

December 2021

Happy Holidays from the OHC!

Looking Back: OHC Staff Reflects on 2021

As we transition from 2021 to 2022, the Oral History Center staff reflects on a year that moved both fast and slow and was full of change, yet much of the same. I asked our team to share their highlights from the past year. Join us as we look back on the moments in which our team found hope, joy, and inspiration in over the past twelve months. — Martin Meeker, OHC Director

Read the reflections of Amanda Tewes, David Dunham, Jill Schlessinger, Paul Burnett, Roger Eardley-Pryor, and Todd Holmes here as they look back on 2021 at the Oral History Center.

The Roots of the Oral History by Charles Faulhaber, Interim Director of The Bancroft Library

As we bid farewell to 2021, I've been thinking about the power of first-person accounts and the meaning of oral history within The Bancroft Library's collections. Bancroft's Oral History Center was founded in 1953 by Robert Gordon Sproul, President of the University of California, as the Regional Oral History Office, "regional" because there was one at Berkeley for northern California and one at UCLA for southern California.

In fact, however, Bancroft's oral history roots lie much deeper than that. As early as the 1860s, San Francisco bookdealer Hubert Howe Bancroft, the founder of The Bancroft Library, was traveling extensively up and down the Pacific Coast and back to the East Coast in order to record "dictations," his interviews with the men, and some women, who had made the West their home. In Utah he interviewed Mormon leaders while his wife, Matilda Griffings Bancroft, interviewed their wives. On a trip to Pennsylvania he interviewed John Sutter, bitter over the failure of the federal government to compensate him for the loss of his extensive land grants in the gold-rich foothills of the Sierra Nevada.

Later, as Bancroft's plans for a monumental history of California and the American West—eventually 39 massive volumes—crystallized, he hired staff to record dictations with the *Californios*, the Spaniards and Mexicans who had colonized Alta California from 1769 onward, men like Mariano Guadalupe Vallejo, the last Mexican commandant of the Presidio in San Francisco, as well as with native Americans, like Isidora Filomena, the wife of chief Solano of the Suisun tribe.

Bancroft believed that these contemporaneous oral accounts provided an essential complement to the written sources in his library, which he eventually sold to the University of California in 1905. This is the same philosophy that informs the activities of the Oral History Center today. The thousands of oral histories that have been recorded in the almost seventy years since the Center was founded inform and enrich the printed and manuscript documentation collected by Bancroft's curators.

Thus the **series of oral histories of Japanese Americans** who were incarcerated during World War II has proved to be a fundamental resource for Bancroft's current exhibition, "UPROOTED: The Incarceration of Japanese Americans," which also draws from Bancroft's extensive collection of documents, photographs, and family and personal papers. This exhibition commemorates the 80th anniversary of President Franklin D. Roosevelt's Executive Order 9066, which ordered the incarceration of all Japanese Americans on the West Coast, including American citizens, some 113,000 individuals.

I invite you to visit this powerful exhibit at **The Bancroft Library Gallery** when it re-opens briefly from January 10-21 and then again from February 17, 2022 through June 30, 2022, and hear first-hand the words of the uprooted, preserved for posterity through oral history.

The Oral History Center of The Bancroft Library has interviews on just about every topic imaginable. You can find the interviews mentioned here and all our oral histories from the search feature on our home page. Search by name, keyword, and several other criteria. The Oral History Center preserves voices of people from all walks of life, with varying political perspectives, national origins, and ethnic backgrounds. We are committed to open access and our oral histories and interpretive materials are available online at no cost to scholars and the public.

Applications Open for the 2022 Introductory Workshop and Advanced Institute!

The OHC is offering online versions of our educational programs again this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.



The **2022 Introduction to Oral History Workshop** will be held virtually via Zoom on Friday, February 4 from 8:30 a.m. – 2:30 p.m. Pacific Time, with breaks woven in. **Applications** are now being accepted on a rolling basis. Please apply early, as spots fill up quickly.
For more information, please visit our website.

The **Advanced Summer Institute** will be held via Zoom from August 8 – 12, 2022. **Applications** are now being accepted on a rolling basis. Please apply early, as spots also fill up quickly for this program.

For more information, please visit our website.

Please email Shanna Farrell (sfarrell@library.berkeley.edu) with any questions about either program.

