

CENTER FOR
ORAL & PUBLIC
HISTORY

CAL STATE
FULLERTON

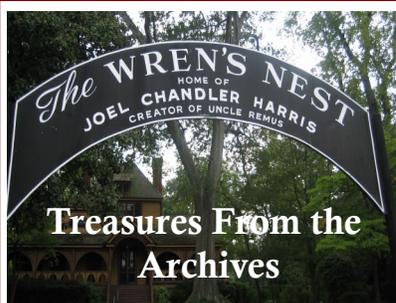
HISTORY
DEPARTMENT

COLLEGE OF
HUMANITIES
& SOCIAL SCIENCES

Voices

Volume 5, Issue 2

Spring 2009



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

(continued on page 6)

COPH Staff:

- Natalie Fousekis, Director
- Cora Granata, Benjamin Cawthra and Raymond Rast, Associate Directors
- Stephanie George, Collections Curator
- Kathy Frazee, Administrative Support Coordinator
- Amanda Tewes, 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

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. ☘



Antoinette Avila



David Cox



JoAn Kunsleman

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>

El Toro Marine Corps Air Station Exhibit

By Michelle Antenesse

On April 25th, a new exhibit will open at the Orange County Agricultural and Nikkei Heritage Museum. This will be the first exhibit at the OCANH Museum planned and executed by students. The exhibit will interpret the impact of the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station on the development of mid-century Orange County.

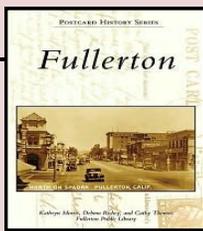
The base was established in 1942 on land purchased from the Irvine Company. Beginning in 1943, the **air station** was used to train combat pilots preparing to fight in World War II. The exhibit will be comprised of four sections and will explore how Orange County changed over the course of **25** years, and the role that MCAS El Toro played in that change. The first section of the exhibit will cover the agricultural history of the land, including the crops that were grown and the workers who farmed it. The second section will examine the acquisition of the land, as well as the construction of the base. It will also show life on the base and its relationship with the surrounding communities. In the third section, the exhibit will demonstrate post-war changes in Orange County, including the Cold War population boom and the region's transition away from an agriculture-based economy, as well as the development of freeways and the opening of Disneyland. The last sect of the exhibit will briefly explore the controversy over plans for the land after the closure of the base and the recent development of the Great Park.

Leading the exhibit team are graduate students serving as Project Manager and Curator. The research for the exhibit was completed during the fall semester by students of Dr. Cawthra's Introduction to Public History class; broken into five teams, the class researched separate sections of the exhibit. Thanks to the efforts of the whole class, led by **Curator** Sarah Barca, we have gathered detailed information and interesting artifacts, such as Marine uniforms circa WWII and pictures from the Flying Leatherneck Museum at Miramar Marine Corps Air Station, to create an engaging experience. In the coming semester, the exhibit team will focus on installation, as well as the creation of media and educational components. We will also utilize selected oral histories from the El Toro Marine Air Station Oral History Project.

We expect more hard work this semester and hope you will join us when the exhibit opens on April 25th!☺

Book Review

Fullerton Post



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 Google of

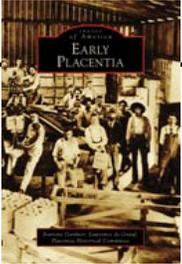
COPH Creates New
the 1950s – make their appearances as

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,

Book Review *Early Placentia*

By Ray Rast



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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.

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El Toro Homecoming

By Kira A. Gentry

On October 2, 2008, the Orange County Great Park hosted the narrators of the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station Oral History Project at a reunion at their former base. Dubbed the **El Toro Homecoming**, guests of honor reunited in **Hangar 244**, a building that for many served as their primary work site during their time at MCAS El Toro. Over fifty narrators attended, many with family members and special guests. COPH staff and project team members thoroughly enjoyed seeing narrators again and meeting many for the first time. Having listened to or read scores of their interviews, it was a treasure to watch them interact, greet old friends, and share stories about their time in boot camp, at MCAS Cherry Point, and, of course tales about El Toro. The evening included bus tours of the former base, a reception, group photograph, buffet dinner, and a display of various Marine Corps artifacts and photographs of each narrator. To top it off, one of the first narrators, Faye Shumway, was interviewed by our local NBC affiliate for a news story!

If you were stationed at or have memories of MCAS El Toro and would like to participate in the Oral History Project please call (714) 278-8415 or send your contact information to coph-eltono@fullerton.edu. Information is also available on the website at <http://coph.fullerton.edu>.☞

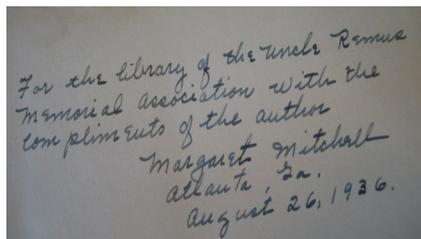


In Memoriam

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.



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!!



“With the compliments of the author”
Courtesy of Stephanie George



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. ☘