
INDIANA ARCHIVES

Oral History Collections

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Having surveyed local history archives over the past four years, the Indiana Archives series broadens its geographical and methodological scope this year to explore some oral history resources available in the state. As a relatively new research tool and field of study, oral history makes its most obvious contribution in compensating, at least partially, for the absence of written documents. Yet oral history also has been part of a broader effort to redefine the boundaries of traditional scholarship, diversify its sources of information, and democratize the process of historical interpretation. Indeed, oral history is unique in that it creates its own documents, and these records are by definition dialogues between history and memory, narratives describing past experiences through the present context of remembrance.

Oral history's potential value must therefore be tempered by an awareness that it is a product of historical consciousness, or the way people understand and articulate their pasts. Those who generate, read, and use oral testimony must guard against the uncritical acceptance of broad historical judgments made by those who have wielded political, economic, or social authority and the relegation of those not in such positions to a kind of impressionistic sideshow, with little more to offer than personal observations or recalled feelings. A second, related challenge is to welcome first-hand accounts of events while refraining from granting sole interpretive power to them, as if there were no independent sources of knowledge with which to assess their perspectives. Add to these issues thought-provoking questions about the selectivity of oral history subjects and speakers and about the legal and institutional guidelines affecting the interviewing process, and what was once a fairly freewheeling pursuit has become more complex, problematic, and reflective.

Indiana's oral historians have been addressing these and other concerns over the past three decades, and some of the products of

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their work are described in the following essays. Barbara Truesdell summarizes the extensive collection of narratives reflecting many disciplines and nations that is compiled at the Oral History Research Center at Indiana University, Bloomington, and the use of the narratives in recent scholarship. James Lane recounts the remarkable history of *Steel Shavings*, a journal based at Indiana University Northwest, which over the past twenty-five years has incorporated hundreds of oral accounts generated by students, faculty members, and community residents that highlight the economic, ethnic, and racial diversity of the state's Calumet region. Glenn McMullen outlines the steadily increasing integration of taped and transcribed interviews into collections processed at the Indiana Historical Society in Indianapolis and the society's funding of oral history initiatives that have often become part of larger projects on Indiana history.

These contributions suggest that the effort to preserve the collective memory of residents of Indiana and beyond is well established and growing. Hours of interviews are being conducted annually among elites and at the grassroots, and theoretical as well as logistical questions about the interviewing process continue. The next step, as these essays suggest, is to use these narratives in ways that respect diversity, acknowledge interrelationships, and depict an interactive past, one that reveals a conversation among various voices whose memories help construct a more comprehensive, more insightful understanding.

The Oral History Research Center at Indiana University, Bloomington

It is often said in oral history circles that when a person dies, a library burns to the ground. Oral history is one method for saving the story of an individual's life from that consuming fire. Oral history interviews preserve, record, and make available for future generations the memories, experiences, and opinions of individuals. Tape-recorded interviews not only collect unique facets of a person's existence, but also reflect the imprint left upon that individual's life by communities and events. Because of this duality in oral history, interviews provide new data, insight, and understanding for the study of history and culture when used in conjunction with written records or in situations where no written records exist.

The primary mission of the Oral History Research Center (OHRC) at Indiana University, Bloomington, is to foster the use of personal memory in the study of modern history. That mission encompasses archival, pedagogical, and research goals. First, the center raises funds to conduct interviews that preserve the oral history of Indiana, the Midwest, and the nation. Second, the center uses the funding it receives to train graduate students from history, folklore, anthropology, and other fields at Indiana University in the disci-

pline of oral history and the study of social memory. Third, the center contributes to the emerging scholarly study of memory by undertaking research projects that collect interviews to illuminate specific historical issues and events. To this end, the center fosters the use of oral history through access to its archives of interviews, through workshops on oral history methodology, and through its website at <www.indiana.edu/~ohrc/collect.htm>.

The OHRC began in 1968 under the direction of Indiana University history professor Oscar O. Winther. Its first project was to gather information for an institutional history of the university. The center's founding was also part of an innovative movement to bring the public into the academy and democratize the writing and transmission of history. While interviewing witnesses to historical events has long been recognized as a valuable research tool, the new center emphasized its value for a wide variety of historical subjects. The influence of social history, with its concentration on the lives of minorities and workers, as well as the impact of feminist and post-colonial/post-authoritarian academics have prompted the center to undertake projects not only for the history of Indiana but for the nation as well.

Since its establishment, the OHRC has gathered a steadily growing archive of interviews and collateral materials and a select library of noncirculating, secondary sources related to the center's mission. The archives currently holds over 1,600 interviews, with a particular focus on Indiana history. Approximately 85 percent of the collection is transcribed, and 50 percent of those transcripts include an index and table of contents with the interview. A copy of each edited, indexed transcript, along with the original audiotape, is housed at the Indiana University Archives for long-term preservation storage. The interviews are available to researchers in either location, although the level of accessibility in both places is determined by the permission forms that accompany interviews.

A list of the center's projects, with a brief summary of the topics covered in each project, is available in hard copy and online through the OHRC website. This collections list is updated regularly. The website has greatly increased the center's ability to serve researchers, providing information about the collection and the field of oral history and facilitating quick access to our reference resources through an e-mail link. Its text is in an easily readable format for those who do not have highly sophisticated graphics capabilities on their computers. The website has been used by researchers from such distant countries as Venezuela, Turkey, and China.

