

CENTER FOR
ORAL & PUBLIC
HISTORY

CAL STATE
FULLERTON

HISTORY
DEPARTMENT

COLLEGE OF
HUMANITIES
& SOCIAL
SCIENCES

CENTER FOR ORAL & PUBLIC HISTORY
COPH
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Celebrating
40Years

Voices

40th Anniversary

Spring 2008

To commemorate our fortieth anniversary, this newsletter features a retrospective of the history of the center, highlighting its origins and looking to the future. We hope you enjoy this issue celebrating forty years of accomplishment!

Beginning the Oral History Program

By Gary L. Shumway



In the fall of 1967, a few weeks after beginning my first semester of teaching at Cal State Fullerton, the department chair called me into his office. After a few pleasantries, Dr. Warren Beck informed me that the major reason the History Department offered me a full-time position when I had

applied for a part-time job was because of my previous experience in oral history. For some time, Dr. Beck explained, members of the department had believed that this new method of combining technology and technique for the collecting and preserving of historical documentation held real promise. At different times in prior semesters, Drs. David Williams, Jackson Putnam, and Larry de Graaf had been given three units of released time for working with one or two students who expressed an interest in oral history. The department was now ready to formalize this work by initiating a more expansive and focused effort, and members of the department hoped that I would be interested in spearheading this. Dr. Beck suggested that I consider all of the ramifications of this endeavor, then get back with him regarding my willingness to dedicate a major part of my scholarly effort to developing an oral history program and my thoughts as to how this program should unfold.

Although this offer came as a complete surprise to me, my immediate response was that I would be very willing to dedicate the time and effort necessary to develop a meaningful oral history program. I also expressed my feeling that capable students would share our interest in such a program, and that they should be involved. Listening carefully to my enthusiasm for this endeavor, and my conviction that a significant number of students would like very much to be involved, Dr. Beck said that he was glad to see that I was so up-beat, but he cautioned that his lifetime of experience with students led him to be less optimistic regarding their sustained interest. Noting that it was almost time for me to teach my History of Spain class, he suggested that I give some more thought to what we had been talking about, then come back to see him in a couple of days with some more specific suggestions.

When I got to my class, I found that I could not quit thinking about our discussion. Thus, while realizing that a History of Spain class would not be the perfect venue for finding students who might be interested in a rather esoteric American

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Blast from the Past! This photograph, taken in 1977, originates from the first edition of the OHPProfile. Pictured from l-r: Arthur A.

Hansen, director, Gary L. Shumway, Associate Director, and Shirley E. Stephenson, Associate Director, Technical Processing.

COPH Staff:

- Art Hansen, Director
- Natalie Fousekis and Cora Granata, Associate Directors
- Stephanie George, Archivist
- Kathy Frazee, Administrative Support Coordinator
- Suzanne Walter, Tapes into Type Coordinator
- Kira Gentry, Editor

Save the Date

In honor of COPH's 40th anniversary, we will be hosting an afternoon of panels and an evening reception on *September 6, 2008*.

Speakers & reception details to be announced.

(OH Program, continued from page 1)

History project, I decided to tell the class my thoughts about student involvement. Without attempting to hype, I related Dr. Beck's mandate, told them of my conviction that some students would see this as an opportunity to get out of the bleachers and onto the playing field of history, then announced that if any of them felt they would be interested in participating, to please stop by during my office hour at 3:00 that afternoon.

Finishing my History 170 class just before 3:00, I remember feeling quite confident that at least one of my History of Spain students would stop by to tell me they were interested in oral history. Even I was unprepared for the sight that greeted me as I rounded the corner to my office. The hall was choked with virtually every member of my History of Spain class, who told me that since they knew that only a few students could participate, they had decided to come early to ensure that they would be a part of the founding class of oral history.

There in the hall outside my office (because there was nowhere near enough room in my office to hold all of the students) we conducted a very animated, important session that determined many of the contours that oral history would take during the next forty years at Cal State Fullerton. Not only were the students very certain that they wished to put out the effort to develop an ambitious program, but they had specific ideas regarding projects worth developing and individuals who should be interviewed. When I introduced Dr. Beck's concern that students might not follow through, they suggested that we make two lists: one of students who would promise to sign up for independent study in oral history for the spring semester, and another for students who would enroll the following semester, insuring a continued supply of students. After they finally left, I looked at the two lists to find that eighteen of the students had indicated not only their commitment to participate in the first class, but that they would be very disappointed if they were somehow left out.

Armed with this outpouring of student support, I went to Dr. Beck's office the next day, showing him the lists and outlining the student-oriented program the students and I had envisioned. He was so happy to hear of the amount of student interest and so supportive of the direction we felt the program should take that he stated that if I truly could get eighteen students to sign up, he could give me half-time "released time" for the spring semester. This would mean that I would only teach two other classes, besides developing, with no precedent to follow, the specific materials to be taught in each class session, the methods for providing training in oral history techniques and equipment use, the development of a myriad of forms from interviewee and interviewer agreements through tracking the submission of tape recorded interviews. In addition, I would have to follow the subsequent processing to completed documents, including the acquisition of needed equipment and supplies, providing assistance to students in the selection of interviewees and the scheduling of appointments, listening carefully to every word of every interview submitted by eighteen very motivated students, offering meaningful critiques of their interview skills. I would also oversee background preparation, suggesting topics to develop in subsequent interviews with the interviewee.

