

## Long Desperate Hours at the Typewriter: Establishing the Oral History Association of Australia

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*This paper was requested by the editor to mark the 30th anniversary of the Oral History Association of Australia. It documents the founding of a national association by Jean Teasdale in Perth in 1978, prior to the existence of local oral history groups anywhere in Australia. It also establishes the influence of the first two oral history conferences in Australia, convened by Joan Campbell at La Trobe University in Melbourne in 1974 and 1975. The paper goes on to describe the consolidation of the OHAA in its early years, as well as assessing how much of the founder's original vision has been realised thirty years later.*

The Oral History Association of Australia (OHAA) came into being at a meeting held at the University of Western Australia (UWA) on 26 July 1978, through the extraordinary energy and drive of one woman. While the same 'convergence of sociology and history'<sup>1</sup> that stimulated the emergence of oral history as a research technique in Britain in the 1960s was exciting a new generation of historians across Australia in the 1970s, it was social worker Jean Teasdale who spent 'the long desperate hours' at the typewriter<sup>2</sup> to bring about a national association.<sup>3</sup>

In 1975 Jean Teasdale had interrupted her career as a social worker to become one of the first two full-time interviewers appointed to the J. S. Battye Library of West Australian History's Oral History Program at the State Reference Library of Western Australia. She brought impressive skills and experience to the role. She had studied psychology at UWA prior to completing a diploma in Social Science at the University of Adelaide, awarded in 1952.<sup>4</sup> She had then worked in a range of agencies in Adelaide and Perth, as well as teaching at Western Australia's inaugural School of Social Work at UWA from 1965 to 1968. Jean had also pursued an interest in history, studying for a Master of Arts (Preliminary) at UWA (1969-1971), while continuing to raise four children. Prior to joining the Library in 1975 Jean was working as a family counsellor in her husband's general medical practice, and contributing as a volunteer to support refugees from Darwin in the wake of Cyclone Tracy (24 December 1974).<sup>5</sup>

The potential of oral history to contribute to the historic record had been recognised by the Battye Library's first librarian Mollie Lukis during a nine month trip to Europe and North America funded by the Carnegie Foundation in 1957-1958.<sup>6</sup> In 1961 she and her staff began recording interviews for the Library's collection as time permitted.<sup>7</sup> This was the first oral history program in a major Australian library. While the National Library began supporting fieldwork by



**Jean Teasdale founded the OHAA in 1978.**

*Photo... from Jean Teasdale courtesy John Ferrell.*

oral history practitioners in 1960, beginning with Hazel de Berg's recordings of writers and artists, it did not begin 'a full-scale oral history project' until 1970 when retired journalist Mel Pratt was contracted to conduct interviews with people selected by the library.<sup>8</sup>

The resources to establish a dedicated program at the Battye Library eventuated from the Western Australian state election campaign in 1974 when Liberal Party leader Sir Charles Court proposed 'the gathering of live history while the memories of those who are making it are still strong.'<sup>9</sup> When Sir Charles became premier, the State Librarian's submission to establish an oral history program within the Battye Library was successful.

During 1975 and 1976 Jean researched and recorded over sixty interviews for the Battye Library. Interviewees ranged from farmers (her own family background) and miners to government ministers and Western Australian-born entertainer Rolf Harris.<sup>10</sup> Her role also involved training others in interviewing and recording techniques, proofreading transcripts and promoting the collection. However, she felt isolated. She had been a member of the Australian Association of Social Workers since 1952, benefiting from its program of publications and conferences and contributing to the development of the profession.<sup>11</sup> There was no such support for oral history in Australia. So Jean joined three overseas associations: the United States' Oral History Association (established 1966), Britain's Oral History Society (1973-) and the Canadian Oral History Association (1975-), and she began corresponding with other practitioners identified through their journals.<sup>12</sup> In 1977, with the idea of a national association of oral history already in her mind,<sup>13</sup> she travelled to Britain where she attended an Oral History Society conference in London<sup>14</sup> and met the editor of its bi-annual journal, Paul Thompson.<sup>15</sup> On her return to Perth Jean was determined to establish a similar organisation in Australia.

