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## Introduction

Part of our mission is to assist you in exploring oral history. In addition to the workshops that we offer to community groups, we are happy to provide this manual as a resource and guide to oral history interviewing. This manual includes tips on designing an oral history project; notes on preparing, conducting, and processing interviews; equipment suggestions; interview forms; sample field notes, tape index, and transcript; guidelines for transcribers; and an extensive oral history bibliography. Before you begin, we recommend that you read the parts of this guidebook most relevant to the goals and scope of your project. We hope that it will give you a strong foundation from which to develop your research and refine your interviewing skills. If you have further questions, please call the SOHP at (919) 962-0455.

## OUR MISSION

### Southern Oral History Program

*"You don't have to be famous for your life to be history."*

These words, spoken by Nell Sigmon when she was interviewed by the Southern Oral History Program in 1979, serves as our unofficial motto. They remind us of the extraordinary significance of ordinary lives and guiding our efforts to seek out and record memories of the Southern past.

For over thirty-five years, the Southern Oral History Program has preserved the distinctive voices of the region. University of North Carolina students and faculty have interviewed more than 4,000 men and women—from mill workers to civil rights leaders to future presidents of the United States. Made available to the public through UNC's [Southern Historical Collection](#), these priceless tapes and transcripts capture the vivid personalities, poignant personal stories, and behind-the-scenes decision-making that bring history to life. These are our goals:

- Create an unparalleled archive of sound recordings that document life in the twentieth-century South.
- Produce prize-winning publications and documentaries that offer a fresh understanding of the modern South.
- Attract exceptional students to the University, providing them with hands-on research opportunities, and teaching them to combine scholarship with public service. Our graduates now direct oral history programs and teach southern history throughout the country.
- Make history accessible through community-based workshops and collaborations with the public schools, with an emphasis on understanding the roots of current issues and building bridges between generations and between the university and the public.

We have been fortunate to receive national recognition for our efforts. In 1999, Bill Clinton awarded a National Humanities Medal to the Southern Oral History Program's Director, Jacquelyn Hall, in honor of the Program's contributions to America's cultural heritage.

*Visit us online at [sohp.org](http://sohp.org) to listen to and read our interviews, learn more about the oral history process and performing your own interviews, and to learn more about the SOHP.*

## DESIGNING AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Questions to consider before you begin an oral history project:

1. What is the historical subject you want to investigate?
2. What are your goals in undertaking this project?
3. What will you do with the oral histories you collect? How will you use this information?
4. What kinds of materials will the project generate? What should you do with them?

With these broad questions answered, you can more easily tackle the nuts and bolts:

1. Who can provide you with information on this subject? How many interviews should you conduct? With how many different people?
2. What personnel do you need to do this?
3. What equipment and materials do you require?
4. How long will the project run?
5. What kind and amount of background research should you conduct?
6. What funds will you need? Where might you obtain these funds?

Consider how the answers to these questions would vary in each of the following cases:

1. A project in which high school students interview Vietnam veterans in their community in an effort to understand the impact of the war on individuals. (An example of oral history used in teaching.)
2. An set of in-depth interviews with former President Jimmy Carter on his administration's foreign policy regarding the Mideast to be added to the collections of materials on his presidency at the Carter Library. (An example of oral history used to create new historical materials for the use of researchers, scholars, and others.)
3. A set of interviews with former minor league baseball players on the history of their sport and its relation to major league baseball. The interviews are to be used as the basis for a radio broadcast series on the changes in minor league baseball. (An example of oral history used in public history, i.e., interpreting history to the public.)

## NOTES ON INTERVIEWING

An oral history interview involves complex social interactions; no rigid formula can guarantee success. Respect for the sanctity and complexity of human lives, intelligence, empathy, flexibility – all these personal qualities influence the interview situation. But interviewing is also a skill which can be learned with systematic practice. The following suggestions are meant to facilitate this process.

### PREPARATION

1. Begin by defining the historical problem you wish to investigate. Only then can you decide whom to interview and what to ask.
2. In order to handle the problem of interview bias, you must explore your own assumptions, values, and attitudes. An interview does not call for an impossible neutrality. It does demand special self-awareness and self-discipline.
3. Before conducting your first interview, do as much background research as possible. Oral history cannot be separated from or substituted for other methods of historical research.
4. Select respondents who will be able and willing to provide information you need. Respondents may be chosen because their lives illustrate certain historical themes or because they have special knowledge of or occupy a unique position in a historical event, movement, or institution.
5. Either in writing or in person (preferably followed by a letter of confirmation) ask permission to conduct the interview and explain its purpose. Provide a description of the project and mention any release forms you will be using. This is a good time to make certain that the interviewee understands that the materials may be deposited in an archive. In the course of this conversation, be sensitive to any hesitation on the interviewee's part. Emphasize the importance of preserving these stories and making them available to later generations. Be reassuring about the fact that these are spoken reminiscences, not polished, grammatical essays.
6. Draw up a list of the topics or specific questions to be explored. You will want to refer to these questions during the interview, but you should not feel constrained by them.
7. Choose a setting for the interview that will maximize the respondent's comfort. Avoid places where there will be distracting background noise.
8. Prepare any release forms or other paperwork that may be necessary.
9. Before the interview, become thoroughly familiar with your recording equipment. Read the equipment manual; test the microphone and the input levels so that you know how to monitor the equipment during the interview.

### THE INTERVIEW

1. Set up your recorder and record your opening announcement. Include the interviewee's name, your name, the date, the location, and the topic you will be discussing in your interview.
2. Be sure to check (i.e. play back) the recording early in the interview. If there are background noises (fans, air conditioning, etc.), or other problems with the recording, this will be the moment to address such issues.

