

Spring 2013

## Interview of Charles A. Desnoyers, Ph.D.

Charles A. Desnoyers Ph.D.  
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### Recommended Citation

Desnoyers, Charles A. Ph.D. and Lee, Remus, "Interview of Charles A. Desnoyers, Ph.D." (2013). *All Oral Histories*. 55.  
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## FIELD NOTES

**Interviewee:** Charles A. Desnoyers  
**Interviewer:** Remus Y. Lee  
**Interview date:** April 9, 2013 (2:00PM)  
**Interview location:** Dr. Desnoyers' office; Olney Hall Room 342  
**Interview duration:** 2 hours, 36 seconds

Field notes written on April 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2013

### The Interviewee:

Dr. Charles Albert Desnoyers was born on December 7, 1952, in Muhlenberg Hospital in Plainfield, New Jersey to Albert Henry Desnoyers II and Ruth Reed Desnoyers. As a child, he attended St. Joseph's School, a Catholic institution, for eight years before attending North Plainfield High School. He went to college at Villanova University, getting both his bachelors and masters degrees at the institution. He later got his Ph.D. from Temple University and joined the La Salle staff as a professor on the tenure track. He served as the chair of the History Department until 2008 and is still involved with the history department. He is active in La Salle's Travel Studies program and plays in the band "Boris Garcia".

### The Interviewer:

Remus Yue-chung Lee was born in British Hong Kong in 1987, but grew up in Bucks County, Pennsylvania. He earned a B.S. in History from Drexel University in 2011. He is currently attempting to get a M.A. in public history at La Salle University. Most of his family lives in and around Bucks County. Mr. Lee currently lives in Newtown, Pennsylvania, near La Salle's Bucks County campus.

### Background:

I started studying history in his sophomore year of undergraduate studies at Drexel University, transferring from a general engineering track in 2007. I enrolled the Public History program at La Salle in 2011, taking the History 650 Oral History: Theory and Practice Course as part of the program. The program focuses on teaching the essentials of oral history recording, and one assignment of the course entails that a practice interview be done in preparation for a formal interview to be done as the highlight of the course.

As part of La Salle University's 150<sup>th</sup> Anniversary, the History 650 Oral History class is interviewing members of La Salle's staff, La Salle alumni, and people in the La Salle neighborhood. This led me to interview La Salle history professor and advocate of the

history program Charles Desnoyers. Desnoyers was head of the History Department until 2008, and is still active in the faculty senate as well as other organizations in and out of La Salle.

In the weeks before the interview, Dr. Desnoyers and I hammered out the details of our interview via e-mail. We were able to finalize our meeting for April 9, 2013, and on that date I met with Dr. Desnoyers in his office.

### **Interview Description:**

On April 9, 2013, I planned my departure from my home to arrive at Dr. Desnoyers' office at least two minutes early, and so I was able to arrive at his office on time. Dr. Desnoyers' office is in La Salle University's Olney Hall on the third floor, in room 342.

When I arrived at Dr. Desnoyers' office, he was chatting with another professor, Lisa Jarvinen, but ended the conversation upon my arrival. We entered his office posthaste. As a history professor, the walls of his office were lined with history books, including some from his History 510: Historiography class. His desk was lined with knick-knacks and office equipment; a small Chinese terra-cotta warrior stood in the middle between me and the professor.

I sat in a chair across the desk from Dr. Desnoyers; my inexperience with oral history recording caused great jitters, and I ended up sitting uncomfortably in the chair as it was positioned obliquely to Dr. Desnoyers. I quickly apologized for my oral history inexperience, but Dr. Desnoyers was patient and understanding enough to overlook my flaws and undergo the interview with me. Dr. Desnoyers already understood the nature of the interview, having good rapport with Oral History professor Barbara Allen, and was more than willing to undergo the interview process. Dr. Desnoyers signed the legal release without difficulty, adding a little quip.

The interview lasted two hours without interruption. Although the beginning of the interview started in relative quiet, the progression of the interview coincided with other activities in the history department hallway which created an undercurrent of background conversation during the conversation that, though faint, could still be heard by an unpracticed ear.

The great danger for me during the interview was a lack of confidence in asking the questions. This manifested in a slight stutter, pauses, and filler words which shows up every so often during the interview. I would have liked to have been less intimidated with speaking with a La Salle professor during the course of the interview, although Dr. Desnoyers was empathetic and discerning enough.

Other than my practice interview, this was my first interview, and it gave me much to think about when setting up other oral history interviews in the future. I will have to pay better attention to my surroundings to cut down on potential interruptions; I will also

have to work on my social skills so as not to lose composure as easily in front of an interviewee. Dr. Desnoyers was an excellent and charismatic interviewee who was more than happy enough to be interviewed. Once the log is done, I will send him a copy.

**Recording Notes:**

For recording, I used an Olympus WS-100 Digital Recorder/Flash Drive. At the conclusion of the interview, I transferred the file off of the recorder onto my laptop and converted it to mp3 using an online conversion program. The log is being compiled with the help of NCH Express Scribe.

**Log Notes:**

For ease of reading, the log will not include any pauses, stutters, or filler words used by both interviewer and interviewee, nor will any background conversation be added. The log will reflect any mistaken preconceptions the interviewer made at the beginning of the interview.