Engaging with the Dory Fleet: A Panel Discussion on a Collaborative College and Community Oral History Project

Brenda DeVore Marshall
Linfield College

Tyrone Marshall
Linfield College

Mary Beth Jones
Linfield College

Kathleen Spring
Linfield College

Jackson B. Miller
Linfield College

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Good afternoon and welcome. Thank you very much for coming. I'm Brenda DeVore Marshall, Chair of the Department of Theatre and Communication Arts at Linfield College. It's my pleasure to be here with my colleagues to talk with you about an ongoing project that we began in 2011. We were excited to be selected to bring this program to you because we believe that it truly epitomizes the conference theme, “Collaboration and Engagement.”

Our second speaker will be Jackson Miller. Most of you know him as the 1st Vice-President of the Northwest Communication Association. He is also a professor of Communication Arts at Linfield and director of our forensics program. Our third speaker will be Ty Marshall, who is a professor of Theatre Arts and scenic and lighting designer for the theatre program. Our fourth speaker will be Mary Beth Jones, who is a junior Communication Arts major. Mary Beth has been working on this project for three years. She did not work in the field with us, but she’s done a great deal of work, including creating written transcripts for audio and video stories, in preparing materials for the digital repository. And then finally, but certainly not least, is Kathleen Spring. Kathleen is a faculty librarian in charge of our collections management and is the coordinator of DigitalCommons@Linfield, which is the digital repository facet of our library. In addition, she has a background in communication and worked in the field with us.
I’m going to talk about the web of community created by this project and the interview process. You may wonder how faculty members and students in communication arts and theatre became involved in an oral history project involving members of a fishing community. Serendipity played a major role in this adventure.
Pacific City is located about 50 miles west of McMinnville on the Oregon coast north of Lincoln City. It’s still an unincorporated village. The most recent population statistics for permanent residents indicate that approximately 900 individuals live there year-round. There are times, however, when there are several thousand people crowded into this small community. You’ll notice in this photograph of a large billboard people once passed on the way into Pacific City, that the village is proclaimed the “Home of the Dory Fleet.” Ty and I worked with an organization in Pacific City called the Pacific City Arts Association, which sought to try to bring arts events into the community and to celebrate the cultural heritage of the region. As a member of that board and a faculty member at Linfield, I found myself thinking about how the arts association and our department might collaborate.
One morning I was walking on the beach as a dory was coming in for a landing. As you can see, there’s no marina. The dory fishers launch off the beach, into the surf; they then come back through the surf, sliding onto the beach. You can see Cape Kiwanda in the background. Haystack Rock is located behind and on the other side of the dory. One morning I was walking on the beach; a dory landed, and “Aha!” I discovered a focus for a project—the home of the dory fleet. Next came the question: what are we going to do with that idea? I talked with Ty, and then with Jackson and other colleagues in the department. Our original idea was to do some interviews with a few dorymen, write a play, and produce it as part of our theatre season. That’s where we began.
The most important parts of this project were collaboration and building relationships. It became a faculty-student collaborative research project involving colleagues and students in various Linfield departments. The Pacific City Arts Association bought in. A lot of additional networking was required, including working with the Dorymen’s Association. Of course, without them we didn’t have a project. And they were a little trickier. Although the dorymen have been around for over a hundred years, they face many challenges. This is a very high-use beach. It is one of the premiere surfing points on the Oregon coast. Surfers, fishermen, other tourists, and now kayakers all want to use this same beach. There’s a lot of concern surrounding the question, “Will we be able to retain our fishing rights and beach access?” So, they’re a little distrustful of outsiders. But, we were able to gain their trust in large part thanks to doryman Dave Larkins. We feel like we have literally become part of the dory community, and they have become some of our dearest friends and colleagues. We know the development of these relationships may move beyond the “norm” for researcher/subject interaction in many of our research methods. But, as our interviewees became co-researchers, the building of relationships has been a natural and necessary consequence of this project. So, dory fishers, their families and friends, and ultimately the Pacific City community became part of the community web that made this project possible.
Our specific project partners were the two distinct disciplines in the department of Theatre and Communication Arts. The library certainly became one of our partners; just as we were beginning to talk about this idea, our DigitalCommons@Linfield was coming online. This addition to our library provided a repository for our data, allowing the creation of an archive. We knew that people were not going to give up their artifacts at this point to go into a physical archival collection, so the digital repository was perfect. The Linfield Center for the Northwest endeavors to promote internships and research, particularly in the Pacific Northwest, through funding of faculty-student collaborative research grants. Prior to this project, their projects had been based in Yamhill County. The Arts Association and the Dorymen’s Association became formal project partners as well.
This photo features some of our collaborators during the summer of 2012. In the summers of 2011 and 2012, we had to spend time on the beach. It was a tough research assignment! Some of us continue to conduct interviews and process data. A total of five faculty members were involved: the four of us, and Janet Gupton, who is our resident theatre director. Nine students were involved in interviewing and processing data. Seven additional students, including Mary Beth, have been involved in data processing. We included an additional 58 students and three additional staff members in the play we produced. To date, 82 people have been involved directly with the research project.
We thought you might be interested in how we funded the project. One of the things we’ve done is write grants with the support of Linfield’s wonderful grants writer Catherine Jarmin Miller. The Linfield Center for the Northwest provided funding for faculty-student collaborative research, as did our Office of Academic Affairs. Linfield is an undergraduate-only institution, so all of the students involved in the project are undergraduates. The Oregon Arts Commission provided an Arts Build Communities Grant to work on the concept for the play and playwriting. The Oregon Cultural Trust also helped fund work on the play, the production, and processing of the interviews. The Yamhill County Cultural Coalition provided funding for a traveling exhibit, as did the Tillamook County Cultural Coalition. Additional funds have been contributed by individual donors.

