

# Voices

Volume 4, Issue 2

Spring 2008



By Stephanie George



After my Saturday lunch plans fell through at the last minute, I wasn't sure

what to do. After all, I had spent three full days and evenings in workshops and sessions at the Association for State and Local History meeting in Atlanta and was really looking forward to a relaxing afternoon catching up with a good friend. I quickly browsed through my program and looked at what still might be available. *Helping Hands: ...an attic full of partially archived materials...spectacular material upstairs that demands and has not received proper care...the staff would be grateful for any and all help.* Perfect.

So, after letting them know I'd be joining the group, I climbed on a bus with nine others and we headed toward the **Wren's Nest**, the Atlanta home of Joel Chandler Harris, prominent journalist and editor of the *Atlanta Constitution*, but Also the author of *Uncle Remus Tales*.

Largely unchanged from the

time of his death in 1908, the Queen Anne style home is now surrounded by small commercial strip malls, family-owned businesses, and several churches. Not knowing what to expect, we entered the front door and immediately found a parlor full of children listening intently as an African American storyteller introduced another generation to the didactic folktales prominently featuring the characters of Br'er Bear, Br'er Fox, and trickster Br'er Rabbit.

The executive director, Lain Shakespeare, a likeable young man and great-great-grandson of Harris, took us upstairs to the small attic in which we would spend the hot and humid September afternoon, so typical for Georgia and much of the Deep South.

We all had various backgrounds – curators, conservationists, archivists, preservation students – and after a quick assessment of the situation, divided up into teams, and began the afternoon by requesting boxes, trash bags, acid-free folders, vacuum, and a FAN. A case of bottled water and some cookies arrived shortly – a much needed and welcomed treat for us recruits.

Limited by time (about five hours that included travel back to the hotel) and space (attics aren't particularly known for their roomy layouts), we sought to organize and inventory the cache of manuscripts, paintings, books, correspondence, regalia,

and artifacts that documented nearly 125 years of history. Moreover, since Lain previously had admitted his lack of knowledge with regard to historic house management and even less familiarity with preservation, we felt it necessary to draw up a list of recommendations that could be implemented, thus extending the life of their many unique treasures. In the midst of this organized chaos, we cleaned and re-housed most of the items, not a particularly pleasant exercise, but necessary. Imagine what you might find if you were to do a thorough cleaning of *your* attic. Let's just say, vacuuming insect exoskeletons from seventy-five-year-old files was one of the least objectionable tasks I performed that afternoon.

Increasingly hot and sweaty, we continued working, oohing and ahing at nearly all of our finds. Work stopped immediately, though, when I opened a box and found a collection of late nineteenth- and twentieth-century first editions – all signed by their authors. Rudyard Kipling, Andrew Carnegie, and yes...even Margaret Mitchell. There we were; a room full of adults squealing like school children as we gingerly opened the cover of *Gone with the Wind* and found the author's inscription and signature just beyond the frontispiece.

Still reveling at discovering the Mitchell book, we stumbled upon Harris' manuscripts for his

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## COPH Staff:

- Art Hansen, Director
- Natalie Fousekis and Cora Granata, Associate Directors
- Stephanie George, Collections Curator
- Kathy Frazee, Administrative Support Coordinator
- Sharon Pellegrino, Systems Librarian
- Suzanne Walter, Tapes into Type Coordinator
- Kira Gentry, Editor

## Director's Report

### COPH's "Hired Guns"

By Art Hansen



The spring of 2008 marks the fortieth year of Cal State

Fullerton's Oral History Program (OHP), now known as the Center for Oral and Public History (COPH). From the beginning, a trait that has distinguished our operation is its profoundly curricular-based nature. At CSUF oral history (and, later, public history) work has been and still is overwhelmingly done by students, both graduates and undergraduates.

Nonetheless, from the outset of the OHP through its current incarnation as COPH employed scholars have enriched the institutional holdings and reputation of OHP/COPH. A watershed in the employment of research associates or "hired guns" was achieved during the six-year interval, 1979-1985, in which Professor Larry de Graaf directed the OHP. At this time, CSUF's oral history program, along with those at UCLA, Claremont Graduate School, CSU-Sacramento, and the University of California, Berkeley, was granted state-budgeted monies administered through the California State Archives (CSA) to produce the interviews in the prestigious State Government Oral History Program.

