The Voices Initiative at Oregon State University Libraries: Using OHMS and Omeka to Describe and Provide Access to Oral History Content

Chris Petersen, Special Collections and Archives Research Center, Oregon State University Libraries

Panel Session: “Beyond the Interview: Oral History Curation and Project Management”
Annual Meeting of the Northwest Archivists
Warm Spring, Oregon, April 27, 2018
Oral History at Oregon State University Libraries

The SCARC Oral History Program

The Oregon State University Archives, Collections, and Special Research Center (SCARC) is home to over one thousand oral history programs accompanied by any archives in the state. Since 2013, SCARC faculty and staff have conducted over 650 interviews in the process creating a body of oral history that has contributed greatly to the understanding of the state's history, which can be explored online as part of the Oral History Archives in the Pacific Northwest.

In this narrative, the department has collected and continues to collect more interviews conducted by ORU students and faculty as well as by former students to the present day. All SCARC's oral history transcripts and audio files have been cataloged and digitally scanned and recorded on physical oral history transcripts that are made available and preserved by the department. All ORU, SCARC, and the public for over 800 interviews, the earliest of which was conducted in 1940.

Finding aids for all SCARC's fully processed oral history collections are available here. These guides are updated regularly as new interviews are completed, and additional guides are being written for collections that are not yet fully processed.

DSU Oral History Online

A primary objective of the SCARC Oral History Program is to provide free and open access to as much of its content as possible. To this end, interviews totaling more than 650 hours of recording time have been transcribed, cataloged, and made available online. One component of this work is Oral History Online, which features a broad selection of the Oral History Transcripts and the OHS Oral History Publishing Project is a growing number of Oregon's oral history transcripts. All ORU's oral history transcripts are named, as are professional archival collections whose contents are indexed through finding aids. Issues of both are accessible through the Oregon State Oral History Online.

The largest oral history project is called History, the '90-105 project includes more than 400 hours of interviews with alumni, faculty, staff, current students, and alumni supports. Every talktape and OHS is represented in this collection as an audio file, even decades between the '90s and the '10s. The program of the visible, may be browsed by transcripts, including the most recently added by interviews, 'A History of Oregon.' In addition, multitudes of every issue are open, available for download.

The Voices Initiative

Multicultural Voices of Oregon

The collection reflects the diversity and complexity of Oregon's multicultural communities, including African Americans, Asian Americans, Latino, and Native American communities, and offers a window into the past and present of oral history in Oregon.

Voices of the Northwest

This collection features interviews collected by the Oregon Historical Society and the Oregon Historical Society, which reflect the experiences of Oregonians and people who have lived in Oregon.

Voices of Oregon Agriculture College

Consisting of a series of interviews conducted primarily between 1970 and 1975, the project includes interviews with individuals who had a significant connection to Oregon Agricultural College, now Oregon State University. These interviews offer a unique perspective on the history of Oregon agriculture and its impact on the state.
The **OH 150 Platform: Pros and Cons**

**Pro**
- Maximally customizable because of how it’s built (XML and XSL)
  - Allowed us to do lots of tweaking and to respond affirmatively to various requests from project stakeholders, e.g.
    - Embed of video or audio adjacent to transcripts and other contextual information (bio sketches and abstracts)
    - PDFs of transcripts in addition to html versions
    - Tagging of interview themes and affiliations to create mini-collections

**Con**
- Infrastructure is complicated and heavily reliant upon project administrator
- Portal is built to present full-text transcripts
- As a result, the portal is very time- and labor-intensive, and does not leverage well across skillsets
The Challenge

• OH 150:
  • $60,000 budget
  • Mandate from the university to create something with sizzle for the 150th anniversary

• The rest of SCARC’s collections:
  • $0 budget
  • Strong desire to make content available
  • Equally strong desire to create something that looks nice and works well
  • Imperative to distribute work more evenly across the department
The Solution

• The Voices Initiative at Oregon State University Libraries

- Multicultural Voices of Oregon

  For communities who have been traditionally marginalized in both the historical record and in historiography, oral histories can be a form of empowerment, a way in which community members can literally add their voice to the historical narrative. This web portal features interviews collected by the Oregon Multicultural Archives and the OSU Queer Archives, and reflects the experiences of Oregon’s African American, Asian American, Lesbian, and Native American communities, as well as LGBTQ+ people within OSU and Corvallis.

