



OHMAR

ORAL HISTORY in the MID-ATLANTIC REGION

NEWSLETTER
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Spring 1982

OHA WORKSHOP AND COLLOQUIUM SET FOR SAN ANTONIO

OCTOBER 7-10, 1982

San Antonio, Texas will be the site of the 1982 Oral History Association Workshop and Colloquia. Befitting its location, the meeting will have a "Tex-Mex" flavor, both at its dinners and at its sessions.

Joel Gardner chairs the workshop program, which includes sessions both for beginners and more advanced oral historians. The program includes discussions of how to set up a program, use of equipment, special problems in processing, and new technologies in oral history. An after-dinner panel on Thursday, October 7 brings together four who "wrote the books": oral history manual authors Willa Baum, Thomas Charlton, Edward Ives, and David Lance.

John Fox has put together a diversified colloquium program which highlights projects in the Southwest and Latin America. Offered on the program are sessions on "Oral History in Black Houston," "Mexican Workers in the Southwest," "Oral History in the Mexican-American Community," and a session in Spanish (with English abstracts) on "Oral History in Latin America." Also on the program are "Life History Through Personal Statements," "Oral History with Louisiana's Cajuns and Creoles," "Oral History and the Legislatures," "New Observations on the 'Foxfire' Method of Teaching," "Oral History in the Religious Community," and "Witness to the Holocaust."

OHMAR FALL MEETING

The fall meeting of OHMAR will be held on Saturday, Nov. 6, 1982, at the Arlington Historical Museum on Ridge Road in Arlington, Virginia. "Oral History and Local Communities" is the theme of the meeting, chaired by Betty Key and Sara Collins. For further information, contact Sara Collins at 5314 8th Road-South, Arlington, Virginia 22204. (703) 671-7189.

Featured speakers include Albert Santoli, author of Everything We Had: An Oral History of the Viet-War by Thirty-three American Soldiers Who Fought It, and James R. Bennett, author of Oral History and Delinquency: The Rhetoric of Criminology.

All OHMAR members should receive registration packets this summer.

LIVINGSTON BIDDLE, JOHN NEUENSCHWANDER

ADDRESS OHMAR WORKSHOP

Former chairman of the National Endowment for the Arts, Livingston Biddle, gave the keynote address at the 6th annual OHMAR workshop, April 16-18, 1982, in the Adult Education Center, University of Maryland. Biddle focused on a subject of keen interest to oral historians: the future sources of funding. In an anecdotal address he recounted the creation and expansion of the NEA, and talked frankly about the effect of federal budget cuts. Biddle predicted a long, dry spell, but likened federal funding to desert flowers that can bloom on seemingly desolate landscapes after the spring rains. At the luncheon, OHA President John Neuenschwander described his vision of what the 1980s holds in store for oral history, and talked about the OHA's search for funding to promote better training of oral historians.

The workshop provided basic training sessions for beginning interviewers and featured a fascinating display of how oral history techniques are being used to study and preserve the history of the arts--music, theatre, film, dance, and painting--both by individual researchers and by archival institutions.

The speakers represented the interdisciplinary nature of oral history. Larry Warren of the University of Maryland Dance Department, told how he used oral history to write his biography of Anna Sokolow, to understand how her radical politics affected her choreography. He mentioned the special problems of interviewing an artist who has developed a "standard interview" for dealing with the press. Historian Jean Tucker showed how oral history can give voices to the stars of silent films, using her interviews with those associated with D.W. Griffith's classic, Intolerance, as an example. For more recent film history, Larry Suid explained how his interviews helped him unwind the complex relationship between Hollywood and the Pentagon in the making of war movies.

David Seaman of Davis & Elkins College described how an art critic incorporated oral video history into his attempts to reach more authentic interpretation of an artist. Anthropologist Carole Robertson played tapes from her studies of music in Africa and Latin



Livingston Biddle, Bruce Wilson, and
UM Dean Roger Meersman

America, and explained how she interviewed native performers in order to interpret their musical traditions.

