

---

# NOHANZ

## Newsletter

Volume 15, number 3

SEPTEMBER 2001

### EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE

President:

Linda Evans

Committee:

Marie Burgess  
Joce Chalmers  
Heeni Collins  
Jacqui Foley  
Helen Frizzell  
Anna Green  
Lesley Hall  
Gillian Headifen  
Megan Hutching  
Alison Laurie  
Bronwyn Officer  
Rachael Selby  
Anaria Tangohau  
Anne Thorpe  
Wendi Wicks  
Shirley Williams

### Calling all members...

We would like to hear what you are working on. Please share your stories, successes, proposed projects, challenges, etc., with us. Send to:

NOHANZ  
P.O. Box 3819  
WELLINGTON

Or e-mail to:

[megan.hutching@mch.govt.nz](mailto:megan.hutching@mch.govt.nz)

### NOHANZ news

October 2001 is the 15<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the establishment of NOHANZ. We are going to have a small celebration on 13 November at the National Library in Wellington to mark the occasion. Claudia Orange, Judith Fyfe and Jock Phillips who were involved in the early days will take part in a panel discussion, along with Taina McGregor, the newly-appointed Maori oral historian at the Oral History Centre. If you are going to be in Wellington, we do hope that you will attend and help us celebrate.

We are also in the process of setting up our web site and hope to be able to launch it at the 13 November function. Once it's working, we will publicise the address.

### Oral history in New Zealand

#### Dunedin

#### *From the Community History Programme*

The next Introductory Oral History Workshop is scheduled for February 2002. The two-day workshop will be held in Dunedin and tutored by Helen Frizzell. Dates are yet to be confirmed.

The workshop will cover: choosing the best equipment to record interviews and achieve clear recordings; project planning and funding; improving interview techniques; processing oral history interviews and making the recorded material available for use. There will be practical exercises during the workshop and discussion of ethical and legal issues in oral history.

Further information & enrolment from Helen Frizzell  
Tel: 03 477 7115 (office hrs);  
Fax: 03 479 2020;  
Email: [hfrizzell@psotago.org.nz](mailto:hfrizzell@psotago.org.nz)

#### *Otago District Law Society Oral History Project – Stage II*

The Otago District Law Society (ODLS) has recently received funding to continue recording oral histories with legal practitioners and staff. The project began in 1996 and is being carried out by Helen Frizzell.

The first stage of the project, funded by the NZ Law Foundation, involved interviews with nine senior members of the profession – both retired and still practising – and one staff person. The interviewees, selected by the ODLS Council, represent a mix of experience and background - for example, rural and urban, ethnic, different periods at which people practiced and different areas of law practiced. The resulting 55 hours of recorded material contain an enormous wealth of information, including anecdotal and commentary on the profession, its past and its

likely future. Late 1999 a function was held at the Otago Settlers Museum, where the tapes and accompanying documentation are deposited, to mark the completion of the first stage of the project.

Since then ODLs has been making efforts to secure further funding to continue the project, in particular to explore contemporary women lawyers' perspective on the practice of law in Otago which remains a gap in the Society's historical record. This year the ODLs Williams Trust granted funding for two women - a lawyer and a former ODLs secretary - to be interviewed. The interviews will build on three interviews recorded in 1994 for the Otago Woman Lawyers Society suffrage year project.

It is planned that the recorded material would be incorporated into a major public exhibition, undertaken in conjunction with the Otago Settlers Museum, to celebrate the 125<sup>th</sup> anniversary of ODLs in 2004.

#### ***Otago Settlers Museum***

On 8 August Dunedin's Otago Settlers Museum opened its exhibition *Abbotsford '79: the human dimension of a natural disaster*. Over 200 people gathered to mark the occasion, which coincided with the twenty second anniversary of the slip night. This included many residents and former residents of Abbotsford as well as Civil Defence personnel who were at Abbotsford in 1979. There was much laughter, and a few tears, as former neighbours met up again and shared memories of their old neighbourhood. The core of the exhibition is an oral history project conducted by the Museum since the Abbotsford disaster's twentieth anniversary in 1999. It provides an insider's perspective of the landslip experience and conveys some of the emotional impact of the disaster on the Abbotsford community. Former residents' memories of the slip are presented via five listening posts, with excerpts on CDs arranged in a chronological sequence and interspersed with a linking narrative. Care has been taken to ensure that exhibition visitors can listen to the oral history sequences in comfort and many visitors are taking the time to do so. The exhibition also contains dramatic contemporary

television footage of the developing landslip and the devastation of the major slide on 8 August 1979 which destroyed 69 family homes. The presentation is structured around a recreation of the streets that were 'lost' as a result of the slip, with every building and family chronicled as well as 'before' and 'after' photographs. *Abbotsford '79* runs at the Museum until 10 February 2002.

