

Guide to Pennsylvanian Oral Histories

Key:

AFSIC:	Alternative Farming Systems Information Center
AHCM:	Afro-American Historical and Cultural Museum and the Atwater Kent Museum
AIHP:	America's Industrial Heritage Project
AIS:	Archives of Industrial Society at the University of Pittsburgh
CMU:	Carnegie Mellon University
CUOH:	Columbia University Oral History Project
DWM:	Drake Well Museum
ECHS:	Erie County Historical Society
HARC:	House of Representatives Archives and the Record Center (Pennsylvania)
HCA:	Hershey Community Archive
HCLA:	Historical Collections and Labor Archives at Penn State
HMHPM:	Hugh Moore Historical Park and Museums
HOHA:	Holocaust Oral History Archive at Gratz College
HSWP:	Historical Society Western Pennsylvania
IUP:	Indiana University of Pennsylvania
JAHA:	Johnstown Area Heritage Association
LCHS:	Leigh County Historical Society
MCA:	Mercyhurst College Archives
PHAC:	Pennsylvania Heritage Affairs Commission in Harrisburg
PFP:	Philadelphia Folklore Project
PMM:	Philadelphia Maritime Museum or Independence Seaport Museum
PSA:	Pennsylvania State Archives
PSM:	Pennsylvania State Museum
SHC:	Seton Hill College
SHCS:	Somerset Historical Center in Somerset
SHO:	Senate Historical Office (United States)
SAAAOH:	Smithsonian Archives of American Art Oral Histories
RMMA:	Railroaders Memorial Museum in Altoona

1) Nature Matters/ You can Make a Difference/ Conservationists

- a) Donora Smog disaster: focuses on life during smog disaster of 1948 (a PHMC grant awarded to Pittsburgh Filmmakers, Inc. for a local history project)
- b) Robert Rodale: founder of the organic movement in the U.S. (AFSIC Oral History Interview Series) http://www.nal.usda.gov/afsic/AFSIC_pubs/oralhist.htm#video670
- c) Karl Mason is interviewed in the Harrisburg Patriot and Evening News Oral History Project. He was the creator of the Bureau of Environmental Health in the 1950's (PSA)

2) Traditional Crafts

- a) Abington Friends School Project: Inhabitants of Abington recall traditional techniques in rope making, wagon-building, and masonry (PSA)

b) Calliope the Pittsburgh Folk Music Society: oral histories and sound recordings of folk music, song, dance, and crafts in the Pittsburgh area (a PHMC grant awarded to Calliope: the Pittsburgh Folk Music Society for a local history project)

c) Eckley Oral History Project: contains descriptions of traditional Welsh games, crafts, and recipes (PSA)

3) America's Kitchens

a) "America's Kitchens": oral history interview with the couple that owned and donated the kitchen (PSM)

b) Eckley Oral History Project: contains recipes (PSA)

4) New Deal

a) Richard Hood: interview with the former state director of the federal art program in Pennsylvania (SAAAOH)
<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/index.cfm/fuseaction/OralHistories.ViewOralHistory/CollectionID/11862>

b) Jasper Deeter: producer actor, teacher and Federal Theater Project director; named director of FTP in Pennsylvania and New Jersey (SAAAOH)
<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/index.cfm/fuseaction/OralHistories.ViewOralHistory/CollectionID/13030>

c) "The Reminiscences of J. David Stern": oral history of the publisher of the Philadelphia Record, acquaintance of FDR (CUOH – search under J. David Stern or Julius David Stern)
<http://www.inthefirstperson.com/firp/firp.detail.documents.aspx?documentcode=OHI0017224-12667>

d) Pennsylvania New Deal History Project: interviews with artists who were employed through the WPA during the Depression (PSA)

