DICKINSON COLLEGE
COMMUNITY STUDIES CENTER
Fall/Winter 2002

Director's Notes

The Community Studies Center has been very busy since our last newsletter. We have settled into our new facility, had an open house for alumnae at Homecoming, sponsored an African American music festival, and hosted a second Crossing Borders program with participants from Dickinson, Xavier and Spelman and returned to fieldwork in the Carlisle African-American community under the supervision of Susan Rose.

Our development program in July was an Oral History Workshop for faculty and staff. Overseen by our own Kim Rogers, some of the best oral historians in the world spent eight days training our enthusiastic group: Alesandro Portelli, worked with the group for two days, laying out the complexities of analysis and interpretation of oral testimony; Valerie Yow, whose book *Recording Oral History* sets the standards, spent two days on the nuts and bolts of interviewing and collecting and the ethics of fieldwork; Charlie Hardy did a one day workshop on audio production; and I did one day on the use of video and representation in film. Already one of our participants, Catherine Beaudry, has launched an exciting new project on French Canadian immigration to Maine and another, Sinan Koont, has taken a "pilot" to Cuba for a January course.

One of our most consuming new projects takes us back to the earliest days of fieldwork here at Dickinson. In March of 1979 when the Three Mile Island accident occurred, four Dickinson professors (Dan Bechtel, Melissa and Julius Kassovic, and I) supervised students as they interviewed nearly four hundred people in the community. Those interviews have not been available to anyone but the primary investigators because this is the agreement we established with our narrators. March 28, 2004 will be the 25th anniversary of the event and we are working on a WEB site that will make many of the interviews available to researchers. This is a huge project that will also include a sampling of TMI Alert (a watchdog group in Harrisburg) papers under the supervision of John Osborne and new interviews that are being conducted as this newsletter arrives by Kim Roger's and my students in oral history. Simply digitizing and organizing the original interviews is a daunting task, but with the aid of Jim Gerencser, College Archivist, and supervised by assistant director Madelyn Campbell, a whole cadre of students is working on this. We are hoping to get reflections of all the researchers who participated looking back at their experience from this distance as well. So those who get the newsletter will hear from me soon.

Things currently in progress or in the offing which you will hear more about in the next newsletter include a return project to Patagonia with Marcello Borges and John Osborne this last January and a 4.8 million dollar, four-year health care project, funded by the State of Pennsylvania headed up by Kjell Enge (Anthropology) and Marie Helweg-Larson (Psychology). This project will be carried out in cooperation with the University of Pennsylvania Medical School and Cheyney University and will provide unprecedented opportunities for student field research on health care outcomes of minority populations in Philadelphia and Harrisburg. Receiving this grant is clear recognition of Community Studies' excellence in training undergraduates. In the fall, Professors Borges, Enge, and Rose will return to Adams County for another Mosaic, this time starting in Mexico where many of the migrants begin their journey. Through it all, we continue to see students thrive on real, in-the-field research and analysis.

- Lonna M. Malmsheimer

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The African American Music Festival Comes to Dickinson