Speakers also provided insights into the building of oral history archives in the arts. Samuel Brylawski outlined the scope of the Library of Congress' collection of recorded narratives. The Library has been collecting sound recordings since 1904, and its collection is currently estimated to hold 1,200,000 recordings, approximately 50% of which are spoken recordings. Lorraine Brown explained the objectives of George Mason University's Institute for the Federal Theatre Project and New Deal Culture, and the increasing role oral history plays in their program. Ron Wellburn described the functions of the Rutgers Institute of Jazz Studies, and its oral history interviews with jazz musicians. Peter Fay talked about the Kennedy Center's oral history program, which is conducted in connection with the Center's annual awards for lifetime achievements in the performing arts. Garnett McCoy represented the Oral History of American Art program at the National Museum of American Art.

On Saturday evening the audience saw a demonstration of the dramatic use of oral history in the film "A Good Dissonance, Like a Man," based on the Charles Ives Oral History Project. On hand to discuss the film afterwards were Theodore Timreck, its producer/director, and Vivian Perlis of Yale, who directed the Ives project.

Bruce Wilson, Martha Ross, and Howard Green served on the program committee that put together this splendid conference. The only disappointing note was the small attendance, about half the anticipated registration, due perhaps to conflicting meetings and the lovely spring weekend weather.

equipment. Everything I say here is off the record."

Those of you who knew Prange knew that he was a great raconteur. He loved to be on stage. So she said: "Dr. Prange, it's such a shame to have these great stories going unrecorded. Can't I turn on their recorder?" "All right, turn it on just of this." And thereafter there was no question. Here she created an invaluable historical source because, if you read the New York Times best-seller list, Prange's At Dawn We Slept is extraordinarily successful. So here is somebody who had to die before his work came to public attention, but he is, in death, a very important author. And it is because of her perseverance that she got the only oral history of Prange and what he was trying to do as a professor and in his writing.

So, are you getting the right people? You might have to move heaven and earth to get a Gordon Prange, but this certainly documented the worth of her work.

FERN INGERSOLL: The panel I moderated, which was "Seeing and Hearing Artists," fit in a good deal with a number of the ideas that I had had. One of the things that I had been thinking about was: can oral history really tap the process of creativity?

I have always been impressed by the observation that the Victorian period was a period when the old ideas were dead and the new ideas were powerless to be born. I think a lot of people at the beginning of the '80s feel the same way about our era.

The two speakers on the panel, David Seaman, who did videotapes, and Garnett McCoy, who is senior archivist of the Archive of American Art, were attempting to tap the process of creativity.

David Seaman showed some of the videotape he had done with a Virginia artist called Ruth Rodgers. He brought out from her, and could not help but have the audience take it in and empathize, how she used experiences, her journals, her meditative process, where she sat and visualized what she wanted to have on that canvas. There, crawling on the floor as she did it, because that is part of what he showed, she reproduced what she had seen in her

meditative state.

One of the questions that came up was: "These artists in the visual field these people who don't communicate with words, but communicate with their brush or their models, are they good subjects for oral history? Can they explain in words what they are doing? Both McCoy and Seaman felt that they could. That, with a few exceptions, people who communicate in the visual arts can also communicate well with words.

I thought it was very interesting that, when McCoy and Seaman spoke to each other, here is the Archive of American Art, where the type of things that David Seaman is doing with individuals are very much valued, preserved for the future.

People asked if it was possible to tape an oral history without becoming so emotionally involved with the artist that you are no longer a good art critic. This was particularly an interesting question for David Seaman, because he had thought a good deal about this. Sometimes he gets in the position where he wants to promote some of these West Virginian artists. His feeling was, however, that as long as you know what your own feelings are and what you are doing, as long as you can keep a good balance between your empathy with these people and what you feel about their work, that you can stay a good critic. . . .