If all of the above tasks seem daunting, there was one other that was so important that if it were not completed entirely, it would mean that the envisioned oral history program would be stillborn. While Dr. Beck had been cheered by the willingness of eighteen students promising to sign up for the oral history independent study, as the time approached for the spring semester enrollment, he confided to me that unless every one followed through on their commitment, there would not be enough independent study units generated to allow me the six units of released time. He then told me that his many years of experience with students taught him that if eighteen students exhibited

a great deal of interest in a project, and promised that they would participate, when the time came, just about half would show. Understanding the importance of the number eighteen, I assured him that all eighteen would enroll.

When he asked me why I was so confident, I told him that first, I was certain that all were as enthused as I about this endeavor, but should any of them be inclined to wander, I had volunteered to work every session of class registration and would be stamping the class schedules of all eighteen students as they completed the registration process. This plan seemed to allay the fears of Dr. Beck somewhat regarding the dependability of students.

Two days before registration was to open for the next semester, I received word that my father had passed away in southeastern Utah and that I was needed at home. I returned from the funeral two days after registration closed, heartsick over the loss of my father, and also mourning the fact that I had not been available to stave off Dr. Beck's predicted registration shortfall. When I stopped by the history office to pick up my mail, I noticed that the enrollment sheets for my classes were in my box. I took them to my office, steeling myself for what I feared I would find regarding the oral history enrollment. Of the eighteen students who had promised they would register for oral history, not one of them had failed, even without me being there to shepherd them!

It is this stalwart commitment on the part of students that best characterizes the first eight years of the existence of the oral history program. As we met in the three hour long class each week, I had the feeling that they were aware that we were building a city on a hill, whose example would radiate to other institutions throughout the nation. They read widely and thoughtfully, coming to each class prepared to share their thoughts on how better to approach each problem we faced. They worked very hard, learning interviewing techniques, equipment use and background information they felt would be useful in the interviews they planned. They assisted each other in developing topics, finding interviewees and preparing for interviews as that time came. After the first interviews were done, they listened carefully to each others' experiences, learning from mistakes, suggesting new approaches, and congratulating each other for every small success. Never were there students more eager to learn, willing to adapt, and committed to hard work.

At the same time, we were blessed with the assistance of a number of other helpful individuals. From the outset, Dr. Larry de Graaf demonstrated, what I came to recognize as his signature energy, commitment and good sense in helping us find a home for the tapes and transcripts in the Special Collections division of the library, developing a good press for the program, and blunting opposition from some members of the history department who viewed with concern the development of a program that could only lead to smaller slices of the same financial pie. Similarly, Dr. Jackson Putnam not only exhibited a continual enthusiasm for the existence of an oral history program, but lent his awesome skills in maneuvering the needs of the program through the

(continued on next page)



Reel-to-reel equipment similar to what was used at the beginning of the program.

(OH , continued from page 2)

treacherous shoals of departmental politics. Ernie Toy, as the Cal State Fullerton Librarian, was of immense assistance in encouraging the support of Linda Herman and Kay Heil from Special Collections, providing funds for excellent equipment, the best tapes available, other curricular materials, and even some funds for transcribing interviews. Throughout the formative eight years of the Oral History Program I knew that if Mr. Toy could in any way justify the expenditure of funds needed by the program, he would provide them. Probably through the good services of Larry de Graaf and Ernie Toy, we were blessed with the involvement of Esther Cramer and Lester McLennan. Although ostensibly their presence merely represented the interest of a group which came to be known as Patrons of the Library (Esther was one of the first students who had done oral history interviews at Cal State on the topic of Brea history, and Lester was a retired director of Union Oil Company's research facility in Brea), we soon recognized that they were as passionate as the rest of us. During the first two years, when we were developing needed forms, setting essential interviewing and processing precedents, and fending off understandable opposition, Esther and Lester were at every class meeting. As were the students themselves, they were willing to stay long after the scheduled time for ending the class at 10:00 p.m., imbuing each protracted session with Esther's consummate enthusiasm for, and dedication to, the work we were beginning and with Lester's measured good judgment as to the better course to follow in meeting each crisis.

Along with Esther and Lester, the organization soon acquired another iteration which made a perfectly good academic program sound like a law firm. When the history department voted to hire Harry Jeffrey as a member of the department, with the mandate of developing the Richard Nixon Oral History Project, the aggregation was lovingly referred to as Esther, Lester, Gary, Harry, and Larry.

