Boswellizing OSU: On the Attempt to Create an Oral History of a Large Place

Chris Petersen
Library Faculty Association Seminar Series
June 9, 2017
OH 150: Sketches
(0:21:11)
2013: Getting Started
Initial Ambitions

• Project Budget: $60,000
• Project Goal: 50 Interviews (mostly alumni)
• Deadline for Completion: June 2015
Project Oral Historians
Incredible Student Assistants

(Plus eight more)
Technical Workflow

- Interviews captured using both video and audio recorders
- Video files stitched together in Adobe Premiere
- Three derivatives created: .m2t, .mpg, and .mp3 (stored in different places)
- .m2t files uploaded to OSU MediaSpace for initial presentation
Andy Landforce
2014: Spreading Our Wings
2014 Milestones

• Travel to Saratoga, CA; Norman, OK; Houston TX; Washington, D.C. and Bend, OR; Pendleton, OR

• Interview #50 (Beth Rietveld) captured on June 11, 2014

• Interview #100 (Dick Smiley) captured on November 21, 2014
Big Names

Terry Baker             Katharine Jefferts-Schori             Chris Johns             Jane Lubchenco             Don Pettit
Two Presidents
Project Portal
How It’s Made (Quick and Dirty Version)

- METS records mostly for structural and administrative metadata
- MODS used for bibliographic description
- TEI to encode transcripts
- Homebrew XML to encode themes and affiliations
- All interpreted by custom XSLT and XSL-FO to create HTML and PDF files via command line
2015: The Full Century
A New Mission

“The OSU Sesquicentennial Oral History Project attempts to holistically document the history, impact and ambitions of the university through the recollections of various alumni, faculty, staff, administrators and current students affiliated with OSU.”
2015 Milestones

• Travel to Denver, CO; Bend, OR and Klamath Falls, OR
• Interview #150 (Paul Turner) captured on June 24, 2015
• Interview #200 (Katy Barber) captured on November 12, 2015
• 101 interviews collected in one year!
Big Names

Ken Austin                      Tracy Daugherty                   Pat Reser Jim Rudd                          Patrick Stone
A Third President
Warren Washington
2016:
The Year of Typing
January 26, 2016: A Bad Day
Filling Gaps (Without a Budget)

Mike Beilstein  Sandy Macnab  Gloria O’Brien  Erwin Pearson  Darlene Russ-Eft
2017:
A Distinguished Conclusion
Distinguished Professors

Andy Blaustein       Margaret Burnett       Jon Lewis       Lew Semprini       Robert Tanguay
A Presumptuous Task

“The OSU Sesquicentennial Oral History Project attempts to holistically document the history, impact and ambitions of the university through the recollections of various alumni, faculty, staff, administrators and current students affiliated with OSU.”
How Did We Do?

• 110 sets of alumni interviews
  • Every decade from the 1930s to present
• 106 sets of faculty interviews
  • Every academic college, plus the Graduate School, Ecampus, the Honors College, LPI, OSULP and the MU
  • 23 Distinguished Professors
• 22 sets of staff interviews
• 10 sets with current students
• 24 sets of Extension and Experiment Station interviews
• 12 interviews focusing on HMSC as a major topic
• 5 interviews focusing on OSU-Cascades as a major topic
• Specific interviews focusing on Sea Grant, Space Grant and Sun Grant
Demographics

- 134 males; 60 females; 13 mixed groups
- **Colleges Represented:**
  - Liberal Arts – 49
  - Agricultural Sciences – 37
  - Science – 36
  - Engineering – 22
  - Education – 21
  - Business – 17
  - Public Health and Human Sciences – 15
  - Earth, Ocean and Atmospheric Sciences – 12
  - Forestry – 9
  - Veterinary Medicine – 5
  - Pharmacy – 2
Topical Strengths (n>10)

- Athletics (30)
- Environmental Sustainability (20)
- Fisheries and Wildlife (10)
- International Studies (20)
- Journalism (17)
- Military (33)
- Multiculturalism (47)
- Oceanography (15)
- Public Service (29)
- Women – Advancement of (29)
Final Numbers

• Project
  • 242 interviews
  • 348:24:23 total recording time
  • 2.85 million words of transcription
  • 1,770 gigabytes born digital

• Portal
  • 275 interviews
  • 405:49:18 total recorded time
  • 3.3 million words of transcription