Like many other oral history centers in the United States, the OHRC specializes in projects with a regional focus. In documenting the history of "Middle America" or "the Heartland," the center has captured first-person accounts of the cultural, social, and economic forces that have affected this region, forces that have also been at work across

the United States. From Indiana's part of the so-called "Rust Belt" in the northwestern corner of the state, with its reliance on the steel and petrochemical industries, to small rural towns, dependent on agriculture and small industries such as furniture and veneer factories, to old "river towns" like Evansville and Madison that saw the earliest settlement of the state, OHRC oral histories have connected Indiana's regional narratives with national economic developments.

In addition to the regional strength of the OHRC archives, the center's collections and research initiatives encompass national and international topics. A recent study of mestizo identity in Central America, conducted in collaboration with the Indiana University Center for Latin American and Caribbean Studies, is one example of this wider perspective. Another is the center's cooperation with the Indiana University Russian and East European Institute and the university in Cluj, Romania, to help recover the history of that country's communist period. Such projects not only contribute to the advancement of knowledge in underrepresented areas of study, but also provide fertile ground for comparative research on issues such as ethnicity, nationalism, and the nature of democracy.

The OHRC's archive also serves as a resource for research, teaching, and public programming. The variety of reference questions addressed through the center indicates the potential of the archives. The center's holdings have been used for a Hollywood film about Alfred Kinsey's pioneering work on human sexuality; a documentary film on the life and music of composer Hoagy Carmichael; and a history of the Packard Motor Car Company used by James A. Ward in his *The Fall of the Packard Motor Car Company* (1995). The Indiana State Museum consulted the OHRC during the development of its labor history exhibits, as did the Monroe County Historical Society for an exhibit on the county's limestone industry.

The following sample of the OHRC's projects suggests the breadth of oral history as a discipline.

Biography: Oral history is an important resource for biographical research, as demonstrated by the center's studies of Indiana politicians Homer Capehart and John Hurt, Indiana University researcher Alfred Kinsey, and national figures Melvyn Douglas and Helen Gahagan Douglas. Ingrid W. Scobie's *Center Stage: Helen Gahagan Douglas, A Life* (1992), and the recent biographies of Alfred Kinsey by Jonathan Gathorne-Hardy, *Sex the Measure of All Things: A Life of Alfred C. Kinsey* (2000), and James H. Jones, *Alfred C. Kinsey: A Public/Private Life* (1997), drew upon these collections.

Institutional studies: The center uses oral history to study the intersection of individual lives with institutions of all kinds. Some projects have explored institutions that have a wide-ranging effect on American society, such as philanthropic foundations. *Fund Raisers: Their Careers, Stories, Concerns, and Accomplishments*, by Margaret A. Duronio and Eugene R. Tempel (1997), made use of these projects.

The OHRC has also studied state institutions, such as the Indiana Humanities Council, the Center on Philanthropy at Indiana University-Purdue University, Indianapolis, and Indiana University, Bloomington. And the center has explored the impact on their communities of local institutions, such as county historical societies and the influence of a single church in a small town in southern Indiana.

Industries and professions: This area is one of the strengths of the center's collection. It includes a study of the auto industry in Indiana, an oral history of labor unions in both the auto and coal industries, and a project documenting changes in the medical profession as seen by local physicians. Several projects have cast a wider net, recording the economic history of the state; the most recent addressed economic development as a cultural concept, tracing changes in three diverse areas of Indiana.

Community studies: The OHRC's community studies encompass rural towns such as Paoli in south central Indiana, communities with a predominantly industrial economy such as Whiting in the northwest, and vibrant urban centers such as Indianapolis. The center has examined other kinds of communities as well: ethnic communities composed of Korean, German, and Indian immigrants; black community initiatives, such as the Flanner House homes developed during the 1950s and 1960s in Indianapolis to provide low-cost housing to African Americans in an era of segregation and real estate redlining; and women's community efforts, such as Bloomington's women's shelter, Middle Way House. The OHRC's ethnic community collections contributed to *Peopling Indiana: The Ethnic Experience*, edited by Robert M. Taylor and Connie A. McBirney (1996). John Bodnar's *Our Towns: Remembering Community in Indiana* (2001) brings together a number of community studies the center has done over the past thirty years.

Life cycle studies: This is a relatively new area for the OHRC, the result of a collaboration with the Poynter Center for the Study of Ethics and American Institutions at Indiana University, Bloomington. The Open Society funded an examination of the experience of death in America, using the OHRC's earlier social history of Paoli to place the study in a context and identify interviewees. The archives also holds David Ransel's interviews with Russian and Tatar women about childbirth and child-rearing practices, topics examined in his *Village Mothers: Three Generations of Change in Russia and Tataria* (2000).

Period studies: Oral history collects first-person perspectives on major social movements or cultural changes, offering a human scale for massive forces at work in history. Among the pivotal periods of the twentieth century represented in the OHRC's collection are the civil rights movement, World War I, and World War II.

Event studies: These oral history projects focus on unexplored facets of a single historical event. This approach has produced stud-

ies ranging from the impact of a tornado in the city of Louisville, to the making of the atomic bomb, to an auto strike in Anderson, Indiana.

Like other archives, the center faces the challenges of preserving its collection and increasing access to the interviews. The OHRC's current National Endowment for the Humanities grant to create a searchable electronic database of the collection online will greatly improve the center's ability to serve researchers by allowing keyword searches of the interviews. As part of an initiative to broaden its potential, in the fall of 2001 the OHRC will change its name to the Center for the Study of History and Memory. Latin American scholar Daniel James will join the center as codirector with Bodnar, and the directors will consider adding seminars and classes to the center's services.