Resources

- Grants
  - Linfield Center for the Northwest CERC Grants
  - Linfield Faculty/Student Collaborative Research Grants
  - Oregon Arts Commission–Arts Build Communities Grant
  - Yamhill County Cultural Coalition
  - Oregon Cultural Trust–Cultural Development Grant
  - Pacific City Dorymen’s Association
  - Tillamook County Cultural Coalition
  - Individual Donors
- In-Kind Donations
  - Pacific City businesses
  - Linfield College
  - Individuals
The scope of the project expanded from our initial conversations to include the items and projects listed on this slide. We worked from an ethnographic perspective, which is common in oral history projects. We interviewed dory fishers to document their personal stories. The interviews were audio- and videotaped. Photographs of the interviewees were taken during the interviews. We also collected artifacts, which were scanned and then returned to the interviewees. We wrote and produced a play, inspired by the stories from the interviews, which had seven performances on our campus in November of 2012. We then toured the play to Pacific City where we performed in a small community center. Both on our campus and in Pacific City, large numbers of dory community members attended the play. Jackson and Ty will speak more about the play. Partnering with the Pacific City Arts Association, we created a pop-up gallery exhibit featuring paintings and photographs of dories for a summer arts festival. Half of the traveling exhibit is displayed around the room. Ty will discuss the creation of this exhibit. We also have completed several scholarly papers and presentations. Finally, we have created a permanent historical archive for the dory fleet. Kathleen will discuss this part of the project in more detail.
We began the project thinking that we might do around 40 interviews. To date, we have conducted 100 formal interviews, lasting from an hour and a half to four hours. Ty and I are still conducting interviews. The interviewees were initially identified with the help of the Pacific City Dorymen’s Association, and then a web of community developed. You talk to one person who says, “Have you talked to so-and-so?” Initially, we worked with a liaison with the dorymen who called as many as 75 people saying, “When you get a call from Brenda Marshall, it’s okay.” We would not have been able to make our initial foray into this community without that help. Our interviewees have ranged in age from 9 to 91. The children were interviewed with their parents. We’ve also completed 65 shorter “on-the-spot” interviews during the Dory Days Festivals and the Blessing of the Fleet with people who may or may not have been associated with the fleet.
This slide contains some of the interview questions developed in June of 2011. The faculty and student researchers attended the annual Blessing of the Fleet. We had completed available readings to learn what we could about the fleet and the area beforehand. Following the Blessing, collectively we developed our interview questions. During the interviews we usually got through all of them, sometimes we didn’t. The interviewees were free to talk about what they wanted to discuss even if we did not question them about a specific idea or event. In one case, we asked question one and forty-five minutes later the interviewee had pretty much answered all of our questions.
In many oral history projects, entire interviews are included in collections. We took a different approach. Our feeling was that it’s the numerous individual stories that describe the history of this community. From each interview we have edited several short video and audio stories. This excerpt from one of Paul Hanneman’s stories provides an example of the narratives in the collection.