Because of the incumbent demand to utilize interviewers with a high degree of expertise in California political history and culture, de Graaf solicited the paid services of three members of the CSUF Political Science Department (Dr. Raphael Sonenshein, Dr. Phillip Gianos, and Dr. Harvey Grody), as well as two CSUF History Department faculty (Dr. Harry Jeffrey, a permanent faculty member, and Dr. Arlene Lazarowitz, an adjunct faculty member) as

interviewers. But the lion's share of the interviewing for this program was done by de Graaf himself along with a former CSUF History Department student of his, Dr. Steve Edgington, then finishing his doctorate at UCLA.

In future years, successive OHP/COPH directors turned for research associates to tenure-track faculty (Dr. Volker Janssen of the History Department), adjunct faculty (Dr. Lee Ann Hansen, Dr. William Myers, Dr. Thomas Reins, and Dr. Albert Vogeler of the History Department), and past CSUF graduate students (Eileen DeCair, Barbara Gossett, Dr. Debra Gold Hansen, Brent Johnson, Jane Mueller, Sally Pierotti, Charlene Riggins, Laura Turner, and Jane Wehrey of the History Department; Tracy Smith Falk, Megan Tanaka, Suzanne Walter, and Lisa Nobe Wong of the American Studies Department; and James Aldrich of the Environmental Studies Program). Additionally, one research associate utilized, Blair Woodard, was a doctoral history student at the University of New Mexico, while still another research associate, Robert Johnson, was an engineer by profession as well as an independent historian. In every case, these individuals were well grounded in their respective fields of research as well as accomplished oral/public history fieldworkers.

In recent years, the research associates called upon most frequently by COPH has been a truly outstanding individual, Dr. JoAn Kunsleman, and a remarkable team, David Cox and Antoinette Avila. The latter have done a



Antoinette Avila



David Cox



JoAn Kunsleman

stellar multiple-part videotaped business oral history project for the St. Joseph Health Care System, with David as interviewer and Antoinette as videographer. Both are former CSUF students, David in history (B.A. and M.A.) and Antoinette (B.A.) in communications. The daughter of a registered nurse, Antoinette works in Government Documents at the University of California, Irvine's library. David, on the other hand, was educated in microbiology and medical history and has been employed for thirty-four years in the laboratory at St. Joseph Hospital in Orange, California.

Dr. Kunsleman's background includes a doctorate in music and a master's in library and information science. A onetime reference librarian and adjunct professor in music at CSUF, she directed the fine arts libraries at UCLA and then the library at CSU-Los Angeles, before retiring as a tenured professor in music at CSUL. She has brought this rich experience, along with her oral history training, to bear on a stunning trio of southern California-based oral history projects: one dealing with music, another with music philanthropy, and a third with real estate development.

With the addition to COPH this year of two new public historians, there is little doubt that the future role of research assistants in our operation will become even more important than before. ☘

### Spring '08 Hours of Operation

**Monday** 9:00am-5:00 pm  
**Tuesday** 9:00am-5:00 pm  
**Wednesday** 9:00am-5:00pm  
**Thursday** 9:00am-5:00 pm  
**Friday** 9:00am-5:00 pm  
**Saturday and Sunday**-closed.

CENTER FOR ORAL & PUBLIC HISTORY

**COPH**

<http://coph.fullerton.edu>



## Preserving Farming History

By Kathleen Frazee

The history of farming in Orange County, as anywhere, is full of trials and difficulties. Hard work and long hours don't always pay off. Floods and droughts, pests and disease in turn threatened the farmers' livelihood. Farmers were a determined lot, however, who adapted their crops, their equipment, and at times the land itself to their purpose. They relented only when houses and pavement crowded their fields and covered the soil.

The Orange County Agricultural and Nikkei Heritage Museum's next show, *A Determined Lot: Resilient Pioneers Forge a New County's Future*, will focus on the challenges and ingenuity of Orange County pioneer farmers. The timeline will introduce visitors to the history of agriculture in the county as well as the county's relation to the rest of the country, while elements of the display will describe the difficulties farmers faced and how they handled them. In particular, as part of the fiftieth anniversary of the campus, there will be special focus on the agricultural uses of the land CSUF occupies.

