interviewer on the interviewee. And another thing is the necessity of professional status of the interviewer and its effect on the interviewee. And the third is the use of an additional person in an interview -- what sort of guarantee do you have that, in a confidential interview, the third party won't later spill the beans? My fourth comment is that my own thought for the most important qualification for the interviewer is to "know thyself." You've really got to put yourself through the mill before you even attempt to go out on an interview, to find out "Who am I," "What am I doing," and "Why am I here." Then you can face the question, "How adaptable can I be?"

ROBERT ECKART: Has anyone ever done any group interviewing, where, for instance, a question with one interviewee might be followed up by another person present. We have done some of this.

EDWARD BEECHERT: If you define a group as more than one interviewee, yes, I've done this especially in sessions with "secondary leadership" in a union or regarding a particular episode. For instance, in the sugar strike, I purposely put two people together because they had been, at that time (1946), not only were they the ones who started the labor movement on that particular plantation, but also they had been the chief organizers for the supporting operations of the strike: feeding the people, keeping up the morale, how you keep them from diverting the strike by getting out of hand. I put these two people together although they are not as friendly now as they had been (in fact, one was out of the union). But I used them to stimulate each other's memory and as a kind of deflationary device -- for remarks that otherwise might be extravagant. Because in this category of interviewees, there are no documents -- people don't write things down. It works very well. But I would think you have to select the people very carefully. I've never had more than three.

ROBERT ECKART: I was wondering if in this case an individual interviewee might lose his identity for his remarks.

AMELIA FRY: Right. The one time we taped a large group was years ago when a bunch of old timers in a mining town in the mountains sat around reminiscing. It gives an important sort of social history background for people who might be writing old miners stories, but the interviewer cannot always identify who is talking, nor can he keep two people from talking at once.

However, I, too, have had good luck in a two-interviewee session in which a primary interviewee who is engaged in a series of sessions will bring in another who used to be his assistant, or someone with whom he had to deal on the outside. This has added more specific information in every case, but the second person does have to be selected very carefully.

ROBERT ECKART: One of the things we are doing is trying to document some of the history of Southeast Asia, which is contemporary. Very often an individual will bring up a problem to which he doesn't know the answer, and in a whole group of individuals related to that item, they may very well lead you to where the ultimate answer to that question is.

AMELIA FRY: Or you can organize your interviews around a series of interviewees on one topic -- which we usually do, although our interviews are essentially biographical. (It's easier to get grants for a series, let's face it.) This method uses the interviewers' research time more efficiently -- you can also eventually piece together somewhat comprehensive information from all the interviews.

ELWOOD MAUNDER: I've found that the group interview has one value as a preliminary tool. Get a group together and talk with them. (You can do it on tape if you want to but, as Mrs. Fry has indicated, you have a terrible problem of transcribing.) But in a group you can determine who are the real potential sources of information and who are not. Then you go back and pick them off one at a time in individual interviews, which I have done and with good success. And in each case, I have found that the man was far more free in setting down the record than he had been in the group meeting. Three people can sometimes work it out, but I think the ideal interview is the old interviewer-interviewee arrangement. I wouldn't make any quibble about that.

THE ART OF INTERVIEWING

Albert S. Lyons, Chairman

ALBERT LYONS: As each man speaks I'll identify him. When you do say anything in this session, please state your name so that we may record it. Our topic is The Art of Interviewing.

If one can define science as a body of knowledge which can be reduced to formulation or to rules, art certainly is not such a body of knowledge. In oral history performance, we are involved in both the art and the science. Therefore, perhaps it would be better for us to say we're discussing the technique, rather than either the art or the science, of interviewing in oral history. What I hope we can do is to ask each of the panelists to make an introductory statement of about five minutes each, and then we will throw the meeting open to everybody. I will, if I may, assume the prerogative of breaking in on anyone who speaks a little longer, even though it may be that he's saying the most significant thing here, simply in order to give everybody else a chance.

JOHN HALL: I'm overwhelmed by a modesty which is not in the least little bit feigned; it's real, scared by some of the people I've met around here who have done so much more of this kind of work than I have. The notion that I pose as an authority gives me the "willies." Walter Lord stole so much of my thunder and said it so much better than I could.

An interview is something that everybody has to do in his own way. There are no rules, but there are some considerations that we have to keep in mind or else we get into trouble. I was surprised to find that questions still continue to come up as to how much you should prepare. I have very strong opinions on that. My opinion is that it is impossible to prepare too thoroughly for an interview, so long as you remember that you are preparing for an interview and not for a lecture. Your purpose in interviewing is the sort of thing that Lord referred to earlier this morning: so that you can respond to what the particular person has to say. You can prepare for his jargon, his alphabetical arrangement, and to know what he's referring to when he refers to things, so that you don't have to stop him for a,b, c, explanations. You're aware of what he did, and what you're looking for in your interview is to find out more about what he did. So the preparation for the interview has to be thorough. The more thorough the better. I think it is a more profitable use of time to prepare on the subject than on the man.

We all have trouble figuring what to call the person we're talking to. "Interviewee" is a stupid word. It annoys me. If you call him a "subject," it sounds as though he's made on a slab where he can be dissected. If you call him a "respondent," then it brings to my mind a divorce proceeding. Well anyway, "man" is a good word. I just want to call him a man, unless he's a female.

VOICE: How about just an "oral author?"

JOHN HALL: I'm afraid to comment. Preparing on the subject of the man himself can be dangerous. If you know too much about him, if you're too much interested in him, if you are too flatteringly hanging on every word he says, you can shut him up in short order. You can make him suspicious. And to be too appreciative also can have the same effect. I've had this happen when I got some real hard-boiled advice when we went in to tackle a man who was notorious for not telling anybody anything. I was going to sweet-talk him out of it. I didn't. I sweet-talked him into the most complete silence anybody had ever encountered.

The preliminary warm-up before you start the serious interviewing I think is undoubtedly sound, because the ideal that you're looking for is the role of the friendly and interested listener. Let the man talk. And because you're interested, because you know what's going on, encourage him to talk. Lord said we listen to a lot of bull; perfectly true. But it takes a lot of bull to produce a filet mignon. We must never shut the man off if we can possibly avoid it.

Interruptions are apt to shut him off too, but on the other hand, interruptions sometimes can put him back on the right line. You decide according to how you feel about the man you're talking to. You navigate by the seat of your pants. That's all there is to it. It is a personal relationship between you and the person being interviewed.

ALBERT LYONS: Thank you, Dr. Hall. You've told us about what you thought we should do. Lila Johnson perhaps ought to tell us about what we shouldn't do. Go ahead, Lila.

LILA JOHNSON: Before I go on, I'd like to say that my purpose in research in oral history is to gather resources and materials -- not to write up something; not to make a conclusion about something; just gathering material that other people can use.

I've found that when I turn on the tape recorder, and say that this is July 3 in such-and-such a building, people often freeze. And so I developed the type of interviewing in which you turn on the tape recorder and say, "Isn't it a nice day out?" You start talking and gradually get into the story. But then I have run across the type of person who, when I start talking about the weather, will ask, "Don't you want to tell what date it is; don't you want to give everybody's name?" You can't anticipate all eventualities. It depends on whom you're talking to.

On the problem of believing everything that is said, this is what Walter Lord advised. I've developed the technique of believing everything that is said during the interview. If I really doubt it, I might say something like, "I've read somewhere something different. What do you think about that?" The person may modify his statement or he might say, "That's not true; what I've said is right." In my work I consider that also valuable. If it turns out that what they're saying isn't true, or perhaps that their impressions are wrong, for my purposes this is also valuable.

Another problem is whether you should push hard on a point or go back later and reask certain questions. Ask them once maybe and come back to it later, perhaps rephrasing the question. You might not get anything if you don't push a little bit, and yet if you push, you might get nothing.

Another problem that arises is whether to take notes during the interview. I've not been taking notes. I have before me a list of questions, which I'll check off as they've been answered. As other questions occur to me, I write them down. You may run into the problem of the person thinking you're not interested in what he is saying. Or if you take notes, they may want to know what the tape recorder is for.

These are just a few of the problems that we have been going over and over and over again in talking with people or in talking in discussion groups. My conclusion is that the art or the technique of the interviewer is probably linked to the purposes and the personalities of both the interviewee and the interviewer. You have to go into it with the idea that you might have to change your tactics, or your questions, or anything else that is blocking results.

ALBERT LYONS: Thank you, Lila. Next, John Stewart.

JOHN F. STEWART: There really isn't much to say after Walter Lord has gone over so much. Everyone I've talked to has concluded that there's very little that he said that most of us wouldn't agree with, and agree with quite heartily. There are a few things I'd like to mention, however, that may serve as a basis for some discussion. First of all I'd have to confess that I myself, and I think a few of the other people, haven't paid enough attention to the techniques, the actual techniques of interviewing. I think so often we're so concerned with the subject matter, and we're so concerned with getting familiar with both the subject matter and the person's role, that we don't think enough beforehand about the actual techniques of interviewing. On the other hand, one of the points that has been brought up, with which I would heartily agree, is that it is very difficult really to prepare the techniques for an interview. Each person that is interviewed demands a different approach, demands a different type of interview. There's a wide diversity of types of people to be interviewed. We have covered the whole range. Some people want to be interviewed strictly on a short question and a short answer basis, but you never know this until you start the interview. They will want to give a three- or four-sentence answer to every single question you ask. This means that the interviewer appears on the tape or appears on the transcript as much as the person being interviewed. Others strike a somewhat medium course and will respond to questions, for example, in two or three paragraphs, or even a page, maybe two pages. This makes the job of the interviewer a little easier. At the other extreme are people who take off, totally on their own, in response to a very general question. They need only the slightest prodding, such as the mention of a subject or an incident. They will organize their answers completely, and produce a finished product, with very little urging from you. These are the ranges of people that we are dealing with in the Kennedy project. I'm sure many of you have found the same.

I would agree with all that's been said about the need for total preparation or as total as is humanly possible. However, I would also stress that in the preparation an interviewer has to be concerned with the types of information he's looking for. We have had instances of people preparing for interviews, getting totally familiar with the subject at hand (especially something that involved many technical considerations), but losing sight of the kind of information that can reasonably be expected to be obtained from the person being interviewed. Thus it is important to get familiar with the types of information that the person conceivably can give you.

This relates also to the matter that I think Mr. Hall brought up about whether to focus on the subject matter or on the person in his role. I don't think there are any absolute rules that you can follow. However, in many of our interviews with people who work in large organizations in the State Department, in the Department of Defense, or in any of the governmental departments, it's frequently extremely important for us to try to pin down this person's role as much as possible before we go in and talk to him. Very frequently this is the area that we have most difficulty in, especially at certain levels during the Kennedy administration. People sometimes were acting in situations not according to their legally authorized roles, but rather on an ad hoc basis, so that it was quite difficult to determine beforehand exactly what the role of these people was in any particular situation.

On the matter of introducing the tape by giving the names of the people, of the interviewer, and the dates, we have just adopted a standard practice of not doing this until afterward. To me it is the one thing that really makes the situation very formal and is apt to scare someone off. If you say, "This is a recorded interview with so-and-so," it does tend to freeze someone. We have adopted the practice of leaving a good deal of tape at the beginning and then filling it in afterwards.