By Glenn Guerra '05 and Judith Rudge '05

On October 5th 2002, the Central Pennsylvania Consortium presented Dickinson College with a series of hip, vibrant, charming and moving musical performances: The African-American Music Festival. The CPC and some Dickinson College offices sponsored the event, in hopes of broadening the global and intellectual experiences available to students. The music was elaborate in composition, and more importantly, it was fun. The African-American Music Festival kicked off on the Drayer Porch at 3:00 p.m. It began with Steelton's Beulah Baptist Youth Choir and traced African-American music from blues to jazz and then to hip-hop and performance poetry. An array of students, faculty, and community members gathered around the porch on Morgan Field to listen to the rich traditional and contemporary musical forms that are part of a historical and cultural African-American identity. The Beulah Baptist Church Youth Choir and the Dickinson College Choir gave the first performances. The youth choir, which was directed by Marion Henderson, prepared an extensive set of songs, and their voices, especially those of the young children, were fantastic. The Dickinson College Choir directed by Professor Richard Rischar joined the Baptist choir for a few numbers, and with the help of a musicologist, Guthrie Ramsey of the University of Pennsylvania, they even learned songs in front of the audience that were then performed. Local blues artist Gary Harrington with Ross Mounds and Chris Waller gave the next performance. Harrington had recently been seen at Allenberry Resort during a performance of "Jesus Christ Superstar." His blues group, as expected, was smaller and more solo-oriented. The following performance was by Guthrie Ramsey, along with Marion "Coco" Coleman. Ramsey is a pianist and historical musicologist. Before he performed, he briefly spoke of some of the influences that contributed to jazz as a musical form. He mentioned the use of call-and-response and the way in which musical elements, such as the tambours, clash for intense effect. He emphasized the importance of singers in jazz compositions and explained that the singer becomes the emotional focal point of a piece through which the song appeals to the audience. When Marion "Coco" Coleman performed, she roused the audience by moving from the stage down to the grass and singing among them. She employed the call-and-response technique several times. She sang with a strong, passionate voice, and the audience cheered joyously at the end of her performance.

As the night progressed, the attendance grew tremendously during the hip-hop group performance and the Freestyle Battle. The next performance was by a rising hip-hop group called

Empire Dynasty. There were four guys in the group, and the energy that they put into their performance made a huge impact on the enthusiasm of the audience. They all took turns rapping individually, and came together for the choruses of their songs. The audience was excited and the evening still had much more to offer. After the Empire Dynasty performance, Aja Owens, Makeeba Browne, and Judith Rudge performed an electrifying series of individual and group poems. performance poetry is not necessarily a musical form, but the content of the poems nevertheless expressed a strong sense womanhood to the audience. After the poets, there was a freestyle battle coordinated by Otilio Baez and Makeeba Browne, where emcees faced off against one another in a competition of rhymes. The object was for each emcees to bring down their opponent through a continuous flow of rhyme and sharp punch lines. Each emcee was given a minute to deliver something to the other opponent. Members of Empire Dynasty also participated and the emcees had to abide by the ban of profanity and sexually explicit words. As Otilio Baez put it, "Watch the curses in the verses." This was difficult but they complied with the rules as best as they could. They improvised punch lines and rhymes, sometimes forcing themselves to repeat a line while they thought of the next one, but these punch lines always seemed to elicit loud cheers from the audience. Battles like this are very common in the hip hop world, and the lines that emcees hit each other with are clever, deep and uncompromising. The battle on Drayer Porch was no exception. The emcees criticized each other's looks, previous rhymes and movements. The program concluded with an open-mic session where various people presented their own freestyle rhymes and poetry. According to Ramsey, the audience should have noticed the continuity in the musical performances and the way that certain elements of one style have been incorporated into the other, as well as the ways in which musical forms like hip-hop have formed their own distinct identity in African-American culture. It was an invigorating experience, the musical scope and appreciation level for African-American music rose that night. It left an indelible imprint in the hearts and memory of all people in attendance.

Oral History Summer Institute

Participants spent ten intensive days learning about oral history and discussing ways in which they might incorporate field research into the courses they teach.

Seated left to right: Grace Jarvis, Joyce Bylander, Charles Hardy, Kim Rogers, Sinan Koont, Dan Schubert, Teddy Ako, Steve McKenzie, Richard Richar, Susan Spillman, Gersende Vuillamy, and Sharon O'Brien

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Dickinson Student Retells her Crossing Borders Experience

By Jamie Alexander

I will never forget my experience in Africa. It was a place that I really thought I would visit later in life when I would be financially stable. But I was only twenty-two years of age and very far from having money. Therefore, the recollections of my experience are extremely distinct thus Cameroon has served as a valuable site of memory for me. The people, food, education, and the overall culture are still with me. They serve as reminders to live life one day at a time and not make assumptions about different cultures. The sociology class that was part of the program served as a priceless aspect of the Crossing Borders experience as well.

