

Iris Hill: By it. And I think, you know, Bill Chafe suggested that in his talk here, the center is really multidisciplinary and it's has multipurposes and the faculty and research associates connected to us come from a wide range of fields, from history to medicine, to law, to photography.

Iris Hill: And when we try to define what the common ground is for this group, one of the doctors a family practitioner says to me that it's about telling stories. That's what this center is. And in our own brochure, we, in a more formal way, we, we talked about the centers being dedicated to recapturing the reality of people's diverse experiences, which Bill Chafe and his practicum elaborated by talking about our effort to capture the first person experience, to get as close as possible to representing people's understanding of their own lives and communities from their own perspective. So, trying to get inside and as close as possible to rendering the experience and point of view of an individual who's lived through that particular chain of experiences.

Iris Hill: I think this is why oral history is so key to the Center's program. When when we first opened, there was a reporter from the Chronicle of Higher Education who came and interviewed different associates of the Center. And she was trying also to come up with, with a way of understanding this, this amorphous concept. And she, she used this phrase, she says, it's the gathering of historical and sociological evidence directly from the source in the form of personal interviews with their subjects. For example, were photographs of the life of a community. The other side of the center's effort to understand from within is the desire to present the words and photographs or films collected from individuals and communities in a meaningful and comprehensible way, in a way that interests general readers and the communities in which the work is done.

Iris Hill: While committed to research, the center is not committed to the promulgation of specialized studies. Instead, we are committed to preparing work for publication or exhibit that can be understood by non-specialists. And so, as a university center, we take a somewhat unusual position in that we wanna communicate not to other scholars, but to the wider general public. And we wanna be understood by ordinary people. This is going to take me into the topic of the session, which is publishing, but I thought I should just make a statement. 'cause I know a lot of people have, you know, asked in, and I don't know that this is any, any more satisfactory an answer, but I thought I would give a, a little bit of an effort to, to try and, and, and make a statement about documentary studies. The Center is keenly interested in the different forms of documentary work and wants to present that work in a aesthetically and intellectually sound ways.

Iris Hill: I know the word sound is, and the word aesthetic and intellectual, all of that, you know, you can argue and debate what that means. There are lots of subjective values involved in that. But presenting oral history and and the, and the way documentary photographs look and the way films work are, are, are important concerns. Other center here at the institute, you've talked about a lot of questions about

collecting oral history and identifying informants and setting up interviews about the types of questions to ask about the protocol or etiquette for the interview. And there also have been some questions about legal issues, about getting appropriate permission forms from individuals for use of their stories and photographs, and questions about the methods of reproducing photographs for good quality reproduction. The, these are some questions that are relevant to anyone who's thinking about publishing any material coming out of a particular project.

Iris Hill: There are different ways to produce documentary work so that the public has access to it. And I just, I wanna talk a little bit about some of these ways before I talk then, about publication per se. There's a handbook. You all probably know Willow Bombs Handbook about transcribing and editing oral history. She focuses on how to prepare oral materials for, for deposit in archives. And bound provides some useful legal forms which I've xerox and I'm gonna distribute here.

Iris Hill: I also have gotten some legal forms that were used by the Southern Oral History Project, which, which you may find helpful, and the forms allow for different kinds of releases from individuals. Let me, I can just go ahead and circulate these, these are,

Iris Hill: If people just pass those around. These are the southern oral history forms. And here are some forms from this is from the bound book. I think there are 35 copies. I'm, I'm also gonna circulate just a, a short form that we use for a student project, which I'll talk about at the very end. It's the migrant center of the and, and this was done in English and Spanish.

Iris Hill: 'Cause I was gonna say that if you just look through the forms, you can see that they allow for different kinds of releases from individuals so that their taped histories will be made available either in the archives or by publication, or other means. They include copyright releases for the, and suggests that the interview is try to obtain full rights for use of material so that future problems are avoided both the Southern Oral History Project and Baum. And in her book, recommend that you have the interviewee review the transcript before it's deposited in the archives. And Pam also says that it's not always possible to have people review a transcript, especially when you're interviewing people who are not particularly comfortable with writing and, and reading and, and print media. And in those cases, she, she feels that a simple release is certainly appropriate and you and the, and the, and no review of the transcript would be included.

