Προφορική Μαρτυρία και Ελληνική Διασπορική Ιστορία

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Προφορική Μαρτυρία και Ελληνική Διασπορική Ιστορία

Εισαγωγή

"Χωρίς αμφιβολία η καλύτερη πηγή για τη μελέτη της πλειάδας των κινήτρων που τον οδήγησαν στην απόφαση να μεταναστεύσει, αλλά και για την καταγραφή των λεπτομερειών της μετάβασης του, είναι ο μετανάστης ο ίδιος." (Robert F. Harney)

Η ιδέα ότι ο ερευνητής της διασποράς θα μπορούσε ν'αγγίξει την ιστορική, ανθρωπολογική ή εθνογραφική διάσταση του φαινομένου απευθείας μέσω του μετανάστη, χωρίς να εξαρτάται μόνο από κυβερνητικά έγγραφα και άλλα επίσημα ντοκουμέντα και αρχεία, δεν είναι κάτι καινοφανές. Ήδη από το δεύτερο μισό του 19ου αιώνα, ο Hubert Howe Bancroft είχε αρχίσει να δημιουργεί ένα αρχείο, συλλέγοντας προσωπικές μαρτυρίες από διαφορετικές ομάδες και φυλετικές κοινότητες που είχαν εγκατασταθεί στην Καλιφόρνια και τις Δυτικές πολιτείες της Αμερικής την εποχή εκείνη.[1] Μερικά χρόνια αργότερα, το 1888, ο Καναδός ιστορικός Robert Sellar θα δημοσιεύσει το βιβλίο του *History of Huntingdon County and the Seigniories of Chateauguay and Beauharnois*, που παρουσιάζει την ιστορία της συγκεκριμένης περιοχής του Κεμπέκ μέσα από τις προφορικές μαρτυρίες τριακοσίων και πλέον από τους πρώτους Ευρωπαίους αποίκους, που είχαν εγκατασταθεί εκεί.

Ο 20ος αιώνας θα δει όχι μόνο την έξαρση της μετανάστευσης προς το Νέο Κόσμο αλλά και μια πιό συστηματική προσπάθεια καταγραφής και ανάλυσης του φαινομένου, μέσω των προφορικών μαρτυριών. Ο καθηγητής του πανεπιστημίου Columbia της Νέα Υόρκης Allan Nevins, θα εισάγει δυναμικά το 1938 την προφορική μαρτυρία στις κύριες πηγές της ιστοριογραφίας με το βιβλίο του *The Gateway to History*. Ένα χρόνο αργότερα, το 1939, μέσω του μεγάλου προγράμματος της Αμερικάνικης κυβέρνησης για την καταγραφή και ανάλυση της πολιτισμικής και κοινωνικής πολυμορφίας των ΗΠΑ, μέσω του Federal Writers' Project, χιλιάδες προφορικές συνεντεύξεις θα συλλεχθούν από όλες τις πολιτείες της Αμερικής και μέσα σε αυτές θα συμπεριληφθούν πολλές (κυρίως πρώτης γενιάς) μεταναστών. Οι Αμερικάνοι ανθρωπολόγοι της εποχής θεώρησαν ότι οι συνεντεύξεις αυτές, μαζί με τη συστηματική παρακολούθηση και τη συλλογή πληροφοριών, ήταν η καλύτερη και πιο ουσιαστική «τεχνική» για τη μελέτη της πολιτιστικής αφομοίωσης των διαφόρων μεταναστευτικών και διασπορικών

[1] Για μια συνοπτική ανασκόπηση της ιστορικής εξέλιξης της προφορικής ιστορίας, Βλ. Rebecca Sharpless, "The History of Oral History," στο *History of Oral History: Foundations and Methodology,* επ. Thomas L. Charlton, Lois E. Myers, και Rebecca Sharpless (California: Altamira Press, 2007), 9-32. (Παράρτημα 1)

κοινοτήτων της Αμερικής.[2] Αυτή είναι και η πρώτη φορά που συναντούμε μια, σχετικά, συστηματική συλλογή τέτοιων προφορικών μαρτυριών και από Έλληνες μετανάστες της Αμερικής.[3]

Έτσι, από την αρχική περίοδο της συστηματικής μελέτης και καταγραφή της στο πέρασμα των δεκαετιών 1940 και 1950, η προφορική ιστορία δημιούργησε ένα κύμα ενθουσιασμού στους μελετητές των εθνοτήτων και διασπορών της Αμερικής, στους ανθρωπολόγους και κοινωνιολόγους, τους εθνογράφους και ιστορικούς. Η προφορική μαρτυρία μπορούσε να εισχωρήσει, να δημιουργήσει αφηγήσεις και να δώσει απαντήσεις εκεί όπου άλλες (επίσημες) πηγές παρέμεναν σιωπηλές ή πολύ απλά αόρατες. Η ικανότητα των προφορικών μαρτυριών να περιγράψουν και να χρωματίσουν τις συνθήκες εργασίας της χαμηλής τάξης, την ποιότητα ζωής τους και τις καθημερικές κοινωνικές και πολιτιστικές δραστηριότητες δημιούργησε τόσο την ανάγκη και το ενδιαφέρον για μια ιστορία «από κάτω» όσο και ένα πρώιμο πλαίσιο μελέτης των κοινωνικών αυτών φαινομένων, προετοιμάζοντας έτσι τους ιστορικούς και κοινωνικούς επιστήμονες για την δεκαετία του 1960, όπου τεράστιες κοινωνικοπολιτικές μεταβολές θα λάβουν χώρα στο αμερικανικό πολυπολιτισμικό παλίμψηστο.

Το 1956, ένας από τους πρώτους και σημαντικότερους μελετητές της ιστορίας των Ελλήνων της Αμερικής, ο Θεόδωρος Σαλούτος, θα δημοσιεύσει τη μελέτη του *They remember America : the story of the repatriated Greek-Americans,* η οποία είναι και η πρώτη ολοκληρωμένη εθνογραφική μελέτη των Ελλήνων που αποφάσισαν να επιστρέψουν στην Ελλάδα από την Αμερική και η οποία στηρίζεται κυρίως στις προσωπικές μαρτυρίες των ιδίων των επαναπατρισμένων Ελλήνων μεταναστών των πρώτων δεκαετιών του εικοστού αιώνα.[4]

Τη δεκαετία του 1960 οι προφορικές μαρτυρίες ξαναεμφανίστηκαν στο προσκήνιο της ιστοριογραφικής μελέτης και εθνογραφικής έρευνας κυρίως λόγω

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[2] Ο Νικόλας Κάλας, μία από τις σημαντικότερες μορφές του ελληνικού μοντερνισμού που εγκαταστάθηκε μετά το 1939 στην Αμερική, συνεργάστηκε την δεκαετία του 1940 με τη διάσημη αμερικανίδα ανθρωπολόγο του πανεπιστημίου Columbia της Νέας Υόρκης, την Margaret Mead, πάνω σε ανθρωπολογικά ζητήματα που είχαν σχέση και με τη μετανάστευση. Περισσότερες πληροφορίες μπορούν να βρεθούν στα αρχεία του πανεπιστημίου.

[3] Παράρτημα 2.

[4] Βλ. Γιώργος Καλογεράς, "The 'Other Space' of Greek America" στο *American Literary History 10:4* (1998), 702-724. Επίσης, Γιώργος Αναγνώστου, *Contours of White Ethnicity: Popular Ethnography and the Making of Usable Pasts in Greek America* (Ohio UP, 2009), 20. Βλ. επίσης, Ιωάννα Λαλιώτου, *Transatlantic Subjects: Acts of Migration and Cultures of Transnationalism between Greece and America* (The University of Chicago Press, 2004), 192-196.

του Κινήματος για τα Ατομικά και Κοινωνικά Δικαιώματα που ταρακούνησε τη μεταπολεμική Αμερική. Συνέπεια αυτών των κοινωνικοπολιτικών αναταράξεων ήταν τοπικοί και εθνικοί οργανισμοί, σύλλογοι και κοινότητες, φορείς και πανεπιστήμια να άρχισουν να καταγράφουν συστηματικά τις πολυσυλλεκτικές μαρτυρίες των συμμετεχόντων σε αυτό το κίνημα, αλλά και να δίνουν μεγαλύτερη έμφαση στις διάφορες εθνικές/διασπορικές κοινότητες (και μειονότητες) που είχαν αρχίσει να βγαίνουν τώρα στο προσκήνιο της αμερικανικής πολιτικής ζωής.[5] Σημαντικό ρόλο επίσης στην αύξηση του ενδιαφέροντος της ιστορίας και εμπειρίας των μεταναστών στον Νέο Κόσμο έπαιξε και η εμφάνιση νέων μελετητών ή ακόμα και φοιτητών της ιστορίας των διαφορετικών εθνοτικών κοινοτήτων της Αμερικής. Πολλές φορές παιδιά μεταναστών, που τα ίδια έβρισκαν την πλέον πολυπολιτισμικά συνειδοτοποιημένη κοινωνία της Αμερικής του 1970 και 1980 ως ένα κοινωνικό εργαστήριο για να μάθουν περισσότερα για τη ζωή των μεταναστών γονιών και προγόνων τους πίσω στην πατρίδα, καθώς και για το μεταναστευτικό τους ταξίδι και τις προκλήσεις που αντιπετώπισαν κατά την περίοδο της εγκατάστασης τους στην Αμερική.[6]

Η δεκαετία του 1980 βρήκε την αμερικάνική κοινωνία πληγωμένη αλλά και διχασμένη από τον καταστροφικό, για πολλούς λόγους και από πολλές απόψεις πόλεμο του Βιετνάμ. Η προφορική ιστορία, δρώντας μ' έναν αναχρονιστικό ως προς το ιστορικό της πλαίσιο, αλλά ιαματικό ως προς το τελικό αποτέλεσμα τρόπο, βγήκε πάλι στο προσκήνιο της ιστορικής και κοινωνικής μελέτης. Το βιβλίο του ιστορικού και συγγραφέα Studs Terkel, *'The Good War', An Oral History of World*

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[5] Ως παράδειγμα ν'αναφέρουμε εδώ ότι τόσο ο «Σύλλογος Ιστορίας του Μιζούρι», όσο και η βιβλιοθήκη του πανεπιστημίου του Μιζούρι στο Σέντ Λούις έχουν στις συλλόγές τους προφορικές μαρτυρίες, μεταξύ άλλων, και Ελλήνων (δεύτερης γενιάς κυρίως) που καταγράφηκαν στις αρχές της δεκαετίας του 1970, λόγω του αυξημένου, εκείνη την περίοδο, ενδιαφέροντος στις διαφορετικές εθνοτικές κοινότητες τους Σεντ Λούις. Παρόμοιες μαρτυρίες Ελλήνων της εποχής βρίσκονται στ'αρχεία βιβλιοθηκών και συλλόγων πολλών πολιτειών της Αμερικής.

[6] Μια από τις σημαντικότερες τέτοιες συλλογές προφορικών μαρτυριών, για τους Έλληνες της Γιούτα, έχει συλλεχθεί απο το 1969 μέχρι και τα τέλη του 1970 από την Helen Z. Papanikolas, εκ των σπουδαιοτέρων μελετητών της ιστορίας των Ελλήνων της Αμερικής και με σημαντικές μελέτες μέσω της προφορικής ιστορίας πάνω σε ζητήματα φεμινιστικού και εργατικού ενδιαφέροντος, Η συλλογή αυτή στεγάζεται στα προφορικά αρχεία του University of Utah. Ένα παρόμοιο πρότζεκτ προφορικής ιστορίας για την ελληνική κοινότητα του Σεντ Λούις εκπονήθηκε από τελειόφοιτους φοιτητές του τμήματος κοινωνικών επιστημών του πανεπιστημίου Saint Louis University το 1974. Αρκετοί δε από τους φοιτητές ήταν παιδιά ελλήνων μεταναστών. Οι προφορικές μαρτυρίες και οι εργασίες που εκπονήθηκαν βασισμένες σε αυτές, βρίσκονται στα Αρχεία Ιστορίας της Πολιτείας του Μιζούρι. Αρκετές παρόμοιες εργασίες κατά την περίοδο αυτή, τόσο για τους Έλληνες όσο και για πολλές άλλες εθνοτικές ομάδες, μπορούν να βρεθούν σε αρχεία και βιβλιοθήκες σχεδόν σε κάθε πολιτεία της Αμερικής.

War II, που δημοσιεύθηκε το 1984, είχε τεράστια επιτυχία και βοήθησε, αναγνωστικά και ερευνητικά τουλάχιστον να ξεχαστεί η αποτυχία του Βιετνάμ μαζί με τους χιλιάδες «κατεστραμμένους» βετεράνους που δημιούργησε. Η κεντρική σκηνή στο πόνημα του Terkel πλημμύρησε από τις προσωπικές μαρτυρίες των βετεράνων του Δευτέρου Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου, της "Σημαντικότερης Γενιάς" (The Greatest Generation) όπως ονομάστηκε, που όχι μόνο διέσχισαν τον Ειρηνικό και τον Ατλαντικό για να πολεμήσουν και να δώσουν την μεγάλη νίκη στις Μάχες του Β' ΠΠ, αλλά και επέστρεψαν πίσω στην πατρίδα τους και με την άκοπη εργασία τους και το ηρωικό τους ήθος έδωσαν την απαιτούμενη ώθηση στην αμερικάνική κοινωνία και οικονομία για να εξελιχθεί σε μια υπερδύναμη τις δύο επόμενες δεκαετίες. Μέσα σε ένα τέτοιο πλαίσιο και με δεδομένη τη στροφή της αμερικάνικής κριτικής σκέψης και των πανεπιστημιακών ερευνών την δεκαετία του 1980 προς τις εθνοτικές ομάδες, χιλιάδες προφορικές μαρτυρίες άρχισαν να συλλέγονται από πανεπιστημιακούς, στρατιωτικούς και πολιτειακούς φορείς, από εν ζωή βετεράνους του Δευτέρου Παγκοσμίου Πολέμου. Ανάμεσα τους και πολλές ιστορίες απο δεύτερης γενιάς Έλληνες της Αμερικής που πολέμησαν με τον αμερικανικό στρατό.[7] Οι ιστορίες τους, που δεν έχουν δυστυχώς αξιοποιηθεί ακόμα από την ερευνητική κοινότητα, παρουσιάζουν τεράστιο ενδιαφέρον καθώς, μεταξύ άλλων, εκείνη την περίοδο του πολέμου γίνεται πιο αισθητή μια εμφανής διχοτόμηση μεταξύ της αφιέρωσης τους στην πατρίδα τους, την Αμερική, που τους αφήνει πλέον να βιώσουν το "αμερικάνικο όνειρο" σε όλες του τις εκφάνσεις, και τη σταδιακή τους απομάκρυνση από την πατρίδα των γονιών τους, την Ελλάδα. [8]

Μια πιο συνειδητή προσπάθεια τις τελευταίες δύο δεκαετίες από πανεπιστημιακούς ερευνητές αλλά και πολιτιστικούς φορείς της Ελληνοαμερικανικής κοινότητας σε συνδυασμό με τον ερευνητικό εναγκαλισμό των

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[7] Υπάρχουν αρκετά πανεπιστημιακά προγράμματα προφορικής ιστορίας στις ΗΠΑ, καθώς και ένα μεγάλο ερευνητικό πρόγραμμα των ιστορικών αρχείων του Αμερικάνικου Στρατού, που ασχολούνται κυρίως με τη συλλογή μαρτυριών από βετεράνους, και δη του Β' ΠΠ. Σε αυτά βρίσκονται διάσπαρτες και οι ιστορίες των Ελλήνων βετεράνων της δεύτερης γενιάς. Η μόνη συλλογή που ασχολείται αποκλειστικά με Έλληνες που πολέμησαν με τον αμερικανικό στρατό κατά τη διάρκεια του Β' ΠΠ έχει συγκεντρωθεί από το Γιώργο Πελεκάνο, με 16 τέτοιες προφορικές μαρτυρίες από την περιοχή του Σεντ Λούις και στεγάζεται στα Αρχεία Ιστορίας της Πολιτείας του Μιζούρι (Παράρτημα 3).

[8] Ιστορικά μελετήματα βασισμένα σε προφορικές μαρτυρίες βετεράνων του Β' ΠΠ έχουν συγγραφεί σχετικά με πολλές διαφορετικές εθνοτικές κοινότητες της Αμερικής (Εβραίους, Ιρλανδούς, Πολωνούς, Βραζιλιάνους, Μεξικάνους κτλ.), όχι όμως για τους Έλληνες. Ίσως είναι μία ακόμη έκφανση του φαινομένου που ονομάζω "the Saloutos effect" και που χρήζει περαιτέρω συζήτησης και ανάλυσης. Να σημειώσουμε εδώ ότι οι Έλληνες της πρώτης γενιάς συνέχισαν να δείχνουν την έμπρακτη αγάπη τους για την πρώην πατρίδα τους με το φιλανθρωπικό τους έργο για την ενίσχυση της δοκιμαζόμενης από την έλλειψη βασικών αγαθών Ελλάδας, κατά τη διάρκεια αλλά και μετά το πέρας του Β' ΠΠ.

διασπορικών σπουδών από την ακαδημαϊκή κοινότητα αλλά και τη γενναιόδωρη χρηματοδότηση από ιδρύματα όπως το Niarchos Foundation, έχουν δώσει το έναυσμα για τη συγκρότηση σημαντικών αρχείων προφορικής ιστορίας των Ελλήνων της Αμερικής, όπως για παράδειγμα το Hellenic American Oral History Project του πανεπιστημίου Queens College της Νέας Υόρκης ή το Homer Oral History Project του National Hellenic Museum στο Σικάγο. Τέλος, αξίζει να μνημονεύσουμε εδώ το πολλά υποσχόμενο πρότζεκτ για τη δημιουργία ενός αρχείου ελληνικής γλώσσας και προφορικής ιστορίας στον Καναδά με τη συνεργασία των πανεπιστημίων McGill, York, Simon Fraser και Πατρών.

Προφορική Ιστορία: Τι είναι και πως λειτουργεί

Υπάρχει πολλές φορές μια σύγχυση ως προς το τι είναι προφορική ιστορία. Κάποιες φορές μάλιστα χρησιμοποιείται ένας γενικός ορισμός που διαχωρίζει τη γραπτή ιστορία από την προφορική, η οποία εκλαμβάνεται ως η ιστορική αφήγηση που περνάει από τη μια γενιά στην επόμενη δια μέσου της προφορικότητας. Στην ακαδημαϊκή ορολογία ωστόσο, αυτή η «γενεαλογική» μεταβίβαση των εμπειριών, ενθυμήσεων και ιστοριών ορίζεται συνήθως ως προφορική παράδοση ή πιο πρόσφατα, συλλογική ή κοινωνική μνήμη. Αν και υπάρχουν βέβαια σημεία σύγκλισης της προφορικής παράδοσης και προφορικής ιστορίας, λόγω και του πολυδιάστατου ορισμού της προφορικής ιστορίας, εν τούτοις είναι χρήσιμο να κατανοήσούμε τις διαφορές τους.

Με τον όρο «προφορική ιστορία» συνήθως εννοούμε τουλάχιστον τέσσερα διαφορετικά πράγματα: μία ιστορική μέθοδο, μία ιστορική πηγή πληροφοριών, ένα ερευνητικό προϊόν ή ιστορική δημοσίευση, και ένα κοινωνικό κίνημα.

Προφορική ιστορία είναι η **μέθοδος** που προσβλέπει στη δημιουργία αρχειακών πηγών μέσω των συνεντεύξεων και προφορικών μαρτυριών, ατόμων, σχετικές με τη ζωή τους και τις βιωματικές τους και ιστορικές εμπειρίες. Υπάρχουν δύο κυρίως είδη τέτοιων συντεντεύξεων, οι θεματικές και οι βιωματικές. Οι θεματικές συνεντεύξεις συνήθως επικεντρώνονται σε ένα συγκεκριμένο γεγονός, π.χ. στην περίπτωση της ιστορίας ενός μετανάστη αυτό το γεγονός μπορεί να είναι το ταξίδι της μετάβασης του από την πατρίδα στη νέα χώρα εγκατάστασης ή μπορεί να είναι τα πρώτα χρόνια της εγκατάστασης του αυτής ή και ακόμα οι πρώτες εμπειρίες του στο χώρο εργασίας και η πιθανή του συμμετοχή σε εργατικά σωματεία. Οι βιωματικές συνεντεύξεις προσπαθούν, από την άλλη, να καταγράψουν τη συνολική βιωματική εμπειρία και ιστορία ενός μετανάστη – μια ιστορία που επικεντρώνεται σε προσωπικές αφηγήσεις και βιώματα, αλλά και μια ιστορία, που μπορεί να ανατρέξει πίσω, σε μνήμες σχετικά με άλλα άτομα αλλά και ιστορικά γεγονότα του παρελθόντος και που συχνά προσφέρει μια συνολική εικόνα

του μετανάστη και του κόσμου τριγύρω του.

Οι θεματικές και βιωματικές συνεντεύξεις διαφέρουν και προς τον απαιτούμενο χρόνο για την ολοκλήρωση τους. Οι θεματικές συνεντεύξεις συνήθως δεν απαιτούν περισσότερο από μία ώρα για να συζητηθούν οι ερωτήσεις του ερευνητή, ενώ από την άλλη οι βιωματικές μπορούν να διαρκέσουν από μία έως και δεκαπέντε ώρες.[9] Συχνά, οι βιωματικές συνεντεύξεις χωρίζονται σε δύο μέρη. Στο πρώτο μέρος έχουμε, συνήθως, μια γενική αφήγηση της ζωής και των εμπειριών του μετανάστη, ενώ στο δεύτερο μέρος ο ερευνητής επικεντρώνεται σε πιο συγκεκριμένες ερωτήσεις που σχετίζονται και με το είδος της έρευνας ή του πρότζεκτ που συμμετέχει. Και στις δύο περιπτώσεις όμως οι ερευνητές θα πρέπει να δημιουργήσουν ένα είδος ιδιαίτερης σχέσης εμπιστοσύνης με τον ερωτώμενο ώστε να γίνει πιο πυκνός ο διάλογος και η αφήγηση (αυτό που ο Ronald Grele ονομάζει "dialogical narrative") σχετικά με τη ζωή, τις μνήμες και εμπειρίες του μετανάστη. [10]Η συγκέντρωση ενός ικανοποιητικού αριθμού συνεντεύξεων (μεταξύ 10 – 100) απαιτείται για τη δημιουργία αρχειακού υλικού και μιας δυνητικά αξιοποιήσιμης, για ερευνητικούς σκοπούς, **πηγής πληροφοριών.**

Η προσεκτική καταγραφή και ανάλυση αυτού του αρχειακού υλικού μπορεί να οδηγήσει στη δημοσίευση ενός **ερευνητικού προϊόντος** βασισμένου στις προφορικές μαρτυρίες Ελλήνων μεταναστών ή Ελλήνων της διασποράς. Με αυτό τον τρόπο βιογραφίες, μονογραφίες, διατριβές, διάφορες ερευνητικές μελέτες, αλλά και άρθρα σε τόμους και σε επιστημονικά περιοδικά έχουν δημοσιευθεί χρησιμοποιώντας την προφορική ιστορία ώς την κύρια ερευνητική πηγή τους. Η δυνατότητα μάλιστα, μετά τη δεκαετία του 1970, που έδινε η προφορική ιστορία στους μελετητές να εξετάζουν σημαντικά κοινωνικά φαινόμενα (φεμινισμός, ρατσισμός, εθνοτισμός, λαϊκισμός κ.α.) μεγάλωνε και την προσδοκία ότι η καταγραφή και ανάλυση αυτών των διαφορετικών ή προθύστερα «σιωπηλών» υποκειμένων θα μπορούσε να οδηγήσει σε μια συλλήβδην αλλαγή του κοινωνικού και πολιτικού κατεστημένου της εποχής. Η προφορική ιστορία άρχισε να ριζώνει στις βάσεις της κοινωνίας και των τοπικών κοινοτήτων (grassroots level) και να δημιουργεί σιγά σιγά ένα **κοινωνικό κίνημα** αλλαγής και δημοκρατικότερης και πολυδεκτικότερης αντίληψης της ιστορίας «από κάτω». Έτσι, τοπικοί σύλλογοι και εθελοντικές οργανώσεις άρχισαν να συμμετέχουν ενεργά στην καταγραφή προφορικών μαρτυριών, χωρίς να χρειάζονται να περάσουν πρώτα κάτω από τις επιβλητικές πύλες των πανεπιστημίων ή κάποιων ερευνητικών κέντρων και αρχείων.

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[9] Παράρτημα 4.
[10] Παράρτημα 5.

Η συλλογή και ανάλυση των προφορικών μαρτυριών από μελετητές που προέρχονται από διαφορετικούς επιστημονικούς χώρους και πεδία δημιουργεί μια πολυεπίπεδη, αλλά συγχρόνως και αμφίσημη σχέση μεταξύ της προφορικής ιστορίας και των ερευνητικών αυτών κλάδων. Αυτή η διαφορά είναι πιο αισθητή όταν συγκρίνουμε τον τρόπο προσέγγισης των προφορικών μαρτυριών από τους εθνογράφους, ανθρωπολόγους και ιστορικούς σε σχέση με τον αντίστοιχο των κοινωνικών και πολιτικών επιστημόνων.

Ανθρωπιστικές Επιστήμες	Κοινωνικές & Πολιτικές Επιστήμες
Συλλογή, απομαγνητοφώνηση και αρχειοθέτηση των προφορικών μαρτυριών	Συλλογή, χρήση και συχνά καταστροφή του υλικού των συνεντεύξεων
Συλλογή και ποιοτική ανάλυση των ιστοριών	Συλλογή και ποσοτική ανάλυση των πληροφοριών
Επώνυμα υποκείμενα	Συχνά ανώνυμα υποκείμενα
Έμφαση στην «πυκνή περιγραφή» (thick description) για τη διαφώτιση και επεξήγηση της ιστορίας.	Έμφαση στην πληροφορία (data) για την κατανόηση ή και πρόβλεψη κινήσεων και αντιδράσεων (trends and profiles)

Ενώ όμως η συλλογή και ανάλυση των προφορικών μαρτυριών απέκτησε το δικό της ερευνητικό κοινό, η επιστημονική κοινότητα συνέχισε να είναι σκεπτική απέναντι στις μεθόδους και τα συμπεράσματα όσων την χρησιμοποιούσαν. Η ανθρώπινη μνήμη, επιχειρηματολογούσαν οι πολέμιοι της προφορικής ιστορίας, συχνά κάνει λάθη, ενώ πολλές φορές οι ερωτώμενοι είναι επιρρεπείς στη λήθη, τη μεγέθυνση του ιστορικού γεγονότος ή ακόμα και το ψέμα. Υπήρχαν όμως και άλλα, τόσο πρακτικά όσο και μεθοδολογικά, ζητήματα που μάστιζαν την προφορική ιστορία μεχρι και τη δεκαετία του 1980. Η ποιότητα του ήχου σε παλιότερες ηχογραφήσεις και η έλλειψη εκπαίδευσης και καλής προετοιμασίας των ερωτώντων όξυναν τα ήδη υπάρχοντα προβλήματα. Υπήρχε γενικά μια έλλειψη κατανόησης από τους ιστορικούς ότι με το να ρωτούν απλά τους ανθρώπους για τις

προσωπικές τους μαρτυρίες ή με το να παρουσιάζουν μια σειρά ερωτήσεων σαν να πρόκειται για μια δημοσκόπηση δεν ήταν αρκετά για να δημιουργηθούν συνεντεύξεις με ικανοποιητικά πρόσφορο ιστορικό υλικό για περαιτέρω ερευνητικές εργασίες.

Η αντιμετώπιση των παραπάνω προβλημάτων βασίστηκε στην επιστημονικότερη προσέγγιση των προφορικών μαρτυριών και στην εισαγωγή μεθοδολογικών και θεωρητικών μοντέλων για την καταγραφή και ανάλυση των μαρτυριών αυτών από ιστορικούς και ερευνητές της Αμερικής, της Αγγλίας και της Ιταλίας. Την ίδια στιγμή, η προφορική ιστορία έγινε πιο ανοιχτή σε ιδέες που προέρχονταν από τους χώρους των θεωριών της κριτικής σκέψης, του φεμινισμού και της μετααποικιοκρατίας. Έτσι, για παράδειγμα, η έννοια του υποκειμένου έπαψε να θεωρείται τροχοπέδη στον χώρο της προφορικής ιστορίας αλλά μετουσιώθηκε σε μια βασική ιδέα, που μάλιστα απέκτησε ιδιαίτερο ρόλο και στη διασπορική ιστορία που μας ενδιαφέρει.[11] Την ίδια στιγμή, οι ερευνητές της προφορικής ιστορίας άρχισαν να αναλύουν τις μαρτυρίες πέρα από την «πεζή» τους πραγματολογική έννοια. Ακολουθώντας το παράδειγμα του Ronald Grele, του Edward Ives, του Alessandro Portelli και της Luisa Passarini, μεταξύ άλλων, οι ιστορικοί ξεκίνησαν να χρησιμοποιούν τεχνικές της αφηγηματικής θεωρίας και όρους της μετα-ιστορίας και γλωσσολογίας για να αποδώσουν το μέγιστο δυνατό νόημα μέσα από τις ιστορίες που τους αφηγούνταν οι ερωτώμενοι τους, καθώς γινόταν ολοένα και πιο εμφανής ο τρόπος με τον οποίο η γλώσσα και η αφήγηση (ανα)σχημάτιζαν τον τρόπο πρόσληψης και αναπαράστασης του κόσμου και του ιστορικού γεγονότος.[12]

Η αφήγηση, όπως υποστήριζαν και οι γνωστικοί ψυχολόγοι, ήταν πλεόν η κινητήριος δύναμη του σχηματισμού και συνεχή ανασχηματισμού των ταυτοτήτων και των αναμνήσεων. Οι αφηγήσεις των υποκειμένων, ακολούθως, έπαψαν να εκλαμβάνονται ως ένα διάφανο παράθυρο για τη μελέτη από τους ιστορικούς παρελθοντικών γεγονότων ή καταστάσεων, αλλά θεωρήθηκαν πλέον ως η κύρια πηγή για τη δημιουργία ταυτοτήτων οι οποίες είχαν συχνά ενσωματωθεί σε κοινωνικές σχέσεις δύναμης και εξουσίας (για παράδειγμα, τί σημαίνει όταν ένας Έλληνας μετανάστης μετά το Β' ΠΠ στο Σικάγο ή το Ντητρόιτ αυτοπροσδιορίζεται ώς «δουλευταράς» ή «άνθρωπος με φιλότιμο»;).

Αυτό το επαυξημένο ενδιαφέρον για τη γλώσσα, την αφήγηση και την ταυτότητα οδήγησε τους μελετητές της προφορικής ιστορίας σε πιο πολύπλοκες χρήσεις της έννοιας της μνήμης. Η μνήμη θεωρείται μια εποικοδομητική διεργασία,

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[11] Βλ. Ιωάννα Λαλιώτου, ο.π., passim.
[12] Παράρτημα 6.

ενώ η λήθη δεν εκλαμβάνεται πλέον ως ελαττωματική μνήμη αλλά ως κύριο δομικό συστατικό της ίδια της μνήμης: Πρέπει να μπορούμε να ξεχνάμε όχι μόνο για να (ξανα)θυμόμαστε αλλά και για να λειτουργούμε ως ανθρώπινοι οργανισμοί (σε μια φιλοσοφικά φορτισμένη συζήτηση επι του θέματος, ο Νίτσε προτείνει κάτι αντίστοιχο για την πρόσληψη της ιστορικής πραγματικότητας στο ανεξήγητα παραμελημένο του δοκίμιο «Οι Χρήσεις και Καταχρήσεις της Ιστορίας»). Παρόλη τη γενικευμένη προτίμηση της προφορικής ιστορίας, τις δύο τελευταίες δεκαετίες, σε θεωρίες μνήμης και αφήγησης, η σημασία της προφορικής μαρτυρίας στηρίζεται ακόμα κατά ένα μεγάλο ποσοστό στην κριτική ανάλυση, από τους ειδικούς μελετητές, του συνόλου των αποδείξεων που εμπεριέχονται σε μια συνέντευξη. Ποιοί θα μπορούσαν να είναι λοιπόν για τη δική μας ερευνητική περίπτωση – τη μελέτη των Ελλήνων της Αμερικής – οι καλύτεροι τρόποι χρήσεις της προφορικής ιστορίας;

Χρήσεις της Προφορικής Μαρτυρίας στη Μελέτη της Διασποράς

Η περίπλοκη σχέση των ερευνητών με την προφορική ιστορία ίσως απεικονίζεται καλύτερα στον τρόπο με τον οποίο έχουν χρησιμοποιηθεί οι προφορικές μαρτυρίες στην έρευνα για την ιστορία της μετανάστευσης και της ελληνικής διασποράς. Μένοντας μακρυά από τα λόγια του Harney, στην προμετωπίδα του κειμένου, ότι δηλαδή οι μετανάστες και τα διασπορικά υποκείμενα μπορούν να δώσουν ουσιαστικές απαντήσεις στις ερωτήσεις των ερευνητών, η προφορική μαρτυρία έχει χρησιμοποιηθεί ως επί το πλείστον ως μια περιθωριακή ή διακοσμητική πηγή ώστε να δώσει σε μια μελέτη βασισμένη σε γραπτές πηγές και τεκμήρια μια πιο ανθρώπινη και προσωπική αίσθηση.[13]

Μια άλλη αρκετά συνηθισμένη προβολή και χρήση των προφορικών μαρτυριών είναι η συλλογή τους και η έκδοση τους σε τόμους με την προοπτική να δώσουν μια πολυδιάστατη προσωπική ή θεματική προσέγγιση πάνω σε ένα συγκεκριμένο μεταναστευτικό θέμα ή μια κατηγορία μεταναστών. Ως τέτοια θα μπορούσε να χαρακτηριστεί και η προσπάθεια του Peter M. Coan με την έκδοση του τόμου *Ellis Island Interviews: In Their Own Words* (Facts on File, 1997), όπου συμπεριλαμβάνονται οι προφορικές μαρτυρίες 130 μεταναστών που έφτασαν στο Έλλις Άϊλαντ μεταξύ του 1892 – 1924, κάποιες εκ των οποίων μάλιστα και από Έλληνες μετανάστες. Εναλλακτικά, οι επιμελητές τέτοιων εκδόσεων προβάλλουν τη

[13]Gunther Peck, *Reinventing Free Labor: Padrones and Immigrant Workers in the American West, 1880–1930* (Austin: University of Texas Press, 2000). Ο Peck που καταπιάνεται και με τους Έλληνες εργάτες στην αμερικάνική Δύση, χρησιμοποιεί κάποια αποσπάσματα από προφορικές μαρτυρίες (της δεκαετίας του 1970) για να δώσει κάποιες προσωπικές λεπτομέρειες και για να σκιαγραφήσει τον χαρακτήρα και την προσωπικότητα κάποιων εκ των μεταναστών (μεταξύ αυτών και του γνωστού Λούη Σκλήρη).

σημασία των προφορικών μαρτυριών ως κύριων ιστορικών πηγών στη μελέτη και ανάλυση πολύπλοκων κοινωνικών φαινομένων ή παραγκωνισμένων κοινωνικών ομάδων. Μια σημαντική τέτοια συλλογή με έναν αναλυτικό ιστορικό πρόλογο έχει εκδοθεί από τον Loring M. Danforth και την Riki Van Boeschoten[14] με τίτλο *Children of the Greek Civil War: Refugees and the Politics of Memory* (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 2012). Το βιβλίο παρουσιάζει τις προσωπικές ιστορίες παιδιών κατά τη διάρκεια του Εμφυλίου που έφυγαν ως πρόσφυγες σε χώρες της Ανατολικής Ευρώπης ή μεταφέρθηκαν σε προσφυγικούς καταυλισμούς σε διάφορες περιοχές της Ελλάδας. Η ιστορία της προσφυγιάς ξαναδημιουργείτε μέσα από τις ασκήσεις μνήμης και προφορικής μαρτυρίας αυτών των παιδιών. Και στις δύο προαναφερθείσες περιπτώσεις οι προφορικές μαρτυρίες εμφανίζονται ως κύριες πηγές των εξεταζόμενων ιστορικών γεγονότων αλλά ο προβληματισμός γύρω από τέτοιες εκδόσεις έγκειται στην υπερβολική επιμέλεια (editing) των μετεγγραφών των μαρτυριών αυτών και στις τελικές διορθωτικές παρεμβάσεις των κειμένων που εμφανίζουν στη σελίδα μια εξωραϊσμένη εικόνα της πραγματικής συνέντευξης.

Η πλέον διαδεδομένη χρήση της προφορικής μαρτυρίας απο την ακαδημαϊκή κοινότητα είναι ως ένα τεκμήριο το οποίο σε συνδυασμό με άλλα αρχειακά ντοκουμέντα μπορεί να διαφωτίσει τις ιστορικές πτυχές ενός γεγονότος ή προσώπου με ακόμη μεγαλύτερη λεπτομέρεια. Σε αυτή την κατηγορία θα μπορούσαμε να εντάξουμε το βιβλίο της Helen Z. Papanikolas, *A Greek Odyssey in the American West*, (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1997), το οποίο χρησιμοποιεί προφορικές μαρτυρίες, μεταξύ άλλων αρχειακών πηγών, για να παρουσιάσει μέσα από την αρχετυπική αφήγηση της ζωής των γονιών της την εμπειρία και ιστορία της ελληνικής μετανάστευσης στις δυτικές πολιτείες της Αμερικής. Πιο πρόσφατα, η Joy Damousi εξέδωσε το βιβλίο της, *Memory and Migration in the Shadow of War Australia's Greek Immigrants after World War II and the Greek Civil War* (Melbourne: Cambridge University Press, 2015), που πραγματεύεται μέσω προφορικών και άλλων μαρτυριών την επίδραση του πολέμου, και ιδιαίτερα των τραυματικών εμπειριών, στην αναπαραγωγή ή

[14] Η Riki Van Boeschoten (Ρίκη Βαν Μπούσχοτεν) είναι η μόνη ίσως στον ελληνικό ακαδημαϊκό χώρο που ασχολείται ενεργά με την προφορική ιστορία αλλά και με την χρήση της στην μελέτη της μετανάστευσης και προσφυγιάς. Μάλιστα οι θεωρητικές της εξηγήσεις μπορούν να βοηθήσουν τον νέο ερευνητή στους χώρους της προφορικής ιστορίας να εντοπίσει τα κατάλληλα ερευνητικά μοντέλα ώστε να επιτύχει την καλύτερη δυνατόν χρήση των συλλεγμένων μαρτυριών (Παράρτημα 7). Ο ιστιοχώρος δε που έχει δημιουργήσει μέσω του πανεπιστήμιου της Θεσσαλίας και η ερευνητική της ομάδα έχουν θέσει τις βάσεις για μια συστηματική και παραγωγική προσέγγιση της προφορικής ιστορίας στους χώρους των ανθρωπιστικών και κοινωνικών επιστημών στην Ελλάδα. http://www.epi.uth.gr/index.php?page=home

αποσιώπηση της προσωπικής και κοινωνικής μνήμης ανάμεσα στους Έλληνες μετανάστες της Αυστραλίας.

Τις τελευταίες δύο δεκαετίες μια πληθώρα βιβλίων, ακαδημαϊκών άρθρων και διατριβών έχει συγγραφεί, στηριζόμενη αποκλειστικά στις προφορικές μαρτυρίες, για την καλύτερη κατανόηση της δημιουργίας ταυτότητων διαφόρων κατηγοριών Ελλήνων μεταναστών αλλά και τις περιπτώσεις μετάβασης και μετακίνησης. Έτσι, η Anastasia Kaketsis εκπόνησε τη διατριβή της με τίτλο *Perspectives of Greek Immigrant Women in Canada* (2000) στο πανεπιστήμιο του Calgary, χρησιμοποιώντας προφορικές μαρτυρίες από Ελληνίδες που είχαν μεταναστεύσει στον Καναδά μετά το Β' ΠΠ. Το άρθρο της Georgina Tsolidis, "Living Diaspora 'Back Home' – Daughters of Greek Immigrants in Greece" στον τόμο, *Women, Gender, and Diasporic Lives: Labor, Community, and Identity in Greek Migrations, επ. Evangelia Tastsoglou* (Plymouth: Lexington Books, 2009), 181-196, επίσης στηρίζεται στις προφορικές μαρτυρίες Ελληνίδων μεταναστριών από την Αυστραλία και τον Καναδά που αντιμετωπίζουν κρίση ταυτότητας όταν αποφασίζουν να επιστρέψουν πίσω στην Ελλάδα.[15] Η σημαντικότερη πρόσφατη μελέτη για την ελληνική διασπορά μέσω της καταγραφής και ανάλυσης προφορικών μαρτυριών από μετανάστες δημοσιεύτηκε από την Anastasia Christou και τον Russell King με τίτλο *Counter-Diaspora: The Greek Second-Generation Returns "Home",* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2015). Οι δύο ερευνητές επικεντρώνουν το ενδιαφέρον τους στις προφορικές ιστορίες δεύτερης γενιάς Έλληνοαμερικάνων και Έλληνογερμανων που αποφασίζουν να επιστρέψουν «σπίτι» τους, στην Ελλάδα, στις αρχές του 21ου αιώνα και επιχειρούν να διαπραγματούν τους προβληματισμούς τους γύρω από το πόσο «Έλληνες» είναι και πού πραγματικά ανήκουν.[16]

Όλες οι παραπάνω βιβλιογραφικές αναφορές αποδυκνείουν με τον πιο εμφατικό τρόπο τη δραματική αύξηση στην χρήση της προφορικής μαρτυρίας ώς κύριας πηγής τεκμηρίωσης, και την κριτική και θεωρητική της ανάλυσης ώς μιας σημαντικής ερευνητικής μεθόδου για τη μελέτη της ελληνικής μετανάστευσης και ταυτότητας.[17]

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[15] Παράρτημα 8.
[16] Βλ. Yiorgos Anagnostou review of *Counter-Diaspora: The Greek Second-Generation Returns "Home",* by Anastasia Christou and Russell King. *Journal of Modern Greek Studies 35*, no. 1, (May 2017): 252-257.
[17] Παράρτημα 9.

1

The History of Oral History

Rebecca Sharpless

Oral history has its own history and as a modern movement has its roots in many locations, over many centuries. In the twentieth century, the methodology rose from several directions. Since the 1940s, however, the practice of oral history has been relatively unified in the Western academic world, with a high level of agreement on basic matters. This essay traces the historiography of oral history.