I think this approach of really going deeply into an artist's life, which is being done not only by an individual like David Seaman, but is being promoted by something like the Archive of American Art, shows that perhaps this thought is obsolete--that we don't think of persons' backgrounds when we look at their art work. Much better to have all the richness of their experience and creativity that Vivian was able to draw out, that David Seaman was able to draw out, for other people to better understand what their work is.

DONALD RITCHIE: I have been struck, at this conference, how diverse the field of oral history is and how many different ways it can be applied. As a political historian I really have focused very little on the arts, and so the last two days have been very educational for me in finding out how

not feel so marginal anymore. Individual projects are going to be where a lot of funding is going, and where a lot of the work is going to be. That brings up the issue of what you are going to do with the tapes. Do you get releases? People told me in the beginning, don't get releases, that is not your problem; you are not doing a project, you are just interviewing. So I do not have releases for a lot of these interviews, and here I have all these wonderful tapes and no way to deposit them. Some of these people have died. So it is a really important issue.

The other thing that strikes me is that there are lots of people out there who are doing oral history who do not consider themselves oral historians--but they are doing wonderful oral histories. I have a friend who is an anthropologist who did a dissertation on Italians in San Francisco. Her dissertation begins with a section in which she analyzes the way she was introduced into the Italian community (although she does not use that word); how she met people; how she found people to interview; her perceptions of what these people were trying to say; and how they were trying to use her.

One of her great quotes is: "I was sent to men." That is, when people suggested other people for an interview they said, "Oh, see George." And she went to see men. In fact, she says: "Then I discovered women." The women were sitting by quietly, and as she began to talk to them, she found that much of the information that she wanted to find was really with the women.

I think that there is a lot that we need to do with reaching out as an organization to all these other people who do oral history, and who do it very subconsciously and very critically. We have a lot to learn from each other. One issue that came out in the session was in response to a question directed to Peter Fay, from the Kennedy Center. It related to the choices of who is interviewed by this large project. They have selected people who on Kennedy Center awards honoring the highest achievements in the field of performing arts. Someone asked: "What about all the local performers here who are trying to piece together

careers in smaller theatres and other kinds of arenas?" That issue is very important--who makes these choices about interviewing, especially considering that the sources of funding are going to be a real issue of the 1980s. If we are not going to be able to get as much government funding and funding is going to be coming from more private sources, how is that going to affect the selection of interviewees. How is that going to affect the purpose and the use of oral history?

BARBARA VANDEGRIFT: The session that I moderated was called "History Preserved and History Perceived." It was a provocative title, only a hint of the fascinating and fully developed paper which was read, and also of the summary of collections at the Recorded Sound Division of the Library of Congress, which turned out to be a delightful revelation of really unknown sources which are in that division.

At the lunch preceding that session, with speakers Mark Leone and Sam Brylawski, it became evident to all three of us that perhaps we should add a third "p" word to "preserved" and "perceived." Add "History Presented," because both of the speakers grappled with the idea of how we as collectors, curators, developers of exhibits and published materials were going to present it for public consumption.

The questions that came out of the session were questions such as these: what do we choose to preserve? What impact do collections have on our view of history? How are those windows on history created with the materials that we begin to develop? What is inadvertently collected?....

What does all this have to do with oral historians? What does Mark Leone's examination of public consumption of history say to us as oral historians? His question, as he began to look at a recent museum collection--the Smithsonian exhibits on FDR and George Washington--brought about the question of these larger-than-life figures, or the mythology that we create as part of our history. The question for the oral historian might be: "How much of what we create today with the intention of capturing the

be working with folklorists; with people who write town histories. . . .

And lastly, I will focus my remarks on what I would call professional issues. I have a sense that the oral history field has a feeling that it "can't get no respect" relative to the history biz.

I think first of all we have in the 1980s enormous retrieval problems. We have to deal with new technologies and the kinds of mega-dollar budgets that it is going to do that. Micro-film Corporation of America's program is one important step in that direction, but we need catalogs, we need indices, we need to encourage programs to be in communication with one another, we need directories, we need selectivity.

