FROM THE CHAIR ....

Lauren Kata, Consulting Archivist, Austin, TX

At the beginning of this month, I participated in a wonderfully thought-provoking and intellectually challenging conference themed "Interdisciplinary Perspectives on Archives and the Ethics of Memory Construction," hosted by the University of Michigan's School of Information and Labadie Collection in Ann Arbor. Within the many lessons, stories, ideas and experiences that were shared, oral history was featured often, and sometimes centrally. (For example, Noel Solani's presentation on Robben Island Prison Memories.) If you have the time, I encourage you to browse the presentation abstracts at memoryethics.org. Beyond reading about others' ethically challenging experiences or assertions, I also encourage us all to revisit the question of how ethics – whether a specific professional code of ethics, or our own personal ethics – shape and influence our daily work as oral history archivists.

During the final Q&A discussion of the conference, one gentleman shared his ambivalence regarding the transcription editing process. Specifically, he spoke of the amount of post-interview editing contributed by donors and raised questions about the roles and responsibilities that archivists have, not just in curating oral history collections, but in shaping and editing – which includes omitting – information. Another participant replied to this shared conundrum: she reminded us that, especially in oral history, there is always a degree of self-editing that is taking place. We as interviewers, or we as readers, have no way of knowing what a subject ultimately chooses to discuss or not discuss, or which portions of memory remain unspoken during an interview. This conversation seemed a very good illustration of how NOT black and white these "memory ethics" issues are; is our primary responsibility to our interviewees? Our donors? Our researchers? Our institutions? To "history?"

IN THIS ISSUE ....

FROM THE CHAIR (continued)

And who or what is out there to help guide us? Well, to start, there is SAA's "Code of Ethics for Archivists" as well as the Principles and Standards of the Oral History Association. But these are not easy questions. The answers, which are not necessarily codified, will depend on a number of variables. I do believe in the assertions of the Memory Ethics Conference presenters that it is important to continuously revisit and explore these questions, if not on a day-to-day basis, then at least as regularly as we can. We never know when we may be faced with a situation that requires us to formulate answers – for our bosses, our colleagues, ourselves.

That is also why, to me – and I hope for you – active participation within our archival organizations is valuable. This means more than connecting at annual meetings. Those of us who label ourselves "oral history archivists," whether we collect interviews or conduct them or both, have a number of particular questions that are important to consider, ethical and legal issues among them. Communicating with each other,

sharing successes and pitfalls, pointing each other to resources – all of this is possible on a year-round basis, and is certainly illustrated in this issue of Dialogue. I'd like to thank everyone who contributed to this issue, which includes a special "Spotlight on Technology," because the sharing we do outside of the annual meeting is as meaningful as our face-to-face interactions once a year. Our email discussion list is also a way to absorb and share information. If you are not yet subscribed to the SAA OH Section email discussion list – please subscribe today and initiate a conversation. Go to http://www.archivists.org/listservs/ for more information.

Your Steering Committee has also been exploring establishing a section blog or wiki to enhance year-round activity and communication. What do you think? Feel free to send your thoughts to Lauren. kata@gmail.com. Even better – if you have an idea and would like to enhance your own year-round activity within the section, let us know!

ORAL HISTORY CALENDAR

Oral-History Related Happenings at the SAA 2008 Annual Meeting

Pre-conference workshop:

Driving Exhibitions with Oral History

Monday, Aug 25, 2008

9:00 AM - 5:00 PM

Event Location: HILTON SAN FRANCISCO

Instructor: Bonnie Gurewitsch, CA

Archivist/Curator, Museum of Jewish Heritage

Seats Available - To register go to the Conference/ Workshop page of the SAA website.

Annual Oral History Section Meeting:

Friday, Aug 29, 2008

NOON – 2:00 PM

Featured guest speakers:

Howard Levin, Director of Technology at the Urban School of San Francisco, who will speak about the "Telling Their Stories" Oral History Archives Project.

Joe Lambert, Executive Director of the Center for Digital Storytelling, who will speak about the Center's current initiatives, including co-sponsorship of the first "International Sharing Our Stories Day."

