

Chinese Studies Scholars Oral History
Project in North America:
Crafting Primary Sources and
Creating Knowledge

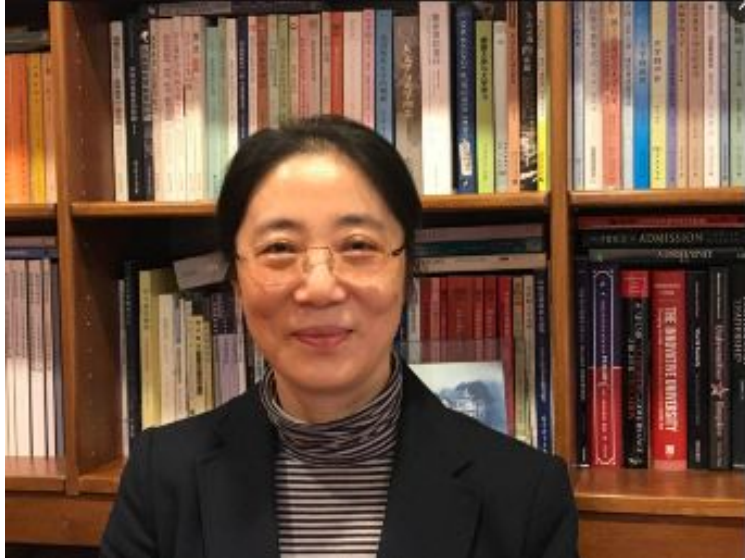
Chengzhi Wang
Columbia University

Outline

- Introduction
- Oral History as a Useful Tool and as Primary Source
- Chinese Studies Scholars Oral History Project
- Concluding Remarks

Introduction

- Gap Identification
 - Significant growth of East Asian / Chinese studies vs. no systematic, comprehensive, detailed documentation of development history
 - Librarians' tremendous work in acquisition, processing, cataloging, instruction, and serving of library resources including primary sources, plus active research and publishing, vs. inadequate in crafting primary sources
 - Remarkable growth in recognizing contributions, rights and cultures of Asian / Chinese Americans, redressing historical wrongs, and creating and preserving oral histories vs. limitations in participation by librarian interviewers and issues of oral history collections' metadata, access and digitization, thus affecting sustainability and access
- Planning, Communications and Coordination since 2020
 - UCLA East Asian Library as the leader
 - Winning support from UCLA Library, particularly the administration and the Center for Oral History Research, as well as participation by American and Canadian peer librarians



Su Chen

- Head of the UCLA Richard C. Rudolph East Asian Library since 2011, with experience in East Asian studies librarianship for over 25 years
- Major publications include《海外中國研究現狀與趨勢分析：2006-2016》Xueyuan press, 2021;《北美藏抗日戰爭歷史檔案文獻提要》(co-author), Fudan University press, 2017; *Archival Resources of Republican China in North America, 1911-1949* (co-author), Columbia University press, 2016; *Archives of the YMCA in China at the University of Minnesota Library*, Guangxi Normal University press, 2012.



Dr. Teresa Barnett

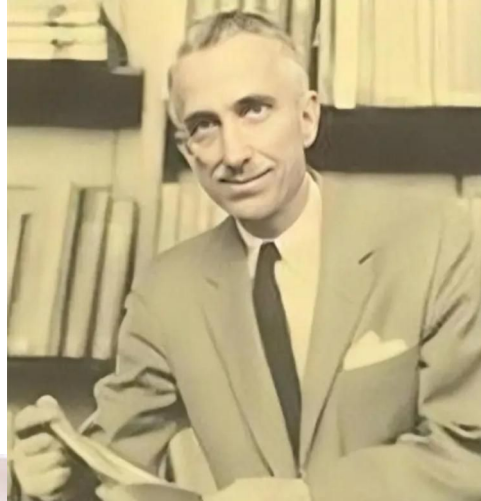
- Head of the UCLA Center for Oral History Research
- With experience in oral history for over 30 years, she has served as book review editor of the *Oral History Review* and oral history editor of the *Public Historian*, and is co-editor with Chon Noriega of the collection *Oral History in Communities of Color*, published by UCLA Chicano Studies Research Center Press.