3. Interviews may be autobiographical or topical. In either case, begin at a point in time previous to the central events you want to explore. For all interviews, include basic information regarding birthplace and family of origin.
4. You should seek a balance in which you allow respondents to express the logic of their lives as they understand it, while at the same time maintaining a sense of the overall direction of the conversation and framing questions so as to elicit information that pertains to your area of interest. Listen carefully. Do not be afraid of silence. Allow the respondent time to think, to continue after a pause. Critically evaluate the flow of information, so that you can ask for elaboration where the respondent's statements are unclear. Take notes that will remind you to ask follow-up questions at an opportune moment, rather than interrupting the respondent's train of thought.
5. Your questions should be open-ended and should not supply a list of alternative answers. They should be direct and to the point: Avoid asking several questions in the guise of one. Avoid leading or prejudicial questions. Frame questions within a language and context understood by the interviewee.
6. Seek concrete examples of attitudes and feelings from which you can infer subjective orientations. Focus on behavior; but try to understand the meaning the interviewee attaches to his/her actions. Develop facts and events first, then explore feelings and values. You may need to stimulate the interviewee's memory or reduce chronological confusion by supplying key facts learned from background research.
7. It may be helpful to arrange the sequence of topics so as to postpone until last questions that may be threatening or challenging to the interviewee. Within each topic, it may be helpful to begin with a broad question, then ask successively narrow and detailed questions as the conversation proceeds.
8. When an interviewee seems unwilling or unable to provide certain information, try approaching the topic from another angle, indicating contradictory information that you have obtained from other sources; alternatively, wait until later in the interview to return to the topic. When appropriate, mention that it will be possible to restrict the interview according to the interviewee's wishes.
9. A typical interview session lasts around 90 minutes. Be alert to signs of fatigue, distraction, or boredom. Conduct a long interview in several sessions.
10. Have the interviewee fill out and sign the release forms and/or other paperwork. (See page 40 for guidelines.)

#### AFTER THE INTERVIEW

1. Immediately after the session, write up your field notes. Field notes should include: the names of yourself and your interviewee; the date, time, and location of the interviewee, and a description of the interview itself. Describe the setting, other people present; any pertinent events that happened prior to, during, or after the interview; and your honest reflections on whatever dynamics occurred during the interview/visit.
2. Send a written thank you to the interviewee.
3. Only work from a copy of the recording for transcription or indexing purposes.
4. Decide how you will store and organize your recordings, transcripts, copies of release forms, and other interviewee information.
5. Listen to the recording and evaluate both your own behavior and the content of the interview. Only by such self-criticism can you learn from your mistakes and refine your interviewing skills.

6. Decide whether or not a follow-up interview will be necessary. It is often helpful to conduct follow-up sessions after you have analyzed the content of the interview and as your understanding of the research problem evolves.
7. Once the interview is done, "history making" begins. The interview is raw data which must be compared to and used in conjunction with other evidence. Oral history starts with the collection, transcription/indexing, and preservation of interviews. But its goal is historical synthesis and interpretation. Remember that it is a collaborative effort; consider the ways in which you can engage your interviewee in this interpretive process.

## TEN TIPS FOR INTERVIEWERS

1. Choose a quiet locale and properly position your microphone(s).
2. Ask one question at a time. State your questions as directly as possible.
3. Ask open-ended questions—questions that begin with “why, how, where, what kind of,” etc. Avoid yes or no questions.
4. Start with non-controversial questions. One good place to begin, for instance, is with the interviewee’s childhood memories.
5. Understand that periods of silence will occur. These are useful periods of reflection and recollection for your interviewee.
6. Avoid interrupting the interviewee.
7. If the interviewee strays away from the topic in which you are interested, don’t panic. Sometimes the best parts of the interview come about this way. If you feel the digression has gone too far afield, gently steer the interviewee back to the topic with your next question.
8. Be respectful of the interviewee. Use body language to show you are interested in what he or she has to say. Remember, the interviewee is giving you the gift of his or her memories and experiences.
9. After the interview, thank the interviewee for sharing his or her experiences. Also send a written thank-you note.
10. Don’t use the interview to show off your knowledge, charm, or other attributes. Remember, good interviewers never shine—only their interviews do.

## **BUDGET, EQUIPMENT, AND MATERIALS FOR AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

The materials, equipment, and personnel needed to run an oral history project vary widely depending on the purpose, location, scope, and duration of the project. What follows is a list of possible expenses. Not all projects incur all of these; some projects will require more. The dollar figures listed below are based on figures used by the Southern Oral History Program as of January 2009.

### **Personnel:**

- Paid Interviewers: \$200 - \$500/interview depending on experience
- Transcription: An experienced transcriber will transcribe one hour of tape in approximately 5-6 hours. Expect to pay an experienced transcriber between \$15 and \$20 per hour.
- Editing: If the interviewer and/or interviewee will be correcting the transcript and the transcriber will also enter these corrections and produce a final copy, allow for one hour of editing (at the same rate of pay of transcribing) for each hour of tape.

### **Equipment:**

- An established oral history project usually finds that it needs to purchase at least one high-quality tape recorder and an external microphone.
- Access to word processing software and a printer is necessary for transcription.
- A transcription machine is required for the efficient production of transcripts for analog audio tapes. Transcription of digital audio files is best accomplished with digital transcription foot pedals and software.

### **Basic Supplies for interviewing:**

- Plan for duplicate interview audio tapes, CD copies, or digital files for the interviewee and transcriptionist.

## EQUIPMENT CURRENTLY USED BY THE SOHP

<u>Recording Equipment</u>	<u>Brand &amp; Model Number</u>
Digital Recorder	Marantz PMD 670
Condenser Lavalier Microphone	SHURE MX 185
Unidirectional Microphone	SHURE SM 58

Headphones

Equipment and prices change frequently. You will need to do your own research to determine what equipment meets your needs and budget. A great place to start is at the Vermont Folklife Center: [www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/res\\_audioequip.htm](http://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/res_audioequip.htm).

Transcription equipment:

To transcribe a digital sound file, download free software from [www.nch.com.au/scribe](http://www.nch.com.au/scribe) and purchase a foot pedal.