Session 610: Models for Collaboration: Providing Enhanced Access to Oral History

Saturday, Aug 30, 2008

9:30 AM - 11:00 AM

ORAL HISTORY SPOTLIGHT: TECHNOLOGY

Implementing iPods: A Success Story at the University of South Florida Libraries' Oral History Program

by Mark I. Greenberg

While a graduate student at the University of Florida in the 1990s, I learned about oral history from the late Samuel Proctor, one of the field's early leaders. UF's Oral History Program changed little while I was there. Release forms, interviewing strategies, transcribing and editing standards, even technology remained largely the same. Interviewers recorded on analog players using 60-minute standard-size cassettes, and Dr. Proctor's staff and students transcribed and audit edited on Dictaphone machines. (Fortunately, word processing software had replaced typewriters by the time I arrived!) Researchers seeking access to completed interviews traveled to the oral history offices to access the rich collection of audiocassettes and printed transcripts.

Over the past 17 years much has changed in the oral history field, particularly in recording and transcribing technology and access to completed interviews. Largely a thing of the past, analog cassette recorders have given way to various digital recording devices. Some transcribers and audit editors have boxed up their Dictaphone machines in favor of computer software programs. Digital content management systems, some commercial and some homegrown, provide researchers worldwide access to completed interviews via the Internet.

As director of the [University of South Florida Libraries' Oral History Program](#) since 2001, I have followed the evolving technology with interest and have tried to stay with or even ahead of the curve. About five years ago, I supplemented analog audiocassette recorders (used internally and loaned out to faculty and students) with several digital audio recorders (Sony Hi-MD Walkman MZ-RH10s with Sony ECM-MS957 condenser microphones). The stereo sound quality proved fine for speech, but downsides outweighed the pluses. The unit's cost ($300 MSRP), recurring DAT expenses ($1.00-$1.50 each), and somewhat cumbersome but required software (SonicStage) to convert audio files from Sony's proprietary format for use in transcribing software worked against large-scale adoption and sent me looking for other solutions.

Several years ago, I purchased a single Marantz PMD670 recorder with an Audio –Technica U851R unidirectional condenser boundary microphone. From a technical and sound quality perspective, the equipment is excellent. Dual XLR inputs, the ability to record to portable compact flash drives, easy uploading to transcribing software, and myriad other settings and enhancements almost justify the $700 spent on the unit. Marantz makes cheaper models (the PMD660 sells for $400), but they remain too expensive to acquire in larger quantities and too complex to loan out except to the more techno-savvy or intensively trained users.

As I thought about the growing interest in oral history at USF, I realized the Oral History Program needed to loan and support relatively inexpensive and durable equipment (ideally under $200, including microphone) that captured high quality sound, required a minimal learning curve, and worked well with different personal computers and transcribing software packages. In 2007 I settled on a now ubiquitous device in many American homes and college campuses – the Apple iPod.

Commonly used by travelers, joggers, teenagers, and others seeking to tune in their favorite music, movies, TV shows, or audiobooks, the iPod nano is barely 5.7 inches square, a quarter inch thick, and weighs under two ounces. Long battery life, an AC adaptor, two-inch color display, and Apple's revolutionary click (control) wheel make iPods relatively convenient and easy to use. Sold with either a 4GB or 8GB internal flash drive for $149 and $199, respectively, they support MP3, WAV, and several proprietary audio file formats. iPods work seamlessly with free iTunes software in either Mac or Windows operating systems and can serve as a USB storage device for those people not interested in downloading iTunes. iPods transform from playback to recording devices with the addition of a small microphone, like Belkin's TuneTalk ($50), and record CD-quality stereo sound. A 4 GB iPod captures approximately 7.5 hours of interviews. The TuneTalk also provides three volts of power for an external microphone via its 3.5 mm auxiliary stereo input, and a two-level auto-gain switch optimizes audio quality.

For the USF Libraries' Oral History Program and its

growing constituents, iPods with Belkin TuneTalk microphones have offered a viable way to acquire and loan six oral history "kits" to faculty and students engaged in both individual research and formal coursework. Though I do not recommend iPods to people seeking broadcast-quality sound, they work well for most oral history classes and projects on campus. Stored in a small plastic container, the kits comprise an iPod, headphones, microphone, AC adapter, and the accompanying power and file transfer cables.   An optional digital camera offers the opportunity to capture still images during an interview. People with their own iPod may borrow the microphone and camera only.

