

7 June 2016

Department of History
New Mexico State University
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Dear New Mexico State University,

My ambition to be a Public History research assistant originates from a professional dedication to digital humanities collection and the archival management of oral history. In research for sound recordings of narrator interviews, and in providing public access of individual and community memory, I believe historians interpret the present rather than an arbitrary past. Although past dates and events helps to guide research, each narrator should have the luxury of a well-rounded interview experience rather than too much inquiry of a specific knowledge or personal history. Oral historians yield best practice results when narrators share stories and memories at the ease of a well prepared, comfortable, and respectful research setting.

At Colorado State University-Pueblo, my introduction to archival work and oral history collection began at Steelworks Center of the West. I learned to describe and store boxed archival engineering journals, create metadata entries for photographs and other acquisitions, and to assist archivists with the reorganization of over 30,000 maps and drawings. Ultimately, I earned the opportunity to volunteer as an oral history coordinator for Pueblo narrators, and successfully researched, interviewed, and helped catalog more than 20 oral histories from steelworkers.

Contributors told stories from Colorado Fuel & Iron (CF&I) at Pueblo Plant, such as an administrator who outlined unfair labor practices and the company's subsequent 1980s bankruptcy. A steel mill blast furnace worker crew shared the dangers of steel production,

including the unfortunate accidental death of a fellow steelworker. Another CF&I narrator told a fascinating history of working as the company's freelance geographic aerial photographer, and adventures of traveling the world by airplane. These recordings and more can be accessed at CF&I Archives and Steelworks Museum whose continued work includes a listening booth, visual interpretation, and an open invitation for future oral history research and recordings.

Since returning home to Albuquerque in 2014, my research and recording of oral history with local and international narrators continues. Such examples feature a University of New Mexico PhD graduate student of Language, Literacy, and Sociocultural Studies; and more recently, a Central New Mexico Community College educator who spoke about teaching in Albuquerque Public Schools. Highlight clips of these and other narrators can be reviewed at the [Albuquerque Record](#) blog pending progress to store sound files within a permanent repository.

At New Mexico State University, beginning Spring 2017, my intention will be to create Las Cruces oral history projects, digital collection and storage of narrator stories, and to provide open access display of this work through the internet. In the program's requirement for a public history article, original research on Poverty and the borderlands can call for narrator stories about the hardships of overcoming health and hunger epidemics so often experienced by the citizens of New Mexico. Further avenues of research include collective memory studies on maquiladoras, border wall militarization, and the human rights' issues of United States immigration policy; possibly in compliment to the Hist 590 (Borders, Boundaries, and Frontiers) reading seminar. A particular interest of study at NMSU includes research and use of the transcript and indexing program [Oral History Metadata Synchronizer](#) (OHMS) currently in development at the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History.

As a graduate research assistant, and a potential teaching assistant when called upon, preservation work to digitize state analog materials creates the possibility of university collaboration through projects held by the history department and contributes to the discovery of future New Mexico oral history practitioners and methodologies. Sound recording, narrative, and oral history storytelling — especially from narrators who choose to tell their story — will shape my academic success at NMSU. I believe digital collection throughout New Mexico benefits most when considered a present correspondence with the future generations of listeners seeking oral history narrators of both individual and collective memory.

My goal at New Mexico State University will be to create connections through thoughtful engagement with narrators, to learn and practice oral history collection in digital recording formats, and likewise to work with fellow students, colleagues, and professors. In doing so, I hope to be a resource to oral history collections yet undiscovered.

Thank you for your consideration of my application to the New Mexico State graduate degree in Public History.

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