#### **Auckland**

Ruth Barton and Willie Smith of the University of Auckland have been working on a project on "Institutional Change in New Zealand Science". Willie Smith, a science policy analyst, has been interviewing scientists who were involved in the restructuring of New Zealand science through the late eighties and early nineties. Ruth Barton, a historian of science, has been talking to people whose careers go back further, some to the 1930s, many to the 1940s. Some of the men interviewed worked on radar research in New Zealand and then on nuclear projects in north America during World War II. A range of sciences have been included, but her emphasis has been on human nutrition and applied mathematics - chosen to represent quite different areas of science.

The interviewing began in 1997. Transcribing has been time-consuming as the material is often technical and has required careful checking. The topics covered include early education and career choices, employment options, the organisation of scientific institutions in New Zealand, as well as the individual's research projects and achievements. Both men and women, senior administrators and researchers have been included. Many of the tapes and transcripts are now available in the Oral History Centre of the Alexander Turnbull Library.

### **Oral history around the world**

#### **United States**

*From Columbia University, NY comes the news of a contemporary oral history project.* The National Science Foundation (NSF) has awarded Columbia University a \$US90,000 grant to conduct an oral history project on the World Trade Centre attacks of September 11. Over a two-year period, researchers will collect and analyse life-stories of individuals both in New York City and around the country who were affected directly and indirectly by the attack. Called "Narrative Networks: The World Trade Centre Tragedy," the project was initiated by Mary Marshall Clark, director of Columbia's Oral History Research Office and one of two principal investigators on the project, which researchers hope will create a valuable historical resource for future researchers and the public.

"As oral historians, we know that people make sense of their experiences through stories," said Clark. "We want to give people affected by this tragedy the opportunity to offer their own interpretations of this historical event. Through doing so, we will provide the public and generations of future scholars and researchers, a record that represents, to the fullest extent possible, the uniqueness and diversity of responses to this tragedy."

Using both video and sound recordings, the researchers will capture more than 300 personal accounts in the immediate aftermath of the tragedy and then conduct follow-up interviews with the same individuals after six months and again after two years. Since the scope of the project will extend beyond New York, Columbia will recruit oral historians across the nation.

Columbia researchers intend to investigate the extent to which individuals' life-stories are shaped by the World Trade Centre tragedy. Of special interest is how the event emerges as an important turning point. In addition, they hope to understand how narratives of the tragedy are shaped by, and shape understandings of, immigration status, race, social class, and ethnicity.

Also involved in the project as the other principal investigator is Peter Bearman, director of the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy (ISERP) and chair of Columbia's department of sociology. Robert Smith, assistant professor of sociology at Barnard College, an ISERP research fellow, and an affiliate of the Oral History Research Office, is a co-investigator.

"We hope to understand the ways in which stories of the tragedy were told, transformed, circulated, and shaped the understandings of people, both closely and only distantly involved," said Peter Bearman. "Hundreds of volunteers who have stepped forward to conduct interviews, transcribe data, organize field materials, and help in launching a giant field project in a matter of days," said Bearman. "Because narrative quality decays quickly, the support of the volunteers has meant that we can get into

the field quickly, an essential element for project success."