Anyone seeking to use a kit must be affiliated with the university and possess a valid borrower's card. Before each checkout, the person receives written information about the library's loan policies and signs a form assuming responsibility for the equipment's safe return. A detailed set of instructions on downloading and using iTunes, recording with an iPod, and transcribing using free Express Scribe software is available via the USF Libraries' Oral History website.

In its first year, USF's iPod oral history implementation has experienced far more successes than problems. Like with any technology, recording with an iPod requires practice. Both iTunes and Express Scribe involve changing several default settings, explained in the web-based instructions. Carelessness can cause damage, and inexperience can ruin an interview. In this regard, iPods are no different than analog

cassette players or $700 Marantz digital recorders. Nonetheless, for their price, quality, and ease of use, iPods remain highly viable at the University of South Florida , and they may serve as a model for other people's and institutions' oral history needs.

Mark I. Greenberg, MLS, Ph.D. is director of the University of South Florida Libraries' Oral History Program and the Special Collections Department. He can be reached at mgreenbe@lib.usf.edu.

Can Voice Recognition Software Benefit the Oral History Program: A Brief Case Study

By Kirstin Duffin

Note: rights cleared between Troy Reeves and Al Stein for running this article. It will also run in Michigan Oral History Newsletter.

Dragon NaturallySpeaking is voice-activated software that allows the user to communicate with a computer by means of their voice rather than their keyboard. The software's aim will make anyone who failed Keyboarding 101 giddy with delight. Forgo typing, be it for a document, an email, or instant messaging, Dragon listens to your voice and records your composition faster than you can type. After a brief, fifteen-minute training and tutorial session, where Dragon listens to the user and he or she learns commands to navigate within Dragon, you are ready to start using the program.

The staff at the University of Wisconsin-Madison's Oral History Program (OHP) wanted to determine whether a student user of Dragon would be a more cost-effective means of transcribing audio interviews as compared to traditionally typing the transcript. Starting out, the brevity of the training surprised me. After hearing myself read just a few paragraphs, I wondered how accurate Dragon would be. The user can opt for further voice recognition training with Dragon, but as my time with testing the software was short, I bypassed this choice. I wanted to get started, commanding Dragon with such powerful keywords

as "scratch that" (deletes what was just written), "new line" (acts like the return key, creating a new line), and "go to sleep" (hibernates the program—in this mode, Dragon will not register audio through the microphone). After completing the training, I felt prepared to use the program.

Despite the succinct tutorial, Dragon amazed me with its accuracy. It understood words even when I slurred my speech, sacrificing my enunciation while trying to understand the narrator's words. Dragon knew to put words in context. For example, if I said, "They're commuting over there using their bicycle built for two," Dragon would understand when to spell they're as opposed to there or their. Also, although the words we're and were can sound alike if one were speaking quickly, Dragon could distinguish between the two.

The program had difficulty with proper nouns. Sometimes it wrote a more common word with a similar sound, and sometimes it guessed admirably at the spelling of the name. Command words caused confusion for Dragon within the context of the interview. Saying "edit" could bring up the edit menu, pausing the transcription; dictating "period" could instead type the punctuation mark. These ambiguities aside, Dragon's precision was impressive.

With the "autopunctuation" feature turned on, Dragon will insert commas and periods with the natural pauses and inflections of the speaker's voice. Less common punctuation marks, such as the colon, question mark, and exclamation point, must be inserted by the speaker. With autopunctuation off the speaker must instruct Dragon where to place all punctuation, so the transcriptionist would need to remember to say "period" and "comma" in the correct places. Or, they would create a transcript with a string of text with no punctuation whatsoever.

I tested the software with autopunctuation on and learned that transcribing does break the normal flow of speech. While I dictated, I focused on what was being said in the interview rather than on my own intonations, which caused Dragon to add commas and periods in otherwise strange places. Transcribing with Dragon required me to focus on audio output rather than the interview's context, and the product

was a transcript with punctuation placed sporadically.