These are "what" statements. If we are talking about an agenda for the 1980s, we have to recognize our limitations, a certain kind of historiographic awareness and sophistication that we have lacked. . . . If we are worried about the uses for the historical field, the community, that the information we generate will be used to the way in which our writings will be taken seriously, then I think we have to address ourselves to the debate within the historical field. There are a variety of ways in which things have happened in oral history and the discoveries we have made about what kind of evidence we have and what kind of history it helps us write. Precisely parallel things historians themselves have been doing and the two camps have not been talking to one another. We need them far more than they need us. It is our obligation to try to show them what we have, to communicate with them, and to do so on their terms. . . .

In terms of the original list I had, it's lastly, but it does not turn out to be that way anymore, so I hesitate to say it. We have to deal with life history far more seriously than we have. . . . I think we have to be much more sensitive to what the nature of the life history is, what kind of evidence it generates, and importantly, how we interpret it. Now, having said that, let me try to tie together some of the themes that came out.

The distinction between an archival project and an individual project,

which Don raised, Patty raised, and Barbara referred to, has at least a couple of different aspects to it. The one that interests me is the question of using interviews that one did oneself and using interviews that somebody else did. They pose different kinds of interpretive problems.

That connects to themes that came out of Patty's comments and Barbara's comments about the way we write history, or the way we interview history as reflections of the present. And does that undermine what we do? I think precisely it does not. It does the opposite. What I am suggesting is that where oral history will survive, endure, make its major impact in the next decade is in the history of consciousness.

Oral history's real special contribution is in getting people to talk about the way they understand their worlds. That itself is historical information. That is what we learn from oral history. That is where it will continue to be an important source of information for historians who work on that, it's consciousness. . . .

Oral history interviews are conversations now about then. They inherently contain that aspect of the present looking at the past. Fine. Rather than suggest that it denegrates the value of what we do somehow, I would suggest that we should take that, use it, and understand that oral history enables us to talk about that. So we get as our subject of well-done interviews a subject something like this: how do individuals of this type or place in time--understand the history in which they have lived, made, shaped, and been shaped by? That is a historical subject, and one that many of us are already writing and reading. Oral history fits right into that. So I do not think we have to worry about defending ourselves. I think we simply have to take the right tack in our forward thrust and there will be lots of people who will be there to listen.

/There followed a general discussion and question-and-answer session between the panelists and the audience./

PERSONAL AND PROFESSIONAL

ORAL HISTORY OF SLOT MACHINES

Three OHMAR members delivered papers at the Organization of American Historians meeting in Philadelphia, March 31-April 3, 1982. HEATHER HUYCK, of the National Park Service, spoke on "Proceeding from Here: History in the Public Sector." JOHN TCHEN, of the New York Chinatown History Project, spoke on "Community Documentation of New York's Chinatown." And ROSALYN TERBORG-PENN, of Morgan State University, spoke on "Reconstructing Black Family History: The James Van Horn Kindred, 1800-1980." (Also at the OAH meeting, OHMAR members operated a table in the hotel lobby advertising the work of the national and regional oral history associations)

If you had traveled in Southern Maryland twenty years ago, you would have seen slot machines everywhere. Grocery stores, laundromats, restaurants, motels, amusement parks, even service stations--all had slot machines. On July 1, 1968, those machines were removed. What happened to the area?

RONALD J. GRELE, formerly with the New Jersey Historical Commission and the UCLA Oral History Project, has been named the new director of the Columbia Oral History Research Office.

Thanks to a grant from the Maryland Committee for the Humanities, the Charles County Community College can study the slot machine era through oral history. The Project Director is Susan Shaffer and the official title is "Charles County: A Study of the Cultural Life and Economics from 1934 to 1968, as Influenced by Slot Machines." This project has generated enthusiasm, controversy, and some excellent interviews for the College's Southern Maryland Room, which is transcribing all the tapes. Thus far, politicians, gamblers, ministers, slot machine mechanics, distributors, and business men and women have recorded their memories. More interviews are planned with law enforcement officers, slot machine inspectors, and a variety of others.