The idea of a national oral history association was not entirely without precedent. It had been raised at a one day conference at La Trobe University, Melbourne in 1975. This was the third of three conferences between November 1973 and February 1975 that had begun to build a sense of community between oral history practitioners in the eastern states, and to suggest to Australian libraries and archives 'the growing respectability in this country of oral history programmes'.<sup>16</sup> The first Australian Folklorists' Conference<sup>17</sup> at the University of Sydney on 17-18 November 1973 was convened by the New South Wales Folk Federation (1970-) but:

brought into the open a number of questions which must be asked of any oral history programme whether it be concerned with the specialised fields of folk lore, tradition and popular song or interviews on tape with politicians and public servants or artists and writers.<sup>18</sup>

Three months later two of the delegates, folklorists Wendy Lowenstein and Shirley Andrews, addressed a much larger gathering in Melbourne; the first national conference about oral history held in Australia.<sup>19</sup> The one-day conference on 1 March 1974 was convened by Joan Campbell, a senior tutor and Ph.D. candidate at La Trobe University. Joan's primary interest was European history but she chose local topics for her postgraduate degrees so that she would not need to leave her young family to do research. In 1972 she began recording oral histories,

and also made contact with the US Oral History Association, while she explored the idea of a Ph.D. on the history of the Mornington Peninsula. Although she decided instead to research the colonial history of the Port Phillip district she continued to record interviews with people on subjects of interest to her and to correspond with American practitioners.<sup>20</sup>



**Joan Campbell convened two influential oral history conferences in 1974 and 1975.**

*Photo.. ca. 1980, courtesy of Joan Campbell.*

When she joined the History Department of La Trobe University in 1974 she offered to present an oral history course for third year students. She also taught oral history in a voluntary capacity through the Council of Adult Education.<sup>21</sup>

The decision to convene a conference was made because of 'the need for dialogue' in 'this relatively new development within the discipline of history'.<sup>22</sup> The conference program presented sixteen speakers in five panels covering current developments in oral history, ethnohistory and interviewing. The speakers were primarily Victorian academics but the response was overwhelming; about seventy people attended, the catering for tea breaks fell well short of demand and Tom Stannage, who attended from UWA, enthused that, 'All that is vital in history in Australia seems to be occurring at specialist conferences like this one.'<sup>23</sup> As Joan reported in the proceedings, convening the conference:

provided a vital means of communication between many researchers ... From Townsville to Perth, and places in between, numerous letters have come in wanting to know more about the Conference and its aims.<sup>24</sup>

For 'the Second Oral History Conference' on 6 February 1975, she assembled eight speakers, including academics from Canberra, Queensland and South Australia, for a program focused on immigrant communities and folk traditions. She concluded that 'the need for a listing of oral history contacts within Australia' was clear.<sup>25</sup>

Joan signalled her intention to convene a third conference in 1976 in the 1975 conference proceedings, and referred to the lack of a formal association in a report she wrote for the US Oral History Association's journal.<sup>26</sup> However the momentum was halted when she left La Trobe for the Royal Melbourne Institute of Technology (where she remained until her retirement in 1987), to coordinate the establishment of the Victorian Technical and Further Education Off-Campus Network to support distance education. Like oral history, distance education appealed to Joan's interest in innovative approaches to research and teaching. She subscribed to the OHAA in its first year and was involved in discussions about the establishment of a Victorian branch but her involvement in oral history ended in the early 1980s.<sup>27</sup>

The timely publication of the proceedings of both La Trobe conferences fixed their influence on the growing interest in oral history in the late 1970s. The second proceedings also provided Jean Teasdale with an invaluable list of almost 150 oral history contacts and collections, which she used to begin canvassing support for a national association by means of a letter she circulated throughout Australia in March 1978.<sup>28</sup>

It would seem that the time has come for Australia to think about a national association in conjunction with yearly conferences. ... Perhaps steps have been taken towards this in the East but certainly not here in the West. If you reply to this note I wonder if you would also say whether you would be interested or not in such an association being formed. ... I was not involved in the 75 conference so do not know what the feelings about a national association were at that time.<sup>29</sup>

The following month Jean produced the *Oral History Newsletter*, volume 1, number 1, on the Gestetner in her husband's general practice.<sup>30</sup> The lead item was 'Comments on the formation of an Australian Oral History Association' in which she referred again to the second La Trobe conference:

A number of people in Australia now feel it is time for those working on some form of oral history, whether in their own work or in organized programmes to get together in some form of an association so that ideas,

methodologies, ethics, etc. can be discussed, as well as offering a means of disseminating the growing volume of knowledge in this field through either a newsletter or a journal.