There are some practical ways, however, that I could make Dragon work to my advantage. Turning the headphone feedback of the transcriptionist's voice off, for example, stopped my voice from covering the narrator's. The "add new command" feature was a hidden treasure. This allowed for the creation of self-formatted shortcuts.

Two such shortcuts were especially helpful. When I came to an unclear spot in the interview, I created the shortcut "sounds unclear" (I got to choose the catchphrase). Saying it would cause unclear to appear. Instead of having to say, "unclear, select unclear, bold that," this shortcut let me bypass vague dialogue with ease. To identify the start of a new speaker, I was having trouble getting Dragon to understand that I wanted it to type letters. Saying "MS", for instance, might yield "aim pass," among other combinations. I trained Dragon to understand that when I said, "MS", it should output "MS:" Without this shortcut I would have to say, "cap m, cap s, colon," an inefficient and frustrating technique.

After the initial dictation, I tested Dragon's proficiency at helping me edit the transcript. As I had limited time to work with Dragon, using it to help clean up the text did not work well. With Dragon, for example, if the sentence ended with the word orangutan, I needed to say, "Insert after orangutan, period." With a number of commas and periods to add and delete, the use of a mouse appeared to be a more efficient method.

After working with Dragon for a few hours and becoming more familiar with its operation, I grew attached to it. Using Dragon, it seemed, took more practice to overcome the learning curve as compared to typing a transcription. Once I established a rhythm, I could not imagine typing faster. I must add two contingencies to this last thought. First, the transcriber can work only as quickly as they understand the narrator's words. After hearing the interview, the transcriptionist must generate a reiteration either through vocal output (if using Dragon) or finger movement (if typing). We communicate using the keyboard nearly every day

of this modern age; at typing we are highly practiced students. Voice-activated writing is a new skill with which many, including myself, have no prior experience. If I improved as much as I did during my 20 hours with Dragon, I can imagine someone with daily practice could do well with it.

It may be easier to type over the voices in the interview, perhaps because the brain can more readily process the conversation while typing. After training and working with Dragon, however, I believe using it would save time over typing. It would take practice to learn to talk over the interview's voices, to be sure, but one can acquire that skill.

In my brief experience with Dragon, as long as I could understand the voices in the interview, I could shadow the conversation. I could repeat what was just said, following the interview in this manner for considerable stretches without pausing. I could not type faster than Dragon dictated. I did struggle, however, to understand the narrator or interviewer, detaining me at times from making steady progress. Not being able to hear the words would cause anyone, whether typing or using the Dragon software, excessive toil. With time anyone could grow quite adept at decoding mumbled utterances and understanding voices through poor audio quality.

Transcribing using one's voice rather than one's fingers is a new skill that takes time to master. If one can accept and expect a steeper learning curve, I believe Dragon can be used effectively. There may be some interplay between the use of Dragon and the keyboard when it comes to editing the transcription. Overall, student transcription using Dragon NaturallySpeaking seems a plausible way to transcribe interviews for the OHP.

Kirstin Duffin worked on this project for the UW-Madison Oral History Program. She has been accepted to the UW-Madison SLIS Masters Program.

Protocols for Processing Video Oral History Interviews: The Maria Rogers Oral History Program

Courtesy of Susan Becker

The Maria Rogers Oral History Program is a community-based oral history program located in the Boulder, Colorado, Carnegie Library for Local History and supported by the Boulder Public Library. The program has been collecting oral histories about the Boulder County area for thirty-two years and currently has more than 1,500 interviews available to the public.

Although our earlier interviews were recorded on analog audio cassette tapes, for the past ten years we have been recording interviews in digital video on mini-dv tape. After archiving the interview, we make DVDs of them available for viewing at our library, and we post full audio and transcripts of the interviews on our web site so these can be accessed from anywhere.

Our current protocol for the technology transfer is as follows:

1. Transfer interview from mini-dv tape to DVD for preservation purposes and public viewing. We use a multi-purpose DVD recorder (the JVC SR-DVM70) that has a mini-dv drive, a DVD drive/burner, and a hard drive that allows us to do light editing if necessary (such as removing irrelevant small talk from the beginning or end of a tape or removing blank sections in the middle of a tape before burning to DVD).