The Oral History Research Center archives is an irreplaceable resource for the history of Indiana in the twentieth century and for many of the great events, social movements, and cultural transformations of the last century. The center anticipates even greater interest in and need for the study of oral history and cultural memory as a means to preserve the past in years to come: in an age in which many are moving toward lives that leave no paper trail—communicating by electronic mail and voice mail and recording documents in computer files that can vanish with the touch of a delete key—oral history offers a way to record a person's memories and preserve for the future the "library" of an individual life.

Life in the Calumet Region during the Twentieth Century: A History of *Steel Shavings*

The internet and digital revolutions have opened up all sorts of possibilities for disseminating oral testimony. For most of the late-twentieth century, however, publishing *Steel Shavings* magazine seemed the best way to make the fruits of oral history research available to students, families, community residents, and scholars interested in "Nearby History" and northwest Indiana's rich heritage.¹ Originally the brainchild of Indiana University Northwest historian Ronald D. Cohen, the name *Steel Shavings* underscored the enormous impact of area steel mills on Calumet regionites. Steel industry jobs had originally lured most of those who settled in northwest Indiana in the twentieth century.² Although the area is still a major American steel producer, the diminution of that influence because of automation has been quite dramatic since the magazine's debut in

¹See David E. Kyvig and Myron A. Marty, *Nearby History: Exploring the Past Around You* (Walnut Creek, Calif., 2000).

²See Powell A. Moore, *The Calumet Region: Indiana's Last Frontier* (Indianapolis, 1959); James B. Lane, *"City of the Century": A History of Gary, Indiana* (Bloomington, Ind., 1978).

1975.³ The publication is dedicated to "Life in the Calumet Region during the Twentieth Century," with special emphasis on the social history of the family.⁴ It has undergone numerous transformations but has consistently showcased Indiana University Northwest student and faculty work based on oral history research. Many original papers and interviews contained in various issues are housed in the university's Calumet Regional Archives (CRA).⁵

CRA's oral history component was in part the product of the author's research interests and editorship of *Steel Shavings*, but it also reflected the concern that the interviews should be processed more systematically (storing tapes, securing valid permission agreements, allowing interviewees to review and edit transcripts, and other procedures). CRA archivist Steve McShane has facilitated the tasks of preservation, cataloguing, and disseminating holdings on the internet. In 2001 the collection includes approximately one thousand audiotapes and videotapes, many with typescripts. Some have been donated by scholars, civic groups such as the Gary Historical Society and the Latino Historical Society, and media interviewers. The CRA also seeks to videotape all donors who contribute manuscript collections and to respond to inquiries and tips about community residents who are moving away or rapidly aging and whose reminiscences would be well worth recording.⁶

Over the past quarter century the oral interviews published in *Steel Shavings* have centered largely around the acculturation process among immigrant families settling in northwest Indiana; the work experiences, folk tales, and union struggles of Calumet region steelworkers; black political power during the administration of Gary Mayor Richard G. Hatcher, 1967–1987; and the social history of Indiana University Northwest. What has emerged from these oral accounts has not only illuminated these areas but occasionally captured unusual perspectives on the region's past as well.⁷

³The time may soon come when Jean Shepherd's phrase "Shards and Midden Heaps" is an accurate reflection of a vanishing steelworker world in Gary, as has happened in Youngstown, Ohio, and elsewhere. Jean Shepherd, *In God We Trust: All Others Pay Cash* (New York, 1972), 235; Robert Bruno, *Steelworker Alley: How Class Works in Youngstown* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1999).

⁴Social history has come into vogue during the past quarter century. See Michael Gordon, ed., *The American Family in Social-Historical Perspective* (New York, 1973); Steven Mintz and Susan Kellogg, *Domestic Revolutions: A Social History of American Family Life* (New York, 1988).

⁵On the CRA see Ronald D. Cohen and James B. Lane, "Establishing a Program: The Calumet Regional Archives," *Drexel Library Quarterly*, XIII (October 1977), 105-14; Stephen G. McShane, "Documenting 'Indiana's Last Frontier': The Calumet Regional Archives," in John M. Glen et al., "Indiana Archives: Indiana since 1945," *Indiana Magazine of History*, XCI (September 1995), 326-42.

⁶The Calumet Regional Archives website can be found at <www.IUN.edu/~lib/cra-home.htm>.

⁷*Steel Shavings* is approximately 80 percent self-sustaining, with the balance emanating from its home institution, which uses the magazine in various promotions. The author's colleague Terry Lukas and Larry Klemz of Home Mountain Press have provided invaluable help.

Families of the Calumet Region: Volumes 1-8

Rose Daniels: What was Election Day like in 1967?

Mayor Richard G. Hatcher: They had National Guard troops and tanks around the city because of all these threats on my life and a lot of talk about violence taking place.⁸

1. *Selections from Gary's History* (1975). Edited by Cohen, this volume is a community study with an emphasis on ethnic families (mainly Greek), urban institutions, and neighborhood support groups.

2. *Families of the Calumet Region* (1976). Coedited with Cohen, interviews relived migration experiences from Eastern and Central Europe, the Netherlands, Latin America, and the American South to the industrial cities of Gary, Hammond, East Chicago, and Whiting. Most contributors trace their families' fortunes and the Americanization process over several generations, including movements to outlying suburban communities.⁹

3. *Families of the Calumet Region during the Depression of the 1930s* (1977). The thirty articles included in this volume collectively constitute a case study of survival strategies. Strong ethnic bonds were often essential to keeping families intact through desperate times. Narrators discuss the nonunion era ("You Couldn't Say Boo"), descriptions of successful organizational drives, and work relief and other New Deal services that transformed the Calumet region into a Democratic stronghold.