ALBERT LYONS: Thanks, John. This completed the preliminary statements. I would like to indicate how I think we ought to proceed with the discussion, so that we can in the allotted time give almost everybody a chance. We're going to discuss: the preparation for the interview; the structure of the interview; the techniques to gain rapport with the respondent; and the techniques to elicit information. Let us take each separately, spend a few minutes on each, and then cut off and go to the next. I don't want you to feel hurried, but I am going to hurry you.

First, the preparation. I think we've heard considerably about the preparation of us, of ourselves. Perhaps we ought to discuss what preparation of the person to be interviewed we should engage in. For instance, do we explain the purpose of the interview? Do we tell the interviewed person that he is speaking for posterity? That has advantages, telling him he's speaking for somebody hundreds of years from now. It has an advantage because it satisfies the ego, and lets one expand. It also helps accuracy, because one is more apt to be candid and accurate if he knows that others are going to check up on him. Also it helps to make the interviewers, ourselves, less important to him. We're only agents of mankind, and so he is less apt to react to us too personally, and will therefore perhaps be more open. But of course it has a disadvantage too. It may inhibit many people. If they think they're talking to posterity, they may be overawed.

The second thing we want to consider in the preparation of the interview, and I'd like to hear your views, is whether we should make the contact with him by phone only, by phone and personal appointment, or whether it should just be by letter. What is your experience on these things? Let's address ourselves to how any of you believe the person to be interviewed should be prepared on these issues.

MARY ELLEN GLASS, University of Nevada: We do spend considerable time in preparing our interviewees. (I'm sorry, somebody objects to this word.) We send them a letter that invites them to participate in our project. Enclosed with the letter is a thing we call a Fact Sheet, and it explains the process. It is something you can read: what happens at an interviewing session; what's going to happen next; can one restrict his material, etc. That letter asks for a reply but we almost never get it. Within ten days or so I telephone and say, "Did you get the letter? I'm looking forward to meeting you." I make the appointment then to get together. We talk about what we're going to do after the interview begins. At that first meeting I ask for and get an outline of the activities that they've been involved in. From that I construct a written outline which I subsequently send. I say that these are the things that we discussed at our preliminary meeting.

QUESTION: You said a written outline?

MARY ELLEN GLASS: Yes, I did.

QUESTION: Of what you're going to ask?

MARY ELLEN GLASS: Well, we use a live history approach. We've had then the contact by letter; the contact by telephone; the contact with the outline before we ever begin to introduce the tape recorder. When we do introduce the tape recorder, I explain completely what we're going to be doing. "I'm going to be sitting here. I'm going to be taking notes. We have to keep the words clear for the transcriber. You know about the transcriber, I think. And then I take notes in case there's a strange word or something."

ALBERT LYONS: Is there anyone here who does not prepare the interviewee so completely?

FLOYD O'NEIL, University of Utah: Our project is a big one with American Indian informants. We usually form the tribal council; tell them why we are going to be on the reservation, and let the word filter down. The Indian underground gets the word around, and we try to keep it as spontaneous as possible. The use of the material subsequently will not just be the history of the Indians. Sometimes it will be in an Indian language. The tapes will be saved for the anthropological linguist and other disciplines as well. And so in attempting to maintain the spontaneity that we desire, we do not prepare our interviewees. We keep him loose.

BENIS FRANK: I think one thing that you might have asked that we should discuss here is how an individual is chosen to be interviewed. This depends basically on the structure, nature, and desire of the individual program. In my particular program we interview retired Marines. We choose these individuals to be interviewed on several bases: Recommendations of those individuals who have already been interviewed, recommendations of the Commandant Advisory Committee, and on our own expertise, or on the requirements of the individual writing projects in the historical branch of the Marine Corps. We have a big organization, The United States Marine Corps, behind us. Therefore our letters go out over the signature of the Chief of Staff, and sometimes the Commandant, asking these individuals to participate, indicating that we've interviewed so many Generals, so many former Commandants, and that we're filling in the gaps in the Marine Corps history. The letter also says, "If you do desire to participate, and we hope that you do, we will send you a proposed topical outline, and you'll be informed of the restrictions which may or may not be imposed upon you." I must say that there isn't one single interviewee out of 38 general officers, plus a couple of colonels, whom I haven't liked, and with whom I have not attained a great deal of rapport. To me, essentially, interview is a dialogue.

ALBERT LYONS: Before you go into that, because we're going to come to that separately, let me just ask a question before leaving this subject. How many here submit some written material to their interviewees, an outline, or some other thing? Let's see, nine do submit.

QUESTION: May I have one sentence? What I send is a list of questions that may or may not be answered.

ALBERT LYONS: Those of you who do not send any preparatory information to the person interviewed, will you raise your hands?

FLOYD O'NEIL: Ask for a third category; those of us who use both approaches.

ALBERT LYONS: What do you mean by both?

FLOYD O'NEIL: Well, if it's a white informant I send him a list. If it's an Indian informant I usually do not.

ALBERT LYONS: I see. So your hand is both up and down.

FLOYD O'NEIL: Yes.

ALBERT LYONS: Let me find out something. How many do not send any preparatory information? One.

QUESTION: What do you mean by preparatory information? A proposed outline?

ALBERT LYONS: A proposed outline or a list of questions, that he can see beforehand.

QUESTION: I think you have to distinguish between sending a person either specific questions that are going to be asked, or specific subjects that are going to be discussed, on the one hand, and sending him information about the project or about the program on the other hand. Now in our case we always send people information, a brochure, about the program, but whether we send him topics or questions, we don't have a general rule on. We do it if we feel it will help the interview along, and we don't do it if we feel it will scare people off.

ALBERT LYONS: Well, information about the project is simply a way of inviting him to be a participant, but I meant the actual questions. I see that they are sent by most of the people here, in fact by all of them except for you, Mr. O'Neil, in relation to the Indians, and I, with none of my people.

FLOYD O'NEIL: I would like to say that I send, if I'm asking them about, say, the Department of Conservation, a note that that's what I want to interview them about. Then if they want questions beforehand, and some of them do, I send them the questions. If they don't ask for them I don't. It depends on the subject.

ALBERT LYONS: It would seem to me, as on so many of these points, it depends a good deal on what kind of material you're going to deal with, on the kind of project. Since I deal with the history of an institution, and with the history of medicine in a city, I prefer to have the people "cold," because what I'm trying to get is information that is not available by documents, that is not available in any other way except by probe of the person. I find that if they're prepared too well in advance they have put together a whole little history, which they've gotten out of documents rather than from their own memory and experience. Let's leave that subject except to ask one more question. How many here do tell the person you're interviewing, preparatory to starting, that they are talking to posterity, that is, that they are talking to people who will come afterward? Most of you. Let's put the hands down, and see how many do not tell the people that? How many do not tell the interviewed person that they are talking to posterity?

VOICE: We don't use that word.

ALBERT LYONS: Well, no, I'm sure there are other ways of saying it.

LILA JOHNSON: It's the same idea, but they know it's not for a specific book or a research project.

ALBERT LYONS: What do you say, Willa Baum?

WILLA BAUM: We indicate where the material will be deposited. It will be for the use of many different types of scholars. I think you have to qualify this now on the extent of how you warm the interviewee up. For instance, we indicate we will tell them what the restrictions are. I give them the background of the oral history program, our involvement with transcription processes and the requirements of the branch to use some of this material. We ask them to give us interim authorization to use it. So this warms them up. This in effect gives them the idea, or should give the individual the longsighted view that this is for posterity.

ALBERT LYONS: I'd like to go to the next subject, and that is the structure of the interview. First, I think, is the question as to just how do each of you set it up for goals? Do you have a particular goal in mind when you interview? Is it set up so that you have actual outlines either in your head or written down? To give the background, so that you can address yourself to it, the advantages of having a goal, of course, is that you can get what you're after more easily. You can let the interview proceed in orderly fashion. You're less apt to be overwhelmed by rambling on the part of the interviewed person because you know what you're after. But it has disadvantages too. You may fail to get information that you are not aware of, if you're after particular goals. Actually it may be other unplanned-for subjects that may come out in an unstructured interview that would be more important. Let's hear some views on that.

CARLOTTA HERMAN: I just start out by sending a list of detailed questions to the interviewee, and get that off in time so that they have the questions before them. Without the questions most of them wouldn't know exactly why I wanted an answer or what it was I was looking for. I also make up a list of questions in my own mind, and think them over carefully so that I don't have to refer to any paper, but know more or less what I want to find out. That allows me to have a goal in mind and get specific information, but also it leaves me flexible so that I can pick up when the person comes in with something that I haven't got or wasn't familiar with. I think if you have some structure but leave it loose enough to allow for spontaneity in new areas, it is much more useful.

BERT KLEIN: I do not prepare a list of questions, but during the preliminary interview, what I do is go over, in a more general or superficial way, the content of the entire set of interviews, which might range from two to four perhaps in number. On the basis of the notes that I take during the prelim, I am able to construct a two to three page outline of actual content. When I come in for the taping session, I do not have any pre-prepared questions, but I frame the questions on the basis of this outline, which has been sent to the gentleman, say a week before, and which I have perused with care. I find at times that because of this careful pre-perusal the gentleman can proceed at length without too much interference from me. When the transcript is finally completed, and it is put together, I find that the prelim provides a very convenient cover sheet for the document, because anybody who looks at the interview can examine the first two or three pages at the top, and it constitutes a kind of table of contents for the interview which follows.

ALBERT LYONS: Thank you. Does anyone else want to address himself to this? Very well, let me go to the next subject. Techniques used in gaining rapport with the person. Of course, preparing him in advance, as you've all indicated, some by questions, some by stating to him that he is speaking for the future, is a method to gain rapport. I would like to hear other ways of getting rapport. I will start with one idea for you to shoot at. For instance, I do not always begin in in a chronologic way. I seldom ask a man where or when he was born or anything like that. After the immediate warm-up preliminaries are out of the way, I might ask him, "What is the most important contribution you've ever made?" It's a rare person who doesn't get started on what he thinks about himself, or what he thinks he may have done well. It sometimes has started a flood where only a trickle was flowing before. Now let's hear some of your own contrary views.

WILLA BAUM: Our interviews are usually biographic, mainly. I think Al's are subject oriented.

ALBERT LYONS: No, they're biographical too.

WILLA BAUM: Well, anyway, we usually start chronologically, which is reasonable, but also because it's a lot easier to start out with somebody explaining something very easy, like where he was born and a few things like that. Then I think you can give him a harder question. I would never ask a man what was his most important contribution until I'd talked to him for several sessions, and until he had had a chance to expand. By the end of the third or fourth interview, he has often gotten to thinking in terms of seeing his whole life as leading up to something, which is probably what he considers his major contribution.

ALBERT LYONS: All right, how many of you feel one way or another?

