Voices of the Northwest: Novel Approaches to Oral History Across the Region

Chris Petersen, Oregon State University
Cynthia Lopez, Pacific University
Nathan Pedersen, Deschutes Public Library
Randy Williams, Utah State University

SESSION 4.1
CONFERENCE OF INTERMOUNTAIN ARCHIVISTS / NORTHWEST ARCHIVISTS JOINT MEETING
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The Oregon State University Sesquicentennial Oral History Project: A Document and a Cornerstone

CHRIS PETERSEN
SENIOR FACULTY RESEARCH ASSISTANT
SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND ARCHIVES RESEARCH CENTER
OREGON STATE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES AND PRESS
Background

Jennifer Lee (right), 1982

Ilona Fry, 1980
Initiated Spring 2013

“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.”

One of several projects sponsored in anticipation of OSU’s 150th anniversary in 2018.

The largest oral history project ever conducted at OSU.
A Large Project

- More than 400 hours of total interview time, 3.2 million words of transcription, and 1.7 terabytes of born digital video and audio

- More than 100 sets of interviews with OSU alumni from the 1930s to present

- More than 100 sets of interviews with faculty from each of OSU’s colleges

- 22 sets of interviews with OSU staff; 10 sets with current students
Points of Emphasis

- All three campuses (Corvallis, Newport, Bend)
- OSU Statewide (Extension and Experiment Station staff from every major region of Oregon; OSU ECampus as well)
- Land, Sea, Space and Sun Grant missions
- The Campaign for OSU
- Travel outside of Oregon
  - Denver, Colorado; Houston, Texas; Norman, Oklahoma; Saratoga, California; Washington, D.C.
Major Personalities

- Fifty-Seven Administrators
- Twenty-Nine holders of public office (past and present)
- Twenty-Three OSU Distinguished Professors
- Thirteen Student Athletes (past and present)
- Nine Student Activists (past and present)
- Four Members of the OSU Board of Trustees
- Three OSU Presidents
- Two National Medal of Science recipients; two former heads of NOAA
- One Heisman Trophy winner; one astronaut and...

...one Atomic Veteran; one retired carpenter who became a poet; one greenhouse worker and union activist; one OSU drop-out turned independent theatre owner...
A Dedicated Portal
Digital objects described using METS and MODS
Transcripts encoded using TEI
METS, MODS, and TEI interpreted by XSL
HTML and PDF files created as the end product
No HTML is created by hand
Website generated through a simple Command Line function
Website is generated from scratch every time a change is made
Static pages uploaded en masse
Very extensible and based primarily on recycled code
An efficient workflow for us, but would be somewhat difficult to implement across institutions
...not great...
- Currently using a home-brewed LOCKSS set-up
  - Redundancy provided through two RAID arrays that are, unfortunately, located in precisely the same place
  - Added redundancy through use of personal Box account

...but help is on the way!
- Library is testing Archivematica to be used in concert with Amazon S3 as a preservation solution for its digital content
Cornerstone of a Robust Program
The Voices Initiative

• Voices of Northwest Brewing (2017)
• Multicultural Voices of Oregon (2017)
• Voices of Oregon Agricultural College (2017)
• Iconic Voices of OSU (2018)
• Voices of OSU Women (2018 – class project)
• Voices of a Warming Planet (2018)
Thank You!

chris.petersen@oregonstate.edu

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