2. Create copies of the DVD. We make a preservation copy on Mitsui-Gold DVD stock and two copies on DVDs that have our program logo, contact information and copyright information silk-screened on the disks—one for the public to use at the library and one to send to the interviewee as a thank you.

3. Pull the audio off the DVD by playing it on a computer and capturing the audio with an audio editing program. Examples of software that can be used for this step include Audacity (free, open-source software), Sony's Sound Forge (moderately

ORAL HISTORY NEWS

The Oral History Program at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library & Museum

Submitted by Jennifer Beaton

Photo by Cecil Stoughton/John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston

Since 1964 the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library has been actively collecting, preserving, and providing access to the oral histories of individuals associated with President Kennedy. The purpose of the collection is to contribute to a more complete understanding of John F. Kennedy's life, his presidency, and the major personalities of his time.

The oral history program is one of the oldest continuing activities of the library, and to date the collection totals more than 1,500 interviews. The extensive holdings include a wide range of participants, including members of the Administration, staff, and personal friends of the Kennedy family. Some of those interviewed are prominent public figures, others are relatively obscure private individuals who played limited or specialized roles in the history of the times. To add breadth, the collection includes interviews with members of Congress, public officials, national and state political leaders, business and labor leaders, journalists, civil rights leaders, foreign government officials, and people who opposed Kennedy administration policies.

In a similar manner, to supplement the personal papers of Robert F. Kennedy, the collection includes a series of interviews on RFK's career, concentrating on his role as Attorney General of the United States, Senator from New York, and candidate for the Presidency in 1968.

Among the interviewees held in the collection are presidential advisor Dean Acheson, columnist Arthur Buchwald, President Gerald Ford, astronaut John Glenn, Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara, Secretary of State Dean Rusk, Supreme Court Justice Felix Frankfurter, and journalist Helen Thomas.

During the past year over one hundred transcripts have been placed online through the Library's website in order to provide increased access for researchers and library patrons.

The oral history program is part of the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library's Archives, which include 48 million pages of documents from the collections of over 350 individuals, organizations, or government agencies; oral history interviews with over 1,500 people; and more than 30,000 books. The Audiovisual Archives administers collections of more than 200,000 still photographs, 7,550,000 feet of motion picture film, 1,200 hours of video recordings, over 7,000 hours of audio recordings and 500 original editorial cartoons.

The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum is administered by the National Archives and Records Administration and supported, in part, by the John F. Kennedy Library Foundation, a non-profit organization. The John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum and the Kennedy Library Foundation seek to promote, through scholarship, educational and community programs, a greater appreciation and understanding of American politics, history, and culture, the process of governing and the importance of public service.

John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum, Boston

The Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum is open daily from 9:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m., with the exceptions of Thanksgiving Day, Christmas Day, and New Year's Day. The Research Room is open 8:30 am – 4:30 pm each weekday, and is closed on weekends

and Federal Holidays. Appointments may be made by calling (617) 514-1629. The Library is located in the Dorchester section of Boston, off Morrissey Boulevard, next to the campus of the University of Massachusetts/Boston. Parking is free. There is free shuttle-service from the JFK/UMass T Stop on the Red Line. The Museum is fully handicapped accessible. For more information, call (866) JFK-1960 or access our website.

For more information regarding the Oral History Program at the John F. Kennedy Presidential Library and Museum please visit our website or contact jennifer.beaton@nara.gov.

2008 Wisconsin Oral History Day: The Start of Something New

By Troy Reeves, Head of Oral History Program, University of Wisconsin-Madison

The 2008 Wisconsin Oral History Day (WOHD) started as a dream in October 2007. As the only, full-time oral historian in state/university system, Troy Reeves— head of the oral history program at UW-Madison— followed the leadership and long-range goals of the UW-Madison's General Library System to bring the oral history program out into the community. Over the next few months, Reeves found logistical, financial, and content support. The Continuing Education Services (a division of the School of Library and Information Studies), for example, provided yeoman's work implementing the event's logistics. Sponsors—such as the Wisconsin Humanities Council, the UW-Madison's General Library System, the Friends of the University of Wisconsin-Madison Library, and public and oral history programs at UW-Eau Claire and UW-LaCrosse—offered financial support to make the morning workshop fee greatly reduced and the afternoon's activities free. In-kind or content support from the Wisconsin Historical Society, UW-Madison's Folklore Program, and the Center for the Study of Upper Midwestern Cultures helped to bring the event's participants together.

