

ESA HISTORICAL RECORDS COMMITTEE

(ESTABLISHED 1944)

NEWSLETTER

*Resources for the history of the Ecological Society of America
and the history of ecology and allied sciences*

No. 1

April 2015

Looking toward the Centennial: A Guide to the Website and Recent Bulletin Essays

The Historical Records Committee has been busy preparing for the upcoming Centennial meeting in Baltimore, August 9-15. **Sally White** and **Susannah Tysor** have been improving the website design and adding information relevant to the Centennial celebrations. Thanks to **Jean Langenheim** and **Art Cooper** and several of our committee members, we have two completed timelines on *ESA's Living Past Presidents* and *ESA's Early Past Presidents*, respectively. In addition there is a general timeline for the history of ESA. All three may be found on the website: <http://esa.org/history/timelines/>

The Biographies page also continues to expand: <http://esa.org/history/biographies/>

ESA's Bulletin has published contributions from our committee in the Centennial year. **Dennis Knight** and **Douglas Sprugel** completed their "History of ESA's Historical Records Committee" [Bulletin 96 (1): 32-40, January 2015]. It is also on our website here: <http://esa.org/history/references/>

Sharon Kingsland published an essay on the prehistory of ESA's founding, "The Ecological Society of America: Founders, Founding Stories, Foundations" [Bulletin 96 (1): 5-11, January 2015].

Kiyoko Miyanishi continues with her excellent short series on the history of ESA decade by decade, the most recent being "ESA's Fifth Decade: A Period of Growth" [Bulletin 96 (1): 41-44, January 2015]. Previous essays are linked to our website at: <http://esa.org/history/references/>

Committee members published two essays in the April 2015 Bulletin: **Jean Langenheim**, "W. S. Cooper As I Knew Him: Teacher, Mentor, Friend" [Bulletin 96(2): 184-208]; and **Dennis Knight's** "paper trail" essay "From Phytosociology and Plant Evolution to Ecosystem Analysis" (pp. 209-210).

Join Us for these HRC-sponsored Sessions and Events at the Centennial Meeting!

Workshop on Saturday, August 8, afternoon. We will host an "unofficial" workshop (and dinner) for our committee members to help us plan activities in the post-Centennial period and discuss ideas that can't be incorporated into our regular business meeting. Please book your hotel early as the meeting will be well attended.

Special Session: Ecology's Concepts: How Are They Used and Valued? Monday, August 10, 8-10:00 p.m. (Organized by William Reiners, with Jeffrey Lockwood, Steven Prager, Derek Reiners)

Symposium: Fostering Transdisciplinary Science to Meet 21st-Century Challenges: How Can Ecology Learn from the 'Science of Team Science'? Tuesday, August 11, 1:30-5:00 p.m. (Organized by S. Kingsland and supported by the National Socio-Environmental Synthesis Center, Maryland).

Organized Oral Session: External Influences on Ecological Theory: The Effect of Economic, Sociopolitical, Climatic and Other Conditions. Thursday, August 13, 1:30-5:00 p.m. (Organized by Michael Huston).

News from the ESA Archives at the University of Georgia

In mid-March Juliana Mulroy, Alan Covich, and Sharon Kingsland met over the course of a week with several people at the University of Georgia Libraries (UGAL) in Athens, Georgia. Our visit was a follow-up to an HRC-UGAL workshop held in 2011. Since then the Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, where ESA papers are held, moved to the Richard B. Russell Building, a new state-of-the-art facility which combines superb space for scholarly research and public events, with careful attention to modern “green” design that has enhanced that section of the campus environment. Our wide-ranging discussions included plans for ESA papers as well as related collections held at Georgia. We met with Toby Graham (University Librarian and Associate Provost), Katherine Stein (Director of the Hargrett Library), Leandra Nessel (Development Officer, Main Library), E. Gilbert Head (Archivist and Curator for ESA collections), and Christian Lopez (Oral History and Media Archivist).