***SAMPLE FIELD NOTES, TAPE  
LOG, AND TRANSCRIPT***

## FIELD NOTES -- REP. DANIEL T. BLUE, JR.

(compiled January 19, 1996)

Interviewee: REP. DANIEL TERRY BLUE, JR., NC HOUSE

Interviewer: Joseph Mosnier

Interview Date: Friday, Jan. 19, 1996

Location: Blue's downtown law office, Raleigh, NC

THE INTERVIEWEE. Daniel T. Blue, Jr., has been a major figure on the North Carolina political landscape and pioneering African American political leader since the early 1980s, serving since 1981 in the NC House and as that body's first-ever African American Speaker during the 1991-92 and 1993-94 legislative terms. Born April 18, 1949, in Lumberton, Robeson County, NC, Blue was educated in the local segregated public schools, earned a degree in mathematics from North Carolina College in Durham (now North Carolina Central University) between 1966 and 1970 during a period of ongoing civil rights protests in Durham, and then attended Duke Law School, graduating in 1973. From 1973-76, Blue practiced law in Raleigh in former NC governor Terry Sanford's politically well-connected law firm, and began his involvement in local Democratic Party and African American politics. In 1976, Blue departed the Sanford firm to co-found Thigpen, Blue & Stephens, an all-black Raleigh law firm. In these years Blue led the Wake Black Democratic Caucus, which challenged the established Raleigh-Wake Citizens Association by appealing to a younger and more progressive generation of black residents and activists. Blue narrowly missed election to the NC House in 1978, but since 1980 has won eight consecutive two-year terms. During the 1980s, Blue labored in the House, typically in conjunction with the NC Black Legislative Caucus, for political redistricting, the King Holiday, greater workplace safety and tax equity, increased educational and health care spending, and against any introduction of a lottery, among other concerns. Following the 1989-90 term, during which Republicans and a minority of dissident Democrats orchestrated a leadership coup that deposed Speaker Liston Ramsey and broke his eight-year reign in the House, the House Democratic Caucus chose Blue as Speaker. Blue's tenure as Speaker ended with the election in November 1994 of a Republican majority in the House.

THE INTERVIEWER. Joseph Mosnier is a graduate student in the Department of History at UNC-Chapel Hill, currently completing a dissertation concerning the civil rights litigation

efforts of Mr. Julius Chambers, an African American civil rights attorney and North Carolina native who brought countless suits to desegregate the state's places of public accommodations, schools, and workplaces after establishing his practice in Charlotte in 1964. NB: In the summer of 1972, Blue served as a legal intern at the Chambers' firm in Charlotte; see the note below.

DESCRIPTION OF THE INTERVIEW. The interview was conducted in the conference room of Blue's Raleigh downtown law office, a quiet and comfortable venue. There were two brief interruptions for phone calls. Although it had taken many months to get an appointment to see Blue, given his heavy schedule, he was relaxed and unhurried during our conversation, and readily gave more than an hour of his time. Blue knew of my dissertation work on the Chambers law firm, and hence we enjoyed some common ground from which to build for our conversation about state politics. Blue was warm, personable, and pleasant, and seemed to enjoy discussion of the evolution of black politics in NC across the last several decades; though he is, to be sure, a polished, skilled political leader, one well practiced in talking to reporters, we generally were discussing historical matters that he could discuss with some candor, and hence the level of detail is generally good. I had worried at the outset, when he announced that he wished to place no restrictions on access to the interview, that he perhaps would be somewhat guarded with his comments.

CONTENT OF THE INTERVIEW. Substantively, the interview was organized around several major themes: the evolution of black political activity in NC during the late 1960s and early 1970s; his earliest political involvements in Democratic Party and African American politics in Raleigh in the mid-1970s; his House service during the 1980s and the circumstances that led to the 1989 House leadership upheaval; the issue of political redistricting; his selection as Speaker in December 1990-January 1991; and the recent enormous electoral successes of the GOP. As is the case with all interviews I have done for this series, every effort is made to explore, through the lens of the interviewee's particular range of experiences, the following overarching themes: (a) the dealignment/realignment in NC party politics and the Republican reemergence; (b) the evolution of African American political activity in NC since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; (c) the evolution of women's political activity in NC in the same period; and (d) the centrality of cultural/social politics in the state's political contests and debates during these three decades. NB: This interview contains very little background biographical information on Blue; for that discussion, see the Marjorie Smith interview, cited above.

NOTE ON RECORDING. I used the SOHP's Marantz recorder #3 and one unidirectional microphone, recording in mono (the left track in stereo mode did not seem to be responding fully, so I switched to mono). The tape quality is quite good. NB: I neglected to provide an introductory message on the cassette providing the Tape Number; if possible, one should be added to the first portion of all dubbed cassettes ("Interview with N.C. House member Rep. Daniel T. Blue, Jr., for the Southern Oral History Program's

series, 'The North Carolina Politics Project,' on Friday, January 19, 1996, in his Raleigh, NC, law office; the interviewer is Joe Mosnier.”)