4. *Cruisin' in the Region in the Fifties* (1978). Edited by Cohen, respondents in this study describe events of importance about their lives, including the 1955 Whiting Refinery explosion at Standard Oil and the 1959 U.S. Steel strike. Other interviews describe family interactions with urban institutions, in particular churches and schools.¹⁰

5. *Families of the Calumet Region during the World War II Years* (1979). Narrators recall the momentous effects of the war on the habits, obligations, social opportunities, and lifestyles of men, women, and children of all ethnic backgrounds. "A Time of Shocks," 1941–1945, was for some "A Time to Forget." The homefront was a beehive of activity—for forty-four months Mae's Louisiana Kitchen in Gary's central district never closed. Thousands of war workers and veterans eventually moved into the middle class.

6. *Race-Relations in the Calumet Region during the 1960s* (1980). Interviews in this volume reveal the pain and trauma created by generations of prejudice and neglect. There was a slow ebbing of insti-

⁸*Steel Shavings*, VI (1980), 29.

⁹James B. Lane, "A Note on *Steel Shavings*: Family Histories of the Calumet Region," *Indiana Magazine of History*, LXXVI (June 1980), 123-28.

¹⁰These narratives reflect Cohen's interest in the history of Gary schools. See Ronald D. Cohen and Raymond A. Mohl, *The Paradox of Progressive Education: The Gary Plan and Urban Schooling* (Port Washington, N.Y., 1979).

tutionalized racism, but patience was at a premium. Many whites perceived black militancy as a threat to their families' livelihood. Suburban white youths had little meaningful contact with African Americans except for occasional encounters in sports events or perhaps the weekly visit of a maid. Student-conducted interviews explore reactions to busing, changing neighborhoods, public employee strikes, and the election in Gary of Richard G. Hatcher, the country's first black mayor.¹¹

7. *Work Experiences in the Calumet Region* (1981). A variety of on-the-job experiences, such as those of a grocer, teacher, surgical nurse, and fire captain, are examined, with particular attention given to steelworkers, most of whom had strong ethnic ties ("Greek Immigrant's Dreams," "Polish Steelworker") and job loyalties ("Four Decades at Youngstown," "Thirty-year Man"). Local 1010 activist at Inland Steel, Cliff "Cowboy" Mezo, interviewed by Sam Cozza, lamented the increasing bureaucratization and complacency of the top union hierarchy: "The guy who is getting it in the neck is the poor working slob. He feels he's getting kicked from both sides."¹²

8. *Families of the Calumet Region during the Roaring 20s* (1982). Most respondents were children during the 1920s. Depending often on their race, class, and gender, they recall a fun-filled, carefree era or a time of prejudice and toil. The Ku Klux Klan had a rancid effect on local politics; Fords clogged Dunes Highway on summer weekends. Like elsewhere in the nation, it was an age of ballyhoo. Victorian standards, never strong in the Calumet region, were in retreat. Together the interviews depict the twenties as a decade of slowly expanding opportunities.

Special Issues: Volumes 9-16

Linda Martisovic: Do you have nightmares about Vietnam?

Fire Fighter: I had nightmares every day for the first four years. I'd wake up dripping wet. One dream was so real I could feel the mud in my boots.¹³

9. *Life of the Calumet Region during the 1970s* (1983). Numerous narrators discuss emigration from Southeast Asia, Greece, and Puerto Rico, as well as white flight to bedroom enclaves outside Gary; others focus on school experiences, delving into dress code controversies, teacher strikes, and drug raids conducted with police dogs. Doc-

¹¹Mayor Carl Stokes of Cleveland was also elected on November 7, 1967, but not officially certified until six and a half hours after Hatcher. See Richard G. Hatcher, "Judge Not Lest You Be Judged: Judicial Selection and Race in Indiana," unpublished manuscript, p. 43 (CRA, Gary, Indiana).

¹²*Steel Shavings*, VII (1981), 20-21. Studs Terkel also interviewed Cliff Mezo. Terkel, *The Great Divide: Second Thoughts on the American Dream* (New York, 1988), 168-75. Mezo's thoughts are in a section entitled "Hired Hands."

¹³*Steel Shavings*, XV (1988), 5. In 1981, the year the Iran hostages returned home to a hero's welcome, some Vietnam vets, including "Fire Fighter," preferred to remain anonymous.

umenting the "Aging of the Region" are interviews conducted in connection with a Tri-City Mental Health Center "Life Revue" project.

10. *Sports in the Calumet Region* (1984). Interviews cover a wide spectrum of activities dating back to recreational programs of settlement houses, Catholic parishes, and industrial leagues. Also examined are high school basketball, Little League baseball, young women's accomplishments in sports such as diving, community boosterism, the socialization of adolescents, the use of leisure time, athletics as a path to social mobility, and various race, class, and gender issues.¹⁴

11. *Darnell Lee's "2545 Pierce Street: From Ghetto to Limbo"* (1985). Though not strictly oral history, this haunting autobiography of a black man striving to overcome poverty and a broken home shares motifs with earlier "Family History" volumes.¹⁵

12. *Life in the Calumet Region during the Formative Years, 1900-20* (1986). Northwest Indiana was a microcosm of America during a period of massive immigration, rapid urbanization, boss rule, and triumphant industrialization, all of which scarred the lakefront landscape for the entire twentieth century. Residents recall "Scrub Boards and Tubs" in the kitchen, "Free Food and Drink" at political rallies, "Peddlers with Wheelbarrows" delivering coal, "Twelve-Hour Shifts" at the mill, and "Cyrillic Russian Classes" at St. Michael's Church.