Katherine (“Kat”) Stein oriented us with a tour of the building, which includes handsome space for exhibits, an auditorium for public lectures, comfortable reading rooms, and an enormous modern vault capable of holding 220,000 cubic feet of archival materials (*shown at left, courtesy of UGAL*). Discussions with Toby Graham, head of the UGA libraries, focused more on long-term ideas such as building a consortium that might link UGA with other repositories that are strong in the history of ecology and environmentalism. Creating a consortium of this kind requires significant

funding, however, and has to be accompanied by a strategy for fund-raising, including raising funds from private donors.

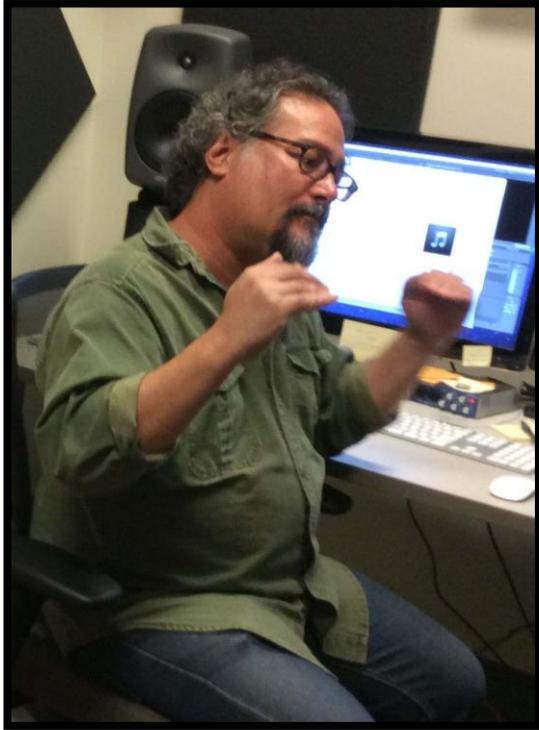
Other meetings with Kat Stein, Christian Lopez, and Gilbert Head concentrated on goals and tasks for this year and the two years following the Centennial meeting. These included the following specific goals:

1. Complete the finding aid of ESA papers so that it can be put online in the Centennial year;
2. Along with #1, upload a small selection of documents to the HRC website, as a way to highlight the types of materials that can be found in the collections;
3. Work with UGAL to revise our Guidelines to help ESA have a clearer idea of what UGAL is seeking for its collections;
4. UGAL will accept electronic documents (a change from past policy) and ideally would like to establish a set time for annual transmission of materials from ESA officers to UGAL.
5. Write an addendum to the Memorandum of Understanding between ESA and UGAL, in order to incorporate standard language that is currently not in the MOU; this will need approval by ESA’s Council;
6. Digitize and upload oral histories, including those described in Dennis Knight’s oral history project (see below) as well as oral histories that were part of the history project focused on The Institute of Ecology (TIE), which started within ESA. TIE’s papers are also held at UGAL.

Mid-range goals (1-3 years) include:

1. Work with UGAL to develop a grant proposal to the National Historical Publications and Records Commission, to complete catalogs of the Odum and Golley collections at UGAL;
2. Start on a survey of national collections dealing with history of ecology and environmentalism, which might support fund-raising activities and the idea of creating a broader consortium of libraries;
3. Mounting an exhibit at UGAL in 2017, which could focus on a conservation theme and also support fund-raising activities.

After our trip to UGAL, Dennis Knight also visited on April 1 to deliver a banker's box with about 30 folders of his own ESA papers. Gilbert Head has updated the ESA archives inventory to include these files.



Dennis had a productive meeting with Christian Lopez (*shown here explaining technical aspects of recordings to Julie and Sharon*) about the oral histories that Dennis and others have been conducting, which were just being downloaded at UGAL when we visited. Discussions involved use of recording technologies and interview strategies designed to capture the spontaneity of the interviewee. Dennis will be updating our instructions on oral histories as a result of this visit.