5) Cold War in PA

a) Barrows Dunham-Fred Collection: oral history about philosophy professor Fred Dunham's dismissal from Temple University during the McCarthy period (Temple University)
<http://library.temple.edu/collections/urbana/oral.jsp;jsessionid=80FE6F9F48D663685A3E232F67747AF0?bhcp=1>

b) There may be some relevant oral histories about the Cold War politics at the House Archives and Record Center (HARC)
http://www.senate.gov/pagelayout/history/g_three_sections_with_teasers/people.htm

6) History in our Communities

a) Local Ethnic History: collections of the Historical Society of Berks County
(<http://www.berkshistory.org/>)

- i. German-American Greater Beneficial Union of Pittsburgh (http://64.233.169.104/search?q=cache:tJTr3Kx-BgYJ:www.gbu.org/german-links.htm+pittsburgh+German-American+Greater+Beneficial+Union+of+Pittsburgh&hl=en&ct=clnk&cd=1&gl=us&lr=lang_en|lang_de)
 - ii. Jewish Museum of Eastern Pennsylvania (<http://www.synagogue-museum.org/>)
 - iii. Hershey Community Archives (<http://www.hersheyarchives.org/>)
 - iv. Westmoreland County (<http://www.starofthewest.org/>).
- b) Also see section 13 "Ethnic Minorities/ Communities"
- c) National Council of Jewish Women projects (AIS)
<http://www.library.pitt.edu/libraries/archives/aistoc.html>
- d) Steel Folklife Documentation Center (JAHA)
<http://www.conferencecart.com/cgi-bin/jaha/index.html.html>
- e) Radnor library collection
http://www.radnorlibrary.org/oral_history.html
- f) Bowlby library collection in Waynesburg
<http://www.evakbowlby.org/>
- g) Middletown Public Library
<http://www.middletownpubliclib.org/>
- h) Lancaster County Public Library
<http://www.lancaster.lib.pa.us/lcl/site/default.asp?lclNav=|30281|>
- i) Search oral histories at university libraries in:
- i. York (<http://www.ycp.edu/library/index.html>)
 - ii. Gettysburg (<http://www.gettysburg.edu/library/>)
 - iii. Mercyhurst (<http://merlin.mercyhurst.edu/>)
 - iv. Temple University (<http://library.temple.edu/index.jsp?bhcp=1>)
 - v. West Chester University (<http://www.wcupa.edu/library.fhg/>)
- j) Search historical societies:
- i. Clinton County (<http://www.clintoncountyhistory.com/>)
 - ii. Crawford County (<http://www.crawfordhistorical.org/>)
 - iii. Lawrence County (<http://www.lawrencechs.com/>)
 - iv. Lycoming County (<http://www.lycoming.org/lchsmuseum/>)
 - v. Union County (<http://www.rootsweb.com/~paunion/society.html>)

- vi. Leigh County (<http://www.fieldtrip.com/pa/04354664.htm>)
- vii. Town of New Hope (<http://www.newhopehistoricalsociety.org/parrymansion.htm>)
- viii. Town of Equinunk (<http://www.rootsweb.com/~paehs/>)

7) Agricultural

- a) Viticulture: discussion of wineries in Erie County (ECHS)
<http://www.eriecountyhistory.org/>
- b) Employees of the Battles Farm have been interviewed about farm life (ECHS)
<http://www.eriecountyhistory.org/>
- c) See Rodale in Nature Matters/ You can Make a Difference/ Conservationists
- d) History of agriculture in southwest region, w/ emphasis on the impact of industrialization and technology on farming practices and rural life (SHCS & IUP)
<http://www.somersethistoricalcenter.org/>
- e) PA Migrant Farm Labor: interviews with migrant farm workers and those who provide social services for them (PSA)

8) Historic Theaters

- a) Jasper Deeter: Producer actor, teacher and Federal Theater Project director; named director of FTP in Pennsylvania and New Jersey (SAAA OH)
<http://www.aaa.si.edu/collections/oralhistories/index.cfm/fuseaction/OralHistories.ViewOralHistory/CollectionID/13030>