Oral History as a Useful Tool and as Primary Source

- Examples of Relatively Large Oral History Projects
 - Chinese Oral History Project, Columbia University
 - China Missionaries Oral History Project, Claremont Colleges
 - Midwest China Oral History and Archives Collection, Luther Seminary
 - Beyond Chinese Studies:
 - Korean-American Oral History Project at the UCLA Asian American Studies Center Oral History Interviews
 - Houston Asian American Archive, Chao Center for Asian Studies at Rice University
 - CU Boulder Japanese and Japanese American Community History Project
- Improved Technologies
 - Recording
 - Transcription
 - Digitization & depository



Allan Nevins (1890-1971)



Martin Wilbur (1908-1997)



Julie How (1926-1982)



Te-kong Tong (1920-2009)



Julie How and Chen Kwang Pu

Te-kong Tong and Hu Shih



Chinese Studies Scholars Oral History Project

- **Goals:**
 - To document the development of academic careers of prominent scholars
 - To preserve the history of the field of Chinese studies
 - To create primary sources and excel in sustainability and accessibility
- **Stakeholders**
 - Interviewees: Prominent Chinese studies scholars
 - Interviewers: Chinese/East Asian studies librarians, and faculty members and graduate students
 - Training/infrastructure/depository: UCLA Richard C. Rudolph East Asian Library & UCLA Library Center for Oral History Research
- **Scope:**
 - Chinese studies scholars mainly in higher education, mostly retired and near retiring
 - Mainly U.S, and Canada, starting in Europe

Participation (since 2021)

- Interviewers in North America:
 - 25 librarians
 - 5 professors
 - 2 graduate students
- Interviewers in North America
 - 25 scholars
 - Various fields, in history, literature, economics, art history, anthropology, sociology, political science, communications, religion, musicology, feminism, etc.
- Each Oral History
 - 3-6 sessions
 - 5-8 hours
- Deposited in [Chinese Studies Scholars Oral History Project](#)
 - 8 fully completed and deposited (sound files; transcripts; agreements; etc.)
 - More are to be finalized and deposited

Crafting an Oral History

BEFORE INTERVIEW

- Contacting Narrator
- Pre-interview Meeting
- Background Research
- Interview Aids
- Equipment Readiness
- Donation Agreements

INTERVIEWING

- Opening Statement
- Conducting Interview Sessions
- Good Sound Quality
- Listening before Next Session
- Donation Agreements Signed

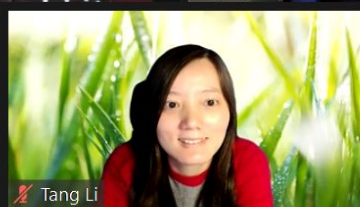
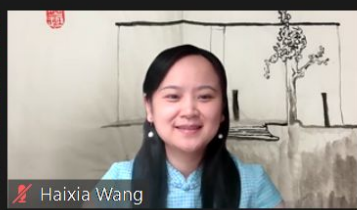
POST INTERVIEW

- Transcription
- Editing and Review
- Compiling All Paperwork
- Submitting Checklist Items

-----*Continuous Training and Monthly Meeting*-----

Examples of Meetings and Guideline Files

CSS Oral History Project Phase I Cohort Meeting



Steps for pre-interview meeting

1. Introduce the project and its goals.
2. Ask for an updated and detailed CV from the interviewee. (*The CV is the basis for developing the interview outline.*)
3. Ask for any biographical information already existing or published or interviews done by someone else for you to read.
4. Explain the type of oral history that you are doing. You are doing an **abbreviated life history with a focus primarily on their career** as Chinese studies scholars.
5. Inform them that you will develop an interview outline based on their career, major events, and other contextual background information.
6. Provide a **Donation Form** and ask them to read it closely.
7. Explain how their oral history will be stored, accessed, and preserved by UCLA's Center for Center for Oral History Research under the series **Chinese Studies Scholars Oral History**.
8. If both interviewee and interviewer (you) agree, the interview transcript will be made available through the Center's website so that anyone who has internet access can have access to it (<https://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/>).
9. A catalog entry for the entire project will also be created in UCLA's on-line catalog. If your institution wishes to create a catalog entry for the individual oral histories held at their institution, they may do that as well.
10. If interviewers wish to keep a copy within their institution, please talk with Teresa how to set up an agreement to do that.
11. Inform interviewees that you will review the electronic transcription generated by Temi and send it to them for their review.
12. Test recorder/Zoom recording function.

CHECKLIST for submission

Items Interviewers Need to Submit for the Chinese Studies Scholars Oral History Project

Narrator's complete name: _____

Your complete name: _____

As electronic files uploaded to the project's Google drive:

___ The recordings of all interview sessions. These should be Zoom files if the interview was conducted via Zoom or uncompressed WAV files if the interview was conducted in person.