- Voices of Northwest Brewing

  This website features interviews collected for inclusion in the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archives (OHBA), the first archive in the U.S. devoted to creating, collecting, preserving and sharing records related to the brewing industry in the Pacific Northwest. The OHBA oral history collection documents the stories of people involved with Pacific Northwest hops and barley farming; craft and home brewing; cider, and mead; and scientific research.

- Voices of Oregon Agricultural College

  Consisting of a series of interviews conducted primarily in 1975 with a collection of individuals who maintained a connection to Oregon Agricultural College (as Oregon State University was known until 1927) the majority of these interviews were captured by staff working at the Homer Museum, which resided on the Oregon State campus for seventy years. The narratives offered in this exhibit by alumni, retired faculty, and more casual acquaintances of OAC have been digitized from recordings made to audiotapes and transcripts created with typewriters.

• A marriage of the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer, Omeka (and a little bit of other stuff) that is available to you!
The Oral History Metadata Synchronizer

- Web-based tool used to describe oral history interviews.

- Created by the University of Kentucky – message them and they’ll give you an account.

- Empowers:
  - Description of oral history interviews as discrete objects
  - Dynamic time stamping of full transcripts and...
  - ...importantly, the creation of interview indexes as an alternative to full transcription

- The Result: a workflow that is much easier to distribute across multiple skillsets, including many tasks that are suitable for student assistants.

http://oralhistoryonline.org
Anatomy of an OHMS Record

### Part 1

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Traditional Approach to OHMS Indexing

Philip Mote Oral History Interview, March 23, 2018
Oregon State University
Elizabeth Thokey, Interviewer (PHM oral history project)
Oregon State University Climate Change Research Oral History Collection

17:55 - Arriving at Oregon State University

20:47 - Oregon Climate Change Research Institute

Partial Transcript: Can you talk about the formation of OCCRI and its relationship to Oregon’s Global Warming Commission?

Segment Synopsis: Mote discusses the Oregon state legislature’s formation of the Oregon Climate Change Research Institute (OCCRI) and the Oregon Global Warming Commission. He explains that while based at OSU, OCCRI is a multi-university collaborative organization, serving policymakers by providing scientific research. Mote describes his role as more managing and leading research, rather than performing it directly. He discusses the Climate Impacts Research Consortium, a NOAA-funded collaborative group under OCCRI.

Keywords: Climate Impacts Research Consortium, Collaborative Climate Science Research; Oregon Climate Change Research Institute; Oregon Global Warming Commission

Subjects: Climate changes – Research; Climatic changes – Research; Law and legislation

24:47 - Communicating Science to Non-scientists

29:37 - Changes in Technology

35:15 - Envision Projects
Keyword-Heavy Approach to OHMS Indexing
Dynamic Timestamping in OHMS
**OSU’s Content Management Solution**

*Omeka* [open source content management system developed at George Mason University; free but not trivial to administer]

+  

*OHMSObject Plug-in* [also open source; embeds OHMS viewer within an Omeka item]

+  

*Custom .css and .php files* [for look, feel and organization of metadata; these files have been released by *OSU*]
The OHMSObject Plug-In

http://github.com/libmanuk/OHMSObject
The OHMSObject Plug-In

- Plug-in embeds the OHMS viewer within Omeka’s item view
- Requires adding two fields to Item-Type Metadata: ‘OHMS Object’ and ‘Interview Format’
  - This has to be done by your institution’s Omeka administrator.
  - Also means that the plug-in does not work with omeka.net – has to be a self-hosted Omeka instance.
Custom Scripting from OSU

This website is a product of the Oral History Program at the Special Collections and Archives Research Center, Oregon State University Libraries. It was created by Chris Peburn, Ryan Wiltz, Tab Edmundson-Morton, Gillian Bergmann, Clara Smith and Julien Todd.

