

CANADIAN ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION
MINUTES OF THE EXECUTIVE MEETING
PUBLIC ARCHIVES OF CANADA
OTTAWA, ONTARIO
MARCH 1, 1979

Present at the meeting were James Morrison, President; Jean-Paul Moreau, Vice-President; Chris Gebhard, Treasurer; Gary Hughes, English Language Secretary; Denis Gagnon, Assistant Editor. Absent were Bruno Jean, French Language Secretary; and Richard Lohead, Editor.

The President; called the meeting to order at 1:30 p.m. and asked for the approval of the agenda. This was done and the executive moved on to the first item of business.

1. Business arising from previous meetings or from correspondence

The President asked the executive if there were any matters they wished to discuss arising either from the last general meeting held in October or in the intervening period to the present. The treasurer, Chris Gebhard, asked about the status of the grant given to the Association by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to assist in the travel and subsistence costs of participants in the COHA Conference held in Toronto. The English Language Secretary, Gary Hughes, who had applied for the grant, explained that a sum of \$1,000 had been received from the Council but that the award had not been received until after the conference because of the lateness of application and because of the autumn mail strike which delayed notification of the grant. He further explained that contact regarding the grant and its financial considerations had been kept with Denis Gagnon, the outgoing Treasurer and now Assistant Editor of the Journal, because the grant application had been made during M. Gagnon's term of office as Treasurer. The English Language Secretary stated that he had contacted M. Gagnon after notification of the award, that the monies had been dispersed to those participants who had required assistance and that all records pertaining to the award were in M. Gagnon's possession and would be turned over to Mr. Gebhard, the incoming Treasurer, very shortly. The English Language Secretary noted that the Council had been generous in accepting the Association's overdue application and cautioned that the former had stated reservations concerning two of the participants who had received assistance for chairing workshops of practical instruction. He concluded by stating that assistance for this type of participation was not really a part of the Council's mandate and he felt that the Association should take such reservations into consideration before application is made for conference assistance in the future.

On the separate matter, the English Language Secretary informed the executive that he had been contacted by Neil Rosenberg, the past Vice-President, shortly after the Association's conference at which time he had asked about the ultimate storage of past papers of the C.O.H.A. in his possession. It was Mr. Rosenberg's opinion that the papers should be housed in an archive, preferably one which had a close working relationship with the Association such as the Sound Archives, P.A.C. The English Language Secretary continued by stating that he had contacted the executive for their opinions in the matter and that the general consensus was that the papers should be absorbed into the reference library of COHA material initiated and administered during the past two years by Jean-Paul Moreau, Vice-President. The President then asked M. Moreau if he was in agreement with this consensus and the Vice-President

replied in the affirmative, adding that he would be in contact with Mr. Rosenberg concerning the transfer of the said papers.

2. Code of Ethics:

The President reminded the executive of the correspondence addressed to each of them in late December which contained, among other things, a proposal to develop a code of ethics for the Association. He stated that in his letter he had recommended that a study committee be set up to deal with the matter and had further recommended that the English Language Secretary be appointed as chairman of the committee. The President continued, saying that the English Language Secretary had agreed to chair such a committee and that the latter had come prepared to give a progress report to the executive.

The English Language Secretary then reported that a member on staff at both the Provincial Archives of British Columbia and the Memorial University Folklore and Language Archive had been contacted and that each had provided suggestions and related material for the proposed code of ethics together with their assent to serve on the study committee. He also informed the executive that the Oral History Association in the United States had been contacted on the matter and had in turn sent a copy of their existing code of ethics. The English Language Secretary stated that these initial submissions had created a good base on which to develop a code and that other oral history repositories in Canada, the United States and the United Kingdom would be asked for their recommendations on the subject. He further stated that a draught copy of the proposed code would be completed by early autumn and sent to each member of the executive as well as to the relevant personnel at P.A.B.C. and M.U.N.F.L.A. for their comments and opinions. The English Language Secretary concluded his report by saying that a final draught of the code should be completed by the middle of October.

3. C.O.H.A. Journal:

As an introduction to this item, the Treasurer, Chris Gebhard, reported that as of February 1, 1979, the Association had a balance of \$1,277.83 and that membership consisted of 41 individual, 21 institutions and 7 subscriptions. Six new members had been attracted to the COHA and the Treasurer stated that he would be sending out renewal notices to those members whose subscriptions had run out. He expected that this process should be completed by late May or early June.

