National Oral History Association of New Zealand

...d my research among resettled Cambodian refugees whose ...uage, the Khmer language, I don't share, requiring that I work with ...terpreter. It is a community whose members have been severely ...matised, who are vulnerable with regard to their minority linguistic ...ethnic status...**[NICOLA NORTH, p. 4]**

...of the Cambodians don't want to hear themselves called refugees. ...akes them feel so low, so helpless. They are not arrogant, but, one, ...cannot speak English: and, two, they look up to you New Zealanders ...u are the host country, you are helping them, so they are grateful, and

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cOntents

FOREWORD

Angela Ballara 2
TE TAHA MAORI TE PAPATANGATA O AOTEAROA

Nicola North 4
RESETTLED CAMBODIAN REFUGEES: METHODOLOGICAL AND ETHICAL ISSUES IN CROSS-CULTURAL, BILINGUAL INTERVIEWING

Niborom Young 13
THE REALITY AFTER THE DREAM

Michelle Horwood 18
ORAL HISTORY AND THE WHANGANUI REGIONAL MUSEUM

Fiona Cameron 21
SLICES OF LIVES – ORAL HISTORY PROGRAMMES AT THE SCIENCE CENTRE AND MANAWATU MUSEUM

Ken Scadden 24
ORAL HISTORY AT THE WELLINGTON MARITIME MUSEUM

William Ellis 26
THE AMERICAN SMALL TOWN IN MICROCOSM: THE SMALL TOWN IN KENTUCKY ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

BOOK REVIEWS 30
CONVENT GIRLS: NZ WOMEN TALK TO JANE TOLERTON
reviewed by Jacqui Foley

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE USE OF ORAL HISTORY IN THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE
reviewed by Marie Burgess

ORAL HISTORY AND THE LOCAL HISTORIAN; TALKING HISTORY: A SHORT GUIDE TO ORAL HISTORY; RECORDING ORAL HISTORY: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR SOCIAL SCIENTISTS reviewed by Rob Perks

Code of Ethical & Technical Practice 36

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The address for all correspondence and subscriptions is:

Linda Evans
Secretary, NOHANZ
P O Box 3819
WELLINGTON

There is a NOHANZ branch in Otago. For further information on meetings and activities, contact:

Helen Frizzell
Presbyterian Support Services Otago
P O Box 374
DUNEDIN

TE TAHA MĀORI O TE PAPATANGATA O AOTEAROA

THE MĀORI DIMENSION OF THE DNZB

ANGELA BALLARA

Ko tēnei tau te tau o te reo Māori. Ko te reo Māori te reo tuatahi me te reo rangatira o tēnei whenua. Engari, nō te mea ka hiahia ahau kia rongona āku kupu e te nuinga, me huri au ki te reo o tētahi whenua kē, arā, te reo Pākehā o Ingarangi. Ko tēnei te mea tino pōuri o roto i ngā āhuatanga o te tipuranga o te koroni hei whenua mō ngā iwi e rua, Pākehā, Māori. Nō te mea he nui atu tētahi iwi i tētahi, i roto i te roanga o ngā tau o mua mai, kua āta pēhitia te reo o te itinga, arā o te tangata whenua, ā, mō te rima tekau tau pea kua ngaro haere i roto i ētahi o ngā whakatupuranga hou. I nāianei ka tipu haere anō te reo rangatira i waenganui i ngā tauira, i ngā tamariki o te kohanga reo, ā, i ētahi atu momo tangata, rōpū Māori, rōpū Pākehā hoki. Engari, me ki tonu kei te keokeonga anō o te rango te waka - ka taea pea te pana whakamua – te hinga whakamuri rānei. Ko ngā hiahia o te nuinga o te tangata whenua tuatahi, ko te whakatau i ngā āhuatanga o te reo ā ngā tau kei te haere mai; tuarua, ko te ngākaunui mai o te nuinga o ngā tāngata Pākehā o tēnei whenua me ō rātou painga ki te reo; he wāhanga tika o te moni kāwanatanga te utu. Nō te mea ka riro i te Pākehā te Māoritanga hei tohu mōna i a ia i te kāinga rānei, i tētahi whenua i rāwāhi rānei, ko te wāhanga tika o ngā tahua me rahi ake hei whakaako i te reo ki ngā tamariki katoa, Pākehā, Māori rānei. Kei te ētita matua rātou ko ngā kaimahi o te Papatangata o Aotearoa he wāhi iti o te tāraitanga o te reo hei waka mō te motu katoa.

What does the Dictionary do to make its Māori dimension genuinely Māori, rather than a Pākehā version of Māori history expressed through biography? It consults. A working party of prominent Māori elders and academics, as far as possible regionally and tribally balanced in composition, actively assists in the selection of people for each volume. Dictionary staff prepare biographical lists as aide memoires for the committee, which works through each tribal rohe successively. From their intimate knowledge of their people, the committee members are able to point out gaps in our lists, to tell us which informants to approach, and how. The committee supplies information about the present descendants of subjects selected so that Dictionary staff can consult with senior family members in the appointment of authors.

Authors of Māori essays are often family members, in contrast to the selection policy for authors of Pākehā essays. Objectivity, the aim behind the appointment of non-family writers, is not abandoned in writing on Māori subjects, but the choice of author is affected by the marginalisation of Māori in New Zealand society over time. This has meant that Māori lives are often relatively less well documented in official papers. For example, the births, deaths and marriages of Māori went unregistered officially until well into the 20th century. Often family whakapapa books, family bibles, and land court records held by descendants are the only sources for vital biographical information. Other sources are scattered. Even for the most prominent Māori figures, the input of Māori families is essential if many of the Māori essays are to happen at all.

Sometimes the appointed authors are the now-elderly children or grandchildren of the subject, but increasingly often, young people, recently qualified in a variety of disciplines, are appointed by their seniors to write about the family's treasured ancestors. The senior members of the whānau can work confidently with their own young people where a Pākehā author might unwittingly intrude into tapu areas.

There is a fine line between the academic objectivity, ideally the goal

Angela Ballara is an historian specialising in contact history; she is the author of Proud to be White? (Auckland, 1986), and many articles and reports. She is currently working as an editor on the Māori side of the Dictionary of New Zealand Biography.

of scholarly biographical writing, and the public versus private areas of a Māori life. Māori live in the context of whānau and hapū, where individuals' actions affect not only themselves, but sometimes the mana, integrity and even the continuance of the community.

An example of the potential for harmful consequences from straying into tapu areas concerned a Māori essay that was commissioned for Volume II of the Dictionary. Family research revealed that a prominent identity, a leading focus of a community, was the natural child of the leader of another, rival group. The public revelation of this fact would have undermined the leading role of the current generation, and possibly torn apart their community. The essay was never written.

Pākehā essays, of course, have to deal with the same kind of issues, and where the ethics of the historical profession fail to provide a solution, DNZB research sometimes poses hard problems for the descendants of wayward forebears. But the consequences of revelation to a people whose culture is based on individual worth are always less than to those whose mana is held collectively.

Alternatively, Māori families sometimes prefer that an unrelated historian or experienced writer, Māori or Pākehā, be appointed author, while they assist with evidence, be it oral or written. In these cases the Dictionary tries to supply the author with the names and addresses of those they might consult, and if necessary arranges an introduction.

When authors cannot be found either within the family or elsewhere, the essay has to be written by the DNZB. In these cases the staff writer contacts the family where known, and goes to visit (this writer has been to Hokianga, Coromandel, Auckland, and elsewhere), writes to the family, or uses the telephone. At least one essay with this writer's name on it was written from notes taken during a two-hour toll call with a kindly but frail elder, since deceased. The draft and edited versions of the essay are submitted to the family for their comments and corrections.

With the exception of essays for Volume I, when time constraints and the political agenda of publishing during 1990 had to take precedence over every other consideration, these consultative systems have been followed. Sometimes an essay eventuates without such consultation, but only because present descendants have not been found. During the preparation of Volume I a somewhat different approach saw the General and Assistant Editors visiting marae around the country in an effort to publicise the Dictionary and familiarise the wider Māori audience with its objectives. It was found over time that most Māori organisations had urgent matters on their agendas and Dictionary concerns were assigned a low priority. It was after this experience that, with the help of its Māori Working Party, the Dictionary moved to a one-to-one consultative approach.

Whatever the system used, Dictionary staff have sometimes found resistance amongst Māori to any publications about their ancestors. Gross mistakes of fact and insensitive interpretations made by Pākehā historians and less qualified writers in the past have angered the descendants. There is a continuing substratum of Māori opinion which fears that government or Pākehā publications are out to exploit their history. Another strand of opinion seeks to prevent publication of some or any less creditable details of past Māori activities, even when these facts are well known and publicly documented, out of respect for the elders. Examples include clandestine land sales, the loss of funds through poor administration, investigations into irregular public administration and similar phenomena. But, generally, Māori people have been very supportive of the Dictionary project, and problems have been rare. The Māori Working Party committee members combine their sensitivities and understanding of the present and its links with the ancestors, with a critical and scholarly approach to the past.

The nature of the evidence this consultative approach produces often differs spectacularly from that of the primary documentary sources which is usually the stuff of Dictionary essays. The Dictionary has sometimes been the privileged recipient of oral evidence and tradition unrecorded in documentary sources. The resulting essays tend to be some of the most fascinating insights into Māori culture yet afforded in literature. An essay emanating from the Tūhoe writer, Pou Tēmara, gives details of taiaha use and training; an essay from Ngāi Tahu outlines the methods of southern mutton-birders and traditional uses of river and sea resources; an essay by our Māori assistant editor, Tairongo Amoamo, revealed hitherto unknown material about the methods of a Ringatū tohunga.

The Dictionary values this kind of input highly and has developed techniques for identifying oral or traditional evidence in its texts. Taha Māori in the Dictionary is just that, immensely assisted by Māori knowledge of the eventual destination of its essays on Māori, their publication in the Māori language in *Ngā Tāngata Taumata Rau.*

Nō reira, ka mutu i konei, i roto i te mātauranga hōhonu o ngā taonga pounamu o nehe rā, o nanahi hoki.

Resettled Cambodian refugees private methodological and ethical issues in cross-cultural, bilingual interviewing

NICOLA NORTH

Conducting interviews for the purposes of social research is an accepted method among a number of disciplines, including the growing field of oral history. As the boundaries between disciplines become porous, there is much each can contribute to the other along the shared interface. Social anthropologists have a long tradition of cross-cultural research, frequently entailing interviewing members of the subject culture. However, conducting anthropological research within one's own country, in participation with members of the culture being studied, is a recent development.

This article focuses on the process of collecting narratives with the assistance of interpreters, from members of an ethnic minority community. The ethnographic method was employed, characterised by unstructured in-depth interviewing and participant-observation. I conducted my research among resettled Cambodian refugees whose language, the Khmer language, I don't share, requiring that I work with an interpreter. It is a community whose members have been severely traumatised, who are vulnerable with regard to their minority linguistic and ethnic status, as well as their experiences and status as refugees.

In this paper, I first describe the method of ethnography, commenting on my relationships with participants, which in this study were mediated by my interpreter. I go on to describe how I went about the process of cross-linguistic interviewing and recording of data, and how I handled this data, including a brief discussion on methods of verifying data collected orally.

The conventions and codes governing social research among human subjects are severely strained in cross-cultural and cross-linguistic research, particularly when the community is vulnerable by virtue of its minority and refugee status. These issues are discussed at length. To conclude I discuss the politics of a person from the dominant culture conducting research among an ethnic minority, which is disadvantaged socially and economically.

Background

During the 1960s and 1970s the Vietnam War dominated world news. It spilled over into neighbouring Cambodia and Laos, and in its wake millions of refugees from the former Indochina drifted on the high seas and fled through the jungles, seeking initially asylum in refugee camps hastily set up in nearby countries, and eventual acceptance for resettlement by Western countries. In common with developed countries such as those of North America and Europe and neighbouring Australia, New Zealand became host to large numbers of refugees of south-east Asian origin. This marked an unprecedented influx of Asians into the country's existing population mix of predominantly Māori, European and Pacific Island peoples.

Refugees who resettle in other countries have lost country and home, family and friends, lifestyle and livelihood. It is contingent upon them to adjust to alien ways of organising society and the lives of its members. More fundamentally, their familiar ways of explaining and dealing with phenomena, which

Nicola North holds a degree in social anthropology and nursing studies, has research interests in the areas of refugee health and health transitions, and currently lectures in healthcare systems at Massey University. This paper, first presented at the 1994 New Zealand Historical Association (NZHA)/NOHANZ conference in Auckland, describes experiences in ethnographic interviewing using translation, while conducting doctoral research.

characteristically make sense in the context of the place from which they fled, lose relevance, necessitating an adjustment of their world view. This process of acculturation, which intimately impinges on values, beliefs and practices, is for the refugee accompanied by mourning the lost culture, country, and frequently family members and life-long friends. At the same time, refugees frequently wish to preserve and revive aspects of the lost culture in their adopted country, giving rise to the development of ethnic minority cultures. The process of resettlement, therefore, is complex, intense, and often poorly understood.

