



On Tape

December 2006

Editor: Suzanne Mulligan

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Hello Everyone!

Well here it is nearly Christmas again. I hope you've all had a wonderful year and if you haven't, perhaps 2007 will be better.

The last few months have been wonderful for me. My husband, Terry, and I retired from paid work. Terry is keeping busy with his new role as Head Coach at his beloved Toowong Rowing Club and I will pursue a number of interests, including oral history. I've joined my local Centenary & Suburbs Historical Society and am looking forward to making a contribution there.

Immediately following our retirement, Terry and I enjoyed an extended holiday. We drove down to Adelaide via Broken Hill and boarded The Ghan. We got off at Alice Springs for a guided four wheel drive four day camping holiday around Uluru, Kata Tjuta, Kings Canyon, and Palm Valley. We re-boarded The Ghan in Alice Springs and proceeded to Darwin. From there we explored Kakadu, Katherine, Kununurra and returned home via Mount Isa and Charleville. We travelled about 15,000 kms and saw many beautiful sights. I even discovered a lovely 92 year old man to interview. So it was a wonderful holiday.

We had our Annual General Meeting in November and a copy of the minutes is attached for the information of Queensland

members. Executive Committee Members were voted as follows:

President	Sue Pechey
Treasurer	Maxine Kendall
Secretary	Suzanne Mulligan
Editor <i>On Tape</i>	Suzanne Mulligan

A Working Sub-Committee was also appointed as follows:

Helen Klaebe
Jean Tremayne
Jen Barrkman
Lena Volkova

We still have a vacancy for our North Queensland representative and I would be pleased to hear from anyone in that region who would like that position.

We are continuing to work on the National Conference in Brisbane in September 2007. This will become more earnest early in the New Year. You will find the conference on our web site: <http://www.ohaaqld.org.au> which will be added to as time goes on.

I wish you well for Christmas and the New Year.

Suzanne Mulligan
Editor

HERE and NOW biographies Helen Ruby

Helen Ruby of Toowoomba writes - Being the family historian for almost forty years brought to my attention the importance of recording life stories while the person is still alive. I began **HERE and NOW biographies** in 2002 but after working in it for almost two years had been away travelling for some time.

After returning from overseas in August I was transcribing a tape for the Jessie Street National Women's Library of a monthly lunch hour talk. Rosemary Block was talking about the importance of recording family stories. I was inspired to take my business – Here and Now Biographies into Stage 2 and it wasn't long before I had a new client.

My business offers people the chance to make a contribution to their family history before it is too late. Every story is important. Life stories not only tell of personal experiences but add threads to the fabric of local history as well as our Australian heritage and perhaps other country's history.

It is commonly heard, "If only I had recorded grandmother's stories or the stories of older members of the family before it was too late."

The client's life story is recorded on audio tape, transcribed, edited and compiled into a book for their future enjoyment. It is also a tangible record for their family history.

If any of the members of the Oral History Association would like to discuss the details of starting a similar business to mine I would be happy to help them. Please ring me on 07 4637 9806

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STATE LIBRARY TOUR Suzanne Mulligan

Last week I had a guided tour of the new State Library and was very impressed. It has a friendly, open atmosphere to welcome everyone into the Library. On the ground floor in the Infozone, visitors can access the internet for 20 minutes for free. There is an area for children and a great café. There are a number of exhibitions now on in conjunction with the opening that are well worth visiting:

National Treasures – until 7 January 2007

A few of our favourite things – until 11 March 2007

I Cherish This, an exhibition of personal treasures – until 25 February 2007

Unbound: artists' books from the collection – until 11 March 2007

Apply online for your e-services card to use at the Library at www.slq.qld.gov.au under 'quick links', click on 'Get an e-services card'.

ORAL HISTORY IN THE DIGITAL WORLD

Suzanne Mulligan

I attended this Master Class conducted by Dean Rehberger and Michael Fegan at the IOHA Conference. It was very interesting but I am not technologically minded enough to attempt to convey all the information that was so enthusiastically passed to us.

With digital audio the key is to produce the best sound quality possible and the minimum we should record at is 44.1 kHz 16 bit, and if it is for archive purposes that should be increased to 96 kHz 24 bit. They emphasised the importance of using a good microphone – dynamic mikes recommended as more durable. They recommended recording in uncompressed .wav files and/or .bwf (broadcast wave files). You can then compress down to MP3 files for general use, but keep the better quality files for long-term storage.