Though not part of our Cal State Fullerton group, two other persons had a larger-than-life impact on the program. During those nightmarish days at the beginning of the program, when I felt so strongly my own inadequacies in developing something that I knew was so important, I sought the council and advice of the UCLA Oral History Program. Adelaide Tussler and Don Schippers not only gave moral support and encouragement, but they made copies of a large number of articles relating to the development of this new approach to historical documentation. They also offered to attend some of our beginning

classes, providing needed direction and assisting us in developing interviewing skills. While it is easy to forget the importance of their help after forty years have passed by, at the time we were very grateful for their kind encouragement and the focused instruction they gave us. It made an indelible impression on the way our program developed.

In the academic world, where space is always a rare commodity, our fledgling program struggled hard to find enough room to allow not only for the archiving of tapes, transcripts, and other ephemera, but also for the equipment and supplies, and the room needed for transcribing, editing, indexing, adding of memorabilia, copying, and binding. We soon felt a strong need for more space than could be supplied by the already bulging Special Collections and thus began an odyssey starting with the furnishing of a piano practice room in the Fine Arts building (which was, unfortunately, little larger than the room needed for a piano and a piano bench), but coalescing eventually into the lovely facilities we now enjoy on the third floor of the south wing of the Library.

As the program developed, with everyone involved mindful of the fact that we were setting important precedents, we worked very hard to make good choices that would reflect well on our University, as well as being of service to others striving to develop an oral history program. There is nowhere near enough space within the purview of this article to describe even briefly each concern we felt, and each solution we contrived, but as we responded to the needs we saw within the program, we built something that we have been proud to have been a part of. Eventually, after about eight years as director or co-director of the OHP, I began to feel my own energy flagging. In part, this was due to a realization of the impossibility of directing such an important, demanding program with only the released time earned by working with a large number of students. Probably even more telling, however, was my realization that we had found someone with far more ability than I in fulfilling most of the needs of the program. One of the many contributions of those vital, committed students who became part of the program was to convince other professors in the history department of the value of oral history. One of the most successful students was Betty Mitsun, who succeeded in transforming Dr. Arthur Hansen into a willing advocate of the program. At first agreeing to develop our Japanese-American Project, he soon agreed to serve as co-director of the Oral History Program, and then he agreed to take over the rigors of directing our very active program. There was nothing I did as director of the program that was as important as recognizing the great talent of Art Hansen, and talking him into accepting the mantle of leadership. ☼



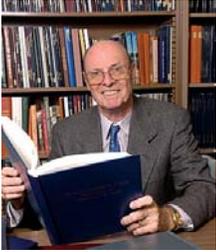
Candid photograph of program founders taken at the opening reception of the newly minted Center for Oral and Public History, 2002. l-r: Dr. Gary L. Shumway, Larry de Graaf, Harry Jeffrey, and Arthur A. Hansen.



At its meeting on March 19, 2008, the Advisory Board of the Center for Oral and Public History voted unanimously to recommend to the dean that Dr. Cora Granata be re-appointed as Associate Director for another three-year term. The board also voted to appoint Dr. Ray Rast and Dr. Benjamin Cawthra as Associate Directors beginning in the next academic year. We are pleased to inform you that the dean has agreed with the board's recommendation.
Congratulations, Cora, Ray, and Ben!

Multiple Facets, One Outstanding Gem

By Lawrence de Graaf



One of the earliest programs at CSUF to combine instruction with community activity was the Oral History Program established by the History Department in conjunction with the Library in 1968. I am fortunate to have been part of the program almost since its inception. During that time I have worked on a number of projects and helped document the history of the university by interviewing each president of CSUF, beginning with William Langsdorf up to our current leader Milton Gordon. One interesting anecdote I recall from my tenure with the program was that we had several early oral history students who were visually impaired. I best recall Donald Brown, who took the bus into Los Angeles on eight to ten separate occasions to interview black community leaders.

The program began obtaining contracts and grants in 1981, leading to such large projects as the multi-faceted study of Brea, known as the Brea Historical Project. This was my (and I think the program's) first venture into California Council for the Humanities grants, and we landed funds for a mini conference to launch the program, transcribing and editing interviews (I think we did about thirty), a museum exhibit, and general work with Brea in revitalizing its local historical society. This represented a true foray into public history and allowed the program to participate in a variety of different projects with a local city.

OHP was fortunate to have worked on the State Government Oral History Project in collaboration with three other major oral history programs. Enid Douglass, Dale Treleven, and I traveled to Sacramento to meet with legislators and convinced them to alter the new phase of the program dealing with Reagan's governor period so as to include three additional campuses. First, I got Steve Edgington (now a dean at Hope International University), and later some fellow faculty members involved. It was also the most strictly regulated oral history project I've been involved in and included my introduction to such techniques as name lists and long hours of debating when it should be *Legislature* with a capitol L versus *legislature*. The Center for Oral and Public History currently houses the extensive collection of grey volumes that comprise the State Project.

