

Building Historical Collections with Non-Historians through Oral and Public History Projects

Amrys Williams, Center for the History of Business, Technology,
and Society – Hagley Museum and Library

As the space industry becomes more and more the work of private enterprise, involving non-historians in the collecting process is increasingly important. Oral history and community partnerships offer one promising avenue. Using my experience as the oral historian at the Hagley Library, a repository of business and industrial history, and as the former director of Under Connecticut Skies, a public history project at Wesleyan University's Van Vleck Observatory, I will share some successful ways of doing history in partnership with scientists, community groups, students, companies, and other non-historians. My remarks will focus on building interdisciplinary collaborations, planning and carrying out oral history projects, and using interpretation and public programs to broaden the reach of historical collecting.