Bringing the event's participants together arose as one effective aspect of WOHD. People from throughout Wisconsin (10 counties including Dane) and individuals from two surrounding states (Iowa & Minnesota) brought their interest in oral history together to actively participate in the morning workshop and to attend the afternoon plenary, roundtables, and keynote events. These people can become part of an oral history community in not only Wisconsin but also the region. (People from two other states, Illinois & Michigan, expressed interest in attending but could not make it.)

Another of WOHD's strengths arose from our use of the Internet as the sole advertising device. Anna Palmer and Reeves tapped into their email lists, as well as the local history listserv, overseen by the Wisconsin Historical Society to effectively target those people (graduate students, staff, and faculty in applicable departments, and men and women involved in history related profession/avocations throughout Wisconsin and the region) who would want to be involved in WOHD. We sent emails in November to announce the idea, in February when our online program went live, and in late March as a "two-week warning" email. Doing this allowed us to avoid putting any of our limited funds into advertising, and it allowed us to get a strong turnout of the exact men and women we thought would attend this event.

These men and women have offered positive anecdotal evidence through their strong comments before, during, and after WOHD. Anna Palmer (from the aforementioned Continuing Education Services) and Reeves created and compiled a survey that Palmer posted to Survey Monkey. The people who responded to it offered constructive comments to help WOHD stakeholders make improvements to future Days.

To expand on attendees' comments, any event worth doing should include answers to the question, "What we would do differently?" Well, WOHD ended up being too long. While nearly 60 different people attended all or part of the activities, the attendance lagged by our last event, our keynote, sponsored by the Wisconsin Humanities Council. Future Wisconsin Oral History Days will probably morph into two shorter days or one shorter day (with perhaps a reception the previous evening) to give people the

opportunity to see what they want and to offer a strong, robust showing at all of WOHD's activities.

We would also like to tap into other sources of possible attendees, particularly the state's schoolteacher. Oral history has and can be a vital part of an educator's learning toolbox. With our email "advertising," we either did not reach or did not receive response from anyone with the state's education community. We know that this constituency will be paramount for the future success of not only WOHD but also oral history in general. We will work between now and the next event to make positive connections with whomever we can to make sure teachers know, and more importantly, attend future WOHDs. Although men and women from the Ho Chunk Nation did attend the workshop, we also intend to make more connections with the state's many Native American tribes, as well as other Wisconsin cultural groups. It will take a village to make WOHD grow and flourish.

We chose "The Start of Something New" as the initial WOHD subtitle. Although we dropped it from all official communication, we feel, in the event's aftermath, the phrase's resonance. We sincerely believe that the 2008 Wisconsin Oral History Day will begin a beautiful friendship between the UW-Madison Oral History Program and those interested individuals throughout the state and region.

The George Mason University Oral History Project

By Leah Donnelly, GMU-OHP Coordinator

Since its inception in 1999, the George Mason University Oral History Program (GMU-OHP) has conducted hundreds of interviews with members of the Mason community. As a part of the University's Special Collection & Archives, the program has worked to expand the historical perspectives related to our extensive theater collections (Arena Stage, Federal Theater Project of the 1930s) and our Planned Community Archives. With new state-of-art equipment and facilities, the GMU-OHP has several new initiatives underway.

