Talking Business: Oral History and the History of Enterprises

Friday, November 2, 2012
Hagley Museum and Library, Wilmington, Delaware

1 - 1:45 p.m.  Keynote Address
Robert Perks (British Library), “Corporate and Business Oral History: The Opportunities and Challenges”

1:45 - 3:30 p.m. Banking, Science, Entrepreneurship
David Caruso (Chemical Heritage Foundation), “Documenting Science-Based Businesses”
Sally Hughes (University of California, Berkeley Regional Oral History Office), “Venture Capitalists”

3:45 - 5 p.m.  Music and Food
Amy C. Evans (Southern Foodways Alliance), “The Stories Behind the Making of Southern Food”

5 p.m.  Closing Address
Doug Boyd (Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky), “Oral History and the Possibilities of Digital Technology”

5:45 p.m.  Reception

The conference will take place in the Soda House of the Hagley Museum and Library in Wilmington, Delaware. Use Hagley’s Buck Road entrance off Route 100 and follow signs to the Soda House. Detailed directions may be found at www.hagley.org. Registration is free but required. To register or for more information, contact Carol Lockman at clockman@hagley.org or (302) 658-2400, ext. 244.

See reverse for information about the conference speakers.

Photo: Rodney Scott in his pit room, Scott’s Bar-B-Que, Hemingway, South Carolina. Photo by Denny Culbert, June 2012. Used with permission from the Southern Foodways Alliance.
Robert Perks has been Lead Curator of Oral History at the British Library since 1988 and Director of National Life Stories since 1996. He heads a team of some twenty staff involved in oral history fieldwork in a variety of sectors: from arts and crafts to business and finance, from the utilities to science, from architecture to publishing. Notable projects in business and finance have included oral histories of Barings Bank, the Tesco supermarket group, the Wolff Olins branding consultancy, and Royal Mail. Dr. Perks also was Co-coordinator of the Millennium Oral History Project, a collaborative initiative between the British Library and BBC Regional Broadcasting, and the largest oral history project ever mounted in Britain. As secretary of the Oral History Society (UK) and a visiting professor at the University of Huddersfield, Dr. Perks serves as series editor of the Oxford University Press Oral History Series and co-editor of the authoritative collection, The Oral History Reader (Routledge, 1998, second edition 2006).


David J. Caruso works on the relationship between government and private funding and the development trajectories of biomedical research in the United States from the end of the twentieth century through today. He heads the CHF Oral History Program whose major projects include World War II and America’s Synthetic Rubber Program; innovation, discovery, development, marketing, and management in the chemical industries; and the Women in Chemistry oral history project that preserves the history of women's contributions to science, medicine, and technology in their own words. Currently Dr. Caruso is president of Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region (OHMAR), an Oral History Association affiliate.

Sally Smith Hughes is an academic specialist in History of Science in the Regional Oral History Office of the University of California, Berkeley. She has conducted close to 150 archival quality oral histories for the Program in Bioscience and Biotechnology Studies, which she directs. Her book, Genentech: The Beginnings of Biotech drew on extensive interviews with early biotech players to provide the first book-length history of this pioneering company.

Mary Marshall Clark is director of the Columbia Center for Oral History. She was the co-principal investigator of the September 11, 2001 Oral History Narrative and Memory Project, and edited After the Fall: New Yorkers Remember September 2001 and the Years that Followed. She has directed projects on the Carnegie Corporation, the Atlantic Philanthropies, the Council on Foreign Relations, the Japanese Internment on the East Coast, the Apollo Theater, and Women in the Visual Arts. Formerly, she was an oral historian and filmmaker at the New York Times. Mary Marshall Clark has been involved in the oral history movement since 1991, and was the Oral History Association president in 2001-2002.

Amy C. Evans has been the Southern Foodways Alliance’s oral historian since 2005. She has won awards from the Mississippi Historical Society, Travel & Leisure magazine, and the International Association of Culinary Professionals for her role creating oral-history based culinary trails in the south, such as the Mississippi Delta Hot Tamale Trail and the Southern BBQ Trail, and for documenting iconic food establishments such as Doe’s Eat Place. Complementing oral interviews with documentary photography as well as moving images, Evans has made her research available to large public audiences as well as scholars through the SFA website and a free iPhone application. To date, the SFA’s archive contains more than 600 stories behind the food.

Doug Boyd serves as the director of the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Libraries and is a recognized national leader regarding oral history, archives and digital technologies. Most recently, Boyd led the team that envisioned, designed and implemented the open source OHMS Oral History Metadata Synchronizer system that synchronizes text with audio and video online, and he is currently completing the design and implementation on an open source, online oral history collection management database system. He is currently managing the IMLS grant project “Oral History in the Digital Age” establishing current best practices for collecting, curating, and disseminating oral histories. His recent publications include the article “Horses and Hoops: New Approaches to Oral History in a Digital Environment,” as well as “Achieving the Promise of Oral History in a Digital Age,” a chapter in The Oxford Handbook to Oral History.