Iris Hill: One of the I also have some sample texts. I'm gonna show you about the different treatment of oral sources. And, and they, there certainly infinite numbers. I'm looking for particular one, which I wanted to circulate here, here it was this this is just the first interview that was in a book published in 1977 by the University of Texas Press called Big Picket Legacy. The, the people who did this book Claude and Lynn Lock Miller lived in the thicket with the people they interviewed. They, they lived there for probably 15 to 20 years. And in the, in the course of that time, they had started doing interviews with a lot of these elderly people. And they took a photograph of each one. And, and the way this book works is that you have a photograph of the person being interviewed, a little descriptive preparatory note, and then a, a like history that that just follows.

Iris Hill: And there, the, the way the book is designed separates these different pieces of, of tasks in, in getting releases for this book. I, I can remember Mr. Lock Miller saying that, that he really would, would use a very simple form that, that there was no reason to do this in a very complicated legal sounding form. And the people knew him, and that they would find it very odd for him to come in with some kind of legal document. So he, he composed just a, a, a two page, three page note where essentially he was getting full permission from them to use the tapes and the interview materials that he had done with them for public, for purposes of publication and other uses related to disseminating the work. And there, there was no suspicion IL there was a, there was a relationship of trust.

Iris Hill: And, and that's a very key thing in, in, in, in any of these types of projects. Bam also comments in another part of her, her handbook that there are no cut and dried rules for how to do oral history at any step. And oral history is an art, not an exact science. And later she writes, the transcribing is a work of art, a little akin to translating from one language to another, but with less latitude. Louder, louder. As we, you all know, from our own work, there is no exact way to set rules for collecting and then transcribing testimonies or life stories or, or interviews. And bound here is talking about how, how one edits a transcript. You know, when, if I look at this as an editor, as a publisher, I say, well, this is unedited material. It's, it's unedited from a publisher's perspective.

Iris Hill: Although from an archivist perspective, these deposited transcripts have been edited for the library's use. The transcriber has made various difficult editorial decisions in transferring the story from tape to paper. And in, in a way, you could say, well, that's the base level for establishing a text of this particular story. At another level, the text will be subjected to other editorial changes. The second, third, and fourth level changes will be ways to prepare the material for publication of various kinds. For example and I, there I got, I have these different segments of, of just pages from a number of books that use oral history. This, I'm going to I'll just circulate these too, and you could maybe think about them or look at them in your leisure too. That's from like a Family, which was published in 1987 by the U N C press.

Iris Hill: And it uses a lot of oral materials from the southern oral history, industrialization project. And the, in this, in this text, the, the authors who were six collaborate collaborators on this. The, the writing of this book decided that the oral hist, oral histories would be used as any other kind of document of it as any other kind of source material. What they were interested in doing was integrating this material, this, this oral material into a discursive book in which, in which they were making certain points throughout. There another book that was using the same material in, in, in part does some of the same things in other parts doesn't, is Habits of Industry by Alan Tullis, which, which was published by the Un Press in 1989. Both of these books have won prizes. And it's very interesting to sort of compare them because you, in a and you know, if you have some time and you have the, you, you're in the library and you wanna look at the books to see how two different authors or a set of authors and another author were working with similar materials or coming to diff or focusing on different issues, coming to different conclusions, using the materials differently and have different purposes.

Iris Hill: The one of the things that's interesting in habits of industry, and I put I think a Xerox to page from

that in there is Alan tell us, I guess wanted, I think it's the ninth chapter. He wanted to have the interviewer and the interviewee. He wanted to be Tallis. And the, the man he was interviewing, or I think it's a couple, and he he, he really insisted on that because he wanted at some point to bring out this sort of, and make transparent the fact that there was some kind of interview relationship going on behind all of the acquiring and all of the getting of, of this material. That was a hard thing for us to accept at the press. We had some long, pleasant, nice arguments about it, because we wanted this to be a, a, a way of finishing the book off.