13. *Latinos in the Calumet Region* (1987).¹⁶ These family histories make frequent reference to public events—festivals, holiday pageants, and parades—and provide anecdotal glimpses of group dynamics, organizational activities, childrearing practices, and generational strains. Many subjects struggled against discrimination and cultural assimilation. Featured are interviews with Chicano activist David Castro, migrant worker Pilar Gamos Norric, and members of the politically powerful Arredondo family of East Chicago.¹⁷

¹⁴Inspiration for this issue came from local historian Tom Higgins and reflected growing scholarly interest in sports history. See Donald Mrozek, *Sports and American Mentality, 1880-1910* (Knoxville, Tenn., 1983), and Jules Tygiel, *Baseball's Great Experiment: Jackie Robinson and His Legacy* (expanded ed., New York, 1997).

¹⁵At the time the author saw striking parallels with Piri Thomas's *Down These Mean Streets* (New York, 1967). See James B. Lane, "Beating the Barrio: Piri Thomas and *Down These Mean Streets*," *English Journal*, LXI (September 1972), 814-23. In retrospect, further interviews of Lee family members would have produced a more complete story, though the veracity of some information was confirmed with Lee's sister-in-law.

¹⁶Mexican-American communities in East Chicago and Gary have existed for over eighty years, and Puerto Ricans began immigrating to the Calumet region during the 1940s. Broadly speaking, the term "Latino" is used in reference to those whose families were from Spanish-speaking countries or territories in the western hemisphere. See James B. Lane and Edward J. Escobar, *Forging a Community: Latinos in Northwest Indiana, 1919-1975* (Chicago, 1987).

¹⁷The Arredondo group interview was part of a Tri-City Mental Health Center project entitled "Pass the Culture, Please." Papers related to the project are in the CRA.

14. *The Postwar Period in the Calumet Region, 1945–50* (1988). During an age of anxiety and affluence, region residents sought to buy homes for their expanding families, a variety of products that had been in short supply during the war, and a new item on the postwar market: television. Coedited with McShane, this volume contains interviews on such subjects as the 1945 Froebel Strike, the harassment of leftists during the post-World War II Red Scare, and the anticrime Women's Citizens Committee.

15. *Vietnam Vets from the Calumet Region* (1988). Oral histories here make vivid how a flawed foreign policy degraded idealism and destroyed innocence. Special features include recollections of Vietnam Veterans Memorial Committee leader Jim Chancellor and excerpts from *Payback* by reporter Joe Klein, who reconstructed the life and times of 1981 suicide victim Gary Cooper, a resident of the poor white community of Black Oak.

16. *Concerned Citizens against the Bailly Nuclear Site* (1988). James E. Newman, who donated newsletters of the "Concerned Citizens" to the CRA, agreed to coedit this volume. It includes interviews with the major participants of the Concerned Citizens as well as members of a more militant antinuclear group, the Bailly Alliance, which mobilized citizen action to stop a utility company from building a nuclear power plant on the southern shore of Lake Michigan.

"Life" in the Calumet Region: Volumes 17-24¹⁸

Greg Nordyke: Why did you go into the mill in 1963?

Mike Olszanski: It was a place to make a quick buck. . . . Many of us went in with the idea of working a summer, buying a car and then moving on to something else.¹⁹

17. *Life in the Calumet Region during the 1930s* (1988). This volume contains a potpourri of stories about Hotel Gary maids, a "Singing Milkman," policy runners, Summer Gardens picnic grove frolickers, and "Grandma Boots," who produced clothes out of flour sacks, collected rainwater in a tub, and made bootleg liquor in her cellar. Also included are Depression experiences—"Oatmeal Three Times a Day"—as well as a digest of earlier *Steel Shavings* excerpts on the 1930s and some literary treasures.

18. *Life in the Calumet Region during the 1930s: John Letica's "Totin' Ties in the Harbor"* (1989). A Croatian-American steelwork-

¹⁸While most issues continued to stress family, the word "life," as in the phrase "everyday life," seemed an accurate summary of the social historian's goal of depicting some balance among all aspects of human activity, including primary group ties, school and workplace experiences, and leisure time pursuits. As Studs Terkel put it in reference to Chicago, a city that has had a tremendous influence on the people of northwest Indiana and is technically part of the Calumet region, "I guess I was seeking some balance in the wildlife of the city as Rachel Carson sought it in nature." Terkel, *Division Street: America* (New York, 1967).

¹⁹*Steel Shavings*, XIX (1990), 59.

er talks about the death of his mother, his relationship with his brother and father, and coping with hard times. Accompanying this between-the-cultures autobiography is an interview with the deceased author's brother Bart and family photos.

19. *Calumet Region Steelworkers' Tales* (1990). Colorful anecdotes confirm the validity of Richard M. Dorson's "folklore of steelworkers" findings regarding recollections of "the old days," "deaths and accidents," "thefts," "goofing off," "rats," and "mill characters."²⁰ Supplementing these oral memories of workplace experiences are lengthy interviews with women, Latinos, and union activists.

20. *A History of Portage, Indiana* (1991). Indiana University Northwest students employed oral histories to research Portage's modern history. The editor combined remembrances of several civic leaders, material from a collection of oral histories in the local library, and documentation from press clippings and council minute books to produce a profile of the town's recent past.