With respect to the Journal, the Assistant Editor, Denis Gagnon, reported that the next issue should appear, on schedule, during the summer. The Assistant Editor did voice some doubt, however, about the form in which it would appear since there had been some discussion of combining the up-coming issue with the COHA Directory, a publication designed to identify the level of oral history activity in each province. The President, James Morrison, replied that he favored the separation of the Journal and the Directory, stating that each publication would have more impact on an individual basis. He then asked the Assistant Editor about the cost factor associated with each publication. Denis Gagnon replied that the Journal would cost approximately \$700.00 for a 40 page format and that the Directory would be in the vicinity of \$800.00 - \$900.00 because it would likely exceed 50 pages. The Assistant Editor did inform the executive, however, that there was a possibility the Public Archives might absorb the cost of the Directory. He stated that an approach to Mr. Ernie Dick of the PAC should be made and that he would initiate negotiations in that regard. M. Gagnon continued by offering his opinion that the Association's present balance of approximately \$1,300.00 would be sufficient to initiate publication of the Journal

and the Directory. If the publications were combined, they could be sold for about \$6.00 or, if separate, at \$3.00 each. The Assistant Editor felt that sales to non-members, plus the monies received from membership renewals would cover the costs associated with both publications. Both the Journal and the Directory would, of course, be sent to paid up members free of charge.

On the matter of two single publications or one large publication, the executive felt that the former alternative was the better choice. It had been suggested that the Directory itself be divided between the upcoming issue of the Journal and the next issue, tentatively scheduled to appear before the Association's next conference in conjunction with the Learned Societies in Montreal in May, 1980. This idea, however, did not receive favor from the executive because information contained in the second installment of the Directory might be dated by the time the conference took place. Similarly, the President's suggestion that a separate Directory be published in advance of the summer issue of the Journal did not receive majority assent because it was felt that some of the items in the latter would be dated if that order were adopted. It was eventually decided that the singular publication format would stand and that the Journal would be ready for publication in June and the Directory by October or November. The President then suggested that the code of ethics in preparation be included in the Directory. The executive felt this was a good decision and the English Language Secretary stated that a final draught of the code would be ready for publication in the Directory.

The President offered his opinion that the publication of a separate Directory, including the code of ethics, would have a significant appeal beyond the general membership, perhaps more than the Journal had had and certainly more than a combined publication. On the matter of the volume of production of the Directory, the Assistant Editor informed the executive that if the P.A.C. did not assist in its publication, then 400-500 copies would be contemplated but that if such assistance were rendered, then as many as 1000 copies might be published. He stated that the two publications would nevertheless be printed with or without P.A.C. assistance. He also pointed out that if the P.A.C. absorbed the publication costs of the Directory, then it could not be sold because policy governing the institution required that service volumes of that nature be offered free of charge.

The idea of placing COHA advertisements in relevant trade papers such as Archivaria or the Archival Association of Atlantic Canada's Newsletter was then discussed with the view towards generating more revenue through additional memberships. It was also thought that specific notices in combination with or separate from these advertisements, relating to both the Journal and the Directory, would increase sales of the publications amongst non-members. The executive felt that such additional revenue would be an important factor in generating an increase in the volume of both the Journal and, more particularly, the Directory in the event that the P.A.C. provided no assistance for the latter. The President then suggested that each member of the executive submit a list of relevant trade papers in their region to the Editor of the Journal, Richard Lohead.

4. C.O.H.A. Conference in Conjunction with the Learned Societies in 1980.

Jean-Paul Moreau, Vice-President, who was charged with conference arrangements, reported that the Learned Societies, according to the latest information received, would be holding their conference in Montreal in May, 1980. The Vice-President related that full details of the conference would not be available until after the 1979 meeting of the Learned Societies in June at Saskatoon. He informed the

executive that contact with a representative of the Learned Societies had been made and that their plans will be communicated to him at the conclusion of the conference. The Vice-President continued by stating that in case the arrangements for a concurrent meeting did not mature, preliminary inquiries had been made with both the Université de Montréal and the Université de Québec concerning the availability of conference rooms and other arrangements. He also reported that hotels and motels near both universities in Montreal would be investigated with regard to accommodations.

