

News / Les Nouvelles

THE MARITIMES:

Report of the Closing Meeting
of the 2nd Atlantic Oral History Conference
held on October 19th, 1980
at the Memramcook Institute, Memramcook, N.B.

1. Gary Hughes began by mentioning the two points to be considered: First, should our group found an Atlantic Oral History Association? Secondly, where should we hold the next oral history conference?
2. A discussion followed, concerning the founding of an association. The difficulties of finding funds for meetings without being constituted as an association were mentioned. The problems of founding an association, choosing an executive, and preparing a constitution were then discussed. As many of those present seemed to favour the creation of an association having an informal structure, it was suggested by Jim Morrison that we form an association with a simple constitution and with a steering committee that acts as an executive. This suggestion receiving favourable comments, Gary Hughes then proposed that a constitution be prepared by Jim Morrison, Ronald Labelle and himself and that the proposed constitution be shown to conference participants before being considered for adoption.
3. Links with the Canadian Oral History Association were discussed and Jim Morrison suggested that the conference report be sent to the COHA.
4. A discussion then followed, concerning the location of next year's conference. Halifax was mentioned as a possible location, as well as Prince Edward Island, Orono (Maine) and Sydney, N.S. An invitation coming from Dr. Robert Morgan of the Beaton Institute in Sydney was transmitted by Elizabeth Beaton-Planetta, while an invitation coming from Dr. Edward Ives of the University of Maine at Orono was transmitted by Joan Brooks. J.B. added that a meeting in Orono could be held jointly with the 1981 meeting of the New England Oral History Association. The problem of obtaining sufficient travel grants to cover long distance travel was then discussed.
5. In order to finalize the discussion concerning the founding of an association, Jim Morrison read the following motion (seconded by Jim Hornby):
"That the Atlantic Oral History Conference retain its present informal structure and direct coordinators of this conference to suggest a proposed constitution for an Atlantic Oral History Association next year."
The motion was carried unanimously.
6. Concerning the holding of next year's conference, various possibilities were studied, with much debate taking place on the issue of the University of Maine at Orono versus the Beaton Institute in Sydney. A motion proposed by Jim Morrison (seconded by Janet McGinity) was then read:
"That the 1981 Atlantic Oral History Conference be held in Orono with the second choice being the Beaton Institute, depending upon funding arrangements."
It was then stated that representatives of the University of Maine and the Beaton Institute should keep in close contact and that the other members of the steering

committee, Gary Hughes, Ronald Labelle, Jim Morrison, Jim Hornby, and Cyril Byrne, should also be consulted before a final decision is taken. The motion was then voted on and was carried by a margin of nine (9) to six (6).

7. Gary Hughes then adjourned the meeting and Jim Morrison proposed that the two organizers of the 1980 meeting be congratulated for their efforts.

Ronald Labelle
Centre d'Etudes acadiennes
University of Moncton

ONTARIO:

The Multicultural History Society of Ontario

Over the past three years, the Multicultural History Society of Ontario has amassed an extensive oral history collection. It consists of some 6,000 cassette tapes of interviews with members of more than 50 ethnocultural groups. In order to obtain the most candid and open discussion between interviewees and interviewers, interviews are recorded in whichever language the interviewee finds most comfortable. Therefore, approximately 60% of the interviews are in languages other than English or French. Most of the tapes are unrestricted, but some donors have chosen to place restrictions on their interviews.

Because of the size of the collection, transcripts are not made of most interviews, though these do exist in a few rare cases. When, however, an interview is recorded, the interviewer fills out a log (or half-page summary) of the contents. A log form is available for every tape in our collection. The Society is presently preparing a computer guide to the oral history section. The computer guide will allow access to tapes by ethnic groups, date of arrival in Canada, area of residence, etc. It will also have a broad set of subject categories.

Services

The Society provides access to the oral history collection to any interested researcher. Listening facilities are provided at the Society offices at 77 Grenville Street. Since space is somewhat limited, arrangements must be made in advance. All requests for access to tapes must be submitted in writing. The Society does not sell copies of taped interviews. Researchers who cannot make use of the Society's own facilities in Toronto may arrange to listen to tapes at one of several Ontario institutions with which the Society maintains reciprocal agreements. We will be pleased to provide details of how this can be arranged.

Researchers outside Ontario may approach a local university, library, or similar institution for listening facilities. Such an institution must confirm its willingness to provide this service, in writing, to the Multicultural History Society. This written confirmation must accompany any application for the loan of tapes. The Society does not send tapes on loan to private homes.

Limits on Tape Loans

Only ten tapes may be borrowed at any one time. Tapes are loaned for a period of up to 30 days. Additional tapes will not be sent out while previous loans remain outstanding. The Society will cover mailing and handling costs. No tapes may be copied--the holding institution will be so advised. Restricted tapes are not released for outside loan. The above limits also apply to tapes used at the Society.

The Society will undertake to negotiate the waiver of restrictions on any tape. Since this must be done in writing, the researcher should be prepared for a delay in the release of the tape. There is no guarantee that such a waiver can invariably be obtained.