BENIS FRANK: We gain rapport by our outline which contains a chronological listing of the individual's history from the time he entered the service to the time he retired, which encompasses a thirty-three or forty or twenty-eight year period. And I have it down there, almost a day-to-day, assignment-to-assignment listing. When I say, "Well, now you sailed from ______ flats, on the S.S. ______ on such-and-such a date," he may say, "My God, where did you get this information?" Anyway, I gain the rapport. I am perhaps better able than many people to structure my outline by the mere fact that I have the records available, and one unique quality of the old file jackets that the Marine officers had was that there was a listing, a month-to-month listing of what their assignments were, whether they were a special services officer or in on a special course. But knowing this material, and giving them the outline so that they can look at it at their leisure, I recall in them a train of consciousness. Actually we go strictly along this proposed outline very seldom. I think maybe in the case of one or two interviews was I ever faced with a yes or no question and answer type of thing. I was usually able to allow them to go on and then ask them their expertise or knowledge of this particular subject. Then with certain questions we could branch off to include personalities, and events, but this goes into something that is preparation for the interview.

ALBERT LYONS: I think your point is made and I think the point is also very clearly made that I'm the only one here on two issues: one, who does not submit an outline, and two, who may begin right in the middle, you might say, in the water, by asking the person what his most important contribution is.

I might say that what happens, to give you my own experience, is that while you may think it shocking, it's not shocking to a person to be asked the thing that is the pet idea of his life. They eventually and continually come back to the same subject and enlarge upon it. It is really what he wants to say anyway, and I have found that I do tend to convey immediately to the person I'm interviewing what the real purpose of these interviews is: to give information that historians may use. However, I must admit of course that often it might be right to start with some other things that will lead up to it better.

FLOYD O'NEIL: May I add one other thing? I think here we ought not to think of ourselves as indispensable. Use someone who already has rapport. In our American Indian oral history project, we have used men who are illiterate clear on up through the men with Ph.D.'s and Rhodes scholars and all the rest. Get the man who knows him best. And don't think of yourself as being indispensable. You're not. After we got over that hill, we found it much easier to interview people if we were willing to be versatile.

ALBERT LYONS: You know, you're so right, because when I think of it, all of the people whom I interview, almost all of them, are people who are well known to me or else I am well known to. Even those who are outside my specific field know about me or I have met. I've already gone over many of the hurdles. Most of you have never had any contact at all with the person. So maybe for someone you know it's all right to start in the middle, and maybe for someone you don't know it's better to do it gradually.

FLOYD O'NEIL: I have a suspicion you'd fail very quickly on an Indian reservation.

ALBERT LYONS: Yes, I have a feeling.

FLOYD O'NEIL: It depends too on what you're looking for. People may want to tell the story in biographical order. If, on the other hand, you're looking for something else, then your technique may be definitely the thing to do.

ALBERT LYONS: It's true that if I had several days or a week to go through interviews, I suppose I would have the luxury of going through gradual steps. But I don't. I have a limited time. And let me tell you therefore from my own experience, if you do have a limited time, if you only have one interview, and it's an hour, or between an hour and two hours, then my advice to you is to get quickly to what it is you want from the man, and then let the other biographical material come out. You know, much of the biographical material that the person gives you is readily available. Every one of these individuals I have a curriculum vitae on. I don't want him to recite that over again. I want him to ruminate on it, but I don't want him to recite it. Now with the American Indian, of course, that's an entirely different matter.

The last subject, so that we really finish on time, has to do with the techniques evolved to elicit information from the person. Of course, we've already spoken of some of them. Do any of you challenge statements of your interviewee? Do you challenge your subject? I'm using all those words you don't like, John, but everybody understands. Do you challenge the accuracy of something the person says?

JOHN STEWART: Yes. We do it. I think this relates to the whole matter of rapport. Personally, I feel it's much better to have a situation where the person is telling you the story and trying to get you to understand it rather than trying to get it down on the tape recorder. So following from this, if someone says something that conflicts with something you know or something that someone else has told you, you can very carefully interject a remark such as, "Well, I'm a little confused in my own mind now. I had thought that this was the case and now you say that that was the case."

ALBERT LYONS: But you're just telling me you're using a tactful approach. You aren't challenging him.

JOHN STEWART: Right. But it becomes a situation, in effect, of their clearing up your knowledge of the situation, or of correcting your attitude of just how it took place. I think it's a fairly effective way of getting data without really challenging the person's integrity.

ALBERT LYONS: Well, we assume that everybody is going to do this by means that are, let's say, gentle. But it's the principle that I'm after. You do challenge?

JOHN STEWART: Oh, yes, quite definitely.

ALBERT LYONS: Does anybody else challenge accuracy?

JOHN HALL: I just reinforce what John said. Quite often this is where you get some very important information that we wouldn't otherwise get.

CARLOTTA HERMAN: I challenge them by saying, "Oh, I'm really interested to know that, because I had thought something else," and I bring in something conflicting. They may say, "No, you're wrong," or may add to what has already been said.

VOICE: We use the same method of tactfully getting around that. However we've found one point that's difficult. Sometimes we use professors for interviewers, and they have difficulty when something comes up that is opposed to their own thesis or to something they know. They may be known figures, and since their names are going to appear in the interview, they cannot let it stand. They have to come on strongly in order to preserve their own reputations. This is often a quite difficult and I think unsuccessful situation.

ALBERT LYONS: May I tell you that I have challenged many times, just to get the personality on tape. In this I have in some way failed. Perhaps

I have prepared the people too well. They feel so clearly that they are talking to future generations and not to me, that even when I have made the most outrageous challenges in the hope that I would get some kind of emotional response to show how this person acted when he was challenged, I have failed. They have reacted with such great blandness that it has disappointed me. So I suppose in some ways one can prepare too much.

I know that there's a lot more to say. I know we have only hit the barest tops of the topics: preparation of ourselves and of the interviewed person; the structure of the interview; the techniques for gaining rapport; and techniques to try to elicit information. But most of us have had something to say, and maybe that was the main purpose after all.

ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS

John F. Stewart, Chairman

JOHN STEWART: The purpose of these sessions, as Louis Starr told me ten minutes ago, is simply to try to get everyone to describe exactly what they are doing. Dr. Starr felt that a lot of people who came to these conferences didn't really get a chance to speak up in a meeting and tell what they were doing and the problems they were having.

I think it would be of value if we could focus, as much as possible, on the problems that each of us is encountering in running our programs, or in serving as staff members on the programs. I'll kick it off, and then we'll just go right around the room and have each person pick it up. Feel free to interrupt and ask questions of the speaker. In fact, it would be a good idea to cross-examine each person a bit if you feel the need for it.

QUESTION: Because there are many of us, should we set a 5-minute limit?

JOHN STEWART: All right. I'll try to keep track of the time. I think it would be best to give a very short description and then answer questions about our programs. Let me begin by saying that I think I've met most of you personally either here or at Arden House last year. I have been Chief of the John F. Kennedy Library Oral History project for the past two years. This project was begun in early 1964. The intention was to interview as many members of the Kennedy Administration and political colleagues of President Kennedy as possible. At the present time we've interviewed 740 people. The project, according to our present plans, has approximately three more years to run. One of the things we're very concerned with right now, and which has always been a big problem because of the large number of people with whom we are dealing, is making sure that each subject is adequately covered. There is, of course, a great range of subjects relevant to the Kennedy Administration and to the various other aspects of President Kennedy's career. In this project, therefore, we are trying to achieve a balance in the coverage of different subjects. Thus far, we haven't really been able to do this. There are certain subjects -- for example, the West Virginia and Wisconsin primaries -- on which we have a disproportionate number of interviews at this point. It is these imbalances that we hope to correct now and in the next couple of years.

Why don't I throw it open now to anyone who wants to ask questions? Then we'll move on.

QUESTION: I would like to make a suggestion. One of the problems in connection with Kennedy that casts somewhat of a shadow over him, from my point of view -- which, on the whole, is extremely favorable -- is the role of the President, or, at any rate, the White House staff, in the final coming-to-grips with the Kefauver-Harris legislation of 1962. The book on this by Harris called The Real Voice is quite critical of the President's office in this episode. This is of particular interest to me, but, even from the point of view of the broader historical record, it is an issue that I hope might be touched upon in the oral interviewing. I have no idea what the printed records may contain with respect to it.

JOHN STEWART: This raises a very good question, or a question that has been of concern to us. With so many books being written on particular subjects, we're always faced with the problem of how much additional interviewing to do, and how to be sure that we're not going over a lot of the same ground that's covered in books such as The Real Voice.

QUESTION: Harris is on the inside from the Kefauver point of view, but on the outside as far as the President's office is concerned, and he didn't do any interviewing.

JOHN STEWART: He did quite a bit of interviewing.

QUESTION: I don't think he did. Within the President's staff he may have, and I just don't know about it. It's not really documented.

JOHN STEWART: Right. Books like that do serve as a good jumping-off point for a lot of the interviews that we do. It would be ideal if we could organize small projects, taking a book like that and using it as the outline -- as the basic document -- and then going on further to do as much additional work in the area as we could.

QUESTION: Mr. Stewart, I understand that a great variety of people have been involved in the interview process itself. After the President died, members of the Administration began to interview one another and then, for a time, Charlie Morrissey conducted interviews. Now you and your staff are conducting interviews. One of the questions I asked Charlie, and I put to you now, is what materials do you have access to in preparation for your interviews? And do you have a particular schedule of hours to be given to a particular interview?

JOHN STEWART: The allocation of time for particular people relates to the whole matter of scheduling and to determining who should be interviewed. When we're dealing with the number of people that we are, namely the 750 who have been interviewed and the 200 or 300 more whose names we have in our files, it becomes a substantial problem. This problem is just compounded by the difficulties that I'm sure all of you run into in trying to arrange appointments because people have to be interviewed when they become available. As far as specifically alloting time to particular people based on their role, we haven't really thought of it in those terms. It's more a matter of when they become available. We try to take people by subject matter and arrange for one of the interviewers to spend a couple of months, or however long it takes, on a particular topic. As far as the question of what materials we have for our preparation is concerned, we have used certain of the official documents or records that came from agencies after the assassination. There was a large-scale program right after the assassination to microfilm a lot of documents that individual departments and agencies had. These have been deposited in the Kennedy Library, and certain of those have been available to us and have been of substantial assistance. We have used certain other manuscript collections, though not too many, and this is a problem.

ROBERT ECKERT: The Air Force is collecting information at the present time for a project on Southeast Asia. They're determining who should be interviewed by job or position rather than name. I don't know whether this type of thing is equivalent to what you're talking about or not. In other words, there is a certain command structure which could be followed; a hierarchy of command, so to speak, as opposed to specific names. I don't know whether this is appropriate or not.

JOHN STEWART: Well, the two, of course, go together. As a general policy, we've set the Assistant Secretary level as the base, so to speak. One of our major goals is to try to get people in all departments and agencies down to that level. In other words, Secretary, Under Secretary, and Assistant Secretaries or heads of major bureaus.

TOM KRASEAN, Indiana State Library: Our program is just a little less than a year old now, and we're sort of centering it around what we call general Indiana history. To date, I've interviewed one ex-congresswoman, a political writer of the 1920's for a newspaper in Indianapolis, and the wife of a literary figure. At that point I ran into something that might be called a special project. I've been attempting to interview as many veterans of the Spanish-American War as I can find who are presently living in Indiana, or were in Indiana at the time of the conflict. This is something that I think should prove to be pretty worthwhile. As you probably realize, they're 85-years-old and older. Some of you may want to consider doing something like this. Of course, their age presents a problem that we discussed yesterday in one of the sessions. To go along with the oral history program there, I'm also responsible for collecting manuscripts. I can't give it full time, and I think this is one of the problems involved in my job — trying to be two or three different places doing four or five different things at the same time. But we will try to do what we call a general Indiana history collection.