In order to better understand the phenomenon of refugee resettlement from the perspective of the refugees themselves, an ethnographic study was undertaken over a three-year period from 1992, documenting the life-stories and experiences of Cambodian refugee families, who had settled within the previous decade in a provincial city of New Zealand in which between 350 and 400 Cambodians reside. As a medical anthropological study, the principal interest was in collecting narratives relating to illness experiences and healing, both prior to and after settling in New Zealand. These narratives were interpreted in the widest possible contexts of their refugee experience: their accounts of events leading up to and including their flight to refugee camps in Thailand were therefore recorded, along with their experiences as they endeavoured to adjust to New Zealand conditions. In spite of pressures to integrate with mainstream society and the provision of sponsorship and English language services, a majority of these Cambodian adults of peasant farming backgrounds have not acquired sufficient English to converse without the assistance of interpreters.

The study demonstrated that to migrate to and settle in another country demands far more than adjustment to, even conformity with, alien values and ways of seeing and doing. It became apparent from discussions with participants, and by interacting with other members of the Cambodian community over that period of three years, that they do not exist in a single place (a particular city in New Zealand), nor time (the 1990s). Rather, their consciousness is occupied intensely and simultaneously with multiple places and times. These geographical and temporal reference points reflect where their kith and kin now reside, or had resided until they were lost to them, and where they themselves experienced life events and crises of a severity that is scarcely credible. It is not the findings of the study which are presented in this paper, however, but the methodological challenges to the collecting of narratives, posed by researching cross-linguistically and cross-culturally, among a traumatised and vulnerable community.

The Ethnographic Method

Ethnography is described simply as a process of closely observing, recording and engaging in the daily lives of those of the culture being studied (1). In the process, I as researcher needed to continually recognise and make allowance for my own presuppositions and biases, and accept that my very presence and questioning affected the social phenomenon I was seeking to interpret. It has been pointed out that the philosophical difficulties related to the researcher's being in fact part of the phenomenon under study can be resolved by acknowledgement of the reflexive nature of research, a reflexivity which can be an added advantage when the ethnographer is able to exploit her/his role and person for the benefit of participants and the study (2). On the other hand, personal characteristics of the interviewer that contrast with those of the participants can limit both the kind and quality of data offered, as for example when ethnic and cultural backgrounds and educational levels differ (3).

My interest in collecting narratives on health and healing, including the persistence of traditional beliefs on causation of illness, and of traditional healing practices, entailed the risk that I would be given the picture the informants believed would be acceptable to the ears of a white educated person, and legitimate in the context of New Zealand society. In this case, I exploited my experience of having worked in community health development in rural Asia for over a decade. My familiarity with beliefs regarding the supernatural in both illness causation and cure effectively opened up that significant area of information that otherwise might have been concealed for fear that I would consider them superstitious and ignorant, as my translator phrased it. On the other hand, some participants exploited my familiarity with the health system and Western medicine for their benefit, a reciprocal arrangement I willingly concurred with, and one which greatly assisted in strengthening the moderately long-term relationship we shared.

The processes of collecting oral histories and conducting ethnographic interviews share much in common, with each employing similar techniques of interviewing, analysing and verify-

ing narratives (4). Oral historians of the Anglophile West are cautioned, however, on the difficulties encountered in interviewing those with sensory disabilities, ill-health, and for whom English is a second language (5). In the case of this ethnographic study, the participants were characterised by being in poor health and unable to converse in English, which was particularly demanding of interview techniques and required the development of strategies to overcome these difficulties.

The principal method of collecting data was in-depth interviewing, unstructured interviews which are best described as focused conversations, carried out with the assistance of a Cambodian interpreter. The usual form was that after the preliminaries were over, I would focus the discussion by asking a question or introducing a topic. Most of these conversations were tape-recorded, and the tapes subsequently translated and transcribed by independent bilingual Cambodian research assistants. The narratives were supplemented by limited participant-observation, mainly in domestic and social service settings, on festival and life-cycle occasions, and as my contact with them went on, increasingly as a friend who called to visit.

I recorded these encounters, at times by photographing the scene, but mainly in the form of descriptive notes, for example: Old man squatting smoking by fire (fire smoking too and not too warm). Grandmother trying to put one baby to sleep. Daughter with another child. Daughter-in-law perched on arm of chair suckling the infant born last week and entertaining her older one (there really are a lot of people in this room for the available seating). This young mother looks very pale, sallow even. Garlic outside drying in sun, on step. Eight adults and four kids live here, four bed-roomed house, their own. Into the midst of our conversation came another elderly couple who turned the place into a market; set out their produce on a cloth on the floor and began to sell surplus vegetables! Is this New Zealand?! This often happens, Sok says. They brought news of the sick infant, very serious apparently, in ICU.

This particular study was complicated by my need for an interpreter, whom I call Sok. This introduced another major dimension to my task of interpreting the phenomena. Sok's involvement in this study and the effect she had on the social world that was its focus was considerable. The potential for her to overlay my questions and participants' responses with her own understanding and experiences was very high, yet at the same time her centrality to the study process facilitated the interlinking of stories. I was reliant on her to identify suitable participants and make the initial contacts, and it is likely that her personal circle of friends are well represented. I do not see this as a problem in that it does not result in misrepresenting the phenomena under study, that of refugee experiences and health.

My reliance on an interpreter meant that I had less control over the direction these conversations took than would have been the case in a monolingual interview. There were times when the conversation drifted off the topic, and we did not return to the point of interest; but in most instances this could be remedied at our next meeting after I had reviewed my notes made during the interview. On other occasions my low level of control proved to be an advantage, as when the conversation ranged on to a subject which I hadn't previously considered, but which was highly relevant. An example was when I was trying to uncover the concept the Cambodians translated as allergy, which triggered a discourse on fright, a concept I hadn't previously been acquainted with.

Methodological Issues in Research among an Ethnic Minority

This research was carried out in co-operation with members of the Cambodian community, which assisted in addressing many of the problems encountered in research among ethnic minorities. The problems of conducting studies of ethnic and linguistic minorities, and specifically south-east Asian refugees, has received some attention. Problems that particularly plague survey methodologies include those of sampling, non-response and response errors, conceptual and linguistic non-equivalence between researcher and subjects, and problems in recruiting and training interviewers (6, 7, 8).

These problems are not altogether overcome by avoiding questionnaire surveys, as responses even to open-ended questions may lack validity because of the way a question is framed, and because social and cultural factors militate against answering fully or truthfully. While my choice of an ethnographic approach side-stepped some of the difficulties listed above, there remained the subtle cultural differences that influence disclosure, as Liu intimates (8): 'A Chinese proverb says, 'before a stranger it is better to express only one third of your opinion'. For immigrant populations, perhaps the proverb should be changed to one fourth . . . For refugee populations, one's whole opinion should probably be entirely withheld.'

In the light of this discussion on ethnic minority research, my inability to converse directly with participants, which forced me to work with an interpreter, proved fortuitous. As we struggled to find the meanings attached to phenomena, our very difficulties in finding linguistic and conceptual equivalence forced a deeper exploration of the issue. Frequently I needed to rephrase a question to ensure that my interpreter grasped the point of it. Similarly, as I re-read transcripts of tapes, there are recorded many times Sok's attempts to ensure I understood. 'Have you got it?' she would demand. 'Have you got that about the dtoas?' And then would follow more discussion among all of us, as I was often slow in grasping such concepts.

Selection and Roles of Interpreter and Transcribers

The choice of interpreter was most important for the process of generating data. Obviously I required someone fluent in both Khmer and English, someone able to translate both language and concepts. This narrowed the field to a relative few, mostly young, members of the Cambodian community. Moreover, this person needed to be available at the times which suited the participants, which as it turned out was during the day on week-days. I wanted someone who was fully part of the Cambodian community and their history, sharing a common background and therefore able to empathise with participants both young and old. Thus were excluded young bilingual Cambodians who had grown up and been educated mainly in refugee camps and in New Zealand. I did not want a trained health care professional such as a nurse, as this would be likely to affect disclosure of traditional beliefs and interpretations, and risk an overlay of interviewees' accounts with an 'educated' view.

In the first instance I approached the leader of the Cambodian Association for assistance in selecting an interpreter; three possibilities were suggested. Of these, Sok met my criteria, and was both available and willing. This choice did not go unchallenged by the transcribers/translators of tapes. Their concerns included that there were other Cambodians whose English was better; Sok didn't know some of the more technical English terms, and did not confine herself to translating questions and responses; and that a more educated interpreter would in their view have obviated the need to tape interviews which then needed to be translated.

It subsequently transpired that other social and ethnic issues underlay these objections, such as the mutual antagonism that at times emerges between ethnic Chinese (as these young people are) and ethnic Khmer. Reflected here too are the political factions that are a feature of the Cambodian community, and conflicts between Cambodians of urban and rural origin, as well as between the educated and less educated. Finding myself in the position of defending my choice heightened my awareness that the Cambodian community is not a homogeneous group, but on the contrary is characterised by ethnic, political and increasingly, intergenerational differences.

The choice of translators/transcribers was equally important to the success of the study; they were located through networking. Again, I first requested assistance from the leader of the Cambodian Association, pointing out that these people needed to be highly literate both in English and Khmer. Young people who grew up in south-east Asia but were educated in New Zealand I thought would be suitable. A young man whom I call SomNaang, a student completing his university degree, agreed to assist, and he in turn recruited a suitable person when he found he could not single-handedly complete the task within my time-frame. When it came to translating words and concepts for which there was no corresponding English term, they furnished me with detailed explanations, supported by dictionary references, drawing from the leading Khmer and Khmer-English dictionaries.

The interpreter Sok, and the translators/transcribers of tapes, particularly SomNaang, themselves became key informants. This was particularly the case with Sok, who was intimately involved in selecting participants as well as in every interview, and inevitably influenced the data through her two-way interpreting. Furthermore, as we drove away from participants' homes she would frequently add her interpretation to what we had been discussing, or contribute stories of other experiences, her own or others she was acquainted with, all of which was most useful in establishing the linkages among individual stories and contexts. She was also the principal sponsor to my participating in Cambodian festivals and meetings, and took it upon herself to instruct me in social mores and conventions, and the expectations participants had of me, thereby smoothing my ongoing relations with participants.

An example follows of the interplay among myself as interviewer, the participant BoPa, Sok as interpreter, and SomNaang's clarifications and comments. SomNaang devised a system of brackets, denoting spoken and

translated Khmer (in round brackets), and distinguishing his own additions or comments for clarification by [square brackets]. I had asked about a recent investigation.

BoPa: (They said nothing was wrong, just that [my] blood was not circulating properly. Nothing was wrong.)

Sok: She said her brain that's okay; her blood and her nerve for the blood running, [is] not normal.

BoPa: ([They] said nothing was wrong. All were normal. But just told [me] not to think too much, because that one [is] like you said.)

Here followed BoPa being advised at some length by Sok, together with another woman present, as to how she should stop herself 'thinking too much' (the literal translation of a common Cambodian mental process, usually regarded negatively). At the end of this SomNaang offered one of his personal opinions, an example of his interaction with material throughout the transcriptions: '[I think it can be quite dangerous for some (untrained) self-appointed counsellors to deal with or offer advice to people like BoPa in cases like hers. From my own experience with this problem there would be nothing wrong with 'thinking', if it was forward-looking, if the 'thinking' was complemented with action...].'

Although the tensions between the interpreter and the translators/transcribers required sensitive handling on the few occasions when they became overt, there were positive effects. Issues that may otherwise have passed unnoticed were highlighted, and the contrasting perspectives on a given issue between the traditional, often older, Cambodians and their younger, Westernised fellow-refugees came into sharp focus. Far from being better avoided, as SomNaang had suggested, the painstaking process of recording, transcribing and translating taped interviews, often conducted in the presence of family members and friends and with their participation, effectively verified data derived from a variety of narrators.

Verification of Data

A characteristic of the oral interviewing method of research is to carry out a preliminary analysis of data concurrently with collection. At the conclusion of each interview and its debriefing I reviewed my notes, including reflexive comments I had made in the margins. These formed the basis for the next interview with that person, when I would follow through with issues that I wished to clarify or elaborate on. As some themes began to emerge as prominent and potentially significant, I would raise these with a number of participants until they had been thoroughly discussed by several people with different experiences and perspectives. An example of one theme is what they described as thinking too much. The frequency with which this was mentioned raised the possibilities of either interpreter influence or overlay (a concern which I had noted in the margin of my field notes), or that it was indeed a significant concept emerging in the study. Through the process of revisiting a certain theme or concept with the one participant, and through raising it with several participants, it was possible to verify the data, and ensure that this was not a one-off remark, or an isolated experience or opinion.

A second stage of verification followed the winding up of interviewing. It involved categorising excerpts that were raised in these interviews according to subject, and then grouping the subjects, and critically interpreting these in the light of available literature. For example, the accounts told to me of such things as living under the Khmer Rouge, refugee camps, and fleeing to Thailand, not only broadly agreed with one another, but also with published biographical material and investigative journalism. This published material was similar in kind to the data I was collecting, in being reliant on oral sources while lacking collaborative documentation. However, as much of it had been collected from refugees very soon after the events described had taken place, it can be assumed that memories were unfaded and not contaminated by the experiences and anxieties of intervening years, by issues that may have influenced the narratives of the resettled refugees I interviewed, or by relating events that took place over a decade ago and in another geographical and cultural context.

Ethical Considerations

Research among ethnic minorities, especially of refugee origin, has particular ethical considerations. Ethical issues in this study fell into three areas. The first and most general relates to research involving human subjects, the underlying principle being to do your subjects no harm.