In the 1980s, I established a parallel program in public history and courses and field work in such areas as historic preservation joined oral interviews as part of the program's community outreach. I could go into almost as many stories of meeting with off-campus people in this area as Gary and Art can about their projects. Public history conferences shared traits with early oral history meetings in their informal nature and professional camaraderie. CSUF was one of a handful of campuses that participated in forming the National Council on Public History (NCPH) and the California Committee (now Council) for the Promotion of History (CCPH) largely on the basis of its oral history program (most others had preservation, museum, archeology, or archival programs). Out of these annual meetings I gained familiarity with a whole new dimension of history and brought this back to campus in the form of the rudiments of our Public History Program (established formally in 1986, but taught informally since the late 1970s). It is a pleasure to see this legacy carried into the future with current CSUF students, such as Michelle Antenness, attending NCPH meetings. ☞

CSUF Fiftieth Anniversary Book

Cal State Fullerton's year-long Golden Anniversary celebration will be highlighted by the publication of a distinctive pictorial history of the University. Beginning three years ago, COPH began surveying campus departments to identify historical documents and photographs for the Anniversary. Many departments responded by supplying records and pictures that have helped to chronicle the University's first fifty years. Researchers found in University Archives a treasure trove of documents, papers, and memos. Other photographic collections utilized in creating the book, include that of Public Affairs, the Office of Design and Construction, and the famed collection of founding Dean Stuart McComb, who carefully recorded the building of the University from its first days at Fullerton High School to its exciting growth on the present campus. The book's professional research and writing team includes Sharon Pellegrino, Allison Frickert, Lorene Broersma, Taran Schindler, and eighteen history students who interned for

the project over the course of three semesters. Together, these individuals carefully digitized and re-searched these legacy slides and other rare historic photographs and documents to feature in the book, in addition to compiling research projects on a myriad of campus topics.

The text for the book is primarily authored by Dr. Lawrence de Graaf, a founding professor at CSUF, who incorporates his own unique perspectives with those of other early faculty, staff, and administrators for first-hand accounts of the University's history. The book, through stories and photographs, traces the school's emergence from a rural campus surrounded by acres of citrus, to an urban institution and one of the leading California State Universities. ☞



1970s photograph of the Humanities building taken from across the Quad.



Summer '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.

COPH is closed for lunch daily from 12:30-1:30

Appointments are encouraged!!

A Change of Heart Pumps Life into OHP

By Michael Onorato



My professional background has been traditional: go to manuscript or archival collections here and abroad. Occasionally, there was an interview of some important individual. But oral history was alien to me. The start of California State University, Fullerton's oral history program as part of the department's major made little impression upon me. If Harry Jeffrey, Larry de-Graaf, Art Hansen, and Gary Shumway, wanted to teach a course

or two in oral history, it was of little interest.

However, in 1993, I wrote that, "oral history is the newest and most difficult of the methods for recording and examining critical and significant events...[and] as a practitioner of oral history, I find the process is not easy..." (Pilipinas, No. 21, Fall 1993, p.79). It was in the mid-1970s that my interest in the process was piqued. Over the next few years several of my oral histories were transcribed, edited, and bound for inclusion in the program's growing library. I had become convinced of oral history's importance.

On February 10, 1989, James Woodward, History Department chair, asked me to accept a two-year term as director of the Oral History Program. Art Hansen wanted to step away as director for a time. A meeting with the previous directors worried me, as did several meetings with Dean Don Schweitzer, HSS, over the course of two years. It seems that some projects, especially the OHP work for the State Archives, were not being completed in a timely manner. State Archivist, John Burns, was pushing for completion. Moreover, funding for the program's several projects was not sufficient. The dean was steadfast that the non-classroom part of OHP would have to be self-sustaining.

It was apparent that the "Tapes into Type" transcribing service brought cash but that effort rested on the shoulders of one person. The binding of master's thesis was lucrative but staff had to set type, work with a hot embosser, and act as salesperson. The on-going commitment to the Pioneer Council of Anaheim was falling short of timely completion.

The program's staff, Shirley Stephenson and Kathy Frazee, must have thought that they had inherited a heavy-handed taskmaster. I became a permanent fixture at OHP learning in time how to emboss and bind, take orders, Xerox several hundred pages at a time, and negotiate for time and funds. By 1991, the State project was well on the way to completion. The Pioneer Council made a commitment of an annual stipend. Stalled projects moved forward so that Art Hansen returned as director to a somewhat different OHP in July 1991.

Dean Schweitzer never challenged the validity of the classroom side of OHP. It was the projects and OHP library that had to be self-sustaining. In the end, Shirley would take early retirement in June 1991 while Kathy's situation became more dependent on outside funding. Despite the loss of a valued staff member, OHP began Academic Year 1991-92 in better shape growing in stature and reputation. ☘



El Toro Oral History Project Update

By Janet Tanner, El Toro Graduate Assistant



General Frank Peterson with researcher Janet Tanner, 2007.

A little over a year ago the Center for Oral and Public History launched the El Toro Marine Corps Air Station Oral History Project. Thanks to the hard work of our interviewers, we are happy to report that to date over 100 oral history interviews from former veterans of the base and their families have been completed. We would like to thank the men and women who have welcomed us into their homes, openly shared their memories, and served our country with great courage and dedication.