Practitioners of the modern oral history movement enjoy contemplating its ancient origins, sometimes pointing out with glee that all history was oral before the advent of writing. From the Greek side come the historians Herodotus, who employed first-person interviews in gathering information for his account of the Persian Wars in the fifth century BCE, as well as Thucydides, who interrogated his witnesses to the Peloponnesian War "by the most severe and detailed tests possible." In the Zhou dynasty of China (1122–256 BCE), the emperor appointed scribes to record the sayings of the people for the benefit of court historians. Africanists point to the *griot* tradition in recording history, in which oral traditions have been handed down from generation to generation. Historian and anthropologist Jan Vansina highlighted the Akan (Ghanaian) proverb *Tete ke asom ene Kakyere*: "Ancient things remain in the ear." In the Western Hemisphere, observers point to Bernardino de Sahagùn, a sixteenth-century

Franciscan missionary to New Spain who brought together about "a dozen old Indians reputed to be especially well informed on Aztec lore so that he and his research assistants might interrogate them." Sahagùn and his colleagues produced a text and 1,850 illustrations.[1]

Despite the traditional prevalence of orally transmitted historical sources, such traditions fell into disfavor in the scientific movement of the late nineteenth century, and there arose a prejudice against oral history that remained strong for more than fifty years. Nineteenth-century German historian Leopold von Ranke, protesting moralization in history, said that the task of the historian was "simply to show how it really was (*wie es eigentlich gewesen*)," and other historians enthusiastically took up his cause.[2] Some historians, however, were never won over by the scientific approach. Californian Hubert Howe Bancroft, for example, recognized that missing from his vast collection of books, journals, maps, and manuscripts on western North America were the living memories of many of the participants in the development of California and the West. Beginning in the 1860s, Bancroft hired assistants to interview and create autobiographies of a diverse group of people living in the western part of the U.S. The resulting volumes of "Dictations" ranged from a few pages to a full five-volume memoir. Bancroft eventually entrusted his collection to the University of California at Berkeley, and it became the core of the library that bears his name.[3]

During the first third of the twentieth century, other historians began to see oral history accounts as valid. The Federal Writers' Project, part of the Works Progress Administration during the New Deal, emerged from the project administrators' democratic impulses to portray America in its cultural diversity.[4] W. T. Couch of the University of North Carolina Press decided to expand the Federal Writers' Project to collect life stories. Taking notes, the writers collected from ordinary Americans more than ten thousand first-person narratives, most of which were deposited in the Library of Congress. From this body of interviews, Couch published in 1939 a selection of interviews with ordinary Southerners as *These Are Our Lives*. Explaining his purpose, Couch wrote, "The idea is to get life histories which are readable and faithful representations of living persons, and which, taken

together, will give a fair picture of the structure and working of society. So far as I know, this method of portraying the quality of life of a people, of revealing the real workings of institutions, customs, habits, has never before been used for the people of any region or country. . . . With all our talk about democracy it seems not inappropriate to let the people speak for themselves."[5] Folklorist B. A. Botkin focused on the Former Slave Narratives portion of the project in his 1945 work, *Lay My Burden Down: A Folk History of Slavery*. In his introduction, Botkin wrote: "From the memories and the lips of former slaves have come the answers which only they can give to questions which Americans still ask: What does it mean to be a slave? What does it mean to be free? And, even more, how does it *feel*?" The first-person narratives in the Federal Writers' Project answered at least in part such intimate questions.[6]

At the same time, but from a completely different vantage point, Columbia University historian Allan Nevins, formerly a "newspaperman," in 1938 decried a historical field that lacked life and energy. In his influential work *The Gateway to History*, Nevins called for a popularization of history and the creation of an organization that would make "a systematic attempt to obtain, from the lips and papers of living Americans who have led significant lives, a fuller record of their participation in the political, economic and cultural life of the last sixty years." Nevins cherished the idea of "the immense mass of information about the more recent American past . . . which might come fresh and direct from men once prominent in politics, in business, in the professions, and in other fields; information that every obituary column shows to be perishing."[7] He kept his idea and his dream alive for more than a decade during the difficult years of World War II.

American military historians used oral history extensively to gain contemporary accounts of World War II. The U.S. Army brought professionally trained historians into each theater to collect sources and write studies. A historian assigned to cover the Pacific theater, Lieutenant Colonel (later Brigadier General) S. L. A. Marshall, pioneered the army's oral history effort as he brought together participants shortly after the fighting (often within a few hours) and conducted group interviews. After the Allied invasion of Normandy in June 1944, Marshall traveled to

France to interview combatants from the 82nd and 101st Airborne Divisions. He then traveled throughout Europe collecting firsthand accounts of recent battlefield experiences. Hundreds of historians conducted similar interviews, the majority of which took place a week to ten days after the action or sometimes even later. The best-known field historian, Forrest C. Pogue, spent D-Day aboard a landing ship interviewing wounded soldiers who had participated in the assault. Historians assigned to the European Theater alone collected more than two thousand interviews by the end of the war. The notes and transcripts from these endeavors eventually came to the National Archives.[8]

After World War II, Allan Nevins continued to pursue his interest in oral history research. He persuaded his friend Frederic Bancroft, a librarian with a family fortune, to leave Columbia University $1.5 million for the "advancement of historical studies." With a portion of the Bancroft funds, Nevins launched "the oral history project" at Columbia in 1948.[9]

A graduate student took notes in longhand for the first interviews, conducted by Nevins. The Columbia colleagues soon learned of a recent invention, the wire recorder, and lost no time in acquiring one. The process then moved much faster, and they began transcribing the interviews as a convenience to researchers. The first American-made tape recorders (as opposed to wire), modeled on a captured German Magnetophon, were launched in 1948, but tape recorders did not become widely available until several years later.[10]

Nevins selected the first oral history projects at Columbia because of their potential for external funding. The earliest projects included oil wildcatting, the Book-of-the-Month Club, the Ford Motor Company, and the timber industry, all chosen because of their potential to bring in payment from the corporations or individuals interviewed for the small department. The project focused on elite subjects, resulting in a group of biographies of powerful white males.[11]

As the Columbia project picked up speed, others in the United States began to employ the new recording equipment. At the University of Texas in 1952, archivist Winnie Allen organized and supervised a project to record stories of pioneers of the oil industry. Noted folklorists William Owens and Mody Boatright

served as interviewers and project directors.[12] In the 1940s, the Forest History Society began taking notes on the reminiscences of veterans of the forest products industry. The society started tape recording in the early 1950s and gradually expanded its interviewee pool to include forestry educators, government employees, and conservationists.[13]

The University of California at Berkeley created its Regional Oral History Office in 1954. In the mid-1940s, George Stewart at Berkeley conceived the idea of continuing Hubert Howe Bancroft's interviews. In 1952, James D. Hart, director of the Bancroft Library, decided to interview author Alice B. Toklas, then living in Paris. After the next interviews, with the founder of the bohemian community of Carmel, California, the Berkeley program formally received funding in 1954. Willa Baum became its head in 1958 and remained so until 2000.[14] In 1959, the regents of the University of California at Los Angeles (UCLA) established the UCLA Oral History Program, upon the urging of historians, librarians, and other members of the UCLA community. Appropriately for its southern California location, the project focused strongly on the arts.[15] The first university-based oral history programs in the United States were well under way by 1960.

The National Archives of the United States began formal oral history work through the presidential libraries, starting in 1961 with the Harry S. Truman Library, in Independence, Missouri, and expanding rapidly with the John F. Kennedy Library in 1964, the Herbert Hoover Oral History Program in 1965, and the Lyndon B. Johnson and Dwight D. Eisenhower projects beginning in 1967. The presidential projects were monumental in scope and size. By 1969, the year after Lyndon Johnson left office, his oral history project already had 275 tapes.[16] The presidential projects played a crucial role in once again bringing the federal government into the oral history movement, and they also broadened the definition of political history, featuring interviews with ordinary people as well as the movers and shakers from the various White House administrations.

Throughout the 1960s, oral history research expanded dramatically. Part of this expansion was due to the availability of portable cassette recorders, first invented by the Philips Company in 1963. The philosophical underpinnings of the oral history

movement, however, lay with the democratic impulses of the social history movement. The civil rights movement, protests against the Vietnam War, and the feminist movement all raised questions about American history based on the deeds of elite white men. Contesting the status quo, social historians began to explore the interests of a multiracial, multiethnic population with an emphasis on class relationships. As they sought to understand the experiences of ordinary people, historians turned to new ways of discovering the pluralistic "mind of the nation," in the words of historian Alice Kessler-Harris. Oral history, easily accessible and useful for talking with almost any type of person, became a primary tool for documenting the lives of ordinary people.[17] As Ronald Grele notes elsewhere in this volume, historians in England led the way in documenting lives of ordinary people, as Americans tended to focus their interviews on elites, but clearly a sea change was under way. Historians of the left hoped that, by giving voice to the voiceless, they could foster social change.

By 1965, the oral history movement had reached a critical mass. *Oral History in the United States*, a report published in that year by the Columbia University Oral History Research Office, identified eighty-nine oral history projects nationwide. Practitioners realized a need for standardization of practices and procedures, which Gould Colman, an archivist and oral historian at Cornell University, articulated in an article in the *American Archivist*.[18] The time seemed appropriate to call a gathering of people calling themselves "oral historians."

With the urging of Allan Nevins, James V. Mink, university archivist and director of oral history at UCLA, convened a nationwide meeting at Lake Arrowhead, California, in September 1966. Seventy-seven people came for the three-day "National Colloquium on Oral History," a lively gathering of archivists, librarians, historians, members of the medical profession, and psychiatrists from across the United States and including international participants from Lebanon. The colloquium consisted of panel discussions aimed at gaining consensus on definitions of oral history, the uses of oral history, directions for future work, techniques for interviewing, and professional objectives and standards.[19] The debates were prescient, highlighting some of the issues that would remain under discussion in oral history

circles almost forty years later. In other areas, the attendees at Lake Arrowhead were able to reach consensus quickly.

The first area of consensus was on keeping the cumbersome term *oral history*. Louis Starr, the director of the Columbia oral history program, observed the phrase had "gone generic. The *New York Times* and even the *New York Daily News*, that ultimate authority, use it in lower case now."[20]

The discussions at the first meeting were lively and wide ranging. The opening discussions centered on exactly what constituted oral history—was it the tape? The transcription? Did it have to be recorded? Philip Brooks of the Truman Library argued that it did: "Now I think that a tape recorder is important enough to oral history to constitute almost a part of the definition. . . . I think I can take pretty good notes, and I could recreate pretty well what they said, but my notes do not constitute actually what they said, a record of their oral statements."[21] Brooks and like-minded colleagues carried the argument, and recording became a standard part of the definition of oral history in the U.S.

Some early programs, notably the Truman Library and Columbia University, recorded their interviews but did not believe in saving the tapes, making transcription crucial.[22] There was great worry about how to represent the memoirist in the final product: Should ungrammatical utterings be edited? What about material that the interviewee deleted from the transcript? Elizabeth Dixon of UCLA argued for destroying the tapes: "One thing is economy. You keep buying tape, and we're back to the budget again! We can't afford it. Another thing, as Dr. Brooks has said, is that many people would not give you such candid tapes, if they thought you were going to keep them forever because they may not like the way they sound on tape."[23] Louis Shores, dean of the library school at Florida State University, countered by pleading for "more serious consideration of the tape itself as a primary source. Strongly I urge that all of us who are developing oral history collections protect the master of the original tape for replaying by later researchers, and for the possibility that some new truth may be discovered from the oral original not revealed by the typescript."[24] Most programs assumed early on the right of the interviewee to close their memoirs, putting a time seal on interview materials to be made public at some future

time. Some returned transcripts to the interviewees for their editing, while others wanted to let the first transcription stand in its original form. Still others destroyed their first drafts.[25] Programs varied on methods of dissemination. While some kept their transcripts as tightly controlled, rare items, the University of California at Berkeley distributed its completed transcripts to a number of selected depositories.

Underlying the arguments about the conduct of oral history programs was a deep concern with the ethics of oral history interviewing. To that end, attendees at the first oral history colloquium in 1966 vigorously debated a list of possible objectives and standards. The standards included issues over recording fidelity, verbatim transcriptions, the right of interviewees to review and change their transcripts, appropriate training of interviewers, and related materials to accompany the transcript.

The discussion of the need for a code of ethics began as early as 1967, stirred in part by William Manchester's controversial use of intimate interviews with the Kennedy family in his book *The Death of a President*. At its third meeting, in 1968, the Oral History Association adopted its first set of standards, labeled "Goals and Guidelines." The final document included three guidelines each for the interviewee and interviewer and one for sponsoring institutions. The first clearly stated the right of the interviewee: "His wishes must govern the conduct of the interview." Others stressed the mutual understanding between interviewer and interviewee regarding the conduct and outcome of the interviewing process. The "Goals and Guidelines" indicated a spirit of compromise regarding arguments about the retention of tape recordings and the need for transcription.[26] These guidelines stood unchanged for more than a decade.

As oral historians crystallized a common set of goals and standards, they worked to disseminate scholarship on oral history. The new Oral History Association, chartered in 1967, published the proceedings of its first meetings, then broadened the publication to an annual journal, titled the *Oral History Review*, in 1973.[27] Practitioners also realized the importance of spreading the gospel of high-quality oral history, and they began actively teaching others how to conduct projects according to the new standards. With funding from the Higher Education Act,

for example, UCLA offered an eleven-day oral history institute in July 1968.[28] Beginning in 1970, the Oral History Association Colloquium (as the annual meetings were first called) also featured a workshop component.[29] Willa Baum, director of the Regional Oral History Office at the University of California at Berkeley, published *Oral History for the Local Historical Society*, the first how-to manual on oral history, in 1969. Numerous others soon followed.[30]

During the late 1960s and 1970s, oral history projects rode the crest of increasing grant funding for such work and fed directly into the social history movement in the United States. The National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) and state humanities councils, founded at almost the same time as the Oral History Association (OHA), generously funded oral history projects through the early 1980s. A 1981 issue of the *Oral History Association Newsletter* listed thirty-two NEH grant awards, ranging from $400,000 to a local historical society in Nebraska to $2,500 to a youth center in Rochester, New York.[31] Funding from humanities organizations on both the national and state levels enabled academics and local communities alike to engage in oral history activities.

Oral history research reflected the social changes of the 1960s and 1970s. The growing acknowledgment of the importance of various ethnic groups in American society fueled an interest in their histories. One of the earliest such oral history endeavors was the Doris Duke project on Native American history. Between 1966 and 1972, tobacco heiress Duke gave a total of $5 million to the Universities of Arizona, Florida, Illinois, South Dakota, New Mexico, Utah, and Oklahoma. The funding established multiple oral history centers to document the diversity among Native Americans, making possible interviews, for example, with members of every Native American tribe in Oklahoma. Portions of the South Dakota interviews were published in 1971 in a volume titled *To Be an Indian*.[32]

The civil rights movement gave impetus to numerous oral history projects on African American history. Noted author Alex Haley conducted numerous interviews with Malcolm X for his *Autobiography of Malcolm X*, published shortly after Malcolm X's assassination.[33] Between 1967 and 1973, Howard University

gathered more than seven hundred interviews as part of its Civil Rights Documentation Project.[34] With funding from the Rockefeller Foundation, Duke University historians William Chafe and Lawrence Goodwyn between 1972 and 1982 specifically trained doctoral students as oral historians. Their interviews then created source material with which to rewrite the history of the U.S. in its multiracial complexity.[35]

Two of the most celebrated uses of oral history in African American history gained national recognition in the mid-1970s. Historian Theodore Rosengarten, conducting field research on the Alabama Sharecroppers Union, found in Ned Cobb an ideal interviewee. He conducted 120 hours of interviews with Cobb, which he published, to great critical acclaim, as *All God's Dangers: The Life of Nate Shaw*.[36] And Alex Haley traced his family's stories back to Gambia, publishing the results of his quest as *Roots: The Saga of an American Family*, which won the Pulitzer Prize. The ensuing television miniseries based on Haley's book set industry records for numbers of viewers when it aired in January 1977.

The women's movement also found oral history to be congenial to its aims. Some of the earliest work in that movement concentrated on women who had been active in the woman suffrage movement. The University of California at Berkeley interviewed leaders such as Alice Paul, while the Feminist Oral History Project, led by Sherna Gluck, focused on rank-and-file suffragists.[37] Radcliffe College launched its Black Women Oral History Project in 1976, interviewing seventy-two women of remarkable achievement.[38] Oral history proved to be a tool uniquely suited for uncovering women's daily experiences. In 1977, Gluck wrote, "Refusing to be rendered historically voiceless any longer, women are creating a new history—using our own voices and experiences. We are challenging the traditional concepts of history, of what is 'historically important,' and we are affirming that our everyday lives *are* history."[39]

Historians of labor and working-class people also realized early the potential for oral history. Between 1959 and 1963, Jack W. Skeels of the University of Michigan and the Wayne State University Institute of Labor and Industrial Relations interviewed fifty-four people to document the creation of the United

Auto Workers.[40] Labor activists Alice Lynd and Staughton Lynd interviewed rank-and-file workers about their experiences in the labor actions of the 1930s and 1940s, demonstrating that workers organized themselves rather than waiting for union officials to act.[41] Peter Friedlander relied on the memories of Edmund Kord, president of Local 229 of the United Automobile Workers in Detroit to produce an in-depth study of the founding and emergence of one union local.[42] Tamara Hareven employed numerous oral history interviews to portray life in a New Hampshire mill village in *Amoskeag: Life and Work in an American Factory City*.[43] Across the U.S., significant archives arose containing oral histories of labor activists.

Community historians also soon realized the value of interviewing in documenting local history. With community history came attempts to "give back" history to the people. The idea also flourished that helping people record their local history would give those people efficacy in their lives, or empower them. In many locations in the United States, oral historians interviewed community members and created public programming from the interviews. Books, pamphlets, slide-tape shows, and readers theaters abounded. A typical project described in the *Oral History Association Newsletter* in 1981 was the Neighborhood Oral History Project in Lincoln, Nebraska. The project employed student interns to record the histories of Lincoln neighborhoods. Each neighborhood had a history committee that created a slide–tape presentation, and an oral historian–storyteller created stories to present to children. Director Barbara Hager expressed her hope that "through sharing cultural heritages while working on the project, participants will transfer their energies to revitalization and preservation of their neighborhoods."[44] One particularly creative, sophisticated application of oral history to community history was Project Jukebox, initiated in 1988 by the University of Alaska Fairbanks (UAF). UAF staff members conducted oral history interviews and loaded the transcripts, along with other materials, onto interactive "jukebox" players accessible to interviewees.[45]

Oral historians and folklorists also made common cause, discussing oral tradition as historical evidence. Folklorist Lynwood Montell used oral history to study a former community of

mixed-blood people settling amid the white farmers in the Cumberland hills of southern Kentucky after the Civil War. In his introduction to *The Saga of Coe Ridge*, Montell makes a passionate argument for the use of oral tradition, where no written documentation exists, to produce "folk history."[46]

Such broad applications of interviewing methods unnerved traditional historians, many of whom were already uncomfortable with social history. As researchers began taking to oral history interviewing with great enthusiasm, traditionalist historians leveled criticisms at the methodology. Most notable was renowned historian Barbara Tuchman, who feared the type of history that oral sources buttressed. She compared the tape recorder to "a monster with the appetite of a tapeworm," and argued that it facilitated "an artificial survival of trivia of appalling proportions." "We are drowning ourselves in unneeded information," Tuchman said.[47]

Yet criticism of oral history also came from those who wished for more radical uses of interviewing. Historian Nathan Reingold critiqued established programs in his talk at the Oral History Association colloquium in 1969: "It would be very useful if people got away from these great men and deliberately looked for people, trends, and events that *are* largely bereft of conventional documentation." Reingold was responding to the uses of oral history in the biographies primarily of powerful white males, such as Forrest Pogue's four-volume work on General George Marshall and T. Harry Williams's study of Huey Long, which won both the Pulitzer Prize and the National Book Award.[48]

Reingold also raised the issue of validity, a concept that has continued to concern oral historians for many years: "I think you all know that if there is a contemporary letter saying one thing and an oral history saying the opposite and there are no other evidences whatsoever on this point, nine out of ten historians will take the contemporary letter."[49] Critiques such as Reingold's set up a continual challenge for oral historians: defending the reliability (the consistency with which an individual will tell the same story repeatedly) and validity (the agreement between the interview and other types of historical sources) of interviews.[50]

The expense of oral history worried some early critics. In 1967, Philip A. Crowl defended the expense of the John Foster

Dulles Oral History Project. He observed that 280 interviews, conducted over a period of three years at an expense of almost $67,000, were well worth the cost: "Oral history . . . is not meant to serve as a substitute for the documentary record. It does in fact supplement the record by producing some information not hitherto documented. But more important, it can provide guidelines to assist the historian through the jungle of data that confronts him."[51]

By the late 1960s, oral history was gaining popularity with the general public and academics alike. Chicago radio talk-show host Studs Terkel first used taped interviews in book form in *Division Street: America*, a study of seventy ordinary people in Chicago. He followed this with *Hard Times: An Oral History of the Great Depression* and *Working: People Talk about What They Do All Day and How They Feel about What They Do*. Terkel's work garnered widespread acclaim in the popular press. Terkel's methods remained in tension with the Goals and Guidelines of the Oral History Association, for he edited heavily and rearranged his interviews and made no provisions for archiving them.[52] Terkel nonetheless epitomized oral history for many Americans.

Another variety of oral history began when a desperate young school teacher enlisted students in his English class to gather the folklore around their home in Appalachian Georgia. The students and teacher, Eliot Wigginton, created a magazine known as *Foxfire*, which became wildly popular upon its initial publication in 1966. Doubleday published the first compilation in 1972, and it was followed by ten subsequent editions.[53] Foxfire created an intersection between oral history and pedagogy, as Wigginton used the project to teach numerous language-arts topics. The success of Foxfire gave rise to numerous other similar projects, several of which persisted into the twenty-first century.[54] It also created an industry of its own, including a 1982 Broadway play for which Jessica Tandy won a Tony Award for her portrayal of Aunt Arie Carpenter.

In 1975, the Oral History Association published a revised *Bibliography on Oral History*, enumerating ongoing work in the United States. The compiler, Manfred Waserman, observed that in 1965 there were 89 reported projects. By 1975, the number had risen to 230, with an additional 93 planned. Waserman commented, "In

1972 it was estimated that there were some 700 oral history centers in 47 states and several foreign countries. The literature on oral history, consisting of about 80 articles in 1967, more than doubled by 1971, and increased to around 300 through 1974. Publications incorporating oral history material have multiplied to the point where the presence of 'oral history' in a title is no longer uncommon." Waserman observed that the items in the bibliography were "products of oral history broadly defined and were produced by a wide spectrum of oral history practitioners extending, in the particular instance of academe, from scholars to high school students." The material varied greatly in quality and included "social, political, and cultural subject matter" as well as folklore and oral tradition. Waserman concluded, "While the merit of these works must be judged on an individual basis, this extension of the oral history phenomenon, with its publications, programs, and related literature has, nevertheless, blurred rather than defined and delineated the origins and scope of the subject."[55] As an acknowledgment of the growing appeal of the practice, the *Journal of Library History*, beginning in 1967, and *History News* (published by the American Association for State and Local History), beginning in 1973, featured regular articles on oral history.[56]

As a field of critical inquiry, oral history began to mature in the 1970s, influenced by cultural studies scholars such as Clifford Geertz. Postmodernism and oral history were well suited for one another, as oral texts easily moved away from positivism.[57] One of the first thoughtful responses to the interviewing phenomenon was "Oral History and *Hard Times*: A Review Essay," in which Michael Frisch used Studs Terkel's work to examine the nature of memory and the significance of recollecting an earlier time amid the turmoil of the 1970s. Frisch observed, "To the extent that *Hard Times* is any example, the interviews are nearly unanimous in showing the selective, synthetic, and generalizing nature of historical memory itself. . . . These capacities are shown to be not only present, but central in the way we all order our experience and understand the meaning of our lives."[58]

Ronald J. Grele edited *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History*, published in 1975. The outcome of a session at the 1973 Organization of American Historians meeting, *Envelopes of Sound*

featured two major papers. One, by Grele himself, examined an interview through linguistic analysis, studied the interaction between the interview participants, and considered the cultural "problematic" brought into the interview by the subject. The second, by Dennis Tedlock, explored rendering narrative as poetry. An interview with Studs Terkel and dialogue between him and the OAH panelists, including chair Alice Kessler-Harris and commentators Jan Vansina and Saul Benison, further broadened the discussion.[59] Conversations about oral history began to move away from the literal process and the content to the theory behind the interview.

Intellectual cross-fertilization with trends in Europe, particularly England, increased in the 1970s as well. In his studies of East Anglia, George Ewart Evans argued for the relevance of oral tradition in supplementing written records.[60] Paul Thompson, oral historian at the University of Essex, published *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* in 1978, demonstrating how oral evidence can change the standard historical narrative. The development of the Oral History Society in England, which published its first journal in 1971, paralleled that of the Oral History Association in the U.S.

Even as it took on international dimensions, oral history became increasingly accessible to local and family historians. Many projects, often limited in scope, flourished in local historical societies, voluntary associations, and so on. Such projects often escaped the attention of academic historians but held deep significance for their communities of origin. As the number of practitioners grew at the grassroots level, regional and state-level oral history groups sprang up across the United States. The first, the New England Association for Oral History, began in 1974, while Oral History in the Middle Atlantic Region formed in 1976. The Michigan Oral History Council was founded in 1979. The Southwest Oral History Association was created in 1981, the Texas Oral History Association in 1982, the Northwest Oral History Association in 1983, and the Oral History Association of Minnesota in 1985. Each of these organizations fostered local history research while promulgating the highest standards of oral history practice, offering workshops and giving awards for exemplary research.

Discussions over the nature and practice of oral history continued apace. While some issues easily coalesced into agreement, others remained contentious. In 1979, a selected group of Oral History Association members came together at the Wingspread Conference Center in Wisconsin to build upon the original "Goals and Guidelines" and to formulate a set of guidelines to "impart standards to oral history projects that were just beginning and to provide critical appraisal to established projects that wished review and advice from professional peers."[61] The resulting *Evaluation Guidelines*, an official publication of the Oral History Association, promulgated basic criteria for programs and projects. The guidelines included analyses of purposes and objectives; selections of interviewers and interviewees; availability of materials; finding aids; management, qualifications, and training; ethical and legal guidelines; tape and transcript processing guidelines; interview content guidelines; and interview conduct guidelines. The guidelines proved an invaluable touchstone for practitioners seeking to conduct interviews of the highest quality and provided a common ground for discussion.

Recording technology expanded beyond audio equipment with the appearance and spread of video recording, which appeared in professional discussions as early as 1970. Once again, oral historians debated over the nature of the product and how it changed when visual images were added to the verbal record.[62] The debate over videotaping continued into the 1980s, when the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation awarded the Smithsonian Institution funds to examine videohistory's effectiveness. By 1991, Smithsonian historians had completed more than 250 hours of tape in several different projects. Evaluator Stanley Goldberg expressed reservations about the increased administrative costs and the expense of high-quality recording, while Carlene Stephens commented on video's usefulness for documenting material objects and processes. Producer Brien Williams declared that preliminary audio interviews were critical to success. Their conclusions seemed to point to a limited but valuable role for video in oral history interviewing.[63]

Scholarship in oral history continued to mature. In 1984, Willa Baum and David Dunaway compiled and edited *Oral History:*

An Interdisciplinary Anthology. The reader brought together thirty-four germinal articles in the field, beginning with early writings by Allan Nevins and Louis Starr, and continuing with articles on interpreting and designing projects, applied oral history, the relationships with other disciplines, education, and libraries.[64] Writings on oral history became increasingly sophisticated. In 1986, Linda Shopes analyzed book reviews on oral history and concluded that a sustained critical voice was emerging.[65] Bibliographer David Henige's *Oral Historiography* (1982) investigated how oral historians shape "the past they reconstruct," looking at the role of the historian in selecting, recording, and interpreting sources.[66] In the field of communication studies, Eva McMahan and her colleagues pioneered studies in oral history as a rhetorical device, examining the interview as a communicative event and speech act.[67] Michael Frisch in 1990 published his collected essays in a volume evocatively titled *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History.* Frisch's essays included thoughtful discussion of the collaboration between interviewee and interviewer.[68] In 1987, the *Journal of American History*, the quarterly publication of the Organization of American Historians, began an annual section on oral history, which was edited by Linda Shopes and Michael Frisch for ten years and then by Michael Gordon and Lu Ann Jones. The oral history section served as part of the journal's examination of resources available to historians. Over the next sixteen years, oral historians provided a mixture of topical and reflective essays designed not to be theoretical or methodological, but to "foster a more thoughtful evaluation of oral history source materials and a more self-conscious historical practice."[69]

Increasingly, American oral historians came to be influenced by scholars outside the U.S. The *International Journal of Oral History*, edited by American Ronald J. Grele, began publication in 1980, focusing on comparative approaches, cross-disciplinary or interdisciplinary approaches, and theoretical and methodological discussions, all within an international context. In 1992, the journal merged with *Life Stories* from the British Oral History Society to become the *International Yearbook of Oral History and Life Stories*, which published several thematic issues of mostly European and American scholarship in the mid-1990s.[70] The work of

scholars such as Elena Poniatowska and Luisa Passerini began influencing American readers with their nuanced readings of oral interview data.[71] A group of oral historians from around the world met in Essex, England, in 1979, sharing their common interests. The group organized formally at its 1996 meeting in Göteborg, Sweden, as the International Oral History Association, held biennial meetings, and published a bilingual journal titled *Words and Silences/Palabras y Silencios*.

Historian Alessandro Portelli, whose research included Americans in Appalachia as well as his fellow Italians, published his important work *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories* in 1991. Portelli's study of the versions of the death of steelworker Luigi Trastulli brought new questions to bear on the issues of validity and reliability in oral history. Portelli posited that the way that people remember is as important as what they remember: "Oral history has made us uncomfortably aware of the elusive quality of historical truth itself."[72] Trained in the field of literary studies, Portelli was keenly attuned to analysis of texts, and he significantly influenced the ways in which historians interpreted their sources. In the same year, Sherna Gluck and Daphne Patai edited *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*, a collection of thirteen essays by women in several academic disciplines. The authors reflect on personal politics, power dynamics, and race and ethnicity as well as gender. Elizabeth Tonkin's *Narrating Our Pasts: The Social Construction of Oral History* (1992) investigated the question of oral history and narrative, as Tonkin argued that narratives are both social constructions and individual performances.[73]

The breadth of oral history research continued to be one of its prime strengths. In 1988, Twayne Publishers, acknowledging the wide appeal of oral history, started its Oral History Series, edited by Donald A. Ritchie. Twenty-six books, on an expansive array of topics, appeared between 1990 and 1998, testimony to the span of the usefulness and applicability of oral history. The Twayne volumes centered around interview transcripts, carefully contextualized.[74] As gay and lesbian studies emerged in the U.S. academy, oral history again became a prime tool for documenting people and movements. Among the earliest titles in the

field were Allan Berube's work on World War II soldiers, Lillian Faderman's general study of lesbians, and Elizabeth Kennedy and Madeline Davis's research on working-class lesbians.[75]

Two major manuals for oral history research appeared in the mid-1990s: *Doing Oral History*, by Donald Ritchie, and *Recording Oral History*, by Valerie Yow. Both books, each excellent in its own way, demonstrate the consensus that oral historians shared regarding standards and methods, the differences in approaches, and the vast possibilities for applications.[76] In 1998, British historians Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson pulled together much of the best scholarship of the late twentieth century into *The Oral History Reader*, considering critical developments, interviewing, advocacy and empowerment, interpretation, and "making histories."[77]

In the mid-1990s, technological issues took center stage as digital recording raised anew issues of representation of the interviewee's voice.[78] The issue of accessibility, widely discussed since the late 1960s, became even more pressing as the World Wide Web made possible unlimited distribution of oral history transcripts and sound files.[79] The Internet and e-mail also made possible digital exchanges between oral historians. Terry Birdwhistell of the University of Kentucky launched an Internet discussion list, OHA-L in 1993. It became affiliated with the rapidly growing organization known as H-Net in 1997 under the name H-Oralhist. Almost two thousand subscribers worldwide can communicate electronically about issues of mutual interest. The Internet has also facilitated a massive oral history initiative by the Library of Congress: the Veterans History Project. Spurred by the loss of World War II veterans, the project enlists volunteers nationwide to conduct interviews and deposit them in the Library of Congress. By May 2003, more than seven thousand interviews had been submitted to the project.[80]

Oral historians have long been concerned with issues of memory, particularly how people remember and what shapes their memories. Early works by Michael Kammen and John Bodnar raised the questions of public participation in the formulation of historical memory, opening the floodgate of later scholarship.[81] By the turn of the twenty-first century, discussions

of memory pertained to the physical process not of a given individual but rather of society at large—what a society remembers and what that means.

Writing using oral history has continued to grow in sophistication. The Palgrave Studies in Oral History published its first volume in 2003. Edited by Linda Shopes and Bruce Stave, the Palgrave books are designed to look at oral history interviews in depth, to place them "in broad historical context and engage issues of historical memory and narrative construction."[82]

In 2005, oral history methodology continues to flourish. Both the Oral History Association and the International Oral History Association are thriving, and their publications continue to increase in quality. The methodology continues to prove itself useful in a broad array of topics, and applications continue to become more creative. As the World Wide Web grows in scope and influence, it undoubtedly will have an impact on the dissemination of oral history. But the basic dynamic, two people sitting and talking about the past, has remained largely unchanged. Despite the sophistication of analysis and interpretation, a middle-school student can still do a legitimate oral history interview. Where individuals communicate, oral history will continue to be useful.

Notes

I thank Bruce Stave and Thomas Charlton for their careful reading of and suggestions for this chapter.

1. Starr, "Oral History," 4; Moss, "What It Is," 5; Strassler, *Landmark Thucydides*, 15; Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, xi (originally published as *Oral Tradition: A Study in Historical Methodology*); Haley, "Black History," 12, 14–17; Hanke, "American Historians," 6–7. For an overview of historiography in Europe and Africa, see Henige, *Oral Historiography*, 7–22.
2. Carr, *What Is History?* 3.
3. Hart, *Catalogue*, vii–viii.
4. Hirsch, *Portrait of America*, 6. Hirsch provides an elegant discussion of the intellectual impulses behind the Federal Writers' Project.
5. Couch, preface to *These Are Our Lives*, ix, x–xi.
6. Botkin, *Lay My Burden Down*, ix. Ann Banks discusses the history of WPA project anthologies in her 1980 collection of eighty previously unpublished

interviews in *First Person America*, xi, xiii, xv. Later, in 1993, Theda Perdue published *Nations Remembered*, a selection of WPA interviews with Native Americans. An extended debate over the veracity of the slave narratives took place in the *Oral History Review*. See Soapes, "Federal Writers' Project"; Rapport, "Life Stories"; and Terrill and Hirsch, "Replies."

7. Nevins, *Gateway to History*, iv. See Hirsch, *Portrait of America*, 141–47, for a contrast between the Federal Writers' Project and Nevins's approach to collecting personal narratives.
8. Everett, *Oral History Techniques*, 4–7; Pogue, *Pogue's War*, 99.
9. Nevins, "How and Why," 31–32.
10. Starr, "Oral History," 8–9, 22.
11. Nevins, "How and Why," 32; Starr, "Oral History," 10–11.
12. Boatright and Owens, *Derrick Floor*, ix–x.
13. Annotations of the Forest History Society interview collection first appeared in Holman, *Oral History Collection*, and are now available online at Forest History Society Oral History Program, Understanding the Past for Its Impact on the Future, http://www.lib.duke.edu/forest/Research/ohiguide.html (accessed January 31, 2005).
14. Hart, *Catalogue,* vii–viii.
15. Grele, introduction to *UCLA Oral History Program*, 1. See also UCLA Oral History Program, History and Description, University of California at Los Angeles, http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/special/ohp/ohphist.htm (accessed January 31, 2005).
16. Starr, "Oral History," 12; Herbert Hoover Presidential Library and Museum, Research Collections: Historical Materials, Oral History Transcripts, http://www.ecommcode2.com/hoover/research/historicalmaterials/oral.html (accessed January 26, 2005); Truman Presidential Museum and Library, Oral History Interviews, http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/oral_his.htm (accessed January 26, 2005); Eisenhower Presidential Library Information Archives, Eisenhower Library Information Resources: Oral Histories, http://www.ibiblio.org/lia/president/EisenhowerLibrary/oral_histories/Oral.html (accessed January 26, 2005); John F. Kennedy Library and Museum, Historical Materials in the John F. Kennedy Library: Oral History Interviews, http://www.cs.umb.edu/~serl/jfk/oralhist.htm (accessed January 31, 2005); Lyndon Baines Johnson Library and Museum, Oral History Collection, http://www.lbjlib.utexas.edu/johnson/archives.hom/biopage.asp (accessed January 26, 2005).
17. Kessler-Harris, "Social History," 233–34, 237.
18. Colman, "Oral History," 79–83.
19. Dixon and Mink, *Oral History at Arrowhead*.
20. Dixon, "Definitions," 14.
21. Ibid., 6.
22. Ibid., 5. By the mid-1970s, 70 percent of U.S. programs were transcribing their interviews, opposed to British and Canadian programs, which left theirs in recorded form only. Louis Starr concluded, "This is not so much because those who favor the transcript have the better of the argument on theoretical grounds as because of practical convenience." Starr, "Oral History," 7.

23. Dixon, "Definitions," 22.
24. Nevins, "Uses," 40.
25. Dixon, "Definitions," 19; Dixon and Colman, "Objectives and Standards," 78, 80.
26. "Oral History Association Adopts Statement about Goals and Guidelines during Nebraska Colloquium," *Oral History Association Newsletter* 3, no. 1 (January 1969), 4. The "Goals and Guidelines" were subsequently revised in 1975.
27. Editors to date are Samuel Hand, 1973–1978; Richard Sweterlitsch, 1978–1980; Arthur A. Hansen, 1981–1987; Michael Frisch, 1987–1996; Bruce M. Stave, 1996–1999; and Andrew J. Dunar, 2000–2005. *Oral History Review* began publishing twice yearly with volume 15 in 1987.
28. *Oral History Association Newsletter* 2, no. 2 (April 1968): 1.
29. *Oral History Association Newsletter* 4, no. 3 (July 1970): 6.
30. Other significant manuals prior to the 1990s included Moss, *Program Manual*; Davis, Back, and MacLean, *Tape to Type*; Ives, *Tape-Recorded Interview* (1980); Charlton, *Oral History for Texans* (1981); and Sitton, Mehaffy, and Davis, *Guide for Teachers*.
31. *Oral History Association Newsletter* 15, no. 1 (1981): 6–7.
32. Cash and Hoover, *To Be an Indian*.
33. Haley, "Black History," 7–8; X, *Autobiography*.
34. Browne, "Civil Rights," 90–95.
35. Jefferson, "Echoes from the South," 43–62.
36. Rosengarten, *All God's Dangers*, xiii–xxv.
37. Bancroft Library Regional Oral History Office, Oral History Online: Suffragists Oral History Project, University of California at Berkeley Library, http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/projects/suffragist/ (accessed January 31, 2005); Gluck, *Parlor to Prison*.
38. Hill, *Women of Courage*, 3–4.
39. Gluck, "What's So Special" (1984), 222.
40. Starr, "Oral History," 12; Walter P. Reuther Library, Oral History Collections: UAW Oral Histories, Wayne State University College of Urban Labor and Metropolitan Affairs, http://www.reuther.wayne.edu/use/ohistory.html#uaw (accessed January 26, 2005).
41. Lynd and Lynd, *Rank and File*, 3.
42. Friedlander, *UAW Local*.
43. Hareven and Langenbach, *Amoskeag*.
44. "Neighborhood OH Changes Lives," *Oral History Association Newsletter* 15, no. 2 (1981): 6.
45. University of Alaska Fairbanks Oral History Program, Project Jukebox, Elmer E. Rasmuson Library, University of Alaska Fairbanks, http://uaf-db.uaf.edu/Jukebox/PJWeb/pjhome.htm (accessed January 26, 2005). Following Baum's early community history guide, *Oral History for the Local Historical Society*, the Oral History Association produced its own guide by Mercier and Buckendorf, *Using Oral History in Community History Projects*. For a particularly good example of a community history, see Fee, Shopes, and Zeidman, *Baltimore Book*.

46. Montell, *Coe Ridge*, ix–xxvii.

47. Tuchman, "Distinguishing the Significant" (1984), 76.

48. Reingold, "Critic Looks at Oral History," 219. Pogue, *George C. Marshall*; Williams, *Huey Long*.

49. Reingold, "Critic Looks at Oral History," 217.

50. Hoffman, "Reliability and Validity." Hoffman has continued her work for several decades, particularly with her husband Howard Hoffman's memories of his service during World War II. See Hoffman and Hoffman, *Archives of Memory*.

51. Philip A. Crowl, "The Dulles Oral History Project: Mission Accomplished," *American Historical Association Newsletter*, February 1967.

52. For Terkel's discussion of his editing, see Grele, "Riffs and Improvisations," 31–39.

53. Wigginton, *Foxfire Book*. For a description of how the Foxfire movement began, see Wigginton, *Shining Moment*.

54. Two of the most successful projects include Loblolly, Gary, Texas, and The Long, Long Ago Oral History Project, Suva Intermediate School, Bell Gardens, California. See Sitton, *Loblolly Book*, and Brooks, "Long, Long Ago." High school students in Lebanon, Missouri, published *Bittersweet: The Ozark Quarterly* from 1973 to 1983. See Massey, *Bittersweet Country*.

55. Waserman, *Bibliography*, rev. ed., iii–iv.

56. The *Journal of Library History* articles ran twice yearly from 1967 (Volume 2) to 1973 (Volume 8) and were often descriptions of oral history projects and activities. *History News* articles appeared occasionally through 1976.

57. Bonnell and Hunt, introduction to *Beyond the Cultural Turn*, 2–3, 4.

58. Frisch, "Oral History and *Hard Times*" (1990), 13.

59. Grele, *Envelopes of Sound* (1975).

60. Evans, *Where Beards Wag All*.

61. Oral History Association, *Evaluation Guidelines*, 1. The guidelines were updated in 1989 and again in 2000.

62. Frantz, "Video-Taping"; Colman, "Where to Now?" 2; Charlton, "Videotaped Oral Histories."

63. Goldberg, "Manhattan Project Series," 98; Stephens, "Videohistory," 107; Williams, "Recording Videohistory," 143–44.

64. Dunaway and Baum, *Oral History* (1984).

65. Shopes, "Critical Dialogue."

66. Henige, *Oral Historiography*, 128.

67. McMahan, *Elite Oral History Discourse*.

68. *Oral History Review* 30, no. 1 (Winter/Spring 2003) featured essays by seven authors commenting on the collaborative process.

69. Frisch and Shopes, "Introduction," 593. The annual oral history sections of the *Journal of American History* began in 1987 (Volume 74) and continued through 2002 (Volume 89). The editors were Michael Frisch and Linda Shopes (1986–1996) and Lu Ann Jones and Michael Gordon (1997–2002).

