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# OHMAR Newsletter

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## **THE INCREASE AND DIFFUSION OF KNOWLEDGE: AN INTERVIEW WITH PAMELA M. HENSON**

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*As is customary, the OHMAR Newsletter presents below an interview with the recipient of the Forrest Pogue Award. The 1995 awardee is Pamela M. Henson, director of the Institutional History Division of the Office of Smithsonian Archives. The interview was conducted August 11, 1995 by Anne G. Ritchie, archivist and oral historian for the National Gallery of Art.*

**Ritchie:** I thought we could start today, Pam, with your telling me about your background, and growing up, and your education.

**Henson:** I was born in New Jersey in 1948 and grew up in northern New Jersey. I went to school at George Washington University, got my bachelor's there in American Studies, and then my master's as well, focusing on the museum program at George Washington University. I began working at the Smithsonian right as I was finishing my master's degree in American studies.

**Ritchie:** How did you choose George Washington University?

**Henson:** Well, actually I didn't initially choose George Washington. I initially went to C.W. Post College on Long Island, in part because it was near home and my dad knew one of the professors there. But I didn't particularly like it. Then I decided that I wanted to come down to Washington. I was at that point a premed major, and George Washington had a very good premedical program and hospital. So I was looking at schools that had premedical programs, and Washington seemed like a good compromise. I liked the city. It was close enough, I could get home to my family when I wanted to, but far enough away that I was further away than I had been out on Long Island.

**Ritchie:** So you've always had a scientific interest.

**Henson:** Yes, I was a biology major initially. I switched later. When I switched majors, I really quite practically was looking for a major that I could carry the credits I already had forward into a degree, and American studies had no course requirements. It allowed me to get a humanities degree without redoing extra credits. However, I then really became interested in the material culture program in the American studies program, and that's what I pursued.

**Ritchie:** While you were in school, did you do any internships or have any jobs that related to your course work?

**Henson:** No, I always worked my way through school, so I worked as a departmental secretary at the university, but didn't do the other type of thing because I was actually working to put myself through school rather than being a full-time student and having that free time.

**Ritchie:** How did you first come to the Smithsonian?

*(continued on page 4)*

### **Mark Your Calendar**

**January 31, 1996: deadline for Workshop Grants (see p. 3)**

**April 20, 1996: OHMAR Spring Meeting, Port Washington, N.Y.**

**October 10-13, 1996: OHA Annual Conference and OHMAR Fall Meeting, Philadelphia, Pa.**

*Washington*

**Processing.** An overview of procedures for processing oral history collections, including accessioning, transcribing, cataloging, preservation, and access.

**Videohistory.** Use of video and motion picture technology and materials in an oral history project. When and how to use video or film to best effect.

State and local groups within the OHMAR region are encouraged to apply for workshops. Preference will be given to organizations with limited resources and in locations distant from the population centers where OHMAR typically meets.

Contact the OHMAR Workshop Committee for further details and an application form. Deadline for applications for 1996 is January 31, 1996.

Address inquiries to Chairperson, OHMAR Workshop Committee, P.O. Box 2351, Gallaudet University, Washington, D.C. 20002.

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**Pogue Award Interview: Pamela M. Henson** (continued from page 1)

**Henson:** I was taking the coursework in American studies that related to the museum program, and so many of our courses were down here and were taught by Smithsonian staff. I had told the people in the department I was interested in working at the Smithsonian, and they heard about, and told me about, a part-time job to do a visitor-behavior study in the Museum of Natural History. So for a year I and several other grad students followed visitors around the Museum of Natural History, coding on these big sheets their behavior, their level of interaction with the exhibits, whether they talked about them, how long they stayed and looked at an exhibit, whether they walked right through the hall. Then we would interview people on the way out of the museum.

**Ritchie:** The same people that you'd been following?

**Henson:** Right. And I learned a lot about human nature! [laughs] Then, while I was doing that, and while I was writing my master's thesis at the time, another American studies student, Judy Braun--now Judy Braun Zegas--had gotten a job working as a transcriber on the new oral history project here [in

the Smithsonian Archives]. She did not intend to stay and told me about it, so then I moved over into that job. When I moved over into that job, I knew that the historian was also leaving. The two of them had just set up the project that year but the historian wasn't staying, so what I was really interested in was moving over into the historian's position.

**Ritchie:** Who was conducting the interviews?

**Henson:** Miriam Freilicher, who had studied under Gould Colman at Cornell University; she had been trained by him in oral history.