Christian informed Dennis about new websites that provide guidance for doing and archiving oral histories, such as OHDA (Oral History in the Digital Age) and OHMS (Oral History Metadata Synthesizer). We were intrigued to learn about OHMS in particular, and believe it will be a terrific tool both for researchers and teachers, replacing transcripts.

UGAL's support ensured that our meetings were productive and forward-looking. During the coming year we anticipate cementing what promises to be a great working relationship. Down the road we look forward to broader initiatives that might link University of Georgia Archives to other repositories of significance for the history of ESA, ecology and environmentalism, although

this is a more ambitious and longer-term goal.

Exploring the ESA Archives: Why Visit or Write?

Even if you aren't interested in ESA organizational history specifically, there is much to find about the history of ecology at UGA's Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, both within the ESA archives and in other collections. Although processing of these collections and Finding Aids is not complete, there is an excellent staff, including some with intimate and long-term knowledge of the collections. Their help is invaluable; take advantage of it while you can.

Archives everywhere are limited by available resources and must prioritize their efforts in terms of processing and making materials more "visible." One of the ways that priorities are set is by the number of queries and visits. Up until now, such interest in our collections has been limited because researchers have had difficulty finding out what might be available. We are working with the UGAL staff to change that.

The ESA Archives and related collections such as TIE (The Institute of Ecology), the Eugene Odum and Frank Golley papers, as well as other collections of special interest to UGAL (such as natural history) are housed in a beautiful new facility under energetic new leadership. We were "on hold" while the new library was being

constructed and the collections moved, but they are now open for business and welcome our inquiries. Now is the time to visit or write.

Julie has developed a list of tips for ESA Archives visitors; they will appear in a future newsletter. Email her at mulroy@denison.edu if you plan to visit before the list appears.

HRC's Oral History Project

Since this HRC project began several years ago, oral histories have been recorded for 12 long-time ESA members (Larry Bliss, James Brown, Art Cooper, Scott Collins, Yaffa Grossman, John Hobbie, Jean Langenheim, Ori Loucks, Gordon Orians, Robert Paine, Patricia Werner, and George Woodwell). Ten recordings are now archived at the University of Georgia and the others will be submitted soon. Each submission includes a folder with the recording (WAV digital format in most cases; MP3 recordings are considered inferior); a detailed, searchable summary of the topics that were discussed (digital); and a copy of the signed release form (scanned plus the original). Older ESA officers and award winners have priority at the present time, but others are being interviewed as the opportunity arises. Thus far, each interview has lasted from 1 to 1.5 hours and has been organized around the following questions:

1. What motivated you to become an ecologist and how did it happen?
2. What were significant milestones in the development of your career and why did they happen?
3. What major developments have you noticed in the development of ecology as a discipline?
4. What major developments have you noticed during your involvement with ESA? Frustrations? Improvements?

Dennis Knight, project coordinator, now has three oral history kits that can be sent to individuals with an interest in doing additional interviews. Each kit includes an easy-to-operate digital recorder with instructions and guidelines on how to proceed. Anyone interested in doing an interview, or with suggestions on who should be interviewed, is encouraged to contact Dennis at dhknight@uwyo.edu. Those doing interviews thus far are Eva Dettweiler-Robinson, Rich Fonda, Richard Houghton, Dennis Knight, Doug Sprugel, and Tom Wentworth.

Christian Lopez noted that UGA does not edit interviews in any way, but simply archives what is sent. People who want to edit or take clips from the interviews in future will do so on a copy of the original that UGAL provides, or on a copy that Dennis or his successor can provide. For now, people should ask Dennis for access to the folders, which include the recording, a detailed summary of the topics and people discussed, and a copy of the signed release form.

The HRC newsletter welcomes contributions from HRC members and friends. Please send Newsletter items to Sharon Kingsland at sharon@jhu.edu