They recommended the Marantz 670 or 671 recorder. They also advocated using a laptop computer for recording (if using computer, save more regularly). An interesting point they made was to commence your recording with “nothing” to start so you just have background noise. This segment can later be used to remove the background noise from the voice segment.

They said there is a program called Audacity which is free sound-editing software available on the web (similar to Soundforge). There is also a transcribing program available called Transcriber. <http://trans.sourceforge.net/en/presentation.php>. To use, upload your sound file to your computer, open the transcriber program (after you have installed it from the web site), load the sound file into the Transcriber file and name it. Use the TAB key to start and stop. In TOOLS and Audio File you can set the time for playback (I set it to 1.0 sec.) One of our members, Colleen Hattersley, first told me about this program. I’ve used it for my last two transcriptions and it has worked very successfully. If you have any queries about it, please email me.

Web sites associated with the presenters:

MATRIX at Michigan State University - <http://matrix.msu.edu>

National Gallery of the Spoken Word - <http://www.ngsw.org/>

Historical Voices – <http://www.historicalvoices.org>

Studs Terkel: Conversations with America – <http://www.studsterkel.org/>



CALL FOR PAPERS

The Oral History Association of Australia (Qld Inc.) invites proposals for papers and presentations for its 2007 National Conference to be held in a delightful riverside setting at Riverglenn Conference Centre, Indooroopilly, Brisbane from 27 to 30 September 2007. The theme of the conference is: Old Stories New Ways. Proposals that relate to mediations and new work on the following are encouraged:

- interpreting story;
- working with community;
- understanding memory;
- oral history and independent practitioners; and
- addressing changing technologies.

Proposals on other topics are also welcomed. The Conference Committee invites proposals from oral history practitioners in a wide variety of disciplines and settings, including academic institutions, museums, historical societies, archives and libraries, community organisations, media professionals, independent historians and oral historians, arts workers and reminiscence practitioners. We also encourage proposals from students. Sessions may address the many uses of oral history in media such as film, video, play back and other theatre, radio, exhibitions and multi media. Similarly, while sessions may be organised in a panel format, we encourage workshop proposals, media and performance oriented presentations and other formats that go beyond the boundaries of conventional conference presentation.

If you are interested, please send us a single page proposal (email info@ohaaqld.org.au or OHAA (Qld Inc., PO Box 12213 George Street, Brisbane Qld 4003) including an outline of your paper and the following details:

- name (with your family name in CAPITAL letters)
- affiliation
- postal address
- email address
- phone and fax numbers
- relevant theme
- whether an individual paper, a thematic panel, a workshop proposal, an exhibition or a dramatic piece.

DEADLINE FOR PROPOSALS: 28 February 2007

Acceptance or rejection of proposals 16 March 2007.

Full papers by email required by 30 May 2007.

For further details visit the website of the Oral History Association of Australia- Qld Inc – (www.ohaaqld.org.au)

Contributions are invited from Australia and overseas for publication in the
OHAA Journal No. 29, 2007
**Old Stories, New Ways:
More Challenge(r)s in Oral History**

Contributions are invited in the following 3 categories:

A Papers to be submitted for peer review, and non-refereed articles on the following themes
(*limit: 5,500 words*):

- Papers addressing themes at the OHAA's Biennial National Conference, September 2007, Brisbane, *Old Stories, New Ways* (*See note below)
- Issues arising from the 2006 International Oral History Conference *Dancing With Memory: Oral History and its Audiences*
- Ethical, methodological, legal and technology challenges being met in the practice, collection and usage of oral history both in Australia and abroad
- Critiques/analysis of strategies and protocols in projects, the perceived value and meanings attributed by oral historians to their work, or the way in which projects and agencies handle their involvement

Peer Review

If requested by authors, papers in this category may be submitted for assessment by peer review at the discretion of the Publication Committee. However, note two important points:

- Papers for referral must show a high standard of scholarship, and reflect a sound appreciation of current and literature on the topics discussed;
- Deadline for submission of papers for peer review is 27 February 2007, earlier than the deadline for other material

B **Articles** describing specific projects, the information gained through them, and/or other important outcomes or practice issues identified in the process (*limit: 4,000 words*)

C **Reviews** of books and other publications in Australia or elsewhere that are of interest to the oral history community (*approximately 1,000 words*)

Photographs, drawings and other illustrations are particularly welcome, and may be accepted for any of the above categories of contribution.

Deadlines

Papers for peer review: **27 February 2007**

All other paper, reports and reviews: **30 April 2007**

An 'Information for Contributors to OHAA Journal' document will be available on the OHAA web-site in late 2006 (<http://www.ohaa.net.au/>), which **all contributors must obtain**.