Following the Oral History Conference at La Trobe University in 1975 some had hoped that this would occur, but interest waned and no one was sufficiently motivated to collect people together for this purpose. It is now felt that there is sufficient interest for a body to be formed at least in Western Australia, and it is for this reason that a meeting will be arranged some time in July.<sup>31</sup>

The short time in which Jean intended to marshal support for the meeting is all the more remarkable given that she was also preparing to travel to Penang in early May to attend a 'Colloquium on Oral History' organized by the National Archives of Malaysia and the Universiti Sains Malaysia, in cooperation with UNESCO.<sup>32</sup> Nevertheless, the second edition of the *Oral History Newsletter* distributed in July included not only the formal notice of 'an Oral History Inaugural Meeting' on 26 July but also a draft constitution and standing orders based on those of the British Oral History Society.

By the day of the meeting, Jean had recruited twenty three people to serve in positions of the proposed executive or on the committee.<sup>33</sup> As high school history teacher John Ferrell, the inaugural treasurer, recalled twenty years later:

[n]othing was left to chance. There may have been nominations from the floor on which Jean didn't rely [but] she had nominees in advance for each position to ensure a committee could be established.<sup>34</sup>

There has been a persistent misconception that the organisation formed on 26 July 1978 was a *Western Australian Oral History Association* that predated the national body.<sup>35</sup> This misconception may well be a response to Jean's words in the first *Oral History Newsletter*, that there was 'sufficient interest for a body to be formed at least in Western Australia'.<sup>36</sup> There was certainly some initial opposition to setting up a national association prior to establishing a local oral history organisation in the West?<sup>37</sup> In 1980 Wendy Lowenstein in Melbourne also questioned whether the OHAA had been formed prematurely, much to Jean's chagrin.<sup>38</sup> However she had never had any intention of settling for less than a national association.

I had to seek a number of people for Executive positions before the meeting was held and people from other states had to be found since a National body was the objective. ... The

committee was a very large one and possibly could have had fewer WA members.<sup>39</sup>

Of the thirty-two person 1978-1979 committee, eleven were interstate representatives, including two of the three vice presidents: Professor Weston Bate of Deakin University in Melbourne and Graeme Powell, the Principal Librarian of the National Library of Australia in Canberra. The third was Professor Geoffrey Bolton of Murdoch University and the inaugural president was Professor Peter Reeves of UWA. Jean was elected organising secretary, and announced in the next issue of the newsletter, 'the Oral History Association of Australia is now a reality.'<sup>40</sup>

Jean had an ambitious program mapped out to establish the role and influence of the OHAA and she gave herself a deadline in which to achieve it, deciding 'to devote two years to setting up the Association and although I hate typing, addressing envelopes, filing etc., I had to knuckle down to the job.'<sup>41</sup> She had intended from the outset to convene an oral history conference in Perth in 1979 to coincide with Western Australia's sesquicentenary.<sup>42</sup> Now, with the help of an OHAA subcommittee and support from the History Department of UWA and several sponsors, two were organised: a 'local conference' on the theme of 'Oral History and the Community' attended by about seventy people on 31 March, and a national conference and annual general meeting (AGM) held in Perth on 18-19 August that drew 125 delegates.<sup>43</sup>

In forming the program of the first national conference, Jean continued to be international in outlook. It was scheduled to coincide with the International Conference on Indian Ocean Studies to encourage participants from that region (resulting in delegates from Indonesia, Kenya and Mauritius), and Professor John Saville, chairman of the British Oral History Society, was invited as a keynote speaker.<sup>44</sup> Papua New Guinea, Malaysia and Thailand were also represented.<sup>45</sup> The spirit of the conference established another precedent, as John Ferrell recalled:

[The] first Executive and their families made great efforts to ensure the success and good spirit of the first National Conference. All delegates were met on arrival at bus, train or airport terminals. Transport for delegates was arranged from university college accommodation. Some visitors were billeted. In this, again, Jean led the way, offering hospitality to three people.<sup>46</sup>

Membership grew steadily in response to Jean's tireless publicity; with 107 members reported six months after the OHAA's founding, growing to 285 by March 1980.<sup>47</sup> At the same time Jean was urging

the formation of branches throughout Australia. She travelled to South Australia to be present at the meeting on 5 February 1979 that established the OHAA's first branch.<sup>48</sup> The NSW branch was formed on 5 July 1979.<sup>49</sup> Jean was also on the editorial committee for the publication of the first Oral History Association of Australia Journal in 1979, containing the papers of the national conference.