Local rancher and farmer descendants are sharing some artifacts left from the agricultural heyday of the county, and quotations from those who experienced rural Orange County that have been collected by the Center for Oral and Public History with the help of the Orange County Pioneer Council will explain the exhibit.

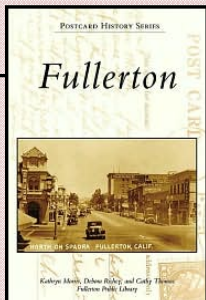
Located on the northeast corner of California State University, Fullerton, in the Fullerton Arboretum, the museum serves as a campus hands-on learning lab as well as a community outreach for the university. Students from anthropology, engineering, history, and the art department will have the opportunity to work in a real-world setting and visitors from the community will see the student efforts at their best.

The next exhibit will open February 16, 2008, and run until the end of the year, with only a month off during August. Admission to the museum is free of charge. ☿

### Book Review

#### *Fullerton Post Card Series*

By Ben Cawthra



Morris, Kathryn, Richey, Debora, and Thomas, Cathy. *Fullerton*. San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2007.

Arcadia Publishing's Postcard History Series turns to Fullerton, California, in this impressive new volume featuring more than 200 vintage postcards from 1891 to recent years. Relying heavily on the Launer Local History Room of the Fullerton Public Library and augmented by private collections, the book provides an enlightening capsule history of postcards as a mode of communication over the course of a century as well as views of the city over time. The volume's back cover suggests that the "pictures and messages stored on the fronts and backs of these postcards" reveal the "rich social history" of Fullerton and Orange County, reflecting "people, places, and events that were the most important to residents over decades."

The cards, along with an accompanying introduction and captions, reflect somewhat more modest but still very informative aims. They clearly illustrate the various types of postcards produced over time, including advertising, holiday and greeting, real-photo cards created by anyone with the appropriate camera, and mass-produced souvenir cards from later in the century. The selections also show environmental change over time as Fullerton grew from a modest agricultural community to today's suburban city of 130,000. Southern California's twentieth-century architectural metamorphoses – from the myth-based Spanish revival of the early century to the futuristic Googie of the 1950s – make their appearances as well.

As the authors' selections and captions demonstrate, postcards have much to tell us about what Fullerton looked like to people engaged in business and civic promotion. Whether such a project is in fact related to historical analysis is perhaps beside the point, but the volume under review does raise questions for those concerned with how visual culture may speak to developing and sustaining historical argument.

The seduction of photographs is that they appear to be so obviously revealing

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### COPH Creates New On-Campus Advisory Board

By Cora Granata

COPH recently established an Advisory Board that will help in governing our center.



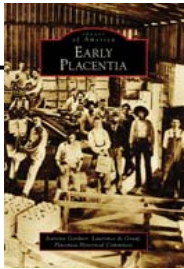
This board is made up of our center's leaders as well as several individuals from other on-campus entities whose missions overlap with ours. This board, which meets at least twice per semester, will advise the director on the direction of our center and on our current and future projects. Because it includes representatives both from the History department and outside the department, it will also help COPH maintain contacts and develop partnerships across campus. As its first order of business, the board drafted and approved the COPH Constitution and Bylaws, which will provide our growing center with a firm institutional foundation.

In addition to COPH Director Art Hansen and Associate Directors Cora Granata and Natalie Fousekis, board supporters, including William Haddad,

(continued on page 4)

## Book Review *Early Placentia*

By Ray Rast



Gardner, Jeanette, de Graaf, Lawrence, and Placentia Historical Committee. *Early Placentia*. San Francisco: Arcadia Publishing, 2007.

This book, a photographic history of Placentia from the 1870s to the 1950s, was a pleasure to read, despite important limitations created by the formula that it follows. The book reflects the work of the Placentia Historical Committee, whose members have been promoting interest in the history of Placentia for more than twenty years. The book is also one of the newest additions to Arcadia Publishing's series of local history publications, titled "Images of America." This popular series calls upon authors to follow a proven formula: collect two hundred old photographs and use them to tell the his-

tory of a specific place or community. The formula works because it makes every community's history seem accessible, just as it makes an unabashed sense of nostalgia seem acceptable.