The question of the Association's role with respect to the Learned Societies was then raised. The executive had learned that the registration fee for a conference sponsored by the Learned Societies was \$40.00 and that it was their practice to book university residence accommodations. In view of this information, the President wondered what additional costs would be associated with university accommodations and what portion of the registration fee paid by the participants would return to the Association. He also thought that the total charge for each participant as well as the cost of translation facilities should be discovered as soon after the June, 1979 meeting of the Learned Societies as practicable. The President remarked that translation services might be covered by the registration fee but that any other privileges or services included in the fee remained unknown. He also wished to know how the C.O.H.A. would fit into the format of a Learned Societies conference. The Vice-President, Jean-Paul Moreau, replied that this information would be forthcoming after the Learned Societies meeting in June. The executive, in any case, agreed to plan for a conference in Montreal in May, 1980 irregardless of the results of the Vice-President's negotiations with the Learned Societies and whether the C.O.H.A. met jointly with that organization or not.

On the subject of a conference theme, the Vice-President stated that a change in perspective might be preferable from titles such as "Oral History and Education" or "Oral History and Museums" which had been used in the past to set the tone of the meetings. He felt that the multidisciplinary nature of oral history mitigated against the adoption of a specialized theme and suggested that more workshops be incorporated into the conference format. He felt that this venue would provide a ready forum for the presentation and discussion of differing approaches to oral history, a direction which would, in his opinion, hasten its evolution from a method to an integral part of the historical process. The Vice-President then informed the executive that at least 25 individuals had expressed interest in a workshop theme where short presentations would be given in an informal setting followed questions and discussions.

The President, James Morrison, replied that while this approach deserved attention, it might prove somewhat inappropriate if the C.O.H.A. met with the Learned Societies since that organization had adopted a standardized format where delegates present papers followed by questions and discussion. He further stated that such an approach would not prove favourable with the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council which requires abstracts of papers to be presented by delegates in advance of or in conjunction with application for assistance for conference participants. The President reminded the executive that the Council's mandate for conference assistance did not normally include meetings where the workshop format applied solely. In response to this, it was suggested that the executive plan for the inclusion of both formats. The Vice-President then introduced a third approach involving oral critiques of books based on oral history. He informed the executive that David Millar of York University was presently working on a review of the book "L'Histoire Orale", co-authored by M. Bruno Jean, French Language Secretary. It was his opinion that Mr. Millar and others who are doing or have done related book reviews might wish to make oral presentations of these at the conference.

The President then informed the executive that the Association would most likely have two working days in a conference setting, with or without the Learned Societies, and asked the members if the three format approach should be incorporated into the conference planning. The other members of the executive felt that the tri-level approach should be considered. Further discussion resulted in a general structure where a certain block of time would be set aside for the presentation of formal papers, another section involving a participatory format where short presentations would be made followed by an informal discussion in a workshop setting and a third block of time for oral critiques based on reviews of books relating to oral history. The President suggested that the executive consider recommendations for each format and submit these to the Vice-President. He also thought that the conference theme could be decided when enough input had been received from prospective delegates.

5. Other Business:

The President informed the executive that he had recently received a letter from Derek Reimer who had been appointed Director of Aural History, P.A.B.C. the previous autumn. In his letter, Mr. Reimer suggested that both organizations should increase their level of contact and inform each other on matters of mutual concern. The President felt that this was a good idea and noted that the English Language Secretary had corresponded with staff at Aural History concerning the draughting of a code of ethics and suggested that a representative of that section of P.A.B.C. be considered as a conference participant in one of three proposed formats for the 1980 meeting.

6. Interim Workshops:

In view of the COHA decision at the 1978 conference not to have a conference in 1979 but instead to substitute a series of regional workshops, the President asked the executive to report on any upcoming workshops in their different localities. He pointed out that the summer issue of the Journal could print announcements pertaining to these workshops and thus aid in the participation factor. The Vice-President reported that a workshop sponsored by the Association de Professeurs D'Histoire Locales et Régional would be held on May 3 and 4 in Montréal but noted that the event would precede publication of the Journal. The Treasurer stated that there was little to report from the Toronto area but that he would keep the Editor of the Journal informed of any developments in the region. The President then informed the executive that a conference was being organized in the Atlantic region and was scheduled for late October in Truro, Nova Scotia. He further related that the conference would be sponsored by the Federation of Museums, Heritage and Historical Societies of Nova Scotia and the Heritage Trust of Nova Scotia and that the meeting would not be a workshop per se on how to collect oral history but a number of sessions on what has been collected and how it has been or will be used. The President concluded by stating that the conference format would include reports on completed projects, formal papers and tape analysis and that he would provide further details to the Editor of the Journal as they became available.

7. Next Meeting of the Executive:

The President informed the executive that the next meeting would most likely be held in January of 1980 at which point plans for the conference in May of that year would be much more defined.

There being no further business, the meeting adjourned at 4 p.m.