Inquiries

Inquiries about specific aspects of the collection and requests for access to tapes should be addressed to the Society administration office: Victoria Wilcox, Tape Curator, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, 43 Queen's Park Crescent East, Toronto, Ontario M5S 2C3.

ALBERTA:

Provincial Archives of Alberta

A survey of oral history tapes already in existence in Alberta has just been completed. Initiated and directed by the Provincial Archives of Alberta, the survey was undertaken in order to identify gaps in the geographical and subject coverage of oral history already available so that future oral history projects will be conducted on a more orderly basis. With financial assistance from the Alberta Historical Resources Foundation, a researcher/surveyor has travelled systematically throughout the province since September 1979, visiting local museums, archives, historical societies, libraries, and private individuals with tapes in their possession. Once the returns have been edited for consistency, the survey will be published by the Provincial Archives of Alberta. It will contain a listing of the holdings of each institution or individual, including names of informant and interviewer, date of interview, subject and date coverage of the recorded information, and availability of indexes and finding aids. It will also include an alphabetical index of the main people, places and subjects mentioned on the tapes. The survey should be available by the end of February 1981, and requests for copies should be sent to: Oral History Survey, Provincial Archives of Alberta, 12845 - 102 Avenue, Edmonton, Alberta T5N 0M6. There will be no charge for the publication.

Jean Dryden
Senior Archivist
Provincial Archives of Alberta

SASKATCHEWAN:

Saskatchewan Archives Board

With the departure of Claudia Buckley to Ottawa, the Saskatchewan Sound Archives Programme, a section of the Saskatchewan Archives Board, is now headed by Krzysztof Gebhard, formerly Oral History Co-Ordinator, Multicultural History Society of Ontario. D'Arcy Hande is responsible for the collection of sound recordings at the Saskatoon office.

The technical facilities of the Regina-based Sound Archives Programme have recently been upgraded with the expansion of the audio equipment inventory. Tape recordings of varying formats can now be processed efficiently. The recent announcement that a modern Archives building will be constructed in Regina means that the collection of sound recordings will be housed in properly designed storage areas by the mid 1980's.

In addition to expanding and maintaining a collection of broadcast material, the Sound Archives Programme continues to gather oral history sources that mirror Saskatchewan's history and chronicle current developments. The oral history collection housed in Regina exceeds 2,500 hours. As in the past, the Programme engaged a number of individuals in 1980 on a contractual basis to carry out oral history research. Regular staff members also conduct interviews frequently. The majority of oral history projects are originated in the Archives and closely monitored by the staff at all stages of the process. The interviews collected are diversified in content and social milieu of the informants.

One of the more ambitious projects currently underway is an effort to tape-record the reminiscences of Saskatchewan women involved in the early days of the Canadian Co-operative Federation movement. The women interviewed include those who played an active role in the organization and those who stayed in the background but closely observed the developments. In the 1930's and 1940's the power base of the CCF was its grassroots organization in which women played a major part.

The search for natural resources in the province has spread the influences of modern society upon the northern inhabitants at an unprecedented pace. The Sound Archives is carrying out a project to interview the native inhabitants of the small northern community of La Loche in order to document the character of its inhabitants and their reaction to the recent changes that have affected their lifestyles.

In 1979 the 50-year old Capitol Theatre, a Saskatoon landmark, was demolished after a struggle by heritage groups and individuals who felt it should be preserved. The Archives has organized a project to retain at least the memories of the theatre. Nostalgic former patrons and employees have been interviewed as well as those involved in the more recent controversy, the city aldermen, architects, developers and demonstrators.

As in other provinces, Saskatchewan writers and poets often face obstacles in publishing their work. This situation has resulted in the establishment of a number of literary small press publishers across the province. By interviewing the people involved in such ventures the Archives' aim is to determine the development, growth, viability, and often demise of the small publishing house.

Mennonite traditions are examined in another oral history project. The interviews among the Mennonites include descriptions of cooking traditional foods, meat processing, soapmaking, sewing, special holidays and storytelling and singing. Oral history of this character contributes to a better understanding of the "ethnic identity" in the context of Saskatchewan's multicultural heritage.

Oral history was also one of the major components of a drive to locate and preserve sources relating to the history and culture of the French Canadian settlement in the province. The life and times of the Fransaskois were revealed as individuals from Willowbunch, St. Louis, Gravelbourg, Montmartre and Lafleche recorded their life stories, impressions and opinions.

Perhaps the most ambitious oral history project undertaken by the Sound Archives is a comprehensive effort to conduct interviews and research existing sources for publication on Saskatchewan folklore. The publication will appear in the form of a handbook and will introduce the people of the province to the kinds of traditions which surround them. It is anticipated that the book will be available for distribution in the Spring of 1982.

1980 is the year that Saskatchewan is celebrating its 75th anniversary. In commemoration of this jubilee, the Sound Archives initiated a project designed

to promote the use of oral history in the classroom. Assisted by the "Celebrate Saskatchewan Committee", the Archives engaged two full-time staff members and invited every grade seven pupil in the province to interview a grandparent or another senior citizen. Archives staff conducted workshops and instructed teachers and students in proper interview techniques and provided stimuli to use the material. The response to the project has been overwhelming, as over 6,000 discovered a fascinating way to study history and rediscover their grandparents.