## TAPE LOG -- REP. DANIEL T. BLUE, JR.

Interviewee: REP. DANIEL TERRY BLUE, JR., NC HOUSE

Interviewer: Joseph Mosnier

Interview Date: Friday, Jan. 19, 1996

Location: Blue's downtown law office, Raleigh, NC

Topic: An oral history of Daniel T. Blue, Jr. Blue has been a major figure on the North Carolina political landscape and pioneering African American political leader since the early 1980s, serving since 1981 in the NC House and as that body's first-ever African American Speaker during the 1991-92 and 1993-94 legislative terms. Born April 18, 1949, in Lumberton, Robeson County, NC, Blue was educated in the local segregated public schools, earned a degree in mathematics from North Carolina College in Durham (now North Carolina Central University) between 1966 and 1970 during a period of ongoing civil rights protests in Durham, and then attended Duke Law School, graduating in 1973. From 1973-76, Blue practiced law in Raleigh in former NC governor Terry Sanford's politically well-connected law firm, and began his involvement in local Democratic Party and African American politics. In 1976, Blue departed the Sanford firm to co-found Thigpen, Blue & Stephens, an all-black Raleigh law firm. In these years Blue led the Wake Black Democratic Caucus, which challenged the established Raleigh-Wake Citizens Association by appealing to a younger and more progressive generation of black residents and activists. Blue narrowly missed election to the NC House in 1978, but since 1980 has won eight consecutive two-year terms. During the 1980s, Blue labored in the House, typically in conjunction with the NC Black Legislative Caucus, for political redistricting, the King Holiday, greater workplace safety and tax equity, increased educational and health care spending, and against any introduction of a lottery, among other concerns. Following the 1989-90 term, during which Republicans and a minority of dissident Democrats orchestrated a leadership coup that deposed Speaker Liston Ramsey and broke his eight-year reign in the House, the House Democratic Caucus chose Blue as Speaker. Blue's tenure as Speaker ended with the election in November 1994 of a Republican majority in the House

Substantively, the interview was organized around several major themes: the evolution of black political activity in NC during the late 1960s and early 1970s; his earliest political involvements in Democratic Party and African American politics in Raleigh in the mid-1970s; his House service during the 1980s and the circumstances that led to the 1989 House leadership upheaval; the issue of political redistricting; his selection as Speaker in December 1990-January 1991; and the recent enormous electoral successes of the GOP. As is the case with all interviews I have done for this series, every effort is made to explore, through the lens of the interviewee's particular range of experiences, the following overarching themes: (a) the dealignment/realignment in NC party politics and the Republican reemergence; (b) the evolution of African American political activity in NC since the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965; (c) the evolution of women's political activity in NC in the same period; and (d) the centrality of cultural/social politics in the state's political contests and debates during these three decades. NB: This interview contains very little background biographical information on Blue; for that discussion, see the Marjorie Smith interview, cited below.

See Also: For further discussion of Blue's personal biographical history see the extensive oral history by Marjorie Smith (his niece), March 27 and 30, 1994, conducted for the Law School Oral History Project, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill (tape copy and full transcript on permanent deposit at the Southern Historical Collection, UNC-CH).

Subject  
Headings: North Carolina Politics & Government; North Carolina Democratic Party; North Carolina Republican Party; African Americans in North Carolina Politics; Civil Rights.

Comments: Only text in quotation marks is verbatim; all other text is paraphrased, including the interviewer's questions.

#### TAPE INDEX

##### Counter Index   Topic

[Cassette 1 of 1, Side A]

001            [I neglected to make an the typical opening announcement, which would have been, "Interview with N.C. House member Rep. Daniel T. Blue, Jr., for the Southern Oral History Program's series, 'The North Carolina

Politics Project,' on Friday, January 19, 1996, in his Raleigh, NC, law office; the interviewer is Joe Mosnier; the Tape No. is 1.19.96-DB."]

- 008 His "relatively upbeat" views of the political prospects for African Americans in NC in the late 1960s -- comparative assessment of North Carolina's civil rights experiences in the early 1960s, civil rights participation in college 1966-70 ("you had to take sides" and get involved), his belief that "blacks would move into the political mainstream" encouraged by the 1968 campaigns of McCarthy and Kennedy, impact of the King assassination and how it forced the taking of a "reality check" and yet an upbeat feeling remained, how the King and Bobby Kennedy assassinations prompted him to shift his career ambitions away from graduate education in mathematics and toward the law and public service, how the Humphrey campaign in 1968 and Henry Frye's election in that year as the first African American member of the NC House in the twentieth century gave him further hope that blacks could indeed enter the mainstream.
- 108 Reflections on Reginald Hawkins' 1968 NC gubernatorial campaign -- while Hawkins had no realistic chance to prevail, his candidacy had important symbolic value for black North Carolinians.
- 121 Events of the early 1970s continued to encourage Blue's view that black prospects were on the upswing -- the political campaigns of Howard Lee for Congress in 1972 and Mickey Michaux in the early 1970s for the NC House, and Blue's heavy involvement in Lee's 1976 race for NC Lt. Governor.
- 165 Blue's involvement ca. 1973-76 in local black and Democratic Party politics in Raleigh and Wake County -- the "galvanizing" effect of Clarence Lightner's victory as Raleigh's first black mayor, the highly political nature of the Terry Sanford law firm and the expectation that its members would be politically involved; the efforts of politically active young Democrats including Hugh Cannon, Bob Spearman, Elizabeth Cofield, Jim Shepard, and Ralph Campbell, to recruit new arrivals to Raleigh and encourage their active participation in local politics and inspire a sense of duty to serve.
- 210 Blue's role ca. 1973-77 as a leader of the new Wake Black Democratic Caucus [WBDC], a group that challenged the established Raleigh-Wake Citizens Association [RWCA] for influence in the local black community -- genesis of the Wake Black Democratic Caucus, Blue's efforts to recruit members most of whom were under thirty-five years of age, becoming chairman of the WBDC in 1974, how the WBDC recognized that half of the city's black population lived outside Raleigh's traditional black

neighborhoods and sought to organize these voters, how the WBDC “out-hustled” the RWCA and garnered considerable support, how the WBDC by 1975 was a formidable local political force that could control the outcome in many precincts across the city.