This is complicated by the second consideration, that the Cambodian community is a vulnerable population. Cambodian refugees are vulnerable because of their newness to the country, because they may not be fully conversant with their rights to decline to participate in part or totally at any time, and/or because of their desire to please those of the host country, including stranger researchers. They are also vulnerable to being ill, and being classed as refugees, which in combination

is likely to give rise to a perceived and real dependence on those about them as they endeavour to find their way in an unfamiliar health care system, compromising their own sense of control and self-determination. This vulnerability and dependence affects their capacity to freely continue their participation in an interview, in fact may be a factor in their consenting in the first place.

The third ethical concern in this study is in respect to the likelihood that the participants included victims of torture, and all had suffered trauma and loss. Although these experiences were not the focus of the study, a number of participants did raise them in the context of discussions on current health problems. The few psychiatric centres that specialise in treating south-east Asian refugees, mainly in the United States, have had mixed experiences in applying Western psychiatric therapeutic approaches to highly traumatised refugees. For example, experiences have been documented in the United States in which attempts to resolve past trauma through revisiting trauma experiences have exacerbated symptoms, and disturbed and demoralised therapists (9, 10, 11).

Being mindful that revisiting a very traumatic past can worsen rather than alleviate distress, and considering that the locality lacked professionals and facilities with expertise in working with distressed Cambodian refugees, I was initially anxious lest I harmed my participants, even though I did not specifically probe into their trauma. After one disclosure of truly horrific experiences, in this instance of flight to Thailand, I inquired of the narrators as to whether recounting that episode was problematic or distressing for them. They assured me it wasn't, and in fact that daily they remembered these events, frequently talking about them among themselves. They went on to say: 'From the stomach thank her for wanting to know such. The misery is such, the Khmer's misery, our plight when we escaped. We don't mind, we want her to know. It is all true, true from the heart, and [we] want everyone to know about that too...'.

My experience in this was similar to those of other ethnographers, who in contrast to experiences of psychiatric clinic workers, have commented on the compulsion among traumatised south-east Asian refugees to recount their stories and that these should be made widely known (12). The clinical nature and intrusiveness of the psychiatric interview may well account for the exacerbation of distress in trauma and torture victims, especially when these bring to mind experiences of being interrogated. However, the collection of narratives in the non-threatening context of ethnographic interviewing, conducted in familiar domestic and community settings, seems rather to bring relief to those carrying unshared personal histories of a horrific nature.

I stressed to my interpreter that it was important to protect participants in their vulnerability, reminding her to allow participants to choose not to respond to certain queries if they wished. On one occasion my questions about people in a photograph, whom I later learned were close relatives who were missing, presumed dead, were rebuffed by the interpreter. Much later, when I read the transcript, the way she protected participants became clear in her explanation of the interchange to them: 'She seems very intrigued, but just now she seemed too curious. And I said, "Why do you want to ask? It is not the sickness."'

A further advantage of working with a member of the group being studied emerged when more sensitive issues arose. For instance, on one occasion when I was asking an older chronically ill woman what she thought had caused her illness, she and Sok chatted away for a long time. Eventually I butted in, and the response to my query about what the chatter was all about was, much to my annoyance, that they were 'talking about [their] own affairs'. As we drove away, Sok explained that the woman had been disclosing a matter of deep shame to her, to which she attributed the exacerbation of her illness, and Sok did not want to add to her embarrassment by translating then and there.

The matter of requiring written informed consent has been questioned in respect to research on south-east Asian refugees (13, 14). Existing cultural and ethnic difficulties in ensuring that consent is truly informed and free is complicated by their vulnerability, as discussed above, and further compounded by the deep fear and suspicion that many refugees have with respect to signing papers. In the view of some researchers, the procedure of using a consent form ostensibly to protect potential participants could in fact be injurious, generating high anxiety.

As I embarked on the preliminary phase of this study, my intent was to comply with university human research ethics requirements by obtaining written consent. However, I was strongly discouraged by Cambodian leaders from doing so for the very reasons outlined above (14). I therefore proceeded (with the somewhat reluctant agreement of the university Human Ethics Committee) on the basis of informed verbal consent. In certain populations, such as this Cambodian community, the procedure

described here proved not only more appropriate but safer. The experience of this ethnographic study demonstrated that the spirit behind the normal requirement of obtaining written consent need not be weakened by instead obtaining verbal consent, provided this was informed, free, and ongoing.

I regarded consent as a process, initiated at the outset of the study, when interviewees were given a written description, in both English and Khmer, of what I intended to do, together with a personal introduction and contact addresses and telephone numbers. This description included the expectation that I would spend some hours spread over several visits interviewing them with Sok, at a place convenient to them (which in most instances was their homes). I also sought consent specifically for tape-recording interviews, and for taking photographs. Consent covered not only the collection of narratives and other data, but the use of that information for scholarly purposes, the nature of which was explained. Their right to decline to answer particular questions, and indeed to withdraw from the study at any time, was made clear: these opportunities were taken up by participants from time to time.

Process consent has been suggested as preferable to written informed consent when studying vulnerable populations. Particularly is this so with an approach to research that is responsive to emergent data, when the study involves interviews and participant-observation over an extended period of time. In the case of ethnographic research when the borders between participant-as-researcher and participant-as-friend tend to become blurred, process consent is particularly appropriate.

Assuring satisfaction of ethical requirements with respect to confidentiality of participants and storage of data was less problematic. Throughout the study, all data has been boxed and kept safely in a private facility. At its conclusion, this material will be destroyed. I replaced names with a code (eg F3a) to label tapes and notes, used pseudonyms rather than proper names throughout the report, and eliminated identifying information which was not essential to the narratives and conclusions.

Finally, participants' rights regarding the final form of reports and their use is enshrined in New Zealand in codes and conventions of social research among human subjects, for example that governing oral history (15). The issue of ownership of data and of publications arising from research is complicated when participants do not share the language in which reports and publications are written. I have endeavoured to satisfy the spirit of these codes and conventions within the constraints imposed by the study population by submitting drafts of reported findings to the principal translator/transcriber for comment, comments which I have taken fully into account in finalising reports. Concerning those who willingly gave of their time in recounting their life stories, every indication is that they remain willing to have them used as originally explained. It has been my repeated experience over the past few years that participants have solicitously inquired as to my progress toward completion, conveying their interest in seeing their stories in print.

I required the interpreter and transcriber to abide by confidentiality agreements, and to indicate this by signing a letter to that effect, one copy of which they retained. We refrained from passing details provided by one individual or family to another. Even so, as the study progressed, I became conscious of cultural differences between the Cambodians as an Asian community and middle-class New Zealand regarding confidentiality. It is fair to say that to a far greater extent than is general in New Zealand society, one person's business is everyone's business among Cambodians.

Although in this study my co-researchers willingly complied with requirements to respect confidentiality, this did constitute a cultural imposition. While it can be argued that it is reasonable to apply New Zealand ethical requirements to all research conducted in New Zealand irrespective of the ethnic group being researched or conducting the study, there is equally a case in respect to ethnic minorities for negotiation and resolution of the issues between the parties concerned.

The Politics of Studying an Ethnic Minority

In concluding this description of the process of ethnographic study, I would like to address the issue of a person from the dominant culture conducting research among a minority language and ethnic group. Questions have been raised and objections voiced, particularly by Maori people, about researchers who advance their academic careers on the backs of minorities, while the ethnic minority stands to gain little or nothing (16).

The politics of research referred to in this statement concern power, the relative powers of researcher and researched which allow the study to proceed in the first place. It is this imbalance which traditionally enables the researcher to gather data, do things with that data (usually without further reference to those providing it), and

finally earn academic and/or financial merit on the basis of the study which is not enjoyed by the researched. Furthermore, the outcome of that research may be used to inform policy and services that affect the ethnic minority, which will deepen their sense of disempowerment if their view of themselves and their needs does not coincide with those of the researcher. While this holds true for research among human subjects in general, it is magnified in the case of a group whose minority status renders it socially disadvantaged.

The obvious way around this dilemma is for people from the ethnic minority to conduct research among members of their own community. In the case of this study, there are equally obvious reasons why this would be unlikely to happen. First, only now are young educated Cambodians graduating from tertiary educational institutes, and the few known to me favour courses in business and technical fields over those of social inquiry. In time this may change, but in the meantime the opportunity to describe the process of modifying traditional beliefs and practices and of adjusting to a very different society as it is actually taking place will be lost. Added to this is the apparent, and understandable, priority of Cambodians to adjust to the New Zealand way of life and to be financially and socially secure, which is likely to militate against their conducting a study along the lines of this one.

In the case of the present study, the very fact of collecting and verifying the narratives in association with members of the Cambodian community went some way to address the concerns outlined. I needed their co-operation and assistance in carrying out the research, and this was willingly provided as described throughout this paper. I sought and took into account their advice on a variety of issues, such as the acceptability of the study, its process, and questions to be included. My involvement as an outsider provided a critical interpretative perspective as we painstakingly inquired into the multiple worlds of the Cambodian transitional generation. In this I worked principally with Sok, and with the invaluable intermediary role of the translators/transcribers. This study, therefore, occupies transitional territory, on the one hand between an outsider (myself) doing research on Cambodians, and on the other Cambodians doing it on their own people, to our doing it in informal partnership, albeit initiated by me. These research assistants have had further input into my final interpretation by commenting on my analysis of data at the draft stage.

Conclusions

Resettled refugees are vulnerable owing to their marginality as an ethnic minority and as refugees. Cambodians, the subject of the ethnographic study described in this paper, are among the most traumatised of refugee communities. In their discussions on recent developments in Cambodia, Cambodian New Zealanders describe the persistence of conditions that led them to flee in the first place, which continue to keep the country unsafe and poor. It is their belief that they have little choice but to remain in exile, difficult and lonely though the experience is.

The process and experience of resettlement for the refugee has been unevenly researched, and remains poorly understood. While the reasons for this relative neglect may be multiple, methodological problems are an important reason. In this paper I have identified some of the difficulties encountered in the conducting of research among a resettled refugee community, and described ways in which these may be resolved. These include procedural issues related to cross-linguistic and cross-cultural research; verification of data when there is little reliable, published material available apart from that collected orally from refugees; and ethical concerns when a vulnerable ethnic minority community is the subject of the research.

As interviews are conducted among members of linguistic and ethnic minorities by both social anthropologists and oral historians, each discipline can enrich the other through a sharing of research experiences on the interface of their respective disciplines. Although the purposes for collecting data may differ, the respective techniques of ethnographic interviewing by anthropologists, and oral histories by historians, have much in common.

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The Reality after the Dream

NIBOROM YOUNG

It is a great pleasure to share some of my experiences of Cambodian people living in New Zealand. In 1993 it was an honour for Cambodian women in New Zealand to be able to participate in Women's Suffrage Centennial Year by recording an oral history of ten Cambodian refugee women. I thought that it was an appropriate time to build up an oral history of some refugee women who had come here over the previous 15 years, to record their experiences. The memories of their lives in Cambodia in peace and war are still vivid, alive and fresh, and yet they all have been in New Zealand long enough to have formed lifestyles and patterns worth recording for future generations.

It is very important to maintain that culture in New Zealand, for the younger generations to know and understand their roots, background and heritage. Hearing the words of their own ancestors in their own language, they will find it most memorable.

After the Communists took over Cambodia in 1975 millions of innocent people were killed and thousands died of starvation and torture. Thousands fled the country across the border into Thailand, where a lot of refugee camps were set up by the United Nations High Commission for Refugees (UNHCR). The story usually focuses on the war, the holocaust, the political changes, the leaders of the country, the after-effects, and generally research has been aimed at men. And yet, more than half the refugees are women and children.

The objective of this project was to encourage all women to work towards a better understanding of themselves, and their realities. Whatever they have been through, it is not poor, cheap or shameful: it is the history of a war of which they are the survivors. This should be a promotion of women's struggle, women's work, and will probably never be officially recognised –either in the communities they used to live in, or are living in.

The choosing of women for this oral history was very hard for me. How many women? They all have stories to tell, but most of them did not want to tell, they want to keep it to themselves, because when they tell it, it is like reliving it. They want to forget it. Do you think they can forget it? They see documentaries about Hitler's experiments, and they have been through it all 40 years later. They have been here for 10-15 years and they have never told their story: it is part of New Zealand history that has never been recorded before, a new part of our history. A lot of them are reluctant to talk; although they trust me, they know that they still do not want to talk. It was very hard to choose: they all went through the war, they lost people, they suffered, they were tortured, and they have buried their children, the little girls who had their own stories to tell.

Most Cambodians are Buddhists, about 90%, and the other 10% are either Moslem or Christian, or other. What I tried to do was to find some Buddhist Cambodians, some Moslem Cambodians, some Chinese Cambodians, and some children. I also tried to get some old people before it was too late. I missed one old woman: she died of breast cancer. That really surprised other Cambodian women because we don't know anything about breast cancer: we didn't believe it would happen to us –we are small, we don't have that problem. And if there is no problem, don't worry about it, don't go and look for it above the surface. Cambodian women don't want to do that. It is very hard to get them to go and have a test. But that death made all women concerned, made them think about it more.