9) Archaeology

- a) Pennsbury Manor collected recollections of reconstruction and archaeology work done at the site in the 20th century.
<http://av.nmu.edu/k-12fieldtrips.html>

10) Historic Schools

- a) Interviews with teachers and students about their experiences in one room schools to provide an interpretive basis for the Claussville School (LCHS)
<http://www.lchs.museum/index.htm>
- b) Abington Friends School Project: there is one cassette with remembrances about the local one room school house (PSA)

11) PA industrial / Labor / Unemployment History

- a) Aluminum workers in New Kensington (AIHP & IUP)
<http://www.lib.iup.edu/depts/speccol/ead/mg74.html>
- b) Coal and coke heritage (IUP)
<http://www.informaworld.com/smpp/content~content=a769943641~db=all>

- c) Railroading (RMMA & IUP)
<http://www.railroadcity.com/>
- d) Steel and Steeltowns (JAHA & IUP)
<http://www.jaha.org/>
- e) United Steelworkers of America at the Jones and Laughlin plant in Aliquippa (AIS)
<http://www.library.pitt.edu/libraries/archives/ais.html>
- f) Videotaped interviews with retired workers of the Pittsburgh area conducted by labor activist and writer Larry Evans (AIS)
<http://www.library.pitt.edu/libraries/archives/ais.html>
- g) Interviews with Steve Nelson, radical political activist and industrial organizer conducted by Rob Ruck and James Barret (AIS)
<http://www.library.pitt.edu/libraries/archives/ais.html>
- h) Impact of technology on Longshoring (PMM)
<http://www.phillyseaport.org/>
- i) Technical and social history of oil production (DWM)
<http://www.drakewell.org/>
- j) General Electric workers at Erie (MCA)
<http://merlin.mercyhurst.edu/>
- k) 1919 steel strikes in Pittsburgh and McKeesport (HWP)
http://digital.library.pitt.edu/hwp/browse/subject_fileO.html
- l) Movement of the unemployed in the Mon Valley during the 1980s (AIS)
<http://www.library.pitt.edu/libraries/archives/ais.html>
- m) Oral histories of the United Steelworkers of America and Graphic Communications International Union (HCLA)
<http://www.libraries.psu.edu/speccolls/hcla/>
- n) Canal boat workers, Leigh Navigation, and Delaware Canal (HMHPM)
<http://www.canals.org/>
- o) Workers' experiences at the Hershey Factory (HCA)
<http://www.dcddata.com/hershey/oralhist.htm>
- p) Scranton, Eckley, Washington County, Electrical Workers, Bethlehem, Cornwall, Delta, Edgar Thompson Steel Works, Monnesson Community, Steelton, Nanticoke, 2nd Nanticoke, and the Pittsburgh oral history projects (PSA)

12) African American Heritage

- a) Chester County: Black Experience. Black citizens of Chester recall their experiences growing up in Chester, working during the Depression, and how Chester and society has changed over time (PSA)
- b) Harrisburg: African American recall their migration to Harrisburg, PA in the 20th century and life in the city (PSA)

- c) African Americans in Johnstown (AIHP & IUP)
<http://www.lib.iup.edu/depts/speccol/ead/mg74.html>
- d) Interview with early 20th c southern black migrants to Pittsburgh by Peter Gottlieb (AIS)
<http://www.library.pitt.edu/libraries/archives/ais.html>
- e) Series on black sport by Rob Ruck (AIS)
<http://www.library.pitt.edu/libraries/archives/ais.html>
- f) African American life with an emphasis on the experiences of southern migrants (AHCM)
<http://www.fieldtrip.com/pa/55740380.htm#>
- g) An oral history project on Black Pittsburgh since WWII Oral History Project is underway at Carnegie Mellon (CMU)
<http://www.history.cmu.edu/faculty/bHouston.html>