A Retrospective: Twenty Years at the Oral History Program

By Shirley E. Stephenson



In 1965, I was completing my studies at California State University, Fullerton (CSUF). After earning a Bachelor of Arts in History, I proceeded to get involved in the then-new CSUF

Library Science Program coordinated by Doris Banks. She was emphatic that I should get involved in the fast growing oral history classes. Even though these courses would not be accredited, she agreed with the decision to "try my luck at interviewing and record the memories of older residents in the area."

At the same time I was taking various history classes, and out of the blue a voice from the CSUF History Department expressed a desire to be my advisor if I would get involved with oral history and, in particular, with the summer classes being taught by Gary Shumway. I decided to sit in on some evening classes even though students were listening to interviews conducted in Spanish. In spite of the language barrier, I was intrigued with the idea and the reception the interviews received.

Soon, opportunities presented themselves for me to become more involved in oral history in addition to cataloging and indexing. I also had the chance to work with students on their individual projects. Over and above all of this activity, I was teaching and putting a book together concerning editing and indexing (which I firmly believe every book needs). Thus, I encouraged one of the students with artistic talent, Karen Wilson Turnbull, to become an important part of a venture to transcribe tapes into type, which became an integral part of daily activity of the Oral History Program (OHP), which I served for nearly twenty years, as the associate director and archivist.

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In the summer of 2007, I traveled to Washington D.C. to interview the first female Marine Corps general and the first African American Marine Corps aviator and general, both stationed at El Toro in the 1950s. Then it was on to Florida to record the memories of three women stationed at the El Toro base in 1944. We hope that the upcoming year brings more opportunity for travel as the project has gained national attention. Marines all across the United States have responded to the call for narrators and are eager to share their memories of El Toro.

With continued funding from the Orange County Great Park Corporation and under the continued direction of Dr. Natalie Fousekis, phase two of the project is underway with the help of five new researchers. Although our collection primarily consists of local marines and their families, in the upcoming year we plan to continue our focus on the World War II and Korea eras, and extend our search for civilians who lived and worked in the surrounding communities of MCAS El Toro. ☘

Who Could Ask For Anything More?

By Kathleen Frazee



When people appreciate your work so much that tears come to their eyes or a smile covers their face or letters arrive with handwritten thanks, then you know you're in the right place and doing a good job. This is how I feel about my work with oral history.

State budget cuts threatened the existence of the Oral History Program in 1991 when we were about to celebrate 25 years of operation. We felt

responsible to the 2,312 recorded voices in the archives and to the individuals who had conducted those interviews. So for the grand celebration held on the lawn of the president's house we created one of the first theatrical scripts based on oral history transcripts ever presented in this area. It gave the ghosts of early Orange County one more opportunity to be heard. We must have riled some of the spirits more than we intended, because years later staff members still report hearing noises of unexplained origin in the archives while they work alone in the office.

To help keep the doors open and the part-time staff paid (a factor high on my list of important goals, indeed) we had to generate new sources of income. In 1996 we resurrected the *OHPProfile*—a newsletter whose origin earlier had marked the tenth anniversary of the Oral History Program—as a tool to solicit contributions and keep in touch with financial supporters. Donations arrived regularly. The Orange County Pioneer Council pledged a quarterly stipend. For seven years every fall we sponsored a “Donor Appreciation Day” when staff and family joined the donors on special outings to local historic sites: the Heritage House in the Fullerton Arboretum, the Bolsa Chica Wetlands, the Orange plaza, downtown Fullerton, historic trees of Tustin, and historical buildings in Buena Park and Placentia. Being editor of the *OHPProfile*, I learned at first to include clip art, then later, actual event photos. After a while I noticed that my dear spouse's photograph appeared in every newsletter except one that was issued between 1997 and 2002, a sort of a “Where's Waldo?” feature that intrigued readers.

We worked on contracts and sought grants. Some encounters were more worthwhile and satisfying than others, but all these new ventures helped us grow as individuals and as a unit. Co-workers became friends; birthday and Christmas parties were festive. Student helpers always joined in. Those of us who hung on for many years may have contributed to the institutional tradition, but it was the parade of student assistants that focused for us the reality that all things pass in time. Every graduation season our preservation work seemed more important.

What more could a person ask than that her work have value to her, her clients, her colleagues, and to generations who follow? ☼



Where's Charlie? Paying homage to the OHPProfile, this newsletter simply would not be complete without including a photo of Charlie Frazee. Can you find him? If you find yourself stumped, see page 10 for his location!

This photograph was taken at a Donor Appreciation Outing at the Bolsa Chica Wetlands, September 7, 1998.