Iris Hill: You know, we, we wanted the interviewer just to be within the, the whole, the narrative itself, and did not have to come out as a question and answer presentation. But he he, he really just would not see that he's a North Alabama stubborn as a mule (laughs). He sure is. Thank you, (laughs), but in, in a way. I mean, he nailed, I'm sure. Yeah. He, he, yeah, he, he did. I mean, there was, it was just no way. And in a way, I'll say, well, it's his book and, and he has the right to do it, and, and you know, it's okay. But, but it it, that, that, that is something that came up and, and that in a way represented the way a press and might think about some of the way material and history interview material is used.

Iris Hill: And, and the other piece of text I have is just a little piece of Studs Terkel's "Working" from which was published in 72 by Pantheon. And, and there, you know, he, he, he'd had these these descriptive notes where he sets scenes. He sometimes uses, um comments from, from the interviewee, and then he goes into a long passage. And, and the way the book is handled in terms of typographically as as meaningful, that you, you get all these cues by seeing certain kinds of, of descriptions he's putting in are always in italics. And then the rest of the, the interviewee would in, in Roman and the, and the last you'll be is just the first page of the All God's Dangers, which of course is just this amazing narrative. Now, Ted Rosengarten taped, I guess hundreds and hundreds of hours of material to show, this is just the one page to make this this book.

Iris Hill: And it's quite recently when, in fact, when Hurricane Hugo hit the South Carolina coast, the, the Inger lived in McClellanville. And Ted had in, in, at his house by the intercoastal waterway, the tapes that he had made with Ned Cobb. They, these tapes were as high as possible in the house. The Rosen Gardens left the house and took their boat out with them on a trailer before the storm hit. But when they went back in, they were just shocked to find that the waters had risen so high that the not only were a lot of papers and books damaged, but he, the tapes were, were just un un the reels had been totally unwound. They were covered with mud and water, and it was just a terrible mess. And Ted had the only copy of those tapes.

Iris Hill: I think there was one coffee, which I always think is a lesson for everyone to think about stay away from hurricanes, stay away from hurricanes, and, and don't have, when you think of what this narrative is, this that, that somehow that should have been protected. And, and I think he thought it was protected, but it, but it wasn't.

Iris Hill: Fortunately, people at the Southern Historical Collection in at U N C were took on the challenge of trying to save the tapes, and they were able to clean and preserve, and they have now an archival copy at the Southern Historical and made a, made a copy for Ted. They did lose, I think, around 20% of the of the interview material. I, I also wanna talk a little bit about documentary photography and using photographs and documentary work, because I, I know that a number of you expressed a lot of concern about Lynn

Marshall Meyer's presentation about the Mississippi Self-Portrait project.

Iris Hill: And, you know, I think that you were really right to wonder about what, what is this project about? And I, and I think from the center's point of view, this is not exactly an archives project. It's, it's a project that has another goal. And that is to prepare a major exhibition of the photographs and texts for the International Center for Photography in New York City, and to prepare a book of photographs and texts for publication. And there's some confusion in the way the project was defined, because I think there are different goals, I think from the Center for the Study of Southern Culture at the University of Mississippi and Oxford, there would be certainly a stronger archival purpose. And from this, from the Center for Documentary Study side, the, the project had a stronger exhibition and publication purpose, and now we're trying to raise additional funds so that the project could be done in a more holistic way so that both of these goals could be realized.

Iris Hill: And this is, I'm going to talk a little bit about this, just a short, briefly, about this project, because I wanted use it to lead into something else. What's what's happening in the Mississippi South Portrait Project as it is now constructed, is that, that the material that's being collected is being selected in the field. And you would say, well, it makes a lot more sense to copy as much as possible. And then, you know, select afterward. And you know, that you could get the materials into the archives, the photographs could be copied well enough and in the archives, and then you'd, you'd have a whole cloth, you'd have the whole transcript to work from. Only that would be hundreds of more pictures than, than what we have. But the project, because of the exhibition goal, the, the quality of the actual image became a very, um dominant question and dominant issue, and that that required going to a four by five camera instead of a 35 millimeter camera.