70. Grele, "Editorial," 2. The first *International Yearbook* was Passerini, *Memory and Totalitarianism*.

71. Poniatowska, *Nothing, Nobody*; Passerini, *Fascism in Popular Memory.*

72. Portelli, *Death of Luigi Trastulli*, viii–ix. Portelli followed with the equally engaging *Battle of Valle Giulia* and *Order Has Been Carried Out*.

73. Tonkin, *Narrating Our Pasts*.

74. Donald A. Ritchie, e-mail message to author, January 26, 2004. The first Twayne volume was Lewin, *Witnesses to the Holocaust*.

75. Berube, *Coming Out*; Faderman, *Odd Girls*; Kennedy and Davis, *Boots of Leather*.

76. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (1995); Yow, *Recording Oral History* (1994). The 2003 revised edition of Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, contains a significant bibliography. The second edition of Yow's manual, updated and enlarged, appeared in 2005.

77. Perks and Thomson, *Oral History Reader*.

78. Gluck, Ritchie, and Eynon, "New Millennium."

79. Large oral history programs produced printed guides to their collections. In the mid-1980s, the Southwestern Oral History Association produced a unified database of interviews in the region. See Gallacher and Treleven, "Online Database." The importance of this issue is demonstrated by the heated arguments in late 2003 on H-Oralhist, the Internet discussion list, regarding plans for a database by the Alexander Street Press.

80. Veterans History Project News and Events, Veterans' Stories Online for Memorial Day, Library of Congress American Folklife Center Veterans History Project, http://www.loc.gov/folklife/vets//news-courage.html (accessed January 26, 2005).

81. Kammen, *Mystic Chords of Memory*; Bodnar, *Remaking America*.

82. The first volume is Polishuk, *Sticking to the Union*. The call for manuscripts is located online at Palgrave Global Publishing at St. Martin's Press, Palgrave Studies in Oral History, University of Connecticut Center for Oral History, http://www.oralhistory.uconn.edu/palgrave.html (accessed January 31, 2005).

[Dennis Potinos]

26070

August 20, 1939

Dennis Potinos (Greek)

Proprietor.

Rectors's Cafe,

Cathedral Place,

St. Augustine, Florida.

Rose Shepherd, Writer.

DENNIS POTINOS, (GREEK) Part I

It was four o'clock on a hot Sunday afternoon, when the polite cashier of Rector's Cafe in aristocratic Cathedral Place smilingly stated that Mr. Dennis Potinos, head of the Greek Community in St. Augustine, and proprietor of Rector's Cafe, had stepped out for a short time.

“He'll be back by five — always here by that time, if you return.”

At 5 p.m. the residents of St. Augustine, the transient visitors to the old Catholic Cathedral next door — the oldest institution of its kind in the oldest city of the United States — historic St. Augustine, were filing into Rector's for their evening meal.

Rector's Cafe specializes in shrimp, fish, oysters, — the business card states — “The Original Seafood Platters — Cooked to the King's Taste.”

Mr. Potinos arose from a small table at the rear of the restaurant where he had been enjoying a cigarette and a cup of black coffee, and came forward, extending his hand — a lame hand from a stiff arm, hanging almost limp from a low shoulder — and said cordially — ‘We sit here at this front table, by the window.”

As if by magic, three cups of coffee appeared, and a large ashtray was placed at Mr. Potinos' left hand, with a package of imported, fragrant cigarettes.

2

A system of air condition makes the restaurant especially inviting after driving around for an hour on the broiling streets, with little or no breeze during the waning afternoon.

Everything was spotless. The tables — sixty of them — were spread with long white cloths with attractive Persian — gourd-shaped — patterns in brilliant colors of red and green, shaded into soft henna and yellow. The top clothe, removed after each diner, were stiffened white linen.

There was no noise. The Greek waiters in Tuxedos glided in and out among the tables, listening quietly, and writing rapidly, when an order was given. There was no odor of food cooking, and no/ sickening smell of smothered burning of shrimp hulls, as was the case a little further down the street in the same block, where cold drinks had been ordered in an effort to combat the heat.

The walls were wainscoted up six feet with embossed imitation Spanish-looking leather wallpaper; above that a double white tile-like border, then the soft green tinted walls to the lofty ceiling. The floor was of small hexagon-shaped block tile, laid in an intricate pattern in brown and white. The chairs were heavy, dark drown, Spanish type, and the cashier's

desk of brown walnut with high brass grille. Everywhere an air of repose, elegance, and refinement.

In front of us, facing the long plate glass window, was a remarkable collection of coral from Florida waters — the feathery fans, the tall, sprangled “trees — some pink, some white — and at the end of the ornate basin — the setting for native ferns, was a long shark's jaw with polished, murderous teeth.

3

“Where did I get the attractive tablecloths? Chicago. A year in November now, it will be, and many, many times they have gone to the laundry, but still like new.”

A rather [?] [?], he is dressed in a light weight gray suite, with shirt of two colors of blue stripes, a soft collar with black string tie, and presents a most dignified appearance with his quiet bearing, his dreamy, enlongated gray eyes, his hair black and slightly graying, parted in the middle.

“You want my story? It will be long — very long. I was born on the Island of [Ithaca?]. On the map? Here it is, to the West of Greece, proper, in the Adriatic between Greece and Italy. It is spelled just the same as [Ithaca?], in New York state. The town of my people where I was born is the seaport, Baphia. The town has a normal population of 6,000, the whole island, 16,000.

“The climate is not tropical, it is about like that of North Georgia. There are high mountains all about, and in the winter are heavy snows.

“There are many beautiful flowers and olive trees, and on the mountain sides great vineyards, all kinds of grapes.”

Mr. Potinos speaks with a well modulated voice. He slurs his [?]'s, lengthens his i's. and [?] to the long words by stringing out the syllables, continental fashion. His accent is decidedly French, which he speaks fluently.

“There are no large farms there, as here — just gardens like, where the farmers raise plenty of vegetables.

“The harbor of Baphia, where I was born, lies in a valley.

4

“It is quite low, surrounded by mountains all around. The groves of olive trees and the vineyards are many and the pressed-out olive oil and the wine makes the income of more than half the inhabitants.” (He pronounced it “inhob'-ee -t-a-h=n=t=s”)”

“The harbor of Baphia is so picturesque and so beautiful! As you come into the harbor front, you sail between two mountains, and as you sail up towards the city, you see nothing — nothing but the mountains on the side, and the sky, and the blue water. After you enter the bay in which the harbor is of the town of Baphia, the mountains rise in steps and tiers which lead down to the valley. If you look around from the ship,”-(he pronounced it “she-ep”) “You seem lost like, you do not recognize the way you come in. The harbor is very deep and big liners come regularly, and freighters from all over the world.

“Between the island and the mainland contact is principally by small sailing vessels, owned and operated by Greeks, bringing over groceries, yard goods, and other supplies. Also there are extensive mail connections from the continent, and to all the islands.

“To take the ocean-going vessels, it is necessary to catch a steamer from Baphia to Patras, on the pelioponisus. They have not yet airplane service, but probably will later, as they are very progressive.

5

“The sustenance (living) of the people is from the visitors to the island from outside of Greece and from the workmen — the main industry is ship-building — and from the sailors on the liners and freighters.

“For instance, the inhabitants of Greece own about fifty ocean-going steamers, mastered-(manned)- “ninety percent by residents of Ithaca from the master (captain) down to the ordinary seaman, dockmen and leaders.

“Many visitors come to the Island of Ithaca in ships from South Africa, the British possessions of India, Egypt, Australia, and from Americas, South America, from Roumania, also from Russia. The money they leave goes to the people who live and work there.

“The island ships olive oil and wine to ports all over [?] and other countries where it is in demand.

“Russia, before the Bolshevic dominance, and the overthrow of the Orthodox Church of the old country, used oil from out part of Greece for illumination of the churches and in their homes.

“The people look for money a greatdeal from the visitors, the same as Florida caters to winter tourists.

“Ithaca is also historic. While I still lived there many archeological excavations had been made; expeditions and scientists coming from various parts of the world, to study the scenes that were referred to in Homer — for instance, the home of Ulysses, and the parts pertaining to his life in Ithaca.

“Mr. Frederick S. Schlemann, the archeologist, excavated the site of Troy, and wrote a letter certifying that Troy, the Illiad, and the Odyssus, were not a myth — as so many

believed — but were absolutely true, as things then existed in early Greece, written about and described with so much detail in the classics.

“The public schools of Greece at present time are three: the primary, the elementary, and the high schools. Business and commercial colleges they have there also.

“In Athens —(he prounced it “Ahthe-e-ns”) is the National University of Greece, and there is another very fine University in Salonika.

“The northern part of Greece is very mountainous, and there exist in the valleys many small settlements. There are three ports/ on the mainland which are nearer to the inhabitants of these settlements, than is the main harbor of the Island — (Baphia).

“In some sections of Greece [rosin?] is added to the wine, the sour wine, mostly as a preservative.

“The wine of the Island of Ithaca is dry, like champagne, very clear, and I am sorry to say almost none of it is ordered or shipped to America.

“The olive oil is the ‘[Maorodaphne?].’ It is wonderful, very fine grain, and in cool weather it becomes thick like soft butter. In the old country it is kept in ancient stone urns of fifty gallons capacity.

7

“In Ithaca, I am thankful to say, electric lights have been installed by one of our [pahtrioots?] (patriots) - a very rich ship owner. His main office is in London, England.

“Ithaca, by the way has produced more patriots /(public spirited citizens) than perhaps of any other section, who have been spending their money for the national expression of Greece.” (That is, that Greece might take her place among the nations of the world as a modern, up-to-date country).

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“Ithaca during the war of the Revolution — 1821 to 1829 — the time when the Island was under the English flag, became the home of the refugees from Greece. The hordes come down, swarming over the country like savages, and the people had to leave their pursuits and possessions and flee for their lives. Ithaca and the other islands helped to house, caring for them also with money, provisions, and clothing, — all necessities.

“During the Igio Messcalanto, was the time Lord Byron was helping the poor sick children, who were victims of the siege. Lord Byron visited Italy, staying there for some, when he was entertained in the larger cities.

“Ithaca is a part of the Ionia Islands, ceded to Great Britian after Napoleon's death, and it stayed under British rule until 1864 or 1865 when England donated the Islands to become a part of Greece by the demand of the inhabitants and the new Price of Denmark, King George I, who ruled Greece.

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“In the [Ionia?] Islands the pure Greek language is always spoken. The islands have been blessed by God — never conquered by the Ottoman rule. While Turks occupied the Balkans and north as far as Vienna, Austria never were they able to take the islands, even [?] under the Duke of Vienna, who had a mighty power at sea — God protected the islands.

“The present dictator of Greece, General Motaxis, was born in Ithaca. Just lately I read in a Greek newspaper that he had asked Greek educator (professor) to write the history of the Ionia islands from prehistoric times, and, believe me, I am eagerly waiting for its publication.

“There are many churches in the Islands, all of the Orthodox Greek, and all under the administration of one Greek Bishop.

“The unit of money is the [drachma?], value and like the French franc, about five cents in American money. But there is so much shipping that we reckon weight in ounces, pounds, bushels, the same as in England or America. It is different in continental Greece.

“I came to the United States twenty-eight years ago, in 1911. I went first to Georgia, living for years in Waycross, and eleven years in [Blackshear?], Georgia.

“I was in business in Blackshear all my years there. I owned a restaurant there and a fruit store. I was rated in both Dun's and Bradstreet's Commercial Register. Then I sold my business at a nice profit and came to Florida in 1925.

“I bought this restaurant and have been here ever since. The man before me gave it the name of Rector's, and I just continued under that name. It was a very small place when I took it over. I have enlarged the capacity, improved the service, extended the menu, until now the cafe has a national reputation. I am proud to say, most proud, that Rector's is recognized as one of the best restaurants in Florida. I specialize in seafoods.”

Returning again in thought to his beloved Island of Ithaca, he continued:

“No cold storage there. Meat was only available once or twice a week, fresh killed, but every day there was fine fresh fish. The fishing boats went out in the morning and returned at night, when the people went down to the market places and selected their fish — fresh from the salt waters and most times alive yet.

“There were no cows on the island. The milk used came from goats. They thrived on the hillsides on the mountains grass of the rocky soil, and their milk is good and rich, free from tuberculosis germs.

“Once someone brought in about a hundred cattle, but they were kept, as you say, in a pen fattening until ready to kill.

“The beef for consumption of the islands came from the sections north of Greece, especially the Epirus. It was from here that the cattle were brought in and fattened like I say. There is some pork on the island, but very little, as the people generally do not like pork, and do not eat it. They consider a pig a dirty animal, not fit as food.

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“In the spring, in fact most of the year, they have lambs, and in the summer the young kids. Easter week everybody buys a lamb and barbecues it. Most of them are cooked at home. A good many, like two families who are good neighbors, barbecue together. The homes have brick, built-in ovens, with a part they build a fire under like a furnace with a grate, and this is where they barbecue.

“When I lived there, only earthen vessels were used to cook in, with occasionally a cooker of tin coated with copper.

“There were tinsmiths — troubadours (traveling potmenders) — who came down from Epirus. They have been coming each year since the Middle Ages, traveling in Greece in the winter time when it is cold in their own country, carrying small furnace-pots fired with charcoal, retinning the copper vessels for the inhabitants. I will say everything cooked in these containers is fine, very fine.

“The housewives roast their own coffee, and grind it /by hand in small mills, held between their knees. The mill can be screwed to grind fine or coarse, and they say the best to do this work is the troubadours ([?]) who have strong hands and arms, and can grind the coffee fine. They also climb up and pick the olives from the trees, help with all kinds of work, but how they do steal! They are terrible thieves.

“My grandmother had a loom, great big, that took up the whole side of one room — about eight feet square, and she would get the wool, when my grandfather sheared the sheep, 11 and washed and washed until the wool was white as snow. Then it was wrung out and

dried in cotton bags in the sun. It would be light then, and a small quantity of wet wool made a big bag of fluffy dry wool.

“Then she had a hand machine - a carder - that made the wools in little rolls, which she would stretch out and spin into thread. Sometimes she would stretch too much and the thread would break. Then she would take the two ends, wrap them together and twist hard, and you could not break such a thread by hard pulling.

“She would buy big spools of cotton thread from the village store and spin that also in to fine cotton cloth. It wear most like iron.

“In my days there was no ready-made or manufactured clothing on the island. In every neighborhood there was a woman dressmaker. These ladies, to my mind, were artists. They could take goods by the yard and fashion the most beautiful things. They made ladies' dresses from looking at pictures. In times when a girl in the neighborhood would be getting married, and had a big trouseau, and lots of maids taking part with the bride, the dressmaker was most busy, as there would be lots and lots of new dresses for the wedding party.

“The men's clothes was made by men tailors. Those who could afford to have the tailor-made clothing were very fortunate, as the tailors were artists, too, training in Athens and Patras, and some of them going to European centers and to London to study the styles and cutting.

“The shoes for both men and women were made in local shoe shops by trained shoemakers who had a special cutter, who cut to measure, had a [mechanic?] to sew and put the shoes together. The shoes, as a rule, were very beautiful and lasting. Kidskin was used for the women's shoes and cowskin and calfskin for the men's. The best leather was imported. Some places in continental Greece had leather manufacturing places.

“Ithaca has always been a maritime country. The Harbor of Euphia has been know for centuries, and there for centuries have existed ship-building yards, building sea-worthy ships. For instance, sailing vessels, plying the Mediterrannean [sea?] from ports on the Black Sea to the [straits?] of Gibraltar, were built in Ithaca.

“Ithaca has produced many good businessman, with large interests in Russia, Egypt, [Asia Minor?], [Austria?] [/-?] [Hungary?]. Also [there have been many?] famous scholars and educators (teachers) who have good positions in schools and collages all over the world, some of them [renowned?] for their great [learning?] and their contributions to literature and the arts and sciences.

“In my home in Ithaca the primary school children went together, but the grammar school from the fifth grade and the [high?] schools were [separated?], the boys having their own rooms and teachers and the girls on the other side. But in the same building. There were both men and women teachers, the women in the lower grades.

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“I would like to mention some of the Grecian ship-building companies in England, one is [Stathatos?] Brothers and the other is Dracoulis, Ltd. These are two of the older and better known firms, with [immense?] capital and large enterprises. There are others, too, that have come into existence since I left Greece thirty years ago, that have offices in London.

“One family of Ithaca, the Theophilatos, were one of the pioneer ship-builders and owners that made great marine progress when Greece first started to become a maritime nation. But that company is now out of existence, because during the World War the oldest stockholder of this company, Demetrios Theophilatos, was forced to leave England on account of his anti-King activities. England wanted a united nation.

“Demetrios theophilatos came to New york, bringing his fortune to this country. He lost his ships because the English Empire were fighting him.

“In my opinion, Demetrios Theophilatos was the greatest patriot of Modern Greece, but he made the mistake of trying to fight the Great british nation, and not on the field of honor!

“Sorry to say, after he came to this country, he lost all his money in real estate in New York city.

“But Mr. Theophilatos was a nobleman. He was recognized by President and Mrs. Woodrow Wilson, was invited to be their guest in Washington, and was a friend of Mayor [Hylan?], of New York City.

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“All of Ithaca regretted that he lost his money, because he was one of the island's most highly regarded citizen.

“When he got cleaned out of his fortune in the United States, he went back, not to England, but to Holland, where in Rotterdam he is earning a nice living as a ship broker.

“Those steamship companies now in London conduct their business from ships flying the Greek flag, enjoy the respect of the English, and the confidence of Lloyds, the great insurors. During all the civil war in Spain, never once did they carry a cargo to any of the belligerents or handle any shipping but to or for the British government.

“There are forty or fifty ocean-going vessels owned by sons of Ithaca and operated for their fathers in Patras and Athens, Greece. But for all these ships, the name of their port of berth is Baphia on the Island of Ithaca.”

At this time, Mr Potinos, who had been talking without interruption, produced a letter from his desk from the captain of a Greek Steamer — the S. S. [Eloni Stathatos?] — a native of Ithaca, a friend whose wife is a near relative, written while the ship was unloading scrap-iron in [Yokohoma?], Japan. Mr Potinos saw in a notice in a Greek paper that the ship would touch at Key West for orders July 1st, and the letter was in answer to one he had

written the Captain, and delivered to him when the ship reached Key West as a port-of-call on the date mentioned. He read the letter, written on a typewriter and [ouched?] in the most beautiful English, which he stated he would answer in time for his friend to receive it five days hence at Seattle, Washington 15 and would turn over to the Federal Writers' Project for the valuable information it contains. [?] Mr. Potinos was shown the picture-supplement illustration of the wedding party of wrestling “Adonis”. Jim Londos, of Beverly Hills, California, and his bride, Miss [Mrva Rochwite?], of St. Louis, Missouri, as they were led around the alter of the Greek Orthodox Church by the Rev. Constantine Thapralis, in the California city, and was asked to kindly explain the flower [crows?] worn by the bride and groom.

“I do not know if I can remember, but a song is part of the service, glorifying virtue and honor — it goes — ““May glory and virtue crown these”” and the two ribbons tie the flower crowns together, to indicated the couple are united. I will write to the minister myself of the Greek Orthodox Church in Atlanta, and ask him to send me the entire hymn.”

In answer to a direct question he said: “Not many Greeks are farming in this country. The could not, because, in my opinion, they were so depressed when they came over here, most of them, that they had to turn their hands to labor or other quick work to earn money to live on, and did not have time or capital to develop a farm. If they would turn to farming. I am sure they would make good, because [as a race?] they are very persistent and hard-working. Some come over trained in various trades as mechanics, — brick-layers, stonesmiths, plasters — as blacksmiths, painters, etc. But they had labored for so little at such work in 16 Greece, there is so little putting up of new building, that they almost starved to death, and they did not have the heart to try to continue their trained [?] occupations in a new country, although wonderful skilled workers, for fear they would be out-of-date or slow, and it would work a hardship on them. You see, the main thing was to earn money quickly, just enough to live on, day by day.

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“America is a wonderful place for my people, wonderful, wonderful country! In which to earn a living, the government by a free people, the things we have (conveniences), and the necessities of live — all so incomparable to what they are in Greece. We won't speak of it, but it would be surprising if we could get along were we to return to the homeland. To live there the life we have in this country, we would have to be one hundred percent in every respect, and indeed be very rich to have there the same conveniences as are possible in this country.” (to be continued)

[Dennis Potinos] http://www.loc.gov/resource/wpalh1.11111216

[Dennis Potinos]

26071

August [20?], {1939?].

Dennis Potinos, (Greek)

Proprietor

[Rector's?] Cafe,

Cathedral Place,

St. Augustine, Florida.

Rose Shepherd, Writer.

DENNIS POTINOS (GREEK) PART II.

“Yes, America is a grand country, the best country, and the richest country in the world today,” continued Mr. Potinos. “Although the best thing of all is the form of American government, the freedom of the individual. As long as one understands the government and understands the people, there is nothing to worry about, and nothing stands in the way of your success and your progress in business, or otherwise.

“[When?] I speak of these things in relation to the Americans, it brings to mind the glory of ancient Greece, and the Greece of my younger days — the free speech, assembly, expression of thought and political ideas, the splendid athletics and other features and ideals — similar in American to my beloved homeland. I am very proud that I live in America, since it so nearly resembles in thought and ideals my ancient ancestry.

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“I am looking for America, in the future, to set an example to the world — to influence the people of the world — to help the people of the world in down-trodden countries to acquire a different form of government, guaranteeing their freedom.

2

“I think President Roosevelt has been inspired by the Divine Providence to initiate new conditions for the American people and for the world, also.

“He is one of the greatest humanitarians the world has ever known. To my individual opinion, he [hascertainly?] saved the country from panic and revolution. God has given the people of America/ the wisdom to grant him such power that he took advantage of it at the right time and saved the country from a great calamity.

“For myself, my business has been fine; I have made money since Franklin D. Roosevelt has been President of the United States, and if those following him will be half as good presidents as Roosevelt, the country will always prosper.

“American has a [great?] task to fulfill on earth. It is a new empire, with immense force — power — wealth — opportunities for education — and the people who live in such a country as this cannot be deterred — cannot go backwards.

“I do not agree with so many people fussing and criticising the country's actions in regard to foreign policies. In my opinion, we have no business to mix in and interfere with the politics of other nations or other lands.

“America is trying to preserve the freedom of the western hemisphere for all time to come. The average citizen does not know or understand just what that means — what the nation shall do for its children, and those of future generations — to preserve for them political freedom, the right to work, and the right to live without entanglement of foreign powers.

3

But the great men in Washington know what they should do! The policy of the United States government is that aggressive nations shall never acquire this country; especially, that South America shall never be able to invade this country. The world now has come so close together through inventions and the discoveries of science that life now is different to what it was a hundred years ago, or even fifty years ago; just so, the policies of nations will change. Just so, the United States, of whom some nations of the world are most envious on account of our prosperity and progress, never could be a party to turning the government over to a ruthless foreign power.

“In the war which is to come, I am sure America will have a big part to play, as an object to the other [nations?], for the uplifting and betterment of the world.

“The United States, at the beginning of injustice in any conflict, will clamp down on the dictators, and just as [soon?] as their policies collapse, they will hold out their hands to these poor countries and say: ‘We help you, and supply you with food and money to carry onyour life of independence.’

“I am looking for that very thing in Italy, the same in Germany and other parts of Europe.

“The war in prospect is forced on the people by the dictators who are mad — who came into power by promising their people impossible things.

4

“The issues of the war will change. When the war is ended, in fact, before, the armies of the world will fight for other causes than those that originated the war.

“The United States [Army?] and the French Army will [be?] the standard [bearers?] for the high ideals of mankind. The English Navy and the United States Navy will fight for the freedom of the small nations. This is the era given by God to the English, the French, and the Americans to do their duty for mankind.

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“When our small island was in trouble and the English flag was there, it was the flag of hope; more so, is the flag of the United States.

“I believe also this one thing — In this world engagement of war, the Greek nation will come out with a much better [future?].

“Greece and her people have always loved freedom, and they want to live, like to live,in peace and have a place in the world of affairs.”

(To be continued)

[Dennis Potinos] http://www.loc.gov/resource/wpalh1.11111304

Emmanuel Cassimatis
Narrator

David Aubuchon
Interviewer,
with questions by Dr. George Pelican

Ryan E. Parker
Transcriber

September 27, 2000
St. Louis, MO

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION: Emmanuel Cassimatis was a second generation Greek American who grew up in St. Louis, MO and graduated from Saint Louis University in 1940. Following the attacks on Pearl Harbor in December of 1941, Cassimatis enlisted in the Air Force and became a navigator with the 100th Bomb Group of the Eighth Air Force which flew missions in northern Europe during WWII. After his plane was shot down in enemy territory, Cassimatis was captured by the German Army and held as a POW for over two years. Following his liberation and the end of the war, Cassimatis remained in the Air Force as recruiters for the Air Force Academy and served in that role for several decades.

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED: The interview contains some brief mention of Cassimatis family background and how his family came to America from Greece. There is a run through of his formal education and his tryout for the Saint Louis University football team. Most of the narrative covers Cassimatis' early days in the Air Force as a B-17 bomber navigator and his capture by the German Army. Cassimatis shares his memories about his time spent at the infamous Stalag Luft III prison camp and how the 14th Armored Division liberated the 125,000 prisoners held there. Cassimatis describes an impromptu tour of Europe on his way home following the liberation that includes his haunting visit at Dachau, the Nazi concentration center, where Cassimatis witnessed the dead bodies of 15,000 Jews murdered at that camp.

David: I'm here with Emmanuel Cassimatis and to start off if we could just hear a little bit about your family, how they came to the United States, a little bit about your childhood, high school that sort of thing before you joined the army

Emmanuel Cassimatis: Alright, I was a child that was raised in the depression. I graduated from high school at 1933, in January, from Central High School; it was up in North St. Louis, at Garrison and Natural Bridge. Jobs were almost unheard of, couldn't get a job anyplace. Finally got a job working for Mr. Vasley at the St. Louis Provision Company trimming and packing meat for restaurants and hotels. After I did that for a couple of months, he promoted me to driver and I delivered meat to all the hotels and restaurants in St. Louis.

Meanwhile, I decided I wanted to go to night school, so I enrolled in St. Louis University Night School. And I was going to night school in 1935 and 36. I had a vacation and I lived at…my home was at Lawn and Berthel, which was in the area of Oakland and Kings Highway. And the Walsh Stadium where St. Louis University football team practiced and played its game was just west of my house. So I went down there during my vacation to watch the practices and I decided to go in and get a uniform. So I go inside and get a uniform, guy give me uniform to play and I had never played football in my life. I went out and I made the freshman team, I was pretty good.

Da: You were enrolled at St. Louis U then, Right?

EC: I was in night school at St. Louis U, so at the end of the two weeks after I established myself as a pretty good player. I told the coach," welp, I have to go back to work Monday."

He said, "What do you mean you have to go back to work? You are not eligible for football unless you are enrolled in the St. Louis University, fulltime student as a day student."

I said, "I'm a night student."

He said, "Well, you're not eligible." So he asked me what it would take to get me to go to day school.

I said, "The same as any of the other kids you got on scholarship, a full scholarship." So they gave me a full scholarship and I quit my job and I quit night school and went to day school. So I played thirty-seven through thirty-nine. I got out of St. Louis University in May of 1940 and I started a restaurant called the Missouri Grill on 12th Street on June the first, 1940.

Meanwhile, it was always my desire to go into the Air Force. So I kept trying to get into the cadet program and they kept telling me I was too heavy for my height. I should have only been one hundred fifty-five (pounds) and I weighed two hundred ten (pounds) at five foot eight inches. So I took at least three tests with the traveling board at Jefferson Barracks.

Meanwhile, Pearl Harbor hit in December, 1941 and on December 19th, I was ordered to report to pre-flight training in California. So I went to California and my transcripts and grades were all there they had

gotten from St. Louis University and I was fairly brilliant at math, so they sent me to navigation school. So I became a navigator, graduated from Sacramento in October, 1942. On graduation, I was sent to the pool at Salt Lake City for assignment to combat duty or whatever duty they had for me. So they assigned me as an original member of the 100th Bomb group at Boise, Idaho – Gowen Field, I reported the 1st of November. I was assigned to the 52nd Squadron as a navigator, flying my practice missions with different pilots and my operations officer happened to be Jimmy Stewart, the movie actor, and we became pretty good friends. After the 100th bomb group was formed, when they had all the planes and all the crews in line we had thirty-four crews of ten men each: four officers and six enlisted gunners on each crew. So we trained for a couple of weeks in Boise, then we flew as a unit and opened up Wendover, Utah which later became the training field for the atomic weapon with Colonel Divits. But we got there as a unit as the 100th Bomb Group before they even had sidewalks. It was mud and everything, all we did was fly and eat and sleep we spent a month there, then they went through the second phase of training in….

(Stops to try and recall the events as they happened)

Where the heck did we go? Boise, Wendover… we were transferred to Sioux City. And we flew in Sioux City about six weeks, more advanced flying, then something happened with our commander and they split us up. They sent me back, they sent my squadron back to Boise and I became an instructor pilot, and instructor navigator for new navigators coming in being assigned to combat. And after spending two months there they assembled the group again at Carney, Nebraska which is a brand new field and we opened Carney, Nebraska.

After practicing there for a few weeks, we went overseas as an entire unit; the 100th bomb group was assigned to the eighth air force. We all flew our planes from the United States to England by way of Prestwick, Scotland. Actually, we went from Newfoundland, to Iceland, to Prestwick, Scotland. And I can say all planes; all B-17s arrived in England safe and sound. So we went operational at a base called Fort Abbots, Station 139 member of the 8th Air Force at a town called Disc, England which was in East Anglican which was about halfway between Norridge and Ipswich. So we went operational I guess around March of 1943.

When I say operational, every plane in the 100th bomb group, none of us had ever flown combat. We all started off with zero combat experience. On the first mission we lost five airplanes. The amount of losses was very, very horrendous because we were flying high altitude bomb site. We were the pioneers of high altitude daylight missions with the northern bomb site, and believe me a B-17 with an indicated airspeed of 155 mph if there is a head wind of thirty then you're only going one hundred twenty-five and then you're like a sitting duck up there for the German fighters and the German flak. I'm happy to say my crew, my pilot, Captain Edgar Woodward, had the best crew of the 100th Bomb Group. We had the most missions, we had completed missions, and a good bombing record and we became the favorite crew for celebrities to fly with.

For instance, in July of 1943 I was the navigator who supervised the gunners to clean their guns. I was at the flight line while the pilot and co-pilot were getting an extra briefing and the bombardiers was getting

the bomb site, I was in charge of the preparations of the plane and checking the bomb loads and the gun, the cleaning of the guns. If the guns weren't clean they would freeze at high altitudes and they would stick and be worthless. If they didn't put any oil on them they would stick. If they put too much oil on the guns they would freeze and they were worthless. So they had to be done precisely to specifications, otherwise you wouldn't have any guns at high altitudes to protect your plane.

On this particular day in July, I looked up and there was a full Colonel in a fancy flying suit. He says to me, "Lieutenant, I'm going to be your tail gunner on this mission."

I said, "Colonel, all due respect to your rank, I think you're an idiot to fly a mission as a tail gunner or on any mission if you don't have to. I don't care what the statistics say, that our losses are minimal, that we lost three airplanes or four airplanes. We never lose less than fifty percent of the planes that we go in with. If we go in with twenty planes, sometimes we lucky if we come out with eight or nine. The average is about two missions a crew."

He said, "Never the less, I designed the guns on the tail gun in Texas and I'm here to see and fly missions to see if I can modify them to help the gunners get better results in later missions." We flew the mission, landed. His name was Bill Kennedy, we shook hands and told him goodbye and I told him don't fly any more missions so that you don't regret it. Well, that was the last time I saw Bill Kennedy until later.

On August the 15th, I remember on my mother's name day, we flew a mission, same thing, down the flight line, lieutenant colonel came up with a fancy flying suit, he said, "Lieutenant, I'm going to be your copilot on this mission."

I said the same thing, "Colonel, all due respect, you know we lose a lot more airplanes than they publicize, I said you don't want to take a chance with your life when you don't have to."

He said, "Naw, I'm going to fly as a copilot."

We flew the mission, we went in, dropped our bombs, coming back out we got hit in the nose, my bombardier got hit in the chest and got blown up in the airplane right next to me. There was nothing I could do to save him at 28,000 feet. No doctor could save him and at any rate we didn't have the oxygen. So we land with a dead bombardier, Lieutenant Robert E. Dibble. Blonde, blue eyes, twenty two years old, good looking kid. There is a picture there in the folder. The mission before he got killed, we were at base and they took a picture of us. So, later on this lieutenant colonel was very famous. He retired from the Air Force as a colonel, he wrote *12 O'clock High* and all the television shows about heavy bombardment and about bombers over Germany. That was, like I say, a famous writer. I kept in touch with him till he died about five years ago.

Meanwhile, we continued flying on our missions and on September the 6th, 1943 General Bob Travis was leading our mission, and I knew Bob Travis from Boise because I was a poker player and he loved poker and he would get poker games together up on a Friday night and the games would go to Monday morning. If anyone that was playing poker had to go fly a mission he would leave the game and go fly

and mission and come back and the game was still going on. So he had a game going for two days and he loved the game.

Anyhow, he was leading the mission to Stuttgart; he was leading a hundred and twenty B-17s. I forgot to add, we were one of the best crews in the 100th Bomb Group, we were always the lead pane in the "V" and I was always the navigator responsible, the lead navigator, if I got lost the whole mission was scrubbed. So with Bob Travis Leading the mission we got to the target in Stuttgart and his bombardier says, "General I can't see the target, there is a slight cloud cover."

His navigator said, "General, it's going to clear in about ten minutes." So the General decided to make a 360 degree turn over the target. While he is making his 360 degree turn over the target, he has B-17s scattered all over Germany! *You cannot make turns at high altitudes with a whole bunch of B-17s.*

Well, on the second pass we got hit on our two inboard engines and they caught on fire and we couldn't keep up with the group and the fighters started chasing us, so we peeled out and there was a couple of fighters chasing us and we went into a cloud bank 27-28,000 feet and while we were in the clouds we lost the fighters and we came out at 13,000 feet and the engines were starting to melt. So I went up to the flight talk to talk to Woody the pilot. "I said, you know, this plane is going to blow up in a minute?"

He said, "What should I do?"

I said, "Put it on automatic pilot, let the crew go out and then we'll go." So the eight members of the crew went out the back and Woody and I went out through the bomb bay.

Meanwhile, General Travis and his group of one hundred twenty B-17s: he lost sixty B-17s on that mission, he lost fifty percent of all his planes and a lot of them just plain ran out of gas before they got back to England.

Meanwhile, I bailed out and when I landed I was a half a mile from the Swiss border. I accidently met my tail gunner in the woods; we buried our parachutes and equipment and waded the Rhine River which is only knee high. Went across the Rhine River and hit a road in Switzerland. I had some shrapnel in my legs I had gotten when the engines got hit. So we waked, I guess it was about ten o'clock when we hit the highway in Switzerland and we walked to about 4:30 at night, it was getting dark and cold and we stopped at the Swiss farm house where a farmer came out and welcomed us with "Amerikind fliers" which means American fliers, and he asked us where we were going, I said Geneva.

He said yeah, "Geneva is about forty kilometers away." Which is about twenty four miles in American miles. And he told us to go sleep in the barn. He brought us some bread and some cheese and some milk. He was very cordial, very glad to see us. And we're sleeping in the barn about three o'clock in the morning somebody kicked me in the head and it's a Gestapo agent with a Luger pointed right between my eyes.

And he said to me, I was a captain by then, he said, "Captain you have to come back with us to the fatherland."

I said, “Why? I’m in Switzerland, I’m neutral.”

He said, “No you’re not neutral; you did not make out your papers at the border. So you have to go get your papers Ok’d before you can come into Switzerland.” Anyway, the farmer is out there in the barnyard, he’s beaming; they put a medal on his chest, gave him a stack of Reich marks and told him what a good hero he was for supporting the Fatherland, which I didn’t know he was a German Swiss. I made the mistake of going into German Switzerland instead of French or Italian.

George Pelican: Did you know where you were when you landed?

EC: No, I thought I was further in Switzerland than I was, but I was only about a half a mile or a mile from the border so we could easily walk across the Rhine River. Once we got across the Rhine River we knew we were in Switzerland.

Da: Now, was the shrapnel to your leg rather minor?

EC: Yeah, they were minor. Just what you might say, flesh wounds, but they needed attention, I was bleeding and I had a piece about a half inch into my knee. Right in the knee joint, this makes walking difficult. So they drag us back to Germany to Friedberg. They put us in the village Bastille and threw both of us in dungeons with the rats and the roaches and everything…

GP: Where was this in Germany?

EC: Friedberg, Germany on the border of Switzerland. So they put us in down there for about two weeks. I really thought I was going to die. I didn’t know anything, they didn’t tell me anything. The Gestapo had me, they kept beating me up. They had my hands tied behind my back, naked in the chair. And they’d slap my face and made life miserable for me. They’d ask me where we were going and I’d give them my name, rank and serial number. They wanted to know what kind of airplane I was in, I wouldn’t tell them. So for about two weeks we went through hell. Finally, I don’t what happened, but the rest of my crew was picked up by the German air force and they started asking questions about Captain Cassimatis and Sergeant Griffith. They found out we were down on the ground, they thought we got down on the ground safe. So through the Red Cross or something, they found out we were in a civilian dungeon in Friedberg, Germany. So the Air force came, they demanded us, and they took us away from them and took us to the interrogation center in Frankfurt on Maine. That’s where the interrogation center for all Air Force prisoners being shot down. They had a big building outside the center (unintelligable). And they had a big place out there where they assembled all the POWs until they get a place to send them in the POW camp. Any way, they put me in a cell; they gave me some black coffee, and gave me some artificial bread with some corn, (unintelligible), margarine. Believe me; we didn’t get much to eat.

Anyway, they put me in a cell and that night I noticed the guard, it was a little cell, like eight by ten. Very high ceiling, they opened the windows up at the top and it got very, very, very cold at night. Of course I was already suffering from malnutrition; I had already been a prisoner for three weeks, so I suffered from extreme cold. The next day they took me into the interrogation where this major was

sitting there with a soldier polishing his boots and he was smoking a cigarette with a cigarette holder in his immaculate uniform, boots and everything. "Hi", he says," Captain Cassimatis, glad to see you. Can you tell me something about yourself?" I gave him my name, rank and serial number and he says, "Hey, you better tell me something because if you don't I can have you shot as a saboteur." They use the fear tactic.

I says, "well, if you're going to shoot me you're going to shoot me whether I tell you anything or not." So I gave him my name, rank, and serial number and then finally, I said to him, "You know major, the way you treated me last night was not the way we treat officers we capture, we give them first class treatment. I froze my ass last night."

"What, were you cold?"

"Yes, I was cold. I'm sleeping on a steel mesh cot, no mattress, no blankets, freezing my butt."

"Oh," he says, "you won't be cold tonight. I'll take care of that." So they put me back in the cell and they give me a couple pieces of bread with some black, artificial coffee, a little margarine for the bread that was my supper that night. And they closed the window. Then I felt the walls and they felt like they were getting hot. Intra heat in the walls. It's like being in the closet without any opening and the lights on and it gets very, very hot. I took off my jacket, I took off everything, I'm down to my shorts and I'm sweating like I'm in a Turkish bath. The next morning when the guard came he was laughing. I said, "What are you laughing about?"

He says, "Don't worry about it." They gave me something to eat again and I got dressed and the major is standing there at his table.

He says, "Well, you weren't cold last night were you?"

I said, "That's horseshit!" So for ten days, every night I got hot or cold, hot or cold. And why were they harassing me? Because I was the lead navigator of the 100th Bomb Group and they wanted to know our targets that we were planning for the future, what kind of airplanes. I said, "I can't tell you that, I just give you my name, rank, and serial number."

He said, "You're in the 100h Bomb Group?"

And I says, "I can't even tell you that. "

He said, "Don't worry about it." So he goes over to the shelf and gets this big black book. "Oh yeah, Cassimatis, You graduated from Sacramento, California. You were assigned to the 100th Bomb Group in 1943." And this and that. He had my entire record and the record of everyone in the 100th Bomb Group. And they had files on every group flying out of England.

Da: You don't know how they got that do you?

EC: They had spies all over. So I says to the major, "Major, how do you speak such good English?"

He says, “I got a degree in drama from Northwestern University and I got a Master’s degree…” I think he said Oxford or someplace like that. He said, “The government sent me around ten years before the war. A lot of us got good educations and of course we came back to the Fatherland to help them in their war effort.” So he could speak better English than I could.

Anyway, he made life hell for me, threatened to shoot me every day. I says, “If you were going to shoot me you’d have shot me by now. “

He said, “Don’t laugh; your life is in the palm of my hand.” He was messing with me because they were trying to get enough prisoners to make a prison train full of prisoners to send to the prison camp. So, you know, these trains could maybe take three hundred prisoners. And my train they were waiting to get three hundred officers, English and American, to put in the train to send us to a camp call Stalag Luft Three, which had five compounds and each compound held two thousand men. Stalag Luft Three was on the Oder River, in Upper Silesia in Poland and that’s where I spent most of my POW camp.

Now, while I was a prisoner in Stalag Luft Three, I was never touched by a guard. I was never beaten, I was never mistreated. We weren’t fed, we were made to stand outside in snow storms for three or four days and nights while they were searching the barracks, but they never physically harmed us anymore after that.

Da: How long was it from when you were in the city till when you were moved to the camp?

EC: I arrived at the camp around the end of October, 1943. I was shot down in September. So I was in the camp from October ’43 till January ’45 and we could hear the Russian guns in background in the east moving westward. And we’re all praying, we knew about the invasion at Normandy. We had all the news because we had some masterminds at the camp, engineering officers, who could make radios out of light bulbs or wire and crystal sets. So we could contact, we could stay in touch with England. Believe it or not, we could transmit and we could receive. So the Germans were always looking, they knew what was going on, they couldn’t find it because every time we would transmit something we would dismantle it in fifty or sixty pieces and hide it in different places around the camp. They might find one piece, but they wouldn’t find the rest of it. The same way with the receiver.

So they stand us out in the snow, they make a surprise inspection; they put us out in the compound while they tore the barracks apart. Oh, I forgot to tell you while I was at Stalag Luft Three, they put me in the south camp with the British. So the camp was half British and half American and that’s where we, they were digging a tunnel. So I met a pilot, a Greek pilot, who had escaped from Crete and joined the RAF and they made him a pilot in the RAF. He was a Greek speaking major. He couldn’t speak much English, but he could speak Greek and I’m fluent in Greek and English, so he and I became friends and we were also moles on digging the tunnel.