And so, I am very sorry I missed that old lady –she was part of the Moslem community. I tried another one. She was also a Moslem Cambodian, and a widow. After she had done the interview, her eldest son, who without the father is the head of the family, and looks after the mother and decides everything for the mother, rang up and said he did not want anyone to hear her story, our story, and I was to rub it off. I said I couldn't do that. But I can not use that interview –I still have it but I cannot use it. I tried to find someone else, they have all got stories to tell, they have all been

Niborom Young is a community worker, and interpreter/counsellor for the Cambodian community in Wellington. This article is based on the talk she gave at the Oral History Festival 'Taping Ourselves Seriously' in Wellington in August - September 1995.

through the holocaust and the trauma.

The interviews go through from the peace time in Cambodia, then the war time, and then the escape, for the lucky ones, through the Killing Fields along the border across into Thailand. That was their dream –get out of Cambodia, get into the refugee camps. Well, beforehand, they didn't even know there were refugee camps on the Thai-Cambodian border. Just get out of Cambodia and they believed they would survive, and they would have no more killing, no more torture.

A lot of them experienced the same thing. A lot of them witnessed the killing of their husbands: their husband would be tied by the hands and they had to watch with no tears in their eyes: if there was a tear, you went the same way. They clubbed them to death because they did not want to waste bullets. Some saw the bodies of their husbands thrown in a big common grave, no shirt, face down, and one asked whether she could turn him up and put a shirt on and cover the body, dress the body, because we believe in reincarnation, and in his next life he would be presentable, look respectful. They said, 'Do you want to go the same way? Why do you want a shirt on? It doesn't matter, whether he's face up or face down. It doesn't make any difference. They cannot pray.' And to start with they could not call each other mother, father, husband, wife, daughter. They had to call each other comrade –that implies no bond between them. Everybody is comrade and the biggest God is Pol Pot.

So how to choose who you are going to interview? They all have different stories. They were made to grow all sorts of things wherever they were living, but they were not allowed eat it. You can't understand how sometimes a mother would steal something and try to feed her daughter: it is very hard to hold them and watch them die.

Have you seen *The Killing Fields*? Did you believe it was true? A lot of people said it was a Hollywood dramatisation.The film was fact, but just a very small part of a much bigger story. Nobody can make the truth, can tell you the whole true story. The film was just like a drop in the ocean to show you that it did happen.

Right, so I got through the choosing. Most of the people are country people, some of them are illiterate in their own language in Cambodia, a lot of them had no educational background, they never went to school. At one stage before the war, because of political change, the government had closed all the Chinese schools. The Chinese Cambodians told me their story of how they hired special teachers to teach their children at home.

I chose one girl. She was 12 at the time of Pol Pot. She was very happy when Pol Pot took over. She did not know what was going on. She was happy that, when they took over they took all their belongings, all the rice and food, and you just had whatever was given to you. She said, that's good because I don't have to cook. Every day she had had to cook for her parents when they went out in the paddy fields to work. And she didn't have to look after the children because all the children were taken away and put into orphanages. They orphaned the children because they were not meant to have any parents; everyone was just comrades. So she was very, very happy because she didn't have to do any cooking. But one day she saw them call a meeting and one woman, a pregnant woman, was killed right in front of her, and they cut the baby out. Then she was scared.

And, what about life in the refugee camps? People thought, if they could get into the refugee camps, they would be all right, because they would have some food. The UNHCR would provide food. Food was issued once a day. You had to queue up all day long to get the food. They might have a small tin of rice, three cabbage leaves, a tin of sardines, and a handful of mung beans. They had that for a family of five. And they had to eat it; and the children had to eat it right away –don't let anyone pinch it because then you would go another day without food. In the camps, if you let someone pinch your lunch, did you go crying to your mama? Where was she going to look? In the camp where I worked for a time, there were tens of thousands of people –where were you going to find the one that pinched your lunch? Who was going to worry about your lunch when they had bigger things to worry about? So, you had to deal with it yourself right there and then, and get your lunch back, and survive.

I know of one young boy who had been born in a refugee camp, and knew no other life. When he arrived in New Zealand, he started school at the age of five. He had never been to school before, and there at school he got his rice. Asian food smells different from Western food, not like sandwiches which don't smell at all. At lunch-time he got his lunchbox out and started eating . Other children started to gather round, and they started to tease him, 'Hey, what are you eating? Ooh, what's that smell?' And they took his lunchbox from him. And so he grabbed his box, punched them, ran to a corner of the playground, and shovelled all the rice in. He walked back as if nothing had happened and all the stories were

told to the teacher about black eyes, and blue eyes. But this refugee kid was very cool: he was warned so many times, but it didn't make any difference. He was told he'd have to change school if he didn't behave himself. No one knew that in the camps, if he didn't eat his rice, he'd go another day without food, and then he'd only get food if the UNHCR could get through with food supplies.

Water was another problem. To begin with, in the camps they dug the ground and got water. It was brown in colour, and it smelt as well. The children would go in and get what water they could, for cooking and for drinking, and for swimming –it was so lovely and cold you would want to dip your feet in there –and not want to get out. And a bucket of water would be recycled –drinking, cooking, bathing the baby once a week, and then another baby, and another one, and then finally they would wash their clothes in the same water. Later on, even that little amount of water dried up, it was so hot (40 degrees), and you couldn't grow anything because it was right on the border, and the soil is not good. Then, the UN had to truck water in every day. And the water that was trucked in –all the children would queue up all night trying to steal a bucket from one another. It was a survival thing – if they didn't have a bucket they'd steal it. They would sleep along the road that the water truck would come in on, holding on to their bucket.

That is why a lot of them, when they came here, they would just turn the tap on and see the water pouring out. It was heaven. A lot of them would just want to watch it. And the toilet would be somewhere on the perimeter of the camp, by the barbed wire. And here in New Zealand, they could flush, and the water would pour out. A lot of them would say, I want to go the toilet, now, and they would just flush, and watch, and flush, and watch. Just magic.

In the camps there were no schools and no toys. When I was working in the refugee camps there were a lot of clothes sent from other countries, and I found a lot of woollen, pure woollen, clothes – in 40 degrees? One night, after working in the camp, I went home and together with all the doctors and nurses we would unravel all the knitwear, roll it up in balls, and make little creatures – with a head, legs, a body – but we never made enough. Every day children came and they all wanted one: we tried to keep the toys in a centre where they could come and play and then go home, but no, the children wanted to take them home. The children played a lot with the doctors' matches, matchboxes, and cigarette packets, with all the pictures and the writing from all the different countries.

Later, in New Zealand, a Cambodian girl in one school was stealing things. Not money. She stole pens and pencils, the ones with the smells, like grapes, oranges. And some rulers, with beautiful pictures on them – Auckland Harbour Bridge, seascapes, Christchurch Cathedral. And rubbers, with smiley faces and long hair. Out of this world. We love blond hair, blue eyes, green eyes, fair skin. That's why we are so amazed to see you in sunbathing in the summer: we try to stay out of the sun because we don't want to go dark. For us, beauty is fair skin, white skin, and blue or green eyes. We can't have the green eyes, but we can work at keeping the skin white. This girl asked her mother to buy her all these things – the rulers, the rubbers – and her mother did not understand what she was talking about, or where to buy it. So what could the girl do? She could steal them; she could just take them when she saw them and use them there in school. And the teacher, of course, said she was stealing and it was no good.

Just recently I talked to one school and the teacher said, 'That has happened here.' She had brought felt-tipped pens from home and she laid them out for the children to use during the class. This Cambodian child put the whole lot in his drawer. The teacher saw it happening, and she knew the felt-tipped pens were hers, but she did not say anything. The next day after drawing she asked this boy to go somewhere and she took all the pens back and put them in her own drawer. The boy did not say anything. It worked, somehow.

Climbing up the barbed wire was another game – it was challenge, who could get up without getting hurt or cut. There was an incident here in New Zealand, when a girl climbed up a fence in a school playground, quite high, and she couldn't get down. She was crying up there, calling for the teacher. One boy was going to ring for the fire brigade to come and get her down. But this refugee boy climbed up and took her down, before the teacher could get there. That was one benefit of playing with barbed wire!

Some women, when they get here, try to go to English class. But they are so quiet when we ask something, we don't know what they are thinking. What we think they are conveying is that they think they are very low because they are refugees, and very poor. Some Europeans, when we ask them to have a meal with us, are quite reluctant to follow our way of eating: we put the food in the middle of the table, have a bowl of

rice and a spoon each, and we each use our own spoon to dish out the food and eat it. Everybody's spoon goes into the same food in the middle of the table, and then into our mouths.

Some Europeans ask me what they can do if they don't want to mix food with us: I say, just take everything and put it on your plate and when you've finished stop eating; if you want some more, too bad.

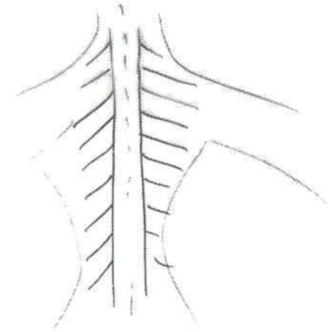
A lot of the Cambodians don't want to hear themselves called refugees. It makes them feel so low, so helpless. They are not arrogant, but, one, they cannot speak English; and, two, they look up to you New Zealanders – you are the host country, you are helping them, so they are grateful, and you are like authority figures.

One day a Cambodian woman living here was very quiet. She was asked, why aren't you talking today? She replied, 'I have a headache.' The European said, 'Here you are – have an aspirin.' Accepting the tablet, the woman replied, 'Thank you very much for your help.' But her problem could not be solved with an aspirin. She had heard from relatives in the camps, that her oldest brother (all her family had been killed) had survived. She wanted to get him out, but he was in a displacement centre. There are a lot of camps on the Thai-Cambodian border – some camps the UN recognises as refugee camps; some camps are called 'displacement centres' – they are not refugee camps. When people escape from Cambodia, they just go wherever they can; they do not know the difference between the camps. But if they go to a 'displacement centre' they are not allowed to be sponsored out; you are not allowed to go to Australia, New Zealand, the United States – you stay there, and wait for repatriation into Cambodia. Well, this woman's brother asked her for some money to bribe his way out of the centre into a recognised refugee camp. She sent the money through the Red Cross; he got it, but instead of bribing his way out, he thought the quickest way out was to buy a motorbike, and zoom out at night from that camp to the other one. When he was driving out, he was shot dead, and the body was thrown back over the Cambodian border. The woman felt guilty. She had sent the money that had killed him. If she had not sent the money, probably one day he would have got out alive.

Once Cambodians get here, they are sometimes asked 'Are you Kampuchean?' And they begin to shake. The reason is that Cambodia is the English version of the name of our country, and people from Cambodia are called Cambodians. In our language Cambodia is Kampuchea, but the people from Kampuchea are called Khmer (pronounced Kmai) and yet you call them Kampucheans. Some people here find it difficult to say Kampuchea for the country, but Khmer for the inhabitants. They ask why can't we use the same word – it would be easier to say that Kampucheans are from Kampuchea. But what do you call people from Holland? What would be easier? A lot of people think, when you call us Kampucheans you are referring to the Pol Pot time and that brings back a lot of memories, either they witnessed the killing of family members, other atrocities.

Khmer script for Cambodia/ Kampuchea (above) and for Khmer (below).

Coining is an ancient Cambodian health practice. Shown here is the pattern drawn when using coining on the spine.



One of our health practices is coining. We use tiger balm which is supposed to heal everything. I remember one day when I was waiting at a doctor's clinic with a lot of refugees, and they took tiger balm and rubbed it on their temples, and their faces, everywhere. Then the nurse came out and called them, and said, 'What is that smell? It's revolting! What is it?' Then, most New Zealanders didn't know about tiger balm, but now I'm very pleased to say that you can even buy it in New World, as well as chemists.

In coining we use a coin as well. First of all we rub tiger balm on the area: if we have a headache we rub it on the neck or on the temple and massage, to relieve the pain. But sometimes you are not sick, but you are not feeling yourself, you use tiger balm, and you ask someone to rub your back, and to do the coining. First, put tiger balm on the skin and use a coin to rub until the skin is red. On your back you rub one line on each side of the spine (not on the spine) from the neck down, top to bottom, and along the ribs moving outwards from the spine. After the coining, your back becomes beautiful and red, but only for the first day; after that, it becomes brown like a bruise, and then the trouble begins! People mistake it for physical abuse – child abuse, wife abuse, husband abuse.

Children at school may take

their shirt off, say for PE, and the teacher screams, 'Child abuse!' They call the police and a doctor, and the parents are called in. The parents come in shaking. They try to explain to the teacher and the others that it is a form of pain relief. The boy had been off school for a whole week; on the Saturday the mother had done the coining, and the boy was back at school on the following Monday. But the teacher doesn't listen, and the doctor continues to examine the 'bruise' and the police are ready to arrest the parents.

Please accept it because that is our way of healing. Coining has been handed down from generation to generation. I cannot tell you when it started or who started it, but it is very gentle and relaxing and therapeutic. Try it some time. I tried it on my husband. He was not feeling himself that day, he was exhausted. I asked him, 'How about coining?' And he asked, 'Does it hurt?' I answered, 'I do it all the time and it doesn't hurt.' I did it very, very gently for him, but he screamed. The next day, after the coining, it was a beautiful summer day and with the children we went to the beach. My husband took off his shirt but then he remembered the coining, and put it back on. He didn't want people to see his 'bruised' back and think it was husband abuse!