PAUL HANNEMAN: The ocean becomes—and the rivers—I was a, a guide for 30 years off and on, on the rivers too mixed in with all this other stuff—uh, becomes a part of you. And uh—the good and the bad. The bad days when you don’t catch fish, and the bad days when the weather’s terrible, and the bad days when you’re running bad oceans and—uh and the good, flat days when, maybe you’d—back then anyway—take a cassette recorder and play music on the boat and not care if you catch fish or not. Go to Cape Lookout and sit in the sun, and, and uh watch the, the birds, and come back with the wind. It’s a part of you that always will be there and, the, the feel of the ocean and, and understanding the water, and what to do and what not to do and, hopefully where there’s fish where other people are not thinking about the same place.

BRENDA DEVORE MARSHALL: Jackson is now going to talk about developing the play script.
Thank you, Brenda. Creating the play script was kind of an overwhelming process, but at the same time a really fantastic process. I think in that first summer, because we had the goal to do the play script after the first summer of interviews, we completed close to the original goal of 40 interviews. Knowing how long some of these interviews are, we had a lot of material to draw from for the play script, which was fantastic and at the same time a little overwhelming. I want to emphasize, especially given our conference theme of collaboration, that I was collaborating primarily with one of our students—a student who really had an interest in playwriting and scriptwriting—to work on the script. But I was also collaborating with everyone else on the team. We set up a Google Doc that we called the “Boat Barn.” Basically, as members of the team were editing a story and came across a snippet of language that sounded like something interesting or theatrical, they would put it into this Google Doc for us. This work pre-dated Mary Beth. All of the students on the team were both interviewing and editing stories at that time. That was a tremendous resource for us in creating a fictional account that was based on these stories. I’m going to give you an example of a story in a moment to explain a little more fully how that worked.
We wanted the language in the play to be primarily language spoken by interviewees. So even if we were rearranging it, re-cutting it, taking pieces from several different stories and putting them together, we thought the more of it that came out of the interviews the more it was going to ring true to this community and their experiences and really reflect back to them some of the things we captured in the interview. So, I would say between 90 and 95% of the actual words in the text that the actors spoke onstage came in some form from one of the interviews. They might have been in a different order, they might have been there in a slightly different way, they might have been a snippet from this Boat Barn document, but it was all language that interviewees, for the most part, had used. I think that - Brenda mentioned the production a little. I know that when the community came to see the production, it was a lot more impactful for them because they not only recognized the stories, but they also recognized the way the stories were being told and the way they were being spoken.

One question that comes up, and Brenda hinted at this, is the question of why communication scholars should study oral history texts and do this kind of project. I have a performance studies background and a creative interest in doing scripting. One thing I regularly teach, and I'm sure many of you do as well, is narrative theory and even narrative criticism if you do a rhetorical criticism class. For me, just to engage in a project and a process in scripting that was really narrative praxis was such a valuable thing. I got a lot out of it. I know that the students whom we worked with, not only the student who co-authored the script with me, but all of the other students as well, really benefited from that immersion in the narrative process and the creativity that goes along with rearranging narratives in this way.
I want to talk a little bit more about the theatrical production, *Kickin’ Sand and Tellin’ Lies*. As you can imagine, we went through hundreds of variations on the title. It actually came from a description of what some of the dory fishermen do on days when they can’t get the boats out because the weather’s bad. One of our interviewees said, “Well, they stand around the beach and kick sand and tell lies.” That statement inspired the title. As I mentioned earlier, the play script came from stories in the collection. The play gave us another medium for sharing some of our work with different audiences, which was a fantastic thing. Along with the theatrical production, we had a couple of opportunities for audience response events or talkbacks. One thing that struck me was talking to audience members who were some of the people in the community who had been interviewed and getting their reactions to the show. That was a very powerful thing. Overwhelmingly, the comments were positive, but some of them did have a few gripes like, “Well, that wasn’t quite accurate.” And that was okay. It was good to get the wide range of opinions. That made the feedback an interesting part of the process.