So you know, while you’re digging the tunnel you got a rope tied around your ankle and you’re in there digging a tunnel if you had a cave in you kicked your legs like hell and they pull you out before you got asphyxiated with the collapsed sand.

While we were digging the tunnel, the people who dug the tunnel got the priority to go out. After the diggers and workers got out, then the others could use it, but they had to wait maybe twenty four hours, until you were completely out of the area before you used it. So we had our uniforms dyed on the inside, we could turn them inside out to make them look like civilian clothes. We had engravers there who made beautiful German passes and papers for us. I don't know how they managed, but they took pictures of you so it looked like an official traveling papers legal in Germany.

Well, about six weeks before the tunnel was finished the Germans decided to make that camp all English. So they pull the English out of the center camp and put them in the south camp and put the Americans like me in the center camp. So the center camp became all American and the south camp became all English. Well, six weeks later seventy eight guys run out through the tunnel. I was supposed to be there to go out with the Greek major; he and I were going to be a team. We had our papers and everything; we were going to be "Greek laborers." Germany had a lot of foreign labor so we were going to pretend to be foreign laborers. Like I said, six weeks before the end of the tunnel, they removed me.

Anyways, seventy eight guys got out. Twenty five were recaptured by the German army and air force and eventually returned to the camp. Two guys made it to Sweden, they got into a rowboat or something and paddled themselves up to the German coast where the Swedish boats were unloading coal and these Swedish hid them in the coal pile and got them out of Germany safe. So that's two guys who got to Sweden, twenty five were returned by the German air force, and fifty one were captured by the Gestapo and SS and executed. I mean plain execution! They were captured (slaps table), they were in jail (slaps table), they were marched out (slaps table), shot (slaps table) or hung (slaps table). And one of the guys was the Greek major. If he and I had been a team like we were planning and were caught, I probably would have been executed. But God got me moved from that camp to the center camp and saved my life.

Da: Going back to the radio you were talking about, what sort of information were you transmitting to England.

EC: Just general information, kind of what was going on around the area. There wasn't much we could send them; mostly we could receive from the British BBC. While we were in the camp, I use to weigh two hundred ten pounds; I'm down to about a hundred seventeen pounds, a hundred twenty pounds. That was my weight when I was liberated, one hundred seventeen from two hundred ten.

We could hear the Russian guns, so they weren't giving us anything to eat, they claim they didn't have the Red Cross partials, each prisoner was supposed to get one partial a week, which had a pack of cigarettes in it, and it had a can of SPAM in it, it was enough to eat to survive, it was enough to eat for week. We were down to twenty men on one partial a week. That means each man got one cigarette out of a pack of cigarettes.

So we hear the Russian guns in the distance and the German guards now they aren't as mean as they use to be, they're a little mellow now, they can hear the Russians coming and they started to sweat a little bit. They came in about midnight and said, you have three hours to get ready, we are marching west to Germany, and we're evacuating the whole camp. Take anything you want, help yourself,

anything you want to take then take. I made a sled out of my bed slats from my bunk and I went to the warehouse outside the camp where they kept the Red Cross partials and everything. I saw thousands and thousands of Red Cross partials in the warehouse that were ours and they wouldn't give them to us. They purposely kept us hungry so we couldn't escape and we couldn't make any waves to bother them. So of course I open the Red Cross partials and I took the cigarettes, I took a few cans of SPAM, I took the coffee and some soap. I took the stuff that wasn't too heavy. And believe me, I was a rich man when I loaded a big bag of that stuff and carried it with me on the evacuation.

Now, the American senior officer told us, "It's your duty to escape, but we're countermanding the orders, we want you to stay in a group. Because the Russians are behind and they are shooting anything that moves, so if you go backwards and the Russians see you, they are liable to shoot you. If you go forward, you're in no man's land, the retreating Germs are liable to shoot you or the civilians will pitch fork you. So stay in a group for safety's sake!"

GP: It was cold at night?

EC: Twenty five below zero with wind chill factor. We're suffering from malnutrition and you know, we can't go too far in that cold. However, eighteen hundreds of us started on the march, the Germans say, anyone who drops out, we have orders, and we have to shoot you. We have to put a bullet in your head, you fall down, and you're down. So the first couple of days if the guy next to you went down you automatically reached up and helped them get back up. But the first night we came across a little Protestant church in a small town about, I would say, twenty kilometers from the Stalag Luft Three and in that church, eighteen hundreds of us tried to get in that church that only seats two hundred. We were sleeping on the floors, on the pews, on top of each other just to get in out of the cold. And if you had to go to the john, it was hell to get out and go to the john, so some guys just went in the church. So we marched for about a week and the German guards were lenient, they didn't try to do too much to us. We were allowed to sleep in haystacks, in barns. Whenever we stopped at night, they would go inside to get warm, hell; we were loose on our own. But like I say, we were told not to escape, to stay in a group. So after about ten days, we came to a train depot where there was a cattle train waiting. Now, these were all cattle cars they had already used to transport livestock. So they threw us in the cattle cars and of course they didn't clean the bottoms of the cars and we sat in cattle dung you might say. We were glad to get in out of the cold, so they secured the train with barbed wire so we couldn't get out, not that anybody wanted to go any place with the German soldiers in a panic and the civilians. So after about three days we arrived at Lisping was one and the other was… I have to come back and think about it.

Da: did you eat much during this trip?

EC: It was the city that Hitler thought he was smart, he removed all the guns, aircraft guns from the city Leipzig and Dresden. He took all the guns from Dresden and made it an unfortified city. Meanwhile, all the refugees from all over Germany were coming to Dresden. That night, when we were two or three hours from Dresden, the RAF bomb Dresden and completely obliterated it. They killed about 400,000

people. And this is towards the end of the war. You know they come to bomb the city, and Hitler didn't have any guns to defend it, so they just bombed at will.

Anyways, they let us out there and we got some steam and if you had to go to the john or something because we were locked in a box for like three days and nights and it's pretty tough to go through a crack in the box car.

GP: Did they give you any water in that time? Any water for three days?

EC: No. No water for three days. So we got out in Dresden and they gave us some water and believe it or not, they had a soup kitchen set up and they gave us some hot soup with some meat in it. Horse meat I guess or something. But every one of us got a bowl of soup. Well, you know it was like apple pie. So we got back on the train and the train is going northwest again and we got to Leipzig the next day, it had been bombed by the RAF and a lot of people had been killed, but what impressed me the most was there was some Red Cross, not Red Cross, but German hospital trains. There must have been eight or nine of them parked in the yards with about twenty five or thirty, maybe forty cars in each train full of wounded Germans. Each car was packed with hundreds of Germans in hammocks, stacked three high and cots on the floor and most of them were suffering from gangrene from frozen extremities, hands and feet. And there was nothing the nurses could do for them except give them something to eat and drink and these guys was the enemy, but I felt sorry for them. You never smelled anything like gangrene in your life. It is the most terrible smell, human body flesh decaying.

We left there; got back on the train, glad we were alive and didn't look like the German soldiers. We went to a town called Moosburg about forty kilometers from Munich. Well, they didn't have the camp ready for us, so we lived in a field like cattle for three days and nights with slit trench latrines and the Germans giving us some hot, what they call soup, ground alfalfa or cabbage that they put in hot water and they call that soup. They gave us that and after they evacuated the political prisoners out of the barracks, they put us in there. Now, by political prisoners I mean Germans who were against the government, Jews, civilians. Well, I'd been in a field for three days in the snow and rain, so when I got in the barracks I found a bunk and I went to sleep. I guess I must have slept twenty hours! When I woke up my face, my neck, everything was completely swollen, the bed bugs had been feasting on me and I got infected all over my face, neck, ears, eyes, everything and they didn't have anything to give me. One of our active medics got some sort of stuff from the Germans to put on, but I wasn't the only one. Lots of guys got bitten by bed bugs. So about the fourth day there the German general and command of the camp with the one hundred twentieth…oh, I made friends with Major (unintelligible) who was a Greek guerilla. He was in the compound next to us and I could go between the compounds I made a hole in the wire and I could speak Greek and English, I communicated with him. I became friends with the Greek guerillas, but not for long because the German general had received orders to execute all the prisoners.

So there was some Russian prisoners outside of our camp, probably a thousand of them who were not part of our camp, they were in another camp down the road. They were brought up to dig trenches for mass graves. All the graves were in place, ready. But before the graves were in place, the German

general told the superior officers that he would not execute the prisoners, which he was raised in the military academy, and prisoners had rights and he was not going to execute us. So the next day the SS came in and they hung him by the flag pole. The German general, they strung him up for refusing a direct order from Himmler and Hitler to execute us.

GP: When was this exactly, towards the end?

EC: This was April, 1945. Mind you, we left the Stalag Luft on January 25th and this was around April 15th or 18th. So the German general was executed. Boy, that's how the Germans treated their own people. So they brought in an SS officer, made him commandant of the camp and he brought the Russians down and they dug mass graves, I mean they were like twenty foot wide and twenty foot deep, to hold 125,000 prisoners. So their idea was to line us up and machine gun us and to dump us in the trench.

Meanwhile, General Patton was about forty miles away, he heard about it. So he spearheaded the 14th Armored Division, came roaring down to the camp to liberate us. The SS troops occupied the camp now because they had hung the regular army general and removed the German army guards and replaced them with the dreaded SS. The 14th Armored Division was on one side of the camp and the SS was on the other and they're lobbing shells at each other trying to prevent the camp from being liberated and do you know, I dug a trench with my fingers into the sand. We had about five guys be killed after being a prisoner for two or three years, you get killed on the last day of liberation.

Anyways, the 14th Armored outflanked the Germans and killed them all and the tanks came roaring through the barb wire and liberated us. So now, here we are liberated and they tell us wait and we are going to evacuate you and we are going to take you to the town called Spremburg, put you on airplanes and fly you to France to Camp Lucky Strike which was the evacuate center and filed hospitals.

Meanwhile, the Serbian Lieutenant of the Greek-Orthodox faith and he and I got reacquainted the next day after our camp was liberated. He was in charge of an artillery battalion, mobile artillery. So they had a field kitchen there and they baked some fresh bread, they opened some cans of stew and everything and I was their guest. When I get that hot fresh bread, tears came to my eyes, it tasted like cake. So I asked them if I could go along with them, they said sure, climb on a tank, you go with sergeant so and so over there and we're going to go on to Munich.

GP: This is US Army? The Serbian was in the American Army?

EC: Serbian Lieutenant in charge of the tank battalion of the artillery unit told me I could go along with them; I could climb on one of their tanks, they had three tanks. So I got on a tank and the sergeant, we're going down through some woods all of a sudden we're peppered by small arms fire and the Americans experiences small arms fire they lobbed a few shells in the woods you know and they outflanked the woods and out came the Germans running with their hands in the air surrendering. They had run out of ammunition, so now they are going to surrender to us and there was a black SS major right in front of our tank. So the sergeant says, "Captain, what do you want to do with them?"

I said, “What do you usually do with Germans?”

“Blow their heads off.”

I said, “I agree.” So he pointed that 75 millimeter cannon right at the major’s chest, he said if I pulled this string he wouldn’t be here anymore. So I pulled this string and all that was left the German’s gun and shoes, he was no longer part of this world.

So we got to Dachau and I saw that the guards had deserted it and I saw 15,000 dead bodies while the UN commission was there examining the camp and one of them was a congressman from the state of Missouri by the name Short. And they’re going around shaking their heads, 15,000 dead people because they were Jews. With their fingers cut off for their rings and their teeth knocked out for their gold and their hair shaved for their hair. Terrible!

So I decided to go back to Mossberg where the camp was. I got a ride on a Jeep back to where the camp and with my guys over there, we got together and they sent us to Spremburg and we got onboard some airplanes and they took us to camp Lucky Strike. At camp Lucky Strike we got showers and shaves. Fresh underclothes and uniforms.

GP: Before you leave the camp, I want to ask you, you mention once that you had met somebody in the camp from (unintelligible)?

EC: I’ll get back to that. So they gave us a little turkey, mashed potatoes, and warmed milk every three hours (slapping table for emphasis again) for a week and a half or two. We didn’t have any money; we couldn’t go any place, just fresh underwear and outer clothing and showers available to us. So one day I’m in line and I ask the cook, “Can I have an extra slice of turkey and a little extra mashed potatoes? I been here two weeks and I’m a little hungry, I can eat a little more than that.”

And up pops a brand new second lieutenant, brand new uniform, never been washed, ninety day wonder, had just got his commission who says, “Captain, you know better than that! You know how much we’re going to give you. You’re not allowed to ask for anymore. We know how much to give you.”

I said, “Who are you?”

He said, “I’m the officer in charge here!” With that I hit him in the face with a tray. I didn’t hit him with the sharp part; I just hit him with the flat part and knocked him on his ass. I wasn’t going to take any crap; I had just been a POW for two years. To have some brand new second lieutenant who just arrived in France to tell me I couldn’t have an extra slice of turkey. After all, he wasn’t paying for it.

So he called the major and the major said, “What’s the trouble here?”

The lieutenant said, “I want this man arrested! I want to put him in the guard house; he hit me with a tray!”

The major said, “Is that right Captain?”

I said, “I sure did. I hit him right with the tray. He came flying up here and told me I couldn’t have another slice of turkey! A brand new lieutenant out of the states! He didn’t know we were POWS in combat and everything.”

The major said, “Lieutenant, if I were you I’d get out of here before I hit you.”

He (the lieutenant) didn’t use common sense, so that was the end of that. So I came home on a hospital ship and the war was just over in Germany, but the U-Boats didn’t know it. So we had to zigzag home and it took us fifteen days to get home, zigzagging to keep the U-Boats from bombing us. And once I got home from Camp Lucky Strike, got a train and came to Jefferson Barracks. I think that’s when I met you and your mother. But getting back, the fella’s name was Steve Sharice, he was from Indiana, just outside of Chicago.

GP: Gary, Indiana?

E: Yeah, Gary, Indiana. And it so happened that his mother and father were from the same island that I was and we were kind of related, fifth cousins or something. But Sharice was an ex-golden glove boxing champion. He connected with Major Charlie Shaw. Who was a navigator and was a St. Louisian. And they were boxing and into physical fitness because all they wanted to do was try to escape. So one day they ask me to help Charlie. Charlie got a Polish workers coat and he got a shovel and when the Polish workers were at the main gate getting in line to be counted on the way out he snuck into the group of Polish workers while I bumped into the guard and got into a pushing and shoving match with the guards while the Polish guys went out. They weren’t checked because the guards were too busy (with Cassimatis). So they gave me thirty days in the cooler, a bed of water. Charlie escaped, he got out of the camp, but they caught him three days later down the road, brought him back and he was in the cell next to me. Charlie Shaw is now the famous St. Louis defense lawyer. He came back here and went to law school. Steve Sharice retired from the air force and the last I heard from him he was living in Florida.

GP: He knew Harry Staff was your uncle?

EC: No, I don’t think he knew Harry specifically, but he knew my relatives in Greece because his folks were from Greece and it was such a small place that everybody was inter-related.

After I came home I thought I’d be a civilian awhile till we got a letter from the government that said to get active or resign my commission. I figured a saloon keeper or restaurant man being a Captain in the Air Force was a pretty nice deal, so I joined the reserve unit here in St. Louis and I became a major. Then I got assigned to the Air Force Academy and I did my two week tours and all my assignments scouting and recruiting for the Air Force Academy. I was promoted to lieutenant colonel and colonel working for the Academy. I’m happy to say that many, many of the boys that I recruited for the academy are generals on active duty. One comes to mind is Ralph Edward Eberhart who is a four star general. He was deputy chief of staff and it wasn’t his turn to be chief of staff, so they move him to NORAD headquarters in Colorado, so he is the commander of NORAD air defense. He will eventually be chief of staff, number one man in the Air Force in the very near future.

All in all I've had a good time. In 1971 I got an award from the Air Force Academy for being the most outstanding Air Force liaison officer in the nation, out of 7500 men. I'm proud of that because there were a lot of sharp guys I had to compete against, active and reserves. Being number one out of 7500 men is quite an honor. I was presented the award by the Secretary of the Air Force at the Air Force Academy.

GP: One question I have. Were your parents married here in the United States?

EC: No, my father fought in the Balkans War and Harry Stathis and he were in the same unit. So they were from (unintelligible), so they went back together. So Harry Stathis introduced my father to my mother in 1914.

GP: Harry Stathis is your mother's brother?

EC: Yes, naturally he wanted his sister to get married, so he introduced my father to his sister and they got married and they came to the United States in steerage. I was born in 1915, so maybe he got her pregnant on the boat or shortly thereafter.

GP: Why did they come to St. Louis, was there any connection here?

EC: My father had been in St. Louis before. He came to St. Louis in 1904. And he went back to fight for Greece. Harry Stathis went back to fight for Greece and he came back to the United States because we already had the ACME Restaurant on Broadway in 1917 and Harry went to war with the American Expeditionary forces in France and my father and Harry was a member of the group. They started the Washington Restaurant at 415 Washington, which was a famous restaurant.

GP: Right.

EC: Then Harry came back from the war in Europe back to his restaurant.

GP: When you were taken prisoner, you said here in St. Louis, your mother had made a…

EC: About a month after I was missing they got a telegram from the war department stating the secretary of war regrets to inform you that your son Captain Emanuel Cassimatis is missing in action over Europe. Well, immediately my mother you know (chuckles) went global and she went to church and the father kept the church open all night so she could pray and her friends could stop in and help pray. I don't know why she did it, I knew I was alive. (Joking)

Da: You mentioned earlier about meeting a Serbian who was Greek Orthodox and of course yourself were Greek Orthodox. What did you have on your dog tag?

EC: (Inaudible) or Greek Orthodox.

GP: They had it then, Greek Orthodox?

EC: Yeah, yeah or Protestant. I got the dog tags here; I'll go look them up. Anyhow, it's just funny because this lieutenant was Serbian guy and I was Greek something or another

(Tape stops)

EC: I told you about Colonel Bill Kennedy who wanted to fly the tail guns and we flew the mission and everything was all right. We shook hands and I didn't see him again until I got shot down and I was in a prison camp. I got shot down in September and around November I'm looking at the main gate one day and here come Colonel Bill Kennedy walking in with two guards. I went up to him and said, "Colonel, what happened?"

He said, "I should have listened to you captain. I kept flying and it caught up with me and I got shot down. I'm lucky my parachute worked. So here I am with you for the duration of the war. "

About three days later I noticed some German generals and colonels coming into the camp to visit Colonel Kennedy. And it wasn't just one or two. Over the weekend it must have been thirty or forty of them came to visit Colonel Kennedy. They spoke to him affectionately and brought him different little presents and stuff like you bring prisoners. Finally, I couldn't stand it anymore. I said, "Colonel Kennedy all these German generals and colonel are coming in and paying homage to you, they are honoring you!"

He said, "Yeah, I was their instructor pilot back in Texas in the thirties. I trained them all to be pilots." That was under our government's lend-lease. We still train pilots for foreign countries (thumping table).

GP: Tell me about your first mission. Your very first mission, do you remember it?

EC: My first mission was sometime in April. We went to Saint Nazaire submarine pens and the flak was awful. We couldn't go in at too high of an altitude, we went in about 16,000 feet and I think the flak shot about half of our planes out of the air. We dropped bombs on the submarine pens and I think the pens were twenty feet of solid concrete reinforced with steel. Our bombs just bounced off of them, we didn't put a dent in them. It was a mission we flew with high losses and no results. Saint Nazaire submarine pens. That was the first mission for the 100th Bomb Group.

We started off with zero missions. It wasn't like replacements coming in and flying with crews that had already flew several missions. When we flew we all started off at zero and I got to eighteen before I was shot down. We were leading…we were the number one crew and all the rank wanted to fly with us. So Saint Nazaire was the first mission and La Pallice was also submarine pens and was also a bust.

GP: And your last mission was over Stuttgart?

EC: My last mission was over Stuttgart when General Travis made a 360 degree turn over the target, spreading B-17s all over Germany and making us vulnerable to the flak. Now, General Travis was from a famous West Point family, he had several brothers who were generals. He went out to California and there was an air base out there called Fairfield-Suisun airbase on the upside of San Francisco. General Travis was there and he took off in a B-29, I assume was fully loaded with atomic weapons and nuclear weapons, and the plane, the crew, and General Travis disappeared from the face of the earth. Nothing has been found of the plane, the crew, or anyone. So they changed Fairfield-Suisun Air Force base to Travis Air Force Base. That's the departure point for all military planes going east to Hawaii and Japan.

GP: When Patton's tanks liberated that camp, I read in a biography of Patton that he got into trouble for that.

EC: He sent the 14th Armor down there with this colonel to liberate the prison camp.

G: Right, the colonel. Were you aware the colonel down there was his son-in-law? Did you know that? I think it was a lieutenant colonel was Patton's son-in-law.

EC: Was Patton's son-in-law. Well, anyway, he accomplished his first purpose; he saved 125,000 POW from being executed.

GP: But Patton got into hot water for…

EC: But Patton got into hot water for a lot of things! Patton thought he was re-incarnated.

GP: (Laughing) Right, right.

EC: But he was a good general; he did not want to fight the same real estate twice. If they had supplied Patton and forgot about Montgomery we had won the war a year sooner. We always licked Montgomery's boots. He was not the brilliant general or field marshal that he claimed to be. It was a disgrace how the Americans had to (unintelligible) to Montgomery and his plan. He demanded to be supplied first before Patton and then he'd stop and have tea and wouldn't fight. Terrible!

GP: Well, we thank you very much Manny.

Da: Thank you had a great time.

E: But Colonel Kennedy… (Tape cuts off).

George Laios

Narrator

John Welsh

Interviewer

March 22, 2013

George Laios -GL

John Welsh -JW

JW- I guess we can just start out by asking for a little background about you?

GL- Sure, alright my name is George Laios. I was born in California and we moved here in 1976 and I been here for just about the rest of my life. I left for a few years and went to the University of Missouri-Columbia from 1988 to 1995. My father is from Greece, my mother is form Alton just right across the river and I have two younger brothers. We were all within five years of each other and both of them live in Chicago right now. My wife is from Greece as well, moved here when she was three. I have two daughters, one of whose birthday is tomorrow, she will be eight years old and another daughter is nine years old. I've been in this job here with the city of Rockhill since 2005 and I got into city administration after I finished graduate school. I started with the city of Maplewood as the assistant city manager and worked there until 99 and then left and worked in Normandy from 99 to 2005 as the city administrator. So, there's the thumbnail sketch of yours truly.

JW- How does your Greek heritage impact your personal life?

GL- That's a good question. It impacts my personal life, professional life, and everything in between. When it comes to being raised in the Greek orthodox culture or Greek culture period you always hear about the rich history with everything and when you hear about mythology and Government and medicine and everything tracing its roots back to ancient Greece and how a lot of the thoughts we have today with our government, with our sports, whether it's the Olympics or other things, with our medicine with Hippocrates which my daughter Sophia we did a presentation on him for a project that she had. All of that stuff kind of intertwines with what we do today and what I like to say is, "If you don't really know the past than it's not going to help you with the present and you will be even more clueless with the future." However if you can understand the past and use it to your advantage being a history major as you are than you can see the patterns in history and how people like the Greeks who set a

certain tone with their culture and with their ideas. If you do things the right way than even a civilization being in a questionable place those thoughts will survive and that's very powerful. What I liken it to the most is the Romans conquered the Greeks after Alexander conquered the world but Greek civilization conquered Rome and that's we still have it with us today.

JW- So how important is your Greek heritage to you?

GL- Extremely important, important for all those aforementioned reasons and important also for the reason that for when we think about things in terms of how we do them a lot of it is traced back to when you learn as a child from your parents, from the church, as a religious institution as well as a cultural institution and as it relates too how you work with people outside of your family, and outside of your faith, and outside of those things that you've been taught. One of the things that I like the most about the Greek culture, why it's important to me is since Greece is situated in the Mediterranean and in a certain part of Europe where it's kind of in the middle of everything. Its next to Asia, its next to Africa, its next to the middle east, and it's always been a crossroads of sorts of cultures meeting at that point where they have taken the ideas from all of those areas and made it into one. That's what I try to do with my job. That's why I think it's important to me and I think it's important to others as well. Where we live in a society where only certain people can live in isolation, very few of us can withstand things without being exposed to the outside world, most of us are fairly reliant upon everyone else to get our basic needs met, only very few can hunt, fish, provide their own shelter, and live off the land, and those people that can do that, that's great. But those are the people that aren't living in a society where there looking to create new ideas, and build upon things that we've learned from in the past and hopefully create a better tomorrow. So, that to me is the Greek idea, to kind of take all of those things around you, the environment that you are surrounded by, contemplate it, think about it, make it your own, and try to make it better. The Athenian credo is to take the city Athens in its present form and make it better when you leave. That is the reason I do what I do as a city administrator, I work with cities and each of the cities that I work for I hope to leave it in a better place after I've been there as their city administrator, and I think again that's another powerful idea, that if we could all do that than we wouldn't have a lot of the problems that we do have today.

JW-So do you consider yourself a Greek, American, or both?

GL- I consider myself Greek, I consider myself Irish because my grandfather was Michael Malone Kinney, was full bloodied Irish, my grandmother was German and Italian and we live in the United States so I consider myself a little bit of everything but primarily Greek in a cultural sense, but from a personal standpoint, Greek – American is probably an appropriate description for me because I love baseball , I love football, I love basketball, I love the area we are surrounded by in the United States and the opportunity and that's the other thing that Greek culture really promoted and have taken here in this country is an openness to opportunities and ideas whereas in a lot of other societies an openness to ideas and opportunities is left only to a certain select few. However if you have it only for the masses then that's where people want to be and that's why people can be Greece in the past and it was a great place for everyone and that's why when my grandfather came here, and my father came here, my in-laws came here, and my wife came here it was for the land of opportunity, so for us to say we are just

Greeks is a misnomer. We are Americans I think is a little more appropriate and for those of us who have some other blood in us that probably sums it up best.

JW- So I guess that's more common now a day's then it was back then when they first started coming over here.

GL- I would agree with that. I think it's pretty much common with every ethnic group that comes to the United States whether the most recent ones being Mexican, Vietnamese, or Bosnian. I think all of them will say that you know they stay here right when they come here pretty close with one another. What usually the common link is a religious institution whether it's a church, or a mosque, or a temple. But once you assimilate for a couple of generations things change a little bit, just as they did in Ancient Greece and ancient Rome. You have people from all over the world coming to these places and there was intermarriage and a cross-cultural breed emerged and to be pure blooded there are very few people on this earth that can claim that. So all sum and total I would tell you it is changed to a certain extent recently to how quickly and how many people go from one country to another on balance that's how things have been for the last ten-thousand years.

JW- How did you choose which church to attend?

GL- Well we don't attend church as much as we use to. My wife and I were probably forced fed a little too forcefully when we were kids. But we still got to Assumption Greek Orthodox Church when we do go to church primarily and that's the church we were raised in and when we were kids we never missed a Sunday. I have more than a few perfect attendance prizes for Sunday school and my wife didn't like Sunday school but she was there every Sunday in church as well.

GL- What I think is important to me more than anything is to teach our children the importance of the Greek Orthodox religion as well as other religions, the Greek culture as well as other cultures, and it's hard to do that when you don't live in a country that has just one religion, we have a lot of religions and to make your kids understand that is a challenge so to speak. But more than anything else um just like with the Jewish culture um there are a lot of people who are non observant Jews in terms of going to temple and what have you, who still consider themselves culturally Jewish and I would consider us the same way. We are not maybe not attending church as often as we should, but were very observant in terms of our Greek culture and our religious beliefs I think are a bit of a hybrid. The Greek Orthodox Church hasn't changed very much and its long long history hasn't had what Catholicism has with its Vatican 1I and Vatican II with their reforms um we haven't had a change in terms of what Judaism has had with a reform movement an orthodox sect a couple of orthodox sects, and a um a traditionally congregation as well in terms of Judaism. So, the Greek Church seems to be behind in terms of modernizing but that's what keeps it as strong in its relationship to tradition. On one hand you can say it's the good and on the other hand you can say that's the bad and at the end of the day what you take from it and what you use it for that's what we try and live by.

JW-Do you feel like the Greek's would lose their identity without the Greek Orthodox Church?

GL-Um not entirely, it is a critical component to a large extent in if it was to be outlawed I think just like what you've seen in other countries where they have outlawed religion like in the Soviet Block um but also there are other things that people take for granted when they do have it in terms of open religions in this country which we allow for that it's hard to embrace and what do I mean for that. I mean that if religion is your only tie to the culture then something is missing to a certain extent. I would agree that it's a critical bridge but again you look back at Judaism, you look back at other cultures, Oriental cultures that have religion as well as they have their cultural identity if you take religion out of that equation does the culture still survive? Yes it does because the traditions that come from the church and you could also say this that the cultures of the Greek society are still being carried on whether or not there is a church or not. The church is a good conduit to promote these activities.

JW-Are you part of any of the Church organizations or anything?

GL- I have been in the past but right now I am not. But what is interesting though is getting back to the point in terms of culture, my wife and I where I was baptized in Greece, she was baptized in Greece. We were married in Greece, we baptized our first child in Greece but on our honeymoon we went to Constantinople, Istanbul and it was a year after 9-11. And if you were just somebody who didn't know the difference between Greek people and Turkish people you would say they are one and the same. Well, why- you look the same uh a lot of the traditions rather it through the food, the dance, the sport, the commercial activity all seems to be the same, the words. But the primary difference right now as we saw it was religion and language and you can say that there are some similarities in terms of religion and the language um but at the end of the day what separates us from them is that by and large and also government for the most part it is more of an autocratic regime there where as in Greece it's more of a democracy however Turkey is the most modern Muslim state and you could say that Greece is struggling with its modernism in terms of a modern democracy in terms of its economic situation. But when it comes to dealing with the issues that we saw and again this was a year after 9-11 that we went we thought for sure we would be targeted people going to Istanbul, Constantinople, being Americans in a Muslim country, being Greek Americans in a Muslim country and being there in a time that was you know September 11th, we got married Oct 5th and yet it's a year after the event, everybody's on pins and needles, we were treated like royalty there uh and when you look out and see the whole city you see a huge inference of Greek tradition and Turkish tradition and Russian and everything um and it's just amazing to see all of that come together as one. And to me, in certain parts of history, those are the types of places that make a difference and those are the places that people keep coming back to much like the church, people do come back to the church whether the city or the church um or anything else are popular at one time, fall out of favor the reason why they have their strength is because of everything that goes into them. The people, the ideas, the beliefs, and it's just amazing to see how that comes to be and a lot of times when people go back to the Church, or the Mosque or the Temple its during times that their having problems with personal issues or war or loss in terms of death and they're seeking comfort. And that's what you need to sustain a society.

JW- How would feel about them wanting to combine all the Greek Orthodox churches into one big American Orthodox church?

GL- I think it's an interesting concept, and I think you've seen it happen with the Jewish faith um and it's been met with mixed results. You've seen it happen with Catholicism where it used to be a German – Catholic Church here and an Irish- Catholic Church there and Italian –Catholic Church there, well now it's just one Roman Catholic Church yes they all bow to Rome, but it used to be ethnic enclaves here and there. As orthodox Christians we all bow to Bartholomew to a certain extent, um and that's the most important thing is to preserve those traditions when you have an idea of the cultures inter marrying you do have to modernize to a certain extent and that goes back to some of the other religious institutions modernizing and doing what you're alluding to in this situation as well. Does it make sense to combine all the Orthodox churches? In my mind, yes it does make sense. Do you lose something in there, yes you do. You lose a certain degree of the ethnic spin to things, um that's ok.

JW-So the other church St. Nicholas, what are your feelings on them?

GL- You know that's been a very unique division within the Greek Orthodox community that will be interesting to see how it plays out going forward. In my mind, um if the Greek Orthodox church wants to continue in the St. Louis area, both churches probably need to do a better job working together but no matter where you go by and large there are probably more Greek Orthodox churches that have found a split one way or the other and it's more akin to what you have in the Protestant religion where you have a Baptist church that splits from another Baptist church that splits from another Baptist church, and the reason I say that in terms of the Baptist church that's the religion that's growing the quickest right now and it really is doing their best to draw people from Catholicism and the demographic they are having the best success with is with the Mexican immigrants who are devote Roman Catholics but just don't feel like their needs are being catered to here by the Roman Catholic Churches we have here in the United States. The Baptists are doing their best to help them with a lot of social support networks and that's what the Catholic Church used to do a lot of in the form of their schools as well as other charitable endeavors- hospitals um and other institutions they created over the last thousand years. Greek Orthodox churches as a whole hasn't done that as much. They focused primarily on religious instruction. The synagogue in the Jewish faith has not gotten into that as well, the focused on the Torah the script in terms of what they have in the teachings. This activism that you see on part the of a lot of other religious institutions in other cultures is a manifestation in terms of government um and drawing them in where government can't in providing support where government as not in the past or a village has provided that support in the past. So at the end of the day, um it's interesting to see how religion is evolving in a large extent in the United States, as well as other parts of the world.

JW- What do you think the major differences are between the two churches here?

GL- Two things, from what I understand is the assumption the Greek Orthodox Church is a large amount of members from roads as well as ethos as other areas that um are not part of the congregation that St. Nicholas has. I will tell you that St Nicholas has larger cities and other areas of Greeks for the most part and families that have been here for two three four five generations. The assumptive Greek Orthodox Church has more people have just gotten off the boat, have just immigrated here, or have been here for less than 50-60 years. And if its 50 - 60 years, then that's the exception rather than the rule.

JW- Is there any fear that parts of the Greek ethnic culture and religion may get lost in future generations?

GL- Oh yeah, you hear that all the time and there is that possibility to a certain extent that it may. Anytime that you photocopy something, you have the original and every time you duplicate that original then make another copy and another copy and another copy you loses its integrity. But then you get back to the point in what you have as it relates to core beliefs and get back to the point in terms of the strengths and the weakness of the Greek Orthodox church is that it was the first church, it was the first bible, it was the idea of focusing on those facts and I think no matter what you have an element of society that will be devote to that. And I would tell you that the Greeks along with the um ethnic groups have been very good about being true to that, true to those core beliefs by and large. I would be surprised if you would be able to eradicate those core beliefs completely. Even if, let's just use Greek mythology as a jumping off point. Even though we don't have anybody who formally acknowledges Greek mythology as a religious movement, they don't have a church, they don't have an organization person, but it's the ideas in Greek mythology and the story telling that comes from those ideas that are still with us in every way shape and form today. So, let's just say you got rid of those stories completely, you wiped them off the books, guess what, somehow someway those stories people still remember because they get told in different ways and if you go back to the root of certain stories in terms of Greek mythology you will see that those stories came from other cultures as well they were brought in. Because at the end of the day there are only about 25 stories people can tell really truly in the sense you have a certain number of love stories, you have a certain number of war stories, you have a certain number and you hear this about movies also. And then when you hear about certain things happening in the world today, it's just a like a Greek tragedy or it's a like a Greek comedy and why is that, why is that? Why is that, because we were the first to right those things down, make them a common place for the masses? So the source information, traced it back to Greece for the most part and I think that at the end of the day that's what it's all about.

JW- Do you think mixed marriages is having a negative impact on that?

GL- NO, no I think mixed marriages are a reality and the reality of ancient Greece was the same way. They mixed with everyone, that's why Alexander went to India, and you will still see reminisce of the conquest of Alexander, near the Hindus mountains and parts of Pakistan and parts of Afghanistan and you'll see it in parts of Lebanon, Syria, Iran, Iraq, all of those places. They intermarried with all of those people there, that's how those traditions are maintained and if…. I don't know if you're familiar with Rudyard Kipling, who's an English writer but a…..

JW- "The Jungle Book"

GL- I'm sorry?

JW- "The Jungle Book"

GL- "The Jungle Book" of course, and "Gung Din", but then he had a book called "The man that would be king", there's a movie on that subject with Michael Cane and Sean Connery and they're British officers in

India, late 1800s and they have it in their mind that they are going to run guns to the rebels of Afghanistan then conquer the kingdom. And right before they are captured and about to be killed they rip off Sean Connery's shirt and see the seal of Alexander and they say "son of Xander", he's a god, and again becomes a Greek story because it is the Greek influence that makes them recognize the mason seal that you see on his chest because he's a mason and recognized it as the seal of Alexander and then that allows him to get the seat of power and then lost it as well because he is an outsider, they are a hill people that are savages. They haven't, they have not gone beyond their society. They are not like the Greeks. They are very insular. They haven't ventured beyond the known. And to try and bring civility to those people it's one of those things that are difficult to say the least. So let's just say Greek culture promotes only mirroring with it, it doesn't work. If you really want to promote your culture you have to spread it throughout society especially if you want to keep your traditions and make them understood by others. And that's not to say that you sacrifice things by lowering it to the lowest common denominator as other religions have to a certain extent but it's also realizing as well that you do have to bend a little bit with the times. So for me I was lucky enough to find a wife who is Greek orthodox but I hearken back to what my mother said to me, she is not Greek orthodox nor did she ever convert to Greek orthodox, that the person that you marry the most important thing more than anything else is not religion is are they good people? If they're a good person I don't care if they're purple, yellow, pink, or white, if they're good people that's all that matters. And to me that's paramount in terms of importance. The other thing that's I think important as well Greek orthodoxy does not have a strict doctrine as it relates to whether or not you're Greek where as Judaism does, its matro-linked, if your mother is Jewish, your Jewish, if your mother is Jewish and your father is not Jewish then you are not Jewish. That's a strict interpretation in terms of Orthodox Judaism, we do not have that. If you have Greek blood you have Greek blood. If you want to dissect it even further, Greeks will drive you crazy in terms of what part of Greece are you from and a little bit more particular if you from this part then you are this way. If you are from Macedonia then you are tall and you have a flat back of your head and you are a disciple of Alexander. Whereas if you are somebody who is from Rhodes, Rhodes is very close to the middle east and they have been inter-marrying there for a long time from Lebanon, Israel, Egypt, and everywhere else. It's been a way station for a lot of cultures that have been off and on the island for a long time.

JW- So do you think this would head toward a more general orthodoxy then a stricter Greek Orthodox Church?

GL- I think both of them will probably move forward, again you will probably lose some integrity, in terms of the original but for the ideas to keep going you are going to have to sacrifice a few things. I think both of them will be fine as we move forward.

JW- Do you speak Greek?

GL-(speaks in Greek)That means I speak a little Greek but I understand a lot and my wife is fluent and whenever she talks to her mother everyday in the morning and I tipped my hand and told her she should not say that I am that way in the morning because I am not a morning person. And if I would have been smart I wouldn't have said a word. Be like a secret agent, get all the information, keep

accumulating it, and act like you know nothing but you know everything. But my ego got the best of me and I had to say what I said. My children are more like me and understand just enough.

JW-Do they speak Greek in the church still? Is that important?

GL-You know it's dying with people who are not from Greece there aren't too many people who are fluent unless their parents were fluent with it at home. Just like if people don't speak Hebrew in a Jewish household, they speak Yiddish if they speak anything at all but Hebrew is really only something that is spoken in Israel. There are variations – Yiddish being one of them. You won't see that with Greek but you will see that with Greek because there are certain words that you could say every word like in My Big Fat Greek Wedding the dad says" give me a water any water and I'll tell you the root it comes from the Greek. Kimono, Kimono, Kimono yes the Japanese Kimono you wear during the winter-Kimono you wear to keep warm, alright whatever you are making stuff up. You see Greek words in modern English. You see Greek words in a Latin based language. You see Greek words in medicine and you're if you don't know Greek and you're a Doctor well then you don't know medicine. So at the end of the day, the Greek language will persevere because you have it in all parts of most every language and every profession.

JW-Where would you like to see the future of church go in 10 years?

GL-Ten years, I would tell you this. I would like to see more things for kids. I would like to see more fun for kids rather than passive. When you go to a Greek Orthodox service its more passive, it's not interactive. You can't change the ceremony but what you can do is provide activities for kids so they want to come to church. Not just Greek school or Sunday school, playgrounds and other activities not to loath going to church, sitting there for hours on end hearing the same things over and over in a language that they barely know. Religion is there for inspirational purposes first and foremost to help you through life as you know it, before life during life, and after life and making sense of that for many people it's difficult to say the least and children it's just a very abstract idea. So the goal I think is to engage kids as much as possible to make it fun and interactive for them, to be surrounded by these ideas and hopefully those ideas will soon care in direct ways and well as indirect ways. We went to a Bat Mitzvah a few months ago and it's not the easiest thing to be one to go through what you have to go through to be Bat Mitzvah Bi Mitzvah. You have to be 13 years of age, its rite of passage per say. But if the Hebrew religion is so difficult because no kid could really do it. Really what's the point? But what they have tried to make a point of is to make it individualized to a certain extend and incentivized for making it fun so you are partying with your family and your friends and they are there with you to be with you on the day that you go from being a child to an adult in terms of your understanding on how the Torah is read and written. Now do I expect that with the Greek Orthodox, no I don't but what I do expect is to get kids involved and you have that to a certain extent with Catholicism when you have your first communion and what have you. But with Greek Orthodox more than anything else I think it's to provide some structure in a sense in two ways. To have kids look forward to going to church and doing church related activities from cultural and religious reasons and to have parents mother being the most key component because mothers are the ones who really depend on whether or not the kids are raised in a religious way. And it's not just Jewish it's every culture. If the mother feels like it's an important

thing to go to church you are going to church. The exception to this rule is the father who imposes his will on those lines. It's not to say it doesn't happen it's just less likely.

JW- With me it always seems when you go to church, not disrespectful in anyway, it was always boring.

GL- Yep sure

JW-So boring, like it seems like a lot of churches are incapable of evolving with the times and are stuck in their old ways and their traditions. There is nothing wrong with that I guess it just gets boring cause we are evolving as a species. Do you think that the Greeks, the Greek community in St. Louis has the ability to evolve with the times going or will they be stuck on their traditions?

GL-I think there will come a point where they will have to adapt or die. Even when they die they are not dying a complete death they like I said they will never go extinct, but its Darwinian, you adapt or somebody else takes over. I think they will adapt. I don't think they will adapt as willingly or as whole heartedly as others but they'll adapt. The Greek culture is a culture that does adapt unwillingly but I think at the end of the day they will.

JW- Because you know we are still doing things a thousand years ago and even in some of the aspects now it's true that we are smarter now as a species and we understand more, we've learned a lot more. Science is grown; do you think that it affects the church more, that it affects the Greek heritage?