My friends and extended family were quite supportive of my endeavors when I explained my plans to pursue the Crossing Borders program. In the beginning, my parents' reactions about traveling to Cameroon were different, but they both agreed that I should not go. They coped with the idea of "Africa" that had been portrayed by the media as an unsafe, HIV/AIDS infested continent in peril and were apprehensive because I would not be near my home-state of Louisiana. My dad understood, but he still did not want me in a place where he could not physically come to my rescue if I needed him. However, with the help of the Lord, as well as a lot of convincing, the initial objections became support; support of the person who at the age of ten said "I will live in Africa when I grow up."

Upon my arrival in Cameroon, many questions emerged about where my romanticized view of Africa as a place of kings and queens had evolved. I could smell, see, and feel the difference. We arrived in Yaounde and began a forty minute drive with beautiful African music playing. The scenery outside held a striking resemblance to Louisiana. I saw miles and miles of sugarcane which came as a slight surprise. Nevertheless, I did not realize that this African scene and music would remain in my heart and thoughts for the rest of my life.

The music that our guide Teku played was that of the artist Longue Longue. It was extremely upbeat and exciting to our group; the beating drums were absolutely exquisite. But with the music came prejudice that I never knew I had. I envisioned women dancing around campfires near homes in the countryside, singing, lots of food, and life without technology (washers, dryers, and stoves). I also imagined people with natural hair, skin and nails. In that instant, I actually expected Africa to be unaltered by the many advances the rest of the world has seen in medicine and technology.

My visions of Africa shocked me because I had previously envisioned myself involved with the Cameroonian families, and being accepted and welcomed. I also expected that I wouldn't want to return to the States at the end of this trip. I did not expect to find my direct roots, but to experience the love of my indirect roots; the love of the descendants of the relatives of my ancestors. However, the negative pre-conceived notions were sub-conscious and came out all at once, which caused a feeling of confusion upon my arrival in Cameroon. Traveling to Cameroon really forced us to come out of our comfort zones and to analyze both ourselves as individuals and the morality of American society.

This is why I had so many questions running through my head. What caused me to think that Africans had to have natural hair and homes in the countryside? Where did that part of my image of Africa come from? Why was I thinking that I would see women dancing around a campfire? Was there really a "positive stereotype" of Cameroon? I then realized that this trip was going to be a different type of learning experience than the one I expected. I knew that I would be learning more about the African culture as well as my Crossing Borders' classmates and professors. But was I ready to learn more about Jamie, the young

lady who had once believed she was completely objective? These were the thoughts running through my mind on that breezy night in June.

And now, almost six months later, I have answered these questions and continue to raise even more questions. It was an amazing opportunity to cross borders through travel in Cameroon. However, the Crossing Borders sociology course at Dickinson College lead by Professors Sharon O'Brien and Susan Rose has been equally eye-opening, allowing us to cross psychological boundaries; borders that I never new existed in my thoughts and words. Through this course and the ideas that I have taken from it, I have been afforded the unique opportunity to cross racial, socioeconomic and gender boundaries everyday. I have learned the value of appreciating another culture as opposed to criticizing and/or trying to change it.

It has been an extremely valuable aspect of my experience to be able to analyze my own personal memories and evaluate them in the context of larger issues, including classism, sexism, and racism, that plague our society and our home schools of Xavier University, Dickinson College, and Spelman College. We, as individuals, have moved out of our bubbles, added new meaning to "changing the world" and have become the changes we want to see within our society. We have laughed, argued, cried, built character, and grown together. My only wish (and it is becoming reality) is that we take our own experience back to our own communities and to the future communities that we will build. We will change the world, but even a thousand mile journey begins with the first step. The Crossing Borders program has been that first step.