From my perspective, Arcadia's formula poses two problems. First, it creates an overreliance on the photographic record. Thus, a community's history is presented based not only on who or what was photographed, but also on what photographs happen to have survived to the present. In the case of Placentia, this overreliance has produced a book in which readers will see numerous white residents, "prominent" families, mansions, orange groves, and oil derricks, but fewer Latinos, Asian immigrants, farm workers, and oil workers—whose contributions to Placentia's history were likely captured better by written documents and oral histories than by photographs.

Second, Arcadia's formula encourages readers to embrace a nostalgic perspective. Looking back at Placentia's early history through black-and-white photographs, it is easy to see evidence of a profound transformation that began fifty years

ago and ultimately caused orange groves, ranch houses, oil derricks, and even a particular social order to disappear. For the authors, this transformation justified a decision to limit the book's coverage to the period before 1960 – a period that now seems so distant. But if we look at Placentia's development through the eyes of the community's early residents instead of our own, we come away with a sense that the period extending from the 1870s to the 1920s was just as transformative as that stretching from the 1960s to the present. Indeed, the photographs in this book suggest that the history of Placentia is, in microcosm, the history of the entire region's development under capitalism, both before and after the 1960s.

That it illustrates the first stage of this development is the book's greatest strength. The photographic record – limited though it may be – offers a window onto this fascinating process from the perspective of those who lived it. The book built around that record will leave readers wanting to know more about how this process affected the lives of Placentia's residents, before and after 1960. ☞



### Advisory Board (continued from page 3)

History Department chair, whose enthusiastic administrative support has been critical to the development of our Center. We are also pleased that Thomas Klammer, dean of the College of Humanities and Social Sciences, serves on the board, continuing to give us his consistent and generous support. We are particularly excited, however, to have the involvement of two members from outside the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. Ed Fink, chair of the Department of Radio-TV-Film, has already worked closely with COPH on previous projects and provides us with critical advice as we begin to have more and more projects involving film. With his guidance, we will be able to make sure that any film-related oral history projects use best film practices. For example, Ed is offering a film training session for our students involved in the El Toro Marine Air Station project. Our other outside board member has been equally generous in lending us her expertise. Elizabeth Housewright is Associate University Librarian and serves as a critical liaison with the library. Elizabeth has already advised us on defining our staff-

ing needs for our new full-time Collections Curator position. She has also helped collaborate with Pollak Library in submitting a National Endowment for the Humanities grant to have our collections included in the library catalog. Overall, our two outside members bring new and fresh perspectives to the table and will hopefully help COPH develop more such fruitful collaborations in the future. ☞

## Your Support Means So Much

The Center for Oral and Public History provides a valuable contribution to the cultural life of Southern California. Please accept my gift to support its work.

\$100    \$50    \$30    Other

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Please make check payable to CSFPF, and send to Center for Oral and Public History, Cal State Fullerton, P.O. Box 6846, Fullerton CA 92834-6846.

## Things To Consider When Purchasing Recording Equipment

(continued from the previous issue)

By Sharon Owen Pellegrino



### Maintenance

- Digital equipment has very little to no maintenance because of the absence of moving parts. Support is readily available on a local basis and from the manufacturer.
- Analog equipment has lots of moving parts making it noisy and a bigger maintenance risk. Heads have to be cleaned often.
- Support of cassette and reel-to-reel equipment is already limited and expensive, usually in the hundreds of dollars. Often the manufacturer has gone out of business or closed the analog portion of the business.
- Analog parts are becoming harder to come by which usually means a long wait time.
- There is not a huge demand for analog equipment technicians; consequently, there is little formal training for future technicians and not much impetus for someone to go into the field when digital is the current demand.

### Preservation

- With proper storage, CDs are expected to last a long time. Even with minimal storage conditions it is estimated that CDs with little handling should last over fifty years. But, migration to new technology will be less expensive. Remember digital copies do not have to be done in real time.
- The costs of digital equipment preservation are expected to go down and quality to improve.

- Both digital formats (CDs in this case) and analog tape are susceptible to moisture, breakage, fire, etc.
- Quality analog equipment is already hard to come by and the availability to get analog tape will become too costly if not impossible.
- Current analog tapes around the country have about reached the end of their shelf life and most suffer severe degradation and requires higher maintenance.