**Ritchie:** And what was the focus of those early interviews?

**Henson:** Just purely institutional history. At that point, the first interviewee was one of the Secretaries of the Smithsonian, Charles Greeley Abbot, who at that point had worked at the Smithsonian for seventy-eight years, which was fairly unusual for most organizations. He was still coming into work three days a week. He was a hundred and two. That had been part of the impetus for the project, that we had so many people who had been here a staggering amount of time. This was 1973, and he had come here in 1895. He died shortly after the interview, but they did at least get to interview him. So the focus was on senior Smithsonian administrators and staff.

**Ritchie:** So your office skills probably came in handy in the transcribing.

**Henson:** Oh, yes.

**Ritchie:** And then how did you move from transcribing to interviewing?

**Henson:** Well, when I came in, Miriam was still here, but she had been accepted at law school, and she had decided she was going on to a career in law, so we knew she was leaving. Even though I was transcribing, she was also training me to become the interviewer. And they sent me to a workshop that Martha Ross gave at George Washington University. And Miriam was training me while I was there, transcribing, to become the historian. Then when she left, I was promoted into that position.

**Ritchie:** How has the oral history program changed during your tenure?

**Henson:** It was a very small part-time program. Actually, it is not larger than that now, in a way, although my position is now full time and the position of my assistant is full time. But we've expanded the focus of the interviews, or the range of interviews that we do. We do try to cover the most important people at the Smithsonian, but we also try to get a broader range of people who have worked here. So, for example, when I was doing interviews at the Smithsonian's Tropical Research Institute, we interviewed the director and we interviewed the scientists, but we also interviewed people in the local community who had had interactions with STRI over the years. We interviewed the game wardens who were from the local Panamanian community, that sort of thing. So we're trying to get a broader spectrum of people covered than just the elite of the institution.

**Ritchie:** It's such a large institution, you must have so many possibilities. How do you arrange your priorities?

**Henson:** It's really hopeless. However, we always talk to the people in the different bureaus at the Smithsonian and ask for suggestions. And staff who know about the project often just zip off a note to me and say, "Have you thought about this one or that one?" Also, because I'm part of an archives, one of the advantages is [that] the archivists are soliciting the papers of our retirees, or they are cleaning out people's offices when they retire, and they always keep an eye out and have suggestions for me. They know that somebody who has been a museum technician for forty years is leaving, they're cleaning out his or her office files, and they notify me that this person is a good candidate for an interview. So it's a combination of people in the bureaus and just people I meet over time. Very often when I'm interviewing someone, they'll say to me, "By the way, you should also interview so and so." And that's another way.

**Ritchie:** Have your interviews, the ones that you've done, focused in any particular area?

**Henson:** My major area of interest has been the history of science, so it's going back to that interest in biology. At one point I went back and got a Ph.D. in history and philosophy of science, so I'm mostly interested in the history of natural history, and especially the history of entomology. And because the Natural History Museum is really the oldest part of the Smithsonian, our oldest staff was there when I started interviewing. So my early focus was very

heavily on the history of natural history. The art and the history bureaus grew tremendously in the 1960s and on, and they are now reaching points where they need coverage as well. So I have had to expand out into general Smithsonian administration but also art history and history.

**Ritchie:** Did you use oral history in your graduate school work?

**Henson:** I did in my master's thesis, which was on the development of handicraft co-ops in Appalachia. So I interviewed people involved in those programs.

**Ritchie:** Now, that topic seems a little far removed from the history of science that you're focused on now.

**Henson:** Right. It relates to a couple of other interests. First of all, the Henson part of the family is from that part of the country, so I was interested in that part of the country to begin with. Secondly, I've always done crafts myself. I'm a weaver and knitter and that sort of thing and was very interested in crafts. And thirdly, this was the '60s. I was very involved when I was in college with social action type programs. Many of my friends were in the Peace Corps and that sort of thing, so I was interested in the history of social programs. That's in part what this related to, programs to go in and help the economy in Appalachia. But it was also coming out of a material culture focus in the American studies program.

**Ritchie:** So you used oral history for that. What about your Ph.D?

**Henson:** My Ph.D. is purely nineteenth century. The only way in which I used oral history is, I did not conduct any interviews myself, but I read interviews done by Gould Colman, of Cornell, interestingly enough, with people who knew the individual I was writing my dissertation on, who was a Cornell professor, an entomologist at Cornell.