QUESTION: Are you the only person in Indiana who's...

TOM KRASEAN: The only one doing it, yes, at this time -- at least at the State Library. I understand that they're going to start a program at Indiana University. Right now, I'm the only one. That is, of course, the big problem. Unfortunately, at this point, none of the tapes have been transcribed at all. We haven't got anybody to do it, and I can't take the time to do that, too, with everything else involved.

QUESTION: Are there any other projects in the State of Indiana that you've worked with? Or are there any other projects, period?

TOM KRASEAN: No, not now, nothing special.

PETER D. OLCH, National Library of Medicine, History of Medicine Division: Very briefly. The program began September of 1966. To date, we have accumulated, through in-house interviewing, interviewing under government contract with individuals outside of the National Library of Medicine, and by gift, approximately 150 hours of "oral history materials." Most of this is structured interviews, a small number of which are actually selected after-dinner speeches which are preserved, not transcribed, because of the individual's prominence rather than the originality of his material. This, I can assure you, is SELECTIVE, in all caps and underlined, because we don't wish to become just the local sound studio of great names in medicine. If I may, I would like to talk about a low-key problem, but a very serious one in our situation, as I think in many others, staffing. At the present time, the National Library of Medicine has one individual spending approximately 90 per cent of his time in oral history. That is myself. I have one clerical assistant to do initial transcription and final transcription. A case in point: A lengthy 39 hours of interview with one gentleman, completed in May, at the rate we were going, would not have been typed for a year. He was becoming anxious and interested; I was becoming anxious and interested. Fortunately -- because it was the pre-Christmas season -- we were able to farm it out to other good typists in the Library on overtime. But this is not a permanent solution, obviously. It can't be. So staffing is a problem, as far as interviewing and as far as clerical help.

There is another serious problem which has concerned us. Many of us find that there is pressure for higher administration, and that is, who should select those to be interviewed in depth -- anything from 10 to 25 to 30 or, in one case, 50 hours? Can this be a decision we make? Is it a decision someone higher in the administration of the organization makes? This, very frankly, has been the case in our program on more than one occasion. It is difficult to build a program around a subject area when you have some rather important forces saying, I think this is a good person, this is a good person, and so on. When you have the responsibility of trying to develop an interest in the medical community in this kind of program, you have to have a product which you're interested in showing around and not just a hodge-podge. At this point, I must say we have somewhat of a hodge-podge. I will say that the in-depth interviews that have been done thus far have been with individuals well worth interviewing. But the project suffers from the fact that preparation for party 1 is not preparation for party 2. I would much prefer, as a one-man staff, to have a subject area where preparation for 1 is partial preparation for 2. I think we'd get a lot more for our time and effort.

QUESTION: Are there any other medical history societies doing this?

PETER OLCH: Yes, I should have mentioned that. Because of our limited staff, this hasn't been followed up, but about a year and a half ago, one of the first things I did was to send out a circular to all medical libraries listed in the MLA bulletin, to all the state medical societies, and to about 80 professional medical societies, to see what kind of activity there was in oral history. Although we were very careful to word the letter properly, we had the usual thing, "No, we have no dentistry here: we have no oral maxill-facial surgery, no oral surgery nor oral history." But, nonetheless, we did come up with approximately 25 to 30 institutions, societies, or individuals who had what could loosely be defined as an actual oral history program, a planned oral history program, or a serious interest which we could say was going to be followed up. And I'm sure by now there are more. You are one of them -- well, no, I did list you as a matter of fact.

JOHN STEWART: Have you given any thought to the National Library serving as a focal point for all those oral history programs concerned with medicine?

PETER OLCH: Collecting, as a repository?

JOHN STEWART: Either that or just listing them in some way.

PETER OLCH: Yes, we have. As a matter of fact, when we started collecting this information, the idea was -- of course, you always start off with grandiose ideas -- to put out a union catalog of oral history materials in the life sciences. Whether or not this will ever come to pass, I'm not sure, primarily because of staffing problems. However, we would like to collect this information, get it out in some very preliminary form, if possible, and eventually get it into any oral history bibliography -- well, listing of oral history collections.

JOHN STEWART: I think it would be best if each of you could focus on the two points that Peter mentioned. One, people and the problems of recruitment and the problems of training, and two, the organization of your interviewing program, how subjects and series of interviews are grouped together. I think these two things are probably on the top of each of our lists of the problems.

HARVEY YOUNG, Emory University: It is appropriate that I am here, as it turns out, since the project that I am involved in is supported by the National Library of Medicine in a contract with my University. It was created, I think, partly because there was this desire on the part of the National Library to have one experimental area in which there would be clustered interviews around a theme. The theme is food and drug regulation in the United States. I already was at work in this area, writing a history of the Food and Drug Administration. This contract is for interviews with people who've played important roles in food and drug regulation. I do the interviewing, along with advanced graduate students who have worked -- or are working -- on some aspect of this theme for their theses. We have a number of interviews with subjects ranging from former Food and Drug Commissioners to Arthur Kallet of A Hundred Million Guinea Pigs, and on down the line. We were much too ambitious (those of you who've been longer at this will smile) in predicting how many hours we would be able to get done, considering the teaching and other things we have to do. I was just amazed at how much work there is, not just to get it typed, but to edit and index and so on. It takes many more hours than I anticipated.

To get a view of the national headquarters from the local level, we did an interview with an old-time Food and Drug inspector, a man with a very precise and circumstantial memory who came aboard one year after the 1906 law was passed. He was interviewed along with a chemist with whom he had worked for quite a while, and one of the interviewers was a Food and Drug man who had been in public relations there for a period of time. I thought that this interview turned out unusually well because it wasn't too big to get baffling. There was a great deal of interaction which stimulated thoughts and recollections so that the final result, I think, was richer than it would have been if I had tried to interview the inspector by myself. In some cases, I have the feeling I ought to employ this technique. I'm sure many of you have already found out the same thing. To date, we have about 30 hours of interviewing on this project. Approximately one hour has been processed through all stages and turned over to Peter Olch for deposit. The rest is gradually coming along.

QUESTION: When you finish the Food and Drug, are you going to do something else? Would you like to set up a permanent oral history program on campus?

HARVEY YOUNG: I don't know. This is really my students' and my individual project in conjunction with the University for the National Library. I get help, mechanical help, in tending the machines and so on, from our audio-visual people, and we keep talking about the possibilities of doing something like this at the University -- perhaps in association with the Georgia State Archives -- but there's nothing more tangible at the moment than talk. I just haven't any idea how the future will develop.

PETER OLCH: This one particular project that he's working on now is actually a single contract which extends over a two-year period. It will obviously go on longer, but it was just for that one piece of interviewing.

JOHN STEWART: Peter, do you have other projects like his going on around?

PETER OLCH: Yes, we do; we have one other oral historian, Dr. Harlan Phillips, a name familiar to some of you, who started off with Dr. Nevins. He has interviewed a series of people, Albert St. George, Senator Lester Hill, Ward Darley, the medical educator, and he's about to start on Jim Shannon and Michael Heidelberger. So this is a large series that has been going on for some time. Also, Dr. John Duffey, professor of medicine at Tulane, very interestingly has been doing a one-year study of twentieth century homeopathy and the problems associated with same -- the problems of organized medicine through the years, and their own problems within their own group. As you know, John, we could use contracts with people on the outside to do oral history for us which, in a way, would be ideal. You can get competent historians -- like Harvey here -- to do phenomenal jobs, but, as we all know, the money is getting rather right. You're feeling it at your universities, and I can assure you, we're feeling it there in Washington, too. Next year, the last thing on the list at the National Library of Medicine, I can assure you, is money for oral history projects.

JAMES MINK, UCLA: Our program was organized in 1959. It's funded from state funds for organized research. It is located in the library. I am the director, and my other duty is University Archivist. We have a faculty advisory committee appointed by the chancellor to give us general guidance in conducting our program, a committee to whom we can take our problems if necessary. Recently, as some of you've heard me say, we've been very much involved with our national organization here in putting on this colloquium. We are in a period now of retrenchment. That is to say, we're doing no new interviews. This bothers me in a way, but what we're trying to do is to transcribe those that we have done and get them back to the individuals interviewed for their editing. We feel this is an essential part of the oral history process. When we begin again, we are planning on one series at a time, rather than the more open-ended type of program that was started by the former director. At that time we interviewed in as many as 16 different fields, all the way from drug addiction to the history of agriculture in education. Our interviews range in length from two hours to 72 hours, the longest being with California Senator Jack Petty, better known to some of you as the author of Mexicali Rose. I think our major problem is our backlog. We have one special project funded by the American Film Institute, and the National Foundation, which is going forward in cooperation with the motion picture history section of the Department of Theatre Arts over which we have general supervision. We have general supervision, but I don't feel we have as much as we ought to have. We're consulted, and then it turns out that I'm not too happy with some of the material that starts coming in. I hope that we can reach some understanding with the faculty member who has charge of this project so that we have an opportunity for closer review of the material that comes in since we ultimately have to bear the responsibility for its integrity. I think that's all.

JOHN STEWART: Is there anyone who doesn't have a major problem in transcribing? Is there anyone who doesn't have a big backlog of tapes to be transcribed?

QUESTION: Yes, because we're just starting.

ROBERT ECKERT: I might add that there is another problem that we run into, and that's the problem of security. We have a fantastic problem with control of classified information. I don't know whether anybody else has solved this problem or knows how to get around it, but obviously with us it's quite a problem.

JOHN STEWART: Are there any other questions of Jim? As long as you've got the floor, why don't you describe your project?

ROBERT ECKERT: I am in the Air Force. I'm down at Maxwell Air Force Base at the Air University. I'm Lt. Col. Eckert, and I'm Chief of the Department of Methods in one of the schools at the Air University. I teach Air Force teachers how to teach. People who go to the War College, the Air Command Staff College and the various schools to teach, come to our school first. One of the methods we use is what we call the teaching interview method. As a result of this, the Air Force asked us to make a study of the possibilities of using the interview as a method for collecting information relative to Southeast Asia. This was obviously without knowing anything about oral history. About a year and a half ago we were engaged in a project, and we did quite a bit of work with it. At the present time, we're running workshops to train people who are in the Air Force to conduct interviews. We use such things as two-way mirrors, critiques, and all this sort of thing. We actually have complete programs that we use to train people. We now have a department of about 25 individuals who are engaged in the collection of information relative to Southeast Asia. Oral history is obviously just a small part of it. We're in a separate office now, and we are in the process of organizing an oral history on Southeast Asia. Part of our problem, obviously, is the vast number of individuals who are coming back from there. We have a fantastic problem in trying to figure out who to interview. This is why I mentioned the idea of a hierarchical structure as opposed, perhaps, to names. At the present time, two of us have finished about 75 tapes with individuals who have returned from Southeast Asia. We have an on-going workshop which trains interviewers, and an on-going collection effort in the oral history business. Our major purpose, as you might gather, is not to gather historical information but to study various projects, perhaps logistics, intelligence, this sort of thing. One of our efforts then would be to see to it that we gather this information so that other people can use it for historical purposes.