Iris Hill: And to get this larger negative slowed down the acquiring of the material, the copying of the material. And we're getting now much better images, but a lot more could be accomplished with 35 millimeter and a, a smaller copy stand. But you, I, I was worried that in some of the things that were said, that the idea was that you had to get the, the most extraordinary quality of image in order to have a reproducible photograph for book publication. And that's not the case at all. A good black and white 35 millimeter copy is, is, is fine. What you need is a clear, good focus and know a well shot picture and, and, and even tone to it. And that, that's certainly does the trick I thought I would pass out, since I'm sure you want more material. This, this is a handbook from the University of North Carolina Press. It's called Step, which means, you know, let it stand when an editor wants to keep the material. It's just been crossed out. And it has a lot of useful information about preparation of man manuscripts and illustrations. It also has some permission for, and it just has some general useful information that, that the press routinely gives to authors. It's, it's one of the, I think it's one of the best handbooks, a little mini handbook that what the university presses put out.

Iris Hill: I'm going to just talk very briefly, and I, I'm sure you can get onto one more a little bit. I think the, the key thing when you're, when you're looking at a project you're working on in documentary studies, is to decide what it is you wanna do with the project. Who do you want to reach with this project? You know, for instance, if you, if you're doing a community based oral history project, you may want to have community

exhibits or do some booklets and local magazine articles, the newspaper articles. You might try for local radio spots and student publications, but you'd have very, perhaps a, a real community focus to, to your efforts to sort of make this public. On the other hand, if you wanna reach a larger general audience because you feel you've collected material that has potentially wider interest, you'd have to start thinking about how to prepare the material to reach an interest, this general audience.

Iris Hill: And you have to be highly selective in what you edit, how you comb material, and you always have to have an eye on how you shape the text, not only looking for its narrative and dramatic force, but also its, its deepest meanings. And this is, I, I feel a very, really a hard art to achieve. And it, it's, it is harder than making a good transcription. As you work with your material, you may begin to see other possibilities for, for ways to disseminate it. And you may begin, begin thinking about how to organize it into a, a book like manuscript. At this point. You could have in mind a publisher who might be interested in this work. It could be a, a university press in your state it could, or it could be a regional trade press, or it could be a commercial publisher or a national magazine.

Iris Hill: And it's very important that you think through what it is you're, you're, you, you're working with, and what kind of publication you can shape. And as you think about this, you sort of have to line up in your own mind who the suitable publishers might be. And I, I really know, and I, that it's, it's, there's nothing more frustrating, nor depressing than having put in a tremendous amount of time into something and then finding you can't get it published.

Iris Hill: In looking at your manuscripts, and, and when you think about presses, you, you, you, one is really sort of doing another sort of selective selecting out processes. You have to match, work up to the publisher. And, you know, just as a gross example, if you want, if you wanna publish a particular article in, in a major disciplinary journal, you write in a language which is very different from the language you use if you wanted to do something for general audience and, and you want it to be understood by, you know, quote unquote ordinary people.

Iris Hill: And there, there are publishers out there interested in all kinds of work. And, and one of the jobs you'll face is in, in, in thinking about the material you have, is, is just sorting out who, who the publishers are. You, you, you can keep up with publishers by you know, following the books book section with the kinds of books you're interested in writing or done, or by keeping up with catalogs and going to the exhibit tables when you're at conventions and, and meeting the editors at, at the exhibit.

Iris Hill: I, I guess what I'm, overall, what I'm trying to say about this is that the material that you collect in documentary studies are very malleable. And when you start thinking about them, you have to think not only in terms of what they are, but, but how, how you shape them to, to speak to the audience that you have in mind.

Iris Hill: Sometimes when I've talked about publication at academic meetings, what people want to know are, you know, questions about the protocol or etiquette of how you contact editors or, you know, what you can expect an editor to do for you, or how university presses make decisions and how you select the press.

And, you know, I'd be, I'd be glad to talk about that at some point. If you don't have to talk about it today, it could be, 'cause I'll be around all summer.

Iris Hill: But in closing, and then I'll, I'll turn this over to Bob. I wanted to talk a little bit about the use of documentary work with students. Students who participate in oral history projects often are interviewing fascinating people, and college and high school students can, can elicit really wonderful material from the people they interview.

