

THE MARIA ROGERS Oral History Program

NEWSLETTER

FALL 2011



What's New?

October found twenty-one members of the Maria Rogers Oral History Program immersed in the national Oral History Association conference, which was held in Denver for the first time in more than thirty years.

Our program showed three videos based on the program's oral histories: a reading of poetry by Anne Waldman and Allen Ginsberg; a video about Boulder in the 1970s, and PACKED; a dynamic documentary that draws on interviews with people about what they took with them when the Fourmile Canyon Fire forced their evacuation from their homes.

Members of the program also presented talks at three conference sessions: "Collaborative Oral History: The Rescue and Resettlement of Soviet Refuseniks," "Secrecy and its Fallout at Rocky Flats: A Cold War Nuclear Weapons Plant and its Impact in the Community," and "Aridity: Stories of Drought and Fire."

Have an appetite for local history? Check out the Boulder Public Library's Facebook page. The Carnegie Branch Library and the Oral History Program have begun posting historic photos, interview excerpts, and other local history tidbits on the Boulder Library Facebook page on Tuesdays and Fridays every week. Visit, enjoy, comment. We'd love to share parts of our

FEATURED INTERVIEW



◀ Learn about wildland firefighting, forest management, and fire mitigation programs in Boulder County in this interview with Greg Toll, Division Chief of the Boulder Wildland Fire Division. The interview also is full of vivid and dramatic stories of firefighting experiences and near-misses. OH 1731V A-B.

collection with you and hear from you in the comments section.

This issue of the newsletter describes **twelve new interviews** that have been added to our collection. They are available online and also at the Carnegie Branch Library for Local History (see p. 2 for details about how to access interviews).

The interviews this quarter continue our explorations into the Italian-American community in Louisville, the lives of former Soviet Jews who have immigrated to Boulder, members of the League of Women Voters, firefighters involved with the Fourmile Canyon Fire, Rocky Flats employees, and people who made a living ranching and farming in Boulder County.



Interview Abstracts

Here are details about the newly archived interviews:

OH 1617. In this interview, which was conducted in 1995, **Eugene Caranci** tells how his father, Marino (Mike) Caranci, immigrated to Marshall from Abruzzo near Rome, Italy, by way of New York City. Marino Caranci worked in the coal mines in Boulder County, including the Monarch Mine. Eugene recalls in detail the way his parents made bread, sausage, polenta, tomato paste and sauce, pizza, bacalao (dried cod), gnocchi, wedding soup, and preserved eggs. He discusses many family traditions, the Italian-American community in Louisville, and development in general in Louisville. By Bridget Bacon. Transcribed by Jo Walsh and Alf McDonnell.

OH 1624. This interview with **Dominic and Rita Ferrera** (also from 1995) delves into the family and work history of the Ferrera and Rizzi families, including family members' emigration from Italy, work in the mines, and WPA work done to make ends meet following the death of Dominic's father. The Ferreras speak extensively about Italian food traditions and recipes. They also discuss Louisville public and parochial schools, including Dominic's 16-year tenure on the Boulder Valley School Board. By Bridget Bacon. Indexed by Jo Walsh and Alf McDonnell.

OH 1682V. **Mikhail Fridman** emigrated from the Soviet Union to Boulder in 1992. In this interview, he talks about government discrimination against Jewish people in the Soviet Union and the process of emigration. He compares life in Boulder to life in the Soviet Union, including discussion of housing, general culture and religion. He also describes adjusting to life in the United States, the role that Boulder Action for Soviet Jewry (BASJ) played in his resettlement, and becoming a United States citizen. By Brandon Springer. Filmed by Becky Rosenberg. Transcribed by Phyl Thomas.

OH 1684V A-B. **Victor and Lydia Slonim** emigrated from the Soviet Union to Boulder, Colorado, in 1989. Victor, who is Jewish, describes many aspects of anti-Semitism in the former Soviet Union, as well as the harsh treatment of dissidents there. Lydia, whose family of origin was not Jewish, describes employment and personal discrimination she experienced in the Soviet Union as a result of marrying someone who is Jewish. They both compare Soviet and American culture and describe adjustment to life in the United States, including the role of Boulder Action for Soviet Jewry in helping them learn English and learn about life in America. Interview conducted and filmed by Brandon Springer and Becky Rosenberg. Transcribed by Joan Nagel.

Visit Us: In Person or Online

⇒ Listen to and/or view any of our 1,700+ interviews at the **Carnegie Branch Library for Local History** of the Boulder Public Library, 1125 Pine St., Boulder, CO 80302.

⇒ Visit us online four ways!

1) Use our digital archive: **www.boulderlibrary.org/oralhistory**. Audio, summaries, and transcripts of interviews.

2) Read our blog, Listen to This!: **boulderoralhistory.wordpress.com**. Oral history news and resources.

3) Listen to our podcasts on iTunes: **www.tinyurl.com/MROHP-iTunes**.

3) Visit us on Facebook: **www.tinyurl.com/MORHP-FB** (become a fan to see new posts automatically).

⇒ Search Boulder Public Library's online catalog to find oral histories by topic: **http://www.boulderlibrary.org** (Choose "local history" for your search from the home page and include the words "oral history" in your search.)

OH 1687 A-B. Roy Slaughenhaupt, whose family came to Rollinsville in the 1800s, discusses his family history, his own childhood, and some of the many families who have a long history in the Rollinsville/Nederland area. He describes houses and businesses that were in Rollinsville and Nederland in the 1930s through the 1950s, and he also discusses Boulder County roads, mines, and several historic town sites, including Cardinal and Tungsten. He also tells many anecdotes about the area's former residents. By Kay Turnbaugh.