The New England Oral History Association has awarded its annual Harvey Kantor award to JOHN J. FOX, JR. of Salem State College.

Former OHA President ENID DOUGLASS is the new mayor of Claremont, California.

Due to an old and unique law, Maryland owns the Potomac River. During the 1950s, there were licensed Charles County slot machines in the river, just off the Virginia shore. Places like Colonial Beach and Free-stone Point grew overnight due to the gambling piers, and generated complaints from the Governor of Virginia. This aspect of the story is being explored as well.

Oral historians traveling to the People's Republic of China recently included BILL MOSS, of the Kennedy Library, who led a tour for the Society of American Archivists, and OHA Council member MARTHA ROSS. On her return from three weeks in China, Martha stopped in Seattle, Washington, to inspect the Edgewater Hotel, site of the 1983 OHA Colloquium.

An open forum will be held at the Community College on Friday, September 24 with a variety of guest speakers. The public is invited and there should be some interesting discussions of Charles County's slot machine era. If you would like to attend, please contact Susan Shaffer at Charles County Community College, Box 910, Mitchell Road, La Plata, MD 20646. (301) 934-2251. (D.C.) 870-3008, Extension 331.

A number of OHMAR members gathered for a Memorial Day picnic in Silver Spring, Maryland to welcome back KAREN WICKRE from Portland, Oregon. Karen was back in the area for two weeks to attend the national YWCA convention.

A special subcommittee of the Society for History in the Federal Government has been appointed to investigate the issue of whether federal historical offices can place restrictions on their interviews. Among the members of the subcommittee are DONALD RITCHIE BENIS FRANK, PAMELA HENSON, and WILLIAM NOLTE.

Please keep the Editor informed of any personal and professional news for future newsletters

ORAL HISTORY STANDARDS

Anyone engaged in oral history interviewing would benefit from the Wingspread Report on oral history standards. Copies are available for \$2 from the Oral History Association, P.O. Box 13734, N.T. Station, Denton, Texas 76203.

STATE OF THE ART

Edited by Mary Jo Deering

HISTORY PERCEIVED AND HISTORY PRESERVED

Mark P. Leone
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/Excerpted from his presentation at the Sixth Annual OHMAR Workshop, April 17, 1982./

For about six years now I have been observing and taking notes on oral presentations of history in outdoor history museums around Chesapeake Bay, principally at Colonial Williamsburg, Virginia, at Saint Mary's City, Maryland. The object of listening and watching has not been to learn about the past, but to understand what people learn when they are exposed to presentations of the past. I believe that such presentations amount to oral history and are about as unreflective--most of the time--as the typical narratives we have all collected in the course of our own oral history projects.

My interest /is primarily/ in presentations of self through presentation of the past. . . . I've come to believe that teller and tale are one. Just because the data are removed in time from the tale, does not make it objectively separate. The given objective separateness of the historical data recorded constitute an important process wherein materials from now are given a degree of reality they do not actually possess. . . . An oral tale, no matter how accurately told /is/ analogous to a dream. It happened now, was about hidden matters existing now, and could only be understood by understanding matters --specifically conflicts--existing now. Oral history /is/ not so much a key to the past as it /is/ a key to the present.

/T/he way to understand the history told in places /such as Colonial Williamsburg/ is to understand the context of the museum itself. The living circumstances of the museum, its sponsors, boards of directors, patrons, fee payors; its town and neighborhood, the people who work there, the people from whom it buys its land, the people who live next to its parking lots, the people who make up for its tax exempt status--all those provide the context for understanding why history is told as it is in Williamsburg, St. Mary's City, and the rest.

