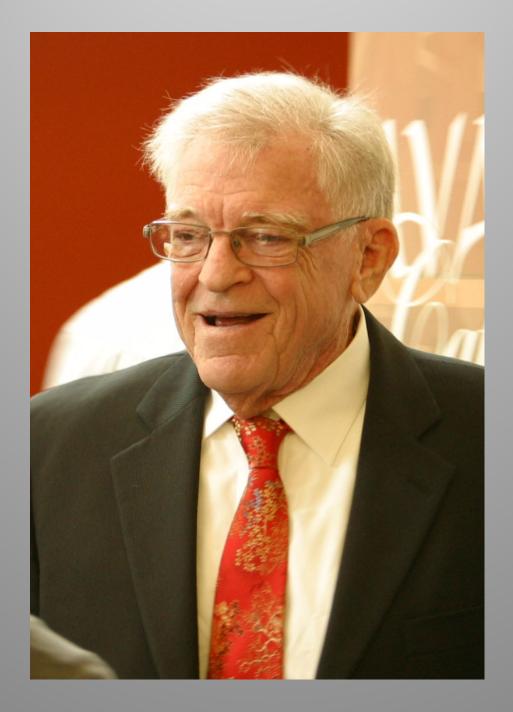
Doing Oral History at OSU



A Tale of Three Time Zones





The Raw Material of Historiography

• Yin:

— "Oral history can be a means for transforming both the content and purpose of history. It can be used to change the focus of history itself, and open up new areas of inquiry; it can break down barriers...[and] give back to the people who made and experienced history, through their own words, a central place." (Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*)

The Raw Material of Historiography

• Yang:

 "Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing and what they think they did." (Alessandro Portelli, *History Workshop Journal*, 12, Autumn 1981)







LIFE'S ALL ABOUT FINDING SOMEBODY ON THE SAME PAGE

Gear

• Digital recorder, lavalier mic, 16 GB memory card, microphone cable, case (\$550 total)



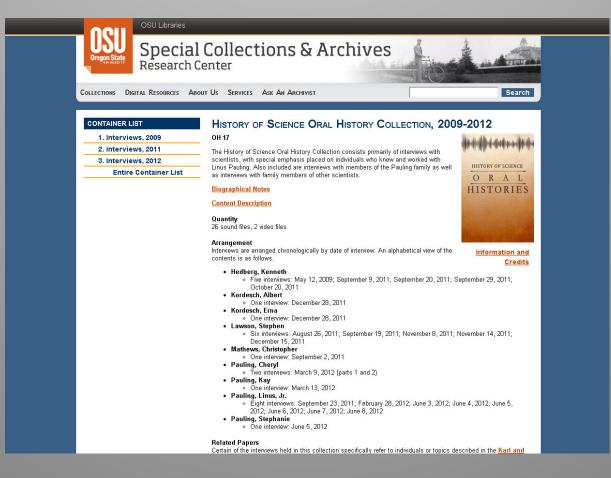
- Arrangements
 - Pick a quiet place
 - Send them the permissions form
 - Try to get a copy of their vita
 - Anticipate at least 60 minutes up to 2 hours

- Preparation
 - Try to create a timeline of their life
 - Advantage: you know how the story "ends"
 - Ask questions relevant to historical era/material & environmental circumstances
 - Remember that they are people and that, in many ways, we are driven by many of the same impulses (projection/empathy)
 - Prepare topics more than questions

- Interviewing
 - Make sure they sign the form
 - Have them formally introduce themselves
 - The Golden Rule: Ask your question then shut up
 - Listen carefully; make notes as needed; be prepared to freelance
 - Pay attention to your time
 - At the end, ask if you missed anything important

- Transcription
 - Express Scribe!
 - Do not transcribe every verbal tic
 - Add timestamps every five minutes
 - Edit your transcript
 - Send to subject for finalization

• **Description**



- Archiving
 - Transcripts and mp3 files live on SCARC file server
 - Archival wav files live on Libraries archival server (zeus)
 - Paper transcripts created in certain cases for inclusion with other physical materials

The Oral History Tradition at OSU



The Oral History Tradition at OSU: University History

- OH 03 History of Oregon State University, 1956-1980 (22 interviews and 5 other sound recordings)
- OH 07 A.L. Strand, 1949-1985 (10 interviews)
- OH 09 Voices of Oregon State University, 1995-2010 (20+ interviews & growing)
- OH 11 College of Home Economics, 1968-1985 (9 interviews)
- OH 13 Oregon State University Alumni, 2005-2008 (3 interviews)

The Oral History Tradition at OSU: Local/Regional History

- OH 01 Oregon Pioneers, 1975-1976 (33 interviews)
- OH 02 Robert C. Ingalls, 1977 (1 interview)
- OH 06 Soap Creek Valley History Project, 1978-1995 (12 interviews)
- OH 10 Horner Museum Oral History Collection, 1964-1992 (290 interviews!)