- 270 (cont’d) The Wake Black Democratic Caucus’s effort ca. the 1977 Raleigh mayoral race to operate independently of the traditional RWCA-white liberal coalition -- how the WBDC split violently with the RWCA in the 1977 mayoral race, the victory of the WBDC-backed candidate, how this victory was somewhat “hollow,” healing the split between the two organizations by 1978 at the time Blue was beginning to look to other venues for political leadership including a race for an NC House seat, how his WBDC leadership enhanced Blue’s reputation.
- 340 Blue’s 1978 House race -- fallout from the split with the RWCA may have cost Blue a 1977 appointment to fill a House vacancy and may also have accounted for his slim margin of loss in the 1978 House primary, how the narrow loss made him determined to run again in 1980, regaining the full support of the RWCA faction.
- 367 NC black leadership ca. mid-1970s -- Howard Lee’s role as the leading black political figure in NC particularly with his run in 1976 for Lt. Gov.; leaders of the small black contingent in the General Assembly including Mickey Michaux, Henry Frye, and Joy Johnson; Durham leaders including Howard Clement, Levonnia Allison, and John Stewart; Ben Ruffin and John Larkin; meanwhile a group of younger black leaders were emerging who favored a new style of “coalition and inclusion politics.”
- 422 The overarching political strategy for advancing black political influence in NC in the mid- to late-1970s -- a decision more aggressively to push for local black political successes.
- 462 Blue’s personal political ideology ca. late 1970s -- how his experiences to that point, particularly his successes in gaining access and influence with the Raleigh mayor for example, encouraged Blue to a politics of pragmatism, a politics of “practicality and reality.”
- 505 The circumstances during the 1980s in the NC House that culminated in the 1989 Mavretic coup deposing Liston Ramsey as Speaker, including in particular how Ramsey’s unilateral control of the House made possible the GOP-inspired plan for his ouster -- “from 1981, when Liston became Speaker, [through the time of his 1989 ouster], ...there was no formal Democratic organization in the House. I mean, the House was Ramsey and [Billy] Watkins and lesser players they would name from time to time....”; “there was no real Democratic organization, no real democracy;

the governor...dealt directly with Ramsey and Watkins... and the decisions were made as to what would happen, and that's what happened."

- 535 (cont'd) GOP Governor Jim Martin's primary objective was to build the GOP, and Martin was happy to see the House in trouble.
- 569 (cont'd) Blue's assessment of the gains achieved during the Ramsey tenure as Speaker: gains for "workers, consumers, average people" and the successes of the Black Legislative Caucus in pushing a fairly progressive agenda for minorities.
- 578 (cont'd) Details of the coup -- "More than anything else, the Mavretic coup was brought about generally by Jim Martin and the Republicans" and its purpose "was to break up the old Democratic stranglehold on running the Legislature"; how Martin was able to craft a public perception that the House was controlled by an illegitimate clique.
- 614 (cont'd) Mavretic "could not be forgiven for having taken the king's head off" and hence while he instituted certain important changes in the way the House was run, still he was not able to get much done as Speaker; consequently the focus shifted back in the direction of legislative results rather than form.
- 621 The issue of political redistricting and Blue's attempt in 1981 to redistrict NC state legislative districts -- how he came to question his earlier belief that blacks could indeed win election in multi-member districts in the state's major urban centers faded, and how he remained concerned about the wider impacts of the creation of majority-minority districts.
- 692 [End of Side A.]

[Cassette 1 of 1, Side B]

- 001 (redistricting, cont'd) How he favored leaving multi-member legislative districts intact where blacks had won seats; redistricting to create minority districts in certain urban centers and also in eastern NC where blacks had never won more than a very small percentage of the white vote; the Justice Department's insistence that the urban centers be redistricted into individual single-member districts rather (as Blue preferred) into a combination of one new minority district and the remainder a multi-member district.

- 045 (cont'd) Blue's conviction that majority-minority Congressional districts were required if NC ever was to elect African American Congresspersons, and the effort to create the NC's Second Congressional District.
- 057 (cont'd) Assessing the impact of redistricting: his ongoing recognition that carving out too many black voters can create the conditions for politicians in remaining districts to ignore the political concerns of minorities; how Republican leaders "with a great degree of hypocrisy, openly [have been] hostile to minority districts but in every effort that they can, try to create more of them to pull the black vote out of predominantly white areas"; "My thoughts on [redistricting] are still evolving, but I will say that I am not firmly in favor of an absolute principle of carving out black districts at any expense and at any place possible"; how he is "intrigued" by such notions as proportional voting but not yet ready fully to embrace such proposals.
- 100 Details of his selection as Speaker in Dec. 1990-Jan. 1991 -- how Blue cultivated the general idea that a black member could be Speaker particularly given the prospect of solid support from the fourteen or fifteen black members of the House; how the Black Caucus resolved on Blue as their candidate and lobbied for him; Blue's confidence that he was very well qualified to be Speaker; ensuring that his elevation be understood not as a "hostile takeover" but as a sign of fairness and appropriate given Blue's tenure of service and credentials.
- 148 The GOP's stunning reemergence, particularly in Nov. 1994, and Blue's view of the ultimate causes for the GOP successes -- the causes are complex but Blue sees race as a central component; hostility to the Democratic Party among new suburban immigrants to NC; "I will argue publicly and privately that the Republican Party in NC is still primarily predicated on the race issue, and that's what's fueled it and that continues to fuel it, especially in the eastern part of the state"; the Democratic Party's difficulty defending certain positive features of the status quo when supporters of those features do not see them as threatened and hence do not speak out politically; his view that the 1994 election results are not necessarily indicative of a permanent party realignment and that the 1996 election will be much more indicative of where voters want their political leaders to take them; how the GOP in NC and the South have skillfully deployed code language to exploit racist predilections of many voters; how the opposition to black political gains is part of a long historical pattern and hence nothing new.
- 290 (cont'd) Blue's belief that the years ahead will prove at least as promising for black office seekers and black political interests as the exciting years

of the late 1960s and early 1970s; his cautious optimism even in the face of many challenges and setbacks.

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[End of Side B. End of interview.]

**TRANSCRIPT—CASE AND ELLENE VAN WYK**

(Compiled September 20, 1998)

Interviewees: CASE AND ELLENE VAN WYK  
Interviewer: Melynn Glusman  
Interview Date: August 11, 1998  
Location: Pinetown, NC  
Length: 2 cassettes; approximately 120 minutes

**START OF TAPE 1, SIDE A**

MG: This is an interview with Case and Ellene Van Wyk. We're in—is this Pantego?

EVW: Terra Ceia, actually, on the Pinetown route.