/An/ illustration will show the relationship. /At/ the bakery at Raleigh's Tavern in

Colonial Williamsburg. . . a baker and his assistant work at making gingerbread cookies from an original recipe, from scratch every-day. The baking process is explained to visitors as they pass by. The baker talks while mixing the dough, the assistant never talks; he is a boy who performs mechanical tasks quickly, rhythmically and is out of sight when not needed. . . . This is all innocent enough and certainly accurate enough until you realize the baker is white, the assistant is black; he who talks is white, he who does not is black; the adult is white, the youngster black; the qualitative work requiring self-described judgment is white, the mechanical tasks are black. Now, in case this appears accidental to you, or worse, an accident of history, the dough also changes color as he who handles it shifts. It is gingerbread dough and very dark, but kept white with flour while the baker handles it and, since the flour is not needed during the cookie cutting, it is dark while the black handles it. I cite this to show that there is a process involved here that is much more than recreating the past. Modern social relations are expressed and perpetuated in this oral history presentation. . . . This does not invalidate it as history but it does invite us to consider here historical interpretations come from, and what purpose they serve. . . .

History, especially that part of it recited orally before a public, is like a person telling an interviewer his or her past: the past is formed in the telling and, in being formed or listened to, then becomes for the teller a part of his or her modern identity. So history is very active, not only a guide to the past: it functions actively in shaping modern life. . . . History occurred and can be understood, but the understanding depends to a very large extent on how clear we are as to where our quest for it comes from. . . .

/We are therefore invited/ to understand vernacular history, and, I would suggest, oral history, as artifact not as self-evident truth. Too many of us take vernacular or folk material as the authentic history of anonymous people, groups, or classes. Rather, it is that such materials form a history of the class, how it perceives itself, and how its own past is handled to perpetuate--not illuminate--the economic or political circumstances of the group or class. History then is always

BOOK REVIEWS

Edited by Linda Shopes

Many oral history projects obviously and sensibly interview older people about their various experiences; some have actually attempted to probe the experience of aging itself. Two rather recent publications eloquently deal with this latter subject: Barbara Myerhoff's anthropological study, Number Our Days (Touchstone, 1980), which uses oral history interviews in the context of field work at a senior citizens' center as a major source; and Ronald Blythe's The View in Winter: Reflections on Old Age (Penguin, 1980), which integrates evidence from extensive interviews with elderly women and men into a broader narrative. Both are real gems.

For those interested in videotaping oral history interviews, Videotaping Local History by Brad Jolly (American Association for State and Local History, 708 Berry Rd., Nashville, TN 37204) may prove a useful resource. An entire chapter is devoted to ideas for video usage in oral history and offers advice on on-camera techniques for interviewing.

A summary of business oral history projects is presented in Gary Saretzky's "Oral History in American Business" (American Archivist, 44, Fall 1981). Noting that "business archives directed by archivists were much more likely to include oral history than those directed by librarians or records managers," Saretzky cites oral history projects involving such firms as the Weyerhaeuser Timber Company, Ford Motor Company, Sears, Roebuck and Company, Kaiser Aluminum, Chase Manhattan Bank, Corning Glass Works, Walt Disney Productions, Educational Testing Service, and Coca-Cola.

"Recording the Past: Columbia's Oral History Collection," by Anne Whitehouse (Columbia, February 1982) not only describes what is indubitably one of the premier oral history projects in the country, but also provides a succinct overview of the broader issues and concerns of oral history.

I'd like to note pamphlets, booklets, articles, books, etc. published by local oral history projects in the mid-Atlantic region. Please send me information about any such publications--and a copy too, if possible. An interesting example of a locally produced booklet is Stitches, Whistles, Bells, and Fires: An Oral History of Cincinnati's Working Women, 1904-1981, published by Cincinnati Working Women (9th & Walnut, Cincinnati, OH

45202) and available from them for \$3.75. It contains interviews with 15 different women, who address various dimensions of women's work experience.



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Voices From the Holocaust, edited by Sylvia Rothchild (New York: New American Library, 1981), 450 pp. \$14.95.

If seeing is believing, then hearing from those who were eye witnesses to history is the second-best thing. This I learned some years ago when I started teaching about the Nazi policy of mass murder to students on both the college and secondary school level. The class was greatly enriched when I asked a survivor from that time to speak to the group. Such testimony has become a staple of the curriculum ever since.

