
NOHANZ

The National Oral History Association of New Zealand
Te Kete Kōrero-a-Waha o Te Motu

'Know your place: locating oral history'

Oral History conference, 19 - 20 July 2003,
Auckland University Conference Centre

We are interested in proposals for presentations which address these issues:

- what do we mean by 'place'?
- local history projects--why do them?
- collaborative projects
- using oral history on the internet
- what is done with the material, i.e. beyond the interview.

We welcome the participation of everyone who shares an interest in oral history. In particular we seek contributions from:

- those recording family, whānau, hapū and iwi history
- those working with oral histories in museums, libraries and archives.

The deadline for abstracts or workshop outlines is 15 February 2003.

Send to:

NOHANZ Conference
PO Box 3819
Wellington

For further information, email:

Megan Hutching
megan.hutching@mch.govt.nz
or Linda Evans
linda.evans@natlib.govt.nz

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NOHANZ • P.O. BOX 3819 • WELLINGTON
www.oralhistory.org.nz

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Otaki Forum

Rachael Selby

NOHANZ held a very successful forum in Otaki on Saturday 16th November at Te Wānanga o Raukawa. Twenty-five people attended and after the pōwhiri there was much chatter over morning tea in the old dining room as enthusiastic members caught up with one another.



Charles Royal and Joce Chalmers at the Otaki Forum

The opening address was delivered by Dr Te Ahukaramu Charles Royal, Director of Research and Graduate Studies at Te Wānanga o Raukawa. He spoke about oral history, tradition and mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge). The address was a highlight of the day. He examined the traditions around oral history and textual, literate history. With the small group, an exchange of ideas and discussion was able to take place and his relaxed and conversational style enabled participants to exchange ideas.

Anne Thorpe and I then reported on the Ōtaki Oral History Project for which we had received a grant in 2001 to complete 8 interviews with local people who have lived in the town since the Second

World War. We presented our completed project in May 2002 to the National Library, the Ōtaki library, the Te Wānanga o Raukawa library and the participants.



Rachael Selby testing the sound equipment before her presentation.

We had initially planned a much larger project, but attendance at one of Judith Fyfe's workshops had made us realise our ideas were far too grandiose, so we settled for a manageable project which could be completed in the year available, particularly given that we also work and are involved in other organizations.

The afternoon offered a series of panels and presentations, the first being a panel of people who have been interviewed for various projects. They highlighted feelings of being flattered to be asked, of feeling obligated to do well so that the interviewer could get enough information and of being surprised by questions which were unexpected. These unexpected questions then prompted a discussion about how much interviewers should delve into personal matters which appear to have no relevance to the topic or theme of the project. It was suggested that we should never interview others until we ourselves have undergone an interview. It seemed good advice! The session was excellent.

Bronwyn Officer from the National Library talked about technology issues and oral history. A panel of oral historians (Megan Hutching, Linda Evans and Taina McGregor) talked about their jobs, the projects they have

undertaken and the benefits of having careers in an area of passion. This was enlightening for us all.



Bronwyn Officer in preparation mode.

Jill Abigail presented a report on the Ōtaki Citizens Advice Bureau Project, where she had interviewed eight people who were long serving members of the local bureau. She highlighted that she was disappointed in aspects of her project and why this was so. Jill gave us the opportunity to think critically about what happens when a project doesn't go as smoothly as we hope and to reflect on why this happens.

The final presentation was a report from the IOHA Conference in South Africa which I attended in June 2002. It was a wonderful opportunity to meet people who are involved in a wide range of topics, at various levels and who work for a marvellous array of organizations in the community and in institutions. It was lovely to meet Hugo Manson again.



NOHANZ members catching up at afternoon tea at Te Raukawa.

He had come from Scotland to the conference and best of all was a familiar face in a sea of strangers. The issues, which were evident for the organisers providing translations in Spanish and English and the costs of doing so, were an eye opener. The politics of a bilingual conference were also a learning experience for me. The next conference will be in Italy in 2004 and there was interest in New Zealand as a venue in 2006 when the conference would like to come to the southern hemisphere again.



NOHANZ members enjoying the hospitality at Ōtaki.

The day concluded with a dinner in the dining hall of the wānanga where students and staff share their meals. We found the forum a pleasure to run and would encourage other communities to consider organising one-day forums in other communities. It enables local people to meet oral historians, to hear about projects, to share expertise, debate issues and gives us all the opportunity to 'think' oral history for a day! Thanks to all who contributed and assisted in the organization.