QUESTION: That was my question. Sometime in the next century, you're going to make the transcriptions.

ECKERT: When you say me, obviously, I am not in that position. We do fill out questionnaires. We do have a computer system now in operation. All the documents that come out of Southeast Asia go to the Archives at the Air University, to the library, where they are catalogued and indexed. Key words are placed into a computer system, and they should be available for retrieval at some future date. At one time, to give you an idea, the projects we were engaged in were for Air Force eyes only. Now some of this has been downgraded, and, depending on who you are and what pull you have, you may have access to this sort of information.

QUESTION: How do you handle this problem of security classification?

ROBERT ECKERT: Well, obviously, if you're familiar with military security, we have to accept the security classification that the individual places on it. In other words, if I interview you and you tell me your information is top secret, I must accept that classification. But above and beyond that, we find security problems with people with clearances that go far beyond that. For instance, what classification would you put on somebody that's on the Joint Chiefs of Staff, or something of this nature, which is highly classified? Or agents who work out of country, this sort of thing? There are many problems that we can't even touch because of the peculiar clearances that these people have.

QUESTION: Theoretically, the officer himself is authorized to put any classification he wants on it. Right?

ROBERT ECKERT: Basically, although we are not necessarily allowed to interview everyone, either.

QUESTION: But if you get an interview, can the interviewee classify segments of his testimony? Could you separate those sections and attach them as an index or appendix or something of that sort?

ROBERT ECKERT: Yes. The security problem becomes quite fantastic. In many cases, a specific individual would have to be assigned to somebody who had a peculiar job, and he would be the only one that would be capable, then, of gathering that information.

RUTH YEAMAN, University of Utah library: Actually, I don't have anything to contribute on the big "tapers" in this conference because we're about to take on the tapes of the Western History Center, which we established on the campus. My director has said we will never conduct a taping program from the library, but we will be responsible for the care of these tapes. And this is what I'm interested in, and I'm surely enjoying every minute that I've been here because I'm learning a great deal.

JOHN STEWART: Do you totally agree with everything the 3M man told us about the preservation of tapes?

RUTH YEAMAN: I don't think that I'm in any position to really judge. I'm learning a lot, and I'm going to try to do some more reading. I will probably be writing to some of you who are learning things that are of particular interest to me.

JOHN STEWART: Questions?

SAUL BENISON: Well, I have a project which is about to get underway which might be of interest to this group. It's not a personal project, but you might be interested in some of the planning that's going into it. It's sponsored by the American Academy of Arts and Sciences. It will be on the history of Biochemistry and Molecular Biology. The initiative for this project came from people in the field of biochemistry, led by John Edsall of Harvard, who believe that the time has come for an initial look at what the history has been for the past thirty-five years. It's that young a discipline. The other motor force came from a book which was recently published, called The Double Helix. A number of people in the scientific community are outraged at this book and have been urging that their sentiments be recorded.

Molecular biology at most, as a discipline, dates from about 1950. One of the leaders in this field is a man by the name of Max Delbruck. On the occasion of his sixtieth birthday, a symposium was held at Coldspring Harbor where many of the early pioneers in the field of molecular biology reminisced about their association with Max Delbruck. Many of these are autobiographical accounts; short but, nevertheless, very pithy.

The academy has organized a 7-member committee of biochemists and historians of science with a double function: to begin gathering the papers of biochemists and molecular biologists to make sure that they're preserved and stored in a particular repository. The repository that has been chosen is the Library of the American Philosophical

Society, which is going to participate in the project. A list is now being compiled by this committee of the people who have made the most important contribution in the past quarter of a century, and this will be the preliminary list of people who will be interviewed.

In addition, several of the learned journals and philanthropic societies are being approached for primary material in their possession. We're trying to get the files of various philanthropic societies which have made grants to scientists. In that way we will know what their particular work was and how it was evaluated, at the critical time when the grant was awarded. We've also asked these journals to submit readers' reports on articles. That way we'll know contemporary opinion of the scientific work. Beginning next fall I will conduct a pilot study with Salvador Luria. Dr. Luria has made available to me his private correspondence files, as well as all of his printed papers. It is hoped that after one or two such pilot studies are completed, they will serve as models for the young science historian who will be chosen upon recommendation of various departments of the history of science in this country to be the director of the project.

There is one thing which is going to be very helpful to anyone who conducts the project. Beginning this year, Dr. Edsall is starting to give a course in the history of biochemistry. Although he is not a historian, he probably has as much information as anyone has on the history and development of this field. I'm sitting in on that seminar. We hope that one of the younger members of the seminar will pick up and direct the project when it gets underway. I think from this you can get some notion of the planning that might go into a particular oral history project. It doesn't have to be done this way. Actually, it's the first project I've participated in which is being done in this way.

PETER OLCH: John, I'd like to put in something at this point which I think is very important for the record. Saul and I have talked about this. Obviously, there will be overlapping on some of the people who the National Library of Medicine or other groups might approach and this upcoming project. We are already in touch with each other and are comparing lists. We have been frank in admitting that, because of the nature of this study, some of the people we have already signed up could be more valuably interviewed by this program than by our own program, and we are not going to stand in the way. I think we all agree that it doesn't matter who has the papers, who does the work. If one group is better able to do it than another, they are the ones who should do it. I think this ought to be a philosophy throughout the entire field.

JOHN STEWART: I'm very impressed, as I'm sure everyone else is, with the amount of planning that has gone into this whole program.

SAUL BENISON: I might say, parenthetically, that when the project began at Columbia -- and I began my oral history career at Columbia -- we were not left with too much planning. Frequently, decisions were made on a visceral basis rather than any other basis, and I think it was a mistake.

JOHN STEWART: In the beginning of the Kennedy Project, there were about 150 people who were to do the interviewing, strictly on a part-time basis. These were people who served in the Administration and would be interviewing other people in the Administration. The whole thing just suddenly came into being, within a couple of weeks, and these lists were prepared. The whole project was going to be completed in six months. It is now five years later and we're still planning for the next two or three years. Obviously, no one really thought through the whole process and did much detailed planning at that time. I would be the first to admit that such planning would have saved us a lot of problems that we're running into now.

HARRY HENSLICK, California State, Fullerton: I think the first thing I should say is that Mr. Shumway, who directs our program, is on a panel now. I'm sure he could tell you much more than I can. Our project is a history of Orange County, which we started last spring. It's also a training program. We're using mostly graduate students to do the work. At this point, we have 146 hours of tapes interviews, of which approximately 70 hours are transcribed. The finished product will be an edited copy with index and footnotes, which will be available in the library. We were able to get these first 70 hours transcribed because the students that began training last spring, on their own time, and without credit, transcribed their own documents over the summer. This was tremendous. We've gotten much more done than we thought was possible. Our problem is that we don't see how we're going to get the current interviews transcribed in time for the same students to edit them this spring. We're thinking that we have to have some kind of funding and have them transcribed by people other than the actual interviewer and editor. We really don't know how we're going to solve the problem, and it's coming upon us fast. The students who are in the program now, of course, want to carry on with the same topic in which they have their background. They want to edit and otherwise carry it through to conclusion. We just don't know how we're going to do it.

JOHN STEWART: There are all kinds of interesting implications of having the interviewers do the transcribing. I think in many of the interviews we conduct, we'd probably be less apt to let people run on and on and on if we knew we were going to have to transcribe the darn things later on.

HARRY HENSLICK: Yes. After you transcribe one, you learn. We think it's good training for a student who is interested in oral history to at least do some transcribing. But the time involved when you have 10 or 12 hours of interviewing alone, is just fantastic.

PETER OLCH: I'd just like to know how many people at this table have transcribed a significant portion of an interview. I mean over one hour's worth.

QUESTION: I think you have to. I think that until you do it, you don't really understand what you're about.

PETER OLCH: Well, even when you understand what you're about, you find at times you just have to do the transcribing or it's not going to get done.

HARRY HENSLICK: Yes. With a small state college and the funding situation, I don't think we had any choice. We're going through the second part of editing, and with the examples that we're building here to show what we can do, I think that we are going to be able to get funding to take care of this.

JOHN STEWART: We should move on. Lila, do you want to tell us all about Hubert Humphrey and Eugene McCarthy?

LILA JOHNSON, Minnesota Historical Society: Right now I'm the only person working on oral history, and it is my only job. I'm directly responsible to the director. It's been set up as a separate division within the society. I've also found that I'm now in a sound archives, which is a completely different problem, but we are collecting other kinds of recordings.

QUESTION: What do you mean by that? This has been mysteriously mentioned several times today, and I'm just so much in the boondocks that I don't know what this sound business that isn't oral history means. Is it railroad sounds?

LILA JOHNSON: No, the society, for example, last week received a complimentary gift of a record of Norwegian-American folk music in America. This record is sound and goes in oral history, on the shelf. This is what I mean by sound — things that can't be transcribed: speeches, tapes, records, video tapes. This program has been in effect for about a year and a half although there was some taping done before in the manuscripts department. The subject of the program is Minnesota and Minnesotans, which gets us into Hubert Humphrey. The main project that I'm working on now is state government; former governors, legislators, state officials. Although there has been a lot done, a lot of miscellaneous old timers in quite a few areas still should be done. I should say that there are other people who occasionally do interviewing. There's some interviewing done in coordination with manuscripts collections. They're collecting a group of papers now, for example, on the cooperative movements in the iron range district in Minnesota, and the person who's collecting these papers and cataloguing them is also doing some interviewing. We haven't yet gotten into Hubert Humphrey and Eugene McCarthy and our local candidates, but as soon as we get some money, we will. Are there any questions?

QUESTION: Are you going to interview them separately?

LILA JOHNSON: No, together in one room, I thought. I don't know what's going to happen.

JOHN STEWART: You mentioned, though, that you were planning for a series of interviews on Humphrey's career.

LILA JOHNSON: Yes, we would like to. We had an outline before President Johnson said he wasn't going to run. At that time it seemed adequate, but all of a sudden it doesn't.

QUESTION: Is he cooperating with this?

LILA JOHNSON: Yes. The Society is fortunate in having all of his personal papers. He is very friendly and is doing everything that he can -- suggesting names, things like that -- but we really haven't gotten beyond that.

WILLA BAUM: I just described in another meeting the operation of our office at the Bancroft Library. However, I'd like to describe another function that we feel we serve. We specialize in sort of the "great man approach," a lengthy series of biographical studies. This means that we are ignoring a large area of local history, of old timers, of many things that people feel should be done. Therefore, we've tried to make one aspect of our program encouraging other associations to handle that type of interview. I've spent a considerable amount of time going around to local history societies, libraries and museums, trying to encourage them to undertake projects that they are qualified for. One of the things that we have just developed in California -- it hasn't really gotten into operation yet, but we hope it will be useful -- is a guide to help researchers locate the material that is now being created in these local history societies. The state library has just agreed to operate a card file of all oral history interviews produced in California. And we have just designed a card for each interview which will be sent to all of the historical societies, or whatever, including individuals who are doing oral history. They can write a brief description of the subjects covered in their interview. We allow them to include as many as four major subjects for the cross file card index. They also will send in some kind of record of their institution or society's policy -- the restrictions they have on their tapes, whether they are available for researchers to use, and so on. This will all go into the state library. At first it will be a card file index, but they hope very shortly to have it in some kind of feed-out system. That way you'll be able to write in and say, What do you have on lumbering in such-and-such a county, or cattle raising, or something? and they will send you a list of what interviews are available in what places. Then the researcher will have to write to those places and make arrangements to listen to them. This is just going to be introduced this month or next. The cards will go out to all the local history societies, and maybe by next year we'll know what kind of a response we've gotten. In part, we hope this is an aid to the researcher, and in part it's to stimulate the various societies to get engaged in oral history on a very local level.