GL-Well, you know it's funny because Muslims were very progressive about 500 years ago in terms of science and something changed in their religious hierarchy where they shunned science. The Greek tradition really hasn't been that way. They haven't ventured into those realms. We haven't shunned modern science. Um but they haven't embraced it either but I will give Bartholomew credit where credit is due. He has embraced some of the concepts in terms of green thinking, sustaining the earth and things of that nature but has he done a good job of getting kids to embrace the idea of Greek orthodoxy? Probably not as much, but when I was growing up there was a couple and unfortunately none of them were from St. Louis, they were primarily from Chicago, but there were some really good priests who promoted um different activities. One of them was a camp up in Wisconsin called Camp Ferrari which was a good endeavor. Another one was a camp in Greece um that Onassis started and is still going today and the dioceses in New York is essentially in charge of overseeing it. And they have some good activities as well and, but that's only for a certain select group of kids. Most kids parents can't afford the time or the money to send their kids to Wisconsin or Greece for a couple of weeks. What I think would be more important, I hate to say this, but take a more community oriented approach. When people criticize the President, he really did not have a background in terms of politics before he became President. He was a senator for a short period of time, he was a state senator for a short period of time but what is he know for? He is known as a community organizer. Let me tell you my friend, that's where it's at. If you can figure things out at the most basic level, and we are the closest to that in terms of government. It's easy to make decisions when people are not at your throat in Jeff City. It's easier to do it in Washington DC because if the public is right here with you in the community that you serve it's much harder. And it's even harder at the community level when it's just a core group of people whether it's the church, or a community center, or a core group of people that want to get

something done for their community. That's very hard to get things figured out on that base level, and you know what that's the way religion was founded at most places. It wasn't top down bottom, yes it was to a certain extent, you conquer people, you convert, and if you don't convert we kill you. How did Greek religion? How did Greek orthodoxy really come to be was Paul making his trip going to Corinthians, going to Ephesians, going to Thessalonians. He was there; he was with the people talking to them directly. It was individualized and that's where I think again, hopefully what you'll see if you want to see Greek orthodox religion evolve into 2.0 or 3.0 versions we'll have another St. Paul and there are a few people, good priests out there who get it. Unfortunately we don't have as many of them as we should. Um, and I'd like to see more and what I'd like to see the folks that are going through the seminary take the approach that the President has taken and say yes , I do understand the core beliefs of this country because he's a constitutional law professor, he knows that inside and out. If you're a Seminarian, you know the bible, the New Testament, the Old Testament inside and out. You also know, that needs of a society in translating that ancient information that's constitution or the bible into a modern society that embraces some of the nuances that we have in a modern era and making it into one. Einstein said that the real genius is someone who can take a complex issue and simplify that so everyone can understand, the real idiot is one who takes a simple idea and makes it so complex that nobody understands.

JW- So is there actually you know any kinds of rift with the St. Nicholas church?

GL- Oh sure it goes back a long time. And it's unfortunate that something that, it will take somebody, it will probably take a couple of priests to bring both of the communities together. Priests who are committed to community activism spirit. Let's make peace; it makes more sense to work together than it does apart. Individuals will make this happen and it is not going to happen overnight. It will take years of um bridging the gap to make this work. And if you can incrementally get there then you're a step closer than you were yesterday and today, so.

JW-So do you think to fix it; it will actually take more of the people who attend the church who are part of the church or the priests?

GL- I think it would be good to have more joint activities between the 2 churches, possibly saying you know what both of the Greek schools are having a really hard time. Why don't we just have one Greek school and do it at this facility. Do it at the facility that they have on highway 40 and make it a good Greek school. Or make that facility on highway 40 rather than the one on 270 and make that one for youth activity or youth ministry. That's the youth ministry for the St. Louis area and if you have a dynamic priest who says ok I've got the kids from the St. Louis area, not just Assumption, not just St. Nicholas, not just the Serbian orthodox church, other orthodox churches as well to say ok we are gonna to this stuff here to promote orthodoxy. I think that could be done. And that's the generation where you make the difference. Is the kids buy into the idea of working together, the older generation it's harder for them to put aside the sins of the past? Kids don't care, there're ideas of the past are very limited and if you get them to work together it's much easier to get them to work together as teenagers, as adults, and as old farts.

JW- If there was anything at the end there that you would like to add to close it all out what would that be? Think of it as the message you would want to get across.

GL- The main message would be is that a good youth minister would make the difference of sustaining this idea of orthodoxy going forward. And it's not just one youth minister, it will be probably several in the sense that one person could set the tone but a great leader is one that works with others to sustain on an ongoing basis and create a network that makes sense. That's inclusive, really I mean it and you know what if there are kids that are not orthodox who come to the youth ministry we're not shoving ideas down their throat, we're doing it with the idea in mind that they are there to have fun but we want to have a message for them that you want to have them convert but you are not forcing them to convert. You want them there as good kids, again back to the point, good people. And you know what, if they are not good people, that's ok too because sometimes the kids who are the most problematic are the ones who need the most help and are the ones that you can make the biggest difference with. And if you get them on the right path whether its orthodoxy or something else, if they just adhere to the core values then you can really make a difference in that person's life. So that's what I'd have to say more than anything else.

JW- So go back to your basically adapt.

GL- Adapt, adapt, and adapt at the earliest age that you can because that's the easiest point for people to adapt.

JW- I guess cause that way when you get the ones at the earlier age that way can use what they learned in bringing up with the church

GL- Right.

JW- Do you feel that the church is actually there for the people that need the most help, you know like you said that if they are not good people you can help them? Isn't that why the church is there anyway?

GL- That's right.

JW- Do you think that the Greek Orthodox Church needs to welcome them more?

GL- Yeah I think I do. And I think it comes from the people more than anything else. The priests can't do it all, but he or she has to set the tone. I say she with the idea behind that there are no women priests that I know of but I think there will be in the future. At least I hope there is, because women are more attune to some of these ideas than men in making a difference. And I would also say that um if they're not priests they would be very good youth directors um if they know how to work with others. Whether its priests, the kids, the families, and usually if you get a good group of kids and families to work together it has a ripple effect. It can make the difference in terms of whether or not an organization is fighting from within or cooperating and making progress. If you get those good people involved and keep them involved, then you've got something and you can really make a difference. Um if you keep on, but you're always gonna have people who are fighting, that's just the unfortunate truth about how things are in this world. But, dealing with them in a good way, um is hard to do sometimes but if you

got good people understanding the big picture in that regard with good cooperation with all the key elements in that community more than anything else you'll have it on a soccer team, you'll have it on a baseball team, uh any type of organization. The winners aren't the ones that always have the best record because you'll see people on great teams who are just as dysfunctional as anyone else. What do they do after the game? Do they go into 5 separate cabs and go on their way or are they close and maybe they lost the game but down the road when you talk to these guys and gals what are they doing? Are they productive members of society? Are they making a difference in their community? Are they doing the right thing with their friends and family uh are they um living a life that has some purpose? That's the real win. Scoreboard it helps, it's always nice to win but give me somebody who is a "C" student who gives an "A" effort and I got a group for you. That's what I have here in Rockhill. I don't know if you have done any background on me but I've been lucky. I've been lucky in the sense that I've been blessed to work with good people here and we've turned around a very dysfunctional operation. We did that for awhile in Normandy and a Maplewood would um we had a unique situation there. That was one of my first jobs out of graduate school there was a very difficult situation where my boss was not the easiest guy to work with. But after I left, we got some things done there, but after I left things got much worse and then they got a whole lot better. And sometimes that's just the way things have to go. So, it's all about people more than anything else. Getting the right people to work with, to associate with, to talk to, um and to move forward with. And sometimes, you're just too busy to be with those people. You're busy with your job, you're busy with your school, and you're busy with a lot of other things and at the end of the day if you still keep in touch and that's the way I feel with Greek Orthodox Church. I still keep in touch, I still go back for Friday luncheons, and I still do things when I can but I just don't have the time. This place sucks the life out of me. I'm in the paper a lot or the news a lot. I don't like that! There is very little time that I have, down time, that I can really decompress and I think that after talking to you, Mr. Welsh, you'll understand that it runs very deep with me. And I don't treat it as something that oh yeah something I do. No, no it's more than that, I give it very serious thought and I've given it very serious time. And there will come a day when I push aside all this here, the cities, and the governments that I've worked with and say now it's time for me to do what I need to do with other things. And it's just that way. So enjoy it while you can!

JW- Thanks for your time, that's all I got.

Six Pages that Saved my Interview

PRACTICE WITH THE RECORDING EQUIPMENT

- Interviewers should be thoroughly trained on using the recording equipment and should practice with it repeatedly before using it for the first time in an interview. They should know how to use it unobtrusively and with confidence and how to handle minor difficulties in the field. Always begin by reading the manual that comes with the equipment. It will help you understand what all the dials, switches, and buttons mean and how each works to control the recording process. You will want to know how to set sound levels and how to troubleshoot.

- Remember that the microphone is a critical part of the recording process and has capabilities and limitations with which the interviewer needs to be familiar. Some researchers who do other kinds of field recordings focus the microphone primarily on the narrator with less emphasis on hearing the interviewer's questions. But in an oral history interview, the exchanges between the interviewer and narrator are critical to understanding the information that emerges. So it is important to record both speakers, documenting clearly what questions were asked and in what order. This helps future users understand the context of the interview and, thus, the information in it.

HEAD OUT FOR THE INTERVIEW

You're almost ready now for the next big step: conducting the oral history interview. All the planning so far is aimed at making the process flow as smoothly as possible. Some oral history projects put interview kits together that include all the necessary tools. Such a kit can include:

- recorder
- batteries/AC adapter/cable
- notebook

- pencils
- folder containing the release form (two copies—one for your file and one to leave with the narrator)
- the interview outline or your question list

CHECKLIST FOR SETTING UP AN AUDIO INTERVIEW

- The narrator is in a comfortable spot where he or she can relax and focus on the interview and where the narrator and interviewer will not be interrupted.
- Pay special attention to the audible environment. Be sure that the narrator's chair doesn't squeak or make other noises and that other audible distractions— pets that bark, meow, or chirp, chiming clocks, dishwashers, telephones, lawn mowers, and the like—are minimized. People will tune out such extraneous noises but recorders will faithfully record them all. Ask the narrator to turn off any cell phones, and be sure to turn yours off, too.
- The interviewer should sit no more than about six feet away, facing the narrator. The two should be able to hear each other clearly and maintain eye contact.
- Use a table or other sturdy surface next to the interviewer to hold the recorder within easy reach to monitor it and change media as necessary. It is best to position the recorder out of the narrator's direct line of vision so he or she will focus on the interviewer, not the equipment, but *never* hide it from view. Oral historians do not engage in clandestine recording.
- Do a sound check with the equipment to be sure it is working properly and the voices are being picked up clearly. Keep it simple by asking the narrator to give his or her name and address and chatting about something neutral while unobtrusively checking recording levels. Fussing over the equipment can make an interviewer nervous.

******After an equipment sound check, the interviewer will want to begin with a recorded introduction, such as:***

The following interview was conducted with _____ (name of narrator) on behalf of the _____ for the _____ Oral History Project. It took place on _____(date) at _____ (place). The interviewer is _____ (name).

GETTING THE INTERVIEW UNDERWAY

The Interview

- Remember to keep the interview setting as comfortable as possible. This will help the narrator concentrate on the interview.
- It is important to establish rapport with the narrator. A sense of trust between narrator and interviewer helps make a good interview.
- Listen (and look) carefully for noise sources, such as ringing phones and chiming clocks that will undermine the sound quality of the interview.
- Take a little time with the narrator before beginning the interview to talk and relax.
- Always be on time for an interview.
- This is a good time to review with the narrator the language in the release form and to let him/her know he or she will be asked to sign it as soon as the interview is over.

INTERVIEW GUIDELINES AND TECHNIQUES

Always keep the ethics of the situation in mind. An oral history interview is not a casual two-way conversation, a social call, or a heated debate over the interpretation of the past. Narrators are entitled to respect for their stories.

Use neutral, not leading, questions. Asking the narrator "Why don't you like living here?" will not result in as complete an answer as the more neutral question "Tell me about living here." Questions beginning with *how, what, when, why, where,* and *who* are often used to introduce a subject or to follow up an initial statement. They can help clarify an answer and can elicit further information. Some scholars have noted that within every question is hidden a clue to its answer, something oral historians need to keep in mind as they frame questions.[3] An interviewer, for example, might be tempted to think that "How do you like living here?" is a more neutral version of "Why don't you like living here?" It's certainly less inflammatory, but still not as neutral as "Tell me about living here."

Ask only one question at a time, not a smorgasbord of questions that will puzzle the narrator. If clarification is needed, make sure your elaboration does not lead the narrator to believe you expect a particular type of answer.

Avoid the temptation to share your personal agreements or disagreements with the narrator's views. Your opinions on the subject are not the focus of the inter- view. Some narrators, believing the purpose of the interview is an equal exchange of views like that encountered at a roundtable discussion or cocktail party, will try to draw an interviewer's opinions into the exchange. If that happens, an interviewer might satisfy the narrator's curiosity by one of several neutral responses like: "I never thought of it that way." Or "That's very interesting." Or "I can see your point." But it may occasionally be necessary for the inter- viewer simply to explain forthrightly that the purpose of an oral history interview is to document the narrator's views, not the interviewer's.

Keep your focus on the narrator. Don't show off your knowledge. Your background research is intended to help you draw out the narrator, but bragging about what you know is likely to have the opposite effect.

Listen carefully without interrupting the narrator. The goal in an oral history interview is to collect in- depth answers by posing focused,

clearly stated, open- ended, neutral questions.

If the narrator insists on telling a rehearsed story, listen politely and let him or her finish. Then go back and ask additional questions that will get the narrator to go beyond the rehearsed performance.

Concentrate on what the narrator is saying. Take notes and wait until he or she has finished speaking. Then ask follow-up questions for clarification or to develop new information that did not emerge in the research process.

Watch for hints, such as pauses or slight changes in voice, that indicate the narrator may have additional thoughts or feelings to describe and ask respectful follow- up questions. Sometimes narrators may indicate their feelings about subjects being discussed through body language. These are nonverbal responses to questions, such as pointing a finger, leaning toward the interviewer, leaning away from the interviewer, crossing the arms and legs, shifting or moving noticeably, breaking eye contact, and talking slower or faster than normal. You will want to be aware of these clues and record them on your notebook.

Remember to ask for specifics of place names, names of people, and dates or context. Sometimes the narrator's story is so interesting, you can forget to ask for these details.

Try to establish where the narrator was and what his or her connection to the story was at each major point. This will help differentiate firsthand information from reports given by others.

When a narrator uses acronyms or jargon that the general public is unfamiliar with, ask for explanations, descriptions, spellings, or translations, as appropriate. Your research or specific knowledge may mean you understand what the narrator is saying, but others listening to the interview or reading the transcript probably will not share this knowledge. This can be especially important with military or other government jargon and acronyms that fall into disuse and whose translations can be difficult to recover.

Use body language and eye contact to encourage the narrator's

responses. Smiles and nods are often effective. Silence—even uncomfortable silence—is also an effective tool to elicit information. When the narrator finishes responding to a question, resist the temptation to jump right in with a follow-up or a new topic. Some narrators simply need a few moments to continue gathering their thoughts. Additionally, a natural tendency to want to fill silences in conversation may induce the narrator to add something more without verbal prompting. Repeated verbal encouragement by the interviewer, such as "uh-huh," is intrusive and lowers the sound quality of the interview.

Use a notebook to keep track of follow-up questions, additional points to make, or other interview needs. This will help keep you organized and will allow you to continue to concentrate on the narrator.

Also use your notebook to keep a running list of proper names mentioned in the interview. It is a good idea to ask the narrator to review this list and correct any spelling errors at the end of the interview. This list should be kept in the master file, with a copy given to the processor.

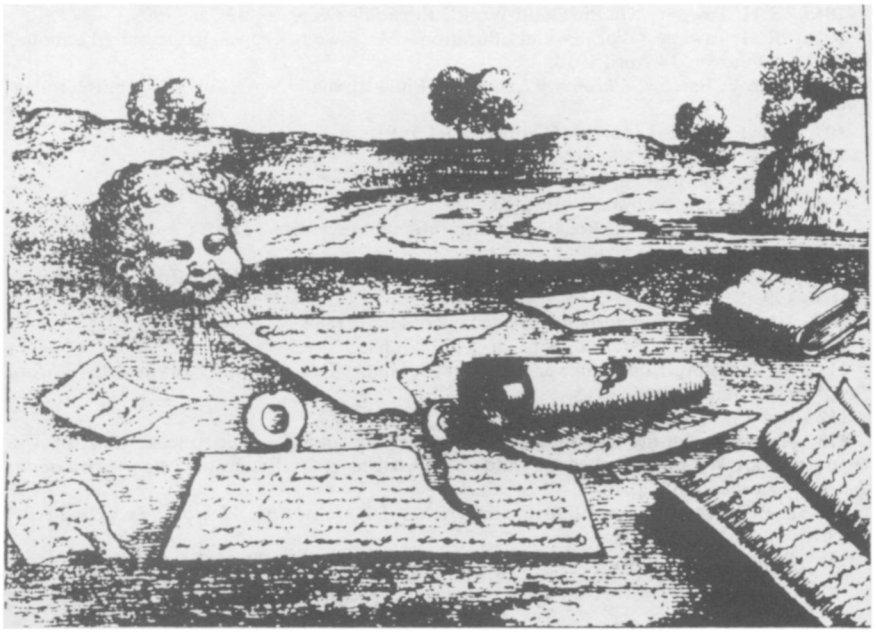
****** Sign the release form with the narrator***.

****** Thank the narrator when finished. Follow this with a written thank-you letter/email.***

POST-INTERVIEW TASKS

- ***Save your interview as an audio file on your computer and burn two CDs.***
- ***Transcribe the interview asap and email a copy of it to your interviewee. Allow him/her a few days to respond with any suggested changes/emendations.***
- ***Prepare an interview cover-page (like the one you prepared for the Greek-American WWII interviews).***
- ***Submit your cover-page, transcript, two CDs and signed release form.***

The Peculiarities of Oral History*
by Alessandro Portelli



From *Pronosticatio* by Paracelsus, 1536.

> 'Yes', said Mrs Oliver, 'and then when they come to talk about it a long time afterwards, they've got the solution for it which they've made up themselves. That isn't awfully helpful, is it?' 'It is helpful,' said Poirot, . . . 'It is important to know certain facts which have lingered in people's memories although they may not know exactly what the fact was, why it happened or what led to it. But they might easily know something that we do not know and that we have no means of learning. So there have been memories leading to theories . . . '
>
> Agatha Christie, *Elephants Can Remember*

> His historical researches, however, did not lie so much among books as among men; for the former are lamentably scanty on his favorite topics; whereas he found the old burghers, and still more their wives, rich in that legendary lore, so invaluable to true history. Whenever, therefore, he happened upon a genuine Dutch family, snugly shut up in its low-roofed farmhouse, under a spreading sycamore, he looked upon it as a little clasped volume of black-letter, and studied it with the zeal of a book-worm.
>
> Washington Irving, *Rip Van Winkle*

A spectre is haunting the halls of the Academy: the spectre of 'oral history'. The Italian intellectual community, always suspicious of news from outside (and yet so

*The expression 'oral history' is open to criticism, in that it may be taken to imply that historical research may be based entirely upon oral sources. A more correct expression would be 'the use of oral sources in history'. For the sake of brevity, I will here use 'oral history' as the term which has entered common use.

subservient to 'foreign discoveries') – and even more wary of those who suggest *going* outside – has hastened to cut oral history down to size before even trying to understand what it is and how to use it. The method used has been that of charging oral history with pretensions it does not have, in order to set the academicians' minds at ease by refuting them. For instance *La Repubblica*, the most intellectually and internationally oriented of Italian dailies rushes to dismiss 'descriptions "from below" and the artificial packages of "oral history" where things are supposed to move and talk by themselves', without even stopping to notice that it is not things, but people, that are expected to move and talk in oral history (albeit people normally considered as no more than 'things').[1]

There seems to be a fear that once the floodgates of orality are opened, writing (and rationality along with it) may be swept out as if by a spontaneous uncontrollable mass of fluid, irrational material. But this attitude blinds us to the fact that our awe of writing has distorted our perception of language and communication to the point where we no longer understand either orality or the nature of writing itself.[2] As a matter of fact, written and oral sources are not mutually exclusive. They have common characteristics as well as autonomous and specific functions which only either one can fill (or which one set of sources fills better than the other); therefore, they require different and specific interpretative instruments. But the undervaluing and the overvaluing of oral sources end up by cancelling out *specific* qualities, turning them either into mere supports for traditional written sources or into an illusory cure for all ills. These notes will attempt to suggest some of the ways in which oral history is intrinsically different.

* * *

Oral sources are *oral* sources. Scholars are willing to admit that the actual document is the recorded tape; but almost all go on to work on the transcripts, and it is only transcripts that are published. (One Italian exception is the Istituto Ernesto De Martino, a Milan-based militant research organisation, which has been publishing 'sound archives' on records for at least 12 years, without anyone in the cultural establishment noticing.)[3] Occasionally – as seems to be the case with the Columbia University Oral History Program, in New York – tapes are actually destroyed: a symbolic case of the destruction of the spoken word. The transcript turns aural objects into visual ones, which inevitably implies reduction and manipulation. The differing efficacy of recordings as compared to transcripts for classroom purposes, for instance, can only be appreciated by direct experience. More important is the fact that expecting the transcript to replace the tape for scientific purposes is equivalent to doing art criticism on reproductions, or literary criticism on translations. (This is why I believe it is unnecessary to give excessive attention to the quest for new and closer methods of transcription. The most literal translation is hardly ever the best; a truly faithful translation always implies a certain amount of invention, and the same may be true for the transcription of oral sources.)

The disregard of the orality of oral sources has a direct bearing on interpretative theory. The first aspect which is usually stressed is the origin of oral sources – in that they give us information about illiterate peoples or social groups whose history is either absent or distorted in the written record. Another aspect concerns content: the daily life and material culture of these peoples or groups. However, these are not specific to oral sources: emigrants' letters, for instance, have the same origin and content, but are

In the search for a distinguishing factor we must therefore turn to *form*. We hardly

need repeat here that writing reduces language to segmentary traits only – letters, syllables, words, phrases. But language is also composed of another set of traits, which cannot be reduced within a single segment, but are also bearers of meaning. For instance, it has been shown that the tonal range, volume range, and rhythm of popular speech carry many class connotations which are not reproducible in writing (unless it be, inadequately and partially, in the form of musical notation).[5] The same statement may have quite contradictory meanings, according to the speaker's intonation, which cannot be detected in the transcript but can only be described, approximately.

In order to make the transcript readable it is usually necessary to insert punctuation marks, which are always the more or less arbitrary addition of the transcriber. Punctuation indicates pauses distributed according to grammatical rules: each mark has a conventional place, meaning and length. These hardly ever coincide with the rhythms and pauses of the speaking subject, and therefore end up by confining speech within grammatical and logical rules which it does not necessarily follow. The exact length and position of the pause has an important function in the understanding of the meaning of speech: regular grammatical pauses tend to organise what is said around a basically expository and referential pattern, whereas pauses of irregular length and position accentuate the emotional content; very heavy rhythmic pauses (often nearly metric) recall the style of epic narratives.[6] Most interviews switch from one type of rhythm to another, thus expressing variations in the narrator's attitude towards his or her material. Of course, this can only be perceived by listening, not by reading.

A similar point can be made concerning the velocity of speech and its changes during the interview. There are no basic interpretative rules: slowing down may mean greater emphasis as well as greater difficulty, and acceleration may show a wish to glide over certain points, as well as greater familiarity and ease. In all these cases, the analysis of changes in velocity must be combined with rhythm analysis. Changes are, however, the norm in speech, while regularity is the 'presumed' norm in reading, where variations are introduced by the reader rather than the text itself.

This is not a question of philological purity. Traits which cannot be reduced to segments are the site (not unique, but very important) of essential narrative functions: the emotional function, the narrator's participation in the story, the way the story affects the narrator. This often involves attitudes which the speaker would not be able (or willing) to express otherwise, or elements which are not fully within his or her control. By abolishing these traits, we flatten the emotional content of speech down to the presumed equanimity and objectivity of the written document. This is even more true when folk informants are involved: they may be poor in vocabulary but are generally richer in the range of tone, volume, and intonation, as compared to middle-class speakers[7] who have learned to imitate in speech the dullness of writing.

* * *

Oral sources are *narrative* sources. Therefore the analysis of oral history materials must avail itself of some of the general categories developed in the theory of literature. (Of course here I am discussing primarily the testimony given in free interviews, rather than more formally organised materials such as songs or proverbs – where the question of form however is even more essential.) For example, some narratives contain substantial shifts in the 'velocity' of narration: that is substantial variations in the ratio between the duration of the events described and the duration of the narration.[8] An informant may recount in a few words events which lasted a long time,

or may dwell at length on brief episodes. These oscillations are significant, although we cannot establish a general norm of interpretation: a narrator may dwell on an episode which seems innocuous to distract attention from more delicate points, or to attract attention to it. In all cases there is a relationship between the velocity of the narrative and the meaning the narrator has in mind. The same applies to other categories among those elaborated by Gerard Genette (see note 8), such as 'distance' or 'perspective', which define the position of the narrator towards the story.

Oral sources from non-ruling classes are linked to the tradition of the folk narrative. In this tradition, distinctions between narrative genres are perceived differently than in the written tradition of the educated classes.[9] Since writing has absorbed most of the functions of certification, official testimony and educational process, oral narration in a literate society finds it less necessary to establish a rigorous distinction between 'factual' and 'artistic' narrative, between 'events' and feelings and imagination. The perception of an account as 'true' is relevant as much to legend as to personal experience and historical memory; and as there are no oral forms specifically destined to transmit historical information,[10] historical, 'poetical' and legendary narrative often become inextricably mixed up. The result is narratives where the boundary between what takes place outside the narrator and what happens inside, between what concerns him or her and what concerns the group, becomes quite thin, and personal 'truth' may coincide with collective 'imagination'.

Each of these factors can be revealed by formal and stylistic factors. The greater or lesser presence of formalised materials (proverbs, songs, formulaic language, stereotypes) can be a witness to a greater or lesser presence of the collective viewpoint within the individual narrator's tale. The shifts between standard 'correct' language and dialect are often a sign of the kind of control which the speaker has over the materials of the narrative. For instance, a typical recurring structure is that in which the standard language is used overall, while dialect crops up in digressions or single episodes: this may show a more personal involvement of the narrator or (as is the case when dialect coincides with a more formulaic or standardised account) the intrusion of collective memory. On the other hand, standard language may emerge in a dialect narrative for terms or themes more closely linked with the public sphere, such as 'politics'; and this may mean a more or less conscious degree of estrangement,[11] as well as a process of 'conquest' of a more 'educated' form of expression beginning with participation in politics. Conversely, the dialectisation of technical terms of political speech may be an important sign of the vitality of traditional culture, and of the way in which the speaker endeavours to enlarge the expressive range of his or her tradition.

* * *

The first thing that makes oral history different, therefore, is that it tells us less about events as such than about their meaning. This does not imply that oral history has no factual interest; interviews often reveal unknown events or unknown aspects of known events, and they always cast new light on unexplored sides of the daily life of the non-hegemonic classes. From this point of view, the only problem posed by oral sources is that of their credibility (to which I will return below).

But the unique and precious element which oral sources force upon the historian and which no other sources possess in equal measure (unless it be literary ones) is the speaker's subjectivity: and therefore, if the research is broad and articulated enough, a cross-section of the subjectivity of a social group or class. They tell us not just what

people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing, what they now think they did. Oral sources may not add much to what we know of, for instance, the material cost of a given strike to the workers involved; but they tell us a good deal about its psychological costs. Borrowing a literary category from the Russian formalists, we might say that oral sources (above all, oral sources from the non-hegemonic classes) are a very useful integration of other sources as far as the *fabula* – or story – goes: that is, the logical and causal sequence of events; but what makes them unique and necessary is their *plot* – the way in which the narrator arranges materials in order to tell the story.[12] The organisation of the narrative (subject to rules which are mostly the result of collective elaboration) reveals a great deal of the speakers' relationship to their own history.

Subjectivity is as much the business of history as the more visible 'facts'. What the informant believes is indeed a historical *fact* (that is, the *fact* that he or she believes it) just as much as what 'really' happened. For instance, over half of the workers interviewed in the industrial town of Terni tell the story of their postwar strikes placing the killing of a worker by the police in 1953 rather than, as it really happened, in 1949; they also shift it from one context to another (from a peace demonstration to the urban guerilla struggle which followed mass layoffs at the local steelworks). This obviously does not cast doubt on the actual chronology; but it does force us to rearrange our interpretation of events in order to recognise the collective processes of symbolisation and myth-making in the Terni working class – which sees those years as one uninterrupted struggle expressed by a unifying symbol (the dead comrade), rather than as a succession of separate events. Or again: an ageing former leader of Terni's Communist Party, tired and ill, recounts as historical truth a daydream of his, in which he sees himself on the verge of overturning the CP's postwar policy of working towards a 'progressive democracy' in alliance with bourgeois forces rather than pushing on from anti-fascist resistance to socialism. Of course, he never did play such a role, although it does symbolise the resistance which the so-called 'Salerno policy' met with inside the party. What his testimony makes us feel is the psychological cost of this policy for many militant workers, how it caused their need and desire for revolution to be buried within the collective unconscious.[13] When we find the same story told by a different person in a different part of the country, we understand that the old comrade's fantasy in Terni is not just a chance occurrence. It is rather part of a burgeoning legendary complex, in which are told as true events that at least part of the working class wishes had happened. The 'senile ramblings' of a sick old worker then can reveal as much about his class and party as the lengthy and lucid written memoirs of some of the more respected and official leaders.[14]

* * *

The credibility of oral sources is a *different* credibility. The examples I have given above show how the importance of oral testimony may often lie not in its adherence to facts but rather in its divergence from them, where imagination, symbolism, desire break in. Therefore there are no 'false' oral sources. Once we have checked their factual credibility with all the established criteria of historical philological criticism that apply to every document, the diversity of oral history consists in the fact that 'untrue' statements are still psychologically 'true', and that these previous 'errors' sometimes reveal more than factually accurate accounts.

Of course, the does not imply acceptance of the dominant prejudice which sees

factual credibility as a monopoly of written sources. The official police report on the death of the Terni worker discussed above begins with these revealing words: 'According to verbal information taken . . . ' This is a typical opening formula (in the technical sense) of such official documents, and it shows how many *written* sources are only an uncontrolled transmission of lost *oral* sources. A large part of the written documents which are granted an automatic certificate of credibility by historians are the result of similar processes, carried out with nothing resembling scientific criteria and nearly always with a heavy class bias. For example, this manipulation is inherent in the transcription of trial records (in Italian procedure at least, which accords no legal value to the tape recorder or even to shorthand): what goes on record is not the words of the witnesses, but a version of their testimony translated into legal jargon literally dictated by the judge to the clerk. (The judiciary's fear of the tape recorder is equalled only by the similar prejudice of many historians.) The distortion inherent in such a procedure is beyond assessment, especially when the speakers are not members of the hegemonic class and express themselves in a language twice removed from that of court records. And yet, many historians who turn up their noses at oral sources accept these legal transcripts without blinking. In a lesser measure (thanks to the lesser class distance and the frequent use of shorthand) this applies to parliamentary records, newspaper interviews, minutes of meetings and conventions, which together form the chief sources for much traditional history, including labour history.

A strange by-product of this prejudice is the insistence that oral sources are distant from events and therefore undergo distortions deriving from faulty memory. Now, by definition, the only act contemporary with the act of writing is writing itself. There is always a greater or lesser lapse of time between the event and the written record, if only the time necessary to put it down in writing (unless of course we are talking about contracts, wills, treaties, etc, where the writing *is* the event). In fact, historians have often used *written* sources which were written long after the actual events. And indeed if lack of distance is a requisite, this ought to include physical distance as well – that is, only a direct participant ought to be considered reliable, and only at the moment of the event. But it so happens that such evidence can only be taken with a tape recorder, as happened with interviews recorded during the housing struggles in Rome in the 1970s, where the words of squatters and police were recorded *at the time* of the evictions.[15]

It is true however that most oral testimony refers to more or less distant events. It is nevertheless not clear why a worker's account of a sit-in strike or a partisan account of an episode of the anti-fascist resistance should be less credible than the accounts by eminent political leaders of the postwar period or even of the fascist era which are enjoying a remarkable publishing success in Italy. This is not so much the consequence of direct class prejudice, as of the 'holiness' of the written word. An excellent American historian, for instance, was ironical about the usefulness of collecting Earl Browder's oral memories of the fifties; but he admitted that if Browder (who was a Secretary of the U.S. Communist Party in the 30s and 40s) had written memoirs concerning the same period, he would have had to consider them reliable until proved otherwise. Yet the time span between the events and the narration would be the same. Writing hides its dependence on time by presenting us with an immutable text (as the Latin tag has it, 'scripta manent' – writings endure), thus giving the illusion that since no modifications are possible in the future of the text, no modifications can have taken place in its past history or in its prehistory. But what is written is first experienced or seen, and is subject to distortions even before it is set down on paper. Therefore the reservations applying to oral sources ought to be extended to written material as well.

The originally oral interviews with political leaders and intellectuals which are increasingly being turned out in book form by the Italian publishing industry are usually revised before printing and checked with notes and documents. The oral narrators of the non-hegemonic classes often resort to similar aids. On the one hand they belong to a tradition which has been forced, because of its lack of access to writing, to develop techniques for memory which have in large part atrophied in those who give greater importance to writing and reading.[16] (For instance they may still used formalised narration and meter; identify and characterise people by means of nicknames and kinship; date events in relation to agricultural cycles; retain the very habit of repeating and listening to oral narrations.) Folk informants often speak from within a collective tradition which passes on detailed descriptions of events preceding their birth, but which remain remarkably compact from one source to another.[17] These stories are part of a collective tradition which preserves the memory of the group's history beyond the range of the lives of individual members. On the other hand, we ought not to consider our sources as entirely innocent of writing. Perhaps the case of the old Genzano farmworkers' league leader, who in addition to remembering his own experiences very clearly had done research on his own in local archives, may be atypical. But the majority of informants know how to read, read newspapers, have read books, listen regularly to radio and TV (which both belong to the same culture as produces the written word). They have listened to speeches by people who read – politicians, trade unionists, priests. They keep diaries, letters, old newspapers and documents. For several centuries now, in spite of mass illiteracy, writing and orality have not existed in separate worlds. While a great deal of written memory is but a thin veneer on an underlying orality, even illiterate persons are saturated with written culture. The most common cultural condition for people in the non-hegemonic classes in a country like Italy is somewhere in between, in a fluid state of transition from orality to writing and sometimes back.

The fact remains however that today's narrator is not the same person as took part in the distant events which he or she is now relating. Nor is age the only difference. There may have been changes in personal subjective consciousness as well as in social standing and economic condition, which may induce modifications, affecting at least the judgement of events and the 'colouring' of the story. For instance, several people are reticent when it comes to describing forms of struggle approaching sabotage. This does not mean that they don't remember them clearly, but that there has been a change in their political opinions or in the line of their party, whereby actions considered legitimate and even normal or necessary in the past are today viewed as unacceptable and are literally cast out of the tradition. In these cases, the most precious information may lie in what the informants hide (and in the fact that they hide it), rather than in what they tell.

However, informants are usually quite capable of reconstructing their past attitudes even when they no longer coincide with present ones. This is the case with the Terni factory workers who admit that violent personal reprisals against the executives responsible for the 1953 mass layoffs may have been counterproductive, but yet reconstruct with great lucidity why they seemed useful and sensible at the time. It is also the case with one of the most important oral testimonies of our time, *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Here the narrator describes how his mind worked before he reached a new awareness, and then judges his own past self with his present political and religious consciousness. If the interview is conducted skilfully and its purposes are clear to the informant, it is not impossible for him or her to make a

distinction between present self and past self, and to objectify the past self as other than the present one, other than now. In these cases (Malcolm X again is typical) irony is the major narrative technique used: two different ethical (or political) and narrative standards interfere and overlap, and their tension shapes the narrative.[18]

We may however come across narrators whose consciousness seems to have been arrested at the climactic moment of their personal experience – certain resistance fighters for example, or many World War I veterans, perhaps some student militants of 1968. Often they are wholly absorbed by the totality of the historical event of which they were part, and their account takes on the cadences and the wording of epic. Thus an ironical style or an epic one implies a differing historical perspective which ought to be considered in our interpretation of the testimony.

* * *

Oral sources are *not objective*. This of course applies to every source, although the holiness of writing sometimes leads us to forget it. But the inherent non-objectivity of oral sources lies in specific intrinsic characteristics, the most important being that they are *artificial, variable, partial.*

Alex Haley's introduction to *The Autobiography of Malcolm X* shows that the shift in Malcolm's narrative approach did not happen spontaneously but was stimulated by the interviewer, who led the dialogue away from the exclusively public, official image that Malcolm was trying to project of himself and of the Nation of Islam.[19] This illustrates how oral sources are always the result of a relationship, a common project in which both the informant and the researcher are involved, together. (This is one reason why I think the historian ought to conduct most interviews in person, rather than through professional interviewers; and why oral research is best carried out in teamwork.) Written documents are fixed; they exist whether we are aware of them or not. Oral testimony is only a potential resource until the researcher calls it into existence. The condition for the existence of the written source is its *emission*; for oral sources it is their *transmission*. These differences are similar to those described by Jakobson and Bogatyrev between the creative processes of folklore and literature.[20]

The content of the oral source depends largely on what the interviewer puts into it in terms of questions, stimuli, dialogue, personal relationship of mutual trust or detachment. It is the researcher who decides that there will be an interview. Researchers often introduce specific distortions: informants tell them what they believe they want to be told (it is interesting to see what the informants think is wanted and expected, that is what the informants think the historian is). On the other hand, rigidly structured interviews exclude elements whose existence and relevance were previously unknown to the researcher and are not contemplated in the question schedule; therefore such interviews tend to confirm the historian's previous frame of reference.

The first requirement, therefore, is that the researcher 'accept' the informant and give priority to what he or she wishes to tell, rather than what the researcher wishes to hear. (Any questions lurking unanswered may be reserved for a later interview.) Communication always works both ways, the interviewee is always – though perhaps quietly – studying the interviewer as well as being studied. The historian might as well recognise this fact and work with it, rather than try to eliminate it for the sake of an impossible (and perhaps undesirable) neutrality. Thus, the result is the product of both the informant and the researcher; therefore when (as is often the case) oral interviews

in book form are arranged in such a way as to exclude the researcher's voice, a subtle distortion takes place: the transcript gives the informant's answers, but not the questions they are answering, and therefore gives the impression that a given speaker would *always* say the same things, no matter what the circumstances – in other words, the impression that a speaking person is as fixed as a written document. When the researcher's voice is cut out, the informant's voice is distorted.

In fact, oral testimony will never be the same twice. This is a characteristic of all oral communication: not even the most expert folk singer will deliver the same song twice in exactly the same fashion. This is even more true of relatively unstructured forms, such as autobiographical or historical statements during an interview. It is therefore often worth the trouble interviewing the same informant more than once. The relationship between researcher and informant changes as they get to know and trust each other better. Attitudes change too: what has been called 'revolutionary vigilance' (keeping certain things from an interviewer who comes from another class and may make uncontrolled use of them) is attenuated; and the opposite attitude, a consequence of class subordination (telling only what the informant thinks may be relevant from the researcher's point of view rather than his or her own) gives way to more independent behaviour.

The fact that interviews with the same informant may be usefully continued leads us to the problem of the inherent incompleteness of oral sources. It is impossible to exhaust the *entire* historical memory of a single informant; so the data extracted from the interviews will always be the result of a selection produced by the mutual relationship. Oral historical research therefore always has the unfinished nature of a work in progress. This makes it different from historical research as we are accustomed to conceive it, with its ideal goal of reading through *all* existing sources, documents, archives, and pertinent literature. In order to go through all the possible oral sources for the Terni strikes of 1949-53, the researcher would have to interview at least 100,000 people. Any sample would only be as reliable as the sampling methods used; and on the other hand could never guarantee us against leaving out 'quality' informants whose testimony alone might be worth more than ten statistically selected ones.

But the unfinishedness, the partiality of oral sources infects all other sources. Given that no research can be considered complete any longer unless it includes oral sources (where available of course), and that oral sources are inexhaustible, oral history passes on its own partial, incomplete quality to all historical research.

* * *

Oral history is not the point where the working class speaks for itself. The contrary statement of course is not without foundation; the recounting of a strike through the words and memories of workers rather than those of the police and the company-dominated press obviously helps (though not automatically) to correct a distortion implicit in the traditional sources. Oral sources therefore are a necessary (if not sufficient) condition for a history of the non-hegemonic classes, while they are less necessary for the history of the ruling class who have had control over writing and therefore entrusted most of their collective memory to written records.

Nevertheless, the control of the historical discourse remains firmly in the hands of the historian: it is the historian who selects the people who are to speak; who asks the questions and thus contributes to the shaping of the testimony; who gives the

testimony its final published form (if only in terms of montage and transcription). Even accepting that the working class speaks through oral history, it is clear that the class does not speak in the abstract, but speaks *to* the historian, and *with* the historian (and, inasmuch as the material is published, *through* the historian). Things may indeed be more the other way round: the historian speaking through the workers' testimony, ventriloquising a discourse which is not theirs. So far from disappearing in the objectivity of the sources, the historian remains important at least as a partner in the dialogue, often as a 'stage director' of the interview, as an 'organiser' of the testimony – and organisation, as the old radical saying goes, is not technical, it is political. Instead of finding sources, the historian at least partly 'makes' them; though other people's words may be used it is still his or her discourse. Far from becoming a mere mouthpiece of the working class the historian may amplify a personal contribution.[21]

While the written document is usually invoked to prove that the account is a reliable description of actual events, oral sources involve the entire account in their own subjectivity. Alongside the first person narration of the informant is the first person of the historian, without whom there would be no source. In fact both the discourse of the informant and that of the historian are in narrative form, which brings them closer together than is the case with most other first-hand sources. Informants are historians, after a fashion; and the historian is, somehow, a part of the source.

The traditional writer of history presents himself (or, less often, herself) in the role of what literary theory would call an 'omniscient narrator': he gives a third-person account of events of which he was not a part, and which he dominates entirely and from above, impartial and detached, never appearing himself in the narrative except to give comments aside on the development of events, after the manner of some nineteenth-century novelists. Oral history changes the manner of writing history much in the same way as the modern novel transformed literary fiction; and the major change is that the narrator, from the outside of the narration, is pulled inside and becomes a part of it.

This is not just a grammatical shift from the third to the first person, but a whole new narrative attitude: the narrator is now one of the characters and the telling of the story is now part of the story being told. This implicitly indicates a much deeper political involvement than the traditional development of the external narrator. Radical history-writing is not a matter of ideology, of subjective sides-taking on the historians' part, or of what kind of sources they use. It is rather inherent in the historian's presence in the story being told, in the assumption of responsibility which inscribes him or her in the account and reveals historiography as an autonomous *act* of narration. Political choices become less visible and vocal, but more basic. The myth that the historian as a subject might disappear overwhelmed by the working-class sources, was part of a view of political militancy as the annihilation of subjective roles into the all-encompassing one of the fulltime militant, as absorption into an abstract working class. This resulted in an ironical similarity to the traditional attitude which saw the historian as not subjectively involved in what he (or she) was writing. Of course oral history seemed to be custom-made for this end, in that oral historians led others to speak rather than speaking themselves. But what actually happens is the opposite: the historian is less and less of a go-between from the working class to the reader, and more and more of a protagonist. If others speak instead, it is still the historian who makes them speak; and the 'floor', whether admittedly or not, is still the historian's.