Responsibilities also began to devolve to others. Wendy Lowenstein in Melbourne was elected Newsletter and Journal editor at the first AGM, the NSW branch organised the second national conference in Sydney in May 1981 and Jean was pressing both the SA and NSW branches to take on responsibility for the national executive after the biennial general meeting (BGM) to be held at the Sydney conference.<sup>50</sup> In the issue of the Newsletter that announced that the NSW branch would take on the role, it was also reported that Jean had resigned as honorary secretary of the OHAA and taken a six-month leave of absence as liaison officer.<sup>51</sup> She was just a little behind schedule; she had taken twenty-seven months rather than two years to set the OHAA on its feet.

In every other way, Jean's timing had been perfect. She had established the national oral history association on the eve of the publication of Australia's 'first crop of 11 oral history books... that delivered the idea of oral history outside universities and well beyond the audiences of folk societies.'<sup>52</sup>

Alan Roberts' list of these publications includes:

Scholarly works like [Ray] Broomhill's *Unemployed Workers* on the Depression in Adelaide and Clive Moore's *The Forgotten People* on Pacific Islanders in Australia; more popular works like Kevin Gilbert's *Living Black*, which won the 1978 National Book Council

Award for Australian Literature; Wendy Lowenstein and Morag Loh's *The Immigrants*; and Lowenstein's massive *Weevils in the Flour* which won the Royal Blind Society's 'Talking Book of the Year Award'. ... Finally, from England came Paul Thompson's *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* ... a handbook of the oral history method, an essay on the theory of oral history, and a masterly survey of the changing role of oral history in the development of western historiography.<sup>53</sup>

The establishment period had not been easy for Jean. Apart from the administrative work, negotiation and travel, as soon as branches formed the OHAA began to take on a life of its own in ways that did not always meet with her approval. The most vexing issues were, not surprisingly, finances and membership affiliation. In the May 1980 issue of the Newsletter, both Wendy Lowenstein's editorial 'It's a big country!' and an article by Alan Roberts,

president of the NSW branch, entitled 'W(h)ither the branches?', suggested that provisions in the constitution and the view of some of the national executive that branches should be self-supporting would inhibit the ability of existing branches to accept responsibility for the national executive and discourage the formation of more branches. Jean's response as founder' was vehement:

At no time did I envisage that branches ... would claim back a large proportion (currently one-third) of each subscription. This situation was changed once branches were formed and began looking for easy money. ... Is it really necessary for the national body to hand back such a large slice of the cake to branches without effort on their behalf? Should we not reconsider this whole question of finance realistically before the national body, not the branches, 'wither'. ... [We should be] pulling together to make our already well known Association into a well organised whole rather than permitting branches to encircle and crush it.<sup>54</sup>

At the BGM in May 1981 compromises were made on both sides, and the retiring president Professor Geoffrey Bolton commented wryly, 'It must be stressed that our negotiations on this subject have been more open and amicable than is customary in Federal-State conferences over funding.'<sup>55</sup> The subscription rebate to branches was reduced to 25 per cent, but membership affiliation was clarified; from now on a member living in the geographical location of a branch would be assumed to be a member of the branch.

Jean had regained her equanimity in her report as retiring secretary/liason officer,<sup>56</sup> and was elected honorary life member.

In moving the motion, Alan Roberts said that OHAA would not exist but for Jean's tremendous efforts. He felt some trepidation in taking over from her as Secretary/Liaison Officer, as Jean's was a hard act to follow. It would be interesting to see what new directions she found now for her energy and organising talent. ... The motion was carried unanimously and by acclamation.<sup>57</sup>

She was not the OHAA's first life member. That honour had been bestowed at the inaugural AGM in August 1979 on John Thomson, 'the WA Forestry Officer who carried his tape recorder through the hot dusty North West in the mid-1960s before most people had even heard of the term "oral history"'.<sup>58</sup>

Jean remained actively involved in the national executive, as vice president, and in the WA branch until 1983, and in the practice of oral history. She was, for example, one of the WA coordinators of the nationwide 'Australia 1938' interviewing program

that provided source material for the *Australians* 1938 volume of the Bicentennial series *Australians. A Historical Library* published in 1987. Despite formally retiring from social working in 1993, she continued to work occasionally as a locum in the emergency department of the Sir Charles Gardiner Hospital in Perth. In 1997 her long awaited book *Facing the Bow: European Women in Colonial Malaya 1919-1945* was published, based on interviews she had recorded in Australia, Malaya and Europe in the 1970s.<sup>59</sup> Jean died in November 2002.