OHC Interviews Completed in 2021

The OHC has had a busy year! Collectively, we've interviewed over 70 narrators. Join us in celebrating those we've had the privilege of speaking to over the last year (and stay tuned for the release of their transcripts)!

Assembly Bill 32

- Linda Adams
- Richard Costigan
- Susan Kennedy
- Fabian Núñez
- Fran Pavley
- Steve Schmidt
- Terry Tamminen
- Allan Zaremborg

Bay Area Women in Politics

- Chude Pamela Allen
- Gloria Bowles
- Mary Hughes
- Mimi Feingold Real
- Trina Robbins

California Cannabis

- Oliver Bates

California State Government Oral History Program (STARCH)

- Loni Hancock
- Richard Polanco
- S. Floyd Mori
- Fran Pavley
- Kevin Murray

Chicana/o Studies

- Ignacio García
- Deena González
- Richard Griswold del Castillo
- Emma Pérez
- Patricia Zavella

Community History

- Nancy Donnelly Praetzel

East Bay Regional Park District

- Doug McConnell
- Marianne Monagle
- Will Travis
- Neil Havlik
- Ned MacKay
- Mark Taylor
- Jeff Wilson

Getty

- Alonzo Davis
- Dale Brockman Davis
- Mildred Howard
- Ulysses Jenkins
- Senga Nengudi
- Merritt Price
- Diana Pumpelly Bates
- Tacita Dean
- Vickie Wilson

History of Economics

- George Tolley

Law & Jurisprudence

- Robert Praetzel
- John Briscoe

Natural Resources

- Mary Nichols

San Francisco Opera

- Pamela Rosenberg
- Sheri Greenawald
- Sylvia Lindsey

San Francisco Politics

- Norman Yee

Save Mount Diablo

- Abby Fateman
- Seth Adams
- Bob Doyle
- John Kopchik
- Shirley Nootbaar
- Jim Felton
- John Gallagher
- Burt Bassler
- Ted Clement
- Scott Hein

- John Kiefer
- Egon Pedersen
- Malcolm Sproul
- Jeanne Thomas

Science, Medicine, and Technology

- Stanton Glantz

Sierra Club

- Bruce Hamilton
- Vivien Li
- H. Anthony (Tony) Ruckel

UC Berkeley

- Donald Mcquade
- Vincent Resh
- Cheryl Resh
- Robert J. Birgeneau
- Bruce Ames
- Dick Beahrs

UC San Francisco

- Samuel Barondes

Thank you for sharing your stories with us!

A peaceful silence: Berkeley undergrads reflect on remote employment during the pandemic

Jill Schlessinger talked to a few of her students about what it's been like for them to work remotely during the pandemic. **Here's an excerpt:**



"For many of us at UC Berkeley, remote work has been a hallmark of the pandemic. As a community we've thought a lot about what it's been like for students to *learn* remotely and for staff and faculty to *work* remotely. But with thousands of undergraduate student employees across campus (500 at the UC Library alone), what was it like for undergraduate student employees — those who could — to work remotely during shelter-in-place?

As a staff member, my quality of life improved significantly when I was able to work from home every day. I was fortunate in that my work at the Oral History Center could seamlessly be done entirely online. Prior to shelter-in-place, my students' schedules revolved around their classes and there was

never an overlap of all my assistants. I would have to train them separately, answer questions that could benefit all one by one. With the flexibility they gained through at-home learning, asynchronous classes, and no commute time, my students could easily hop on an online meeting outside of their core work hours. And they were willing, even eager, to adjust their schedules so we could all meet together. I was able to schedule regular team meetings for trainings and the exchange of ideas, leading to higher work quality. I was able to extend trust and tools for the student workers to be successful remotely, and I was impressed with how much they were able to accomplish. From my perspective, we were also able to build more of a community and I looked forward to our team meetings as a highlight of my work day. I still wondered, though, what was it like for my student employees to work remotely? So I asked them.

Our team's student editors serve critical functions in our oral history production, analyzing entire transcripts to write discursive tables of contents, entering interviewee comments, editing front matter, writing abstracts, and more. They do the work of professional editors and we would not be able to keep up our pace of interviews without them."

Read about the experiences of Ashley Sangyou Kim, Jordan Harris, and Shannon White here.

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The Oral History Center

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/libraries/bancroft-library/oral-history-center>

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