In the writing of history, as in literature, the act of focussing on the function of the narrator causes the fragmentation of this function. In a novel like Joseph Conrad's

Lord Jim, the character/narrator Marlow can recount only what he himself has seen and heard; in order to narrate 'the whole story' he is forced to take several other 'informants' into his tale. The same thing happens to the historian working with oral sources: on entering the story and explicitly declaring control over it, he or she must on that very account allow the sources to enter the tale with their autonomous discourse. Thus, oral history is told from a multitude of 'circumscribed points of view': the impartiality claimed by traditional historians is replaced by the partiality of the narrator (where partiality stands both for taking sides and for unfinishedness). The partiality of oral history is both political *and* narrative: it can never be told without taking sides, since the 'sides' exist inside the account.

Of course, historian and sources are not the same 'side', whatever the historian's personal history may be. The confrontation of these two different partialities – confrontation as conflict, and confrontation as the search for unity – is not the least element of interest in historical work based on oral sources.

1 *La Repubblica*, 3 October, 1978.

2 Eric A Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, Harvard University Press 1963.

3 See Franco Coggiola, 'L'attività dell' Istituto Ernesto De Martino' in Diego Carpitella (ed.), *L'Etnomusicologia in Italia*, Palermo 1975.

4 See for instance Luisa Passerini, 'Sull' utilità e il danno delle fonti orali per la storia', intro. to Passerini (ed.), *Storia Orale. Vita quotidiana e cultura materialie delle classi subalterne*, Turin 1978.

5 Giovanna Marini, 'Musica popolare e parlato popolare urbano', in Circolo Gianni Bosio (ed.), *I Giorni Cantati*, Milan 1978. See also Alan Lomax, *Folk Song Styles and Culture*, Washington D.C. 1968.

6 See Havelock, *Preface to Plato*, also Walter J Ong, 'African Talking Drums and Oral Noetics', *New Literary History*, vol. 8 no. 3, Spring 1977, pp 411-29; Dennis Tedlock, 'Towards an Oral Poetics', same volume, pp 506-19.

7 See William Labov, 'The Logic of non-standard English', in Louis Kampf-Paul Lauter (ed.), *The Politics of Literature*, New York 1970, pp 194-239.

8 Here as elsewhere in this paper, I am using these terms as defined and used by Gerard Genette, *Figures III*, Paris 1972.

9 Dan Ben-Amos, 'Catégories Analytiques et Genres Populaires', *Poétique*, vol. 19, 1974, pp 268-93.

10 Jan Vansina, *Oral Tradition*, Penguin ed. 1961, 1973.

11 For instance, a Communist Party militant interviewed in Rome described the situation of his community and family mainly in dialect, but shifted briefly to standard Italian whenever he had to reaffirm his fidelity to the party line and the line's inevitability. The language shift showed that though he accepted it as inevitable he still saw the party line as something quite different from his own experience and tradition. His recurring idiom was 'There's nothing you can do about it'. A transcript of the interview is published in Circolo Gianni Bosio (ed.), *I Giorni Cantati*.

12 Boris Tomacevskij's essay on plot construction, in Tzveean Todorov (ed.), *Théorie de la Littérature*, Paris 1965.

13 See Alessandro Portelli and Valentino Paparelli, 'Terni: materiali per una storia operaia' in *Giorni Cantati*, bulletin of the Circolo Gianni Bosio, vol. 10, March 1977, 18-36.

14 Nathan Wachtel shows a similar phenomenon for folk reconstructions of the Spanish conquest in Mexico and Peru, which he partly explains by the distance in time (which does not apply to events within the informant's memory, as in Terni): 'Are these distortions arbitrary and mere fruits of fancy, or do they rather respond to a certain logic? And then, what logic is it? Why one interpretation rather than another?' *La Vision des Vaincus*, Paris 1971. From the Italian translation, *La Visione dei Vinti*, Turin 1977, p. 47.

15 On the time span between the event and the writing on the event see Genette as in note 8. The housing struggle recordings are partly published in the record *Roma. La borgata e la lotta per la casa* edited by Alessandro Portelli, Milan, Istituto Ernesto De Martino, Archivi Sonori SdL/AS/10.

16 Paul Thompson tells about the members of a social psychology convention, who, asked after a few days, were not able to remember the topics discussed there. Scholars used to reading and writing have a tendency to forget how to listen. Passerini (ed.), *Storia Orale*, p 36.

17 See Alfredo Martini-Antonello Cuzzaniti, 'Il 1898 a Genzano', *I Giorni Cantati*, vol. 10, March 1977, pp 3-16.

18 See the definition of irony in George Lukacs, *Theory of the Novel*, ch. 5

19 Of course Haley was only aiming to replace politics with 'human interest'. It was Malcolm X's unrelenting political tension which made his personal story the most politically relevant part of the book.

20 Roman Jakobson and Piotr Bogatyrëv, 'Le folklore, forme spécifique de création' in *Questions de Poétique*, Paris 1973, pp 59-72.

21 To this all-important purpose, a historian working with oral testimony collected by someone else is virtually working with a *written* source: a source he may not ask questions of, a source he may not influence and change, a source 'written' on the tape (the Italian 'inciso' or carved gives fully this sense of unchangeability).

“Εχω κάνει 100 συνεντεύξεις. Τι να τις κάνω;”

Ρίκη Βαν Μπούσχοτεν

Abstract

‘I made 100 interviews: what am I going to do with them?”

In spite of the increased use of oral history interviews by Greek scholars over the last two decades, very little of this rich empirical material is integrated into the final draft of their publications. Thus a unique opportunity to gain deeper insights into the role of individual and collective actors in social and historical processes is lost. I argue instead that oral sources can play a crucial role both in the reconstruction of the past and in the analysis of social memory as an important factor of the present. This article explores the reasons for this reluctance on the part of Greek scholars to integrate oral material into their interpretations and suggests two different methods for the analysis of oral interviews: the narrative interview method introduced by Gabriele Rosenthal and Fritz Schütze, among others, and the “ethno-sociological method proposed by Daniel Bertaux.

Keywords: oral history, life stories, narrative method, ethno-sociological method

Ο τίτλος του άρθρου αυτού είναι σκόπιμα λίγο προκλητικός, αλλά ξεκινάει από ένα πολύ υπαρκτό πρόβλημα. Ενώ τα τελευταία χρόνια όλο και περισσότεροι ιστορικοί και κοινωνικοί επιστήμονες συλλέγουν προφορικές μαρτυρίες, στη συνέχεια ένα απειροελάχιστο τμήμα αυτού του πλούσιου εμπειρικού υλικού καταλήγει στο τελικό γραπτό κείμενο. Συνήθως αυτό γίνεται με τη μορφή παραπομπών σε συνεντεύξεις το περιεχόμενο του οποίου παραμένει άγνωστο, ή με μικρά αποσπάσματα που απλώς δίνουν “χρώμα” ή επιβεβαιώνουν συμπεράσματα στα οποία έχει ήδη καταλήξει ο συγγραφέας με τη χρήση άλλων πηγών. Έτσι χάνεται μια μοναδική ευκαιρία να αξιοποιηθεί το δυναμικό των προφορικών πηγών να αποκαλύψουν το “απροσδόκητο” στο ιστορικό γίγνεσθαι και να οδηγήσουν τους ερευνητές σε νέες ερμηνείες. Βεβαίως, είναι απόλυτα θεμιτό να χρησιμοποιηθούν οι προφορικές μαρτυρίες ως επικουρική και συμπληρωματική πηγή, εκεί που τα αρχεία σιωπούν, όπως για παράδειγμα το έκανε ο Δορδανάς στη μελέτη του για τα γερμανικά αντίποινα (2007). Όμως οι προφορικές πηγές έχουν να προσφέρουν πολύ περισσότερα, και αυτό κυρίως σε δύο αλληλένδετα πεδία. Αφενός, στην ανασύσταση του παρελθόντος, με την ανάδειξη της εμπρόθετης δράσης των ατομικών και συλλογικών υποκειμένων και της υποκειμενικότητας ως φορέα κοινωνικής αλλαγής. Και αφετέρου στη μελέτη της κοινωνικής μνήμης ως σημαντικό στοιχείο του παρόντος. Με άλλα λόγια, στο πρώτο πεδίο ο ερευνητής εστιάζει κυρίως σε τι θυμούνται τα κοινωνικά υποκείμενα, και στο δεύτερο στο πως το θυμούνται.

Σε τι οφείλονται όμως οι δισταγμοί των ερευνητών να αξιοποιήσουν το υλικό που με τόσους κόπους συγκέντρωσαν; Το ερώτημα δεν είναι καινούργιο. Ήδη, πριν 65 περίπου χρόνια ο ανθρωπολόγος Kluckhohn (1945), σε ένα τόμο που αφορούσε τη χρήση των “προσωπικών ντοκουμέντων” στην ιστορία και στις κοινωνικές επιστήμες, παραπονέθηκε για την έλλειψη ανάλυσης και ερμηνείας αυτών των τεκμηρίων. Στα σημερινά ελληνικά συμφραζόμενα, ένας λόγος μπορεί να είναι και η διστακτικότητα πολλών καταξιωμένων ιστορικών να αναγνωρίσουν την αξία των προφορικών πηγών έναντι των γραπτών. Και οι νέοι ερευνητές μπορούν να αισθάνονται πιο “ασφαλείς” δουλεύοντας με αρχειακές ή βιβλιογραφικές πηγές. Αυτή η διστακτικότητα όμως πηγάζει ως ένα βαθμό και από την έλλειψη έργων που πράγματι άνοιξαν νέους δρόμους στην ιστορική ερμηνεία με τη χρήση των προφορικών πηγών. Έτσι έχουμε ένα φαύλο κύκλο, που καιρός είναι να σπάσουμε.

Από την άλλη μεριά όμως, ο συχνά τεράστιος όγκος των απομαγνητοφωνημένων κειμένων προκαλεί δέος και δεν είναι εύκολα μέσα από τα πολλά δέντρα των ατομικών διαδρομών να ανακαλύψουμε το δάσος της κοινωνικής ιστορίας. Στην τελευταία έρευνα που εκπόνησα με τον Loring Danforth (Danforth & Van Boeschoten 2011) για τα παιδιά του εμφυλίου οι 130 συνεντεύξεις μας έδωσαν περίπου 5000 σελίδες κειμένου, στις οποίες προστίθενται και εκατοντάδες σελίδες με σημειώσεις πεδίου. Σκοπός του άρθρου είναι να υποδείξω κάποιους τρόπους για να δαμαστεί ένα τέτοιο ογκώδες υλικό και να βγει ζουμί που ενδέχεται να ανοίξει νέες προοπτικές στην ιστορική και ανθρωπολογική έρευνα.

Θα εστιάσω κυρίως σε δύο μεθόδους που έχουν δείξει την αξία τους στην ερμηνεία των αφηγήσεων ζωής, την αφηγηματική μέθοδο και την "εθνοκοινωνιολογική" μέθοδο του Daniel Bertaux..

Προτού προχωρήσω όμως θα αναφερθώ εν συντομία σε εναλλακτικούς τρόπους παρουσίασης των προφορικών μαρτυριών πέρα από την κλασική ιστορική ή ανθρωπολογική μονογραφία όπου κυριαρχεί ο επιστημονικός λόγος. Λαμβάνοντας υπόψη ότι ο αυτούσιος λόγος των πληροφορητών μας αποτελεί το πιο γνήσιο τεκμήριο της βιωμένης εμπειρίας μιας εποχής, η έκδοση τους σε βιβλίο δεν είναι μόνο δικαιολογημένη, αλλά και αναγκαία. Υπάρχουν βασικά δύο τρόποι παρουσίασης αυτών των τεκμηρίων.

1. Μια μεμονωμένη αφήγηση ζωής. Ένα χαρακτηριστικό παράδειγμα είναι το έργο της Marjorie Shostak *Nisa, the Life and Words of a !Kung Woman* (1988), μια ευαίσθητη αφήγηση ζωής γυναίκας μιας κοινότητας κυνηγών-τροφοσυλλεκτών της Αφρικής. . Η προσέγγιση αυτή αποκτά πρόσθετο ενδιαφέρον όταν προστίθεται και η φωνή του ερευνητή, αναδεικνύοντας τη διαλογική σχέση που έχει οδηγήσει στο τελικό κείμενο, όπως στο *Διπλό Βιβλίο* της Τασούλας Βερβενιώτη και *African Voices, African Lives: Personal Narratives from a Swahili Village*, της ανθρωπολόγου Pat Caplan (1997)
2. Μια συλλογή αφηγήσεων ζωής, οι οποίες παρουσιάζονται είτε στο σύνολό τους είτε ως μοντάζ αποσπασμάτων και σκιαγραφούν την πορεία μια κοινότητας, μιας κοινωνικής ομάδας ή μια ιστορική περίοδο. Ένα κλασικό παράδειγμα είναι το *Children of Sanchez* του Oscar Lewis (1961) που αφορά τα μέλη μιας φτωχής μεξικάνικης οικογένειας και έδωσε αφορμή στο συγγραφέα να διατυπώσει τη θεωρία του για την "κουλτούρα της φτώχειας". Στην ίδια κατηγορία ανήκει και το δικό μου βιβλίο "*Περασάμε πολλές μπόρες, κορίτσι μου...*" (1999) το οποίο μέσα από τις μαρτυρίες 50 κατοίκων του χωριού Ζιάκα Γρεβενών παρουσιάζει τις εμπειρίες της κοινότητας στην Αντίσταση και στον Εμφύλιο. Μοναδικό στο είδος είναι το *Blood of Spain* του Ronald Fraser (1986) σχετικά με τον ισπανικό εμφύλιο πόλεμο.
3. Η παράθεση αφηγήσεων ζωής μπορεί όμως να συνδυαστεί με μια ιστορική ή κοινωνιολογική ανάλυση. Το στοιχείο αυτό υπάρχει και στο βιβλίο του Fraser που μόλις ανέφερα. Στο βιβλίο του Paul Thompson, *The Edwardians*, που βασίζεται σε 500 συνεντεύξεις με Βρετανούς που έζησαν τις πρώτες δεκαετίες του 20ου αιώνα, η κοινωνιολογική ανάλυση της περιόδου εναλλάσσεται με οικογενειακά πορτραίτα χαρακτηριστικά για διάφορα κοινωνικά στρώματα της περιόδου. Στο δικό μας βιβλίο (Danforth & Van Boeschoten 2011) το δεύτερο μέρος που παρεμβάλλεται ανάμεσα στα ιστορικά κεφάλαια και τα κεφάλαια ανθρωπολογικής ανάλυσης, δίνει φωνή στους πληροφορητές μας με 7 αφηγήσεις ζωής.

Ας έρθουμε τώρα στη μεθοδολογία ανάλυσης των συνεντεύξεων. Προτού φτάσουμε όμως στην καθεαυτού ανάλυση, πρέπει να κάνουμε 2 ακόμα βήματα. Πρώτον πρέπει να κάνουμε το υλικό μας πιο προσιτό, με την απομαγνητοφώνηση και την ευρετηρίαση των συνεντεύξεων, ώστε να βρούμε πιο εύκολα τα σημεία που μας ενδιαφέρουν. Όπως θα φανεί στη συνέχεια, είναι επίσης πολύ χρήσιμο να κάνουμε μια περίληψη των θεματικών με τη σειρά που αναφέρονται στη συνέντευξη και μια σύντομη περιγραφή της βιογραφίας του υποκειμένου σε χρονολογική σειρά. Κατά δεύτερο λόγο πρέπει να αξιολογήσουμε την κάθε συνέντευξη, τόσον όσον αφορά τα θέματα που ενδεχομένως μπορούν να ανοίξουν νέα πεδία ερμηνείας, όσον και για την αξιοπιστία τους. Η αξιολόγηση αυτή ακολουθεί την ίδια μέθοδο που χρησιμοποιούν οι ιστορικοί και στην αξιολόγηση γραπτών πηγών. Μελετώντας την εσωτερική συνοχή του κειμένου και μέσα από τη διασταύρωση με άλλες πηγές (είτε με άλλες συνεντεύξεις, είτε με γραπτές πηγές) μπορούμε να εντοπίσουμε τα τυχόν μυθοποιητικά στοιχεία στο λόγο του πληροφορητή, τις αντιφάσεις και τις σιωπές. Διαφορετικά όμως από τη δουλειά του ιστορικού που δουλεύει με γραπτές πηγές, ο εντοπισμός τέτοιων στοιχείων δεν θα πρέπει να μας οδηγήσει στην απόρριψη του τεκμηρίου. Αντιθέτως, μπορεί να είναι ιδιαίτερα αποκαλυπτικά για την κατανόηση της βιογραφικής συγκρότησης και της ιστορικής συνείδησης του πληροφορητή, της διάρθρωσης της μνήμης του και της κοινωνικής αλλαγής. Σε ένα εξαιρετικό άρθρο του Sandro Portelli (Uchronic Dreams: Working-Class Memory and Possible Worlds (1991), ο συγγραφέας εξιστορεί πως στην πρώτη του συνέντευξη, ένας Ιταλός εργάτης κομμουνιστής του είπε μια ιστορία που δεν συνέβη ποτέ: μια συνάντηση με τον Τολιάτι, γενικό γραμματέα του Ιταλικού Κομμουνιστικού Κόμματος. Αυτή η επινόηση όμως δείχνει το ρόλο της φαντασίας στην ιστορία, μέσα από την οποία οι Ιταλοί εργάτες εξέφραζαν τη δυσαρέσκεια με τη γραμμή του κόμματος μετά την απελευθέρωση. Όπως είναι φανερό από τα παραπάνω, η ανάλυση αρχίζει ήδη σε αυτό το πρώτο στάδιο.

Από εκεί και πέρα, ανάλογα με το θέμα και το υλικό μας, μπορούμε είτε να εστιάσουμε στην ίδια την αφήγηση είτε σε μια ανασύνθεση του εμπειρικού υλικού μας με τη χρήση και άλλων πηγών. Υπάρχουν όμως και αρκετά κοινά στοιχεία ανάμεσα στις δύο αυτές προσεγγίσεις. Και στις δύο περιπτώσεις θα προβούμε τόσο σε μια διεξοδική "κάθετη" ανάγνωση της κάθε ατομικής αφήγησης ζωής όσο και σε μια "οριζόντια" ανάγνωση συγκρίνοντας περισσότερες συνεντεύξεις μεταξύ τους. Και στις δύο περιπτώσεις, επίσης, θα προσπαθήσουμε να απομονώσουμε ένα ή περισσότερους κεντρικούς πυρήνες νοημάτων που θα μας επιτρέψουνε να χτίσουμε την επιχειρηματολογία μας. Στη μια περίπτωση, της αφηγηματικής ανάλυσης, τα κεντρικά νοήματα θα αφορούν περισσότερο χαρακτηριστικές ατομικές περιπτώσεις, ενώ στη δεύτερη περίπτωση σκοπός μας είναι να κατανοήσουμε καλύτερα τους κοινωνικούς μηχανισμούς που παράγουν ιστορία. Είναι, βέβαια, και δυνατόν να συνδυάσουμε τις δύο μεθόδους.

Το ενδιαφέρον μιας αφηγηματικής ανάλυσης φαίνεται, για παράδειγμα, σε ένα γνωστό άρθρο του Αμερικανού ερευνητή προφορικής ιστορίας Ronald Grele (1985), όπου συγκρίνει τις συνεντεύξεις δύο Εβραίων εργατών των εμπορορραφείων της Νέας Υόρκης, ενός άνδρα και μιας γυναίκας. Παρά το κοινό τους κοινωνικό, πολιτικό και πολιτισμικό υπόβαθρο, οι αφηγήσεις ζωής δείχνουν μια εντελώς διαφορετική ιστορική συνείδηση. Στην περίπτωση του άνδρα η ιστορία αναδύεται σαν μια γραμμική πορεία προς την πρόοδο ώσπου η πορεία αυτή διακόπτεται από την παρακμή. Στην αφήγηση της γυναίκας, αντίθετα, η ιστορία συνίσταται σε δραματικά επεισόδια που αναδεικνύουν τον κόσμο σαν ένα σύνολο διπολικών αντιθέσεων. (Βλ. Τόμσον 2002:331-332).

Αυτοί όμως που επεξεργάστηκαν την αφηγηματική ανάλυση σε ιδιαίτερα ενδιαφέρουσα επιστημονική μέθοδο είναι κάποιοι Γερμανοί κοινωνικοί επιστήμονες, μεταξύ των οποίων ο Fritz Schütze και η Gabriele Rosenthal. Και δεν είναι ίσως τυχαίο αυτό, καθώς βρέθηκαν αντιμέτωποι με

ιδιαίτερα δύσκολες περιπτώσεις αφηγηματικού λόγου, γεμάτου σιωπές, ενοχές και απωθήσεις: Εβραίοι επιζώντες του Ολοκαυτώματος και πρώην Ναζί. Βασική προϋπόθεση της αφηγηματικής αυτής μεθόδου είναι η ίδια συνέντευξη να γεννά ένα πραγματικά αφηγηματικό λόγο και όχι απλώς μια σειρά από ερωτοαναπαντοκρίσεις. Προκειμένου να επιτευχθεί ο σκοπός αυτός, ελαχιστοποιείται ο ρόλος του ερευνητή, ο οποίος δεν παρεμβαίνει καθόλου στην πρώτη φάση της συνέντευξης. Σκοπός αυτής της τεχνικής είναι να βρεθεί η "κόκκινη κλωστή", ο πυρήνας του νοήματος της ζωής, αποστάλαγμα της "βιογραφικής γνώσης" που αποκόμισε ο πληροφορητής στη διάρκεια της ζωής του. Στο θεωρητικό επίπεδο, η αφηγηματική μέθοδος στηρίζεται στη "θεμελιωμένη θεωρία" (grounded theory) των Glaser & Strauss (1967), η οποία προτείνει ότι οι ερμηνευτικές υποθέσεις πρέπει να παράγονται από το ίδιο το εμπειρικό υλικό και όχι από προηγούμενες θεωρητικές υποθέσεις. Η θεωρητική αυτή παραδοχή εφαρμόζεται και στην μεθοδολογία ανάλυσης των αφηγήσεων ζωής, η οποία, σε ιδανικές συνθήκες, πραγματοποιείται από μια ομάδα ερευνητών, ώστε να διασταυρώνονται οι θεωρητικοί και εμπειρικοί ορίζοντες του κάθε μέλους της ομάδας. Η ανάλυση αυτή εστιάζει αρχικά στη διεξοδική ("κάθετη") ανάλυση της κάθε συνέντευξης, η οποία ονομάζεται "ανασυγκρότηση περιπτώσεων" και στη συνέχεια προχωρεί στη σύγκριση μεμονωμένων χαρακτηριστικών για το υπό έρευνα θέμα περιπτώσεων.

Η ανάλυση των μεμονωμένων αφηγήσεων ζωής χωρίζεται σε διάφορα στάδια. Αρχικά είναι αναγκαίο να διαχωριστεί ο βιογραφικός χρόνος από τον αφηγηματικό χρόνο, δηλαδή να αντιπαραβάλουμε τους βασικούς σταθμούς της βιογραφίας ενός ατόμου - που συμπεριλαμβάνει τόσο τις "κανονικότητες" μιας ζωής με τις ρήξεις που σημειώνονται σε αυτό - με τον τρόπο που αυτοί διαρθρώνονται στην βιογραφική αφήγηση. Στη συνέχεια εξετάζεται τι είδος του λόγου χρησιμοποιεί ο αφηγητής σε κάθε στάδιο της αφήγησής του: έκθεση πεπραγμένων, περιγραφή καταστάσεων , προσώπων και αντικειμένων, επιχειρηματολογία και ο καθ'εαυτό αφηγηματικός λόγος. Στην τρίτη φάση ακολουθεί η δομική περιγραφή σειρά προς σειρά του απομαγνητοφωνημένου κειμένου (sequentialization), όπου λαμβάνονται υπόψη τόσο το περιεχόμενο των συγκεκριμένων αποσπασμάτων όσο και η μορφολογία τους (τα είδη του λόγου), η γλώσσα και η συντακτική απόδοση (πχ παθητική ή ενεργητική μορφή του ρήματος, η χρήση των προσωπικών αντωνυμιών). Στη φάση αυτή γίνεται η σταδιακή επεξεργασία και ο διαδοχικός έλεγχος των υποθέσεων ερμηνείας του κειμένου. Ερωτήσεις που τίθενται για παράδειγμα είναι "γιατί ο αφηγητής επιλέγει να διηγείται το συγκεκριμένο περιστατικό σε αυτή τη φάση της αφήγησης; Πως συνδέεται με άλλα σημεία της αφήγησης; Τι αποσιωπάται ή παρακάμπτεται; Γιατί μιλάει για το περιστατικό με ένα συγκεκριμένο είδος του λόγου; Η ανάλυση αυτή στοχεύει για να εντοπιστεί η λανθάνουσα νοηματική δομή της αφήγησης, δηλαδή, όπως και στο παράδειγμα των Εβραίων εργατών της Νέας Υόρκης που προαναφέραμε, πως έχει ερμηνεύσει ο αφηγητής τη ζωή του και πως βλέπει τον εαυτό του στο γενικότερο κοινωνικό γίγνεσθαι. Ταυτόχρονα μέσα από την ανάλυση αυτή ανασυγκροτείται ο ειδικός τρόπος με τον οποίο η εξεταζόμενη περίπτωση συγκεκριμενοποιεί το ερευνώμενο φαινόμενο. Αυτό το τελευταίο σημείο ανοίγει και το δρόμο στην τελευταία φάση της ανάλυσης: η σύγκριση με άλλες περιπτώσεις, δηλαδή με άλλες πτυχές του υπό εξέταση φαινομένου.

Είναι φανερό ότι στη μέθοδο αυτή, ο αριθμός των συνεντεύξεων πρέπει να μείνει περιορισμένος και είναι δύσκολο να προβεί κανείς σε γενικεύσεις. Οι επιλεγόμενες "περιπτώσεις" δεν είναι αναγκαίο, αλλά ίσως και δεν πρέπει να θεωρηθούν "αντιπροσωπευτικές". Είναι όμως σημαντικό να συμπεριλαμβάνουν τόσο τις "κανονικότητες" του υπό μελέτης θέμα, όσο και τις αποκλίνουσες συμπεριφορές. Πχ ο αδίστακτος ιδεολόγος Ναζί, μαζί με τον Πρώσο αριστοκράτη και τον "επιλεγμένο" Εβραίο επιστάτη, ο αιμοβόρος Χίτης μαζί με το "επιστρατευμένο" από τα Τάγματα Ασφαλείας χωριατόπουλο. Ή, για να αναφέρουμε ένα διαφορετικού είδους έρευνα, την κλασική Αλβανίδα οικιακή βοηθό που εγκλωβίζεται εκ των πραγμάτων στο επάγγελμα αυτό, έστω κι αν στη χώρα της ήταν φιλόλογος, μαζί με κάποιες άλλες γυναίκες που κατάφεραν να ανοίξουν ένα

διαφορετικό δρόμο για τον εαυτό τους (Λιάπη 2008). Είναι ίσως μια μέθοδος που ταιριάζει περισσότερο σε ορισμένες δύσκολες περιπτώσεις, όπως αυτές των θυμάτων και τους θύτες της βίας και της καταπίεσης, αλλά είναι μια μέθοδος, που μας αναγκάζει να "επιβραδύνουμε το ρυθμό της ανάγνωσης και να εξετάσουμε προσεκτικά το σύνολο του κειμένου, αλλά και τις λεπτομέρειες του, τις εικόνες του, τις μορφές της γλώσσας, τα θέματα, τα ορατά και τα λανθάνοντα μηνύματά του" (Τόμσον 2002: 344). Για περισσότερες λεπτομέρειες παραπέμπω στο βιβλίο του Γιώργου Τσιώλη *Ιστορίες ζωής και βιογραφικές αφηγήσεις* (2006) που στο τέλος περιέχει και ένα παράδειγμα αφηγηματικής ανάλυσης μιας συνέντευξης από δική του έρευνα που αφορούσε την εμπειρία της αποβιομηχάνισης στο Λαύριο. Υπάρχουν επίσης δύο πολύ χρήσιμα κείμενα της Gabriele Rosenthal (1989, 1991) στα αγγλικά, όπου επίσης εξηγεί λεπτομερώς τη μέθοδό της, με βάση συγκεκριμένα παραδείγματα.

Παρά τα οφέλη που παρουσιάζει η μέθοδος της αφηγηματικής ανάλυσης, η πιο συνηθισμένη μέθοδος στην προφορική ιστορία είναι εκείνη της ανασύνθεσης, όπου τα στοιχεία των συνεντεύξεων χρησιμοποιούνται μαζί με άλλες πηγές. Στο βιβλίο του Πωλ Τόμσον, *Φωνές από το Παρελθόν* (2002: 351-364) αναφέρονται αρκετά παραδείγματα μελετών, όπου η χρήση των προφορικών μαρτυριών επέτρεψε την αναθεώρηση προηγούμενων θεωρητικών προσεγγίσεων στην ερμηνεία της ιστορίας (πχ για το ρόλο των νεαρών ανένταχτων εργατών στον αμερικάνικο συνδικαλισμό της δεκαετίας του 1930, για τη σύνδεση της εργοστασιακής με την οικογενειακή ζωή, για τη διάδοση της αντισύλληψης στα εργατικά στρώματα, για τη σημασία της οικογενειακής κουλτούρας στη μεταβίβαση αξιών και πρακτικών). Σε όλες αυτές τις περιπτώσεις, οι προφορικές πηγές έπαιξαν ουσιαστικό ρόλο στη διατύπωση νέων ερμηνειών. Έδειξαν επίσης το σημαντικό συσσωρευτικό ρόλο των ατομικών επιλογών στην ευρύτερη κοινωνική αλλαγή.

Εδώ όμως θα εστιάσουμε σε μια ιδιαίτερη εκδοχή της μεθόδου της ανασύνθεσης. Πρόκειται για την "εθνοκοινωνιολογική" προσέγγιση που πρότεινε ο Daniel Bertaux στο βιβλίο του *Les récits de vie* (1997). Σε σύγκριση με την αφηγηματική μέθοδο, το κέντρο βάρους τώρα μετατίθεται από το ατομικό στο κοινωνικό, και από τη βιογραφική συγκρότηση στους κοινωνικούς μηχανισμούς. Ο ίδιος ο Bertaux, είτε μόνος του είτε σε συνεργασία με άλλους, έχει εφαρμόσει τη μέθοδο αυτή αποτελεσματικά σε διαφορετικά πεδία έρευνας, όπως είναι η κοινωνική κινητικότητα, η βιομηχανική εργασία, οι χωρισμένοι πατέρες, οι γυναίκες εσωτερικές μετανάστριες, και ο μετασοσιαλιστικός μετασχηματισμός στη Ρωσία. Ονόμασε τη μέθοδο "εθνοκοινωνιολογική" γιατί μέσα από την εθνογραφική επιτόπια έρευνα αποσκοπεί στην επεξεργασία μικροκοινωνιολογικών ερμηνειών που αφορούν τις διαδικασίες κοινωνικής αλλαγής "από τα κάτω".

Κι αυτή η μέθοδος συνδυάζει την κάθετη και την οριζόντια ανάγνωση των συνεντεύξεων. Αρχίζει λοιπόν με μια λεπτομερή ανάλυση των ατομικών αφηγήσεων ζωής. Αποσκοπεί στην ερμηνευτική ανασυγκρότηση τριών διαφορετικών πραγματικοτήτων που εκφράζονται μέσα από τη συνέντευξη:

1. η ιστορικο-εμπειρική πραγματικότητα. Σκοπός είναι η ανασυγκρότηση της διαχρονικής δομής της βιογραφικής διαδρομής του υποκειμένου, που αφορά τόσο τα "αντικειμενικά" στοιχεία της, τις δράσεις και τα γεγονότα, όσο και τον υποκειμενικό τρόπο βίωσής τους.
2. η ψυχική και σημασιολογική πραγματικότητα. Σκοπός είναι η συνολική και υποκειμενική σημασία που έχει αποκτήσει για το υποκείμενο το σύνολο των εμπειριών που έζησε στη διάρκεια της ζωής του, όπως τις αναστοχάζεται αναδρομικά στο παρόν.
3. η αφηγηματική πραγματικότητα, όπως προκύπτει από τη διϋποκειμενική σχέση που

αναπτύσσεται ανάμεσα στον αφηγητή και τον ερευνητή στη διάρκεια της συνέντευξης. Δηλαδή, τι θέλει να πει ο αφηγητής για όσα γνωρίζει και για αυτά που σκέφτεται για τη βιογραφική του διαδρομή.

Με άλλα λόγια, ενώ στην αφηγηματική μέθοδο έχουμε δύο επίπεδα, τη βιογραφική διαδρομή και την αφήγηση, εδώ παρεμβάλλεται ένα τρίτο ενδιάμεσο επίπεδο ερμηνείας που ουσιαστικά αφορά την ερμηνεία που έχει δώσει ο ίδιος ο αφηγητής για το συνολικό νόημα της ζωής του. Αυτή είναι η πρώτη ύλη βάσει της οποίας οικοδομεί την αφήγησή του. (Bertaux 1997:68).

Λαμβάνοντας λοιπόν υπόψη αυτές τις τρεις πραγματικότητες, ο ερευνητής προχωράει στην λεπτομερή ανάλυση ενός μικρού αρχικά αριθμού ατομικών αφηγήσεων ζωής. Η ανάλυση αυτή εστιάζει ιδίως στα εξής σημεία:

- Ποια είναι η διαχρονική δομή των βιογραφικών συμβάντων; Μπορούμε να πούμε ότι υπάρχει ένας κεντρικός και σταθερός πυρήνας αντικειμενικών συμβάντων που έχουν σημαδέψει τη ζωή του ατόμου; (πχ σχολείο, γάμος, μαθητεία, πρόσληψη, απόλυση)
- Πως συσχετίζεται η διαχρονική βιογραφική δομή με τη δομή της αφήγησης; Πότε κάνει ο αφηγητής άλματα προς τα μπρος και προς τα πίσω, πως τα αιτιολογεί, πότε αισθάνεται την ανάγκη να δώσει επεξηγήσεις για τα ευρύτερα συμφραζόμενα; πότε κάνει χρονολογικά λάθη και ποιά είναι τα κενά στην αφήγηση (δηλαδή για ποιά θέματα αποφεύγει να μιλήσει;) Από αυτή τη σύγκριση της βιογραφικής δομής με τη δομή της αφήγησης ενδέχεται να προκύψει το νόημα που έχει δώσει ο ίδιος ο αφηγητής στη ζωή του, δηλαδή το σημείο 2 (ψυχική και σημασιολογική πραγματικότητα) στο οποίο αναφερθήκαμε προηγουμένως.
- Εγγραφή του ατομικού βιογραφικού χρόνου στο συλλογικό ιστορικό χρόνο. Από το χρόνο γέννησης του πληροφορητή μπορούμε να συμπεράνουμε σε ποια ηλικία έζησε ποια ιστορικά γεγονότα και σε ποια γενιά ανήκει. Όταν θα προχωρήσουμε σε μια συγκριτική ανάλυση περισσότερων συνεντεύξεων, αυτό μας επιτρέπει να προβούμε σε μια διαγενειακή προσέγγιση. Για παράδειγμα, από την έρευνα που έκανα στο Ζιάκα Γρεβενών (Βαν Μπούσχοτεν 1997), προέκυψε ότι η γενιά των Επονιτών είχε μια πολύ διαφορετική στάση απέναντι στα γεγονότα, ακόμα και σήμερα, από τους γονείς τους. Παρομοίως, ο Αμερικάνος ανθρωπολόγος John Borneman (1992) στην έρευνα για το Δυτικό και Ανατολικό Βερολίνο ανέδειξε πολύ διαφορετικές στάσεις ανάμεσα στη γενιά που έζησε το Ναζισμό και τη γενιά που γεννήθηκε μετά τον πόλεμο.
- Εντοπισμός "δεικτών" που παραπέμπουν στη λειτουργία κοινωνικών μηχανισμών (διαπροσωπικές σχέσεις, πολιτισμικές και κοινωνικές πρακτικές). Ιδιαίτερα ενδιαφέρον παρουσιάζουν εκείνοι οι δείκτες που περιγράφουν καταστάσεις που δεν μας είναι οικείες ή στις οποίες αρχικά δεν δώσαμε σημασία. (Bertaux 1997:84).

Όπως φαίνεται από τα παραπάνω, η ανάλυση των μεμονωμένων αφηγήσεων ζωής παρουσιάζει αρκετές ομοιότητες με την αφηγηματική μέθοδο. Εκεί όμως που διαφέρει ιδιαίτερα η "εθνοκοινωνιολογική" προσέγγιση που προτείνει ο Bertaux, είναι η μεγάλη βαρύτητα που δίνει στη σύγκριση των συνεντεύξεων μεταξύ τους, στην οριζόντια δηλαδή ανάγνωση του υλικού. Είναι η σύγκριση που επιτρέπει τη σταδιακή επεξεργασία ερμηνευτικών μοντέλων. Οι πρώτες υποθέσεις διατυπώνονται αρχικά στη βάση μικρού αριθμού συνεντεύξεων και των σημειώσεων πεδίου του ερευνητή. Ο Bertaux επιμένει ότι είναι σημαντικό η ερμηνευτική διαδικασία να ξεκινήσει από τις πρώτες συνεντεύξεις και δεν πρέπει να αφήνεται για το τέλος. Κι αυτό συσχετίζεται και με το γεγονός ότι κι αυτός ακολουθεί τη μέθοδο της θεμελιωμένης θεωρίας που αναφέραμε προηγουμένως, βάσει της οποίας οι ερμηνείες πρέπει να πηγάζουν από το ίδιο το εμπειρικό υλικό.

Ένας πρώτος τρόπος συγκριτικής ανάλυσης είναι να εστιάσουμε στις συχνά επαναλαμβανόμενες καταστάσεις, λογικές δράσης των υποκειμένων και ερμηνείες των γεγονότων "από τη σκοπιά του ιθαγενή" (για να θυμηθούμε και τον Μαλινόφσκι). Γιατί είναι αυτά τα επαναλαμβανόμενα σχήματα που μετατρέπουν το ατομικό σε συλλογικό και μας επιτρέπουν να περάσουμε από τις εμπειρικές περιπτώσεις σε κοινωνιολογικές ερμηνευτικές υποθέσεις. Στη συνέχεια, συμπεριλαμβάνοντας όλο και περισσότερες συνεντεύξεις, αλλά και άλλα δεδομένα, οι πρώτες αυτές υποθέσεις δοκιμάζονται, διευκρινίζονται, επιβεβαιώνονται, απορρίπτονται ή αλλάζουν κατεύθυνση. Εδώ έχει ιδιαίτερη σημασία να εστιάσουμε σε εκείνα τα στοιχεία που έρχονται σε αντίθεση με το κοινό νου ή με τις τρέχουσες αντιλήψεις που κυριαρχούν στη βιβλιογραφία. Γιατί από εκεί ενδέχεται να προκύψουν νέες ερμηνείες.

Ένας δεύτερος τρόπος συγκριτικής ανάλυσης είναι να εστιάσουμε στις ομοιότητες στις διαδρομές και στη συνέχεια να τις ταξινομήσουμε σε συγκεκριμένους διαφορετικούς τύπους. Στη συνέχεια θα πρέπει να αιτιολογήσουμε την κατασκευή αυτής της τυπολογίας και να δείξουμε ποια είναι η εσωτερική λογική τους. Αυτή η εσωτερική λογική μπορεί να μας οδηγήσει στην ανίχνευση των κοινωνικών μηχανισμών που λειτουργούν στα συγκεκριμένα κοινωνικά συμφραζόμενα.. Ένα καλό παράδειγμα στα ελληνικά συμφραζόμενα είναι το άρθρο της Μαρίας Λιάπη (2008) για τις μετανάστριες οικιακές βοηθούς που προανέφερα.

Μέσα από τη διαδικασία της συγκριτικής ανάλυσης και της επεξεργασίας ερμηνευτικών μοντέλων, ενδέχεται να προκύψουν νέα ερωτήματα, ή να εξακολουθούν να υπάρχουν ασάφειες και αντιφάσεις. Τότε μπορεί να χρειαστεί να γίνουν νέες συνεντεύξεις, πιο στοχευμένες, ή με διαφορετικό στυλ. Κάποτε όμως φτάνει ένα σημείο κορεσμού, τόσο στη διεξαγωγή των συνεντεύξεων, όσο και στην ανάλυση. Στη διαδικασία των συνεντεύξεων, το σημείο κορεσμού φτάνει συνήθως όταν σε κάθε νέα συνέντευξη έχουμε την αίσθηση ότι δεν μαθαίνουμε κάτι καινούργιο. Κι αυτό είναι ανεξάρτητο από το ποσοτικό αριθμό τους, μπορεί να γίνει μετά από 20 μόνο συνεντεύξεις, αλλά μπορεί να χρειαστούν και πάνω από 100 συνεντεύξεις για να φτάσουμε στο σημείο αυτό. Στην ανάλυση το σημείο κορεσμού φτάνει όταν όλα τα ερμηνευτικά μοντέλα που έχουμε σκεφτεί φαίνεται να παρουσιάζουν μια γερή εσωτερική συνοχή και έχουμε καταλήξει σε μια ερμηνεία που νομίζουμε ότι στέκεται στα πόδια της. Σε αυτό το σημείο μπορούμε να αρχίσουμε να σκεφτούμε για τη δομή της παρουσίασης της έρευνας και να γράφουμε το κείμενο. Κι αυτή η διαδικασία έχει τις δικές της δυσκολίες, αλλά αυτό υπερβαίνει το σκοπό αυτού του άρθρου.

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Living Diaspora "Back Home"—Daughters of Greek Emigrants in Greece

Georgina Tsolidis

In this paper, I explore how the daughters of Greek emigrants understand their cultural identities and how this understanding influences their lives and those of their own children. These are the women who are sometimes referred to as the "sandwich" generation — living between their parents' nostalgia for a land left behind and their children's increasing disassociation with this culture. They sift and mediate this past and future through their own lives growing up as "migrants" in countries like Australia, the U.S.A. and Canada, often marked by experiences of racism. A particular focus of this exploration, are the women who have chosen to live in Greece after having grown up elsewhere. Their experiences allow us to consider, in a more nuanced way, diaspora in the context of globalization. Their lives bring the "foreign Greek" back home and in doing so challenge uncomplicated views of diaspora as national outpost.