I hope that sooner rather than later I will finish translating all the interviews. There are 47 tapes, ranging from the shortest interview, three tapes, to the longest, 10 tapes. The interviews could go on for a whole day, and then another day as well. And talking about finding a quiet place for recording interviews, there is no quiet place. Sometimes they wanted the interview not at their home but at mine, and they brought the baby, and if I went to their place, they called other people, 'Come, Niborom is coming. Let's have lunch together.' Other days they may not be feeling well, or they don't feel like telling stories, so we postpone to another time, and so another day is lost. But you have to do it the way they want it.

I know that I will translate it for you and you will hear the whole story, but you will not hear what actually happened in the original tapes. On these, apart from the noise of the planes and the traffic outside, you would hear other sounds – the doors squeaking, the baby crying, or children fighting, or the beautiful southerly gales.

I will try my best to translate the tapes so you can read those stories. This is just a little bit. Thank you all for listening and sharing with me. Thank you Judith [Fyfe], and thank you oral history as a whole for giving us an opportunity to join your festival, and to talk with you. Beyond all that I would also like to thank New Zealand for giving us a home, peace and hope, and to all New Zealanders for their help, support and understanding. Thank you.

Oral History and the Whanganui Regional Museum experience

MICHELLE HORWOOD

An oral history archive was established at the Whanganui Regional Museum in 1993. Two projects have produced the majority of the 38 taped interviews currently held in the archive. To date museum staff have been the primary users, employing the recordings as aids in the interpretation of the museum's collections for exhibition and education programmes.

Introduction

In 1992 the Whanganui Regional Museum first gave consideration to establishing an oral history archive at the museum. There were already a number of oral history recordings held in the region. However, with the exception of the Wanganui District Library which holds three recordings, these were all in private hands and therefore not publicly accessible. The Oral History Centre at the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington was a further source of taped interviews of Whanganui people.

The Whanganui Regional Museum has comprehensive archival holdings and by 1992, planning was under way to redevelop the archives facilities to improve storage and public access. The incorporation of an oral history archive in this facility was considered a potentially valuable addition.

The objectives in establishing an oral history archive at the museum were to:

— establish a resource generated from the community, through the recording of individuals' first-hand accounts, of events that have shaped our regional history, for the benefit of the community, through public access to this collection within the museum archive; and

—record personal experiences that would enhance existing museum collections and assist with their interpretation and accessibility to the public.

The principles and procedures to be applied to the oral history archive followed established international standards as set out by Fyfe and Manson (1991). The archive was to adopt the National Oral History Association of New Zealand (NOHANZ) Code of Ethical and Technical Practice.

Identifying funding requirements and then obtaining funding were the first steps in developing an oral history archive at the museum. Thus, development of the archive has been shaped by the grants received, and in particular by the purposes for which the grants were received. The two main projects will be described in this article.

Women's Suffrage Centennial Year Project

As the centenary of women's suffrage in New Zealand approached (1993), proposals were being considered at the museum as to the most appropriate means by which the institution could promote the suffrage centennial year in the museum's public programmes. A number of activities were subsequently planned, including a major exhibition, outreach activities, and a resource centre focusing on the suffrage campaign, particularly the role played by local groups and individuals.

The major exhibition was to focus upon women from the region. It was proposed that an oral history component within this exhibition would create an added dimension to the museum's existing exhibition techniques as well as enabling women to describe their experiences and memories in their own words. This was to become the catalyst for the establishment of the oral history archive at the museum.

A successful application was made to the 1993 Suffrage Centennial Year Trust for funding to appoint and train an oral historian and purchase recording equipment.

The objectives of the project were to:

—record the oral histories of a group of elderly women from the Whanganui region through taped interviews;

—enable women to contribute to the recording of history who might not otherwise have the opportunity

Michelle Horwood is Curator at the Whanganui Regional Museum. She has collection and public programme responsibilities at the museum, and regional responsibilities for heritage site protection.

and to whom priority was given because of age;
—produce a photographic portrait of each woman;
—celebrate the centennial year of women's suffrage by curating an exhibition at the Whanganui Regional Museum based upon the oral histories recorded, the photographic portraits, and associated material;
—obtain a greater understanding of the role of women in the development of the Whanganui region;
—pass this information on to the people of Whanganui;
—preserve this information and make the resource accessible through the Archive at the Whanganui Regional Museum;
—make provision for the future expansion of the oral history archive;
—train a local person to undertake the research, interviews and processing of the taped material for the oral history archive.

The museum appointed Karen Kitson as oral historian in February 1993 on a three-month contract. Training was provided through a two-day NOHANZ workshop tutored by Judith Fyfe, oral history consultant, and Jim Sullivan, then manager of the Oral History Centre at the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

As the project was aimed at representing the diversity of women in the community, the selection of interviewees was a difficult task. One criterion for selection was 'older women', and this provided a guideline for museum staff. Through consultation with local groups and individuals who worked with the elderly, as well as by advertising the project in the media, a number of potential interviewees were identified. In all, 13 women were interviewed, and the interviews took the form of life histories.

The Suffrage Centennial Year exhibition at the museum, which opened in August 1993, was entitled 'Lives On Tape' and focused on 12 of the women interviewed. The exhibition illustrated their diverse experiences through oral and written quotes, photographic images, and objects of 'memorabilia' that depicted significant activities or occasions in their lives.

Owing to insufficient resources the audio equipment used in the exhibition was of mediocre quality. This was apparent in the quality of sound produced in the exhibition gallery. This inadequacy was partially redressed by using written quotes from the tapes to illustrate aspects of the women's lives.

It was clear from the experience of this project that the full potential of an oral history facility for this region could not be realised if this was solely dependent upon the limited resources of the regional museum. It was also clear that there was awareness in the local community of the value of oral history, and that an investigation into means of encouraging community initiatives were needed. For the museum, audio equipment specifically designed for oral history use in exhibitions was essential to enhance the public experience. Expansion of the museum's oral history holdings also needed to be considered.

The Men in Our Lives Project

In 1993 a successful application was made to the Australian Sesquicentennial Gift Trust for Oral History for a grant to undertake a second recording project for the museum's oral history archive.

The objectives of this project were similar to the Suffrage Centennial Year Project, with one major difference. This project would focus on men. One additional objective was to install professional sound equipment in exhibition galleries at the museum, to enable portions of the taped interviews to be incorporated into displays to provide a quality audio experience, in addition to a visual one for the museum visitor. Funding, however, was not available from this source for the purchase of this equipment.

Once again the criteria for selection of interviewees were general, with priority given to age. Local groups were contacted to assist in identifying potential interviewees, and a media promotion campaign was also undertaken. The focus of this project, however, was somewhat different from the previous one. As the museum's exhibition and educational activities were considered to be one of the primary destinations of the information generated by this project, additional criteria were included that focused the interviews on specific topics. Thus, the information obtained would directly assist in the interpretation of Whanganui regional history within the museum.

Suzy Hawes commenced a four-month contract at the museum as oral historian in March 1994. During this time 21 interviews were recorded. Information on specific topics was recorded, including:

traditional Maori fishing on the Whanganui River,
captaining a Whanganui riverboat in the 1930s,
World War II,
immigration from Samoa,
family businesses,
65 years' involvement in the local branch of the Savage Club.

During the Suffrage Centennial Year Project it had not been possible to interview Māori women. It was important to redress this during the current project, and therefore two of the interviews were

with Māori women.

Additionally, as 1995 is the museum's centenary, information about the history of the museum was collected. Three of the oral history interviews were carried out with this in mind: a descendant of the museum's first director; a past museum director; and a local kuia who had been involved with a project weaving tukutuku panels for the 1969 museum extension. Portions of these interviews will be used in the museum's centennial exhibition opening in November 1995.

Oral History in Whanganui: Future Developments

Several local kaumatua and kuia were interviewed during the Men in Our Lives project . They spoke in general about growing up on the Whanganui River and the changes that have taken place in the region during their lifetimes. They also spoke about specific aspects of their lives, such as practising traditional Māori medicine, or specific responsibilities they have; for example one interviewee spoke about her role as the current chairperson of the Kaumatua Kaunihera (Elders' Council). These interviews are a very valuable addition to the oral history archive. It was felt, however, that it was desirable for there to be community involvement in the recording of local kaumatua and kuia.

For this reason it was important that Whanganui be included in the National Library of New Zealand Māori Oral History training programme. In May 1994 a three-day course was run in Whanganui tutored by Haare Williams (UNITEC, Radio New Zealand) and Jody Wyllie (Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington). This course provided valuable insights into the potential of oral history recording for a group of about 10 local Māori. Some attended the workshop to develop professional skills, in particular three from the local Māori radio station, while others attended specifically to learn techniques for recording the experiences of their kuia and kaumatua. The positive feedback from those who attended this workshop provided reassurance that the voices of some of our Māori elders from this region will be recorded on tape and video as a resource for their families or the community.

The museum's oral history archive is currently used very little by the public. There are a number of possible reasons for this. One is the location of the museum archive which holds the oral history archive: the space is inadequate in terms of public comfort and access. The museum also lacks a permanent trained archivist, who would have a positive impact with regard to accessibility. Additionally, a full-time archivist would enable a more consistent promotion of the museum archive which would increase public awareness of its holdings. (At the time of writing the museum is awaiting the appointment of a new director, which is delaying plans for developing museum facilities.)

The primary user of the oral history archive at present is the museum itself: it uses it as an aid in interpreting museum collection items, or understanding its own history. Funding for audio equipment specifically designed for exhibition use has yet to be obtained. There are no current plans for a further major oral history project at the museum. The museum staff can, as resources permit, continue interviewing local people for the archive. These interviews will primarily be topic specific, and used to enhance existing or future museum collections and to assist with their interpretation and presentation to the public.

Conclusion

The Whanganui Regional Museum has undertaken two oral history recording projects since 1992. These projects have been externally funded and have generated 34 taped and processed interviews. The primary user of this collection currently is the museum itself. The museum oral history experience over the past two years has made it clear that the full potential of the oral history archive cannot be realised if it is solely dependent on the limited resources of the regional museum.

On a more personal note, my involvement in the development of this Whanganui resource has been a very rewarding experience. I found the interviewing process a humbling one, and I am constantly surprised by the generosity of those interviewed in sharing their lives.

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Slices of Lives – Oral History Programmes at the Science Centre and Manawatu Museum

FIONA CAMERON

Oral history programmes at the Science Centre and Manawatu Museum Te Whare Pupuri Taonga o Manawatu have been undertaken to investigate and personalise the history of the Manawatu region. This method of documentation has also been used to investigate contemporary social issues affecting people living in Manawatu today.

Background

Oral history is one of the oldest, and newest, forms of historical research and documentation. The most familiar category is reminiscence or the first-hand recollections of people. Oral tradition, the narratives and descriptions of people and events, is oral histories that have been handed down by word of mouth for several generations (1).

In recent years oral history as a method for the documentation of people's lives and experiences has become a popular means of recording history. Oral history as a form of reminiscence has also become more rigorous in its approach through the development of standards of recording and documentation.

Within museums oral evidence has increasingly provided the opportunity to complement historical and documentary records by incorporating and personalising experiences. In particular, it has become a tool in social historical research, a discipline which focuses on the daily lives, experiences, viewpoints and priorities of ordinary people. The use of the oral history approach is based on the premise that the documentation of individual experience in all spheres of life provides the basis from which general historical patterns and experiences can be explored and understood. The histories and stories of individuals in the community are seen to provide a valuable and unique understanding of the institutionís collections.

These developments have been coupled with a desire on the part of many museums to become more community-inclusive and focused. This desire is evident in other areas of museological practice, from public programming and evaluation to policy development.

The post-modernist movement with its emphasis on discourse and subjectivity has also had a major effect on popular academic thought and practice. The implications of these theoretical developments for oral history are based on the premise that there is no one historical truth but a number of truths. The value of oral history as a method of documentation recognises this phenomenon.

Oral history as a form of documentation, however, does have its drawbacks. Recent studies have shown that there are inherent problems with recall and long-term memory. People do not reproduce the past in its entirety. The past is often reconstructed in relation to how the interviewee perceives the present, which is often evident when exploring changing values and beliefs (2). Oral histories should not be a substitute for other types of historical research, but should be regarded as a component of the overall process, used to add and enrich. In instances where personal experiences are the focus of the investigation, oral histories can stand in their own right.

From a curatorial standpoint, exhibition presentation involves the synthesis of information into one viewpoint which is presented anonymously as the ultimate truth and reality. However, people have their own viewpoints, realities and truths. The objectives of the oral history projects undertaken at the Science Centre and Manawatu Museum and the use of the resulting material in exhibitions, described below, serve to acknowledge this phenomenon.

Awahou South School Project

The first oral history programme at the Manawatu Museum was undertaken during the summer of 1978-79 by two student researchers. The focus of the programme was schooling in the early 20th century, and it was directly related to the acquisition of the Awahou South

Fiona Cameron is Curator of Social History at the Science Centre and Manawatu Museum.

schoolhouse. Emphasis was also placed on the life histories of the interviewees. This programme has been registered in the National Register of Archives and Manuscripts, published by the Alexander Turnbull Library in Wellington.