Recent interviews include Pulitzer Prize winner and George Mason University Robinson Professor of History and American Culture Roger Wilkins, Arena Stage staple Robert Prosky of Hill Street Blues fame, and Robert E. Simon, founder and visionary of the planned community of Reston, Virginia. The program has also expanded its purview to include a focus on student-run campus organizations.
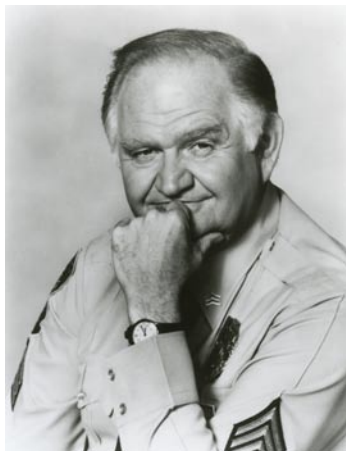
Robert Prosky from Hill Street Blues, courtesy of the Robert Prosky Collection of Special Collections & Archives, George Mason University Libraries

The GMU-OHP spent much of the Fall 2007 semester conducting interviews with students and faculty directors of GMU's much lauded and recognized Forensics Team. Upcoming projects include continuing the focus on student-run organizations, particularly with a view to the culturally diverse student body, as well as a project sponsored by the Office of the President to interview friends and supporters of the University.

For more information contact Leah Donnelly, ldonnell@gmu.edu. To view the collections, please visit: http://specialcollections.gmu.edu/

Rocking the Boat: Studs Terkel's 20th Century

Submitted by Al Stein

In honor of Studs Terkel's 96th birthday (May 16, 2008) please follow this link to my co-production entitled: ROCKING THE BOAT: Studs Terkel's 20TH CENTURY.

GOOGLE VIDEO: Rocking the Boat - 15 min - May 9, 2008 - Mir Productions, Inc.

SYNOPSIS: In this 15 minute trailer, Studs Terkel, Hazel Wolf, Victor Reuther, Norman Corwin, Stetson Kennedy and others talk about their activism in the last century. ROCKING THE BOAT: STUDS TERKEL'S 20TH CENTURY, is an educational DVD which began as a PBS documentary for KCTS, Seattle in 1998. It is adapted, with permission, from Studs Terkel's COMING OF AGE. ROCKING THE BOAT takes a close look at the social progress achieved during the last century and how it was achieved, as seen through the eyes of 95 -year-old oral historian Studs Terkel (who was 85 years young when the production was filmed) and nearly a dozen of his contemporaries. There will be an accompanying Web site in addition to this Google Video work-in-progress.

PRODUCED BY John de Graaf (KCTS, Public T.V.), Alan H. Stein, and Mirko Popadic (Mir Productions), Chicago, IL.

Enhancing the Traditional Oral Record: SWE Archives Partners with StoryCorps®

Submitted by Deborah Rice, Walter P. Reuther Library, Wayne State University

Since 2001, the Society of Women Engineers (SWE) Archives has actively collected oral histories of its membership, documenting the lives of pioneering women engineers who began their careers in the 1940s, 50s, and 60s. The result thus far has been the creation of a valuable supplement to the Society's records [clips from these oral histories may be found on the 'About SWE' page]. Yet, in addition to this well-established project, the Archives has also explored different methods of gathering stories from SWE members. The Society's 60th anniversary, right around the corner in 2010, proved to be the catalyst for a new oral history project.

Given the charge of developing a four-year celebration plan that would build excitement leading up to the actual anniversary year, the Archives had to decide on a specific course of action that would best directly involve the membership. As SWE archivist,

I searched for the means to motivate members and give them a more active role in creating their own history.

Serendipitously, I was listening to the NPR StoryCorps® program one Friday morning on my way into work. If you're a listener, you're perhaps aware of these stories' powerful effect. In just a few short minutes, listeners are given some profound insights into the lives of average Americans. While no trained professional is involved, it is arguable that these informal conversations between two people with intimate knowledge of each other have produced invaluable historical records. The project represented to me the quintessential idea of 'history from the bottom up,' and it seemed a good fit for what the archives was trying to accomplish. There are countless stories of friendships, professional and academic relationships, and even families within the SWE membership. I could not imagine a better way to capture this unique dynamic.

When I arrived at work that morning I immediately went online. My original thought was to take the basic idea behind the project and reproduce the process myself. What I discovered was a program called Door-to-Door, whereby an organization could bring in two facilitators, with professional recording equipment, to a desired location to conduct interviews. An attractive prospect, however, there were certain disadvantages: the cost could be potentially prohibitive, the facilitators were not formally trained oral historians, and the Archives would have limited control over the process and its outcome. In fact, SWE would not own copyright to the interviews.