Thirty years after its foundation, how much of Jean's original vision of the OHAA has been realised? Successive national committees have been as unsuccessful as Jean was in finding reliable sources of external funding to support the development of the OHAA.<sup>60</sup> Instead, branch membership has been the basis of the OHAA's finances. Branches were established in all states and each has endured. The WA branch was the third formed, after SA and NSW, on 9 March 1980, after a meeting originally called for the purpose on 23 July 1979 failed to attract enough people due to a severe electrical storm.<sup>61</sup> Branches in Queensland (for many years known as the Southeast Queensland branch) and Victoria were formed in 1982.<sup>62</sup> The Tasmanian branch was the last to form. There had been an attempt to start a branch in Hobart in the early 1980s but it was not until the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery in Launceston began using oral history in its exhibitions in 1988 that the idea found fertile ground. The inaugural meeting was held on 20 July 1991 to coincide with the launch of the Museum's book *Launceston Talks: Oral Histories of the Launceston Community*.<sup>63</sup>

The territories have proven more elusive. A Northern Territory branch is mentioned in issues of the *Oral History Newsletter* in 1980, but it was probably not formalised for want of the requisite ten members. Distance and the transience of the Territory's population continue to thwart the establishment of a local branch. Instead, Territorians are attached to the SA branch.

The failure of an ACT branch to persist is more problematical. One was formed at a meeting held at the National Library in Canberra on 1 March 1980. Twenty-six people attended and the first committee included representatives from the Australian National University, National Library and Australian War Memorial.<sup>64</sup> However, the branch was disbanded in 1983 and local members have since been attached to the NSW branch.<sup>65</sup> Ironically, Canberra has the greatest concentration of Australians with secure employment in the field of oral history. Several national institutions have supported OHAA aims and activities over the years and the National Library

hosted the 2001 conference, but a robust ACT branch taking its share of responsibility for the national committee, annual journal and biennial conference would be a tremendous support to other branches.

Most branches have long-standing and mutually beneficial relationships with their state libraries and, like Jean, oral history staff in state libraries have continued to play major roles in the development of the OHAA. Nevertheless, the OHAA has also lobbied vigorously for particular libraries not to cut back their responsibility for collecting oral history in response to increasing budgetary pressures.

It took about ten years for the OHAA to become financially resilient. The national newsletter was abandoned in 1985 as too expensive and increasingly redundant as branches established their own publications. The national committee struggled to continue producing the annual *Journal* until 1986 when the first of three years' sponsorship from the National Museum of Australia not only ensured its continued existence but also allowed branches to retain half of each subscription.<sup>66</sup> This was particularly timely for the SA branch, which was then struggling to develop its own publication. The first edition of the *Oral History Handbook* had been published in May 1983 as a little A5-size booklet of thirty-two pages compiled by the SA branch committee. At \$1.00 to members and \$1.50 to others it was intended to provide a simple, affordable alternative to commercial publications such as *The Voice of the Past*. One thousand copies were sold in eighteen months.<sup>67</sup> A revised and expanded second edition was produced in 1985 and a discount price for orders of ten or more copies enabled other branches to buy in bulk and sell at workshops at a small profit. Now in its fifth edition, about 16,000 copies of the *Handbook* have been sold since 1983.<sup>68</sup>

The biennial conferences have never been a financial burden to the OHAA. Most have resulted in a modest profit that was shared between the host branch and the national committee, and the more significant benefit of an increase in membership in the host state. The conferences represent the 'truly cooperative affair' that Jean hoped the OHAA would become,<sup>69</sup> with branch committees, as well as the national committee, extending loans to the organising branch if required, sharing budgetary and logistical information from past experience, and sending delegates to participate in the associated BGMs.