Iris Hill: Recently at a women's narratives contra conference, Dorothy Spruill Redford gave a workshop on oral history or a mini workshop. And she said that when working with college students, she always assigns female students to female interviewees and male to male because she finds that a lot of the elderly men and women feel very uncomfortable and won't find it difficult to talk about, really, to really open up with, um let's say with people the opposite sex. And she, she talked about how what she asked her students to do is really try to get at how people feel about what they're telling, not just about facts that really, she's, she's, she encourages her students to really, really ask some, some questions. And she said, they also asked questions that she would never dare to ask. And then coming out of a, you know, a 19 year old student, it's, it's, it's all right when, when the students have collected interviews and they've made some photographs, and I think with some encouragement and, and, and guidance, they can, they can really produce interesting work.

Iris Hill: And I, I, I just have these, do we have we could give this, this was a, this is a, a college project. This came out of a, a project we did in Smithfield, North Carolina with migrant, it was Migrant Children's Education and Documentation Project. And this well, this, this was this project you saw the release for it was done in English and Spanish is involved around 20 Duke students working with migrant children in Eastern North Carolina. They were also trying to document their own experience, document what they saw, document, try to try to understand something of the life of the Margaret family and of the children. And, and, and the students ended up working collaboratively. This was very collaborative work. It's a lot of, they had they did a lot of revision. They they encouraged each other and they, one of the students was was interested in doing, they had talked about wanting this document to go back to the people.

Iris Hill: So they wanted to do it in a bilingual edition. And one of the students whose parents were Cuban immigrants felt that, that while his Spanish wasn't great, that he could do the translation he wanted to. And, and he he worked very hard on that. And it was the, it was type set on Macintosh by one of the students who did a, a, an excellent job. And there was a photo photographer with the group.

Iris Hill: One of the reasons we went to rather extensive paper was because of the photograph. I don't think that's really necessary. Again, it just depends on, you know, what you're trying to do. We also did an exhibition of both photographs of the children artwork by the children and some different interview panels, different text panels that was at the Bryan Center, and then it was hung at the Duke one of the Duke Hospital exhibit areas where a tremendous number of people saw it.

Iris Hill: It's now hanging in the Tri-County Community Health Center, which is out in Newton Grove, and

which serves migrant families in that area. Some of you probably have seen this, this is Bloodlines that comes from the Rural Organizing Cultural Committee in, in Mississippi and Holmes County. They, they recently, this is the mine state on Freedom. I, I heard some readings done from this on National Public Radio. And I think that this has been done in book form by a, a publisher. I haven't seen the book. I just have this, if you, I could just pass it around. I don't have any extra copies of that. This, this should take us to the end and into Southern Exposure. This is Tobacco Road, which is a, a Duke student publication.

Iris Hill: And I think this is interesting, for a lot of reason, I think it's, it's investigative reporting, you know, which is a form of documentary study. It's done in a, in a really nice format, which is actually very cheap to produce. And the, the students are, you know, form the editorial board, and they write for it. And it includes essays and stories, poetry, as does the migrant summer. I, I just have, I have a couple I can pass around, but Tobacco Road is working in the tradition of Southern Exposure. So I think that takes me to the end of my talk.

Speaker 3: You wanna stretch around?

Bob Hall: You need, do you need a stretch break? Stand up for after lunch,

Speaker 3: These seminars? Yeah. Deadly. I hope you're not all.

Bob Hall: I am. I'm a, I'm a, I'm at a little bit of disadvantage 'cause I don't quite know the, you know, the context of the work that y'all are, you know, engaged in here.

Speaker 3: She has some in her hand.

Bob Hall: I'm, I'm gonna, I, I'm gonna talk some about the, the kind of oral history that, that that we've been involved in at the Institute for Southern Studies and some of the other work we do. And, and hopefully I won't go on too long 'cause I'm, I, I think kind of questions you asked have helped you remind me of what it is that, that we've learned from our work in this stuff. To me, the, this, the whole oral history of, of talking with people, people who have stories to tell is extremely exciting. It, and, and is is the most dynamic kind of I mean, it's the true dialectical kind of process of learning. And it, it's people who hear from you that you want to hear their story are empowered in a way, and then they empower you when they teach you some things about their lives.