**Ritchie:** So you benefitted from other oral history work in your Ph.D. work.

**Henson:** Right. I had come to realize how important this individual was through my own oral history interviews here. He really was the dean of American entomologists and had the largest school. Most of the entomologists who have come to the Smithsonian come out of the Cornell program. So they are students of [John Henry] Comstock's

students, and when I would do their intellectual genealogies, it would all go back to Comstock, which was why he was such an intriguing figure to me.

**Ritchie:** Tell me a little bit about the Smithsonian videohistory project, which is certainly an outgrowth of the oral history program.

**Henson:** That is really a Smithsonian-wide program. One of the things I should point out to place our project in context is [that] the project I do here is really just an institutional history project focusing on the history of the Smithsonian. But even prior to our establishing an oral history project in the Smithsonian Archives, where my collection is housed, there had been oral history at the Smithsonian. All of the museums tend to have oral history programs relating to their subject areas. The oldest one is the Archives of American Art, where going back to the '50s, even before it became part of the Smithsonian, they were interviewing artists. The Air and Space Museum does its own interviews in the history of aviation and astronautics. In the American History Museum, many of the curators do oral history interviews relating to their collections.

The Smithsonian Videohistory Program was a group effort by oral historians across the institution to experiment with using the visual medium. I would have to say it changed my own research, and I think a lot of our research, in the sense of making us much more visually oriented in terms of the research that we were doing. The Alfred P. Sloan Foundation approached the Secretary of the Smithsonian saying that they were interested in seeing the Smithsonian explore possibilities for videohistory, and a group of us, led by David DeVorkin of the Air and Space Museum, who had been doing audio-taped interviews, put together a proposal to the Sloan Foundation to do this, to experiment with videohistory. We limited the project to the history of science and technology, which the Sloan Foundation is specifically interested in, and to Smithsonian staff who would use this as part of their normal, ongoing research.

They gave us a grant of a million dollars, which over the course of five years we used to complete a number of projects documenting our collections and continuing our ongoing research. So people like Carlene Stephens in the National Museum of American History--she's a curator working on a history of clocks and watchmaking--when she was collecting materials from the Waltham Clock Company (they're an old company that was moving from traditional watches and clocks

into electronics; they were getting rid of all of their old equipment as they went to an electronic time-keeping environment), Carlene went up to the factory before she brought the equipment down here and videotaped the watch and clock makers at work, finding out how each piece of equipment was used, which is tremendous documentation to have for your collections.

**Ritchie:** Something that audio doesn't catch.

**Henson:** Right. As Carlene did the interviews, you can hear her remarking: "That's what that's for!" Because many times you'll bring in a piece of equipment from an industrial or craft environment and you really don't know how this thing was used. So to have a visual demonstration by a craftsman and then be able to ask them lots of questions about how they go about their work really supplements the documentation you have on that object, if you are going to keep it in the museum. It's really tremendous. So a number of curators from the museums did those sorts of projects. Other ones focused on an individual or brought together a group of people who were involved in a specific project and had them talk about it.

**Ritchie:** So there was a wide range of types. . .

**Henson:** . . .of approaches. Yes, we were experimenting. Our one constraint was: we really did not want plain old, sitting-in-a-chair, talking-head interviews, where basically you were simply videotaping the same interview you would do on audio-tape. If that's the proposal you submitted, you probably wouldn't get funded. We felt that really was not a very creative use. And we wanted to really explore the uses of the medium. So what you would get funded for were proposals where either you were actively having the person in their normal environment--I interviewed a paleontologist over in his lab, where I had done audiotaped interviews with him about the facts of his career, his theoretical approach to things, but then we videotaped him in the collection area, working with his specimens, talking about specimens.--or a group of them talking about fieldwork, in which we incorporated slides from their fieldwork which they then talked about. So we tried to show processes, tried to show groups--it's much easier to do a group interview on videotape than audiotape; on audiotape it's really hard to tell who's speaking, especially when they talk over one another--and just incorporate visuals of any other sort. Very often you use photographs in oral history interviews, so that was one thing where

we would bring in documents, photographs, and incorporate them. The other really interesting one was [that] one of the curators in American History was interviewing the people who developed computer games.

**Ritchie:** Oh, the group of people, I remember that one.

**Henson:** Right, and what you have there is, in addition to the interview itself, direct line feeds of the computer programs. So you are able to use the ability to record that as well. So as they are discussing the computer programs and how these early programs worked, they are actually operating the programs, and you can see what's going on as they are talking about them.