Local Women Give Public Reading

By Madelyn Campbell

On October 15, 2002 several women from Prof. Sharon O'Brien's Memoir Group presented selected readings to an audience of family, friends and community supporters. Personal stories included reminiscences of favorite foods cooked years ago and now shared with family, a secret admiration of Martha Stewart, a touching biographical sketch of a much loved stepmother, a cross-country honeymoon adventure and a child's recollections of catching fireflies on hot summer nights.

Pictured at the left is Grace D'Alo reading while fellow group members Meredith Rials, Marge Mowery and Demi Hauseman lend a supportive ear.

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Professor Beaudry Conducts Interviews With French-Canadians in Lewiston

By Dana MacPhee '04

The woman at the Museum in Toulouse was taken from France at the age of seven and was the only one to return after WWII. She is now 68 years old. She spends her days sitting in the Museum of the Resistance and Deportation in Toulouse, France and telling her story to whomever is willing to listen. Sadly, no one has ever gotten her story on film.

At the end of her sabbatical, Professor Catherine Beaudry chose to participate in the Oral History Summer Institute. As director of the Dickinson College program in Toulouse for four years, Beaudry had come across many people she thought students should interview, including the woman in the Museum. She knew she needed to learn oral history methods in order to be able to teach students how to interview so this woman's story, and so many other stories, would never be lost.

While at the institute, Beaudry came up with an idea for her own oral history project. Her father had grown up in Lewiston, Maine, but had left at an early age to join the Foreign Service. However, she remembered a population from Lewiston that she had heard about a community called "Le Petit Canada."

In 1860, people from all parts of Canada began migrating to Lewiston because of the work available in its then thriving textile and shoe mill industries. At the height of the migration, there were 18 social clubs with activities ranging from snow shoeing to log rolling. The real feat, however, was

that the people of "Le Petit Canada" were able to keep their French skills strong throughout six generations, from 1860-1960. Children attended French-speaking parochial schools taught by nuns who had come directly from France. There were also 28 active language societies with 14,000 members who all continued to speak French.

Beaudry was particularly interested in the way the French-Canadians kept their French language and culture in America. She believes that "by keeping alive their French…they kept alive conversation and culture and of course, their religiosity." And culture and religion were vital for them. "French-Canadians have the least desire for social mobility," Beaudry said, because they lead humanistic and egalitarian lives and are mostly concerned with keeping strong cultural and religious ties.

In doing her background research, she noticed that she only read the stories of those people who had left Lewiston and she wanted to get the larger picture by hearing the stories of the majority of the population, those who had stayed in Lewiston.

In order to conduct the interviews, Beaudry received a grant from Dickinson's Research and Development office, which she used as her "seed money" to start on what would become a long-term, in-depth project. She first went to Lewiston in October and interviewed women in their 90s and 100s, realizing that "if I don't get these people on tape they will be gone."

Beaudry began conducting her interviews in English, but her narrators only told her of their accomplishments and work, the things that could be found on a resume. Yet, when she spoke to them in French, "some people were expansive. They completely opened up." Beaudry believes that her French "was the key. I was not a monolingual, which to them means Yankee."

One of Beaudry's first interviews was with a woman named Martha Rivard. Beaudry asked Madame Rivard where she was born and Madame Rivard answered with her entire life story. "Every part of the French-Canadian migration to Lewiston came out in the interview but on a very personal level," Beaudry said.

Beaudry, who has been teaching at Dickinson for 15 years and taught a seminar called "Intercultural Communication: French and

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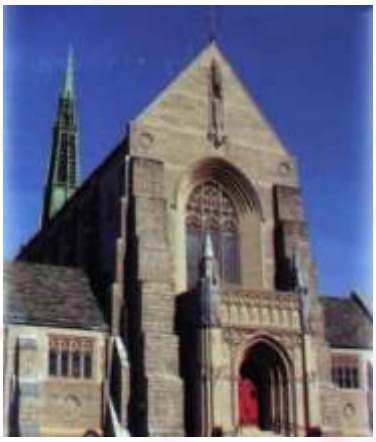


The Franco-American Heritage Center in Lewiston

American Women's Autobiographies Compared" describes her oral history interviews with these women as "oral autobiographies." Beaudry returned to Lewiston at the end of November and plans to go back when winter break begins. After she finishes interviewing the women of "Le Petit Canada," she will move on to the next part of her project, which will involve interviewing the nuns who came from France. They were the teachers in the parochial schools and, therefore, were critical to keeping French alive for generations.