21. *Life in the Calumet Region during the 1980s* (1992). Narrators recall family dynamics, school functions, gender relationships, work and leisure activities, crime, scandal, strikes (the steel lockout of 1986–1987 was Gary's longest ever), and other local disasters, such as the collapse of the Cline Avenue bridge extension ramp. The volume also contains an installment of "An Oral History of the Richard G. Hatcher Administration, 1980–1987," then in decline due to a drying up of federal funds.

22. *Homefront: The World War II Years in the Calumet Region* (1993). During a time of ration coupons, Victory gardens, scrap iron drives, and leg makeup to simulate stockings, the war years had a profound effect on women, youth, and the men who stayed behind, as the reminiscences in this volume make clear. Memorable accounts are provided by Tom Higgins, an AOAs (All Out Americans) leader at Holy Angels School, and defense worker Shirley Franzitta, who sent her pinup picture to a dozen GI pen pals.

23. *Rah Rahs & Rebel 'Rousers: Relationships between the Sexes in the Calumet Region during the Teen years of the 1950s* (1994). Oral histories explore the daily lives of people whose school experiences, leisure habits, gender roles, and mating rituals were a byproduct of steelworkers being able to provide their families with a middle-class standard of living.²¹ A preoccupation with sex, cars, and rock 'n roll gave the 1950s a special flavor. Considering the supposed secretiveness and repression of the era, the respondents' stories are remarkably vivid.

²⁰Richard M. Dorson, *Land of the Millrats: Urban Folklore in Indiana's Calumet Region* (Cambridge, Mass., 1981); James B. Lane, "Steelworkers' Tales: *Land of the Millrats* Revisited," *Oral History Association Journal* (September 1991).

²¹On the effect of consumer capitalism on family togetherness during the 1950s see Stephanie Coontz, *The Way We Never Were: American Families and the Nostalgia Trap* (New York, 1992), 169–73.



COUPLE AT GARY ROOSEVELT HIGH SCHOOL
MILITARY BALL, C. 1959

Steel Shavings (1994)

24. *Louis Vasquez's "Weasal"* (1995) This self-proclaimed East Chicago "Harbor Rat" recalls how friends were forced to leave during the repatriation programs of the early 1930s. Vasquez served in World War II and went on to become head of the East Chicago LAVs (Latin-American Vets), as well as a steelworker and theater entrepreneur.

A Delicate Mix: Volumes 25-32

Jason Harsha: What was your neighborhood like?

Sam Barnett: Glen Park had a lot of nuts. . . . One day I was in the car with my mom, and this guy was walking down Broadway with a pair of face glasses with bug eyes. He looked like his eyes were hanging out.²²

25. *Family Life in the Calumet Region: Social Trends and Racial Tensions during the 1960s* (1996). The nuclear family proved resilient despite attacks on traditional institutions during the turbulent 1960s.²³ Narrators describe the diversity of region lifestyles during a decade of experimentation. The editor contributed three long interviews of a Vietnam vet and two young mothers, as well as an installment of "An Oral History of the Richard G. Hatcher Administration," tracing Hatcher's rise to political prominence in the 1960s.

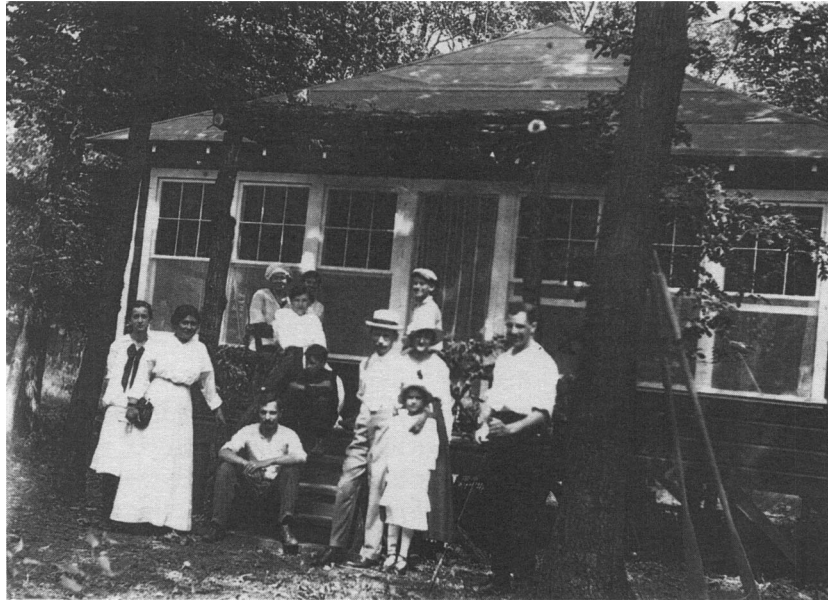
26. *A History of Cedar Lake* (1997). Supplementing the plentiful documentation of Cedar Lake's pioneer years, oral history seminar students recorded the town's more recent past, conducting more than forty interviews. Additional oral accounts, excerpts of news articles, town board minutes, and the unpublished writings of local historian Beatrice Horner offer further insights into a community whose vicissitudes have often mirrored the physical and cultural changes experienced in the region during the twentieth century.

27. *Froebel Daughters of Penelope* (1998). After discovering two autobiographical manuscripts written by daughters of Greek immigrants who grew up in Gary's working-class district during the 1930s and 1940s and attended Froebel School, known as the city's immigrant school, the women and three other "Daughters of Penelope" (also the name of a leading Greek-American sorority of their day) patiently agreed to extensive interviews. Although each of their home environments was unique, their parents generally wanted Greek spoken in the house, expected offspring to contribute to the family income from a young age, and frowned on dating, especially with "outsiders."