OH 1695V A-B. Deborah Hayes has been a prominent member of the League of Women Voters. She describes her early introduction to and involvement with the League due to her mother being a member when she (Deborah) was growing up in California. Ms. Hayes joined the League after graduate school in 1969 when she came to Boulder to teach at CU and has been involved with the organization ever since. She describes studying and taking positions on civic issues, as well as educating the public about issues and candidates, as important aspects of the League's work. As a past president, she discusses the League's mission ("informed citizen participation in government") and its activities over the years. Ms. Hayes describes the changes that have taken place at the League in recent years including the admission of men as members, somewhat diminished enrollment, and the use of the Internet and a League Web site to communicate with members and with the public. Lastly, she talks about some of the accomplishments of the Boulder League during her years of involvement and relates some personal anecdotes. By Anne Marie Pois. Filmed by Emily Shuster. Transcribed by Diane Baron.

OH 1700V A-D. Ken Freiberg discusses many aspects of his long and varied career at the Rocky Flats nuclear weapons plant, where he started working in 1953 as a radiation monitor in Health Physics. He then moved through other jobs that had increasing responsibilities, including heading the maintenance services division and working with other nuclear sites. He continued working there through the

closure of Rocky Flats. He discusses in detail the fires at Rocky Flats and other significant incidents, as well as the planning and construction of the 371 building and why it was not used in a significant way for production. Conducted and transcribed by Dorothy Ciarlo. Filmed by Liz McCutcheon.

OH 1703V A-B. Mary Hey, one of the founders and the former president of the Soviet Sister Cities Project, talks about the mission of the project—to foster greater understanding between American and Soviet people—and the many years of effort that led to Boulder and Dushanbe, Tajikistan, becoming sister cities. She also addresses the controversy that came about when people with the group Boulder Action for Soviet Jewry asked the Sister Cities Project to become involved with their efforts to attain the release of refuseniks from the Soviet Union. See also an oral history in which BASJ leader Bill Cohen and Mary Hey talk together about this issue, OH 1716V. By Brandon Springer. Filmed by Emily Shuster. Transcribed by Jenna Woods.

OH 1707V A-B. Gene Sawhill talks about growing up in what was the community of Valmont. He mentions his family's arrival there from the Midwest, and describes his many years of working for the Public Service Company and serving as a ditch rider for two local ditches. Gene describes scenes from his childhood, his affiliation with the Valmont Presbyterian Church, and his family's continuing involvement with farming and ranching in the area. By Heidi Pate. Filmed by Liz McCutcheon. Transcribed by Diane Baron.

OH 1709V A-B. In this interview, **Inna Schneiden**, originally from Moscow, recalls stories of her Jewish family beginning with the early days of communism in the Soviet Union. Her great-grandparents and grandparents were actively involved in the political and educational growth of the Soviet Union. She recalls their roles during World War II, both women and men working to keep their country together. She talks about her own history; why and how she became disenchanted by the constant surveillance

and fears stemming from being identified as a Jew; and how she and her husband finally managed to obtain visas and permission to leave with their sons. She describes the help received from BASJ once her family was in Boulder, which enabled them to adapt successfully to this culture and for her to feel, as she had never felt in Moscow, at home. By Emily Shuster and Brandon Springer. Filmed by Brandon Springer. Transcribed by Shirley Steele.

OH 1716V A-B. A dual interview with **William Cohen and Mary Hey** regarding the inception of Boulder Action for Soviet Jewry as it coincided with the development of the Soviet Sister City Project. After twenty-four years, Cohen and Hey discuss and analyze collisions and misunderstandings between the two groups. Through the context of the ethics of advocacy, they consider the tenuous nature of Cold War interactions with Soviet officials, and how that informed their differing approaches to advocacy. With much laughter and 20/20 hindsight, they discuss what could have been done differently to foster better communication between the groups, what they would not change, and the eventual successes of the individual groups. By Brandon Springer. Filmed by Chandler Routman. Transcribed by Janna Plant.

OH 1731V A-B. In this wide-ranging interview, **Greg Toll**, firefighter and Division Chief of the Boulder Wildland Fire Division, speaks about wildland firefighting, including the classification of fires, the structure of firefighting groups, and firefighting techniques and technology. He talks about several Boulder County wildland fires including, in the most detail, the Fourmile Canyon Fire of 2010. He discusses forest management and fire mitigation programs and what we can learn from a study of the historical frequency of wildland fire in Boulder County. Mixed in with a large amount of useful information are vivid stories of his experiences as a firefighter. By Caitlin McKenna. Transcribed by Jenna Woods.



**Next volunteer meetings:
December 10, January 21
8:00 a.m.
Carnegie Branch Library
(No meeting in February)**

CONTACT INFORMATION

Maria Rogers Oral History Program
Carnegie Branch Library for Local History
1125 Pine St. • Boulder, CO 80302

PHONE:

Carnegie Library: 303-441-3110
Oral History Direct Line: 303-441-1981

E-MAIL:

Susan Becker (program manager): beckers@boulderlibrary.org
Wendy Hall (branch manager): hallw@boulderlibrary.org

INTERNET:

Interviews Online: www.boulderlibrary.org/oralhistory

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM NEWS:

Blog: boulderoralhistory.wordpress.com
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General Program Information:

www.boulderlibrary.org/carnegie/collections/mroh.html