**Ritchie:** How is your job today different? You've taken on other responsibilities, haven't you?

**Henson:** Yes, I'm director of something called the Institutional History Division, which is the history office for the Smithsonian. So rather than just focusing on an oral history project, I'm responsible for the history of the institution in toto. For example, one of the documentary editing projects on the first Secretary of the Smithsonian, Joseph Henry, the Joseph Henry Papers Project, has been merged in with us and put within my division. And I'm responsible for a larger scale of things. Next year is our 150th anniversary, so I'm working on exhibits. We're developing a number of online databases on the history of the Smithsonian, those sorts of things. So the range of what I'm doing has grown and makes it difficult these days for me to get as many interviews done as I would like to do, because I've got so many other responsibilities.

**Ritchie:** Tell me about your involvement with OHMAR. I know that you're a longtime member and former president and have been continuously involved over the years.

**Henson:** Right. It goes back to the very beginning. Having got to know people like Martha Ross and this group in the mid-Atlantic region, who were just, when I was learning about oral history, incredibly supportive and helpful, and everything that everyone knows that they all are, I heard about--and I believe it was around the time of the Bicentennial [in 1976]--a meeting in Baltimore. Was it at the University of Maryland in Baltimore? I'm not sure. But I think it was woman named Joan Anderson who had called it. She had some Bicentennial funding to

help us hold our first conference. But it was an organizational meeting with people like Ben Frank, and Teddy Poletis, and Martha Ross. I'm trying to think of some of the other names that would have been there, people from really the Washington, D.C.-Baltimore corridor who were doing oral history. We got together and decided that we would form an organization that would supplement the national Oral History Association and meet the needs of the more local community. Then I went continually to meetings as this organization was formed.

**Ritchie:** And then you served as president in the early '80s?

**Henson:** Yes, 1980, I think it was.

**Ritchie:** Now, how has OHMAR changed during the almost twenty years that you've been involved?

**Henson:** It's simply grown and flourished, as far as I can see. We have gone to two meetings a year. The newsletter was created, which I think was a tremendous benefit. We now have a much more formal structure for the meetings, where we are providing, I think, a real service. The first couple of meetings were very closely tied to this area, and then we started moving out to a much broader range, and the membership has really grown to be the entire mid-Atlantic region since then. One of the things that I think has made OHMAR healthiest is [that] at one point we seemed to almost be recycling the same people through the different offices. Who would be program chair this time? You picked the same old person, that sort of thing. And several of us sat around and said, "This really isn't a good thing. We need to get some fresh blood in here." We sort of stepped back in the hopes that somehow or other younger people would appear out of nowhere. We didn't know where they were going to come from, but they did. Somehow or other all of a sudden these younger people have volunteered and have moved in. I think that's been really the health of OHMAR, that it isn't just a small group of the people who began it, but that over time we've really rotated in a lot of new fresh blood, with completely new ideas and new approaches.

**Ritchie:** Tell me about the Forrest Pogue Award and how that came about, now that you're this year's recipient of the award.

**Henson:** Well, Forrest Pogue is really the grandfather of OHMAR, and one of the deans of oral history, having begun it during World War II.

While he never served as our president, he was really guiding and supportive of us all the way through, and was one of the major figures in the national association who did not oppose the local groups, and was always very supportive of all of us. Whenever you had a question, whenever you needed support, you went to Forrest Pogue, and he was always charming and helpful and just a real joy to have in our community. He was actually located in those years at the Smithsonian as director of the Eisenhower Institute over in American History. We also were thinking about developing an award to really try and highlight some of the people who, like me, had either been around for so long [laughs] or had done really extraordinary things, like Jack Tchen, one of our previous recipients.

We felt that giving it the name the Forrest Pogue Award would be the most appropriate way to honor him and his role in this organization, and give the award the stature that we wanted it to have. So it's something that came out of the Board and the OHMAR membership, and I think has become a very nice part of our meetings.

**Ritchie:** What future directions do you think your career will take with oral history? Any changes on the horizon?

**Henson:** Well, my experiences with the videohistory program made me much more visually oriented, so I always see myself working more towards incorporating visual elements, although funding is very difficult for a videohistory. It's expensive. But the other thing I'm doing is now learning about the Internet and online systems. The next step that we want to do is to be able to put some of this material out both in audio and video form over the Internet. That's going to be a large task, but that's the area I see ourselves moving into next, so that we can share our expertise and share our collections, or information about our collections, to a much broader audience.