MG: OK, so the address is Pinetown, then?

EVW: Yes.

MG: Terra Ceia, or Pinetown, North Carolina. It is August the 11<sup>th</sup>, 1998, and we're at their home. The interviewer is Melynn Glusman. This is part of the Southern Oral History Program's Listening for Change interview series, and the tape number is 081198-CV.

So why don't we just start there with your family's move from Holland, why you came.

CVW: I was born in Holland. I was three in 1930 when we came to the United States and wound up in Long Island. My dad worked in for ( ) and he had a brother in

Long Island, so we wound up at that brother in Long Island's farm, and he worked there for a few years. The land there was good farm land, but our church was seventeen miles away. We finally moved where the church was, so we went back and forth to the farm, which was not ideal. And the minister there came to Terra Ceia in the early '40s, in '42, for pulpit supply, because they were out of ministers here. And when he went back he told my dad, "Look, there's some nice land there, if you're interested in buying a farm." My dad said, "Well, I'm only interested in a farm where there's a Christian school." He said, "Well, they just started one three years ago."

So my dad came with him and checked the land over. It was a lot more land than what he was used to, because we only had thirty acres of rented land, and this was 1060 acres. So he went back and got a partner. Most of the town on Long Island was fishermen, but there was a dairyman, a carpenter, a meat cutter, and another overseer of a bull farm. So he and the overseer of the bull farm, C.G. Westerbache, and he came down with Dad and they looked it over and bought it together.

MG: So their names were C.G. Wester—

CVW: Westerbache.

MG: And then who was the other person who came down with your dad?

CVW: Just my dad.

MG: Oh, that was the partner, C.G....

CVW: ...( ), the two of them.

EVW: They were going to Shirley farm.

CVW: They bought what they called a Shirley farm. It was bought by Carl Owens and his wife's name was Shirley. He lived in Rocksville, it's just a little bit above

Manhattan, and for some reason they were speculators in land. And it fell from then to the bank of Columbia, and people settled here and grew a crop and left it because they knew they weren't going to make out, and the bank would have to get the crop out to get their money. So when we came, we were just a bunch of Yankees, and we weren't going to stay long, most people didn't think, probably. We rented the farm out to the local people and let them keep on farming, with their mules and a few tractors, and saw how they did it, and then we just picked up from there.

MG: Why had your father decided to move the family from Holland to begin with?

CVW: Well, I think Holland was getting crowded, and a lot of boys in his agricultural class are now in Argentina and in Transvaal, South Africa. Well, he came to the United States.

MG: I see. So just to get more land. There wasn't enough land to—

CVW: Well, freedom, too. He liked the freedom, of course. So the first time I saw the Shirley farm, it was thirty-acre pieces of land with a ditch between each one, and the ditches were growing up twenty feet high and twenty feet wide.

MG: Oh, my gosh.

CVW: The mules couldn't plow—you know, the roots were pushing further into the fields all the time. So each cut of land looked like a farm to me, since we only had thirty acres on Long Island. And we went through thirteen of those cuts before we finally got to the cuts. The farm is two and a half miles long and a mile deep. Well—

MG: How old were you then?

CVW: Twelve or thirteen.

MG: And that was approximately 1942?

CVW: Yeah. And the road was so bad—the bank had built a road in from the 264 highway, paid a thousand dollars for the right-of-way, but we couldn't use the road. ( ) when you try to get out, you slip in the ditch and get stuck. So we finally made a road to Terra Ceia. There was a cartpath there, but we graded it up, put bridges in, and made a nice road to Terra Ceia. We graded it ourselves until the state took it over, and we had phone before we had electric. But REA came along, you know, and then we got electric, and came in for ( ). And we just got a blacktop, in the last few years, to Terra Ceia. We're real tickled about that.

MG: Oh, when was that paved?

CVW: Two years ago.

MG: Only two years ago! Well, gosh, I'm glad! This whole week I would have been driving up and down the gravel!

CVW: The road was really bad. The ruts were so deep you would hook a tractor to the car and you didn't have to steer, you just pulled it on out to the state road. Cause we had a half-mile driveway. When you got to the state road, you'd just unhook the tractor and go on. The roads are better now because we put ( ) and stone on it.

MG: So you were born in the Netherlands, came to the U.S. when you were three, to Long Island, and then came down here when you were about thirteen?

CVW: Yeah, twelve or thirteen.

MG: And Mrs. Van Wyk, would you say a little about your early history?

EVW: My early history. Well, my dad actually helped build Terra Ceia. He had a blacksmith's shop that was located right behind the church today. And he was a builder, he built that big barn behind Hank and ( )'s house.

CVW: 1915.

EVW: That's the only thing that's still living. 1915? He got married in 1916. But he rode his bicycle all the way out from 264, and that would be, what?, that would be nine and a half miles to work in Terra Ceia.

CVW: Because he went through ( ).

EVW: He was the village blacksmith. And he also made the muckshoes for the horses, too, and the mules to use.

MG: What were the muckshoes?

CVW: They were about the size of a dinner plate, and—

EVW: They keep the horses from sogging down.

CVW: They were fastened to the mule's foot. Because a mule has a small foot.

And if the mule didn't have the shoe, then he sank up to his knee in the mud.

EVW: Almost like a tennis racket. About that size, wasn't it?

CVW: About like a dinner plate.

EVW: And then he kind of kept the equipment going for them, and sometimes he would get on the coal train and ride down to Bellhaven.

CVW: The train came into Terra Ceia in 19--

EVW: It was a little train for the land-clearing and lumber crews. Because this was all woods, at one time, and under water.

MG: Do you remember it being real wooded?

EVW: No, it was already cleared, and my dad planted the first grain of corn in Terra Ceia, with a pick. And he helped clear the land in that way, that he was mostly in the blacksmith's shop, taking care of the horses and the equipment.

MG: What was your dad's name?

EVW: C. S. Wenley.

MG: Wenley.