___ Final transcripts of all interview sessions. The transcripts should have been reviewed by the interviewee and any corrections the interviewee made should have been entered.

___ A Table of Contents for each session (see Sample Table of Contents provided).

___ The Interview Information Form.

___ The Defamation or Invasion of Privacy Form.

___ A photograph of the interviewee.

Hard paper copies that are signed and dated by hand and then scanned and uploaded:

___ The donation agreement signed by the interviewee.

___ The donation agreement signed by the interviewer.

___ The photograph permission form, signed by the photographer.

Should you wish to send paper items of any description, the address is

Jane Collings

UCLA Library Center for Oral History Research

21564 Charles E. Young Research Library

Box 951575

Los Angeles, CA 90095-1575

or email to jcolling@library.ucla.edu

Depositing Finalized Results

- “The audio recordings of the oral history interviews, with transcripts or finding aids and any related images, will be preserved by the UCLA Library Center for Oral History Research and, if interviewees are willing, will be made available to scholars everywhere through the Center’s website (<https://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/>).”
- “Individual institutions may also make copies available through their own libraries.”
- Additional agreements concerning embargo/restriction for certain period of time may be prepared and signed based on interviewees’ specific concerns and needs.

Start Over

Tools >

Interview of David Johnson

Autoscroll

Available Downloads

Historian of pre-modern China; professor, University of California, Berkeley

> Interview Information

> SESSION 1 (9/27/2021)



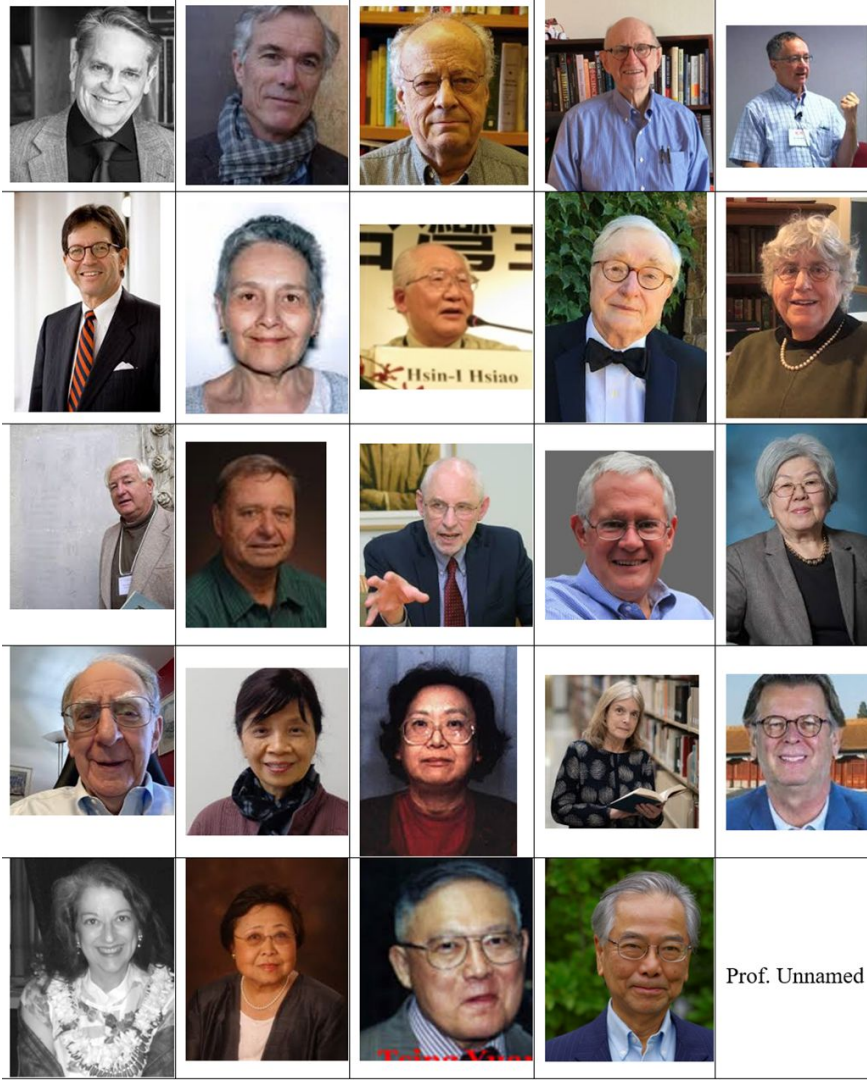
> SESSION 2 (10/7/2021)