28. *Tales of Lake Michigan & the Northwest Indiana Dunelands* (1998). Narrators range among a variety of subjects, from moonlight beach parties and fishing tales to strange disappearances and boating accidents. Sprinkled within these interviews are poems, fiction,

²²*Steel Shavings*, XXXI (2001), 164.

²³See Andrew Cherlin, *Marriage, Divorce, Remarriage* (rev. ed., Cambridge, Mass., 1992).



A CITY FAMILY COMES TO CEDAR LAKE TO OWN A COTTAGE, 1924

Steel Shavings (1997)

folklore, the taped confessions of a powerboat pickup artist, and an oral history of Edgewater, a disappearing community lying within the boundaries of the Indiana Dunes National Lakeshore.

29. *Tie-Dyes & Color Lines: Life in the Calumet Region during the 1970s* (1999). Some young subjects describe efforts to cope with the "Traumas of Growing Up." Baby boomers were reaching adulthood during an age of limits that saw unemployment lines lengthen as industrial jobs disappeared due to mechanization.²⁴ Among the special features supplementing the student-conducted interviews are a lengthy account of a Vietnam veteran's adjustment to civilian life and the final oral history installment of the Hatcher mayoral administration, tracing the fundamental demographic and political metamorphosis Gary experienced during the 1970s.

30. *"Steelworkers Fight Back": Rank & File Insurgency in the Calumet Region during the 1970s* (2000). Coedited with Mike Olszanski, this study employs over three dozen interviews, as well as union records and other primary sources, to recount the history of Inland Steel Company's Union 1010 (known as the "Red Local"). Highlights of the insurgency are the local and district campaigns of Jim Balanoff and Ed Sadlowski, progressive unionists supported by femi-

²⁴Region mills at least stayed open, in contrast to most other areas. See Michael Frisch and Milton Rogovin, *Portraits in Steel* (Ithaca, N.Y., 1993).



JOHN BUSHEMI AND RICHARD HATCHER, 1970S

Steel Shavings (1999)

nist steelworkers and environmental activists within the labor movement.²⁵

31. *Shards & Midden Heaps: Life in the Calumet Region during the 1990s* (2001). Social, racial, economic, and political tensions still polarized the region at the end of the twentieth century, and the arrival of casino boats turned some residents into gambling addicts. Interwoven with journals, memoirs, poems, yearbook copy, and quotations from humorist Jean Shepherd are oral histories that, among

²⁵See also James B. Lane, "Feminism, Radicalism, & Unionism: The Calumet District Women's Caucus," *IOHA Proceedings* (1996); Lane, "'Hell, No! We Won't Glow!': The Bailly Alliance, Memories of an Antinuclear Coaliton," *ibid.* (1998); Lane, "Steelworkers Fight Back: Rank-and-File Insurgency & the 1977 U.S.W.A. Election," *ibid.* (2000).

other things, provide glimpses into the contemporary history of adolescence.

32. Henry Farag's *"The Signal: A Doo-Wop Rhapsody"* (2001). This is an oral autobiography of the lead singer of the doo-wop group Stormy Weather. One of eleven children born to an Egyptian-American steelworker and a devout Polish mother, Farag discovered his musical passion as a teenager during the 1950s while hanging out with Gary gangs.

Throughout the publishing history of *Steel Shavings*, the central challenges facing those who have sought to integrate hundreds of oral histories into a chronicle of the Calumet region have been more or less constant and will likely remain so: verifying the accuracy of testimony and persuading narrators to be candid about family life while respecting people's privacy.

Indiana Historical Society Library's Oral History Collections

The oral history collections housed in the William Henry Smith Memorial Library at the Indiana Historical Society (IHS) are both wide-ranging and extensive. Oral history interviews reside in collections resulting from specific research projects and as components of collections of personal and family papers and organizational and business records. Occasionally, an oral history interview by itself will form a small collection.

In general, the IHS library has been the recipient of oral histories produced by others more than it has pursued an active oral history program of its own. The society provides guidelines for interviews, offers training in some cases, and makes sure that potential interviewers use the standard legal instruments allowing interviews to be used and cited. The IHS is beginning to incorporate oral history interviews into processing collections, using them to fill in gaps in the documentary record.

Oral histories are subject to the same collection development policy that governs other materials coming into the IHS's collections. The library is actively documenting women's history, ethnic history, black history (all limited to Indiana and the Old Northwest), and railroad and interurban history (more widely defined to include Indiana and other parts of the Midwest). Thus it is not surprising that most of the IHS oral history collections fall in these same areas, and many of the examples mentioned below reflect these collection emphases.

The society has been involved with two programs that give funding for oral history projects: Clio grants and Indiana Heritage Research Grants. These projects, when completed, usually require the deposit of tapes and transcripts that they produce in the IHS library, where they can be mined by others for additional information and insights.

Collections based on projects funded by Clio grants include Remembering Indiana in the Twentieth Century, 1995–1997; and the Indiana Broadcasters Pioneers Foundation, Inc., Oral History Project Collection, 1994–1997. The Remembering Indiana project, for which John E. Bodnar served as project director, deposited fifteen transcripts of interviews in the IHS library. Eight reminiscences deal with Evansville, six with Indianapolis, and one with Tell City. Family and personal history, trade unions, and African Americans in Indianapolis are among the topics discussed. Excerpts from these interviews have been incorporated into Bodnar's *Our Towns*. The Indiana Broadcasters Pioneers Foundation oral history collection led to the publication of *"In the Public Interest": Oral Histories of Hoosier Broadcasters* (1999), compiled and edited by Linda Weintraut and Jane R. Nolan. The collection itself contains the tapes and transcripts of interviews with twenty-six Indiana pioneer broadcasters, covering topics in Hoosier broadcasting from 1926 to the mid-1990s.