JOHN STEWART: It sounds like something a lot of the state people could do, both to avoid duplication and to get more oral history going at the local level.

QUESTION: Would you describe the donated tapes collection which your project has followed?

WILLA BAUM: The Bancroft Library has developed what we call the Donated Tapes Collection through which we are encouraging people to donate tapes to us. We give them a form to fill out for each tape, which is actually a very brief index. One part is for biographical data on the person being interviewed, and the other part is for information on the interviewer -- why he's interviewing him and what his relationship is to the interviewee. There is also a time index broken down into five- or ten-minute periods -- that indicates the subjects covered at each point on the tape. We assume that these tapes will never be transcribed; therefore, this index will enable the researcher to look at this table of contents, and decide whether or not he wants to listen to the second 20 minutes of the tape. Along with this form we send copies of a release that the interviewee and the interviewer can sign -- a very elementary release of this material to the Bancroft Library. In part, we're encouraging people to either donate to the Bancroft Library, or use this same form within their own collecting agency, if they have a satisfactory collection place.

LILA JOHNSON: Where do you get these donations from?

WILLA BAUM: We have a very interesting project going -- two women who are writing a book on architecture. They are doing a large number of tapes, very well organized, and they will use their tapes for their own book. They are, at the same time, keeping this tape index and getting these forms filled out at the time they do the interview so that, eventually, this substantial collection will come in to us. This is an individual project, such as graduate students, or someone who is writing a book could do. Some are just history buffs. And some of those history buffs are very good. Some of them are societies or groups that don't have adequate storage for themselves. We're not actually encouraging people to send them to the Bancroft Library if they have adequate storage themselves because this California Bibliographical Center will enable researchers quickly to find the location of the tapes.

QUESTION: Now, that's what I was going to ask. If I were interested in American architecture, and presumably these tapes would be of value to me, ultimately there will be somd kind of index by which I could discover their location.

WILLA BAUM: Ultimately, in the state library, everything that the Bancroft Library and every other institution in California holds, will be in the State Library Bibliographical Center.

QUESTION: With a common index?

WILLA BAUM: Yes, and the state library will set up the subject categories. They'll also have some kind of a print-out -- a list of what's available in California.

LILA JOHNSON: Only California?

JOHN STEWART: I hope all this can be written up, or maybe it has been.

WILLA BAUM: Well, it's just starting, you know. It may not work. One of the problems is that a lot of these local history interviews are not worth much, so we may be indexing a lot of poor material.

QUESTION: What do you mean, it isn't worth much?

WILLA BAUM: Well, I've heard some of these tapes, and they're not done by a very skilled interviewer. The tapes aren't very good. One of the things we've tried to send out in the letter is an explanation of oral history because a lot of people say, "Oh yes, we've got a lot of tapes we can tell you about." And really, they're just taping their local historical society meetings. They're not interviewing an actual primary source. Or they're taping a lecture that somebody's given about the research he's done on the local cemetery. We feel this is secondary source material at this time.

QUESTION: Well, I'm here on an exploratory safari, so I'm interested in finding out what we can do in oral history. I have a question that I've heard many people refer to all during these sessions. And that is editing the tapes. Just what is meant by that? Does that mean that you edit some of the material or what?

HARRY HENSLICK: Yes, it's kind of a hot issue. What we mean by editing is actually the entire process of footnoting and indexing, and also we try to make the interview clearer... We also save the copy on which we have made our editorial changes. The final copy goes out on the shelf. If the researcher is really interested, he can go back to any of those copies to answer questions on a particular part of the final document to determine whether its meaning is correct.

SAUL BENISON: I'd like to speak on this point of editorial work because it's come up on any number of occasions. I think the oral history interviewer has to edit. And his editing job is indeed a very difficult one because he has to edit from the tape. In a sense, the job is almost like the interpreter who takes a Chinese poem and tries to put it into English. He has to preserve the meaning, and also the rhythm, of the poetry in what amounts to an alien tongue. Now, I realize that there is a question of truth involved. Truth, in quotation marks. I think if you are collecting folklore, if you are collecting folk music, where the actual things that are said are part of the material that you are gathering, then you have the obligation to transcribe, in a final way, what you get from the tape. However, if you're interviewing a scientist and your problem is clarity, there is no virtue in saying that what this scientist says at 5:05 during an interview cannot be changed three days later in order to clarify the scientist's thoughts. For example, if you want the substance of Carl Becker's Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers, you're not going to go back to Carl Becker's first draft. You may go back to Carl Becker's first draft if you want to do a study of Carl Becker as a historian. But you'd certainly take the Heavenly City of the Eighteenth Century Philosophers as it's printed -- which may be the 20th draft -- and say, "This is representative of Carl Becker's thought." And I see no reason why a scientist, or any other person that you're interviewing, would not have that opportunity at his disposal.

QUESTION: Well, then, rather than have the interviewer do it, why not have the man who gave you the interview do it?

SAUL BENISON: You can do both. Frequently the people with whom you are working are extraordinarily busy men. They will say, "Help me." In that case, it's your obligation as an interviewer to help. And he has to approve all changes which are made.

QUESTION: Do you people who edit the material on the local level do that too?

DAVID LARSON: No, I'm sorry. The editing policy that we have is quite long and involved. But we actually send the verbatim copy to the interviewee originally, and he goes through it. He has all rights of deletion or whatever he wants. Then we take it, and we make corrections for clarity. At that point the final copy is authorized by him. So we do both; the interviewer and the interviewee both edit that tape.

QUESTION: What if he chooses to delete some essential material?

QUESTION: Well, it's unfortunate, but he has the right. You also have the option, if he should delete a large segment of an interview without saying what was deleted, to indicate what happened with a footnote citation. We do that if it comes up. It has not come up in our program yet where we've had a serious problem. But we have it worked out so that if it does, we hope we can indicate it within the text so that you know something went on at that point.

JOHN STEWART: We can pick this up later, because I think it's important that everyone has a chance.

RON MARCELLO, North Texas State University: I've just been coordinator of our program since September, having succeeded Dale Olum. Our program has been underway since about 1963, so we're past the organizational stages now. Primarily, we've been dealing with Texas political history. We have several special projects as well as random interviews with various Texans who've been prominent in state, local and national politics. One of our special projects is an ex-governors program, for which we've interviewed either living ex-governors or their administrative assistants, or other people who were connected with their administrations. Another one is a special legislative project in which we interview the prominent legislators after every session, preferably the same legislators after each session. We've also just started two new special projects, one on the New Deal in Texas, and one on the history of banking and financing in the Southwest. Since Dallas, Fort Worth, and Houston are perhaps the leading financial centers of the Southwest, we thought this was a rather appropriate project. As far as problems, we really haven't had any except the one that's already been mentioned, the backlog of transcriptions. The recent elections saved us quite a bit because we weren't able to do too much interviewing. Most of our people were actively involved in the campaign and couldn't see us. That gave us a good deal of time to catch up on our transcribing. But now, of course, we're almost right back where we started.

JOHN STEWART: And you have another ex-governor.

RON MARCELLO: Another ex-governor, right, who has promised us thirty hours of interviewing time.

JOHN STEWART: Are you people going to be working with the Johnson oral history project at all?

RON MARCELLO: No, unfortunately, the Johnson people are taking care of that themselves, and so we'll have nothing whatsoever to do with that.

JOHN STEWART: Well, there would be some overlap, I should think, or at least some potential conflicts in talking to the same people, wouldn't there?

RON MARCELLO: A little bit, but not too much. Not as far as people who were concerned with Johnson and the national administration. Texas congressmen would be about the only ones.

QUESTION: Does he talk to other Texans?

RON MARCELLO: Who...?

QUESTION: President Johnson. [laughter]

RON MARCELLO: I suppose so. Bill Moyers is the only one who has promised to talk with us, but so far we haven't been able to arrive at anything definite.

DAVID LARSON, Ohio Historical Society: We're at the organizational stage now, having officially started an oral history department within our Archives and Manuscripts Division this September first. But for the last year and a half, we have been planning for several interview series, for the purchase of equipment, and also attempting to educate our trustees and staff on the need for an oral history program. To fulfill our obligation to collect primary source material in a contemporary field, we have to have an oral history program to augment the manuscript collections. As our program takes form over the next several years, we'll try to develop interview series that closely compliment our strong holdings of manuscript collection. With institutional funding, we plan to employ a full-time person to coordinate interviews, transcribers, and a full-time clerical worker. The rest of the money will come from special grants. We will probably underwrite some interviews, so that the long-range prospects depend on what financial aid we can get.

OWEN STRATVERT, Tennessee State Library and Archives: I started out as an archivist working solely with manuscripts. I found that manuscripts, as a record, are incomplete, so we started collecting oral history. I got involved in interviewing in that way. Then they decided just recently to set up a separate oral history office within the State Library and Archives organization. I'll still be going out and trying to get manuscripts in conjunction with this. We'll be dealing primarily with politics in Tennessee and, secondly, with Tennesseeans who have contributed significantly in almost any field. For instance, we have one very prominent man who invented systems of celestial and marine navigation. These methods were used in marine and air navigation throughout World War II. We hope to establish for the record how such people made their discoveries.

Let me illustrate one thing that I'm particularly concerned with right now. I called a man in Memphis and talked to him about an interview he had done in the past. I said I was very much impressed by it. I also told him that I was planning to interview a former governor of Tennessee on whom I'd been doing quite a bit of ground work -- talking with close friends of his, and getting ready to contact him. The only problem was, he died.

He said, "Well, that's very interesting. I'm quite fascinated with this because I was going to interview him, too." He had an interview scheduled for this January and was a bit dismayed by what happened too. I decided then that we really do need coordination within the state. I think perhaps the state is the best level at which to really get coordination. I'm hoping that we can divide our state up into three units. It's already roughly divided into three: west, middle, and east. I think that the people working in a certain area are going to know a lot more about that area than you, as an outsider, will probably. You should at least confer with them if you're going to interview in that area.

QUESTION: I have a student who, after he has done his homework in the printed documents, expects to do a dissertation on Kefauver and the drug interests. I hope that during this project he will do some interviews which will be of some interest to both of you. If you are doing things that will overlap with that, we'd be interested in the results of your interviewing.

LILA JOHNSON: I was wondering if there's any possibility that your office could fund a set of interviews on a level far below the local leadership level -- going into the community and interviewing people who were affected by the inundation of ten per cent of your state. You've got a situation involving fantastic social change. Some interviewing ought to be done on that level because you really have a unique opportunity.

QUESTION: You're right. One thing I'm going to do soon is contact the county historians. You may have a better suggestion about people to contact. I'm also contacting people at the various universities in the area. These county historians don't do a fraction of what they could be doing in collecting history. I don't mean to downgrade them, but I think that we have a long way to go and they should come along and help us.