Oral History Centre staff at Ōtaki

Oral History at the Auckland Performing Arts Centre - Western Springs

JeanHyland
E-mail: talltalk@clear.net.nz

Opposite the entrance to the Auckland Zoo on the playing fields of Western Springs College a very large building is currently under construction. This building is to be the home of a new community-based and professionally resourced Performing Arts Centre for Auckland with teaching facilities and a flexible theatre. It will be available for use by community groups and professionals as well as the founding partners, Western Springs College and The Performing Arts School.


The opening ceremonies for this centre are scheduled for July 2003. To honour the land upon which this centre is being built we are endeavouring to garner stories of the site and the surrounding area (the swamp, the creek, the reef, the mangroves, the legends, the quarry, the trams, the transit camp, the city dump, the zoo, the park, the psychiatric hospital, the Ambassador picture theatre up at the shops, the Dixieland Dance Hall down by the sea). To gather these stories we are looking not only to the written records contained in city archives and published documents but also the stories told by the people who live or have lived in the area. These stories are to be the raw material from which the performances (theatre, dance, music, song, art, installation) will be drawn for the opening ceremonies. Students (past and present) from Western Springs College and The Performing Arts School of New Zealand as well as local residents in the area will collaborate in the development of these performances.

To date, we have held a couple of community meetings – one at Pasadena

Intermediate School and another at Selwyn Village (a residential home for the elderly in Point Chevalier). The focus of these meetings has been on the Meola Tip – for the ground upon which the centre is being built was once part of this city dump (stories of scavenging, fires, flies, rodents, secrets, excitement, protest and resistance crop up repeatedly). The tape recordings made at these meetings have been made with the understanding that the recordings will be listened to by those involved in the creation of the performances. The tapes will be archived.

We are finding our way with this work. The meetings have been characterised by low turn out. Those that have come to talk are guiding us to widen the focus – I begin to see for example, that the dump was something of a male world, impacting on the lives of women in the area but not in the same way that it did for the men and the boy children. There are people indicating that they would be happy to be interviewed on a one-to-one basis. We hesitate to proceed along this path until there is more clarity around funding/resources for this project.

While the avenues of exploration for the gathering of the oral histories are becoming clearer, how much we can achieve in time for the opening (without compromising the integrity of the enterprise) is open to debate. Every day the building gets bigger serving as a constant reminder that time is of the essence. The challenge of incorporating the stories of the local community into performances created for the opening celebrations invites us to continue with this project. How to do it – that is the question.



RIP Sony WM D6C

Recently Sony stopped producing the WM D6C, which has been the trusty little workhorse of oral historians in this country.

The TCM 5000 EV will still be produced, however, and Protel, Sony suppliers in Wellington, have also suggested a Marantz model the CP-430. The CP-430 is much like the Sony TCM-5000 but has a better frequency response and is a stereo recorder. The Marantz CP-430 costs \$1,265 + GST. Sony ECM-T145 microphones can be used with this unit.

The TCM 5000 EV is a larger machine than the Walkman — it has two microphone jacks, a speaker, a better record level indicator, and a light, which flashes as you get near to the end of each side of the cassette. You can use the same clip-on microphones (ECM T-145) that worked with the Walkman with the advantage that you no longer need a splitter cord/y-cable because of the two microphone jacks. The TCM 5000 EV costs \$1,265 + GST.



Happy Holidays

NOHANZ would like to wish all members a safe and happy holiday and a happy new year.



Oral History Workshops

The Oral History Centre of the Alexander Turnbull Library is offering workshops for people considering using oral history in their work, community or personal projects. The workshops are taught by **Judith Fyfe, lawyer and oral historian**, and held in the National Library Building, Aitken Street, Wellington.

The Essentials of Oral History Research

Day Two: Taping Seriously
Saturday: 1 March 2003, 8.45am-4pm

Taping Seriously builds on *Day One: Introduction to Oral History*, reviewing work completed and covering in more detail interview techniques, equipment standards, project planning and ethical and legal issues. Some experience in recording or processing oral history is necessary. Completion of an earlier *Essentials* course or a recent equivalent introductory course is required.

Fee: \$150 (\$110) Limit: 16

Workshops

Abstracting Oral History, and
The Essentials of Oral History Research
Day One and Two
are planned for later in the year.
*New workshops on Project Development
and From Tape to Type: oral history in
print are currently being developed.*

For further information on funding, dates of forthcoming workshops and registration, contact the Oral History Centre, 04-474 3162 atl@natlib.govt.nz