**Ritchie:** How do researchers find out about your collections now?

**Henson:** We already have our catalog online, so you can call up the Smithsonian's home page or our library catalog, and in a section of it you will find the oral history collection. We also announce it in our guide to collections. We do a lot of outreach work, going to professional meetings and distributing information and giving talks about what we do and what we have. For example, a couple of years ago I

did a talk about what we had in oceanography here, because many people don't realize that the Smithsonian was really pivotal in the founding of oceanography in the United States, and in the Woods Hole Station. So we have wonderful materials, and we've had a long tradition of marine research. I organized all this material for one of the international oceanography conferences, and in that way, by talking about the oral history interviews and the other archival resources, I can bring researchers in. They then find out that we have materials that would be relevant to their research. So we do a lot of outreach, trying to get the word out.

**Ritchie:** Well, then of course the product of the videohistory project was Terri Schorzman's book [*A Practical Introduction to Videohistory: The Smithsonian Institution and the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation Experiment*. Malabar, Fla.: Krieger, 1993].

**Henson:** Absolutely. She not only produced a book but a catalog to that collection, which was really widely distributed. So in that case, for example, we announced in all of the relevant newsletters, such as the Society for the History of Technology, or the History of Science Society, or the American Association for State and Local History. We put an announcement that this collection is available and that you can get a free copy of the catalog. And we distributed the catalog to libraries all over the world.

**Ritchie:** So in addition to actually conducting interviews and processing them, you are actively marketing the interviews so that they are used.

**Henson:** Right, absolutely. And one of the interesting things has been the way that the video has been used now by cable TV stations. The educational stations are very interested. And now we're finding that all these online organizations are also very interested in those types of materials and are keeping us quite busy.

We've always fully processed our collections, and I guess I have this deeply held belief that if you do the interview you have a responsibility to make it available to the rest of the community, to use or to verify what you've got done. So a really important part of doing oral history is not just doing the interview but, even if you can't transcribe it, at least providing some sort of overview of the collection and getting information out about it.

**Ritchie:** How do you do that with your increased responsibilities and obviously a staff that has not increased as much as you've taken on?

**Henson:** Well, it's not easy. But you just get it done as you can. We now contract our transcription. I've had some interns come in and work on getting some interviews not only done but then processing interviews as well. You simply have to find the time to get as much processing done as you can.

**Ritchie:** Because that is time-consuming.

**Henson:** Oh, yes, processing is remarkably time-consuming.

**Ritchie:** I know that through the years, Pam, you've shared your expertise a lot, doing workshops and those types of things. Do you see that as something that professionals have a responsibility to do?

**Henson:** I do, and actually that is really part of the mandate of the Smithsonian. That's simply the institutional culture here, that we are *absolutely* expected as Smithsonian staff to be out and about helping other people develop their skills and sharing our expertise. So it's something that's very strongly encouraged here, to give workshops, to respond if someone calls in and they want to find out about how to do oral history, to send out packets of information, that sort of thing. James Smithson's mandate was "the increase and diffusion of knowledge" and we take that responsibility really seriously across the institution. It's something that's considered high priority at Smithsonian.

**Ritchie:** So your giving of workshops and your involvement with professional organizations is actually a part of your responsibilities here.

**Henson:** Oh, absolutely. And other than that, I think even personally that people like Martha Ross and many people like her took the time to train me, to help me when I was first starting out. I think of technical questions, of calling up people like Blair Hubbard at the Park Service. There are so many people that have helped me over time, when I was starting to do video, I turned to a number of people who shared their expertise. Other people have helped me; I have a responsibility to pass that along, to help other people the same way people have helped me. If we want to see good quality oral history done, which is absolutely possible even with minimal funding, we have a responsibility to share

what we know with people who are very interested and very serious but just don't have the experience yet.

**Ritchie:** And certainly OHMAR provides a forum for that.

**Henson:** Yes, and one of things that you and I have worked on recently is the Workshop Committee. As the next stage of that, OHMAR now offers workshops for groups that really need help in developing a program. I think that you and I and the others involved felt strongly that this is a real service that OHMAR as an organization could provide to the community, which was why we put the time into developing it, because it is the type of responsibility that we should be assuming, that makes the organization really valuable.

**Ritchie:** If you had to pick one interview, or maybe a series that have been your favorites, or stand out in your mind as the most rewarding interviews, could you name one or two?