After several conversations with StoryCorps®, concerns regarding the production, Archives involvement, and terms of use were allayed. The Archives would work closely with StoryCorps® staff throughout the partnership to craft the interviews – everything from contacting the participants to providing suggested questions. And, while they could not give SWE copyright ownership, their terms were very fair. In fact, StoryCorps® was happy to tweak the contract to accommodate several concerns. The funding and copyright turned out to be non-issues with the SWE leadership, as they were ecstatic about the prospect of working with this well-known organization. The fact that the interviews would be

archived at the Library of Congress, in addition to the SWE Archives, also held substantial appeal. This was exactly the response the Archives needed to encourage member participation.

In keeping with the theme of SWE's 60th anniversary, 'Success On Our Own Terms,' the Archives chose one of SWE's primary functions, career guidance, as the subject for the interviews. Members were invited to share personal experiences about mentoring or encouraging women to become successful engineers. Engineering educators and industry professionals were asked to identify one woman they've sponsored along her way to becoming a successful engineer, as partners in a conversation about their relationship.

The result: eight pairs of informal interviews about a topic SWE highly values. These were oral histories of a more organic nature than may have been possible with a trained, professional interviewer. Each pair have a history together that produced avenues of discussion, which might not have arisen in a more traditional setting. The mechanics of recording were very professionally managed by the StoryCorps® facilitators, resulting in a finer quality audio record than the Archives could have accomplished on its own. All consideration was taken into account for a complete archival document: photographs were taken and data sheets were filled out by participants. A subject index was created for each interview and audio files were stored according to acceptable archival standards.

While, at first, I was hesitant to let go of control over an important oral documentation, I was pleasantly surprised with how well it turned out. The Archives ended up with a distinctive record that highlights some of the most important subjects to women engineers and consequently to the Society. This set of oral histories will effectively supplement SWE history and add a unique voice to the written record. Plans are already in place to duplicate this pilot project annually, culminating in the 60th anniversary year.

ORAL HISTORY SPOTLIGHT: TECHNOLOGY (continued)

priced), and Adobe Audition (more expensive) A sound editing program allows us to do such things as remove background hum or hiss, or increase the decibel level of recordings that are too soft. We save the resulting audio as a .wav file for preservation (uncompressed) and an .mp3 file (compressed) for faster internet streaming.

4. Transcribe the audio file using audio playback software. We use Express Scribe (free from http://www.nch.com.au/scribe/), which can handle both .wav and .mp3 files (as well as many other audio formats). Express Scribe will work with or without a foot pedal. If you don't use a foot pedal, the program allows you to program hot keys into your keyboard for such functions as start, stop, backup by a preset number of seconds, play slowly, play fast, and so on. It also has a time-index-number readout.

Susan Becker is Program Manager of the Maria Rogers Oral History Program of Boulder's Carnegie Branch Library for Local History.

To view/listen to oral histories:
www.bplcarnegie.org/oralhistory

To search oral histories by keyword:
http://nell.boulder.lib.co.us/

Oral History Section

SOCIETY OF American Archivists

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New leadership assumes office at the close of the annual meeting of the section.

Purpose of the SAA Oral History Section

The Oral History Section of the Society of American Archivists is composed of members of the Society and others who are interested in or are actively engaged in conducting oral history interviews and/or teach oral history methodology. The Oral History Section provides a forum for news, for discussion of issues and developments, and for establishing and maintaining communication and cooperation with other professional organizations.

Read the rest of the Section's By-laws

Next Issue of *Dialogue*

The August issue will feature our first **literature review** of oral history publications from the previous year. This will have two components: a bibliography of recent books, articles, websites, blogs, wikis, etc; and selected reviews of individual publications. If you are interested in recommending bibliographical entries and/or writing a review, please let Lauren or Joel know. We hope to make this a feature of every August newsletter and possibly provide a print version to attendees of the annual Oral History Section meeting.

We are also accepting regular **submissions** for the August issue. Report on significant projects, donations, exhibitions, grants received, and similar activities. Write an article to offer practical assistance or to discuss professional issues. Make announcements for upcoming workshops, articles, sessions, etc. Contact Joel to make a submission. **Deadline** is August 1.

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