One thing that comes up in this type of project is the concern about ethical obligations. We were creating and advertising the show as a fictional account based on the stories. But, one thing you have to do is treat those personal stories with great care. We always tried to be mindful of this. I followed, almost like a physician, a “First, do no harm” approach. And it’s not that I didn’t want to delve into some of the darker sides of things. You might have noticed in some of the interviews we had questions like, “Did you have conflicts with other dory fishermen?” We wanted to portray the dory fishers in a realistic manner. We weren’t interested in a Hollywood version of these stories because we felt like that would be getting away, ethically, from our obligation to the community that we had immersed ourselves in and interviewed. Even though this was a fictional account, one thing we also kept in mind was fidelity to the stories and to experiences of the people we interviewed. The language had to sound genuine. I mentioned we took snippets of language from the interviews to create most of the script language. We also had members of the community come to a reading of the script before the rehearsals began. They gave us some valuable insights. For instance, we talked with the interviewees a lot about being out on the water and talking on the CB radio. From my knowledge of CB language in a car or truck, I assumed a writer would say, “Roger” or “Over and out.” The dory fishers said, “Well, we never did that on the boats! You just quit talking.” That was a very informative insight for us. This shows how we kept trying to bring the community back into the project to check the accuracy of the language.
WILLIAM HOOK: Uh, I’m William, but people call me Bill or Billy Hook. I’m Captain Hook. I believe it was in 1967 on a charter boat was my first trip out in a dory. My stepfather Bernie. Really, really close with him, uh, in later years. When we were, young, we competed for mother. Teenage son and new husband. [Audible breath] Bernie became one of my very, very best friends, um, in his later life and, and uh—he was the epitome of tuna fishermen. That guy lived to fish tuna. He liked to fish anything. He’d, he’d fish crappie in Eastern Oregon, but he loved tuna. Anyway, Bernie, uh, had COPD and smoked Lucky Strikes his whole life, um. Hard guy, had been a boxer, completely undefeated in his career as a boxer. Um, shot pool for the house. He—he measured a man on how—how much work he could do in a day. And, um, anyway, he was a, he was an old tuna fisherman, and, and as he got COPD, and, and started to go downhill and was really gettin’ bad, he made his funeral arrangements and he said, uh, you know, he told me that, and I said, “Well Bernie, do you like me to spread your ashes on the ocean?” And he said, “Yeah.” And, uh, anyway, he passed away. His ashes were taken care of and then they were turned over to me to put him on the ocean. My mom’s around Haystack Rock, Bernie wanted to be on the tuna grounds. So, um, it took about two years to get a good day. To get out there far enough and, and we’d gone out and had been skunked and hadn’t put any fish in the boat and I just didn’t figure that was his day. And Bernie drank Oly Beer, and, in fact, the first time my mother went out on the ocean with him, his lunch was two Hershey bars and two cases of Oly Beer. And, finally we’re out there, my cousin and I and my son-in-law, and we’re fishing in the blue water when I think we had about six tuna on board and I’d— was carrying his ashes the whole time in the boat, along with two cans of Oly and I still smoke. Anyway, um, I said, “You know I think it’s time to spread Bernie’s ashes.” And, and we went back, and if you guys have never been out there where the tuna are, the water is, azure blue. It’s just incredible. It’s not the green or gray water we get on the shore, and it’s just beautiful. I went back to the prop wash of the boat, I poured his ashes in. I opened up a can of Oly and I poured it on. And, then threw him a whole one in case he needed a second one. Threw him a couple of cigarettes, and, then moved back to the console and all three of us were getting like I am right now. Kinda down, thinking about the good times, and, about that time, the ashes kinda—the gray went out of the, the prop wash and it turned back to that blue, and—Pyoo! Pyoo! Pyoo! Three lines went lit up. And we all looked up and went, “Damn good joke, Bernie, thanks.”
You can imagine being in the living room recording that interview. Every time I hear it, it’s such an emotional story. I was there, and the student who was helping me co-write the script was there. When we heard this story, we said, “All right. This is the type of emotional connection that audiences will have with stories, we must work this into the script.” And, we did. In this fictional account, we included a character called Handy who ended up passing away at the end of the first act. We based a spreading of his ashes scene loosely on William Hook’s story. We decided to honor the sharing of that story by putting it on stage. I think we were able to successfully do that; it’s such a moving story. Even though we have video stories in the collection, for me, this is one of those great examples of how the power of the human voice and the emotion you hear in his voice can really affect us in a tremendous way.
The final thing I want to say is about staging, because I do think we have ethical obligations to our interviewees when we’re putting personal stories like this on stage. Truthfulness, accuracy, and honesty in sharing the experience are important. That’s one thing that we tried to bring to the show. We didn’t want to misrepresent anything. One thing we did throughout the interviews and in the show as well was to take a hard and honest look at the obstacles that dory fishermen and women face. Some of them are very human obstacles, like what do you do when someone you care about passes on. Others are obstacles more specific to their profession. But, I think any time you’re doing an oral history project, you’re always in some way collecting stories about the various successes and failures, obstacles, and challenges a community faces. I’m just so pleased that as a script writer, I was able to make a contribution to this process by putting some of those obstacles on stage in a way that not only the community itself could understand, but that our broader community of colleagues and friends at Linfield, and throughout Northwest Oregon, could understand as well when they came to see the show.