This paper draws on a larger project concerning cultural identities and the role of the maternal in their formations. These are cultural identities linked to diasporic Greekness. The subjects are women whose parents migrated from Greece, to Australia, the U.S.A. and Canada after the Second World War. These women have grown up with their parents' memories of homeland and have shaped themselves as hyphenated—for example, as Greek-Australians or Canadian-Greeks. Through this project, I have been focusing on the cultural identities such women imagine for themselves as well as for their own children and the processes they deploy to encourage these identities (Tsolidis 2001*a*). It has been clear through this work, that these women occupy spaces "in-between" being Greek and being Canadian, American or Australian. Most often, they also make enormous effort in order for their children to also identify with cultural spaces "in between".

Without difference, hyphens and "in between" spaces cannot exist. Such "in-between" cultural spaces, have been the focus of on-going consideration. Interest has been accelerated by understandings of globalization and its capacity to make the world a smaller place (Featherstone and Robertson 1995). In the context of globalization, nation becomes increasingly irrelevant and the way communities with histories of migration establish themselves within, between and across national boundaries, is both product and cause of this irrelevancy. Yet despite this emphasis on transnationalism, on another level, the focus remains on the way migrants, their children and grandchildren live their lives within the nation (Fenton and May 2002). Within the nation, how do mi-

norities construct their difference, for what reasons and with what real and imagined consequences?

Most commonly, in such explorations of difference within the nation, the diasporic becomes almost a euphemism for immigrants, their children and grandchildren. It resonates strongly with margins and centers whereby centers are associated with industrialization, relative affluence, the West and commonly the Anglophone. In other words, diaspora becomes implicated in explorations of the push and pull factors, often economic, linked to migration. In such explorations, diasporic becomes almost synonymous with those who live their culture beyond the borders of their "homeland", understood as their parents' country of origin. This paper is an attempt to problematize the seemingly natural association of the hyphen with those who move from cultural margins to cultural centers in these terms. Instead, this paper has as its focus, the lives of women who grew up in countries such as Australia, Canada and the U.S.A. as daughters and granddaughters of Greek immigrants, and who chose as adults, to live in Greece. In this way, while the diasporic may still be linked to migration, considering return migration to the so-called "homeland" complicates centers and margins and provides an opportunity to consider diasporic cultural identities in the context of contemporary globalization.

In her work on diaspora Brah (1996) argues in favor of "diaspora space" wherein relations between the "native" and the "diasporean" become complicated and somewhat blurred. She argues this in the context of the U.K. and adds that within such spaces complications and blurring occur through the increasingly complex power relations linked to factors such as gender, sexuality and class. In this paper I wish to examine diasporic cultural identity in Greece and argue that within this context also, the boundaries between "native" and "diasporean" become blurred. By taking the hyphen home, that is, by living life as Greek-Australians or Canadian-Greeks "hyphenated Greeks" in Greece, I argue these women's experiences help us think beyond binaries in ways which have the potential to destabilize a range of power relations related to class, gender and cultural otherness. Here the blurring occurs because the "diasporean" is both "native" coming home and "non-native", that is, imbued with the foreign.

While there is an interest to challenge straightforward views of national identity, the issues at the heart of this paper are nonetheless bounded by the nation. Increasingly, we are told that the "nation" is meaningless. Yet the act of migration by definition relates to traveling, passports, boundaries and citizenship—it assumes leaving one place and arriving at another. Globalization has prompted a transnational citizenship premised on virtual and real journeying, which subsumes the significance of boundaries. The lives of the women who are at the heart of this exploration, through their multiple migrations, illustrate how globalization is lived. They also illustrate the lingering significance of nation. These women live their lives within the boundaries of the everyday; the family, the community and the nation. This is not to argue that these are uncomplicated, impervious and permanent boundaries. It is however, an argument that experience at the "coal face" of the cultural dynamics of the everyday provides an "up close and personal" view which so often escapes the macro-politics of globalization. It is the experience of the everyday, which is most likely to rub up against the hard edges of power relations reconfigured through globalization.

The aim of this exploration is two-fold: firstly, to destabilize unproblematic understandings of diaspora which adopt binary logic through concepts of the "home" nation and its outpost and, secondly, to co-opt the everyday as a significant partner in our exploration and thus provide a "bottom up" view of globalization (Castles 2000). These two aims come together through the exploration of return migration or what is referred to here as living diaspora back home. Through this terminology I wish to draw attention to the shifting definitions of Greekness that evolve through globalization. These shifting definitions are not simply reinterpretations of Greekness that occur in countries like Australia, the U.S.A. and Canada. Through the shifting definitions of Greekness that occur outside its borders, Greekness alters in Greece as well. Such changes are arguably a result of relations of domination and subordination, which are a part of economic and cultural globalization. However the argument here is that these also reflect a grassroots messiness that results from relations between real people in real life situations.

1 The Messiness of the Everyday

The everyday, linked as it is with experience, has been a mainstay of feminist theorization. In the context of cultural identifications, I have argued (Tsolidis 2003) that it is the everyday cultural labor of mothers, which produces the hyphens so critical to debates about what Stuart Hall describes as the "new ethnicities" that characterize the "new times" (Hall 1996). It is women's work and women's bodies which are used in boundary maintenance exercises that demark collectivities (Yuval-Davis 1997) and this is arguably as appropriate an argument in the context of globalization as it is with regard to ethnic difference within the nation. It is these women's desires and efforts to maintain difference, which makes the hyphen possible. In relation to diasporic Greekness as it is lived in countries such as Australia, the U.S.A. and Canada, the burden of its representation falls disproportionately on women. These women, through their choice of marriage partners, their attachment to particular ways of understanding and constructing family life and bringing up children as bilingual and bicultural, continue to breathe life into a narrative of identity and culture linked to an imagined Greekness. In the case of such women, we have traditionally chosen to construct them as acted upon. I have argued that this may work to further embed understandings of culture as linked to the will of the fathers for whom rigorous boundary maintenance is a priority. An alternative view may be to see this work as cultural labor that constitutes a form of resistance to hegemonic understandings of culture, which make the mother invisible (Tsolidis 2003). There is scope, to consider the role of these

women through a framework that challenges such binary logic and instead allows us to explore their role in the same way we explore postmodern identities more generally. The role of the maternal in processes whereby diasporic cultural identities are formed is itself fluid, contingent and responsive to contexts, which at any given time, privilege some power relations over others. This possibility is perhaps more obvious when we consider the role of women who live diaspora "back home". Because of their association with the cultures of dominance, traditional power relations, particularly those related to gender, become somewhat destabilized. Having lived their lives in North America, the U.K. or Australia, these women come to Greece with a sought after "cultural capital", at once they have something both coveted and resented.

2 Transnational Hyphens

There is a pronounced tension within diasporic communities between sameness and difference. This is a product of relations between ethnic majorities and minorities as these are commonly constituted in societies associated with the so-called new world. However, this tension also exists with regard to those who have left such countries to return to their parents' country of origin. Differences and similarities are constituted across national boundaries in ways which influence each other in two-way flows. Those born in Canada, Australia or the United States who now live in Greece, have their experience to bind them and reinforce their difference and sameness in other ways. This reinforces the view of diaspora as linked to globalization rather than a view of diaspora as a 'home away from home' or national outpost.

This form of diasporic identification was reinforced for me, when women whom I interviewed in various national contexts, attributed a hyphenated identity to all groups of Greeks. In their terms, there existed Greek-Australians, Greek- Canadians and Greek-Greeks. The meanings attributed to being Greek-Greek were not straightforward. For some this term was linked to a lack of cosmopolitanism that was a product of not having lived elsewhere. Commonly, in their minds, this coincided with "traditional", which was used to mean conservative and old fashioned. In the case of some of these women, being Greek-Greek implied a lack of the sophistication they associated with North America. For other interviewees being Greek-Greek simply indicated a personal history of not having lived elsewhere and this was constructed as relatively uncomplicated compared to those who had negotiated their Greekness within the boundaries of nations where it was not the norm. Greek-Greek was not linked to authenticity. In fact some argued the opposite. For some women who had left Greece when they were young but old enough to remember, their memories of Greece collided with the reality they encountered on their return. They argued that the Greeks in Canada or Australia maintained lifestyles that were all but lost in Greece. In one particular case, a woman who had left Greece as a child and had grown up in Canada, argued that authentic Greekness existed in Toronto where young people still learnt traditional folkloric dances and attended community functions with parents and grandparents. This was not the case in Greece she argued, where this sense of continuity, community and multi-generational socializing was no longer in evidence.

> I think being Greek here [Toronto] is being more Greek than the Greeks in Greece. I guess it's like anything when there's a distance, you try to distil from your heritage only the nicer elements of it and hold onto them as "it", you know, and I think by and large, when there's all these festivals here, you know Greek festivals, there is a celebration of the culture that it bothers me, in a way, when I go to Greece and I see them all aping North Americans, for example, the music.

"Authenticity" can become a marker for the loss of an idealized and nostalgic past. For many of these women their memories of Greece were inherited from their parents. Because of this, their sense of authentic Greekness was tied to a different time when Greece was a different place. Greekness was also linked to their relationships with their parents, most particularly their mothers. These women's mothers had left Greece to make new lives in unfamiliar countries. In places like Australia and Canada they had shouldered the burden of cultural re/production.

I use the term cultural re/production to indicate that women in such situations are cultural workers who engage in new cultural productions. The product of their work is not a replication of the old nor is it mimicry of the new. Instead, their work is responsible for the inextricably linked identities, which define diasporas. The argument here is that this work is positioned between spaces; between the private and the public, between the mainstream and the marginal and between the traditional and the transformative. These are all spaces that are both oppressive and empowering. Such spaces create a cultural dynamic that is dialectical and intrinsic to postmodernism. This is not to suggest that such in-between spaces are unproblematic and uncontested. It is, however, an argument for the need to evoke a perspective that acknowledges women caught in such spaces have some agency.

The potential of these women's location is intimated through the voices of the diasporic women who live in Greece. Unlike the Greek-Australian and Greek-Canadian women, these women are associated in Greece with English language and the ways of modern, industrialized nations. They are understood as sophisticated and as having facility with the culture many Greeks aspire to and associate with progress. Their children's biculturalism is encouraged and envied. For them there is no ambivalence regarding whether or not they are doing what is best for their children. This contrasts with the women who were rearing their children in Australia and North America Greek-Australian and Greek-Canadian women whose attempts at bicultural child rearing were often constructed as harking back to the old and therefore as something which had the potential to disadvantage their children.

Nonetheless, a tension was also present for the women who lived in Greece. Immersed in Greek life at a societal level, many described how difficult it was

identities and pass these on to their children. While being English-speaking and knowing how to function in such countries was considered of value within Greece, this was nonetheless coupled with resentment that this was indeed the case. This created a tension between recognizing the pragmatic benefits of Anglophone cultures and understanding that this familiarity also risked rein-scribing the sense of being a "foreign Greek". These women also considered the consequences for their children of having forgone a life in relatively af-fluent countries, which were assumed to offer more opportunities. They were clearly ambivalent because rearing their children with elements of the Aus-tralian, American and Canadian worlds would provide benefits within, as well as outside Greece, but it would also compound their children's difference in a community they read as being suspicious of the foreign, particularly the Anglophone.

3 A Foreign Greek in Greece

The women interviewed for this project, lived in Athens and had moved there from Australia, Canada or the U.S.A. For some, there had been multiple long and short-term migrations along the way, prompted by education, business or settlement reasons. In all cases these women were married to men who had stronger ties to Greece than they had, including the minority of men who had lived outside of Greece for significant periods. The women sought out each other's company and formed a community with shared understandings and experiences that they felt marked them as different to Greek-Greeks, including their husbands and their husbands' families. Some of these women had taken on professional positions in Greece including teaching, counseling and running businesses, while others worked in service industries. One interviewee remained outside the workforce. Most had young children at the time of the interviews. Many had parents who had returned to Greece to be with them.

I have chosen to consider two interviewees in depth. One of these women grew up in Australia, and the other in North America. Kristina and Stella met each other while selling cosmetics at the Athens airport where their training in the beauty industry, English language proficiency and ability to create rapport easily with Anglophone tourists was highly sought after. They were the same age and both were living in Greece because they had married Greek-Greeks. Both had left family and friends in North American and Australia respectively and at the time of the interviews had been living in Greece for over fifteen years. Both express a cultural ambivalence, yet this ambivalence has been resolved in different ways.

Kristina was born in North Dakota in 1957 and moved to Toronto when she was thirteen because her father took on the ministry of a local church. When she was eighteen she met her husband in Toronto. After living in Canada, the couple moved to Athens. At the time of the interview she had been living in Athens for seventeen years and had an eight year old son.

> He's [husband] Greek-Greek. He came to Canada when he was twenty, just for holidays to see, you know, a different country, and we met and he lived there for the next ten years. We were together but he always wanted to move back so I agreed because I was only eighteen when I met him. My husband said, yes I want to live in Greece, I want to live in Greece.

Kristina's mother was born in the U.S.A. to Greek immigrants and married a Greek man she had met while holidaying in Greece. However, unlike Kristina's husband, her father was happy to settle in North America.

Prior to settling in Greece, in 1979, Kristina had completed her college education in Toronto. She studied to be a professional make-up artist and since migrating to Greece she had worked for Chanel at the duty free shops at the airport. She taught herself to read and write Greek when she moved to Greece, although she had basic spoken Greek prior to migration. Whilst growing up in North America she had spent summers in Greece with her family but had never imagined herself living there.

> I used to come for holidays to have fun, you know, going to the beach, going to the bouzoukia every night, going, you know, to the islands and just having fun. But I never imagined that, you know, I would live here until I fell in love. Every second year. But I used to enjoy it. I couldn't imagine going for holidays somewhere else. It was very exciting for me to come to Greece.

Kristina now made the reverse journey every year when she visited the U.S.A. with her son. Although she spent a significant part of her life in Canada, Kristina identifies most strongly with the U.S.A. where her brother and other relatives live. She is concerned to give her son this cultural experience.

> The first thing I did was I got him American citizenship. I went to the American Embassy. I said, this kid is a Greek-American, you know. The next thing I did was, since he's been three, since he started to understand, I take him all the time, you know, for holidays to America. I want him to be attached. I want him to have a bond with America. I want him to see the better parts of there, let's say. I even dream that, you know, when he grows up, for him to go to university there. I believe that I want his future to be there, you know. ...I think America offers more for him than here. As far as education is concerned, you know, everything. ...I tell my husband that I would never settle for anything less that what I had in America.

In this context, Kristina went on to describe how difficult it was for them financially, despite a relatively high combined income. For Kristina, living an American life style in Greece meant not relying on public health and education. This entailed paying the high costs of private schooling and health insurance.

Kristina wanted to move to Seattle, where her brother and his family lived. However, her husband was unwilling to make such a move. She attributed this to his reluctance to leave his family and the fact that as someone over forty, it was difficult for him to resettle. She also felt that he was very Greek-identified

and this made it difficult for him to imagine living outside Greece. This tension was pronounced when Kristina described her cultural aspirations for their son.

> His father, I'd say is very Greek. His father is very patriotic. He loves Greece, you know. His father tells him, you're Greek and I tell him, no you're Greek-American, you know. His father wouldn't want to live over there. I don't know, maybe because his family is here. Maybe because he's at an age now where it's not easy to go back.

Kristina expressed great pride in her hyphenated identity. She had associations with both the U.S.A. and Canada and as a result, often referred to North America in her comments. However, her links to Seattle were strong because her brother and his family lived there. Her journeying to Seattle was as much about maintaining contact between siblings and cousins as it was about maintaining a link with another country and way of life.

> I'm very glad that I was born and brought up in North America. To me, America is my country, and on the other side, I'm glad that my background is Greek.

She identified the importance Greeks attached to family as a key reason for this pride.

> I believe we have a strong family bond. You don't see that in North America. Once you're an adult, eighteen or over, you know, you're out of your house, usually on your own, living alone.

On the other hand, she described her way of thinking as the most valuable part of being North American.

> My mentality, my manners, my patience. I think, my schooling. I don't think I would compare Greece to North America or Canada or even Australia, you know. Everything's behind here and I think I've seen better things in life. And sometimes when people comment about the United States, I get irritated because they've never been there. A Greek will say, well, why don't you go back, if you don't like it. ... I can compare, I've seen, you know. But somebody that hasn't been there, you know, I don't think they should comment.

Stella was born in Egypt and arrived in Australia as a three-month old baby. Her parents are Egyptian-born Greeks. She grew up in Melbourne as part of an extended family. She moved to Athens when she was twenty-four years old and has lived there since. Stella's memories of growing up in Melbourne were colored by a range of experiences arguably characteristic of the 1960s. This period was marked by a huge immigration intake from countries such as Greece, Italy and the former Yugoslavia. The attendant policy of assimilation did little to placate Australian xenophobia and this was expressed in sometimes violent and often virulent attacks on the "new Australians" (Tsolidis 2001*b*).

> I was one of the first migrant children in school and I was the only dark haired olive skinned child in the school that didn't have blue eyes and blonde hair. And I was the "wog" and I was the outcast. So growing up I didn't want to have anything to do with Greeks. I didn't want to be Greek. I didn't want to look Greek. I didn't want to sound Greek. I didn't want to speak Greek. And I didn't. I didn't want to go to Greek school and I didn't. I wanted to be Australian.

Stella visited Greece for the first time when she was eighteen.

> Well I didn't want to come to Greece, and I'd sworn black and blue that I was never going to come to Greece. I had come to Greece for a holiday in 1975. It was the first time I'd traveled abroad, my parents sent me. I came to live with my grandparents in Athens. In Australia I was quite free and I could do what I wanted to do, and go where I wanted to go and my grandparents had a different mentality and also a responsibility and wouldn't let me go or do whatever I wanted. I was so depressed and so unhappy, so after a short time, I left and went back home. I was nothing like the Greeks. I wasn't Greek at the time, I was Australian.

Stella returned to Greece several years later and explains this in relation to her husband.

> The second time I had not much choice. I met my husband in Australia and he convinced me into coming to Greece for a holiday so that he could show me Greece with a different point of view.

When Stella met the man she later married she spoke no Greek. He was well traveled and spoke several languages, including limited English. He was visiting Australia for professional reasons when they met. The couple spent a year in Greece before returning to Australia to marry. Immediately after the wedding they settled in Athens.

> I liked being with him and because he was in Greece and he made it quite clear that if there was anything ever going to happen between us, there was no way he was going to Australia. So things were pretty touch and go at the beginning, until we actually decided to get engaged eight months later. And then it was always in the back of my mind that I will have to leave Australia and come and live in Greece. And it was a negative and positive reaction. I really couldn't make up my mind.

In Australia, Stella was identified as Greek and after migrating to Greece, identified as Australian.

> So I felt like I had two countries but I didn't really have any and I was sort of in between both I was in the middle of the sea.

These feelings of non-belonging were exacerbated because Stella had left a close-knit family in Australia and entered a domestic arrangement in Greece

where a mother-in-law and sister-in-law, who Stella felt were intrusive, lived next door. Many of the interviewees expressed similar misgivings about their husband's family despite identifying family as one of the important and cherished cornerstones of Greek culture.

Stella responded to her situation by "weaning" herself off Australia. Frequent visits became infrequent to the point where she did not visit for eight years. In part, this was because of limited opportunity but also she described the visits as a painful reminder of what she had forgone by choosing to live in Greece.

> I didn't want to go back. I'd cut all my ties with Australia and I felt like that was behind me, and my life's here now and I have to get on with my life here.

Stella saw herself spending the rest of her life in Greece without doubt, but not necessarily without misgivings.

> Not happily but it's a decision that I've made. I don't think I would be happier in Australia, put it that way. If I thought I would be happier in Australia, I would go and live in Australia, but I would be just as happy I suppose here but the foundation is here now.

Stella admits to still being confused about her cultural identity.

> I'm still trying to see where I fit in . . . it's like a puzzle and there's one gap and you've got to try and see how it's going to fit. It's not fitting in here and it's not fitting in there.

4 The Maternal as Absence and Presence

Kristina and Stella had similar backgrounds and experiences that had drawn them to each other and sustained their friendship over many years. Both were "diasporean natives" in Greece adjusting to what made them both similar and different to Greek-Greeks. They were both negotiating relationships with husbands unwilling to migrate, in-laws suspicious of their "foreign" ways, relishing what made them different from the "locals" and at the same time finding ways of adapting to life in Greece, given they were resigned to living there. There was however, an overwhelming difference in their experiences, which arguably accounts for their varied response to their similar situations. For Stella the maternal was an absence, while for Kristina it was a central concern.

Kristina could not imagine life without her widowed mother who had joined her in Athens not long after her migration. Two years prior to the interview Kristina's mother had died after a protracted illness. During the interview Kristina was brought to tears on several occasions when she referred to her mother and their relationship. Kristina's mother had lived with them in Athens and had been an active carer for her son.

> My mother you know, she passed away a few years ago and I miss her and her role to me. She was a very devoted, loving, affectionate, very strong personality, even though she was very, let's say, she was very soft. My father was the dominant person in the family. He died very young and my mother was always there for us. She was a wonderful person. She would never get involved, like when I met my husband—"Do you love him? As long as you're sure and he's the person you want to be with". You know how here, like the Greek mothers get very involved in your personal life. Whether you get married or you want a divorce, the whole family gets involved. She was always there for me I miss her. Every second of the day I think of her. I cook something, I remember, her. I make coffee, I remember her because we used to have coffee together. I go somewhere, I remember her—ah, mum and I used to come here, you know.

In many ways, Kristina mirrored the mother she experienced in her own parenting. Her son was a central concern and as part of this, his cultural well being. Just as Kristina's mother had fostered the hyphen in North America, Kristina fostered the hyphen in Greece. Kristina's determination to live the hyphen in Greece was to a great extent, prompted by her determination to pass on the "foreign" aspect of herself onto her son. It was a part of her identity and life history that she wanted to bequeath to him. She imagined the possible benefits of an American education and the mentality that she identified as different to that of the Greek-Greeks. She wanted to integrate her son into her own family, primarily with her brother and his children. Her cultural ambitions for her son were juxtaposed with those of his fathers for him, which Kristina described as patriotic.

Stella on the other hand, had left her parents in Australia when she migrated. Her mother had died prematurely and unexpectedly several years later. In this way, her mother had not known Stella's life in Athens. She did not have children of her own, although not by choice. After many years of sometimes, intrusive medical intervention, Stella had had to reconcile herself with infertility. For Stella, unlike Kristina, the maternal was an absence on both these levels. Subsequent to her mother's death, Stella's father remarried. She had to negotiate a relationship with his second wife and her two children. This had not been easy for her and in part contributed to her increasing sense of isolation. At the time of the interview Stella was more at ease and her father was a regular visitor to Greece. One of her brothers had also migrated to Athens, which meant there was a sense of family there that had not existed previously. Nonetheless unlike Kristina, Stella did not have to make choices on behalf of her children.

For diasporean mothers, regardless of place of birth and residency, the need to bequeath the hyphen to their children, appeared to be a constant theme. For these women, their most acute cultural "soul searching", seemed to occur in relation to decisions made about their children. Their sense of identity loomed to the forefront through decisions about the cultural context they wished to create for their children.

Traditionally, being non-Greek meant being barbaric (Papastergiadis 2000). In a more contemporary context, being non-Greek means being a *xenos*, that is, being a foreigner, stranger or guest. The Oxford Dictionary of Modern Greek (Pring 1984) also refers to *xenos* as "being somebody else's". Being both Greek and *xeni* was a status with which many of these women identified. This status reflected both an attributed and cultivated sense of non-belonging. And for many of these women living in Greece, it also reflected "being somebody else's" in the sense of living with husbands whose preferred place of residency took precedence over their own. The impact of this choice was particularly pronounced in the minds of women like Kristina, who were rearing their children in Greece unwillingly and doing so with the explicit aim of bequeathing to them their own sense of non-belonging.

Immersed in the Greek at a societal level, many of the women living in Greece, described how difficult it was for them to maintain the Australian, Canadian or American aspects of their identities and pass these on to their children. While being English-speaking and knowing how to function in such countries was considered of value within Greece, this was, nonetheless, coupled with suspicion of the foreign. This created a tension between recognizing the pragmatic benefits of Anglophone cultures and understanding that this familiarity also risked reinscribing the sense of being a "foreign Greek". These women also considered the consequences for their children of having forgone a life in relatively affluent countries, which were assumed to offer more opportunities. Theirs was an ambivalent location because rearing their children with elements of the Australian, American and Canadian would provide benefits within, as well as outside Greece, but it would also compound their children's foreign status.

Definitions of "diasporean" and "native" are mediated through power relations responsive to factors such as gender, class, generation and sexuality (Brah 1996). In the case of these women living the hyphen "back home", class and gender relations take on particular significance. The children of immigrant parents often fulfill the aspirations on which migration is premised and, through their upward social mobility, a class-based difference between themselves and their parents, can develop. This class-based difference is reiterated in another context, when women born in Australia, the U.S.A. or Canada, educated and often in professional vocations, enter relationships with Greek-born men who have limited vocational opportunities in these countries. Such men often prefer to live in Greece where their sense of masculinity, linked to their earning capacity and place in their original family unit, remain unchallenged. As a result, their wives feel pressured to live in Greece. However, when this happens, these women bring to Greece, expectations that shift established patterns of living. These expectations can be linked overtly to material issues, such as the size and style of an apartment. They are linked to desires for particular types of schooling, health provision and travel. They are also linked with the ways in which family is experienced. With reference to family, the women involved in this project, were most dissatisfied about what were understood as more traditional roles expected of them, including with reference to their husbands and their in-laws. Most of the women interviewed argued that they expected more egalitarian relationships with their husbands, resisted the authority of their in-laws and expected a higher standard of living than had been the norm in the family prior to their husbands marrying. In most cases, these women, were able to establish more egalitarian relationships with their husbands and through their own, often professional, employment, increase the family income. It was their relationships with in-laws that remained an on-going source of angst.

The women interviewed, particularly those with children, felt life in Greece was likely to limit their and their children's opportunities and life-styles. In response, they attempted to create lives in Greece that included elements of what they had left behind. Wives of Greek-Greeks who had migrated to Greece, preferred each other's company regardless of which country they had left. Many argued that they shared their experiences of settling in Greece, difficulties assimilating into their husbands' families and, for most, a form of classing down, that is, a lower standard of living to that they had experienced prior to migration. In this way, the move to Greece reversed the momentum created by their parents' emigration. This is illustrated most dramatically in the case of Kristina and Stella. These women did not have particularly high educational qualifications, nor did their work selling cosmetics at the airport earmark them as elite professionals. Nonetheless, their life-style expectations, arguably were not in keeping with those of their husbands and their families. The relationship between culture and class is vexed and whether or not these life-style expectations could be more readily associated with the Anglophone and/or the bourgeois remains fruitful ground for speculation and needs to be considered in relation to middle-class Greek mores as much as anything else.

By becoming "foreign Greeks" these women, on the one hand, reinscribed the family as traditionally patriarchal by deferring to their husband's choice of place of residence. On the other hand, through their resistance to aspects of how family is enacted within Greece, they blur the boundaries between "native" and "diasporean" and in so doing create family that is "diaspora space" (Brah 1996). In diaspora space, the familiar and unfamiliar mingle and ameliorate each other in ways that have the potential to shift boundaries. Kristina's statement that in Greece, she is not willing to settle for anything less than she had in America, creates a pressure that results in her son living a life he may not have otherwise experienced. Kristina's son attends a private school, has private medical insurance, travels to the U.S.A. frequently, has acquired high levels of English language proficiency and is imbued with the sense that North American ways of thinking are valuable. These factors can be attributed to his mother's background. Kristina's clear preference for rearing her son in Seattle and her husband's preference for remaining in Greece, have resulted in a compromise lifestyle that may not have otherwise eventuated. Her

decision to acquiesce to her husband's preferred place of residence came at the price of him knowing that his son had other options. Kristina was constantly contemplating life in Seattle. Both Kristina and Stella complained (as did all the women interviewed) that their in-laws were unhappy with their role within the family and their attitudes to their husbands. While they may have been able to negotiate relationships with partners that cut across traditional understandings of patriarchy, they had had less success finding acceptability for these relationships in the context of wider family relations. Some women described their misgivings about their in-laws' expectations of them as well as their husband's seeming reluctance to "take their side" in ensuing disputes. Because of this, these women become the "stranger within" (Bauman 1997), not only the nation, but also the family. But like all "strangers within" they created a momentum for change through the combination of their familiarity and foreignness.

6 Conclusion

The women who are described in this paper, lived in Athens because they had married, were going to marry or had divorced Greek-Greeks. They had established themselves in Greece, their children had or were growing up in Greece and their lives would be bound with Greece through financial, familial and cultural links. In some cases they had met their partners while visiting Greece, in other cases they had met their partners when these men had visited Canada, the U.S.A. or Australia. In most cases, the men were not willing to contemplate living outside Greece in the long-term. This was tied variously to preference, employment opportunity, wishing to keep their original family unit in tact and obligations such as caring for widowed mothers who were unlikely to migrate. The women, on the other hand, had grown up in countries such as Australia and developed skills, including English language proficiency, which were considered valuable in Greece. Such skills were coupled with a sense of Greekness, of varying degrees. As a result of their biculturalism, some of these women had succeeded in building high-status careers in Greece, including in counseling, business and education. In most cases they had higher qualifications than their partners, better language skills in English and often, equivalent Greek language skills. Their biculturalism meant that they had facility with "Western" preferences, which assisted greatly in business ventures, particularly those associated with tourism. In this context, it is worth contemplating whether or not, life in Greece provided these women with opportunities they may not have had in Anglophone countries. Yet within the family they were women, wives and mothers and as such were part of a patriarchal order that positioned them "beneath" husbands and parents-in-law. In this way, their capacity to function transculturally made them powerful at one level, but also made them vulnerable at another level by exposing their "foreignness".

"Foreignness" is intrinsic to living in "in-between" spaces. Within the diaspora, the desire to cultivate lives in such spaces is premised on imagined identities born of both nostalgia and resistance. In countries such as Australia, Canada and the U.S.A., the cultures of the "homeland" exist as idealized and romanticized by immigrant parents, now grandparents. These are cultures of a bygone era, which are no longer lived within Greece. These are the cultures of the home and family, the cultures, which for many are associated with nurturing. There are also the cultures of resistance to mainstream xenophobia and racism, which characterize memories of growing up in such countries. When the daughters of immigrants to these countries live their lives in Greece, diasporic identities are tied to imagined modernity, a way of life which challenges the traditional. Again, that which is left behind in Australia or North America, is idealized and romanticized. The daughters of Greek immigrants who were characterized as old-fashioned where they grew up, take "home" the foreign, imagined as modern. Here they resist the ways they are expected to behave as dutiful wives and daughters-in-law. In this way, regardless of the place of origin and the place of residence, these women bequeath to children, cultures imbued with both nostalgia and resistance.

Living the hyphen "back home", in important ways, serves to resist patriarchal understandings as these are linked to cultural identities. Being Greek and being different is cultivated in Greece, just as being a different type of Australian, Canadian or American was cultivated in these countries. And in all cases, cultural identity is cross hatched by a range of complicated power relations lived through the everyday of relations with family, children, partners and friends. This resistance is significant because it develops the "new ethnicities", which (Hall 1996) argues, characterize the "new times" brought about by globalization. Such identities challenge the fixity of meaning that has traditionally linked ethnicity and nation. Instead, we have identities that are not constrained by national boundaries but move within and between communities, as these exist transnationally. These are the non-durable identities that (Bauman 2000) argues are the most suitable for liquid modernity—a time when shifting rather than stability is of a high premium.

In this paper, the focus is on women in the diaspora. After all, diaspora is taken to be a space where boundaries between the "authentic" and "inauthentic" become blurred (Brah 1996). The family in Greece has been constructed as diaspora space shared by Greek-Greek husbands and Greek-something wives. In such spaces, it is arguably women through their role in the family, particularly through child rearing, who contribute to blurring the boundaries between the so-called authentic and inauthentic. Their expectations create a momentum for upward social mobility and destabilize traditional relationships between wives and in-laws and wives and husbands. Yet there is a paradox in this, because it is these women's acquiescence to their husband's preference for living in Greece that prompts this desire to destabilize in the first place. On the basis of this study, it seems that women are most likely to seek change on behalf of their children. Relative to Stella who has no children, Kristina is highly motivated to maintain her links with North America. Familiarity with English, with American ways of thinking, coupled with a private school edu-

cation in Greece, are necessary if Kristina's son is to have the opportunities she desires for him. In this way, the maternal becomes a primary motivation for change within Greece. The success or otherwise of such women's endeavors will be told through their children's lives.

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CHAPTER 10

Gender and Ethno-Regional Identity among Greek Australians: Intersections

Vassiliki Chryssanthopoulou

1 Castellorizians of Perth, Kytherians of Sydney: A Comparison of Two Ethno-Regional Communities

This chapter has a two-fold purpose: Firstly, to illustrate the importance of the concept of the "ethno-region" in the analysis of Greek-Australian ethnicity. Secondly, and in accordance with the aims of this book, to examine the role gender plays in the structuring of two Greek-Australian ethno-regional communities and of their members' respective identities and ideologies.

I have selected case studies of two communities where I conducted fieldwork in Australia, namely the Castellorizians of Perth (original fieldwork in 1984-86, revisited in 2004) and the Kytherians of Sydney (fieldwork in 2004). This was subsequently supplemented by fieldwork on the islands where these two groups originate from, Castellorizo and Kythera (summer of 2005), research into the social history of Castellorizo and Kythera and investigation of Castellorizian and Kytherian diasporic networks through examination of their associations and websites.[1] The durability of ethno-regional identity is strikingly demonstrated by these two cases of migrant communities which are among the earliest Greek ethno-regional communities in Australia. Their pioneers arrived in Australia in the late 19th century, so these two groups were established socio-economically by the 1950s and the majority of their members are now third generation. The two communities present both similarities and differences in the ways they are organized and in the values, practices and ideologies that inform their respective identities. In this sense they provide suitable cases for the investigation of the ways in which gender and ethno-regional identity intersect in the creation, negotiation and transmission of Greek-Australian ethnicity.

The Castellorizians of Perth or "Cazzies", as Australian-born Castellorizians refer to themselves and as they are referred to by other Greeks and non-Greek Australians, originate from the island of Castellorizo, a small, one-settlement island at the southeastern-most border of Greece, only one and a half miles away from the Turkish coast of Asia Minor. Some of them originate from the Castellorizian colonies that flourished in Asia Minor and Alexandria in the 19th and 20th centuries. The Castellorizians were the first Greeks to migrate in large numbers to Perth by means of chain migration towards the end of the 19th century, and mostly during the first four decades of the 20th century until World

What Is Oral History?
Linda Shopes

(from the Making Sense of Evidence series on *History Matters: The U.S. Survey on the Web* , located at http://historymatters.gmu.edu)

Making Sense of Oral History offers a place for students and teachers to begin working with oral history as historical evidence. Written by Linda Shopes, this guide presents an overview of oral history and ways historians use it, tips on questions to ask when reading or listening to oral history interviews, a sample interpretation of an interview, an annotated bibliography, and a guide to finding and using oral history online. Linda Shopes is a historian at the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. She has worked on, consulted for, and written about oral history projects for more than twenty-five years. She is co-editor of *The Baltimore Book: New Views of Local History* and is past president of the Oral History Association.

What Is Oral History?

"Oral History" is a maddeningly imprecise term: it is used to refer to formal, rehearsed accounts of the past presented by culturally sanctioned tradition-bearers; to informal conversations about "the old days" among family members, neighbors, or coworkers; to printed compilations of stories told about past times and present experiences; and to recorded interviews with individuals deemed to have an important story to tell.

Each of these uses of the term has a certain currency. Unquestionably, most people throughout history have learned about the past through the spoken word. Moreover, for generations history-conscious individuals have preserved others' firsthand accounts of the past for the record, often precisely at the moment when the historical actors themselves, and with them their memories, were about to pass from the scene.

Shortly after Abraham Lincoln's death in 1865, for example, his secretary, John G. Nicolay, and law partner, William Herndon, gathered recollections of the sixteenth president, including some from interviews, from people who had known and worked with him. Similarly, social investigators historically have obtained essential information about living and working conditions by talking with the people who experienced them. Thus, the Pittsburgh Survey, a Progressive Era investigation of social conditions in that city designed to educate the public and prod it towards civic reform, relied heavily on evidence obtained from oral sources.

Among the most notable of these early efforts to collect oral accounts of the past are the thousands of life histories recorded by Federal Writers Project [FWP] workers during the late 1930s and early 1940s. An agency of the New Deal Works Progress Administration, the FWP was deeply populist in intent and orientation; the life histories were designed to document the diversity of the American experience and ways ordinary people were coping with the hardships of the Great Depression. Plans for their publication fell victim to federal budget cuts and a reorientation of national priorities as World War II drew near; most of

them remain in manuscript form at the Library of Congress and other repositories around the country. The best known of the FWP life histories are the "slave narratives" elicited from elderly former slaves living in the South; other narratives were collected from a variety of regional, occupational, and ethnic groups.

Though of considerable value, early efforts to record firsthand accounts of the past can be termed "oral history" by only the most generous of definitions. While methods of eliciting and recording them were more or less rigorous in any given case, the absence of audio- and videotape recorders—or digital recording devices—necessitated reliance on human note-takers, thus raising questions about reliability and veracity. Many early interviews were also idiosyncratic or extemporaneous efforts, conducted with no intention of developing a permanent archival collection.

Thus, historians generally consider oral history as beginning with the work of Allan Nevins at Columbia University in the 1940s. Nevins was the first to initiate a systematic and disciplined effort to record on tape, preserve, and make available for future research recollections deemed of historical significance. While working on a biography of President Grover Cleveland, he found that Cleveland's associates left few of the kinds of personal records—letters, diaries, memoirs—that biographers generally rely upon. Moreover, the bureaucratization of public affairs was tending to standardize the paper trail, and the telephone was replacing personal correspondence. Nevins came up then with the idea of conducting interviews with participants in recent history to supplement the written record. He conducted his first interview in 1948 with New York civic leader George McAneny, and both the Columbia Oral History Research Office—the largest archival collection of oral history interviews in the world—and the contemporary oral history movement were born.

Early interviewing projects at Columbia and elsewhere tended to focus on the lives of the "elite"—leaders in business, the professions, politics, and social life. But oral history's scope widened in the 1960s and 1970s in response to both the social movements of the period and historians' growing interest in the experiences of "nonelites." Increasingly, interviews have been conducted with blue-collar workers, racial and ethnic minorities, women, labor and political activists, and a variety of local people whose lives typify a given social experience. Similar in intent to the WPA interviews of the previous generation, this latter work especially has helped realize oral history's potential for restoring to the record the voices of the historiographically—if not the historically—silent. For similar to President Cleveland's associates, few people leave self-conscious records of their lives for the benefit of future historians. Some are illiterate; others, too busy. Yet others don't think of it, and some simply don't know how. And many think—erroneously, to be sure—that they have little to say that would be of historical value. By recording the firsthand accounts of an enormous variety of narrators, oral history has, over the past half-century, helped democratize the historical record.

To summarize: oral history might be understood as a self-conscious, disciplined conversation between two people about some aspect of the past considered by them to be of historical significance and intentionally recorded for the record. Although the conversation takes the form of an interview, in which one person—the interviewer—asks questions of another person—variously

referred to as the interviewee or narrator—oral history is, at its heart, a dialogue. The questions of the interviewer, deriving from a particular frame of reference or historical interest, elicit certain responses from the narrator, deriving from that person's frame of reference, that person's sense of what is important or what he or she thinks is important to tell the interviewer. The narrator's response in turn shapes the interviewer's subsequent questions, and on and on. To quote Alessandro Portelli, one of oral history's most thoughtful practitioners, "Oral history . . . refers [to] what the source [i.e., the narrator] and the historian [i.e. the interviewer] do together at the moment of their encounter in the interview." [Alessandro Portelli, *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue* (Madison: The University of Wisconsin Press, 1997), 3.]

The best interviews have a measured, thinking-out-loud quality, as perceptive questions work and rework a particular topic, encouraging the narrator to remember details, seeking to clarify that which is muddled, making connections among seemingly disconnected recollections, challenging contradictions, evoking assessments of what it all meant then and what it means now. The best interviewers listen carefully between the lines of what is said for what the narrator is trying to get at and then have the presence of mind, sometimes the courage, to ask the hard questions. Yet all interviews are shaped by the context within which they are conducted [the purpose of the interview, the extent to which both interviewer and interviewee have prepared for it, their states of mind and physical condition, etc.] as well as the particular interpersonal dynamic between narrator and interviewer: an interview can be a history lecture, a confessional, a verbal sparring match, an exercise in nostalgia, or any other of the dozens of ways people talk about their experiences. Several years ago, for example, I interviewed a number of elderly Polish women who had worked in Baltimore's canneries as children. I too am of Polish descent and these women were similar in age and social position to my mother's older sisters. In interview after interview, as we talked about the narrator's life as an immigrant daughter and working-class wife, her experiences as a casual laborer in an industry notorious for low wages and unpleasant working conditions, the narrator would blurt out with great force, "You have no idea how hard we had it!", often rapping her finger on a table for emphasis. I had become a representative of the generation of the narrator's own children, who indeed have no idea how hard their parents and grandparents had it; what began as an interview thus became an impassioned conversation across the generations.

How Do Historians Use It?

For the historian, oral history interviews are valuable as sources of new knowledge about the past and as new interpretive perspectives on it. Interviews have especially enriched the work of a generation of social historians, providing information about everyday life and insights into the mentalities of what are sometimes termed "ordinary people" that are simply unavailable from more traditional sources. Oral histories also eloquently make the case for the active agency of individuals whose lives have been lived within deeply constraining circumstances.

A single example here must suffice. For their study of deindustrialization in the anthracite coal region of northeastern Pennsylvania, historians Thomas Dublin and Walter Licht interviewed almost ninety men and women who had

lived through the long economic decline that started when the region's mines closed during the mid-twentieth century. Getting underneath the statistical summaries and institutional responses afforded by census data, government reports, and company and union records, the interviews are replete with information about the various and deeply gendered strategies individuals used to cope with this disaster: men traveled long distances to work in factories outside the region, often living in nearby boardinghouses during the week and returning home only on the weekends; women held families together while themselves entering the paid labor force; families made do, went without, and expected little; some, with fewer ties to the region, pulled up roots and relocated elsewhere. Interviews also reveal subtle shifts in the power dynamics within marriages, as unemployment undermined men's authority even as employment enhanced women's status; and changes in parental expectations for children, who had to forge lives in new economic circumstances. Summing up what they have learned from their interviews, Dublin and Licht have written:

> The oral histories of the men and women of the anthracite region in general render a complicated picture of economic crisis. Neither catastrophe nor a complete restructuring of life marked the collapse of the area's economy. Unevenness characterized the experience--the consequences for and responses of different communities, families and individuals varied. . . . As business and labor historians have recently emphasized the unevenness of capitalist economic development--industrialization, for example, unfolding in varying ways and with varying consequences in different trades and communities--interviews with those who have faced modern-day long-term crises of economic decline suggest that unevenness is a valuable concept for our understanding this contemporary experience as well. [Thomas Dublin and Walter Licht, "Gender and Economic Decline: The Pennsylvania Anthracite Region, 1920-1970," *Oral History Review* 27 (Winter/Spring 2000): 97.]