MARILYN CREEL, University of South Dakota: Our state has just gone through the same thing. The Army Corps of Engineers created four beautiful lakes on the Missouri River running straight through the middle of South Dakota. The cross-cultural index that could be done between studies on those two states would be fantastic.

QUESTION: I think you could get some fine interviews in this area about TVA. This is one thing I hope to get on pretty soon.

CECIL STRIKER: I'm Dr. Cecil Striker, Cincinnati, Ohio, in the private practice of medicine. I've taken on the responsibility of writing the official history of the American Diabetes Association, with which I've been involved since its inception in 1939. This is really a learning process because oral history will only be one facet of the development of the history of the association. This is simply a forward-looking report, as it were. We have no labor pains; we have no financial deficits; we have adequate secretarial and adequate appropriations. [Strong reaction from those not having adequate funds and services.]

JOHN STEWART: How do you do it?

HOWARD FREDRICKS, Wisconsin State at La Crosse: As I indicated before, we're just in the process of deciding what we can do in the oral history field. So I am filled with questions rather than answers. In fact, I have one more question I'd like to ask. I have had a few interviews with former faculty members of the institution. One difficulty that I have experienced again and again is that these people will speak very frankly and very openly and very fluently about the positive side but refuse to say anything of a derogatory nature about any of their fellow faculty members. Have you had that experience and what do you do about it? They will tell me exactly what I want to know about it, but will stop the tape. They say, "I won't put this on the tape."

QUESTION: I could answer that because that is my specialty at the university -- interviewing in university history. In the interview that I'm doing now, which involves a problem in the physics department, problems of administration and so on, I have confronted the people with the relevant documents. We've talked about it, and they've agreed to go on record and explain what went on. I think you can get your subjects to make appraisals of their colleagues. I feel very badly about the history of our own institution. We've done a number of different things. I did a thing myself for the alumni magazine, but we can't tell the truth. We have a double history.

LILA JOHNSON: I've found that to be increasingly true as you get farther from the event. In other words, the older people with whom I talk are much kinder towards their enemies than those who have recently been hurt.

QUESTION: Are you planning to interview Humphrey right away?

LILA JOHNSON: No, for that reason, I think it's good to interview people right away when they are more honest about their feelings. In another 20 years, Humphrey might not have any enemies.

QUESTION: Shouldn't they be more willing to tell the truth the closer you get to their final destiny?

LILA JOHNSON: No. They're more considerate. They say, "Oh, he's really a nice guy. I don't care what I once said about him. I don't mean that."

QUESTION: Some years ago Brandeis received a million and a half dollars for a living biographies program, which the ex-president of the University is now conducting. It's a very grandiose program, and I'd made the suggestion, "Gee, why don't we use some of the money for a project on the history of the institution?" And the word came back, "Never!"

JEANNE SPIEGEL, Business and Professional Women's Foundation: I will be very brief. I'm running two projects. One is a history of the Federation of Business and Professional Women, which is now 50 years old. The other is a general collection on the status of women, particularly business and professional women: discrimination in employment, and that type of thing. My problems are time and money. It's that simple.

MARILYN CREEL, American Indian Research Project, University of South Dakota at Vermillion: We're one of six schools that have been funded by Doris Duke to collect Indian history from the Indian point of view. It's Miss Duke's contention that the Indians really haven't had a chance to fight back on their own history. The white man has had a corner on it for too long. We have a lot of administrative problems. One of the most interesting that no one here can help me with is translating. And, of course, transcribing time and the cost of indexing. We hadn't even thought of indexing. We had been putting a heck of a lot of money into cataloguing. Now we have to go back and think about indexing. Our collection will be on file -- not really available, but on file -- in the Ivy Weeks Library at the University of South Dakota. One sixth of the collection will be handled by the library in Salt Lake City. That's the tape collection that is being turned over by the Western History Center. Dr. Cash can tell you what kind of research we're doing.

JOE CASH, University of South Dakota at Vermillion: I chase Indians in the summertime, and I get so envious of people like Dr. Benison who interview these fine men in plush offices. I interviewed a tribal chairman in jail. Also, I don't have the problem of the gentleman from Wisconsin because, unfortunately, an Indian has absolutely no concept of the law of libel, could care less about what he says about his enemies, and apparently he doesn't forget them. I have a few tapes that I just, quite frankly, don't know what to do with. They contain beautiful material. I could get any number of people to read them and, if published, they could perhaps be made into a best seller -- if I could stay out of jail long enough. This sort of thing happens. We run across lots of problems, none of them major, because the Indian people are very cooperative and they're frequently flattered. I sought out one Indian for three days. I tracked him all over that reservation. He was an old Indian, and I finally got him to where he couldn't maneuver any more and got him on tape. It wasn't a great tape, but when it was done, he thanked me profusely. He had always wanted to say these things, but nobody apparently had given him the opportunity before. Sometimes you have a great many sound problems. For instance, you may interview Indians at powwows because that's where you can find them. Powwows are rather noisy, and you get marvelous background sounds. However, it drives your translators and transcribers to distraction. Since I'm working on political history, I interview those who were around in the '30's -- this is primarily on the New Deal -- I interview the people that are running the tribe now because they're operating under the policies set up during that period. And then I interview what one fellow called "just plain ordinary Indians." Sometimes we have great language problems, but not too often. It's kind of fascinating. Religion and education also come into what is basically a political history.

QUESTION: Any medical folklore?

JOE CASH: I had one give me a root that he suggested I take for everything, but I haven't had enough nerve yet. I put it in my freezer.

JOHN STEWART: How do you select the "just plain Indians" who are included?

JOE CASH: Well, when I first did this, I went down there, and they handed me a tape recorder and pointed me in the general direction of the reservation. First, you talk to tribal leaders; then they suggest somebody who was around then, or someone who has kept this sort of thing in his memory. One leads you to another. No single one is a Hubert Humphrey, or anything like that, so the real in-depth interview is not entirely appropriate here, although some of them go a great deal further than others. You kind of follow your nose. You go on a reservation for the first time, and you may sit there for two weeks and not talk to anybody, until you get them to the point where they'll trust you. Then all of a sudden you've just got Indians running out of your ears. You interview all the time. This is the way it works with these people because they're very talkative once they know you, but up to that point, they play the big stolid red man. It is a kind of game they play, I think.

QUESTION: Previously, I've heard that potables are necessary for certain conversations. Is this true of the Indian?

JOE CASH: Well, I don't know what kind you get. I make it a firm policy never to give anybody anything except respect and decent manners. I don't think that this sort of thing does you any good, especially if the word gets around. Then you'll have great numbers who will come up with something that you can't rely on, I suspect.

JOHN STEWART: Well, it is 5:30. Just let me say by way of conclusion that I was a little skeptical about the value of a session like this when we started. But right now I feel it was extremely valuable. I think often in conferences like this we pick up little bits and pieces from talking to people individually. But, when you get 15 or 20 people in a room for an hour and a half and just listen to the descriptions of their programs, you get a much better feel for the field of oral history at the present time. I hope all of you have the same reaction. I'll certainly recommend that this type of session be put on the agenda next year.

COMMENTS ON THE THIRD COLLOQUIUM

James B. Rhoads

. . . . I'm Dan Reed, Assistant Archivist for Presidential Libraries in the National Archives -- and that only since August.

Last May, as most of you know, the United States acquired a new Archivist, after the retirement of Robert H. Bahmer. This new Archivist was new to the position, but not new to the National Archives. He'd been there since 1952. A short time before that, and I mean "short," he was born in Sioux City, Iowa. It could not have been long before; because, as you can tell by looking at him, he's probably the youngest Archivist that any nation has had in a good while -- except perhaps some Latin Republics where officials rise (and fall) more rapidly than they do here. But in his short career, his young life, he has gone from Iowa to California, where he received two of his degrees, then to Washington, where he received his doctorate at The American University, and where he has held a great number of positions in the National Archives. So many that I haven't even learned of all of them yet. His youth spent on both shores of the country is appropriate in many ways. It makes him at home in the many places where he now has responsibilities, such as Federal Records Centers and Presidential Libraries. Incidentally, he spent some years in that neighboring republic, Texas, a fact which has proved to be of recent convenience. We can now meet new roads to the past. I introduce James B. Rhoads, Archivist of the United States.

Thank you, Dan. When Dr. Starr asked me several months ago to attend this colloquium and to give the final speech, he suggested that, among other things, I might want to comment generally on what had transpired in the earlier sessions, and he was kind enough to assign a vague title to my talk so that I might have maximum flexibility in what I chose to say.

So I've been attending and listening and observing and thinking, and I find myself now with two thoughts predominating. First -- I feel like a fish out of water, for I am not a practitioner of the art. Perhaps I should say I feel like an oral historian without a tape recorder. This has a further disadvantage in that it does not allow me to regale you with a lot of interesting and funny inside stories. Secondly, I feel a bit like an after-dinner speaker, for I am speaking at the conclusion of a feast of many courses. In Joe Frantz' presentation we had quite a dessert. So as an after-dinner speaker, therefore, I'm reminded of the small boy who was looking through an illustrated book of Bible stories. As he came to the account of Daniel's adventures in the lions' den, he paused and then showed his father the picture that illustrated the event. This picture showed Daniel standing amidst the snarling lions, but with a saintly smile on a very placid countenance. "Daddy," the little boy asked, "Why is Daniel smiling?" And his father who perhaps had had to make an after-dinner speech or two himself, said, "Well, he's smiling because when the feasting is over he won't be called on to say a thing." Now, I can identify to some extent with Daniel, but the analogy is really not a very good one, because I would rather say a few words than die for my faith. Basically, I'd like to discuss two things. One is the present status of oral history within the National Archives and Records Service. And two, as I indicated, to give you some personal reactions to some of the subjects discussed at this conference. As I said before, I'm speaking not as a practicing oral historian, but as one who must be concerned with the new techniques emerging in the field of historical research, and as one who is determined that the National Archives and Records Service will perform its appropriate role in our nation's scholarly and cultural endeavors. Although the roots of oral history are imbedded in a now-distant past, I firmly believe that it is beginning to become of age, and that it is here to stay, and I want to make certain that the National Archives and Records Service contributes to its refinement and its complete utilization by the academic community.

Most of you have by now had an opportunity to speak with one or more of the representatives of the various Presidential Libraries, and you probably have some idea of what our basic organizational structure looks like. Briefly, there are now in operation four libraries: the Hoover, Roosevelt, Truman, and Eisenhower. A fifth, Kennedy is in the process of being administratively organized, with completion of the actual building probably being at least four years away. A sixth, the Johnson Library, is also being organized, and its building is due to be completed early in 1970. Five of these six libraries have oral history programs either associated with them or administered directly by members of their staffs.

The Hoover project is privately financed and is being conducted by Raymond Henle, under an arrangement by which the materials will one day be deposited in the library at West Branch. The Roosevelt Library has not had an oral history program; however, we are now considering the feasibility of establishing one to interview those former colleagues of FDR who have not been interviewed either by Columbia or some other project. The Truman Library is our pioneer in the field of oral history, having begun its program in 1960 and continuing to the present time. This program is conducted entirely by regular members of the library staff under the direction of Dr. Philip C. Brooks, Director of that library. The Eisenhower program has been a joint Eisenhower Library-Columbia University endeavor, although its future status is now being reviewed in the light of certain funding problems which were encountered. The Kennedy Oral History Project was initiated as an independent operation, but since 1965 has been administered as a regular program of the National Archives and Records Service under a grant from the Carnegie Corporation. The Johnson project was organized this year by Joe Frantz, who has already told you about it: the idea being that the tapes and transcripts ultimately will be deposited in the Johnson Library.

