

2009

Interview of John S. Baky

John Baky

La Salle University, baky@lasalle.edu

Maura Doyle

La Salle University

Follow this and additional works at: <http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/histdeptohall>

 Part of the [Cultural History Commons](#), [Higher Education Administration Commons](#), [Library and Information Science Commons](#), [Military History Commons](#), [Oral History Commons](#), [Other Music Commons](#), and the [United States History Commons](#)

Recommended Citation

Baky, John and Doyle, Maura, "Interview of John S. Baky" (2009). *All Oral Histories*. 63.
<http://digitalcommons.lasalle.edu/histdeptohall/63>

This Interview is brought to you for free and open access by the Oral Histories at La Salle University Digital Commons. It has been accepted for inclusion in All Oral Histories by an authorized administrator of La Salle University Digital Commons. For more information, please contact careyc@lasalle.edu.

Interviewee: John S. Baky

Interviewer: Maura Doyle

Interview Date: July 21, 2009 10 a.m.-12 p.m.

Interview Location: Second Floor of the Connelly Library in Mr. Baky's conference room outside of his office-La Salle University's Campus-1900 w. Olney Ave, Philadelphia, PA 19141

Field notes written on July 23, 2009.

The Interviewee:

John Baky was in 1947 in Trenton, New Jersey. He attended grade school in Trenton. He attended high school in Flemington, New Jersey at Central High School. He would do his undergraduate work at Gettysburg College. He received a degree in Library Science from Columbia University and a Master's Degree in Liberal Arts from Wesleyan University. He did Doctoral work at Bryn Mawr College. He served in the United States Army from 1969-1971. He served in Vietnam from 1970-1971. He worked at Yale University editing 18th century British Newspapers for the library. In 1980 he came to La Salle University to work for acquisitions. He is now the Director of Library Services and Curator of Special Collections at La Salle University.

The Interviewer:

I, Maura Doyle born in 1983 in Philadelphia, PA grew up in Northeast Philadelphia. I attended high school at Archbishop Ryan; upon graduation in 2001 I enrolled in La Salle University. I transferred to Holy Family University in 2004 and graduated in 2007 with a B.A. in Secondary Education/History. I reside in Northeast Philadelphia where I am a

teacher at Nazareth Academy Grade School. I am attending La Salle University, presently, for a Master's Degree in History.

Background:

I interviewed John Baky as part of the requirements of a class I was taking in the summer of 2009-Oral History, taught by Dr. Barbara Allen. I had the option of completing an oral history project with a Vietnam Veteran, a Christian Brother, or someone with connections to La Salle University who could reflect on the past, present, and future of the University. The latter's interview would be placed in the Universities archives. My immediate response was to conduct an interview with a Vietnam Veteran, but as it got closer to the interview date I could tell my choice for the interview was getting apprehensive. I decided not to make him uncomfortable and cancelled the interview. On June 23, 2009 I contacted my professor for guidance on what to do. Dr. Allen directed me to Brother Joe Grabenstein, who is in charge of the University's archives.

On June 25, 2009 I contacted Brother Joe Grabenstein who sent me names of four people who needed to be interviewed for his archives project. I decided that John Baky sounded interesting because of his work in special collections. On June 26, 2009 I emailed John Baky and asked him if he would be interested in participating in the project. He expressed that he was and on June 30, 2009 through email we set up a meeting for July 7, 2009.

On June 30, 2009 Brother Joe and I set up a meeting for July 3, 2009 at 8:30 a.m. On July 3, 2009 Brother Joe gave me articles written by John Baky and articles written on Baky and his Special Collections in the library. Brother Joe also gave me guidance on certain areas to discuss with Baky. I am very grateful to Brother Joe.

On July 7, 2009 John Baky and I met in his office in the Connelly Library. I had emailed him a basic outline of the interview questions the night before, July 6, 2009. I knew the interview was not going to take place but I knew it would give us something to discuss. John Baky was very interested in the project being conducted for class and we talked in length about the class and others I had taken. John Baky gave me a few handouts on oral history and fieldwork. John Baky then took me on a tour of the Special Collections. This tour was very helpful because as he talked I was able to come up with more questions for the interview. At the end of our meeting we set up dates for the interview, we decided July 21, 2009 and July 22, 2009 both 10 a.m. to 11:30 a.m.

Description of the Interview:

I arrived Tuesday morning, July 21, 2009 ten minutes early. I left home at 9 a.m., which is about fifteen minutes earlier than I planned but it was raining and I was not sure what traffic would be like. I was very nervous and I sat at a computer to try to calm my nerves. I went to John Baky's office at 9:58 a.m., his secretary showed me into his conference room outside of his office. I waited for John Baky who came in shortly after.

The conference room has a large table with about twelve chairs around it, there is a black board spanning the size of one of the walls. The board had writing on it that pertained to the Special Collections. John Baky was dressed very neatly and seemed ready to get the interview started. I had him sign the legal release giving permission to record and he indicated he would want to make changes to it; I informed him he could do as he wanted.

We sat across from one another with the voice recorder in the middle. I had notes in front of me and was holding a pen. John Baky also had papers in front of him and two books. We began the interview promptly after we cleared up the paper work. The interview lasted one hour and fifty two minutes. We did not stop during the interview. John Baky spoke for lengths at a time. He seemed very comfortable talking throughout the whole interview. I felt stopping would have made it hard to pick up again.

John Baky seemed to be in a fairly good mood. He did not show any signs any other wise. He was very serious and business like throughout the interview. He seemed very willing to talk about all subjects and prepared to do so too.

This was the first major interview I have done and I realize the importance of Oral History and the value of interviewing. That being said I feel as though I still need practice to be very effective. I liked listening to Mr. Baky very much.

Note on recording:

For recording, I used my own Sony ICD-PX720 on battery power. I did not use an additional microphone. I connected the voice recorder to my computer with a USB cord after the interview. I was able to save it in MP3 format to my desktop. I used the software that came with the recorder to slow it down to start to transcribe. I edited the transcription when it played at regular speed.

Editing the Transcript:

My editing decisions included:

1. using a dash (-) for spaces in talking
2. using a time indicator close to the top of the page without breaking up a sentence or thought
3. using parentheses () around noises in the background