

Call for essays: Oral History and Photography

Alexander Freund

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Oral History and Photography - EDITED Collection

We are seeking original research essays for a collection entitled Oral History and Photography. Oral history and its diverse practical and theoretical relationships to photography are at the centre of this essay collection, which will explore the interconnections and synergies between theory, method and politics in the two fields. In their essays, the authors will consider oral history and photography as distinct but related research methods; as evidence for interpretation; and as tools for activism and social movements. The themes and questions we aim to consider are detailed below.

We seek papers that are based on original research, reflect practical experience with oral history and photography, and have not previously been published. The essays will be in English, and we encourage contributions from around the world. They should be about 6,000 words long and may include photographic images. Authors will be responsible for obtaining all rights for the publication of photographs and interviews (forms will be provided).

Deadlines:

31 Dec. 2008: Expression of interest (encouraged but not mandatory).

31 January 2009: Abstracts of up to 500 words should be sent to the editors, together with a short CV including contact details, and one example of previously published work in a relevant field.

30 June 2009: Acceptance letters sent to authors.

30 November 2009: Submission of papers.

Please submit all expressions of interest and abstracts/CVs to
a.freund@uwinnipeg.ca

AND

Alistair.Thomson@arts.monash.edu.au

AND

with the subject line: Oral History and Photography

The editors:

Alexander Freund is Associate Professor of History and holds the Chair in German-Canadian Studies at the University of Winnipeg in Canada; he was previously Program Associate at the Columbia University Oral History Research Office. He is co-chair of the Canadian Oral History Association and co-editor of its journal, *Oral History Forum d-histoire orale*, and Council member of the International Oral History Association. He published *Aufbrüche nach dem Zusammenbruch: Die deutsche Nordamerikaauswanderung nach dem Zweiten Weltkrieg*, Göttingen: V & R unipress, 2004 and received the Oral History Association-s Best Article Award 1996 for a co-authored article.

Alistair Thomson is Professor of History at Monash University in Australia and was previously Professor of Oral History at the University of Sussex in England. He is Past President of the International Oral History Association and edited the British journal *Oral History* from 1991 to 2007. His oral history books include: *Ten Pound Poms: Australia-s Invisible Migrants* (co-author with A. James Hammerton), Manchester University Press, 2005; *Anzac Memories: Living With the Legend*, Oxford University Press, 1994; *The Oral History Reader* (co-editor with Rob Perks), Routledge, 2006 and 1998.

Palgrave-s Studies in Oral History series has expressed interest in publishing the collection and preliminary conversations with the editors of the series have been encouraging.

THEMES AND QUESTIONS OF THE BOOK - FURTHER DETAILS

We aim to explore the interconnections between theory, method and politics in oral history and photography. The editors propose the following themes and sets of practical and theoretical questions. They are open to suggestions about other, related topics of investigation.

A. creating Oral Histories and Photographs: Methodological issues

- Are oral historians- and photographers- roles in the creation of their documents similar?
- How may photographs be used in oral history interviewing - and oral histories in photography?
- How can the discourse about photography as a method refine the discourse about oral history as a method?
- How can studies of the relationship between photographer and subject shed light on the interviewer-interviewee relationship and the construction of the dialogic narrative?
- Both methods photography dealt with this part of its practice, and what are the implications for oral history?
- What are ethical issues in photography that have relevance for the practice of oral history (e.g. intrusiveness, the documentation and

representation of -the other-, relationships of power)?

- How might the analysis of the ways in which photographs can be manipulated stir a discussion about the ways in which oral sources are susceptible to manipulation?
- What can oral historians learn from the ways photography has dealt with the digital revolution?

B. interpreting Oral Histories and Photographs: Source, Evidence and analysis

- How may oral sources and photographs be used together as evidence (not simply side-by-side, but in a mutually influential relationship)?
- Photographs can be used as a tool for telling stories - be it stories of events, life narratives, history and myths passed on from one generation to the next. How can photography be used together with oral history in telling such stories?
- How may photography theory illuminate the use of oral histories as evidence?
- What are the epistemological similarities and differences between oral histories and photographs as sources and evidence?
- Are photographs and oral histories -trueâ€” in the same ways?
- How might it be useful to describe oral sources in as detailed a fashion as photographs are often described in a first step of analysis and interpretation?
- How may approaches to interpreting photographs be meaningfully replicated for the interpretation of oral sources?
- Does the analysis of -framing- help oral historians expand their analysis of oral sources?
- Like oral history, photography captures and creates memory and gives access - albeit not direct and transparent - to individual and collective memory. What can oral historians learn about memory through the study of photography and memory?
- What can oral historians learn from the ways in which photographers have documented trauma?
- How might the epistemology, aesthetics and ethics of photography shed light on oral histories?

C. Oral History and Photography As Social Movements

- What have been the intersections of oral history and photography in their developments as social movements?
- What can oral historians learn from photographers about social activism and empowering their subjects?
- How can oral historians use photographs and photography in their quest for democratizing history?
- Photography has also been used as a tool of surveillance by the state apparatus (and increasingly by the private economy). Oral historians have not yet asked whether oral history has been used in a similar

fashion. How has interviewing and archiving interviews (a critical aspect of oral history) been used by the state and the private economy to observe and control people? How have oral historians, through interviewing and archiving their interviews (often in state archives) contributed - uncritically - to the surveillance of people?

Reference:

CFP: Call for essays: Oral History and Photography. In: Arthist.net, Nov 11, 2008 (accessed May 11, 2025), <<https://arthist.net/archive/31020>>.