Bob Hall: Sometimes they don't even know how valuable it is, but when they are sort of reminded and encouraged and legitimized the fact that their story is important they just blossom. And that's been one of the experiences in, in our writing and interviewing folks. And, and I think I'm just the, the power of the, the stories. I just was going through some of these things that they're just, to me, they just always they're much more they're much stronger than the, the narrative, the, the academic, you know, plotting through stuff, and to hear people tell how they came to a certain kind of consciousness, how they engaged in some kind of struggle what what was going on, even if it's not the whole questions of whether it's objective truth and all that stuff. The the reality is that for them, this was real, this happened, and to hear them tell it is just



immensely powerful.

Bob Hall: Also very insightful. I just looking at this, we had this opening quote from a guy, George Stiff, who was the vice president of the Southern Tenant Farmers Union. He said, this was, you know, back in the, in the during the depression year they tried to separate people by class. They tried to do it by race, whichever was best to use. They used it, it worked on a lot of people, and some people it just didn't work on. Boom. That's it. (laughs)

Bob Hall: Race or class, both, you know, hey, they do all, I mean, just the insightfulness of folks, the wisdom that they have comes across too. The, the institute where I, our began in 1970, and it is, it was a direct outgrowth of the Civil Rights Movement. It was kind of spawned from folks involved in the SNCC and people involved in the Southern Student Organizing Committee, which was the sort of white counterpart that spun off.

Bob Hall: And so conversations in the late sixties started among folks in the South who'd been involved in, in the movement about carrying on some both really, the two polls that, that we've worked on are, one is an investigative poll in using power structure research to find and target the enemy. And I'll know when to go to the courthouse or where to go with, with the troops, at which time, who is the boss in the town. That kind of stuff is real important. And somebody needs to continue to do that for whoever whether it's a union struggle or people fighting around utilities or people fighting for clean water, whatever they need to know. The other poll was a sense that the movement didn't start in, you know, 54 or 62, or it, it just goes back and back and back and back.

Bob Hall: And, and the, the awareness of people in my generation a lot of which was very late in learning that, I mean, not recognizing that, again, the wisdom of our elders who had been through all these things, but bumping up against people who had been active in the thirties. And there was this kind of gap in a lot of places between things that had happened in the thirties and forties and things that had happened in the sixties. It was like the, which was, you know, not an accident that the whole McCarthy era, part of the functions of that was to create a disjunction in memory. And, and it was not a carry through of the lessons from the, the struggles of the thirties into the struggles of the sixties. And so the two kinds of missions that the institute began with was one, to do some hard-nosed investigative research to, to look at the south as a power, a region that had a lot of power dynamics involved in it.

Bob Hall: It wasn't just a place where Black and White folks were fighting it out. It was a lot more than race. There was class, there was a military industrial complex, there was pollution, there was, you know, on and on and on. There was colonialism, there was imperial. And so our sense was that there's a lot of work to be done in that area. The other mission was to, to recover our history was to talk to people and document, listen and record the words of people who had gone through all these things in the thirties, and try to capture that and, and, you know, record it become in a, in a sense of a vehicle for transmitting that information. Southern Exposure Magazine, the institute started in 70 and Southern Exposure Magazine started in 73. And it, it really had those two, the investigative journalism reporting and the oral history documentation, including photography and and just straight interviews, life histories.

Bob Hall: And the, the records of, of particular events told by the participants were the two kind of charges that we had, the kind of the, the modus operandi in, in the first year in, in 73. The last issue we did, and we had, I mean the folks that were involved in this Sue Thrasher and, and Leah Wise who had been at the King documentation center that as that project was getting started Jackie Hall, who was ge getting involved in oral history, this guy Alan Tullis was, Ted Rosengarden folks were, and in a way, I mean, a lot of the oral history kind of stuff was just sort of cranking up at that time. It seems like, I, I don't know if that's true or not, but it's, there didn't seem to be a lot for folks to draw on except for that, what they had, what they were doing themselves.