As you can see from this summary of our programs, the National Archives is becoming involved in a variety of administrative arrangements in conducting its oral history projects. This variety, we feel, is consistent with the flexible decentralized approach we have always taken in operating our Presidential Library system. Each library, to a certain extent, has its own unique situation and its programs must be planned and carried out to meet the particular circumstances applicable to the situation.

If, therefore, someone were to ask me, as Archivist of the United States, whether I preferred to have each Presidential Library administer its own oral history program or whether these programs should be operated on a cooperative basis with a university or some other private institution, I suppose my answer would have to be, "It depends on which arrangement can generate the kind of cooperation and enlist the kind of talent which will produce a set of fruitful interviews." We do not, in short, believe that the techniques of administering oral history programs have reached the point where we can conclusively say that one method is, under all circumstances, better than all others. And I'm not certain that we ever will.

In addition to our Presidential Libraries programs, I should add, we are beginning to consider the possible uses of oral history in other areas of the National Archives and Records Service. Our Center for Polar Archives, for example, is planning to interview Arctic explorers, primarily as supplements to the manuscript collections it has acquired. We are also beginning to consider the feasibility of a program of interviews on the major legislative issues of each session of Congress. We've also begun to consider the possibility of beginning an oral history program which would document some of the early history of the National Archives and Records Service itself, as an institution. These and other programs, I should hasten to point out, are still in the very preliminary planning stages.

Now, there are a few general policies or assumptions which we at the National Archives feel should be a part of each of our oral history programs, whether they are administered by a Library directly, or whether they are run on a cooperative basis with someone else. I should mention, parenthetically, perhaps, that the type of oral history we are concerned with, that is, interviews on the career and administration of a President, undoubtedly differs considerably from the type some of you are involved in. I would not, therefore, want you to interpret my remarks as necessarily being applicable to all varieties of oral history.

First, in the techniques used for its production, and in its end use, we feel that oral history must be considered an archival process. What we are concerned with is the creation, preservation, and use by others of an additional type of record of important events and activities. This record, ideally, differs from the more traditional kinds of paper records only in the format used, the circumstances leading to its creation, and to a certain extent, in the areas of human activity that it seeks to document. As archivists, therefore, we feel it is quite natural to move into oral history activities because our training, experience, and professional standards are quite appropriate to this work.

Second, we believe that oral history interviews, unlike most other forms of documentation, can be produced only with the positive, willing cooperation of the main characters involved. Without this cooperation, nothing constructive will happen. For this reason, every respondent must be given almost total control over the manner in which the interview is to be conducted and the use that will be made of it. If a person decides he wants only a brief, generalized type of interview, we must go along with him if we feel this has any value at all. And if a person wants to edit out almost everything of value in the first draft of his transcript, we must allow him to do it, because that was part of the ground rules under which the interview was conducted.

Third, we feel that every person interviewed must be given absolute assurances that the information he provides will be kept in the strictest confidence. Many of the criticisms leveled against the reliability of oral history could be eliminated if users were convinced that interviewees were totally frank in giving their accounts. Although, psychologically, it might be impossible to ever obtain total frankness, most persons would be less guarded in their remarks if they were convinced, beyond all reasonable doubts, that the information they gave was to be shared only with the tape recorder, the interviewer, and the transcriber, for as long as they want the information to be kept in confidence. Now to a large extent this assurance of confidentiality rests on the image of the oral history program itself. Relating this to my first point: if the program is conducted in an archives setting, rather than, for example, a journalistic setting, I feel that people are much more apt to place their full confidence in the security of the interview.

Fourth, we feel that fruitful interviews can only be obtained if the interviewer is thoroughly familiar with the subjects being discussed, and if he is completely aware of the type of information he is trying to obtain. These two ingredients must go together. We have many examples of interviews conducted by persons whose knowledge of the subject was almost comparable to that of the person being interviewed, but who had only the foggiest notions of the kinds of information he should be seeking. On the other hand, we have examples of well-qualified historians who were well aware of the kind of record oral history can and should produce, but who simply could not communicate with the respondent because their knowledge of the subject under discussion was so shallow.

Finally, we feel that, ideally, oral history programs should be guided in their selection of persons to be interviewed, and in their basic interviewing techniques, by an advisory group of persons outside the program. While I must admit this is not true of all the programs associated with the National Archives and Records Service, I feel it eventually should become a regular part of our administrative structure. The oral history process in many respects has not yet been fully tested. The material gathered in the past ten years simply has not been used enough so that we, as historians and archivists, can say, "Yes, this type of oral history is worthwhile," or "No, that type is useless." The alternative, therefore, is to have a committee of both subject-matter specialists and working historians and perhaps other scholars to guide the work of the project. I should like to emphasize again that we do not feel at this point that the National Archives has reached the millenium in the conduct of its oral history programs. We have a long way to go, and undoubtedly many significant changes will be made during the next five or ten years in our policies and practices.

Now, as to my personal reactions to the Colloquium. I must confess that this has been the most extensive exposure that I have had to oral history and to the practitioners of the art. For the past three days I have listened with interest to your discussions, and have chatted with many of you about the problems, the goals and the techniques of oral history. Among the many challenging areas discussed and viewpoints expressed, here are a few that I feel are particularly worthy of our consideration. One is the question of whether to save the tape. I've almost come to feel, and I say this with a certain degree of facetiousness, that maybe it is essential after all that we <u>do</u> keep the tapes as well as the transcripts. You will all remember that early in the colloquium an eminent leader of this Association read to us a review of the Proceedings of the First Colloquium, written, incidentally, by a former staff member of the National Archives and Records Service, a man whom I can vouch for as a supporter of oral history. Somehow, when I first read Herman Kahn's review, it struck me as a well-balanced, objective statement of a generally positive nature. As it was read to us the other day, however, and read quite accurately, I was struck by the power and importance of vocal inflection. As I sat out there, I became almost convinced that Herman Kahn was almost one of the great enemies of this movement. And I'm afraid had I not read the review earlier myself, that I would have found myself so angry at Herman that I would have cut him dead the next time I saw him.

Secondly, I'd like to say something about the professional setting of oral history. It seems to me there is a great danger that as the number of programs increases, and the already large variety of goals and techniques expands, we will find in five years a somewhat negative attitude on the part of potential respondents to the whole process. Just a few well-publicized violations of confidence, for example, or a few major programs handled in a manner not befitting the serious subjects and the influential people involved, could easily set back the cause of oral history to the point where it might have to be practically abandoned. Perhaps because of the persons and the subjects we are dealing with in the Presidential Libraries, I am a little too sensitive about this particular matter. However, I feel that we must continually be aware of our critics, or potential critics, and, if at all possible, correct our deficiencies before they become serious, and before they become a matter of widespread public interest and knowledge. To do this I believe we need at least a basic set of common principles, going a bit beyond the guidelines discussed this morning, and similar to those now generally accepted within the archival profession. I do think that the work of the Winther Committee provides an excellent start, but that it should be continuously scrutinized, monitored and refined as time goes by.

I should also like to say something about oral history and the writing of contemporary history. Perhaps the most frustrating aspect of oral history, according to some of its practitioners, is the attempt that frequently must be made to convince a reluctant respondent that, if he chooses, he can record for scholars of the future, and not for the journalists and contemporary historians of the day. There are a number of interesting and perplexing questions raised by such attempts. For example, what responsibility does an interviewer have to argue against the imposition of a restriction for an excessively lengthy period of time? On the other hand, what responsibility does the interviewer have to advise a respondent who is unaware of the implications of what he has said, that it might be best to close a tape and transcript for fifteen years rather than make it available tomorrow? Finally, what responsibility does the interviewer have to assist the respondent in distinguishing between matters of a personal nature, which might eventually be of legitimate public interest, and matters of a public nature which should be available immediately?

Now in these cases my immediate reaction would be to answer that, "Yes, the interviewer does have a responsibility to accomplish these things, despite the fact that they might conflict with his more immediate needs and inclinations." Thus, although I would not be prepared at this time to offer any profound opinions about the use of oral history in writing contemporary history, I would have to conclude that, in general, serious oral history should be aimed at the historian of at least the next decade, perhaps the next generation.

As I've indicated earlier, this has been a broadening and enriching experience for me. So if I may, I'd like to give you a brief resumé of the evolution of my own attitudes toward the role of the Oral History Association since last Friday -- one man's "Pilgrim's Progress," if you please. I came here with the conviction that oral history is an essential program, more likely to be increasingly necessary in the future as a smaller and smaller proportion of the information at large is committed to paper. That conviction has been strengthened. But I also came here with a nagging suspicion that this organization must have, over the long haul, a common interest in something more substantial and more important than an electronic gadget. At the beginning my prejudices were, if anything, strengthened by the very excellent and very interesting session on Friday night. Even its title, which at that time seemed somewhat paradoxical to me, "Interdisciplinary Views of Oral History," strengthened my feeling that something was wrong here. For if this organization already has as members oral sociologists, oral anthropologists, and oral urbanologists, the seed of eventual disintegration, it seemed to me, had been well sown. Later I became aware that I had seen the non-historian panelists the first evening, and I began to have some hopes for the disciplinary purity of the Association. Then I began to see that the gadget was perhaps not the all-pervasive common-denominator that I had originally suspected it to be. The first shocker was to learn that Walter Lord did not use a tape recorder, or shorthand, or take notes of any kind. Yet you let him in and well you might. For any organization would surely gain reflected distinction from one with so admirable a capacity for mental self-discipline, not to mention his many other distinctions. And then I learned that William Manchester was no slavish worshiper of the tape recorder. Yet you let him in, too -- as well you might. For he distinguished himself by inventing his own new tamper-proof system of shorthand -- not to mention his many other distinctions.

So as time passed, I learned that there were at least one or two others of you who did not invariably use the tape recorder -- sometimes, we have to admit, because at the critical moment the darn thing wouldn't work. But all this time my respect was increasing and my fears were being allayed. And finally, and I am being serious now, I've developed a tremendous respect for the seriousness with which you approach your work, for your devotion to the cause of history; for your knowledge of the subjects with which you deal; and for your concern with professionalism and ethics. And I'm ready to predict for the Oral History Association a long life, one of tremendous importance for the future of historical scholarship. And while predicting a bright future, I think we should not forget the recent past. A year ago, I'm told, while you were convened at Arden House, the British were forced to devalue the pound. Now while we are convening here at Lincoln, the French are in trouble with the franc. This morning I heard a very encouraging report about the rapidly increasing wealth of this Association. So it seems to me that at this moment in time, there's perhaps nothing more important the Oral History Association could do than to lend General DeGaulle a hand.

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Ronald Averyt, Ottawa University
Richard A. Bartlett, Florida State University
Willa Baum, University of California, Berkeley
Edward Beechert, University of Hawaii
Saul Benison, Brandeis University
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