CVW: The train came in 1915, so that's about the time your daddy would've been working there.

MG: And about the same time he built the barn.

CVW: Yeah. But when he first started working there, he told me, he was out— where they cleared land, they just cut the trees down and logged it off and then would just step over the logs, and have a stick in their hand and just dug a hole, dropped two grains of corn, and kick it in with their heel. And they'd march across in a line and just march across that way, with a sackful of seed on their back. Somebody told the boss that he had a good carpenter and a blacksmith there, and he was making fifty cents a day, and the boss came out there and picked him up and said, "I'll give you a dollar a day." And that's when they built him a blacksmith's shop.

EVW: You see, he rode a bicycle all the way from home.

MG: Which was where?

EVW: It was on 264, between Yeatesville and Beckworth. And he would ride that bicycle. Sometimes he'd have to push it, because the road was so bad he couldn't ride.

[example ends here]

# TRANSCRIPTION GUIDELINES

## I. FORMAT:

- Double space throughout.
- Margins: Top – 1.0”; Bottom – 1.0”; Right – 1.0”; Left – 1.5”. These margins will allow the transcript to be bound and give even margins throughout.
- Page numbers - Page numbers are located in the upper right hand corner starting on the second actual page of the interview, after title page and index.
- Header-Running Titles-- Starting on the second page of the interview, the name of the interviewee should appear in the top left hand corner of each successive page in bold face.
- Indent each time a new speaker enters in. Use the whole name the first time the speaker appears; then use initials each time thereafter.
- Indicate the beginning of a new audio file by starting a new page and typing “START OF DISK 1” (or whatever is appropriate). Indicate the end of the side of an audio file by typing “END OF DISK” (or whatever is appropriate).
- Indicate when the interview is finished with “END OF INTERVIEW.”
- The transcriber's name and the date the interview was transcribed should appear at the end of the transcript.

## II. CONTENT:

- NOTE: The interviewer has the responsibility for supplying transcribers with an accurate list (on the Proper Word Form) of proper names which occur in the interview.
- The transcriber is expected to proofread each page of the manuscript for mistakes in spelling and/or typing.
- Where a word or a phrase is inaudible, type (        ). Do not type “inaudible,” or (?).
- When a speaker fails to complete a sentence, this is indicated using two dashes, the first dash flush with the last letter of the last word spoken. The second dash should be followed by some form of end punctuation (period, question mark, etc.), as in “Well, you see there was nothing more I could--.”

- To indicate interruptions use two dashes flush with the last word spoken. For example, “He had planned to go to Yale and--.” (Speaker breaks off because another speaker enters, etc.).
- When a speaker interrupts him or herself in mid-sentence to add a supplementary or clarifying remark--a strong parenthetical digression--the remark is set off by dashes as shown in this sentence, with the dashes flush with the preceding and following words. Weaker parenthetical expressions may be set off with commas.
- More distinct interruptions, such as for telephone calls or for moments when the tape recorder is turned off, or for laughter should be identified by adding brackets and the appropriate explanation of the sounds. [Interruption] or [Laughter] or [Recorder is turned off and them back on].
- Noticeable pauses in conversation by a speaker should be indicated by using brackets with the word [pause].
- Common verbal lapses, such as the droppings of the “g” sound in “ing” endings, or the omission of the “a” and “d” sounds in “and,” should usually be written in their proper form. The meaningless guttural sound “uh” should not even be transcribed unless it indicates some sort of emotion or real quandary on the part of the interviewee.
- Use lower case for state legislative bodies, upper case for national; lower for public officials; capitalize Democratic but not party; where in doubt, use lower case.
- Numbers one through one hundred and large round numbers should be spelled out, as should fractions. Large complex numbers should be written numerically, as should numbers in a series, percentages, ratios and times. The word “percent” should be used rather than the symbol %. The days of the month are written numerically, as are years and series of years, except for such expressions as “the fifties,” or “the roaring twenties.” Expressions such as the 50s or 60s should not contain an apostrophe before the “s.”
- As will be further explained in the guidelines for editing, over-use of dashes only weakens a transcript. One must judge that it is important to the context of the interview for the reader to know that the speaker did pause, was in a quandary, and therefore did not speak straightforwardly. Where the pauses are not this significant, simply end the sentence with a period or a question mark.

### III. EDITING:

This is the aspect of transcribing which is the most challenging, making this sort of typing quite different from “rote work.” It demands the full attention of the transcriber to what is being said, and how-- by the interviewer as well as the interviewee. When one is aware of the context of an interview, and also of the rhythm and mannerisms of speech of the person involved, one is ready to edit in a sensitive and intelligent way. Habitual false starts, or unnecessary and repetitive phrases can be cleaned up; “run-on” sentences can be

broken with appropriate punctuation; the context of the interview can provide clues where there is a question of audibility of a word or phrase. The following are instances which most frequently seem to require a transcriber's editing:

- difficult to anticipate, but important to try to catch, are long run-on sentences or questions which can, for clarity's sake, be broken up into separate sentences. In other words, one should not type long sentences with many commas separating thoughts. Rather, the transcriber should-- whether the voice of the person speaking indicates it or not--use periods or at least semi-colons to make for easier reading and comprehension. Where possible in long interviewee sections, paragraphing can also assist the reader.
- the transcriber may use, sparingly, exclamation marks and underlining where the emphasis seems called for in the context of the interview.

While speed is important, speed is not the highest priority in the transcribing process. Rather, care and accuracy require that the tape be played over again where necessary to catch a phrase or anticipate where editing should come in. A dictionary might need to be consulted, and perhaps an atlas, for an unfamiliar proper name or geographical location. The transcriber must satisfy him or herself that the manuscript is readable, makes sense as it is typed, and, of course, is free from typing and spelling errors. Where there is a question, the interviewer may always be consulted.