New Books in Weglyn Series



This summer will see the appearance in COPH's Weglyn Multicultural Publication Series of two new books, both oral history anthologies. The first, co-edited by Robert Johnson and Charlene Riggins, is *A Different Shade of Orange: Voices of Orange County, California, Black Pioneers, 1930-*

1980. The second, edited by Cathy Irwin, is *Twice Orphaned: Voices from the Children's Village of Manzanar*. Their publication follows by one year the fifth published book in this series, Charlene Riggins and Miguel A. Garcia's *Forgotten Patriots: Voices of World War II Mexican American Veterans of Southern California*. Whereas that work represented the first book-length study of the World War II experience of Mexican Americans in Los Angeles and Orange Counties, *A Different Shade of Orange* will be the first book published on the African American community in Orange County and *Twice Orphaned* will constitute the initial volume in print about the sole facility for orphans in the ten War

Relocation Authority-administered WWII camps for Japanese Americans.

Robert Johnson, Charlene Riggins, and Cathy Irwin are all COPH research associates. Johnson holds B.S. and M.S. degrees in engineering from UCLA, and is a Fellow of the Institute of Electrical and Electronic Engineers. In 1966 he began almost three decades of work to eliminate segregation of blacks in Orange County through the county's Fair Housing Council. Presently, Johnson is on the Orange County Community Housing Corporation board and is a Santa Ana Black Historical Society member. He lives in Tustin with his wife Lois. As for Riggins, she is an alumna of CSU Fullerton, from which she received a B.A. and M.A. in history, and where she now teaches courses as an adjunct professor in US history, American women's history, black studies, and ethnic studies. A Placentia Historical Committee member, she and her husband Chester make their home in Placentia. Irwin received her B.A. from UC Berkeley and her M.A. and Ph.D. from USC, all in English. She is an assistant professor at the University of La Verne and lives with her husband Thomas Poon in Claremont.

Both publications will be available for purchase through the Center for Oral and Public History. ☼

Building on Strengths

By Benjamin Cawthra and Ray Rast



It is an exciting time to be involved with the field of public history. Our colleagues in the field and our students here at Cal State Fullerton are wrestling with important questions: How can we help preserve the remnants of Orange County's pre-1945 landscape? How can we help pre-

serve memories of Nikkei internment during World War II? How should we interpret the Nixon presidency for a new generation of Americans? How should we memorialize the events of 9/11? It is also a challenging time to be involved in public history. Fluctuations in the economy remind us that our funding plans must be sound and that our students must be well trained and well prepared to compete in a tight job market.

We are off to a promising start. In the fall, Dr. Rast taught an introductory undergraduate course in public history that attracted twenty-two students.

In the course, students explored the various subfields of public history (including historic preservation, museum work, oral history, and archival work), and they considered the many challenges that come with historical research and interpretation conducted for (and with) public audiences and clients. Dr. Cawthra taught a graduate seminar in public history focusing specifically on museums and public memory. He was struck by his students' willingness to debate the political implications of doing history in public. For most of his students, the museum is no longer a neutral, objective place, but a vibrant, contested space that speaks to the deepest commitments and contested values of our society.

Now we are looking forward to building the public history program and establishing it as one of COPH's and Cal State Fullerton's many strengths. COPH has deep roots in Orange County, and we want to continue to develop the center's connections to the diverse communities of Orange County and those of the region as a whole. At the same time, we want to build a national presence in the field. We will do so by becoming more active in national public history organizations, launching projects that have both regional and national significance and funding potential, and providing a rich learning experience that will prepare students to become professionals anywhere in the field. We look forward to seeing our students take on projects such as the new exhibition program at the Orange County Agricultural and Nikkei Heritage Museum at the Fullerton Arboretum. That initiative will demand a steep learning curve, but from what we have seen, our students are hungry for practical experience. As part of that program, we will benefit from the expertise in oral history for which the center is already well known, creating projects that weave oral and public history into a distinctive cloth. We are also committed to building up our internship program, placing more students in positions in the region and even across the nation. One goal is central to everything we plan to do: to equip students completing study in public history at Cal State Fullerton to perform history for and with the public, wherever their career paths might take them. ☘



Orange County Agricultural and Nikkei Heritage Museum, home of current exhibit, *A Determined Lot: Resilient Pioneers Forge a New County's Future*.

(Retrospective, continued from page 5)

In spite of all the projects and community work, another interesting facet of my term at CSUF was that for ten years I reviewed the oral history writings and printed a listing of each year's publications for the national *Oral History Review* titled "Oral History Review and Companion Publications."

In the early 1980s, OHP Director Arthur Hansen and I, and others associated with the leadership of the OHP and oral history offices throughout the Southwest regions, were excited about getting more people interested in local and regional history. We knew that the people on the West Coast and the Southwestern states could not attend the expensive meetings on the East Coast, which were normally held at upscale resort hotels and other costly meeting venues. After much discussion, we decided we would contact active members in the area and hold regular meetings at various spots throughout Southern

California, New Mexico, Arizona, and Nevada. Thus the Southwest Oral History Association (SOHA) was born. This regional oral history organization continues to meet on a rotation basis and offer assistance to organizations and individuals.