Next, Tyrone Marshall is going to talk about collecting images and creating a travelling exhibit that you’re seeing all around you.
Thanks, Jackson. Thank you for coming today. As a scenic and lighting designer, I need to have an understanding from the playwright about what the environment is so I can determine how we are going to portray it onstage. Being in these interviews and listening to all of the stories firsthand provided an amazing bit of research. Visiting the interviewee’s homes, their boat barns—wherever we went to interview them—allowed us to gain an understanding of who they were and what was important to them. These are some of the things I had in my mind as I photographed images.
Types of Images

- Production photographs
- Storyteller photographs taken during interviews
- Miscellaneous photographs taken during interviews
- Dory photographs on the beach
- Process/Activity photographs
- Photographs provided by interviewees
- Artifacts provided by interviewees that were digitized for play, exhibit, and archives

Remember, early on the goal of this project was to write a script, produce it on campus, and tour it to Pacific City. And then, as Kathleen will discuss, the DigitalCommons@Linfield came into existence, and boom, this project exploded. I began to think a little differently in interviews about how we would take pictures and what we were trying to document. This slide lists the types of images I have photographed or that we have collected from the interviewees.
This slide takes us back to three of the production photos. Playwrights have a strange habit of trying to come up with many different scene locations, and as a designer you try to figure out how you’re going to deal with that. There were about fifteen different scenes in the play; they all had to take place on a stationary unit set that could suggest multiple locales with minimal changes.