Voices From the Holocaust introduces us to about 30 survivors of what has become known as the Holocaust--the murder of six million Jews during World War II by the Nazis. What they do through the pages of this book is what one survivor did in my classroom, i.e., they make the experience of World War II a palpable reality which cannot be easily forgotten.

The book itself is the product of an ambitious oral history project undertaken by the William E. Wiener Library of the American Jewish Committee in New York. Two hundred and fifty survivors were questioned by trained interviewers in 62 cities throughout the country. Out of the 650 taped hours of their conversation amounting to 250,000 pages of typed manuscript, editor Sylvia Rothchild fashioned this volume, which allows survivors to speak to us about the past and present, about destruction and rebirth. The work is divided into three broad topics: One dealing with life before the Holocaust, another with the war and immediate postwar years, and the third with experiences in America. Questions addressed European background, reception and initial adjustment in America, work, family, religious faith and observance, social relations and organizational affiliation, and

neighbors, the memories of missed opportunities to win his own home, and his pride in the ability to always perform well in any job to which he turned his hand. There are sad memories of poor treatment by doctors and at the Easton hospital for himself and his wife, uncollectable debts and outright thefts, years spent in the belief that he was buying a house only to discover that the "owner" held no clear title. He recalls the lynchings and "accidental" deaths of blacks in the early Thirties on the Eastern Shore. But he refused to believe that no improvement could take place. "It don't pay to talk about prejudice too much. I don't guess I spoke of it half a dozen times. But I haven't forgot it, though, I still think of it. It don't pay to talk too much cause I could get somethin unjust just as much as the other fella. But as I say, we got somethin comin, we ain't going to miss it. I may be gone, I hope I will be, but we got somethin comin. I don't know how people can see somebody else dirt and can't see their own. They speak of justice. We got somethin comin and I hope I'll live to a ripe old age and be gone. That stuff can't go on all the time. There'll be an end to it someday."

The story is divided into seven roughly chronological chapters and presented in the first person, without any interpolations by the editor. It moved along smoothly, with enough variety and detail to maintain the reader's interest; a single criticism would be the often confusing use or omission of noun and pronoun antecedents. However, Dr. Krech has taken time to explain his options and the rationale for the publication style he adopted.

In the introduction we are given a thoughtful, scholarly statement on theories of the process of memory selection and on his own role as editor. The author goes to some length to explain his misgivings about possible bias in the interviews because the relationship was not according to classical anthropological participant-observer fashion, but details his reasons for continuing with the project and the methodological steps he could take to counteract or at least minimize the biases. Graphic material familiarizes us with the geography and people of Miles River Neck: a full map of the area, charts indicating family relationships and knship ties, sketch map of house and land ownership in the central black village of the story. This is all according to good anthropological practice, but certainly sets a pattern which could be profitably used to make any similar publication developing out of an oral history project richer and better understood.

An appendix adds to the discussion of methodology. The tests used for reliability and validity are given in some detail, including comparison with other documentary sources and checks for internal consistency. Krech analyzes Sutton's vocabulary and speech patterns and goes on to explain his decisions concerning spelling forms to be used in the transcriptions and the amount and kind of editing necessary to reduce 1,800 pages of transcript to 152 published pages. With very few exceptions standard spelling is used, but sentence structure remains close to Sutton's own, as can be seen from the quoted passage.

This reviewer is an oral historian, not an anthropologist, but finds the book to be the very model of sensitive, knowledgeable inquiry that could well be emulated by oral historians engaged in either biographical or local history documentation and publication. It is strongly recommended to oral historians, to students of Maryland history, black history and black genealogy. It has broken new ground for us all and reinforced the values of careful research.

--Betty McKeever Key
Maryland Historical
Society

/Edited from the original review appearing in Maryland Historical Magazine. 76 (Winter 1981); reprinted by permission./

From Memory to History: Using Oral Sources in Local Historical Research, by Barbara Allen and Lynwood Montell (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1981) 172 pp. \$12.50.