It is not difficult to understand how, in interview after interview, oral history opens up new views of the past. For in an interview, the voice of the narrator literally contends with that of the historian for control of the story. Recounting the experiences of everyday life and making sense of that experience, narrators turn history inside out, demanding to be understood as purposeful actors in the past, talking about their lives is ways that do not easily fit into preexisting categories of analysis.

Of course, not all oral history falls into the category of social history. Interviews abound with politicians and their associates, with business leaders, and the cultural elite. In addition to recording the perspectives of those in power, these interviews typically get at "the story underneath the story," the intricacies of decision-making, the personal rivalries and alliances and the varying motives underlying public action, that are often absent from the public record.

Some interview projects also focus on very specific topics—like memories of a flood, participation in a war, or the career of a noteworthy individual—rather than the more encompassing narratives typical of social historians. While these interviews certainly add to our store of knowledge,

particularly illuminating the relationship of the individual to major historical events, their limited focus is often quite frustrating to historians and archivists.

In addition to providing new knowledge and perspectives, oral history is of value to the historian in yet another way. As David Thelen and Roy Rosenzweig have demonstrated in *The Presence of the Past*, most people engage with the past in deeply personal ways, drawing upon it as a resource for enhancing identity and explaining experience. Yet at the same time they seem uninterested in understanding anything other than their own personal experience and claim that the formal study of history is "boring." [Roy Rosenzweig and David Thelen, *The Presence of the Past: Popular Uses of History in American Life* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1998)] Oral history affords the historian a way to negotiate this paradox and perhaps helps surmount the barrier separating the analytic work of the professional historian from vernacular efforts at history-making. For oral history interviews are often quite simply good stories. Like literature, their specificity, their deeply personal, often emotionally resonant accounts of individual experience draw listeners—or readers—in, creating interest and sympathy. Edited carefully, they can open the listener to a life very different from his or her own in a non-threatening way. Contextualized thoughtfully, they can help a reader understand personal experience as something deeply social.

Nonetheless, some have argued, not without cause, that the highly individual, personal perspective of an interview, coupled with the social historian's typical focus on everyday life, tend to overstate individual agency and obscure the workings of political and cultural power. Indeed, not surprisingly, many narrators recall with great pride how they coped with life's circumstances through individual effort and sustained hard work, not by directly challenging those circumstances. And, it must be said, narrators are a self-selected group; the most articulate and self-assured members of any group—the literal and psychic survivors—are precisely those who consent to an interview, creating an implicit bias. Nonetheless, oral history does complicate simplistic notions of hegemony, that is the power of dominant political or cultural forces to control thought and action, as individuals articulate how they have maneuvered, with greater or lesser degrees of autonomy or conformity, risk, calculation or fear, within the circumstances of their lives.

Interpreting Oral History

For all their considerable value, oral history interviews are not an unproblematic source. Although narrators speak for themselves, what they have to say does not. Paradoxically, oral history's very concreteness, its very immediacy, seduces us into taking it literally, an approach historian Michael Frisch has criticized as "Anti-History," by which he means viewing "oral historical evidence because of its immediacy and emotional resonance, as something almost beyond interpretation or accountability, as a direct window on the feelings and . . . on the meaning of past experience." [Michael Frisch, *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1990), 159-160.] As with any source, historians must exercise critical judgment when using interviews—just because someone says something is true, however colorfully or convincingly they say it, doesn't

mean it is true. Just because someone "was there" doesn't mean they fully understand "what happened."

The first step in assessing an interview, then, is to consider the reliability of the narrator and the verifiability of the account. The narrator's relationship to the events under discussion, personal stake in presenting a particular version of events, physical and mental state at the time of the events under discussion and at the moment of the interview, as well as the overall attention and care the narrator brings to the interview and the internal consistency of the account all figure into the narrator's reliability as a source. The veracity of what is said in an interview can be gauged by comparing it both with other interviews on the same subject and with related documentary evidence. If the interview jibes with other evidence, if it builds upon or supplements this evidence in a logical and meaningful way, one can assume a certain level of veracity in the account. If, however, it conflicts with other evidence or is incompatible with it, the historian needs to account for the disparities: Were different interviewees differently situated in relationship to the events under discussion? Might they have different agendas, leading them to tell different versions of the same story? Might the written sources be biased or limited in a particular way? Might intervening events—for example, ideological shifts between the time of the events under discussion and the time of the interview or subsequent popular cultural accounts of these events—have influenced later memories? Writing in 1977 about the confirmation of Griffin Bell for United States attorney general, journalist Calvin Trillin quoted a black attorney who had quipped that if all the white politicians who said they were working behind the scenes for racial justice actually were doing so, "it must be getting pretty crowded back there, behind the scenes." Similarly, John F. Kennedy's assassination not only reshaped Americans' subsequent views of him but even changed how they remembered their earlier perceptions. Although Kennedy was elected with just 49.7% of the vote in the fall of 1960, almost two-thirds of all Americans remembered voting for him when they were asked about it in the aftermath of his assassination. [Calvin Trillin, "Remembrance of Moderates Past," *New Yorker* (March 21, 1977): 85; quoted in Cliff Kuhn, "'There's a Footnote to History!' Memory and the History of Martin Luther King's October 1960 Arrest and Its Aftermath," *Journal of American History* 84:2 (September 1997): 594; Godfrey Hodgson, *America In Our Time* (New York: Random House, 1976): 5.]

In fact, inconsistencies and conflicts among individual interviews and between interviews and other evidence point to the inherently subjective nature of oral history. Oral history is not simply another source, to be evaluated unproblematically like any other historical source. To treat it as such confirms the second fallacy identified by Frisch, the "More History" approach to oral history, which views interviews as "raw data" and "reduce[s them] to simply another kind of evidence to be pushed through the historian's controlling mill." [Frisch, 159-160.] An interview is inevitably an act of memory, and while individual memories can be more or less accurate, complete, or truthful, in fact interviews routinely include inaccurate and imprecise information, if not outright falsehoods. Narrators frequently get names and dates wrong, conflate disparate events into a single event, recount stories of questionable truthfulness. Although oral historians do attempt to get the story straight through careful background research and informed questioning, they are ultimately less

concerned with the vagaries of individual memories than with the larger context within which individual acts of remembering occur, or with what might be termed social memory. In what is perhaps the most cited article in the oral history literature, Alessandro Portelli brilliantly analyzes why oral accounts of the death of Italian steel worker Luigi Trastulli, who was shot during a workers' rally protesting NATO in 1949, routinely get the date, place, and reason for his death wrong. Narrators manipulated the facts of Trastulli's death to render it less senseless and more comprehensible to them; or, as Portelli argues, "errors, inventions, and myths lead us through and beyond facts to their meanings." [Alessandro Portelli, "The Death of Luigi Trastulli: Memory and the Event," in *The Death of Luigi Trastulli*, pp. 1-26; quoted material is from p. 2.]

What is needed then is an understanding of oral history not so much as an exercise in fact finding but as an interpretive event, as the narrator compresses years of living into a few hours of talk, selecting, consciously and unconsciously, what to say and how to say it. Indeed, there is a growing literature, some of it included in the appended bibliography, on the interpretive complexities of oral history interviews, replete with strategies for mining their meaning. Much of it begins with the premise that an interview is a storied account of the past recounted in the present, an act of memory shaped as much by the moment of telling as by the history being told. Each interview is a response to a particular person and set of questions, as well as to the narrator's inner need to make sense of experience. What is said also draws upon the narrator's linguistic conventions and cultural assumptions and hence is an expression of identity, consciousness, and culture. Put simply, we need to ask: who is saying what, to whom, for what purpose, and under what circumstances. While these questions cannot really be considered in isolation when applying them to a specific interview—the who is related to the what is related to the why is related to the when and where—here we will consider each in turn to develop an overview of the issues and questions involved.

Who Is Talking?

What a narrator says, as well as the way a narrator says it, is related to that person's social identity (or identities). Who a narrator is becomes a cognitive filter for their experiences. Recognizing the differing social experiences of women and men, feminist historians have noted that women more so than men articulate their life stories around major events in the family life cycle, dating events in relation to when their children were born, for example. Men, on the other hand, are more likely to connect their personal chronologies to public events like wars, elections, and strikes. Women's narratives also tend, as Gwen Etter-Lewis has put it, towards "understatement, avoidance of the first person point of view, rare mention of personal accomplishments, and disguised statements of personal power." [Gwen Etter-Lewis, "Black Women's Life Stories: Reclaiming Self in Narrative Texts," in Sherna Berger Gluck and Daphne Patai, eds., *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History* (New York: Routledge, Chapman & Hall, 1991), 48; quoted in Joan Sangster, "Telling Our Stories: Feminist Debates and the Use of Oral History," in *The Oral History Reader*, Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds. (London: Routledge, 1998), 89.] Racial identity, too, figures into oral historical accounts. Writing about the 1921 race riot in Tulsa, Oklahoma, Scott Ellsworth coined the phrase "segregation of memory" to

describe the varying ways blacks and whites remembered this gruesome event. [Scott Ellsworth, *Death in a Promised Land: The Tulsa Race Riot of 1921* (Baton Rouge: Louisiana State University Press, 1982).] It is a typical pattern, suggestive of the deep racial divides in the United States. In interview after interview, whites recalled either "very little at all" about members of minority groups or that "we all got along," while members of minority groups tended toward both a more nuanced and less sanguine view of white people. Interviews with politicians and other notable public figures pose particular problems. While they are perhaps no more egocentric or concerned about their reputations than many others, their practiced delivery and ability to deflect difficult questions often leads to accounts that are especially facile and glib. Indeed, the general rule of thumb is the longer a public official has been out of the public eye, the more honest and insightful the interview will be.

One can catalogue any number of ways different "whos" inflect oral history narratives. Yet identities are neither singular nor fixed. "Who" exactly is speaking is defined by both the speaker's relationship to the specific events under discussion and temporal distance from them. Hence while we would expect labor and management to record differing accounts of a strike, union members too can differ among themselves, depending upon their relative gains or losses in the strike's aftermath, their differing political views and regard for authority, or their differing levels of tolerance for the disorder a strike can create. And their views can change over time, as perspectives broaden or narrow, as subsequent experiences force one to reconsider earlier views, as current contexts shape one's understanding of past events. All are part of who is speaking.

Who Is the Interviewer?

There is no doubt that the single most important factor in the constitution of an interview is the questions posed by the interviewer. Inevitably derived from a set of assumptions about what is historically important, the interviewer's questions provide the intellectual framework for the interview and give it direction and shape. For especially articulate narrators, the questions are a foil against which they define their experience. Good interviewers listen carefully and attempt to more closely align their questions with what the narrator thinks is important. Nonetheless, more than one interviewer has had the experience described by Thomas Dublin as he reflected upon his interviews with coal mining families: "Once, when looking over photographs with Tom and Ella Strohl [whom he had previously interviewed], I expressed surprise at seeing so many pictures taken on hunting trips with his buddies. When I commented that I had not realized how important hunting had been in Tommy's life, he responded good-naturedly, 'Well, you never asked.'" [Thomas Dublin, with photographs by George Harvan, *When the Mines Closed: Stories of Struggles in Hard Times* (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1998), 21.]

Yet the questions asked are not the only influence an interviewer has upon what is said in an interview. Like narrators, interviewers have social identities that are played out in the dynamic of the interview. Narrators assess interviewers, deciding what they can appropriately say to this person, what they must say, and what they should not say. Thus a grandparent being interviewed by a grandchild for a family history project may well suppress less savory aspects of the past in an effort to shield the child, serve as a responsible role

model, and preserve family myths. And I described above how my own social identity as the upwardly mobile granddaughter of Polish immigrants created a particular emotional subtext to interviews with Polish cannery workers.

What Are They Talking About?

The topical range of oral history interviews is enormous, including everything from the most public of historical events to the most intimate details of private life. What is analytically important, however, is the way narrators structure their accounts and the way they select and arrange the elements of what they are saying. Interviews frequently are plotted narratives, in which the narrator/hero overcomes obstacles, resolves difficulties, and achieves either public success or private satisfaction. There are exceptions, of course, but these conventions, typical of much of Western literature, suggest something of the individualizing, goal-oriented, success driven, morally righteous tendencies of the culture and hence the underlying assumptions people use to understand their experiences. They also perhaps reflect the egocentric and valorizing tendencies of an interview, in which one person is asked, generally by a respectful, even admiring interviewer, to talk about his life. Comparison with interviews conducted with narrators outside the mainstream of western culture is instructive here. Interviewing Native American women from Canada's Yukon Territory, anthropologist Julie Cruikshank found that her questions about conventional historical topics like the impact of the Klondike gold rush or the construction of the Alaska Highway were answered with highly metaphoric, traditional stories that narrators insisted were part of their own life stories. Negotiating cultural differences about what properly constituted a life history thus became Cruikshank's challenge. [Julie Cruikshank, in collaboration with Angela Sidney, Kitty Smith, and Annie Ned, *Life Lived Like a Story: Life Stories of Three Yukon Native Elders* (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1990).]

Narrators also encapsulate experiences in what I have come to term "iconic stories," that is concrete, specific accounts that "stand for" or sum up something the narrator reckons of particular importance. Often these are presented as unique or totemic events and are communicated with considerable emotional force. So, for example, one woman recounted the following incident from her childhood, illustrating the value she places on charity and self-denial:

> One thing I'd like to tell about my grandmother, she was not a very expressive person, but one time she heard of a family with three daughters about the same age as her own three daughters, who were in pretty hard straits. And she had just finished making three elegant new costumes for her daughters in the days when a dress . . . took a great deal of labor. And, instead of giving the three girls the discarded ones of her daughters, she gave them the three brand new ones, which I've always liked to remember. [Louise Rhoades Dewees, interview by Nicolette Murray, March 26, 1979, transcript, pp. 7-8; Oral History among Friends in Chester County, Chester County [Pennsylvania] Library.]

Folklorist Barbara Allen has argued that the storied element of oral history reflects the social nature of an interview, for in communicating something

meaningful to others, stories attempt to create a collective consciousness of what is important. Applying this notion to a body of interviews from the intermountain West, Allen identifies certain categories of stories—how people came to the West, their difficulties with the terrain and the weather, the "grit" required to survive—and suggests that these themes speak to a broad regional consciousness. Whether a given story is factually true or not is not the point; rather, its truth is an interpretive truth, what it stands for, or means. [Barbara Allen, "Story in Oral History: Clues to Historical Consciousness," *Journal of American History* 79:2 (September 1992): 606-611.]

As important as what is said is what is not said, what a narrator misconstrues, ignores, or avoids. Silences can signify simple misunderstanding; discomfort with a difficult or taboo subject; mistrust of the interviewer; or cognitive disconnect between interviewer and narrator. Interviewing an immigrant daughter about her life in mid-twentieth century Baltimore, I asked if she had worked outside the home after her marriage. She replied that she had not and we went on to a discussion of her married life. Later in the interview, however, she casually mentioned that for several years during her marriage she had waited tables during the dinner hour at a local restaurant. When I asked her about this apparent contradiction in her testimony, she said that she had never really thought of her waitressing as "work"; rather, she was "helping Helen out," Helen being the restaurant's owner and a friend and neighbor.

Silences can also have broad cultural meaning. Italian historian Luisa Passerini found that life histories she recorded of members of Turin's working class frequently made no mention of Fascism, whose repressive regime nonetheless inevitably impacted their lives. Even when questioned directly, narrators tended to jump from Fascism's rise in the 1920s directly to its demise in World War II, avoiding any discussion of the years of Fascism's political dominance. Passerini interprets this as evidence on the one hand "of a scar, a violent annihilation of many years in human lives, a profound wound in daily experience" among a broad swath of the population and, on the other, of people's preoccupation with the events of everyday life—"jobs, marriage, children"—even in deeply disruptive circumstances. [Luisa Passerini, "Work ideology and consensus under Italian fascism," in *The Oral History Reader*, 58-60.]

Why Are They Talking?

The purposes of an interview, expressed and implied, conscious and unconscious, also influence and shape the narrative itself. For a generation, social historians worked to shift the focus of historical inquiry away from party politics and public life towards an understanding of the everyday lives of ordinary people. As a result, their interviews are often rich with detail about work and family, neighborhood and church, but include little about the workings of local power. Interviews are also often exercises in historical resuscitation, efforts to revive popular memory about a subject precisely at that moment when it is about to slip away-hence the enormous number of interviews done in the 1960s and 1970s with pre-World War I immigrants. Hence too the more recent spate of interviewing projects on World War II, the holocaust, and the civil rights movement. These interviews often have a valorizing quality—the passion to remember and the pleasure of remembering serving as a filter to what is actually remembered, even as narrators also confront loss, disappointment, and unmet

goals. Community-based oral history projects, often seeking to enhance feelings of local identity and pride, tend to side step more difficult and controversial aspects of a community's history, as interviewer and narrator collude to present the community's best face. More practically, narrators whose interviews are intended for web publication, with a potential audience of millions, are perhaps more likely to exercise a greater degree of self-censorship than those whose interviews will be placed in an archive, accessible only to scholarly researchers. Personal motives too can color an interview. An interviewer who admires the interviewee may well fail to ask challenging questions out of deference and respect; a narrator seeking to enhance a public reputation may well deflect an area of inquiry that threatens to tarnish it.

What Are the Circumstances of the Interview?

The circumstances of an interview can also affect what is recalled. In general, interviews for which both interviewer and interviewee have prepared are likely to be fuller and more detailed accounts than more spontaneous exchanges. Similarly, physical comfort and adequate time help create the expansive mood and unhurried pace that enhances recall. I remember carving out two hours from an otherwise busy day in which to conduct an interview with a local civil rights activist. The narrator turned out to have an exceptionally well-developed historical sense, answering questions with not only great specificity but also considerable reflectiveness on the larger significance of his actions. After two hours of talk, I was becoming increasingly anxious about all the other things I had to do that day. I was also becoming very hungry, as we had talked through the lunch hour. As a result, the last part of the interview is rather perfunctory. It would have been better if I had stopped the interview after an hour and a half and scheduled a second session on another day.

Other external conditions can also affect an interview. Some oral historians have suggested that the location of the interview subtly influences what a narrator talks about and how they talk about it. Interviews in a person's office, for example, tend to be more formal, less intimate, with the narrator emphasizing public rather than private life. Likewise, an interview with more than one person simultaneously or the presence of a third person in the room where an interview is taking place can constrain a narrator, turning a private exchange into something more akin to a public performance. I often think that interviews with two or more family members at the same time document family relationships more than the actual topics under discussion.

Summary of Questions to Ask

To evaluate an oral history interview, consider the following:

1. Who is the narrator?
What is the narrator's relationship to the events under discussion?
What stake might the narrator have in presenting a particular version of events?
What effect might the narrator's social identity and position have on the interview?
How does the narrator present himself or herself in the interview?
What sort of character does the narrator become in the interview?

What influences—personal, cultural, social—might shape the way the narrator expresses himself or herself?
Consider especially how the events under discussion are generally regarded and how popular culture might shape the narrator's account.

2. Who is the interviewer?
What background and interests does the interviewer bring to the topic of the interview?
How might this affect the interview?
How do the interviewer's questions shape the story told?
Has the interviewer prepared for the interview?
How adept is the interviewer in getting the narrator to tell his or her story in his own way?
What effect might the interviewer's social identity and position have on the interviewee, and hence the interview?
How might the dynamic between narrator and interviewer affect what is said in the interview?
Does the interviewer have a prior relationship with the interviewee?
How might this affect the interview?

3. What has been said in the interview?
How has the narrator structured the interview?
What's the plot of the story?
What does this tell us about the way the narrator thinks about his or her experience?
What motifs, images, anecdotes does the narrator use to encapsulate experience?
What can this tell us about how the narrator thinks about his or her experience?
What does the narrator avoid or sidestep?
What topics does the narrator especially warm to, or speak about with interest, enthusiasm, or conviction?
What might this tell us?
Are there times when the narrator doesn't seem to answer the question posed?
What might be the reason for this?
Are there significant factual errors in the narrative?
Is it internally consistent?
How might you account for errors and inconsistencies?
How does the narrator's account jibe with other sources, other interviews?
How can you explain any discrepancies?

4. For what purpose has this interview been conducted?
How might the purpose have shaped the content, perspective, and tone of the interview?

5. What are the circumstances of the interview?
What effect might the location of the interview have had on what was said in the interview?
If anyone other than the interviewer and interviewee were present, what effect might the presence of this other person have had on the interview?
Do you know the mental and physical health of the narrator and interviewer?

What effect might these have had on the interview?

Model Interpretation

First, the interview.

In the mid 1990s, health educator Patricia Fabiano interviewed Dolores Bordas Kosko of McKees Rocks, Pennsylvania, as part of her study of the First Thursday Girls' Club. This group of working-class women has been meeting socially on the first Thursday of the month for more than forty years. The Kosko interview is one of several Fabiano conducted with the club's seven members to investigate the relationship between informal support systems and health, understood as a sense of coherence and well being. In this interview, Ms. Kosko speaks about her experiences working at Dravo Corporation, an industrial manufacturing plant located near McKees Rocks. As she tells it:

> I went to work for Dravo [in June 1972], I didn't want to progress, all I wanted to do was go back and help supplement [my husband's] income, because we were struggling. It was just too hard on one salary. We had zip. We lived from one pay to the other. There were no extras. And we never went on vacation, we couldn't afford it. . . . By that time Valerie was twelve, Diane was nine, and then I went to work part-time, which was fine. But then, you know, you work three days, and then the next thing you know, they want you to work four days, and then before you know it you're working five days, with no benefits, no nothing. No paid vacation. Then they offered me the full-time job, and I thought, "Well, I'm working five days anyways, and it seems to be working." I was living right there . . . so it was very convenient, so I did go as a full-time employee.

Over the years, her work life continued to change:

> And I did that for maybe about three years and then I was offered . . . a job as a supervisor. What did I know about being a supervisor? I took it, and I think to myself, "How did I ever do it?" Without any formal training. I did not have a college degree, they gave me the job of supervisor of stenographic services. I had ten girls reporting to me. Responsible for a co-op program of students going to business school and working at Dravo. Setting that program up. Interviewing. I never had any formal instruction on how to interview people. I was interviewing people. I had to do performance reviews. Writing procedure manuals. Maybe part of it is my sense of organization. Do you develop a sense of organization or is that ingrained in you, a part of your personality?
>
> And then after that, as I look back now, it seems like every four years I made a change. I was transferred over to Automation Systems responsible for office automation, testing software, making recommendations. I still very much wanted to go to college, to get a college degree. I didn't think I

was going to be able to go for the four years, but I definitely wanted to have an associate's degree. And Dravo had the tuition refund program. You have to pay for it first, and then they reimbursed you for it. And I started with classes. It took me twelve years. But I have my associate's degree in Business Administration. I'm not bragging, but I just feel very proud of myself that I was able to do it, working full time, raising a family, working overtime also when projects needed it or demanded it. . . .

Then, in 1988 Kosko lost her job, a crisis that disrupted her life and challenged her to reassess certain assumptions and choices:

After sixteen years at Dravo my job was eliminated because they were downsizing. Always in the back of your mind you think, "Oh, I wish I could get laid off and I'll sit at home." And no one really knows what happens to them when there really is a layoff. But my job was eliminated, I was laid off. And I had two weeks, they gave me a two-week notice. And a lot of people reacted with anger when they were laid off. They just picked up their stuff and they left their office. I got laid off, I came out of the office, and I went back to my office, and I went back to work. And people were walking past my office because they put two and two together, so they figured I got laid off, but they couldn't figure out why I was still working. But I never thought I should do it any other way. I had a job, I had a project to finish. And I finished it in the two weeks, and then when the two weeks were over, then I packed up my stuff and I left. Why? Dravo was good to me. I got my education. They paid me. That was the contract with them. My contract was to finish that project. And I did. And I wouldn't do it any other way.

But the day I had to walk out of there, it was the most horrible feeling. I felt as though I was in limbo. Like I wasn't anywhere, and I thought to myself, "I should be enjoying this time off." But I had out-placement services, and I went to work at that. But I didn't start at eight o'clock. I started at eight thirty, because I really didn't want to bump into the people in the elevators. So I went in a little bit later, and I left like four o'clock because my job was to get a job. I felt like I was in limbo. Like I didn't have an identity. I didn't have an identity. I wasn't. I was Dolores Kosko, but yet, I wasn't Steve's wife, I wasn't Valerie's mother, or Diane's mother, or Julia Bordas's daughter. I felt in limbo, that I had no identity. That's the only way that I can describe it. I was collecting unemployment. Steve was working. And I had severance pay 'till the end of the year. What drove me [to find another job]? I don't know. [My friend] Joanne would say to me, "You're crazy. Stay home!" But I don't know. I still don't know what it was.

"Should I go to do something different?" And I looked at that, but I'm not good at sales, because I can't sell a product I don't believe in. I can't lie to anyone. So I knew sales wasn't for me. The position I really liked the best at Dravo was where I was responsible for office automation, and then I was responsible for the voice mail and I did training sessions. And then, I

> realized then, that I missed my calling. I should have gone to school to be a teacher. That's my one regret, that I didn't go to college. But, at the time, I don't think I was mature enough, or I didn't know what I wanted to do. My parents wanted to send me to college, but I felt that I didn't want to burden my parents because my parents really couldn't afford it. So I just went to Robert Morris School of Business for a six month course, but after my layoff, that's when I realized that I missed my calling. But I didn't know that when I was eighteen. [Patricia Maria Fabiano, "The First Thursday Girls Club: A Narrative Study of Health and Social Support in a Working-Class Community," (Ph.D. diss., The Graduate School of the Union Institute, 1999), 211-215.]

Now, the analysis.

Recall that Kosko recounted her family and work history to Patricia Fabiano for her study of a group of women who have met informally every month for more than four decades. Fabiano is a good interviewer. She is prepared and has prepared Kosko for the interview by explaining the purpose of her study. Long acquainted with Kosko and knowledgeable but not part of her world, she is deeply respectful and appreciative of the club—she assumes its value and wants to understand how it works to enhance health. She also wants to situate the story of the club in broad biographical and social, that is to say, historical, context. These preconditions to the interview create enormous rapport and set the stage for creative inquiry. Much of the richness of Kosko's account comes from her effort to address Fabiano's questions (regrettably not included in the edited transcript) thoughtfully and honestly.

The questions Fabiano brings to the study also open a way for Kosko to draw upon an interesting repertoire of both personal and social explanations as she puts her life into words. Like most people speaking within the individualizing framework of an interview, Kosko presents herself as the hero of her own story, a sturdy survivor and ethical person who will finish a job even when laid off and who cannot lie in a way that she feels would be necessary for a career in sales. The assumptions of the study work to create a self-consciously progressive narrative, shaped around the theme of growing confidence and autonomy. Not incidentally, this theme resonates with contemporary feminism, which has validated women's aspirations and married women's right to work. Though Kosko would not likely identify herself as a feminist, the assumptions and language of feminism are reflected in her account. And when Kosko's very identity is challenged by the loss of her job, she explains the limited options and missed opportunities in her life in terms of both personal limits ("I wasn't mature enough [to go to college at eighteen]") and the constraints imposed by her family's class position ("My parents really couldn't afford it.") Although conducted one-on-one in Kosko's home, this interview is also quite similar in content, tone, and perspective to the interviews Fabiano conducted with the other six group members for her study. In part, this is so because the women's lives have been similar. But it also suggests that their individual accounts have been influenced by the conversation they have been having among themselves for more than forty years about the shape and meaning of their lives. Fabiano's interviews simply made that understanding more conscious and explicit.

To assess the interview in this way does not reduce it to an exercise in good feeling or in telling the interviewer what she wants to hear. Nor does it suggest that it is in any way untruthful or that all interviews are equal—some are richer, more thoughtful, more insightful that others, offering up more for historical analysis. Rather, it helps us understand the deeply situated, contingent, and subjective nature of oral history interviews.

Oral History Online

Electronic technologies are democratizing access to extant oral history collections by on-line publication of both actual interview recordings and written transcripts of them. While oral historians generally have embraced opportunities for world wide dissemination of their work via the Web, many are also appropriately skeptical of the very ease of access the web affords, vastly increasing the possibility for misuse of existing interviews. Especially troublesome is Web publication of interviews conducted pre-Web without narrators' explicit permission; many feel this violates narrators' rights to decide the level of access to their interviews. Also problematic is the greater opportunity the web affords for anyone to publish anything, regardless of quality.

These concerns notwithstanding, web publication of interviews has numerous advantages beyond mere access. Electronic search engines enable users to identify material relevant to their own interests easily and quickly, without listening to hours of tape or plowing through pages of transcript. Hypertext linkages of excerpted or footnoted interviews to full transcripts allow a reader to more fully contextualize a given quote or idea; to assess how carefully an author has retained the integrity of a narrator's voice in material quoted; and to more fully evaluate an author's interpretive gloss on a narrator's account. Most exciting though is the opportunity e-publication affords for restoring orality to oral history. Almost twenty years ago Alessandro Portelli argued convincingly that oral history is primarily oral, that "the tone and volume range and the rhythm of popular speech carry implicit meaning and social connotations which are not reproducible in writing. . . . The same statement may have quite contradictory meanings, according to the speaker's intonation, which cannot be presented objectively in the transcript, but only approximately described in the transcribers' own words." [Alessandro Portelli, *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History* (Albany: State University of New York Press, 1991), 47.] One thinks of irony, for example, as something that is communicated by tone, not words, and so can be lost if not rendered orally. Similarly, hearing, rather than reading, narrators' accounts can render them more compelling, more humane or chilling, more three-dimensional. Quite simply then, by reproducing actual recorded sound, web publication of interviews is perhaps more appropriate than print publication.

ORAL HISTORY ON THE WEB -- EXEMPLARY SITES

American Life Histories, Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940
Library of Congress, American Memory
http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html

This site features approximately 2,900 life histories, both in transcribed and image form, collected from 1936-1940. The documents represent the work of more than 300 writers from the Federal Writers' Project of the U.S. Work Projects Administration. The histories appear as drafts and revisions, in various formats, from narrative to dialogue, report to case history. Topics include the informant's family, education, income, occupation, political views, religion and mores, medical needs, and diet, as well as observations on society and culture. Interviewers often substituted pseudonyms for names of individuals and places.

Archives of American Art, Oral History Collections
Smithsonian Institution, Archives of American Art
http://www.archivesofamericanart.si.edu/oralhist/oralhist.htm
This site offers transcriptions of more than 180 interviews with a variety of artists, including Louise Nevelson, Robert Indiana, Richard Diebenkorn, and Rube Goldberg. Projects include Texas and southwestern artists, Northwest artists, Latino artists, African-American artists, Asian-American artists, and women in the arts in Southern California. This site also include transcripts for more than 50 of the 400 interviews conducted in the 1960s as part of the "New Deal and the Arts Oral History Program."

Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938
Library of Congress, American Memory
http://lcweb2.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/snhome.html
A collaborative effort of the Manuscripts and Prints and Photographs Divisions, this site has more than 2,300 first person accounts of slavery. The narratives were collected as part of the 1930s Federal Writers' Project of the Works Project Administration, and they were assembled and microfilmed in 1941 as the 17-volume *Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves*. Each digitized transcript of a slave narrative is accompanied by notes including the name of the narrator, place and date of the interview, interviewer's name, length of transcript, and cataloging information.

Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive
McCain Library and Archive, University of Southern Mississippi
http://www.lib.usm.edu/~spcol/crda/index.html
This Web site offers 125 oral histories relating to the civil rights movement, drawn from the University of Southern Mississippi Center for Oral History Collection. The site features interviews with civil rights leaders such as Charles Cobb, Charles Evers, and Aaron Henry. It also offers oral history information about prominent figures on both sides of the civil rights movement, such as "race-baiting" Governor Ross Barnett, national White Citizens Council leader William J. Simmons, and State Sovereignty leader Erle Johnston. Approximately 25 of the interviews also provide audio clips from the original oral history recordings. Each interview file includes a longer (250-300 word) biography, a list of topics discussed, a transcript of the interview, and descriptive information

about the interview, the interviewer, interviewee, and topics, time period, and regions covered.

IEEE History Center Oral Histories
Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, Inc.
http://www.ieee.org/organizations/history_center/oral_histories_menu.html
This collection contains 180 interviews with "the technologists who transformed the world in the 20th century." Categories include: the history of the merger of the American Institute of Electrical Engineers and the Institute of Radio Engineers to form the IEEE; interviews with distinguished Japanese electrical engineers and managers; the fiftieth anniversary of the MIT Radiation Laboratory; oral histories of RCA Laboratories in the mid-1970s; and the Frederick E. Terman Associates Collection.

Like a Family: The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World
James Leloudis and Kathryn Walbert, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill
http://www.ibiblio.org/sohp/overview.html
This site relies on hundreds of interviews with working-class southerners conducted by the Southern Oral History Program Piedmont Industrialization Project of the late 1970s and early 1980s. The site combines those sources with materials drawn from the trade press and with workers' letters to President Franklin D. Roosevelt to craft a rich account of cotton mill life, work, and protest. There are approximately 70 audio clips of interviews with mill workers ranging in length from 15 seconds to more than eight minutes.

May 4 Collection
Kent State University
http://www.library.kent.edu/exhibits/4may95/
The events of May 4, 1970, on the campus of Kent State University that left 13 students dead or wounded are the focus of this site. The materials attempt to answer why the events took place as they did, what lessons can be learned, and what can be done to "manage conflict among peoples, groups and nations." The site contains online transcripts of 93 of the 132 interviews conducted at May 4th commemorations on the Kent State campus in 1990, 1995, and 2000.

Oral History Online!, Regional Oral History Office (ROHO)
Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley
http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/BANC/ROHO/ohonline/
This site offers full-text transcripts of more than 55 fully-searchable interviews, with plans to add oral histories on Black Alumni at the University of California. Current offerings include "The University History Series" focusing on the Free Speech Movement, "The Suffragists Oral History Project," including the words of twelve women active in the suffrage movement, "Disability Rights and Independent Living Movement," "The Earl Warren Oral History Project," and

"Health Care, Science, and Technology," featuring interviews regarding the medical response to the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco from 1981 to 1984.

Rutgers Oral History Archives of World War II
Sandra Stewart Holyoak, Rutgers History Department
http://fas-history.rutgers.edu/oralhistory/orlhom.htm
These oral history interviews record the memories of men and women who served overseas and on the home front during World War II. The archive contains more than 160 full-text interviews, primarily of Rutgers College alumni and Douglass College (formerly New Jersey College for Women) alumnae. Rutgers undergraduates conducted many of the interviews. The easily navigable site provides an alphabetical interview list with the name of each interviewee, date and place of interview, college of affiliation and class year, theater in which the interviewee served, and branch of service, when applicable. The list also provides "Description" codes that indicate the nature of the interview contents, including military occupations (such as infantry and artillery members, nurses, navy seamen, and engineer corps) and civilian occupations (such as air raid warden, student, clerical worker, and journalist).

Women in Journalism
Washington Press Club Foundation
http://npc.press.org/wpforal/ohhome.htm
This site provides access to 41 of 57 full-life interviews of American women journalists for three professional generations: pre-1942, World War II through 1964, and post-1964. The collection includes interviews with women who began their careers in the 1920s and continues to the present day. Print, radio, and television journalism are all represented. Interviews address difficulties women have encountered entering the profession and how their growing presence has changed the field. Interviews range from one to 12 sessions and each session is about 20 pages long. The interviews are indexed but are not searchable by subject.

ORAL HISTORY GUIDES

Southern Oral History Program (SOHP)
University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, Southern Historical Collection
http://www.unc.edu/depts/sohp/sohpnew/
"How To: Resources for Planning and Conducting Oral History Interviews," includes The SOHP Guidebook, SOHP Interview forms, and a bibliography of more than 50 oral history resources. The interview forms include a cover sheet, interview agreement, interview agreement with restrictions, life history form, and proper word form. The SOHP Guidebook includes guidelines on designing an oral history project; advice on conducting, cataloguing, and transcribing interviews; notes on budgets and equipment needs; and ten interviewing tips.

Step-by-Step Guide to Oral History
Judith Moyer
http://www.dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html
Developed by historian and educator Judith Moyer, this thorough guide to oral history offers suggestions and strategies for collecting and preserving oral history. Topics range from an explanation of how and why to collect oral history to guidelines for planning and conducting interviews, including initial research, locating individuals, choosing equipment, and asking productive questions. Moyer also addresses a number of important conceptual and ethical issues related to conducting and using oral histories, including questions of accuracy, the limits of oral history, strategies for overcoming specific interview problems, and twenty questions to help interviewers learn from their experience.

TIPS FOR EVALUATING ORAL HISTORY ONLINE

Purpose & Provenance: Is the purpose of the site clearly stated? Where? How? What is the purpose—archival, pedagogical, etc.? Is this a credible and useful purpose? Are you provided with enough information to understand the larger context within which the site was developed, the rationale behind it, etc.? Why would someone use this site?

Credibility: Who has sponsored and organized the site? How do you know? Are the organizers credible? How do you know? Can you contact someone at the site to pose questions, etc.?

Site Features: Is the site well designed? Can you follow its organization? Navigate it easily? Is it updated regularly? Are graphics supportive or distracting? Are there links to other related sites? Are the links credible? helpful? current?

Oral History Material Located on the Site: Does the site include full interviews, interview excerpts, or summaries of interviews? How do you know this? Does the site explain why it chose to present full interviews, excerpts, or summaries? written or audio interviews? If the site includes actual interviews, does it include written transcripts, audio interviews, or some combination of both? Is the level of editing of both written and audio materials made clear?

Design and Technical Quality: How is the presentation of interviews organized? Is the layout easy to follow? If audio is included, what is the quality of sound? Can you hear what is being said easily, with difficulty, or hardly at all? If the site encourages people to submit their reminiscences, how much guidance are respondents given? How easy or difficult is it to submit a response? What is the quality of the responses?

Context for the Interviews: Are the interviews—either taken together or individually—contextualized in any way? Is any background given on the topic(s) of the interview(s) or the individual narrator(s)? What orientation are

you given to the purpose for which the interview(s) were conducted in the first place, the project/interview methodology, the interviewers' backgrounds, etc. In other words, what tools are you given for assessing the individual interviews?

Searching the Site and Assessing Quality: Does the site include a listing or a finding aid to all interviews maintained by the sponsoring organization? How useful or complete is this listing or guide? Can you search the interviews for information on a specific topic? Do searches return useful citations? Does the site tell you where the individual interviews are archived and if they are available to users? How good are the interviews? Are they interesting, rich, full, substantive, etc.? Do they contain unique information, unavailable elsewhere? Overall, what did you learn from the interviews? Are there things you wish the site would include or "do" that are not available?

Selected Bibliography

Coles, Robert. *Doing Documentary Work.* New York: Oxford University Press, 1997.
Reflective essays on the ethics and dilemmas of documenting other people's lives.

Dunaway, David K. and Willa K. Baum, eds. *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Reader*, 2nd ed. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publishers, 1996.
An anthology of important early articles that attempted to deepen understanding of both interviewing methodology and the interpretive complexity of oral narratives.

Frisch, Michael. *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1991.
A collection of Frisch's previously published essays; a singularly thoughtful effort to understand the relationship between the practice of oral history and the politics of public memory.

Gluck, Sherna and Daphne Patai, eds. *Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History*. New York: Praeger, 1991.
Important, albeit uneven, efforts to link oral history to the theory and practice of feminism and feminist studies.

Grele, Ronald. *Envelopes of Sound: The Art of Oral History*, 2nd ed. New York: Praeger, 1991.
Theoretically informed essays on, among other things, oral history interviews as expressions of ideology and consciousness.

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A good discussion of the strengths and limits of oral history as a historical source.

Hardy III, Charles and Alessandro Portelli. "I Can Almost See the Lights of Home—A Field Trip to Harlan County, Kentucky." *The Journal of Multimedia History* 2 (1999).
A successful effort at "aural history" that integrates oral history interviews, written transcripts, and oral and written commentary by the authors into a coherent essay; available only online at www.albany.edu/history_journals/jmmh.

Jackson, Bruce. *Fieldwork*. Urbana: University of Illinois Press, 1987.
Interviewing methodology from a folklore perspective; especially good on technical matters.

Jeffrey, Jaclyn and Glenace Edwall, eds. *Memory and History: Essays on Recalling and Interpreting Experience*. Lanham, Md.: University Press of America, 1991.
Proceedings from a 1988 conference sponsored by Baylor University's Institute for Oral History, bringing together oral historians and cognitive psychologists to examine both individual and collective memory.

Journal of American History.
Since 1987, the September issue of the journal has included a section of essays on oral history; typically, each essay identifies ways oral history interviews can enrich historical study of a given topic (e.g. the civil rights movement, education, farm women, etc.) and identifies important extant collections related to that topic.

Oral History Review. The journal of the Oral History Association, published annually from 1973 to 1987 and biannually since then.
Includes articles, interviews, review essays, and book and media reviews related to the practice of oral history in a variety of settings and the use and interpretation of interviews for a variety of scholarly and public purposes.

Perks, Robert, and Alistair Thomson. *The Oral History Reader*. New York: Routledge, 1998.
The single best anthology of previously published work on the more theoretical aspects of oral history; includes a good international range of materials.

Portelli, Alessandro. *The Battle of Valle Giulia: Oral History and the Art of Dialogue*. Madison: University of Wisconsin Press, 1997.
Elegantly written essays on the interview exchange or dialogue, with case studies focusing on interviews about war and about political movements.

_____. *The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning In Oral History*. Albany: SUNY Press, 1991.
Insightful, elegantly written analyses of oral narratives by a literary scholar with a deep understanding of the politics of history and historical practice; "The Death of Luigi Trastulli" is arguably the most cited essay about oral history narratives.

Ritchie, Donald A. *Doing Oral History*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995.

A practical guide to doing oral history, covering a range of topics in question-and-answer format.

Thompson, Paul. *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 2nd ed. New York: Oxford Press, 1988.
At once a handbook on program development and interview methodology and an astute discussion of the politics of historical inquiry and the nature of historical evidence.

Yow, Valerie Raleigh. *Recording Oral History*: *A Practical Guide for Social Scientists*. Thousand Oaks, Calif.: Sage Publications, 1994.
A solid discussion of project planning, interview methodology, and the use and interpretation of oral history materials.