For Beaudry, oral histories are fascinating. She loves talking about the women she has met and sums up her experiences well. "It's very exciting doing history of people who are percentages."

Henry Goldshmidt Speaks on Race and Religous Relations in Crown Heights

By Lauren Cencic '05

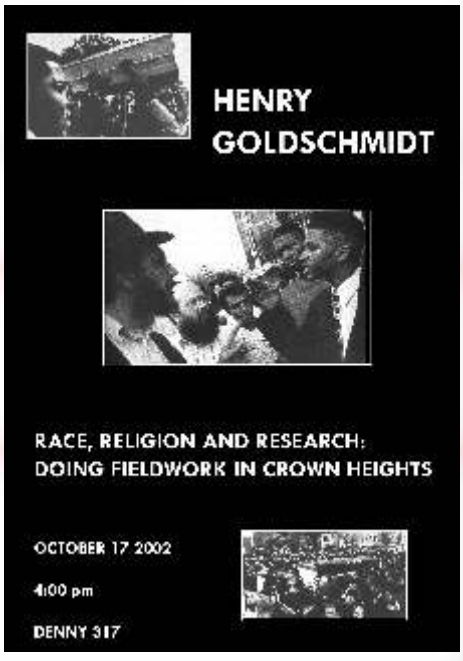
On October 17, the Community Studies Center sponsored "Race, Religion and Research: Doing Fieldwork in Crown Heights" which was presented by Henry Goldschmidt of the Dickinson Religion Department. The lecture was based on over six years of research for his Ph.D. dissertation which he received from the University of California at Santa Cruz. Professor Goldschmidt lived in Crown Heights, Brooklyn from 1996 to 1998 while researching and conducting interviews.

His work is based on three days of violence that occurred in Crown Heights in August of 1991. Crown Heights has deep religious and racial differences. The conflict occurred between members of the Lubavitch Hasidim, an orthodox Jewish sect, and Afro-Caribbean and African-Americans. Professor Goldschmidt estimates that Jews constitute only 8 or 10 percent of the neighborhood and that the Afro-Caribbean and African American populations represent 65 and 15 or 20 percent of the total population, respectively, depending on how the area's boundaries are defined.

On August 19, 1991, a car from the Lubavitcher Rebbe motorcade struck two Black children, killing seven year-old Gavin Cato. An angry crowd gathered and three hours later, Yankel Rosenbaum, a 29 year-old Jew, was attacked and stabbed by a group of Black youths. Rosenbaum died the next morning. Violence and unrest continued for three days which were marked by angry demonstrations, hurled rocks, slogans, slurs, and ransacked stores. Black youths also assaulted Jews, journalists, and police officers.

The Jewish and Afro-Caribbean and African-American populations view the violence of August, 1991 through contrasting perspectives. The Hasidic community focuses on the religious difference between the two groups. They feel the event was an expression of anti-Semitism and refer to it as a "pogrom". Blacks in Crown Heights refer to the incident as a "riot" or "rebellion". They believe the most salient difference is race, not religion. They view the violence of the Black youths as a political protest against racial inequalities and the exploitation of a Black majority by a White, albeit Jewish, minority.

Professor Goldschmidt used this divergence point as the basis of his research. He traces the intersection between race and religion by how people interpret the violence of 1991. The second focus of his lecture was the way in which he was perceived while doing research in Crown Heights and whether it was in terms of race or religion.



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