### End Product

- Analog audio provides rich sound quality on tape that can be played or archived.
- Availability of future analog playback decreases daily as playback equipment becomes extinct and/or overpriced.
- Recording "sound dropouts" are a problem and there is no immediate fix.
- Digital formats are faster and less expensive to migrate to future formats and can be accessed by a wider audience in a variety of formats.
- There is no information lost when a digital copy is made.
- CDs are encoded to correct failures that occur from such mishaps as a scratch for instance, recouping lost sound.
- There is no end in sight as to future changes in digital technology! ☼



### In Memoriam

*Harry P. Jeffrey, emeritus associate professor of history at Cal State Fullerton died Nov. 4 of cancer. He was 70. Jeffrey joined the CSUF faculty in 1969 as assistant professor of history and is founding director of the Richard Nixon Oral History Project. He is survived by his wife Mee-Young; son, Robert; stepdaughter, Clara; sisters Julie and Susu; and grandchildren Marieke and Lex.*



(Book Review-continued from page 3) when in fact they conceal perhaps their most significant meanings behind the magic of technology so eagerly embraced by the early Fullertonians. While the authors are careful to describe who created the postcards and for what purposes, I would be curious to know what more could be done with such a rich trove of artifacts. How did the marketing of the California good life, vividly portrayed in the authors' selections of motel postcards, relate to wider trends in the marketing of the region? At the moment of Spanish revival's appearance in Fullerton, what was the condition of Mexican Americans in Orange County? The prosperous orchards and imposing homes portrayed in the book are silent about the social and politi-

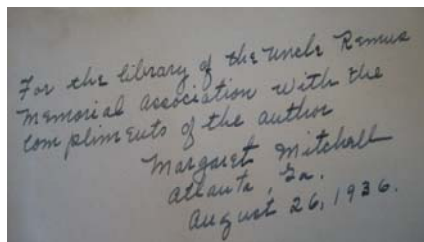
cal processes that sustained them. Absent are the stories of people and of the choices made by Fullertonians; the social history of Fullerton and Orange County remains concealed in these images, resulting in a progress narrative that confirms Fullerton's booster plans rather than interrogating them. Despite these mild reservations, *Fullerton*, with its informative background material on postcards and its judiciously chosen glimpses of the city's physical past, will appeal to anyone curious about the community's origins and development. It is to the authors' credit that the volume will likely leave readers wanting to know more. ☼

**At its meeting in October, the COPH's Campus Advisory Board voted unanimously to recommend to the Dean that Dr. Natalie Fousekis be appointed director of COPH beginning next academic year. We are pleased to inform you that the Dean has agreed with the Board's recommendation. Congratulations, Natalie!!**



**(continued from page 1)**

*Uncle Remus Tales*, originally published as a column in the *Atlanta Constitution* in the late 1870s before its publication in book form a few years later. Despite what critics have said about his literature, the lot of us recognized its importance. We all knew it was essential to preserve this often con-



"With the compliments of the author"  
Courtesy of Stephanie George

tested piece of history—and were pleased to do so.

Covered with dirt, cobwebs, and a

host of microscopic debris I'd rather not think about, we had abandoned all dignity by the time we were ready to leave. Satisfied with accomplishing our goals in the time allotted, we also managed a group photograph on the wrap-around porch, allegedly one of Joel Chandler Harris' favorite places at the Wren's Nest.

Back on the bus, I reflected on what we had done and how it tied into my position at the Center for Oral and Public History. I was thrilled to have an opportunity to join together with other curators and archivists, offering my services to an organization clearly in need of professional assistance. Working together allowed us to share our *own* preservation concerns and how we solved them. Moreover, some of their answers validated what COPH was doing right and what policies and/or procedures we may want to re-evaluate for the future. I also learned the value of an archive with heating and air-

conditioning. While not perfect, we do have a fair amount of environmental control and I promise – I've never seen any bugs or mice. Next year's conference is in Rochester, New York. I'm already dreaming of whose dust-filled attic I'll be working in. ☞



Top: Ten diligent workers pose on the porch of the Wren's Nest.

Photos Courtesy of Stephanie George

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### Online Access to *Voices*

The Center for Oral and Public History's semi-annual newsletter is available on the internet. This is an effort to make the most of our limited funds.

If you would still prefer to get a paper copy of the newsletter, please call or write and let us know. Otherwise, in the future you will receive a notice in the mail when the newsletter is posted on the COPH web site.

Thank you for your cooperation and support. ☞