The strong interest in oral history in the province prompted the Saskatchewan Archives Board to organize and host the 1st Saskatchewan Oral History Conference to be held at the University of Regina May 1-2, 1981. The primary purpose of the scheduled conference is to gather together individuals who are applying oral history methodology to research, teaching, writing, broadcasting and numerous other areas. Sessions will concern themselves with the history and development of the modern oral history movement in Canada, folklore, Indian/Native studies, classroom applications, history, sociology and publishing. The conference will feature a major address by historian and President Emeritus of the University of Regina, John Archer. Some of the other participants will include: Robert Cosbey, University of Regina; Krzysztof Gebhard, Saskatchewan Archives Board; Peter S. Li, University of Saskatchewan; Richard Lohead, Public Archives of Canada; John Lyons, University of Saskatchewan; Derek Reimer, British Columbia Aural History Program; Charles Sutyla, Saskatchewan Department of Culture and Youth; Michael Taft, University of Saskatchewan; Loraine Thompson, Saskatchewan Archives Board; Ian Wilson, Saskatchewan Archives Board; Barbara Roberts, University of Winnipeg; David Millar, University of Winnipeg; and Michael E. Korn, Montana Arts Council.

The Saskatoon office of the Saskatchewan Archives Board has been active in gathering audio discs and tapes since the 1950's and its collection presently comprises about 500 hours of listening time. A large part of the collection is based on radio broadcasts of political figures in the CCF, Progressive Conservative, and Liberal parties. These are supplemented with interviews of individuals involved in the political life of the province which were conducted by archives staff and others.

Archives staff have also conducted many interviews on an ad hoc basis with people of various backgrounds and careers in the fine arts, business, industry, journalism, education, labour unions, and pioneer agriculture.

Audiotapes have come from private individuals relating to specialized topics. Numerous items have been deposited on the history of the CCF, in the form of interviews by A.M. Nicholson. Prof. E.A. Tollefson donated a series of recorded interviews on the Medicare crisis in Saskatchewan. A collection of interviews conducted by G. Berteig and G. Rose was donated which provides valuable information on the Saskatchewan Jewish community. Recordings by M. McEnaney with Dr. Humphry Osmond and other specialists in the field of schizophrenia were recently acquired by the Saskatoon office. A number of interviews and recordings of live events have been added to the collection relating to the Hudson Bay Route Association and their interest in the port of Churchill. The Saskatoon Alliance of Youth and the Elderly presented a large series of recordings of community pioneers.

The Archives has commissioned interviews on specialized topics. One such series in the Saskatoon office is that of John Henderson who talked to fifty former school teachers on educational developments in Saskatchewan. In addition, the Saskatoon office continues to respond to suggestions of possible informants and to audition sound recordings offered to the Archives from outside sources.

For more information on the Saskatchewan Sound Archives Programme and registration forms for the upcoming conference, please write the Saskatchewan

Sound Archives Programme, Saskatchewan Archives Board, University of Regina, Regina, Saskatchewan S4S 0A2.

Krzysztof Gebhard
Head
Saskatchewan Sound Archives Programme

BRITISH COLUMBIA:

The Provincial Archives of British Columbia

The Aural History Program of the Provincial Archives of British Columbia has been renamed the "Sound and Moving Image Division". The new title recognizes that the Division is now the official arm of the PABC with responsibility for film and video source materials, as well as sound documents. At present the Division is making some progress in the areas of acquisition and cataloguing of "moving image" documents. However, an aggressive acquisition policy has been postponed until additional technical and archival staff can be hired and suitable user service facilities can be provided.

This past summer the Sound and Moving Image Division was the beneficiary of two very successful summer student projects. With the help of federal funding from the Secretary of State's Youth Employment Program, the cataloguing of the Imbert Orchard collection of sound recordings was virtually completed. This collection consists of interviews with almost 1000 members of the pioneer generation of British Columbia conducted by Imbert Orchard in the mid-1960s. The collection is one of the finest bodies of resource materials on the common man in B.C. and emphasizes the period 1870-1914. The cataloguing of this collection is a major accomplishment. In addition, by virtue of a provincially-funded Work in Government Program, the Division acquired new source materials on the history of the Chinese in British Columbia. Theresa Low was employed for a period of four months during which she helped prepare a finding aid to the Sound and Moving Image Division's holdings on Chinese source materials. During the course of the summer, Ms. Low also conducted an extensive survey of sound documents related to the Chinese in B.C. and recorded several interviews with Chinese pioneers in the province.

The Sound and Moving Image Division continues to publish volumes in its popular "Sound Heritage Series". Recent issues include: The Magnificent Distances - Early Aviation in British Columbia, 1910-1940, by Dennis Duffy and Carol Crane; and Season's Greetings From British Columbia's Past - Christmas as Celebrated in British Columbia from the 1880s to the 1930s, by Rich Mole.

Derek Reimer
Head
Sound and Moving Image Division