**Henson:** Sure. I interviewed a man named Watson Perrygo, who was the taxidermist at the museum for many, many years, and was just a delightful character and interesting in every sense. He started hanging around at the museum when he was a kid, literally, and grew up here. He spent his entire career at the institution. He was completely self-educated, and not only was an excellent field collector, and taxidermist, and exhibits preparator, but was what many people at the Smithsonian are, just a collector. He collected antique furniture. He collected silver. He collected everything. Because he was an incredible craftsman, not only in taxidermy and in exhibits, he would restore furniture. He bought a beautiful old colonial home down in Charles County, Maryland, that he restored from the ground up over the course of probably ten years. He restored every piece of furniture inside, restored paintings, restored silver. He had a collection of about sixty antique pianos that he was restoring. I think there was virtually nothing he couldn't do. He could repair clocks, anything he put his mind to he could do. And he'd been all over the world on expeditions, so he had all these tremendous stories of exploration. Over time he not only became an absolutely fascinating interviewee but a really close friend, almost like a grandfather to me.

This is something that I think oral historians take different perspectives on. Some of them feel that you really need to have a detachment from your interviewee and need that sort of objectivity. I don't

think I believe that any oral history interview is entirely objective. I think that when someone has completed the process of telling you their entire life story, that you really have developed a relationship. My relationship continues today even with his family. He is gone, but I still keep in touch with his family.

A similar one was Lucile Quarry Mann, who was the wife of the director of the National Zoo for many years and also an editor at the zoo, who again lived an absolutely fascinating life as a writer and explorer herself. Getting to know her, and capturing her adventure, the way she crafted a life and a career for herself, taught me a lot about making a career yourself, but also gave me a really delightful close friend, someone who I really valued. So I've met just absolutely wonderful people, interviewed absolutely wonderful people, and gotten to know them. Especially at the Smithsonian there are so many fascinating figures who have been associated here. I've been privileged through oral history to get to know some really fascinating wonderful people.

**Ritchie:** And when you do the life histories that are very, very long, you meet with them over time and they open their lives to you.

**Henson:** Yes, you can't just walk out the door when someone's just given you their life story. And in Perrygo's case, and in the Mann case, when I finished the oral history interviews we then picked up another project. In both cases they had films from their expeditions which had not been narrated. They used to show them on the National Geographic lecture circuit and talk with the films, but there weren't any narrations, so I transferred these to videotape and then produced scripts with their narrations for the films. So these were longtime working projects, and we then brought in their papers and oversaw the processing of their personal papers, those sorts of things. But they also, in those cases, became really close friends, and were people that I think I was very lucky to know.

**Ritchie:** And it was through oral history that you had the opportunity. Is there anything else you would like to add about your oral history career?

**Henson:** Just to talk a little more about it at the Smithsonian, and that is that this is a place that really shows off the value of oral history to document material culture. Objects are mute until you find out more about them, and I think that oral history is a tremendous tool, not only to find out about the objects but then to turn around and use

the oral history interviews in your exhibits. We have all sorts of public programming possibilities here. I've seen a real transition in my years here. Oral history was something exotic when I first came in and was kind of doubted by a lot of people. Now it really is just a standard part of a historian's research techniques. So it's been interesting to see it become so much a part of the historical profession generally, and also to see the many interesting ways in which it's developed and become a little more sophisticated, through visual interviewing and that sort of thing, at a place like the Smithsonian.

**Ritchie:** Which certainly is a leader for many museums and other places that look to the Smithsonian, so it is nice to have oral history grounded here.

**Henson:** Yes, so well integrated into everything that we're doing.

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## Book Review

***Married to the Foreign Service: An Oral History of the American Diplomatic Spouse.*** By Jewell Fenzi. Twayne Oral History Series 13. New York: McMillan & Co., 1994. 290 pp.

***Her Excellency: An Oral History of American Women Ambassadors.*** By Ann Miller Morin. Twayne Oral History Series 14. New York: McMillan & Co., 1995. 315 pp. Both \$16.95 paper. Reviewed by Sharon Zane.

Taken together, Twayne's Oral History Series' *Her Excellency: An Oral History of American Women Ambassadors* and *Married to the Foreign Service: An Oral History of the American Diplomatic Spouse* offer an intriguing look at the changing role of women in American diplomacy during the last fifty years. Either as women struggling to establish their authority in what was previously an exclusively male domain, or as women performing more traditional duties in the familiar support role of spouse, these narrators demand our attention. Their voices enlighten us, and make our understanding of this aspect of women's history more complete.

For *Her Excellency*, Ann Miller Morin interviewed thirty-four female ambassadors from a variety of social, political and ethnic backgrounds. Regardless of their differences, "these women ambassadors faced common hurdles, shared common experiences, and preserved a common