Regional Oral History Workshop

The Manawatu Museum under the direction of Fiona Cameron, Curator of Social History, was instrumental in organising a regional two-day oral history workshop on the weekend of 20-21 February 1993 at the Palmerston North College of Education. This programme was undertaken in an effort to improve and encourage the use of oral history recording in the region and to provide the museum's staff, of which five attended, with the skills necessary to plan and implement an oral history programme. A Jack Ilott Grant of $500 was obtained to help fund the workshop. Tutors included Judith Fyfe, oral history consultant, and Jim Sullivan, then manager of the Oral History Centre at the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

Slices of Lives – Manawatu and its Peoples – Oral History Project

In 1993 the Manawatu Museum was reconstituted as the Science Centre and Manawatu Museum Te Whare Pupuri Taonga o Manawatu. The oral history project on Manawatu and its Peoples was undertaken as an integral part of the museum's social history programme, and led to the establishment of the social history gallery within the new institution. It also led to the establishment of an oral history archive, which is located in the Colin McVicar Memorial Library and Archives (3).

The project was divided into two parts. The first part of the project was the programme 'Slices of Lives' – Manawatu and its Peoples. This programme looked at aspects of the history of the Manawatu region through the lives and experiences of local people. A series of themes was identified to be explored and interviewees were selected on this basis. The exhibition, of which the oral histories were a part, presented information through a range of media, including objects and photographs, movies, audio reproduction, and art works.

Oral histories greatly enhanced the museum's knowledge of its collections and provided for new acquisitions. The project also documented personal experiences in relation to contemporary social issues.

A total of 15 people were interviewed in this section of the project. A number of others were 'pre-interviewed'. Those interviewed included people from the farming community, and union representatives involved in the Longburn Freezing Works dispute, as part of the theme of looking at the changing relationship between people and the land. Women as single parents living on the Domestic Purposes Benefit were interviewed in relation to the theme of the changing nature of the welfare state. Members of the Jewish, Chinese and Japanese communities were interviewed for the theme looking at cultural diversity and experience. The thematic exploration of living styles involved interviewing individuals from different socio-economic backgrounds who grew up during the 1930s and 1940s.

The second part of the project focused on the Vietnam war: Vietnam – The War Experience 30 Years On. This was examined for a number of reasons. Firstly, a large number of Vietnam veterans now live in the area. Secondly, Linton Military Camp in Manawatu is the home of a number of the units which were sent to Vietnam. 1995 is also the 30th anniversary of New Zealand's first combat role in this conflict and the 20th anniversary of the fall of Saigon.

This oral history project formed the basis of an exhibition, and a professional drama programme on the Vietnam conflict. The Vietnam conflict engendered debate and polarised public opinion. One objective of the project was to focus on the viewpoints of people living in the Manawatu region, both for and against the war. A total of 13 individuals were interviewed: they included Vietnam veterans, representatives from the artillery, infantry and engineers, protesters, Vietnamese refugees, and New Zealand Embassy staff. Another objective of the project was to convey the idea that people are individuals and have different perspectives, beliefs and priorities. The presentation of these opposing views served to promote an open attitude to events and issues in relation to the Vietnam issue. The use of theatre as a medium for presenting these ideas also brought to life the lives and experiences of those people involved in the conflict.

Integral to this project was an education programme tied closely to the 5th– 6th– and 7th– form social studies and history syllabus. This programme, developed in 1994, is now available to schools. Oral histories are the basis of the programme. Attitudes values, and cultural perspectives are foci of the programme (and part of the New Zealand Curriculum Framework).

Community Oral History Workshops

The aim of the institution's social history programme is to encourage and empower community groups to record their own histories. An outcome of this objective has been the development of a series of oral history workshops to provide people with the background and skills to record and document oral histories. The first workshops were held in 1995, on Tuesday 22 November, followed by another session on Tuesday 6 December. Twenty people from a variety of different backgrounds and with diverse interests participated. The workshop was run by Fiona Cameron, Tim Gilbertson and Suzy Hawes. Owing to the popularity of these workshops another was planned for winter 1995.

Outcomes

Oral history programmes are now an integral part of the institution's social history programmes. Programmes and workshops we have held have proved very successful in establishing a network with various community groups. They have also raised an awareness of the value of people's histories and the role oral history has to play in the understanding and awareness of issues in the past and the present.

Many of the interviewees have felt a sense of active involvement and participation in the programme, and ownership of their own histories and materials collected and presented. This we feel was due to the fact we gave the participants a considerable amount of control over the material that was recorded and how it was used within the exhibitions. Oral history material gathered during the Slices of Lives and Vietnam projects have been used in exhibitions in transcribed form, through audio reproduction, and theatre.

The training programmes and oral history projects have also allowed staff to develop project management and interviewing skills. An oral history archive has been set up in the institution's research library, and the nation's store of oral history resources has increased.

ENDNOTES

1) See G. Griffiths 'Oral history' in D. Fleming, C. Paine and J. G. Rhodes (eds.) *Social History in Musuems – A Handbook for Professionals,* p. 111

2) ibid., pp. 111-112

3) In 1993 this project was successful in attracting a grant of $7,895 from the Australian Sesquicentennial Gift Trust for Oral History, administered by the Historical Branch of the Department of Internal Affairs. The grant allowed the employment of an oral historian Suzy Hawes for the recording of 10 interviews, and for the purchase of a Sony Walkman Professional tape recorder. Other interviews were carried out by Fiona Cameron and Curatorial Assistant, Tim Gilbertson.

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Oral History at the Wellington Maritime Museum

KEN SCADDEN

The Wellington Maritime Museum has been collecting oral history recordings on nautical themes since the late 1970s when Jack Churchouse, curator of what was then the Wellington Harbour Board Maritime Museum, was interviewed for radio by Jessica Weddell about the sailing ship *Pamir*, which was well known to New Zealanders in the 1940s. Over the next few years a dozen or so similar interviews were collected to begin a small oral history archive.

However, it was not until I joined the museum as archivist in 1990 that an oral history programme was instituted. I had already done a number of oral histories as part of my research on sub-antarctic/antarctic/whaling history (and briefly served on the NOHANZ committee) and was aware of the need for the museum to establish a proper oral history programme.

The impetus was provided not long afterwards by the launch, at a museum function, of Charlotte Macdonald's book *A Woman of Good Character* about the experiences of single women immigrants to New Zealand in the nineteenth century. Museum exhibitions officer Emmanuel Makarios and I tried to find material on women's maritime history to display at the book launch but could barely fill one display case. Although we knew that women had played their part in the nation's maritime history, it was clear that the record of it was scanty indeed and there was an obvious need for the recording of peoples' personal experiences.

Since that time the museum staff have made a conscious effort to fill in some of the gaps in our maritime history by endeavouring to record the experiences of as wide a range of people as possible: men and women, different ethnic groups, and those at the bottom of the hierarchy as well as the top, the seamen and other workers as well as the captains and admirals.

Some of the early interviews I conducted were with naval veterans, one who joined the navy in 1940 and served on convoy duty in the Red Sea, and another who was on the cruiser *Gambia* during World War II and was present at the Japanese surrender at Tokyo Bay. There was also an interview with an 'old timer' whose career had covered some 52 years on various vessels around the New Zealand coast.

To make contact with possible subjects we put up a notice on one of the museum's display boards, 'Tell us about your seagoing experiences'. This explained to visitors that the museum's mission was to encourage an appreciation and understanding of our maritime heritage. We saw as an integral part of this mission the recording of the experiences of those associated with the sea. The appeal was aimed at a wide audience, especially those people (familiar to all oral history enthusiasts) who believed they had lived ordinary lives that would not be of interest to anyone. The notice asked:

Are you, or have you ever been, a boatbuilder, watersider, sea-borne immigrant, pirate, naval architect, sailor, captain's parrot, veteran yachtie, ship's cat, lighthouse keeper, mermaid, steward or stewardess, deep sea diver, Titanic survivor, shipping company employee, Cape Horner, marine engineer, harbour master, Amokura old boy, fisherman, matelot, coastal hostess, shipowner, whaler, veteran of Trafalgar, ship's doctor or nurse, sea scout, peg leg carver...?

Although many of these categories naturally enough did not elicit a response, a surprisingly large number did, and provided a pool of subjects to be tapped for years to come. The interviews resulting from this notice included some with a variety of seafarers from both the merchant navy and the Royal New Zealand Navy. There was a man who had been involved in the last open season for the taking of fur seals in New Zealand, a shipwreck survivor, and several immigrants who had arrived in Wellington by ship and had interesting stories to tell about their initial impressions.

When the museum hosted the country's first national maritime history seminar in 1992 it followed celebrations marking the 50th anniversary of the founding of the Royal New Zealand Navy. We at the museum decided to explore a

Ken Scadden is Director of the Wellington Maritime Museum.

different perspective on that naval history by interviewing one of the first New Zealand Wrens about her experiences in those early days of women in the new navy. Several other Wrens were subsequently interviewed, including one who was New Zealand's first film projectionist (for the duration of the war only – training gunners) and one who worked at the degaussing (demagnetising) range in Wellington Harbour.

All of the speakers at that maritime history seminar were recorded on audio tape to ensure an accurate record of the proceedings, and when the museum hosted another seminar in 1993, this time on the theme of women and the sea, the speakers were recorded both on audio tape and on video. Although these were not oral history recordings in the usual sense, the museum sees the taping of the speakers at such seminars as an important extension of oral history. The 'women and the sea' seminar was exploring this theme for the first time in a public forum in New Zealand, and possibly in the world, and the recordings are providing some valuable research material in the field.

As an example, one of the speakers, Jan Jordan of the Criminology Department at Victoria University Wellington, had interviewed ship girls about their lives and this provided a fascinating glimpse into a hidden side of the life of our ports. Other speakers were women who had been amongst the first of their sex to go to sea in this country, and they spoke of their experiences in breaking down the prejudices of their male shipmates in the very conservative maritime world.

Another aspect of our maritime history which the museum has begun to explore in detail with oral history recordings is the world of commercial fishing. In early 1993 Emmanuel Makarios began to gather material on fishing for use in a display the museum was putting on at FISHEX, a national commercial fishing show being held in Palmerston North. He quickly became aware that this aspect of our history was virtually unrecorded and decided to do something about it. In making contact with those in the industry he put the word about that the museum was beginning an oral history programme concentrating on commercial fishing and that he was seeking possible subjects.

Some recordings were made, and many valuable contacts established, but the spur to develop a proper programme came in the following year when the museum was successful in an application for an oral history award from the Australian Sesquicentennial Gift Trust for Oral History administered by the Historical Branch of Internal Affairs. With a grant of $2,500 the museum was able to buy a quality portable tape recorder (Sony model TCM 5000 EV) and finance travel out of Wellington by Emmanuel to make recordings at other ports such as Nelson, Napier and New Plymouth.

In applying for the grant we pointed out that we wanted to record the work experiences of people involved in the earlier years of the fishing industry, an area that has been quite important in the country's economic history but neglected as a subject of historical research. It would not be simply a record of fishing and fishermen but a look at the social history of an industry that from its early years was dominated by workers from certain ethnic groups, particularly Italians and Scots, who emigrated to New Zealand and found a livelihood in an occupation they had known back home. Many of these immigrants started family businesses, and their wives and sons often worked with them and have interesting stories to tell. Emmanuel felt it was important to get their memories on tape and regretted the project could not have been started years before, for many of the original immigrants are now dead and their experiences can only be captured second or third hand through family recollection.

Emmanuel intends to use extracts from these tapes in a future museum exhibition on fishing. He has already used some of the information gleaned from the tapes in writing a series of articles on the history of commercial fishing which feature in the monthly magazine Seafood New Zealand.

The museum is to undergo a major refit during 1996-97, when its 103-year-old historic waterfront building at Queen's Wharf will be strengthened and completely refurbished inside. A number of exciting new exhibits will be incorporated in the museum and we intend to make use of some of the tapes in our oral history collection to add realism to the displays and create a sense of empathy in the listener.

We see the museum's oral history programme as a valuable addition to our archives of maritime history. The collection is of course available to researchers and is continually being added to as much as our limited resources permit. Oral history in museums can be a vivid way of preserving our history and making it come alive for visitors, and we at the Wellington Maritime Museum will be using our oral history collection as much as possible in the future development of the museum.

The American Small Town in Microcosm: The Small Town in Kentucky Oral History Project

WILLIAM ELLIS

Small towns, particularly those under 2,500 in population, are losing not only people, but their place in American life as well. The very institutions that give a town its identity, its sense of place, are disappearing. Most independent town schools have been consolidated into large county systems; downtown businesses have been ravaged by the building of shopping strips and malls: the K-Martisation of America. The corner drug store and the 'if I ain't got it, you don't need it' hardware and sundry store is becoming a rarity on the urban landscape (1).

Even at the height of its cultural hegemony in the late 19th and early 20th centuries, the small town was pilloried by intellectuals. Later there were the books – *Spoon River Anthology*, and *Winesburg, Ohio* – and, more recently, television parodies of the small town, with fictional places ranging from Mayberry the benign, to Twin Peaks the sinister, to Cicely the funky, and back to Evening Shade, the modern-day sexy Mayberry. Several recent academic studies have taken a hard look at the fate of the small town (2). None of these recent studies are especially hopeful about its fate.

What is the current condition of the small town in the United States? Some exist only because of their proximity to larger urban areas, serving as dormitory communities. Others are adjusting as best they can. Small towns have many of the same problems as larger urban areas as well as their own special crises. Government agencies at the state and federal levels help some. The Small Towns Institute of Ellensburg, Washington, publisher of Small Town aims its message at preserving the small urban area.