> SESSION 3 (10/14/2021)



Scholars Interviewed



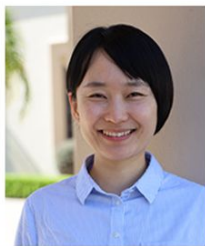
Oral Histories Completed

- Prof. Myron Cohen, Anthropology, Columbia University, interviewed by Chengzhi Wang
- Prof. Andrew Nathan, Political Science, Columbia University, interviewed by Chengzhi Wang
- Prof. Emeritus Tsing Yuan, History, University of Pittsburgh, interviewed by Chengzhi Wang & Haihui Zhang
- Prof. Emeritus David Johnson, History, UC Berkeley, interviewed by Jianye He
- Prof. Thomas B. Gold, Sociology, UC Berkeley, interviewed by Jianye He
- Prof. Emeritus Timothy Brook, History, University of British Columbia, interviewed by Jing Liu
- Prof. Emeritus Diana Larry, History, University of British Columbia, interviewed by Jing Liu
- Prof. Emeritus Richard John Lynn, Literature, University of Toronto, interviewed by Jing Liu & Lucy Gan
- Prof. Emeritus Stephen McKinnon, History, Arizona State University, interviewed by Yan He and Qian Liu
- Prof. Emerita Cecile Chu-Chin Sun, Literature, University of Pittsburgh, interviewed by Prof.s Haixia Wang & Gang Liu
- Prof. Emeritus Edward Farmer, History, University of Minnesota, interviewed by Su Chen
- Prof. Emeritus Joseph Allen, Literature, University of Minnesota, interviewed by Yao Chen

- Prof. Emerita Chia-lin Pao Tao, Gender studies, University of Arizona, interviewed by Ping Situ
- Prof. Emeritus Albert Welter, Buddhist studies, University of Arizona, interviewed by Ping Situ
- Prof. Emeritus Paul Pickowicz, History, University of California San Diego, interviewed by Xi Chen
- Prof. Emerita Elizabeth Wichmann-Walczak, Theater, University of Hawaii, interviewed by Dongyun Ni & Yan Ma
- Prof. Emerita Evelyn S. Rawski, history, University of Pittsburgh, interviewed by Xiuying Zou, Haixia Wang & Zhiqiang (Eddy) Ji
- Prof. Emeritus Thomas Rawski, History, University of Pittsburgh, interviewed by Xiuying Zou, Haixia Wang & Zhiqiang (Eddy) Ji
- Prof. Emeritus Bell Yung, Ethnomusicology, University of Pittsburgh, interviewed by Prof. Helen Rees
- Prof. Emeritus Harry Hsiao, History, Victoria University, interviewed by Ying Liu
- Prof. Emerita Angela Howard, Art History, Rutgers University, interviewed by Runxiao Zhu
- Prof. Emerita Chun-Fang Yu, Religion, Columbia University, interviewed by Runxiao Zhu
- Prof. of East Asian Department & History, Princeton University, interviewed by Runxiao Zhu [interviewee prefers not to be named for now]
- Prof. Ann Waltner, History and Gender studies, University of Minnesota, interviewed by Prof. Qin Fang
- Prof. Emeritus Harry Harding, Political Science, University of Virginia, interviewed by Wei Wang & Chengzhi Wang

Interviewers





Creating Knowledge: Examples

- **Presentations/articles**

- Roundtable panels “The Rise of Chinese Studies in the Research University: An Oral History Project” and "American and Canadian Oral History Collections for Chinese Studies: An Insightful Update," with multiple presentations in the Hawaii International Conference on Chinese Studies, Online, January 3, 2022
- Journal articles to be published in journals in both the U.S. and China

- **Books**

- Biography of Stephen McKinnon and other books based on the oral histories to be published in China, Taiwan and Hong Kong
- A English-Chinese Bilingual Dictionary of Chinese Studies Scholars is in planning

- **Possible Workshops/Conferences**

- Numerous topics of the historical development of Chinese studies on macro/micro-levels
- Oral history theories, methodologies, techniques and related important issues

Concluding Remarks

- Unusual great learning and training in the full process and all aspects of oral history by librarian participants, who become confident and capable interviewers and creators of primary sources and new knowledge
- A number of important issues
 - Implementation and completion according to planned timeline
 - Satisfactorily and effectively handling inherent issues such as memory inaccuracies, biases and ethical concerns
 - Promotion and instruction of oral histories as primary sources, and research access and use by students and researchers
 - Sustainability and scalability