SOHA also grants awards when possible, including the James V. Mink award "in recognition for outstanding contributions to oral history in the Southwest region of the United States." In 1986, after being president of SOHA for three continuous years, I was honored with the Mink Award. In the same year I was also honored for spearheading local arrangements for the national Oral History Association's annual conference, held on this occasion on the *Queen Mary* in Long Beach. This was the first time a welcome breakfast was held for newcomers to OHA in conjunction with this conference, which made it possible for first-time conference goers to be greeted by officers and veterans of the organization.

Progress continues as time passes; and so SOHA continues to grow and take advantage of scholarships and ways of using money in local communities and various areas. Even the raffle and silent auctions at SOHA have grown. This year at the conference held in Tempe, Arizona, we had more applicants for gifts and awards than ever before.

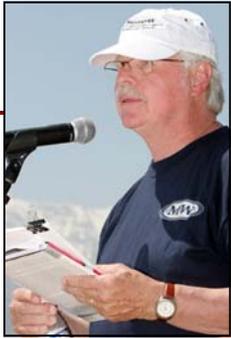
Much history has been recorded during the twenty-five years of doing oral history in the Southwest area. Many communities have been helped in the Southwest area and many organizations, including the OHP and its successor, the Center for Oral and Public History (COPH), at California State University, Fullerton, have been instrumental in providing this important public service. ☘



Director's Report

A Dream Team

By Arthur Hansen



Photograph courtesy of Mario Gershom Reyes, 2007.

In 1975, the founding director of the Oral History Program, Gary Shumway, asked me to succeed him in that position—a step I took reluctantly, since I preferred work in the field to work in the office (which is still

the case)—remaining at the helm of the OHP until 1979, when Larry de Graaf replaced me. During those four years, thanks to an infusion of funding from the Comprehensive Employment Training Act, the OHP expanded to fifty-seven employees, with the operation anchored by the dedicated work of the OHP's associate director and archivist, Shirley Stephenson. It was a wild ride in many ways, but I recall these years with great fondness and am proud of the productivity of the staff trainees, both in processing the OHP's many interviews and fashioning them into professional-quality anthologies. In the 1980s I served intermittently as the OHP's director or co-director (with Gary Shumway), and then in 1991, at a time when the OHP's very existence was imperiled, I replaced Mike Onorato as director and entered my final tenure in that position, which has lasted until the present. Although underfunded and under-staffed, thanks to the extraordinary dedication and inspired performance by OHP office manager, Kathy Frazee, aided by Archivist Gail Gutierrez, the program stepped up its grants and contracts activity, sustained its curricular offerings, and embellished its reputation locally, regionally, and nationally.

In the early years of the twenty-first century, however, the OHP benefited from a windfall of fortuitous circumstances. At the same time that the History Department, of which OHP was but a subsidiary, elected a chair, Bill Haddad, who was convinced that the department could enhance its reputation through nurturing oral and public history, the College of Humanities and Social Sciences was spearheaded by a visionary dean, Tom Klammer, who in 2003 made possible the transition of the Oral History Program into the Center for Oral and Public History by underwriting the expansion of its staff and administrative faculty and making COPH a top priority within his college. Moreover, Haddad and Klammer,

supported by a new cadre of talented professors in the History Department, strategically and resourcefully augmented the History Department with a number of tenure-track faculty experienced in public and/or oral history.

As a result, the Center for Oral and Public History now boasts an incredible leadership team to take the organization into a bright future. My successor as director, Natalie Fousekis, has already served four years as COPH's associate director; so too has another faculty recruit from the University of North Carolina who was affiliated with its prestigious Southern Oral History Program, Cora Granata (a specialist in modern European history who serves double-duty as the coordinator of European Studies). Both Natalie and Cora are top scholars and teachers blessed with administrative ability. Natalie, who specializes in recent US history, has already been given a departmental award for her outstanding service to graduate students, while this past year she was honored as the outstanding untenured faculty member in the College of Humanities and Social Sciences. In addition, Natalie has secured a large grant to document through audio and video taped interviews the historical development of the area in south Orange County that once was the El Toro Air Marine Base and is now the Great Park of Orange County.

To augment the scope of COPH and to fortify its leadership, the History Department in 2007 hired two public historians, Ben Cawthra, whose fields of expertise are African American history and culture and museum studies, and Ray Rast, a specialist in the areas of the American West and Mexican American history, as well as historic preservation and

heritage tourism. These two historians were both appointed this year as COPH associate directors, the same position held by Cora Granata. This means that COPH will begin an exciting new era under a seasoned and dynamic director and three associate directors who can not only assume a great deal of the administrative burden, but who can also, should it be required by circumstances, discharge the duties of the COPH directorship with distinction. This leadership team will be supported by the COPH's newest (and exceedingly competent) full-time staff member, Archivist Stephanie George, who holds an M.A. in History and is completing another master's degree in Library and Information Science, and Kathy Frazee, who will continue in her indispensable role as COPH's office manager and financial officer. This is truly a dream team. But I have no regrets as I enter retirement, for I can look back on over three decades of holding down what for me as been truly a dream job. What's more, I know that COPH is now in far better hands than ever before. ☞



Dr. Arthur A. Hansen with CSUF President Milton Gordon in recognition of Art's many contributions to the university.