The 1983 BGM gave branches the power to receive subscriptions directly from their members, as well as the responsibility for forwarding a portion of each amount to the national committee. This is now known as the capitation fee, and it is used primarily

to fund national OHAA publications including the *Journal*, membership brochures, *Guidelines of Ethical Practice* (adopted 1993) and *Guide to Commissioning Oral History Projects* (first published 1998); to subsidise branch activities, such as new editions of the *Oral History Handbook* and the Queensland branch's *Talking Together: A Guide To Community Oral History Projects*;<sup>70</sup> and to support the planning stages of the biennial conference.

Even Jean's extravagant vision of 'an oral history association which encompasses both Pacific and SE Asian areas to form a Pacific Australasian Society' has been realised in a way.<sup>71</sup> The International Oral History Association (IOHA), formed in 1996, has six continents or areas represented on its Council, including Oceania, of which Australia is a part. A member of the OHAA national committee has the role of international representative and provides contact between OHAA and IOHA. Two Australians, OHAA's Janis Wilton and expatriate (until 2007) Alistair Thomson, have served as president of IOHA. The 14th International Oral History Conference was hosted by the OHAA in Sydney in 2006 and brought participants from twenty-nine different countries, and there have been about fifteen Australian papers offered for the 15th International Oral History Conference to be held in Guadalajara, Mexico in September 2008.<sup>72</sup>

Reflecting on the two years she devoted to establishing the OHAA, Jean admitted,

I must say I resented very much the long desperate hours I spent at the typewriter. I could have produced two books in the time I spent as a non typist pushing those keys.<sup>73</sup>

Would a national Australian oral history association exist today if not for Jean Teasdale? Almost certainly, but it is likely to have emerged some time later from established state associations following the pattern, for example, of the Australian Council of Professional Historians Associations (1996- ). Instead, the evolution of oral history in Australia has been discussed in a series of fifteen national conferences and distilled in thirty consecutive journals. Thanks to Jean's indefatigable endeavour and unwavering vision, the OHAA has been functioning as a 'well organised whole' for thirty years.<sup>74</sup>

#### NOTES

1. Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, second edition, Oxford University Press, Oxford, 1992, p. 65.
2. Jean Teasdale, letter to Alan Roberts, 5 November 1981, reproduced in *OHAA Circular 3*, 10 February

