



PHASE II of the ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Based on our work these last two days, you will now begin to develop a historical interpretation of your narrator's story. A narrator does not illuminate history on his or her own. You, the historian, provide context to show how this narrator's life illustrates and connects with broader themes in American cultural history, and vice versa.

When we meet in the summer for our two five-day institutes, you will work to develop an understanding of your narrator in the context of democracy broadly conceived. And in the next phase of the oral history project, you will examine your narrator's testimony in light of those themes. Our books *Who Built America?, Vols. I and II*, *Historical Atlas of the United States*, and *Historical Atlas of the Pacific Northwest*, together constitute a small library of contextual material for you. During the first week of the summer, June 25-29, our focus on "Change and Continuity in American Democracy" will concentrate on "Ideas and Institutions." Before we meet in June, read the Preface and read around in Part Two in *WBA? Vol. I*, and read around in *Vol. II*. Look for the theme of democracy, particularly as you see particular ways that groups of people become participants in American society in ways that were once unavailable to them. These readings will illustrate the theme of democracy in a variety of ways, and help you to think historically about your narrator's experience. When you come to Olympia in June, you will receive library cards to The Evergreen State College Library, and enjoy the guidance of Liza Rognas, a historian/librarian who will help you make use of resources at the college and beyond.

All this work will culminate in a presentation of your oral history during our second five-day institute in the lovely town of Westport, from July 30-August 3. Each of you will have about 20 minutes. When we meet in late June, bring your raw materials with you. These include:

- The recorded interview(s)
- The transcript of your interview(s)
- Photographs of your narrator, possibly from different times in his or her life
- Images of relevant places in your narrator's life (home, workplace, town, etc.)
- Maps from our historical atlases that give background for your narrator's story
- Relevant historical facts or statistics that place your narrator in broader contexts
- A timeline of your narrator's life
- Artifacts such as letters, journal entries, personal documents (copied, if needed)
- Any other items that you know will help to tell your narrator's story

Bring as many of these raw materials as you can to our first summer institute. Start thinking about creating a tri-fold display board (available at Office Max for \$6-9) to show your narrator's story. The display board will accompany and supplement your paper and presentation.



Plan to write a paper that approximates the length you would require of your students. (*The Oral History Manual* will help you think about how you can adapt this assignment for use in your own classroom.) Start assembling the historical and biographical details that will bring the pertinent facts about your narrator alive. Draw amply from your interviews, and let them direct you to historical sources. In some places, you might quote directly, and in others you might paraphrase the testimony. Begin to examine modes of presenting testimony (excerpts, quotes, paraphrases), description, and interpretation. Samuel Schrager's "Migratory Lumberjack" is a wonderful example of how to compose a life portrait. Sam is a Folklorist and Ethnographer who teaches at Evergreen. He will join us for an afternoon during our first five-day institute. Feel free to include yourself in your narrative, as he does.

Plan to bring your paper and display board with you to the institute at the end of July. We will arrange to have the papers copied and distributed to everyone early in the week, and we will make time during that week for you to read all the papers before the presentations.