Technical Note

Voices of Northwest Brewing uses the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer, the Omeka web publishing platform, and the Omeka Plugin to present born digital oral history media alongside full transcripts or, more often, detailed interview indexes. The website is built upon the Seasons Omeka theme, which has been lightly modified through custom CSS and PHP scripting. These pieces of custom code have been released and are freely available for download through the OSU Libraries and Press Github Instance.

https://github.com/osulp/scarc-omeka-themes/tree/master/oralhistories
Custom Scripting from OSU

• Built to work with the standard Omeka Seasons theme.
• Custom CSS provides five different color pallet options and other standardized visual formatting.
• Modified existing Seasons PHP file to format the item view within Omeka.
  • Specifically, different metadata fields were arranged in such a way as to make prominent the descriptive elements that we wanted to highlight.

https://github.com/osulp/scarc-omeka-themes/tree/master/oralhistories
Anatomy of an Omeka Record: Dublin Core
Anatomy of an Omeka Record: Item Type Metadata

Part 1

Part 2
Anatomy of an Omeka Record: Files
Multicultural Voices of Oregon

For communities who have been traditionally marginalized in both the historical record and in historiography, oral histories can be a form of empowerment, a way in which community members can literally add their voice to the historical narrative. In addition, the process of a community sharing its stories can be personal opportunities for self-reflection, an appreciation for the struggles endured, and a celebration of the community’s accomplishments thus far.

The Oregon Multicultural Archives (OMA) and OSU Queer Archives (OQQA) pro-actively reach out to African American, Asian American, Latino/a, and Native American communities, as well as LGBTQ+ people within OSU and Corvallis, to add their voices to the archives. In addition, both the OMA and OQQA collaborate with local community members and OSU students on projects to train them to conduct interviews and become active participants in creating a more diverse and inclusive historical record.

Presented by the Oral History Program at the Special Collections and Archives Research Center, Oregon State University Libraries

Powered by Omeka and the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer.
Voices of Northwest Brewing

The Oregon Hops and Brewing Archives, established in 2013, is the first of its kind in the U.S., creating, collecting, preserving, and sharing records that tell the unique story of the Northwest brewing industries.

The Oregon Hops and Brewing Archives Oral History Collection is a growing repository of interviews with industry professionals, journalists and community members. More specifically, this collection documents the stories of people involved with Pacific Northwest hops and barley farming; craft and home brewing, cider, and mead; and scientific research.

Use any of the navigation links above to enter the site. For a full listing of the oral history interviews deposited in the Oregon Hops and Brewing Archives, see this page.

Presented by the Oral History Program at the Special Collections and Archives Research Center, Oregon State University Libraries

Powered by Omeka and the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer.
This exhibit consists of a series of interviews conducted primarily in 1979 with a collection of individuals who maintained a connection to Oregon Agricultural College, as Oregon State University was known until 1927. The majority of these interviews were captured by staff working at the Horner Museum, which resided on the Oregon State campus for seventy years.

From 1975 to 1992, the museum provided support for a vibrant oral history program that collected the stories of individuals who were important to campus life and, indeed, to the fabric of Oregon on multiple levels. Read today, the narratives offered in this exhibit by alumni, retired faculty, and more casual acquaintances of OnC, stand as just one example of the richness, vision and lasting value of the museum's oral history work.
Two More Voices Websites to Come in 2018
### NARRATORS: D-F

- **Brent Dalrymple**, Dean of the College of Oceanic and Atmospheric Sciences 1994-2001
- **Tracy Daugherty**, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of English and Creative Writing
- **Jodie Davaz**, student in Digital Communication Arts, University Honors College
  - *Student Media in a World of Change*
  - *A Year in the Life of Beaver’s Digest*
- **Jim Denison**, bachelor’s in Forest Engineering (1950), sixty years working in Oregon’s forests as a timber cruiser, land surveyor and forestry consultant
- **Tom Dietterich**, Distinguished Professor Emeritus of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science
- **Dennis Dlinick**, bachelor’s in General Agriculture (1973), staff member at National Geographic 1980-2015
- **Natalie Dollar**, Associate Dean of Arts and Sciences at OSU-Cascades
- **Jenne Dorn**, bachelor’s in Journalism (1973), multiple positions in the U.S. Department of Transportation
- **James Douglass**, Oregon State University’s Director of Bands 1966-1999
- **Michael Driscoll**, OSU graduate (1970), Atomic Veteran
- **Jeff Edgerton**, bachelor’s in Microbiology (1987), brewer
- **Don Essig**, bachelor’s in Elementary Education (1960), public address announcer for University of Oregon Ducks football and men’s basketball games
Thanks!

chris.petersen@oregonstate.edu

http://scarc.library.oregonstate.edu/oralhistory.html