The transcriber will find standard dictionaries, almanacs, and geographic indexes very useful when questions about the spelling of proper names and locations occur. Your local library will be able to help you identify reference books that might be helpful. For projects about the state of North Carolina, works such as these are invaluable:

William S. Powell, *The North Carolina Gazetteer*  
*The North Carolina Atlas: Portrait for a New Century*, ed. Douglas Milton Orr  
*North Carolina Atlas & Gazetteer*

The transcriber is not expected to double check historical information, dates, book titles, etc. However, one quick telephone call to your local library or web search will often provide the correct spelling of a person or place when the transcriber doesn't recognize it.

# Principles and Standards from the Evaluation Guidelines of the Oral History Association

**Editor's note:** *The following statement is taken from the Evaluation Guidelines, revised edition, 2000, of the Oral History Association. The 2000 edition of the Evaluation Guidelines is available at the Oral History Association's website: [http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/pub\\_eg.html](http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/pub_eg.html)*

The Oral History Association promotes oral history as a method of gathering and preserving historical information through recorded interviews with participants in past events and ways of life. It encourages those who produce and use oral history to recognize certain principles, rights, technical standards, and obligations for the creation and preservation of source material that is authentic, useful, and reliable. These include obligations to the interviewee, to the profession, and to the public, as well as mutual obligations between sponsoring organizations and interviewers.

People with a range of affiliations and sponsors conduct oral history interviews for a variety of purposes: to create archival records, for individual research, for community and institutional projects, and for publications and media productions. While these principles and standards provide a general framework for guiding professional conduct, their application may vary according to the nature of specific oral history projects. Regardless of the purpose of the interviews, oral history should be conducted in the spirit of critical inquiry and social responsibility and with a recognition of the interactive and subjective nature of the enterprise.

## Responsibility to Interviewees:

1. Interviewees should be informed of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the aims and anticipated uses of the particular projects to which they are making their contributions.
2. Interviewees should be informed of the mutual rights in the oral history process, such as editing, access restrictions, copyrights, prior use, royalties, and the expected disposition and dissemination of all forms of the record, including the potential for electronic distribution.
3. Interviewees should be informed that they will be asked to sign a legal release. Interviews should remain confidential until interviewees have given permission for their use.
4. Interviewers should guard against making promises to interviewees that the interviewers may not be able to fulfill, such as guarantees of publication and control over the use of interviews after they have been made public. In all future uses, however, good faith efforts should be made to honor the spirit of the interviewee's agreement.

5. Interviews should be conducted in accord with any prior agreements made with the interviewee, and such agreements should be documented for the record.
6. Interviewers should work to achieve a balance between the objectives of the project and the perspectives of the interviewees. They should be sensitive to the diversity of social and cultural experiences and to the implications of race, gender, class, ethnicity, age, religion, and sexual orientation. They should encourage interviewees to respond in their own style and language and to address issues that reflect their concerns. Interviewers should fully explore all appropriate areas of inquiry with the interviewee and not be satisfied with superficial responses.
7. Interviewers should guard against possible exploitation of interviewees and be sensitive to the ways in which their interviews might be used. Interviewers must respect the rights of interviewees to refuse to discuss certain subjects, to restrict access to the interview, or, under Guidelines extreme circumstances, even to choose anonymity. Interviewers should clearly explain these options to all interviewees.
8. Interviewers should use the best recording equipment within their means to accurately reproduce the interviewee's voice and, if appropriate, other sounds as well as visual images.
9. Given the rapid development of new technologies, interviewees should be informed of the wide range of potential uses of their interviews.
10. Good faith efforts should be made to ensure that the uses of recordings and transcripts comply with both the letter and spirit of the interviewee's agreement.

Responsibility to the Public and to the Profession:

1. Oral historians have a responsibility to maintain the highest professional standards in the conduct of their work and to uphold the standards of the various disciplines and professions with which they are affiliated.
2. In recognition of the importance of oral history to an understanding of the past and of the cost and effort involved, interviewers and interviewees should mutually strive to record candid information of lasting value and to make that information accessible.
3. Interviewees should be selected based on the relevance of their experiences to the subject at hand.
4. Interviewers should possess interviewing skills as well as professional competence and knowledge of the subject at hand.
5. Regardless of the specific interests of the project, interviewers should attempt to extend the inquiry beyond the specific focus of the project to create as complete a record as possible for the benefit of others.
6. Interviewers should strive to prompt informative dialogue through challenging and perceptive inquiry. They should be grounded in the background of the persons being interviewed and, when possible, should carefully research appropriate documents and secondary sources related to subjects about which the interviewees can speak.

7. Interviewers should make every effort to record their interviews using the best recording equipment within their means to reproduce accurately the interviewee's voice and, if appropriate, image. They also should collect and record other historical documentation the interviewee may possess, including still photographs, print materials, and other sound and moving image recordings, if appropriate.
8. Interviewers should provide complete documentation of their preparation and methods, including the circumstances of the interviews.
9. Interviewers and, when possible, interviewees should review and evaluate their interviews, including any summaries or transcriptions made from them.
10. With the permission of the interviewees, interviewers should arrange to deposit their interviews in an archival repository that is capable of both preserving the interviews and eventually making them available for general use. Interviewers should provide basic information about the interviews, including project goals, sponsorship, and funding. Preferably, interviewers should work with repositories before conducting the interviews to determine necessary legal Guidelines arrangements. If interviewers arrange to retain first use of the interviews, it should be only for a reasonable time before public use.
11. Interviewers should be sensitive to the communities from which they have collected oral histories, taking care not to reinforce thoughtless stereotypes nor to bring undue notoriety to them. Interviewers should take every effort to make the interviews accessible to the communities.
12. Oral history interviews should be used and cited with the same care and standards applied to other historical sources. Users have a responsibility to retain the integrity of the interviewee's voice, neither misrepresenting the interviewee's words nor taking them out of context.
13. Sources of funding or sponsorship of oral history projects should be made public in all exhibits, media presentations, or publications that result from the projects.
14. Interviewers and oral history programs should conscientiously consider how they might share with interviewees and their communities the rewards and recognition that might result from their work.