Bob Hall: And, and then going back much earlier back to the Federal Writers Project, and in many cases, and there, and in this opening, this was a, the, the the product of, of the first series of, of oral history work was called "No More Moanin: Voices of Southern Struggle." And the introduction starts off by saying "In his introduction to 'These are Our Lives,' WT Couch wrote, 'With all our talk about democracy, it seems not inappropriate to let people speak for themselves.'" Boom, (laughs) you know?

Bob Hall: That's right. Let them talk for themselves. They, they don't need filters. And in fact, I think a lot of, you know, the medium is the message in oral history, actually, you know, the engaging, talking to people that, that there, there's power, right? That even if it's never published for the person who's interviewing person who's in the other being interviewed, I, I think there's a lot happening right there.

Bob Hall: And to them put it down in a way that's much as direct as possible. And we've all, we've all struggled. I don't know if you're interested in all the kind of, you know, debates about how much editing to do and what length is appropriate and so on. But that's, those are certainly things that we've had to go through. This was the first major piece we did then. And it was really the depression, the period in the thirties and forties. And we found out, you know, that the first sit down strike in the auto industry, it wasn't in Flint or Detroit, or it was in Atlanta, you know, and there were folks who had been there, who had sat down and, and they had their own little retirees local, you know, and we got 'em together, and they started talking and they started finding other people, you know, it was just amazing to to go through it.

Bob Hall: The same, the Southern Tenant Farmers Union stuff with, um similar process of, of people getting re-energized themselves and then turning this on to other people about it. We have continually done in Southern exposure oral histories and published them frequently in different issues. We've done a couple books. This was, this is a book Working Lives that was done with Pantheon that draws on it's an anthology of, of articles that were in Southern exposure, all about labor. And I'll just pass some of these things around actually. And you can look at 'em. This, I, I brought one interview with me, I'm not sure why, but you know, this is how it starts. I want you transcribed mean, the transcription. How, how many people have transcribed a three hour interview? Oh, . Yeah. Well, you know, that's the, that's the worst part, I think, right?

Bob Hall: So if you can get somebody else to do it, (laughs), and you can go back and edit it. But anyway, this is a, this is a, actually the interview with a guy named Sam Block, who was born in 39 in Mississippi, and got

pulled into the movement and, and became the the, the key organizer in, in Greenwood, Mississippi. And which was a town it was a terrorist situation and literally was, I mean, he was driven out on, and almost lost his mind and just barely saved his life on more than one occasion. But the, the interview is, goes all over the place, you know, and I think part of what I, we were trying to do in the final, I think it's one thing to have the interview and put it in an archive so people can actually see what was said, how it was said.

Bob Hall: We're sort of in the, in the business, more of the journalism, you know, publishing. So we then have to try to tell, get the story into some coherence. And my sense is that you really have to get into somebody's inside their life. You really have to know a lot about 'em in order to edit one of these documents. If you're the interviewee or if you're interviewing or you're editing somebody else's. And I come from, I think there's, the difference is Jackie Hall. I know her perspective has been one that came out of our work, is that that trust that you build up with a person is absolutely fundamental. And it doesn't happen easily in hardly any cases, unless you, I mean, it's just doesn't, with with folks who are who are not professionals at, you know, telling their stories, and even sometimes those are the ones you need to have a lot of trust in order to penetrate through the, the bull that they've learned to tell and to the answer to the question.

Bob Hall: So our approach is often generally been to, to tell life stories, to get the person to start at the beginning or start somewhere and get back to the beginning and tell the whole story and spend a lot of time. The other approach, I think, is much more of the fact finding journalistic scholarly approach that goes in there and, and says, you know, we want to find out what happened on this date, or were the police on this side or that side, or, you know, and I don't, I think you're, you're you may not get the, the same answers with those two approaches. And my, so my, our approach has generally been to do the longer interviews and then use them in, in, if, if it's a story about a specific event, that's fine.

Bob Hall: If it's a story about the life which we also publish, and which to me are, are precious then I, I think that's, that's valuable. I think I'll just, you know, stop with this. I was gonna, you know, this block interview was very long, Sam, and this is, it came out into this, this is issue, which this issue also has a another form of documentation, these letters, which came again through the the book on the what is the name of the book? Like a Family. The Like a Family, yeah.