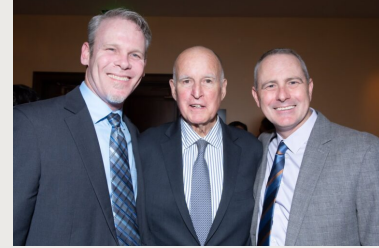


October 2021

News from the OHC

Director's Guest Column from Todd Holmes, "The Political Significance of Oral History: Celebrating the Renewal of the California State Government Oral History Program"



Two decades ago, Todd Holmes made his first research trip to the California State Archives as a young history major at Sacramento State University. It was in the third floor reading room of the archives that he cut his teeth as a political historian, carefully sifting through the papers of some of California's most renowned politicians: Governor Earl Warren; Assembly Speaker Jesse Unruh (aka Big Daddy); and the indelible Senator Randolph Collier, popularly known as the Silver Fox of Siskiyou County. There, he was introduced to the State Government Oral History Program, a treasure trove of political history.

When Todd joined the OHC in 2016, reestablishing the State Government Oral History Program was his top priority. His work paid off and the program has officially been awarded a three-year renewal. In Todd's guest column this month, he discusses the history of the program, the impact that it had on him and his work, his efforts to reestablish the program, his interview with Governor Jerry Brown, and the exciting new interviews that are underway.

Read Todd's column here for more on the California State Government Oral History Program.

Chew on That: A Guide to the Oral History Center's Food and Agriculture Collection



In many ways, the history of food is the history of our world. It's present in all aspects of day-to-day life; it shapes everything from our culture to our consumer habits. Food can inform us about politics and economics, environmentalism and land use — all issues of global importance — or it can reveal intimate stories of family, friendship, and generational strength. Ask someone about what they eat and drink, and you'll hear their story.

At the UC Berkeley Oral History Center, our historians do just that. Interviews related to the history of food, food systems, and agriculture have long been a mainstay of the OHC's research agenda, and reading through the Food and Agriculture project makes that abundantly clear. With more

than 100 interviews dating back to the 1950s, the collection forms an impressive resource for scholars, students, and members of the general public alike.

Interviews range in scope from studies of the dairy industry to tales of local bakeries, but the heart of this collection is an expansive series on the California wine industry launched in 1969. Discover the rich history of California wine from Prohibition to Y2K as told by the winemakers, marketers, researchers, and countless others who had a direct hand in shaping the industry. And with interviews from famed enology and viticulture professors from UC Berkeley and UC Davis — such as Harold Olmo, Albert Winkler, and Maynard Amerine — the California wine series also reveals a good deal of insight into university history and the connection between academia and industry.

Find these and all the **Oral History Center's** interviews from the **search** feature on our home page. You can search by name, keyword, and several other criteria.

You can also find projects, including the Food and Agriculture Individual Interviews project, through the menu on our home page from Oral Histories > Projects.

For more about this collection guide, please read this article by Lauren Sheehan-Clark.



Enlisting Humanity by Uplifting the Voices Who Have Gone Unheard: Undergraduate Research in Oral History

Emily Nodal, UC Berkeley Class of 2022, is a Society and Environment major in the Rausser College of Natural Resources with an emphasis on justice and sustainability with a minor in public policy. In Spring 2021, Emily worked with historian Roger Eardley-Pryor in the **Oral History Center** of The Bancroft Library and earned academic credits as part of Berkeley's **Undergraduate Research Apprentice Program (URAP)**. URAP provides opportunities for undergraduates to work closely with Berkeley scholars on research projects for which Berkeley is world-renowned.

For her URAP project, Emily used oral history materials to create a video on **“Environmental Justice, Systemic Racism, and Democracy.”** She also suggested **high school curriculum materials** to accompany the video.

Emily shares the personal nature of her research here.

New Interview Releases:



John Briscoe: Ineffable San Francisco Poet, Historian, Lawyer, and Restaurateur

The ineffable **John Briscoe** is a poet. He is also an award-winning **author** on the history of California wine and on the culinary history of San Francisco. He is a co-owner of Sam's Grill & Seafood Restaurant in San Francisco, the fifth-oldest restaurant in the United States, founded in 1867. And, after earning his Juris Doctor from the University of San Francisco in 1972, Briscoe became a trial lawyer who has argued before the California Supreme Court, and tried and argued cases before the United States Supreme

Court and the Permanent Court of Arbitration in The Hague. He is a Distinguished Fellow of the Law of the Sea Institute at UC Berkeley, and has taught courses at UC Hastings College of Law. Briscoe served as president of the San Francisco Historical Society and numerous other nonprofits. He remains a supporting member of the **Friends of The Bancroft Library**, in which he has conducted historical research and found inspiration for his poetry that he once described as "emotion recollected in tranquility."

Read more about Briscoe's interview here.

New Book from Shanna Farrell, Out Now!

"**Insightful tour de force**... Farrell's writing is as informative as it is intoxicating"
—Publishers Weekly

At farm-to-table restaurants and high-end bars across America, menus proudly feature locally sourced, sustainable ingredients and the stories of the people who grew them. But why is the eco-consciousness devoted to what we eat not extended to the spirits we drink? The short answer: we don't think of spirits as food, even though drinks are distilled from the same crops that end up on our tables.



In ***A Good Drink: In Pursuit of Sustainable Spirits*** (Publication Date: September 16, 2021), bartender and oral historian Shanna Farrell takes a global journey to discover the stories of the farmers, distillers, and bartenders driving the transformation to sustainable spirits. Along the way, she reveals the urgent need for a sustainable spirits movement, as distilling requires huge volumes of water, bars generate mountains of trash, and crops for spirits are often grown with chemicals that are health hazards and environmental pollutants.

Paul Burnett asked Shanna a some very insightful questions about the book, her process, and putting together the narrative. Read their Q&A here.

Order a copy from Island Press here, and use the code: FARRELL for 20% off!

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