For information before this, contact:

Francis Good

Editor, OHAA Journal 2007

Email: francis.good@bigpond.com

*** NOTE:** The 2007 *OHAA Journal* will be issued in time for the OHAA Biennial National Conference in Brisbane, September 2007: 'Old Stories, New Ways'. Papers accepted by the conference organising committee for presentation at the conference may also be offered by authors for publication in the *Journal*, but only if they are **separately submitted** by authors to the *Journal* editor by the due date. Papers will be accepted for publication in the *Journal* at the discretion of the Journal Publication Committee.

IOHA CONFERENCE MASTER CLASS – Editing for Oral History Publication Suzanne Mulligan

At the International Oral History Conference in July, I attended a Master Class conducted by historian and editor, Linda Shopes, and made the following notes:



When using oral history in publishing, Linda emphasised that the interviews must be edited, contextualised, and interpreted. It is important to link the individual to the historical, putting the individual into the context of history. People's individual stories should be linked to larger themes. We need to explain the social and intellectual position of the narrator to give their words historical meaning. We also need to explain the provenance of the interview, the reason it was done and how that has shaped the interview.

When we turn an interview into a publication, it is at best an act of translation. We are turning a conversation between two people into something that will be read. The transcription is a literal representation, writing what has been said. There can be a great deal of difference between the spoken language and the written word. They are different forms of communication. We lose the nuances of voice, the social relationship that constitutes an oral history exchange. As we attempt to transform conversation into print, we must radically intervene – “mess around with what is said” to show clearly what is meant. Editing for publication aims to make the spoken word accessible to the reader. We don't re-write – we edit. Editing excises redundancies, false starts. It is an art – cutting, splicing, rearranging, “pruning and weeding” extraneous words. It can often mean cutting large chunks – tangents, inserting e.g. surnames, dates, to show sense of chronology. Transitional phrases may be used to “fill-in” information.

We must not rely solely on the transcript. We need to also listen to the interview to see what the narrator is meaning underneath the words. We must present them well in writing and not patronise them in doing so.

Four different genres

1. Single biographical – single narrator

Interviews generally conducted by the person writing the book. Interviews done with associates and sometimes other research materials are used. First identify the thematic focus of the biography e.g. political activism (not on the personal life). Once the focus is determined work out how to arrange the narrative topic, or chronology? Next edit and contextualise, rearranging to create a coherent and tight narrative. Editor needs to be ruthless. Beware of tangents that are “off the point”. See example *Sticking to the Union – An Oral History of the Life and Times of Julia Ruuttila* by Sandy Polishuk (2003). Contextualise by providing background. Editor can contextualise by writing an Introduction to the book. Writer must check for errors, check veracity (with other sources). Significant discrepancies must be noted and addressed. Triangulate with other documentary sources.

2. Series of interviews with different narrators around a single topic

A sequence of accounts on a particular account can be numbing. The author of a collection of interviews must decide what these interview all add up to. What is the plot? What does each interview add to the story? Choose accounts judiciously. Why this person, why this quote? How does it build on the story? See example *Creating Choice – A Community Responds to the Need for Abortion and Birth Control, 1961-1973* by David P. Cline. This book is organised into five sections relating to five types of individuals. Each person has a different part of the story to tell. See example, *When the Mines Closed: Stories of Struggles in Hard Times* by Thomas Dublin (1998). This book has 12 interviews from 90 that he collected. Such a book requires introduction before each chapter introducing a narrator, that is contextualising information.

3. Studies that draw on the authors of historical interviews as one of multiple sources.

In this genre only oral history forms only part of the story. See example *Life and Death in the Delta – African American Narratives of Violence, Resilience, and Social Change* by Kim Lacy Rogers (2006). Oral history as document – used as an illustrative anecdote. For example *Like a Family – The Making of a Southern Cotton Mill World (The Fred W. Morrison Series in Southern Studies)* by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall, James Leloudis, Robert Korstad, and Mary Murphy (2000) documentary sense. Provides new insight. Caution – danger of using oral history as documentary evidence, editor might use it to make their own point. Sometimes difficult to let go of authority.

4. Collections of essays

Essays – for example *Donna Maria Story* oral biography, presented as an oral history, life story then essays as well.

Linda Shope's "Final Word" on the subject: "Print cannot reproduce what was communicated orally in conversation, in the context of a relationship between narrator and interviewer. Recognising the limits, we can only do the best we can, in hopes of opening up the circle of dialogue that began between two people."