- 1982, held in the records of the OHAA (SA Branch), State Library of South Australia (SLSA), SRG 257/4. The records of the National Committee of the OHAA, 1978-1987, are held in the National Library of Australia at MS 7982.
3. For an overview of oral history in Australia, see Alan Roberts 'The development of Australian Oral History, 1798-1984' in *Oral History Association of Australia Journal* [hereafter *OHAA Journal*], no. 7, 1985, pp. 3-22. The material was also published in a shortened form in Louise Douglas, Alan Roberts & Ruth Thompson, *Oral History: A Handbook*, Allen & Unwin, Sydney, 1988.
  4. *Calendar of the University of Adelaide*, 1953, p. 135.
  5. Information about Jean Teasdale is drawn from three sources: the biography on the cover of her book *Facing the Bow.. European Women in Colonial Malaya 1919-1945*, Centre for Migration & Development Studies, Nedlands WA, 1997; John Ferrell, 'Tribute to Jean Teasdale, founder of OHAA', in *OHAA Journal*, no. 22, 2000, pp. 133-5; and (unattributed) 'In Memoriam - Jean Teasdale, December 1928-November 2002', in *The West Australian Social Worker*, Australian Association of Social Workers (WA Branch), May 2003, pp. 6-7.
  6. Margaret Medcalf, 'The Oral History Programme of the Battye Library of West Australian History', in *OHAA Journal*, no. 2, 1979-1980, p. 53. This article and others that use it as a reference incorrectly place Miss Lukis' Carnegie trip in 1956. Contemporary sources show that it began in 1957. See *Archives and Manuscripts: The Journal of the Archives Section of The Library Association of Australia*, vol. 1, no. 3, December 1956, p. 24, and vol. 1, no. 4, August 1957, p.36.
  7. Medcalf, *op. cit.*, p. 53.
  8. Graeme Powell, 'The Oral History Collections of the National Library of Australia', in *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 5, no. 6, February 1974, p. 139.
  9. Medcalf, *op. cit.*, p. 54. Court proposed the establishment of a Heritage Commission with functions including 'the gathering of live history'.
  10. See the State Library of Western Australia's catalogue at <<http://www.slwa.wa.gov.au/>>.
  11. 'In Memoriam', *op. cit.*, p. 6.
  12. Ferrell, *op. cit.*, p. 133.
  13. *Ibid.*, p. 133.
  14. Jean Teasdale, circular letter, 13 March 1978, SLSA, SRG 257/4.
  15. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 1, November 1979.
  16. John Thompson, 'Oral History in Australia: Some Problems Discussed at the Australian Folklorists' Conference, Sydney, November 17-18, 1973', in *Archives and Manuscripts*, vol. 5, no. 6, February 1974, p. 143.
  17. The Australian Folklorists' Conference in 1973 pre-dated the biennial National Folklife Conference, 1984-1994, convened by the Australian Folk Trust.
  18. Thompson, *op. cit.*, p. 143.
  19. The proceedings were published as Joan Campbell (ed.), *Oral History 74: papers presented at the First Oral History Conference, 1 March 1974*, La Trobe University, Bundoora Vie., 1974.
  20. Joan Campbell, 'Pastoral settlement in the Port Phillip district 1834-1847', Ph.D. thesis, History Department, La Trobe University, 1981. Joan Campbell's tape recordings are dispersed in a number of collections, including La Trobe University, State Library of Victoria and National Library of Australia.
  21. Information from Joan Campbell. I am very grateful for the help provided by Joan on being contacted some thirty years after her association with oral history had ended.
  22. *Oral History 74*, *op. cit.*, p. iii.
  23. Unattributed report, 'Oral History Conference - La Trobe University', in *Archives and Manuscripts*, Vol 5, No. 7, May 1974, p. 190; review of *Oral History 74* in *Historical Studies*, vol. 16, no. 65, October 1975, p. 626.
  24. *Oral History 74*, *op. cit.*, p. iii.
  25. Joan Campbell (ed.), *Oral History 75: papers presented at the Second Oral History Conference, 6 February 1975*, La Trobe University, Bundoora Vie., 1975, p. iii.
  26. *Ibid.*; Joan Campbell, 'Developments in Oral History in Australia', in the journal of the US Oral History Association, *The Oral History Review*, vol. 4, 1976, p. 49. The editorial introduction to Jean's report incorrectly states that she convened a third oral history conference in 1976.
  27. Jean Teasdale, letter to Alan Roberts, 28 September 1981 reproduced in *OHAA Circular 3*, 10 February 1982, SLSA, SRG 257/4.
  28. Surveying oral history abroad in David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum (eds), *Oral History.. An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, American Association for State and Local History, 1984, Louis M. Starr mistakenly credits Joan Campbell's second conference with '[giving] birth to an association in 1975', p. 19. Nevertheless, the list of contacts published in the proceedings was instrumental to Jean Teasdale achieving her goal three years later.
  29. Teasdale, circular letter, *op. cit.*
  30. Ferrell, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
  31. Jean Teasdale (ed.), *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 1, April 1978, p. 1.
  32. *Ibid.*, p. 3. Jean Teasdale reported on the Colloquium in *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 2, July 1978, pp. 1-2.
  33. Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting of the Oral History Association of Australia held in Lecture Room 5, Arts Building, University of Western Australia at 8 p.m. on 26.7.78, pp. 6-, SLSA, SRG 257/3.
  34. Five nominations from the floor are recorded in the minutes. Another three people were listed in the committee as published in *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 3, Spring 1978, pp. 1-2; Ferrell, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
  35. See, for example, 'In Memoriam', *op. cit.*, and Margaret Hamilton, 'Jean Teasdale, 1928-2002' in *OHAA Journal*, no. 25, 2003, p. 112.

36. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 1, April 1978, p. 1. Emphasis added.
37. Western Australian opposition to a national rather than a local association is evident in the Minutes of the Inaugural Meeting, *op. cit.*
38. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 3, May 1980, p. 1, and Jean Teasdale's response in *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 3, no. 1, October 1980, pp. 1-3.
39. Jean Teasdale, 'The Oral History Association of Australia Our Beginnings', *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 1, November 1979, p. 3.
40. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 3, Spring 1978, p. 3.
41. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 1, November 1979, p. 3.
42. Teasdale, circular letter, *op. cit.*
43. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 5, Autumn 1979, p. 2.
44. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 3, Spring 1978, p. 11.
45. *OHAA Journal*, no. 1, 1978-1979, p. 8.
46. Ferrell, *op. cit.*, p. 134.
47. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 4, Summer 1979, p. 7; *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 2, March 1980, p. 1.
48. SLSA, SRG 257/2.
49. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 6, Winter 1979, p. 1.
50. The draft constitution circulated by Jean Teasdale in July 1978 required an AGM. The constitution adopted at the first AGM in August 1979 made provision for BGMs instead.
51. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 3, no. 1, October 1980, p. 1. The position of organising secretary in the 1978 draft constitution had been split to become secretary and liaison officer in 1979. Jean Teasdale had held them concurrently.
52. Roberts, *op. cit.*, p. IT
53. *Ibid*, pp. 17-18.
54. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 3, no. 1, October 1980, pp. 2-3.
55. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 3, no. 4, August 1981, p. 4.
56. In February 1981 Jean Teasdale resumed the role of secretary from which she had resigned in May 1980. She had ended her leave of absence from the role of liaison officer in December 1980. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 3, no. 4, August 1981, p. 5.
57. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 3, no. 4, August 1981, p. 4.
58. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 1, November 1979, p. 1.
59. The location of this series of Jean Teasdale's interviews had not been ascertained at time of publication.
60. At the 1983 BGM the national executive and council was replaced with a national committee.
61. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 2, no. 2, March 1980, p. 4; *Oral History Newsletter* vol. 1, no. 6, Winter 1979, p. 1. Information about the storm comes from John Ferrell, who called the meeting.
62. The Queensland branch was formed sometime between December 1981 and April 1982. See *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 4, no. 2, November 1981, p. 10; *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 5, no. 1, March 1983, p. 9. The latter has an account of the branch's first workshop on 24-25 April 1982. The Victorian branch was formed on 1 December 1982 see *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 5, no. 1, March 1983, p. 8.
63. Tasmanian branch report in *OHAA Journal*, no. 13, 1991, p. 130; information from Jill Cassidy, founding branch president and co-editor with Elspeth Wishart of *Launceston Talks*; and letter from Lyall Hunt to Beth Robertson, 6 October 1983, identifying Doug Munro, Port Arthur Conservation Project, National Parks and Wildlife Service as the secretary of the Tasmanian branch, SLSA, SRG 257, Correspondence In, 1983.
64. Janette Condon, letter to Beth Robertson, 21 April 1983, SLSA, SRG 257, Correspondence In, 1983.
65. Janis Wilton, 'General Editor's Note', in *OHAA Journal*, no. 8, 1986, p. 1.
66. Beth M. Robertson, 'A History of the *Oral History Handbook*', in *Word of Mouth, Newsletter of the South Australian Branch of the Oral History Association of Australia*, Autumn 2006, pp. 7-8.
67. Beth M. Robertson, *Oral History Handbook*, fifth edition, Unley, S. Aust., Oral History Association of Australia (South Australian Branch) Inc., 2006.
68. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 1, no. 3, Spring 1978, p. 3.
69. Lesley Jenkins, *Talking Together. A Guide to Community Oral History Projects*, Oral History Association of Australia - Qld Inc., Kelvin Grove, Qld, 1999.
70. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 3, no. 1, October 1980, p. 3. Jean Teasdale also put a motion on notice for discussion on the agenda of the 1983 BGM calling for an investigation of the possibility of forming an Australasian Regional Association, SLSA, SRG 257, Minutes, 13 April 1983.
71. Information from Jams Wilton.
72. Teasdale to Roberts, 5 November 1981, *op. cit.*
73. *Oral History Newsletter*, vol. 3, no. 1, October 1980, p. 3.

The Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies has produced this map detailing the languages used across Australia. Barani, an Aboriginal word of the Sydney language that means "yesterday", is a project detailing the Aboriginal history of the Sydney area. Prior to the arrival of the British, there were between 300,000 and one million Aboriginal people living in Australia. 1788 - First Fleet and Convicts. The Dutch first sighted Australia in 1606 before Captain Cook claimed the land for Great Britain in 1770. The First Fleet of 11 boats arrived at Botany Bay in 1788 to establish New South Wales as a penal colony (receiving convicts until 1848). Convicts were later sent to the other states, with the exception of South Australia, which was established as a free colony in 1836. Long Desperate Hours at the Typewriter: Establishing the Oral History Association of Australia. Beth M. Robertson. 2008. This paper was requested by the editor to mark the 30th anniversary of the Oral History Association of Australia. It documents the founding of a national association by Jean Teasdale in Perth in 1978. (More). Cite.