13) Ethnic Minorities/ Communities

- a) Pittsburgh Oral History Project: contains interviews held with Pittsburghers of various ethnicities such as eastern European, Italian, and Jewish (PSA)
- b) Washington County: interview with coal miners of Eastern European backgrounds who lived and worked in Washington County during the early 1900's (PSA)
- c) Scranton: people of various ethnicities (mostly Eastern European) recall life and work in the coal mines of Scranton, PA (PSA)
- d) Eckley: interview were held with Welsh coal miners. (PSA)
- e) Puerto Rican Philadelphians: Puerto Ricans who live in Philadelphia recall life in the city, their ethnic bonds, and describe the Puerto Rican community in Philadelphia (PSA)
- f) Monnesson Croatians: Croatians living in Monesson recall how their families settled in Monnesson and how cultural practices are maintained. (PSA)
- g) Greeks in Lancaster: Citizens of Lancaster of Greek origins recall their family's immigration to Pennsylvania and the ways in which Greek tradition is preserved within the community (PSA)
- h) Electrical Workers from Pittsburgh and Erie: workers are of various ethnic backgrounds and recall work in Erie at General Electric. There is some discussion of unions (PSA)
- i) Jewish Community in South Hills in Pittsburgh (AIS)
<http://www.library.pitt.edu/libraries/archives/ais.html>
- j) Ethnic Fraternal Organizations Oral History Project (AIS)
<http://www.library.pitt.edu/libraries/archives/ais.html>
- k) Homestead Album Oral History Project (AIS)
<http://www.library.pitt.edu/libraries/archives/aistoc.html>

- l) Interviews with Pennsylvanian Jews who survived the Holocaust (HOHA)
<http://www.gratz.edu/default.aspx?p=3216>
- m) Variety of African-, Asian-, and Euro-American cultural Traditions and ethnic arts are documented in the collections (PFP & PHAC)
<http://www.folkloreproject.org/>
<http://www.loc.gov/folklife/states/pennsylvania.html>
- n) Asian Arts Initiative: an oral history of Philadelphia's China Town (a PHMC grant awarded to the Asian Arts Initiative for a local history project)
- o) Theater Ariel: an oral history of Philadelphia Jews (a PHMC grant awarded to Ariel Theater for a local history project)

14) Women

- a) Nanticoke Women Oral History: Interview of women from Nanticoke of Northeastern Pennsylvania whose economy was based on anthracite coal mining and factory work. Many of Polish background (PSA)
- b) Women in Industry (SHC & IUP)
<http://www.setonhill.edu/>
<http://www.lib.iup.edu/depts/speccol/ead/mg74.html>
- c) Changing experiences of three generation of Jewish-, Italian-, and Slavic-American women (AIS)
<http://www.library.pitt.edu/libraries/archives/ais.html>
- d) Dorothe G. Scott: administrative assistant to the senate democratic secretary (1945-1977) (SHO)
<http://www.senate.gov/artandhistory/history/resources/pdf/ScottPreface.pdf>
- e) Institute for Cultural Partnerships: oral narratives of refugee and immigrant women who have made Pennsylvania their home (a PHMC grant awarded to the Institute for Cultural Partnerships for a local history project)
- f) Legislative Oral History Project: see interview with Genevieve Blatt first woman elected to a state-wide office in Pennsylvania (PSA)
- g) Mary Sachs Collection: Mary Sachs was a successful businesswoman and prominent citizen of Harrisburg. She is remembered by her sister in an interview (PSA)

15) Economic Depression

- a) Comparative views of the depression of the 1930s and that of the 1980s (AIS)
<http://www.library.pitt.edu/libraries/archives/ais.html>

- 16) Social Justice focus at: Visions of Equality project of the Public Interest Law Center of Philadelphia at Temple University's Urban Archives
(<http://library.temple.edu/collections/urbana/index.jsp;jsessionid=03227D5A8AACC9C0C74131BC237F26F2?bhcp=1>);

and of the series of interviews with Benjamin Sherman about his experiences in the Workman's Circle and the Jewish Left as the Balch Institute for Ethnic Studies
(<http://www.hsp.org/default.aspx?id=554>)