Further recommended reading:

Shopes, Linda. 'Making sense of oral history'. History Matters.
<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/>

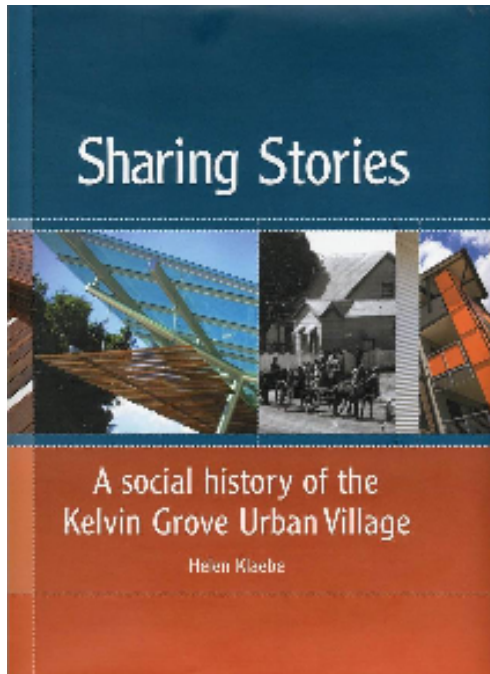
Frisch, Michael. 1990. "Preparing Interview Transcripts for Documentary Publication: A Line-by-Line Illustration of the Editing Process" in his *A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and meaning of Oral and Public History*. Albany: State University of New York Press.

Smith, Richard Candida. 2006. "Publishing Oral History: Oral Exchange and Print Culture" in Charlton, Thomas L., Lois E. Myers, and Rebecca Sharpless (eds.). *Handbook of Oral History*. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press.

See also books published by Palgrave Macmillan, their series Palgrave Studies in Oral History.
www.palgrave.com

Sharing Stories – A social history of the Kelvin Grove Urban Village Helen Klaebe

Review by Suzanne Mulligan



Helen's new book tells the story of the development of the Kelvin Grove Urban Village. This is a project I had very little knowledge of until reading this book. The Village is a State Government initiative that brings together a university community, mixed housing, shopping and businesses.

Sharing Stories is a hard-cover, little larger than A4 size book set out in two Sections and 13 Chapters. It is beautifully illustrated and would look great on any coffee table. There are many interesting stories interspersed throughout the book that give life to the story. Short excerpts from oral history interviews also give personal viewpoints on events at Kelvin Grove during the Depression, World War II and the post war years.

The Introduction in Section One tells the interesting story of the origins of the project in 1998. At that time the Commonwealth government's Defence department was selling "surplus" properties and 'Gona Barracks' at Kelvin Grove was one of those properties. Queensland's Minister for Housing, Robert Schwarten, "was returning to his office via Kelvin Grove Road when a row of neglected sheds caught his attention." When he enquired about them, he decided they would be a good investment for the State government.

Section One – The early years – goes on to tell us about the history of Kelvin Grove. The area was originally inhabited by the Turrbal aboriginal people who called it Barrambin. As white settlers claimed more of their land, the Turrbal people were eventually displaced in the mid 19th century. In 1864 the first suburban allotments (Parish of Enoggera) were offered for sale with all blocks selling on the first day.

Following Federation, the Commonwealth government needed land for the Department of Defence and Kelvin Grove was selected for "its proximity to the city, and its easy access to the Kelvin Grove tramline and the Roma Street train station." During World War II, Kelvin Grove was an important defence facility. It even housed Japanese POWs for a time. The post-war era also saw a severe housing shortage which was partly alleviated by the buildings at Kelvin Grove. Post-war migrants also moved into the area. After the war, the emphasis was on education with the re-opening of teachers' colleges and new schools. In the late 1970s the Brisbane College of Advanced Education (later Queensland University of Technology) was formed from the amalgamation of four colleges.

Section Two – Building a future – deals with the development of the Kelvin Grove Urban Village. The Department of Housing finalised their purchase of the land in June 2000 and the Department and the Queensland University of Technology worked together to develop the property. The development aimed to be environmentally friendly, socially and economically sustainable. There was extensive community consultation, engaging the local and emerging community. One of these components was the Sharing Stories history project which "collected the stories and history of the local community and made them accessible in print and on the internet." (www.kgurbanvillage.com.au/sharing) As the Urban Village is a new concept, it provides opportunities for ongoing research projects into how it is working and will then provide a model for future developments.

If any community group or person contacts the project through QUT Kelvin Grove (www.creativeindustries.qut.edu.au) they can have a copy of this book sent to them for their library.