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Challenges Lead to Archival Resolutions

By Stephanie George



Ask most people what they think of when they hear the word *archives* and, immediately, thoughts of dark and dusty places filled with unique photographs, noteworthy documents, and significant treasures of enduring value emerge. Yet, ask an archivist the same question and there's usually one word that rises to the forefront: *backlog*. I won't bore you with the philosophical debates that often develop concerning how to handle getting materials accessioned, stabilized, organized, and into the hands of the users in a timely manner; however, I will suggest that the Center for Oral and Public History is in good company with the California State Archives, National Archives, and a host of other local, regional, or national repositories you could probably name that suffer from this same malady. Yes, we have backlog, although this isn't to say it can't be mitigated.

Over the last forty years, we've collected nearly 5,000 oral histories which were created through classes or donated by private individuals. These represent approximately 175 separate projects focused on topics such as perceptions of Southern California culture, the UCI fertility clinic controversy, California surf music, and the Laguna Beach greenbelt, in addition to our more traditional projects that have often highlighted geographic, ethnic, social, and religious communities. Of course, one has to prepare for the future, so developing a strategy now is our best means for targeting a day when any backlog might be but a memory to the next generation of COPH staff and students.

During the last few months, we've been involved in an evaluation exercise. What do we have to do to get our materials into the hands of users? How do we responsibly prioritize our needs? Do we have to strictly follow all archival guidelines or can we "cut corners" a bit? It sometimes feels as if everything needs attention – right now.

We're continuing to inventory the collection. Using newly acquired databases and spreadsheets, we've been managing our collections electronically. Gone are the days during which one would have to physically scroll through multiple pages of legal yellow pads filled with narrators' names to find a specific interview that, perhaps, didn't make it into the catalog.

Developing a priority schema has helped us identify what other tasks are paramount to making our collections available as quickly as possible. What types of tasks are absolutely necessary to complete? Does the popularity of a project influence what we process first? During this past semester, two interns, Thomas Alameddine and Trish Campbell, have written an additional sixty or so abstracts that are nearly ready to post on our web site. While having complete transcriptions would be nice, we're attempting to provide as quick a turnaround as possible rather than having projects languish on the shelves while waiting for funding.

Finally, as an item from our preservation plan, we've relocated our master digital files (on CD) to Iron Mountain, an off-site secure facility with environmental controls. Now, if there's ever a major catastrophe in our archives involving fire, flood, or earthquake, we'll still have copies of our audio files – safe and sound.

Yes, the tasks involved in managing audio recordings, photographs, paper, and digital files often appear overwhelming, but not insurmountable. Fundamental archival practices haven't changed too many of our basic procedures, yet the growth of technology certainly has influenced how we manage our collection, as well as how we preserve it.

Currently, I'm content with approaching our collections as works in progress and allowing future events (availability of interns, conservation concerns, grant monies) to influence how we manage our workload. My hope is that in another forty years, the word *archives*—for COPH staff—will bring to mind thoughts of unique collections gathered over an eighty-year history and the word *backlog*, a faded memory. ☘



Intern Trish Campbell proudly shows off the first box of master audio CDs being prepped for shipment to



An employee from Iron Mountain surveys eighty-eight containers full of audio recordings collected

Broadening Our Horizons

By Cora Granata



Even though Fullerton is located thousands of miles away from Europe, Southern California can be a treasure trove for conducting oral histories related to European history. COPH's location in a vast, multi-cultural, cosmopolitan metropolis puts us at a distinct advantage. Immigrants from all over the world have settled here, bringing with them their memories of their pasts in their countries of origin. Southern California became one of the world's leading destinations for immigrants in the post-World War II pe-

riod, and immigrants and exiles fleeing World War II and Cold War Europe were no exception. My students and I have begun to mine this resource through the "European Experiences during World War II" oral history project. Based on oral histories conducted for my Modern European history course, this project consists of interviews focusing on the experiences of ordinary Europeans who lived through the Second World War on the European continent. The project has considerable topical and chronological breadth within this theme, including, but not limited to, British, Polish, German civilians (men and women, boys and girls), Soviet Red Army soldiers, German Luftwaffe fighter pilots, a Dutch Indonesian colonial, and Jewish Holocaust survivors. Interviews raise significant historiographical issues especially as they relate to European civilians

during wartime and the war's immediate aftermath, with several interviews also touching on Cold War experiences in both Western and Eastern Europe.

In addition to this project, several of my graduate students are conducting oral history projects which will also build COPH's collections related to Europe. These include Kira Gentry's interviews with German females during World War II and the early postwar period, Ryan Ruelas's interviews on Hungarian memories of the 1956 anti-Soviet revolt, and Rob Miller's project on Jews in post-Holocaust West Germany. Taken together, these projects help globalize COPH and will provide a valuable resource for both students and scholars in the coming years. ☘

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ORAL & PUBLIC HISTORY

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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. ☚

*Where's Charlie?
Answer from page 6:
Charlie Frazee is second
from the right.*