One purpose of 'The Small Town in Kentucky Oral History Project' has been to capture on tape something of the 'town-ness' that we assume characterises life in a small town. This comes from a traditional oral history approach to the subject, recalling information from the interviewee's past. For example, the following quote from one of the interviews about the Great Depression era, evokes a nostalgic slice of life in small-town America:

'I remember once during the Depression. I had one sister, and my Dad, Mother, and I were sitting on the porch. There was a period of time when my Dad was out of work. He had had a hardware store here [Augusta], but that went 'kaput' with the Depression, and the farmers went, so the hardware store went. So before he went to work for the government, things were a little tight. We were sitting on the front porch one night mulling because [of things] we didn't have; my sister and I wanted to go to the movie, my Mother wanted a candy bar, and Dad was out of cigarettes. I sat there on the porch and remembered that my Grandfather, one time when he was up here, had tossed me fifty cents and I had missed it and it had dropped on the porch and rolled down behind, between the porch and the house. This may sound like a story to you but it's true. I sat there and I thought of that and I told my Dad. He went around, and got a crowbar, took the lattice off the end of the porch. I got a flashlight and I crawled under there and I found that fifty cents. We went to the movies, my sister and I, we bought my Mother a candy bar and my dad a pack of cigarettes for fifty cents.' (3)

Another quote illustrates some of the racial tensions that one would expect in small-town Kentucky, again from a somewhat distant historical perspective in the 1940s. A woman who ran a small restaurant reported that 'a drummer that came in all the time...saw this black cook in the kitchen...and he asked my husband. He said: 'Is that black man cooking for you?' My husband said 'yes'. The drummer said, 'I won't be in here anymore.' I thought good. I didn't like him anyway.' (4) Many quotes of this

William Ellis is Professor of History at Eastern Kentucky University in the USA. He presented this paper at the 1994 NZHA/NOHANZ conference in Auckland.

type may be gleaned from the Small Town collection, offering the researcher an insight into the small town of yesterday. But what about the present and the future of the small town?

Though the historical context of the small town in general and the individual small town in particular comes through in most interviews, there is another, more immediate concern. Specifically, why are some towns prospering, some marking time, and others obviously decaying? By studying a sample of small towns in Kentucky through the oral history process, perhaps some insight may be gleaned on this important question.

In 1990 I began planning this project with the two perspectives mentioned above: historical and sociological. Decisions had to be made. The term small town is, itself, relative. I chose to concentrate on towns under 2,500 in population because that is the traditional census definition of an urban area. Moreover, the apparent vulnerability of a town of that size or smaller is widely accepted. (5)

The Kentucky Oral History Commission has graciously supported this project from its inception in 1991 with three separate interviewing grants, and, more recently, with a transcription grant. Over 180 interviews have been completed in nine towns, with interviewing ongoing in four towns. A minimum of 20 interviews are completed in each town. A larger number of interviews would give greater detail about that particular town, but limited resources make it impossible to reach a larger sample of towns.

The first five towns were chosen for their proximity to the interviewers. The towns were selected based on perceived characteristics. For example, Burgin (Mercer County), Silver Grove (Campbell County), and Augusta (Bracken County) were chosen because they represent the small, non-county-seat town that retains an independent school district. On the other hand, Whitley City (McCreary County) and Burlington (Boone County) are both unincorporated county-seats that offer interesting contrasts, while controlling neither their educational nor their political destinies. There is a strong sense of place, or citizen unity, in Burlington but not in Whitley City, the citizens of which have a typical Kentucky county identification. Pleasureville (Henry County) offered an example of an older rural town that is changing from primarily agricultural support to a dormitory community. Livingston (Rockcastle County), another town of the same type, was picked because it is visibly dying. Most of the towns in the project have lost substantial population in recent years, with Livingston the highest at 27.8%. Finally, Walton (Boone) was chosen for the last round of interviews because it gained 23.2% in the 1990 census and appears to be on the threshold of sustained growth.

Obviously, there is not enough time or grant money to develop a thesis project of this type for all the small towns in Kentucky warranting such notice. There is an effort to get more of a regional representation. As director of the project, I have moved into the northern Kentucky region interviewing in Burlington, Silver Grove, and Walton. Five western and south central Kentucky towns were the focus of interviewing in 1994, giving the Small Town project more regional diversity.

Limiting the number of interviews per town to 20 has necessitated finding a cross-section of interviewees who represent various segments of the community. This goes beyond the rich-poor, young-old dichotomies, to include African-Americans (who are few in number in eastern, central and northern Kentucky small towns); local officials; and past, present, and recent migrants. A few narrators, who have moved away from the community, give a different view of the town. Religious leaders, business people, factory managers, blue collar workers, and others who offer a unique perspective also have been invited to participate. For example, one woman, born in Carlisle, retired there after many years spent in such cities as Washington, DC, and New York. She returned to the small town because of her rather nostalgic views of her birthplace. (6)

A set of core questions was devised. Other items were added depending on each individual's experiences (see Appendix A).

The Small Town in Kentucky Oral History Project is far from complete. Interviews in at least 20 towns of representative types across the state will be necessary to give complete regional coverage. Many of the 'best' interviews will have to be transcribed and studied before any serious conclusions can be reached. However, I believe the results from the first nine towns to be covered reveal some preliminary impressions about the viability of the small town.

Although towns appear to have a generic identity, ultimately each is unique, based on history, location, and other factors. 'Townness' is difficult to define, but some characteristics are clearly evident.

Towns need a centre, an identifiable area which defines the town. Whitley City has a county courthouse, but little else beyond some non-descript stores. Strip development along a new highway has taken even the post office away. The town is unincorporated and

part of a county school system. It has no 'town-ness'. Burlington, while unincorporated and with no school system of its own, has an identifiable centre, with courthouse, businesses, and a hardware store. Less than 10 miles away is Florence mall. It exhibits 'town-ness'. Another county-seat Carlisle (Nicholas County) has an imposing courthouse, but a decaying business centre. Historic preservation, however, gives most people a strong sense of place.

Towns need downtown restaurants, places to meet, to give identity. They need churches, banks, old houses and new. Schools, particularly an independent school district, keep a town focused on itself. Volunteer fire departments are an important part of community cohesion, especially for fund-raising and as meeting places. Keeping the post office downtown is vital. Augusta, on the Ohio River, has a picturesque location and strong historic attachment with the river, and capitalises on tourism. Sense of place is evident.

But if small towns are to survive as other than dormitory communities, they need industry and jobs. They need parks and other public living spaces.

One woman in Carlisle, when asked what made her town unique, replied: 'Is it? I don't know. To me, it's just Carlisle. That's all I think about it. I haven't thought about it being different from other small towns. Of course, there are some things here that aren't in other small towns, but isn't that characteristic of all towns? Where you'll find one thing one place...maybe that's what's interesting. It's not all in one place. And, don't ask me what because I don't know. I really don't know anything special here, but it's special if you live here. One time I was bringing a neighbour man home from a Lexington hospital, and just as we topped the hill coming down into Carlisle, he says, 'There's no place in the world looks like this to me'. And I thought, I never thought about that, but I guess that's right. It's home.' (7)

So far, I have not found a formula for town survival. Perhaps it is as different as each town. But one thing is sure. People must feel a communal attachment and commitment, a sense of place. Otherwise, a town will eventually wither and die.

APPENDIX A: Sample question items, the small town in Kentucky Oral History Project

The questions vary depending on the nature of each town and the age and background of the individual interviewee. Some persons, of course, volunteer more information than others. More probing may be necessary for the more reluctant interviewee.

Demographic information: name; birth date; parents; education; occupation.

What are your first memories of the town? Lead into specific mention of the following list:

- *family*
- *schools*
- *churches and the role of religion*
- *social events – organisations, holidays, public events*
- *relation to other towns and the county*
- *places, buildings*

What makes your town unique? (This is an attempt to test the validity of the ideas of 'sense of place' and 'sense of community'.) Have you lived in other places? If yes, can you make some comparisons?

How has your town changed or not changed over the years? What do you remember of the 1920s? Great Depression? World War Two era? Post-War era?

The following items are of a more probing nature and may be inserted in later stages of the interview if the interviewee does not volunteer some of this information in the general question format outlined above.

Social Relationships:

How would you describe social and racial relations in your town?

Have these changed over the years?

Spatial Relationships:

Has the appearance of the town changed?

Ask about streets, sidewalks, and the influences of changes in architectural styles.

Public Services:

Ask about postal, banking, and city services, including fire and police protection. Has crime/law enforcement changed over the years?

Describe recreation in your town.

Has this changed over the years?

Did your town have an early opera house and/or movie house?

Local Government:

Has this changed over the years?

Who have been some of the officials you remember?

Transport:

How has transport changed?

Can you give examples of early rail, bus, water, and highway transportation?

Economy:

How do people make a living here?

What is the influence of agriculture and local industry?

Do people commute to other places to work?

How has business changed over the years?

Have 'chain stores' had an impact on your community?

Education:

How have educational institutions changed over the years?

Who were some of the prominent teachers you remember?

Religion:

Do you attend church? Which?

Can you describe the influence of churches in this community?

What do you remember about prohibition?

ENDNOTES

Thomas L. Daniels and John W. Keller, 'What Do You Do When Wal–Mart Comes to Town?' *Small Town* 22 (September–October 1991), pp. 14 - 18. The authors conclude that in order for small businesses to survive they must find a niche not served by Wal-Mart.

Richard Lingeman *Small Town America: A Narrative History 1620 – The Present* (New York: G. P. Putnam & Sons, 1980); Elvin Hatch *Biography of a Small Town* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1979); Tony Parker, *Bird, Kansas* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1989); Ron Powers *Far from Home: Life and Loss in Two American Towns* (New York: Random House, Inc. 1991); James Oliver & Janet C. Robertson *All Our Yesterdays: A Century of Family Life in an American Small Town* (New York: Harper, 1993); and Michael Martone, editor, *Townships* (Iowa City: University of Iowa Press, 1992).

Interview with Thomas H. Cline, 5 October 1991

Interview with Irma Haley, 5 December 1991

Bill Steiner, 'The Future of Downtowns: Issues to Consider as We Approach 2001' in *Small Town* 23 (November-December, 1992) pp. 26 - 29

Interview with Annie Laurie Mansour, 19 June 1991

Interview with Alma S. Clinkenbeard, 25 June 1991

BOOK REVIEWS

CONVENT GIRLS: NZ WOMEN TALK TO JANE TOLERTON

Published by Penguin Books, Auckland, 1994, 221 pages, paperback, $24.95

REVIEWED BY JACQUI FOLEY

Jacqui Foley is a free-lance oral historian based in North Otago. She has recorded an oral history project with Dominican nuns.

Seventeen interviews with women educated by Catholic nuns. The women are well known and highly successful in their chosen fields. They talk about school days, the importance of Catholicism in their schooling, discipline, moral codes, the nuns' approach to sin and sex, and the overall effect that a convent education had on their lives. They also describe the attractiveness and drama of some ceremonies of the Catholic Church.

I had looked forward to this book, my own education being with the Dominican nuns. The content of the book was very familiar and I was impressed by the interviewees' analysis of their convent educations. As Jane Tolerton says in the introduction, they had taken the good things and discarded the negatives. The women came across as strong, confident, articulate, and intelligent, and 'answered' easily the question posed on the back cover: 'What makes convent girls stand out in a crowd?'

The author acknowledges that the book is unrepresentative and for this reason, the title should have been modified - "Well-Known Convent Girls" or whatever, rather than a statement on the back cover that the interviewees were prominent women. There are many ex-convent girls who have not come out of the system so successfully or are so much at ease with their experiences of it, do not necessarily stand out in a crowd, or have the distinguishing features mentioned in the introduction: '...irreverent sense of humour, well developed sense of social justice and ability to stand up and say their piece'. Interviews with women from this different perspective would have added interest and given a more balanced representation, and possibly have widened Ms Tolerton's view of what convent-educated women are like.

The basis of the interviews were the questions: 'What was [the convent girl's] world like, how did it shape her, how does she feel about it now?' The interviewer says she was aware of being an outsider, at times thinking, 'this is not my territory, I should not be traversing it'. The method of questioning was explained as opening with a wide question and then letting the interviewees go.

The interviews had a sameness, and while some topics formed the cornerstones of the project and inevitably were repeated, I would have liked deeper questioning. For example, Marian Hobbs talks about the opportunities for leadership (p. 99): the interview, however, does not bring out the other reason for encouraging leadership which was that the nuns relied heavily on the senior girls for leading and assisting with younger girls. On the topic of discipline, Paula Ryan describes how she found it 'repressive at the time, but now sees it as having created self-reliance' (p. 117). I found the system of discipline at my school crippling, and I believe it affected decision-making ability in later life. It could well be that the nuns used such a strict code because, quite apart from the moral question, they were afraid of not coping without it. It was frustrating not to have discussion on these kinds of issues. Possibly, the interviews were cut and one disadvantage of transferring oral history to print may be the loss of in-depth discussion.

Two editorial decisions that irritated me were that in group photographs the interviewees were not identified, and there was no bibliography.

Overall, however, the book is enjoyable, the interviews readable and interesting. More importantly they made me think about things I had not thought of for a long time.

AN INTRODUCTION TO THE USE OF ORAL HISTORY IN THE HISTORY OF MEDICINE

By Paul Thompson with Rob Perks

Published by The National Life History Collection, The British Library National Sound Archive, 1993, 36 pages, paperback. (Copies of this booklet are available from the National Sound Arachive, 29 Exhibition Road, London SW7 2AS, ENGLAND.)