The Oral History Tradition at OSU: Natural Resources

- OH 05 Agriculture, Forestry and Oregon History, 1949-1996 (12 interviews)
- OH 08 Oregon Emergency Farm Labor Service, 1992 (5 interviews)
- OH 14 Oregon State University Extension Service, 2007-2009 (16 interviews)

The Oral History Tradition at OSU: Multicultural Topics

- OH 04 Basques of Harney County, 1976-2001 (14 interviews)
- OH 12 Native American Language, [Tolowa & Tutuni] 1962-1964 (57 audiotapes)
- OH 15 Japanese-American Association of Lane County, 1994-2008 (11 interviews)
- OH 18 Oregon Multicultural Archives, 2011-2012 (10 interviews)

The Oral History Tradition at OSU: History of Science

- OH 16 How OSU Grew Nuclear Science, 2009-2010 (11 interviews)
- OH 17 History of Science, 2009-2012 (26 interviews)

My Subjects

- Alcena Boozer (x2) and Carl Deiz (x2)
- Ken Hedberg (x4)
- Albert & Erna Kordesch
- Steve Lawson (x6)
- Chris Mathews
- Cheryl Pauling (x2) and Kay Pauling
- Linus Pauling Jr. (x8)
- Stephanie Pauling
- Bill Robbins

Ken Hedberg (1:58)

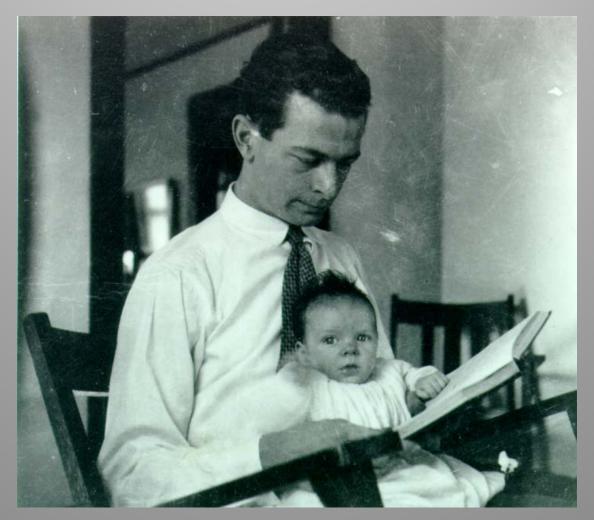




Steve Lawson (3:01)

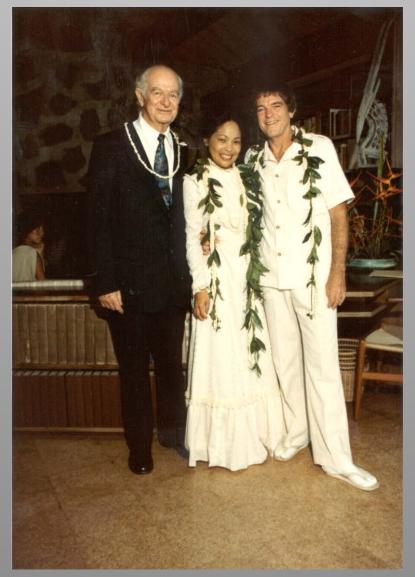








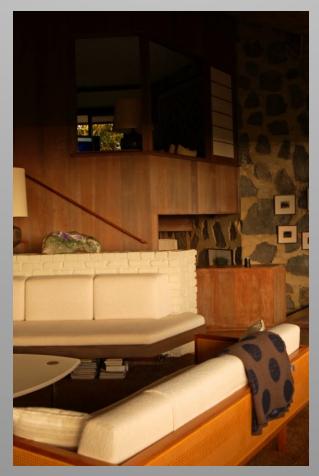








Linus Pauling Jr. (2:04)





What Next?

- More interviews
- Improved description
- Online access?

Thanks!