Allen and Montell's From Memory to History offers local history researchers some intellectual tools for recognizing oral source material and incorporating such material in their work. Reflecting the authors' training as folklorists, the book emphasizes the genres and characteristics of orally communicated history; the settings in which it is transmitted; and internal and external tests for establishing the validity of this sort of material. The book is not a how-to manual and is perhaps best used in conjunction with more nuts-and-bolts works like Edward Ives' The Tape-Recorded Interview or Willa Baum's ever popular From Tape to Type.

Like most AASLH publications, From Memory to History is logically organized,

ALEXANDRIA MEDIA CENTER

On February 12, 1982, the Educational Media Center of the Alexandria City Public Schools provided the site and personnel for videotaping the second session of an oral history project to document the development of the Library Services and Construction Act (Title III of which provides partial funding to the Library Council). Operating under a grant from the U.S. Department of Education, the School of Library Science of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is spearheading the project under the leadership of Dean Edward Holley. The Dean is being assisted by Bob Schremser, currently engaged in doctoral studies at the university.

At the February session in Alexandria, Dean Holley chaired a panel of individuals who had played major roles in the history of Federal library legislation. During more than two hours of videotaping, participants Elizabeth Hughey Arline, Eileen Cook, Paul Howard, Charlie Lee, John Lorenz, and Roger McDonough reflected on the development of the legislation.

The Alexandria tapes will be edited and combined with material taped at North Carolina in January 1982 to produce a composite oral history documentary on the Library Services and Construction Act. The January tapings were held at Chapel Hill, where interviews were conducted with the Honorable Carl Elliott, Emerson Greenaway, Bessie Moore, Germaine Krettek, Evelyn Day Mullen, and Mary Ann Joelly.

--Dale W. Brown
Alexandria Public
Schools

OHMAR ADVERTISING RATES

The OHMAR Newsletter is now accepting advertisements related to oral history, including both classified and display ads.

Classified ads are \$10 for 25 words or less; \$25 for three consecutive issues.

Rates for display ads are: 1/8th page--\$15; 1/4th page--\$25; 1/2 page--\$40; full page--\$75. Those advertisers purchasing half or full page ads will also receive a copy of the membership directory.

Minutes of OHMAR Board Meeting

The OHMAR Board met on May 20, 1982, at 8 p.m. at the home of Chita Fry in Washington, DC. Present were Bruce Wilson, Patricia Cooper, Martha Ross, Fern Ingersoll, Donald Ritchie, Betty Key, Barry Lanman, and Chita Fry.

Bruce Wilson briefed the Board on the financial results of the spring workshop and his efforts to gain funding from the University of Maryland. The workshop lost money, he reported, because of poor registration.

The Board members congratulated Bruce on his work both in planning the program and in fund raising. Members then discussed the problem of attendance. It was suggested that the workshops be moved back from April to March, to avoid conflicts with other meetings and holidays. Bruce pointed out that the brochures did not reach some members in New York and Pennsylvania until after the workshop was over; he urged an earlier mailing next year.

Members suggested that the workshop sessions should not be secondary to the conference sessions; that OHMAR should continue to reach beginner oral historians with how-to sessions.

Betty Key pointed out that the basic considerations for any workshop are cost, location, date, focus, and publicity, which included mailing date. Martha Ross urged that the OHMAR mailing list be broadened to reach many different disciplines, and that material be produced early enough to meet the newsletter deadlines of different organizations.

Patricia Cooper briefed the Board on plans for the 1983 workshop in Pennsylvania. The Board voted to select Pennsylvania State University at Delaware as the site. Alice Hoffman has suggested a program that begins late on Friday afternoon or evening and ends on Saturday afternoon.

The Board voted to authorize the program chairman to continue to pay bills from the workshop and to seek other sources of funding, above the original authorization for the meeting. The Board also authorized a campaign for Contributing Members, with a letter being sent to Life Members soliciting their continuing contributions.

The Board authorized the Pogue Award Committee to decide the format of the next award presentation, either at the Fall meeting or at a separate dinner in the recipient's honor.