REVIEWED BY MARIE BURGESS

Marie Burgess, executive committee member and minute secretary of NOHANZ, co-ordinated an oral history programme on nurses and midwives for the Nursing Education

and Research Foundation in the early 1980s. She currently works as a freelance oral historian.

I came to the review of this 36-page booklet with some anticipation. Paul Thompson's book *The Voice of the Past* was the first oral history book I read when my interest in oral history began back in the 1970s. (That publication was revised in 1988.) He is research professor in social history at the University of Essex, and director of the National Life Story Collection. It is no over-statement in the note about the authors that he 'is the leading figure in the development of oral history in Britain'. Respect for his work goes well beyond Britain.

The other author, Rob Perks, curator of oral history at the British Library National Sound Archive, attended the 1994 NZHA/NOHANZ conference in Auckland. He was an interesting and enthusiastic speaker on his major project with Ukrainians.

Aside from my knowledge and interest in the authors, my expectations were also heightened by the fact that this was the first book I had encountered which deals specifically with my area of particular interest - the oral history of health professionals, and nurses and midwives in particular. I have been involved with the oral history of nurses and midwives since the early 1980s when I acted as co-ordinator and one of the interviewers for the Nursing Education and Research Foundation's oral history project. Over 150 life story interviews were conducted at that time, and are lodged with the Oral History Centre at the Alexander Turnbull Library, Wellington.

To have had at that time a booklet such as *An Introduction to the Use of Oral History in the History of Medicine* would have been a boon. Its content covers succinctly 'interesting to know' as well as the 'should knows' of oral history. Having whetted the appetite it then sends you to an interesting array of further reading on oral history and interviewing, as well as some publications both American and British specifically about oral history in relation to medicine. It ends with a most useful sample interview question schedule used in an oral history project on a general practice.

Because of the limited use of evidence from oral history sources by medical historians compared with its growth in other areas of historical research, the authors state that the main purpose of the booklet is 'to consider its potential for the history of medicine and the basic methodology'.

By way of introduction to this theme the booklet begins with some background comment on oral history in general, and then moves to the work done thus far in medicine. The authors have identified three broad types of history project in the medical area which have used oral history methods:

1. *The limited type, interviewing retired practitioners living locally, about their memories of a particular hospital. This is likely to be limited to supplementary use.*
2. *Medical history evidence obtained from non-medical oral history programmes such as those by social historians. Apparently, this is the most popular type of project in Britain.*
3. *Focused oral history research projects with thematic interviews on a specific issue in the history of medicine: this is considered the most promising approach. This thematic approach could be used for projects about particular services such as maternity care, or the history of a particular institution, or even a life history with a focus on the professional career of the person.*

The section 'Looking Ahead' is particularly interesting for its examination of potential areas of oral history research and approaches in the future. A wealth of ideas are suggested around the three perspectives identified - the oral history of medicine as practised; medicine as part of daily life; and medical ideas and images as part of our culture.

More than half the publication is devoted to the key methodological issues, covering the nature of memory, sampling methods, who to interview, preparation for the interview, the interview guide, equipment, the interview itself, after the interview, analysis and presentation, and finally securing the tapes for the future. The information provided about methodology is not specific in any way to the medical field and therefore is useful to any oral historian.

While I found the publication interesting and useful and would recommend it to any oral historian about to undertake a project in the health field, there were for me some disappointments and frustrations in the presentation of the booklet.

The cover featuring four early photographs of health professionals promised a more lively style of presentation than the inside delivered with its small print relieved only by the occasional heading. In these days of desktop publishing even limited budgets can achieve more creative presentations. The contents of the booklet deserved better.

The written content would also have benefited from a keener editorial pen. The book appears to

have joint authors but two textual references to 'I' indicate that it was written by Paul Thompson. Perhaps this was a result of the booklet's being based on previously published papers. A noticeable lapse (for seven consecutive pages) in the use of bold text to highlight key words was also a minor irritation.

And finally, from a non-medical health professional point of view, in the 1990s it is not acceptable to discuss all health professions under the heading 'The History of Medicine'. For example, oral history projects of nurses and midwives were mentioned on a number of occasions in the booklet. A slightly modified title would I believe have made the publication more acceptable and more widely read by health professionals other than medical practitioners.

ORAL HISTORY AND THE LOCAL HISTORIAN

By Stephen Caunce
Published by Longman, 1994, 227 pages; hardback, £29.99; paperback £11.99

TALKING HISTORY: A SHORT GUIDE TO ORAL HISTORY

By Megan Hutching
Published by Bridget Williams Books/Historical Branch, Department of Internal Affairs, Wellington, 1993, 79 pages, paperback, $17.95

RECORDING ORAL HISTORY: A PRACTICAL GUIDE FOR SOCIAL SCIENTISTS

By Valerie Raleigh Yow
Published by Sage; 1994, 284 pages, hardback £34.50, paperback £15.95

REVIEWED BY ROB PERKS*

Rob Perks is Curator of Oral History at the British Library National Sound Archive in London.

The most remarkable thing about these three new handbooks is their similarity of approach to collecting oral history. They are indicative of the extent to which oral history has become a truly international movement: three books from three very different parts of the globe which seem to be in agreement on a whole host of issues, from consent forms to questionnaires and transcription. All three cover much the same ground, though they vary considerably in style and scope. Interestingly none of them devote very much detailed attention to technical equipment and archiving, and all concentrate on audio tape recording with barely a mention of video recording (and the special problems that poses).

Hutching's well-illustrated and straight-forward book is an excellent beginner's introduction. Five short chapters begin by defining oral history, then trace the process from preparation via the interview itself to processing and memory as evidence. There is a helpful list of questions and a short bibliography. Hutching is current president of the National Oral History Association of New Zealand and the New Zealand's government oral historian, so the tone is not surprisingly practical and authoritative. The volume is the latest in a series of compact, high-quality guides published by the Historical Branch, aimed at enthusing rather than academic comprehensiveness. Other titles in the series have addressed Maori history, local history and women's history. The text of *Talking History* is supported throughout by some lively photographs and interview extracts representative of the rich variety of oral history in New Zealand: from the ubiquitous Robert Muldoon on being an 'accessible' Prime Minister to a vivid account of a volcanic eruption, from a Maori funeral to an Auschwitz survivor's vivid memories.

The inevitable demand for brevity has meant that in places Hutching's advice comes across a little too forcibly. I would query whether professional story-tellers have a fund of stories which are of only 'marginal value' (p. 11). While we all share her frustration at cavalier attitudes to recording quality it is perhaps a little harsh to say that poor recordings are 'useless' (p. 19). She also takes a hard line with those who 'transcribe and publish informants' testimony without comment' which she sees 'as not contributing to history' (p. 65), a position which will dismay many. But these throw-away lines rarely deflect from what is an accessible and welcome short guide.

Caunce's approach in this new volume in Longman's Approaches to Local History series, is largely historiographical, though it is rooted in a wealth of practical experience in Yorkshire, notably a project on East Riding farm horsemen which resulted in the excellent *Amongst Farm Horses* (Alan Sutton, 1991). Although this and other earlier work provides the volume with a wealth of excellent images, this has the effect of giving the book a slightly parochial feel. This is perhaps unintentional, though the Lowry painting on the cover furthers this impression and the 'local historian' tag is clearly

a confining brief when it might have been more broadly interpreted.

Oral History and the Local Historian is an honest and very personal book in which the author rarely hides his commitment to oral history, his attitudes to history or his views about current affairs generally. From the outset he is forthright in pointing out that 'there is no case for setting clear limits to what can be done and no room for dogmatism about methods...this book is a menu you can choose from, not an instruction manual' (pp. 4 - 5). Some readers may be disappointed by this and we have to wait until chapter seven before we get any practical advice. The first 125 pages are devoted to ploughing much of the same ground as Thompson's *The Voices of the Past*, by arguing the case for oral history's application in a variety of settings: biographical life stories, folklore culture and community, migration, women's history, disability, politics and contemporary issues. The writing is well informed, though a little wordy and dense in places, and all the main canons of post-war British oral history are explored. However, little attempt is made to pick up recent methodological debates about collective (public-private) memory, subjectivity, inter-personal interview relations, ethics and interpretation, which gives the book a slightly old-fashioned feel. Caunce's strengths lie in the closing chapters about organising the material, where his advice is sound and sensible. He sets out to demystify and broaden the base of oral history, and succeeds: few can disagree with his conclusion that oral historians should avoid being ghettoised into a enclosed group.

Yow's refreshingly well-written book draws on her wide experience in a variety of different oral history projects, amongst them health care, rural history, women clerical workers, and artists. This is a well-structured book: each chapter has an introduction, a useful summary and an annotated list of recommended reading, making it highly accessible and readable despite the absence of illustrations. Although the orientation is firmly American, Yow embraces the key debates with relish, particularly the thorny issue of ethics in a perceptive and practical chapter which assesses the impact on interviewing of funding and commissioning bodies. I have not read anything better on this topic which marshals all the current literature so well while keeping its feet firmly on the ground. An example is a marvellous story about how Yow's commissioned interviews for a college history had revealed an incident when the president had been caught nude bathing in the college pool with a woman colleague. This had resulted in the resignation *en masse* of the college's vice-presidents, something which clearly deserved a part in any honest published account of the college's history. At proof stage, however, it was omitted against Yow's wishes, and as agent of the institution she was powerless to change the decision. It is the sort of conflict which is likely to be more commonplace on other parts of the oral history community as private funding becomes more common.

In other parts of *Recording History* the author brings her practical knowledge and wide reading into play in thoughtful chapters on transcription and interview techniques. Her emphasis throughout is one of developing a collaborative relationship with an older person and there is much sensible advice on the problem of dependency and ending an interview. Three later chapters reflect on oral history's use in community studies, biography and family research, and are revealing of current work in the USA. There are useful appendixes on release forms and other types of documentation. together with a sample interview question guide and the Oral History Association's evaluation guidelines. It is, in fact, only the opening chapter that disappoints, seeming rather lacklustre and uninspiring by comparison with what follows. Overall this is an impressive book which I warmly recommend not only to those just starting out, but also to those who don't think they need to read another handbook.

* This review was first published in *Oral History* (Spring 1995, Volume 23, No. 1), the journal of the Oral History Society in the UK.

Code of ethical and technical practice

This Code has been established in recognition of the rapid spread of oral history practice and the consequent need for standards in the collection of oral history material, its preservation and proper use.
The Code exists also to assist in the appraisal of oral history projects by setting ethical, professional and technical standards that are essential in maintaining oral history as a valid form of documentation.

The interviewer has the following responsibilities:

- *to inform the interviewee of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the particular project for which the interview is being carried out.*
- *to inform the interviewee of the mutual rights involved in oral history, such as editing, seal privileges, literary rights, fiduciary relationships, royalties, and determination of the disposition in all forms of the recording and accompanying material, and the likely extent of its dissemination and use.*
- *to determine the preferences of the interviewee, and to respect any prior agreements during the conduct of the oral history process, carefully documenting these preferences and agreements for the record.*
- *to prompt informative dialogue through challenging, perceptive enquiry grounded on thorough research and on the background and experience of the interviewee.*
- *to conduct interviews in a spirit of objectivity, candour and integrity, and in keeping with common understandings, purposes and stipulations.*
- *to guard against possible social injury to or exploitation of interviewees, and to conduct interviews with respect for human dignity.*
- *to treat every interview as a confidential conversation, the contents of which may be made available only as determined by written agreement with the interviewee.*
- *to obtain sufficient skills and knowledge of both interviewing and equipment operation, through reading and training, to ensure a quality result.*
- *to obtain and operate equipment of suitable quality so that interviews of contemporary broadcast clarity are obtained.*
- *to place the material, if possible, in a depository where it will be available for general research subject to any conditions placed on it by the interviewee.*

Sponsoring institutions and other collectors of oral history have the following responsibilities:

- *to select interviewers on the basis of professional competence and interviewing skill, attempting where possible to match appropriate interviewers to interviewees.*
- *to inform both interviewers and interviewees of the importance of this Code to the successful production and use of oral history.*
- *to prepare and preserve easily usable records, to keep careful records of the creation and processing of each interview, to identify, index and catalogue interviews; and, when interviews are open to research, to make their existence known.*
- *to ensure that conditions of preservation of recordings and accompanying material are of the highest possible standard.*

NOHANZ Origins

The National Oral History Association of New Zealand (NOHANZ) was established as result of the first national oral history seminar organised in April 1986 by the Centre for Continuing Educaton of the Victoria University of Wellington and the New Zealand Oral History Archive, a professional organisation based in the National Library that worked on major oral history projects.

Objectives

- *To promote the practice and methods of oral history.*
- *To promote standards in oral history interviewing techniques, and in recording and preservation methods.*
- *To act as a resource of information and to advise on practical and technical problems involved in making oral history recordings.*
- *To act as a coordinator of oral history activities throughout New Zealand.*
- *To produce an annual oral history journal and regular newsletters.*
- *To promote regular oral history meetings, talks, seminars, workshops and demonstrations.*
- *To encourage the establishment of NOHANZ branches throughout New Zealand.*
- *To compile a directory of oral history holdings to improve access to collections held in libraries, archives and museums.*

NOHANZ

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