*(About Columbia University's Oral History Research Office: Each year, more than 2,000 scholars consult Columbia's Oral History Research Office, which boasts interviews with such notables as former President Jimmy Carter, former Supreme Court Justice Thurgood Marshall, Dorothy Parker, and Fred Astaire. Founded in 1948, the collection is second only to the Library of Congress in scope, with 15,000 hours of tape and 8000 interviews.)*

**Australia** Just released. *Mission Girls: Aboriginal Women on Catholic Missions in the Kimberley, Western Australia, 1900-1950*, UWA Press, 2001, by Christine Choo

*Mission Girls* examines the situation of Aboriginal women who lived on the Catholic missions of Beagle Bay and Kalumburu, in the north-west of Australia, between 1900 and 1950. Drawing on oral and archival sources, Christine Choo explores the effects of European colonization on these women, and the politics of race, gender and class in the colonizing process. While highlighting the government's and missions' attempts to control the sexuality and reproduction of Aboriginal women, she also reveals the covert ways in which the 'mission girls' subverted such efforts to control their lives.

Christine Choo is a consultant historian and independent scholar, and an Honorary Research Fellow at the University of Western Australia with a PhD in History and degrees in Social Work and Australian Studies. She has worked as a social worker, social researcher and historian for and with Aboriginal people in Western Australia since the early 1970s and has published widely on race and gender issues.

\$A38.95 inc GST. Available from UWA Press at a 10% discount for email orders.

[uwap@cyllene.uwa.edu.au](mailto:uwap@cyllene.uwa.edu.au)



## New developments in the Oral History Centre

### **Oral Historian, Māori**

Taina Tangaere McGregor, Ngāti Porou, has started work as the Oral Historian, Māori, a new position in the Centre. Taina will be taking part in all aspects of the work of the Oral History Centre. She will be specialising in providing training, advice and project

support for Māori groups and individuals recording oral histories and in providing access to Māori material in the oral history collection.

Taina is an experienced oral historian, having completed interviews and abstracts for a number of projects. In particular, she interviewed extensively for the Maori Battalion C Company video history project and has completed a thesis based on interviews with the wives of C Company soldiers - *Nga Mahi, Nga Piki, Nga Heke*. Most recently Taina worked as kairangahau on two projects at the New Zealand Council for Educational Research: a four-year longitudinal project launched in May this year on Māori Immersion Education working with three cohorts of children from Kohanga Reo, Kura Kaupapa Māori into Wharekura; and an evaluation of the third phase of Whaia Te iti Kahurangi - Strengthening Ngāti Porou Schools on the East Coast.

Taina's contact details are: Email [taina.mcgregor@natlib.govt.nz](mailto:taina.mcgregor@natlib.govt.nz), Phone 04-474-3000, fax 04-474-3063

### **Improving access to the oral history collection**

The Turnbull Library has received extra funding for a project to describe a greater proportion of the Library's collections on its databases, making them much more accessible to researchers. Consequently the Oral History Centre has an extra librarian position for the next two years to make more access records for oral history recordings on the Tapuhi database. Jocelyn Chalmers, Oral History Librarian since 1998, will be doing most of this retrospective work. Gabrielle McLaughlin, for many years the Centre's part time Tapuhi inputter will also be contributing.

Two new Oral History Librarians, Linda Bevan Smith and Vicki Hughes, are job-sharing the two year position and will be answering reference enquiries and describing new accessions. Both are qualified librarians with an interest in oral history. Linda Bevan Smith has been working on an oral history project with Welsh immigrants to New Zealand.

From December the Centre will also have a permanent part-time Library Assistant and Gillian Headifen has been appointed

to that position. Gillian has been working in the Centre on a temporary basis since earlier this year. She has done oral history as part of her academic work in Women's Studies and hopes to start studying for her Master of Library and Information Science next year.

Contact details for reference enquiries:

[atl@natlib.govt.nz](mailto:atl@natlib.govt.nz)

Phone 04-474-3000 ext 8818, fax 04-474-3063  
Oral History Centre, Alexander Turnbull Library,  
PO Box 12349, Wellington



## **Videohistory workshop**

**1-2 December 2001**

**New Zealand Film School, Newtown, Wellington**

This weekend workshop will be tutored by oral historian Judith Fyfe and film maker Tony Hiles.

It will be a practical session covering how to record and process the best possible videohistory interviews.

The course is limited to 10 participants and will cost \$225 per person. The fee includes the use of video equipment, morning and afternoon tea and lunch on each day. Registrations should be sent to:

NOHANZ Videohistory Workshop  
P.O. Box 3819  
WELLINGTON

by Friday 23 November.



Name

Address

Email

Telephone

*Make your cheque payable to NOHANZ.*