The Indiana Heritage Research Grant (IHRG) program, jointly funded by the IHS and the Indiana Humanities Council, assists in research efforts that range from cataloging and translating primary materials to creating and transcribing oral histories. Two IHRG-based oral history collections are the Margaret Robbins Oral History Project, 1992, and Reclaiming a German-American Past: The Dubois County Area Oral History Interviews, 1993–1994. Weintraut and Nolan interviewed Margaret Ruth Schricker Robbins, the daughter of former Indiana Governor Henry F. Schricker, in 1992. They covered topics such as Robbins's family; local, state, and national politics; the Depression; and the Ku Klux Klan in Indiana. Heiko Muehr conducted three interviews as part of the Reclaiming a German-American Past project. Interviewees describe German-American life and efforts to preserve their culture in southwestern Indiana.

The IHS formerly organized some of its holdings into interest groups, or sections, and its Military History Section operated an oral history program from 1979 to 1985 that documented the experiences of military veterans from the Hoosier state. Interviewees include a ninety-seven-year-old veteran of the Moro Wars in the Philippines in 1904; a veteran of the Vera Cruz Expedition of 1914; and veterans of World Wars I and II, the Korean War, and the Vietnam War. By the end of the program, nearly one hundred interviews had taken place. One particularly lengthy series of conversations, conducted over a three-year period, were with Frank R. Dillman, who saw service in France during the First World War. Although most of those interviewed are white males, Eugene B. Bailey, a member of the 809th Pioneer Infantry, a black World War I regiment, and Anna A. Cranston, a nurse in a tuberculosis hospital in New Haven, Connecticut, during the same conflict are also narrators who contributed to the program.

There were never formal initiatives in the 1970s and 1980s to document Indiana's ethnic or black heritage through oral history as there had been for military history, but a few concerted efforts generated significant groups of tapes and transcripts in these areas. For example, Jean Spears interviewed black residents of Lyles Station in 1970, and Margaret Trauner interviewed Slovenian, Yugoslavian, and other residents of Indianapolis's Haughville neighborhood in 1983. Carl Cafouros interviewed members of the city's Greek community in 1980. Collections representing more recent efforts to chronicle African American experiences in Indiana have included two IHRG-funded projects: *Remembering The Past: Oral and Pictorial History of African Americans in Grant County, Indiana*; and the Wabash College Oral History Project Collection, which concentrated on African Americans in Crawfordsville and at Wabash College.

A number of interviews contained in personal papers and organizational records document the history of women in Indiana. Women's history, which the IHS has collected for years, has received renewed attention since the 1980s with the creation of the Indiana Women's History Association (IWHA, originally called the Indiana Women's History Archives, Inc.). The IWHA has been helpful in bringing to the society collections documenting recent women's history. Records ranging from the Indiana chapter of the National Organization for Women (NOW) to the state's League of Women Voters and the Indianapolis Woman's Club all contain interview tapes and transcripts.

Other IHS collections—especially personal and family papers—contain women's oral history interviews. Information on many of these is readily accessible through the IHS website <www.indianahistory.org> and in *A Guide to Indiana Women's Oral History Interviews in Selected Repositories*, the first comprehensive guide to these interviews in repositories across the state, which include the Indiana Division of the Indiana State Library, the OHRC at Indiana University, Bloomington, the Irvington (Hilton U. Brown) Branch of the Indianapolis-Marion County Public Library, the Batesville Memorial Public Library, and the IHS. This ongoing project relies upon IWHA volunteers to locate and describe collections that include women.

The IHS website can be used to locate these and other oral histories in the Smith Library collection. Researchers looking for materials can do keyword or more structured searches in the library's online catalog, or do keyword searches only using the IHS website's search mechanism. Either approach will lead to detailed collection guides, though the online catalog also provides subject headings through which related materials can be sought.

Oral history interviews and transcripts continue to make their way into the IHS collections. Indeed, oral histories are becoming almost standard components of family papers and organizational



HELEN CLANIN ELLIS, A WWII WAVE AND SPECIALIST AVIATION
FREE GUNNERY INSTRUCTOR, WAS INTERVIEWED AS PART OF
THE INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY'S MILITARY HISTORY
ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

Courtesy of Douglas Clanin

records. The IHS Library staff is also beginning to view oral history as an integral step in the processing of existing collections, especially as a way of filling gaps in the historical record. In these cases, the archival processor, who gains knowledge of individuals and families during the course of organizing their papers, is taking on the additional role of interviewer, and the resulting taped and transcribed interviews become part of the collection. Meanwhile, members of the IHS's Musical Heritage Committee have begun an oral history program under the auspices of the Smith Library, seeking to record the memories and observations of those who have contributed to Indiana's rich and diverse musical past.

In areas ranging from Indiana's military history to its musical heritage, oral history plays an important part in the Indiana Historical Society's efforts to document the state's history. The society's recent move into a new headquarters building has given it the opportunity to create an audiovisual room for researchers using media as diverse as microfilm, audiotapes, and videotapes. With these new facilities, and with new generations of researchers who expect historical documentation to come from a variety of media, the use of oral histories will certainly continue to grow.