The top photograph depicts a storm scene, with the image of headlights coming across the stage. Several fishermen told stories about being on the ocean fishing when bad weather came up and the ocean became very rough. In one story, most everyone had made it home, but one boat was still out. The people at the fish company that most of the guys sold their fish to would look after the fishermen’s rigs on the beach when they were out fishing. In this particular story, one of them realized that one boat was still out. A number of calls went out, lots of people came down to the beach and shined their headlights out into the ocean so the fishermen could see where the beach was. We also incorporated a number of archival video images and still images from the interviewees into the play. In this scene, turbulent waves were projected on the three screens at the back of the stage to help create the storm effect. The two pictures on the bottom are basic long shots of two other scenes. In the photo on the left, we are on the beach with the Blessing of the Fleet. The image on the right documents a bar scene with a bar fight.
And, of course the playwrights wanted scenes to occur on the water. How are we going to do water? We’re also going to have a boat? Jackson kept kidding me saying, “You’re going to make a dory in the scene shop.” I said, “Yeah, right, we can do that.” So, I had to stop and think, “Well, what is the essence of the dory?” The elements of the console, the outriggers, and the stern gave us that essence. Again, the multimedia capabilities helped us suggest the ocean through projections.
In the early planning stages, we decided to photograph the “storytellers” during the interviews. I took several hundred photos of each individual in the course of the interview. The digital archives includes a collection of storyteller photographs; these images provide a glimpse of just a few of them. As you can see, they’re all “characters” in their own way. One fisherman said, “I don’t have anything to say.” Four hours later he said, “Well, I guess that’s it.” They have so many stories to tell. You’ve just seen and heard two of these heartfelt narratives.
These photographs of “miscellaneous” items became an important part of my design research and a visual documentation of the community. They provided images used in the scenic environment, as well as research for props and set dressing. Almost anything that came into my view had the potential to end up in a photo.
Another major component of the project is the 20-panel travelling exhibit. You see some of the panels in this room. The panels were created from photographs taken as part of the project, as well as from images and documents from the interviewees’ collections that we digitized. This panel chronicles the building of a dory. Terry Learned still builds dories today in his red cattle barn where he began building them with his father. I was fortunate enough to go over one day a week for eight weeks to photograph the process. When the gentlemen who purchased this dory came to pick it up, I was there because I wanted to take pictures of it leaving the building. When they arrived, the owners were wondering, “Well, who is this guy?” I introduced myself and said that I’d like to continue to document the process of preparing the boat for the ocean. They said, “Sure. We’re going to take it home now.” I said, “Fine. Tell me where you live,” because I wanted to take a picture of the dory going into their garage. They did, and I followed them home.
The next step was to fiberglass the dory. And so, when it went to the fiberglass shop, I went there. On three different days, I watched Jim Allen fiberglass the boat, which includes adding color. There is a panel depicting this process in the exhibit. Once that had happened, the owners rigged the boat for fishing. I received this email one day—by this time we had this friendship going on, and I get this email saying, “We’re going out this Sunday, do you want to come over and take pictures of the maiden voyage?” Of course, I said, “Yes, what time are you going to go out? I will be there.” Not only was I able to photograph the maiden voyage, I got to do so from inside the dory as they invited me to accompany them.
In one of our first visits with Paul Hannemen, he mentioned that he and Terry Learned also built oars. The original dories were double-enders without motors. So, they had to have oars. The two of them figured out how to piece equipment together to turn oars. They visited a farmer in Tillamook who had built a homemade lathe that they could use to turn the oars. As we were going through Paul’s barn, I saw this antique equipment and I thought I really needed to watch somebody build and turn oars. One day I was invited to do so.
The Memorial Wall, dedicated in 2009, has become an icon of the beach at Cape Kiwanda. Most fishing memorials honor people who have perished at sea. In Pacific City, the memorial wall celebrates the dories by including the boat names on the wall.
In the interview process, we would ask, “Do you know such and such?” “No, I don’t know that person.” “Well, his dory is whatever.” “Oh, I know him!” Everybody knows everyone by their dory name and not their given name. In addition, very few dory fishers have been lost at sea. The community found it fitting to honor the fishers by recognizing the dories that have taken them to the fish and brought them safely back to the shore.
Dory Days is a community festival that celebrates the fishers and their dories. The original event was known as the Dory Derby, which included dory races. You can see one of the dories coming out of the water in a race. They would launch a boat, go out around the rock, and come back to the beach. Some events involved only racing, others included catching the largest fish as well.
At one point, some fishers positioned their boat trailers on the beach and upon their return attempted to launch the boat out of the water and onto the trailer to get to the finish line first. Eventually, the races ended and the festivities transitioned into a calmer Dory Days celebration.
One of the neatest things that has happened with the traveling exhibit involved the Nestucca Valley Elementary School. Art teachers planned a unit on drawing boats. They asked to have copies of some of the panels placed in the school hallways for the children to view. Both teachers and students would see the panels and say, “That’s my dad, that’s my grandfather, that was his boat.” These images depict some of the work these students created.

The traveling exhibit will be on display in Pacific City each July during Dory Days and other locations as they can be scheduled. Mary Beth will now discuss the work of students in this project.
When Brenda approached me three years ago about doing some work on this project, I had no idea what I was getting myself into. I had no idea just how much I’d learn about these boats, about these people, but most importantly about this community, and about the power of stories. I will talk a little bit about the types of behind-the-scenes work that students have done in the years following the play.
Students have been really active in editing audio and video stories, as well as digitizing artifacts and scanning photographs and other artifacts that you can see on these panels. I, in particular, have transcribed a lot of these stories, a couple that you heard today, which has been a lot of fun. I've also created metadata documents used in the cataloging process. A lot of this work that I have learned to do gave me surprising new skills. It's been pretty eye-opening in that regard.
Here is an example of some of the work of students who helped with audio and video editing. These are screen shots of actual editing processes. For the audio stories, the students used a software program called Audacity. The video editors worked with Adobe Premiere and Final Cut. Both formats take considerable time in the editing process, with the video taking longer due to the complexity of working with both a visual image and sound.
As I said, I transcribed a lot of stories and interviews. In doing this, I really attempt to capture the essence of the story—what the storyteller is really trying to explain—and then to accurately capture the way the speaker was phrasing the idea. Through this work I not only gained this very unique skill set of transcribing stories—something I never thought I would do—but I also gained a very interesting work ethic. I was asked to do these tasks, and then I was sent to figure out how to do them. I was expected to figure out how to get the work done in an efficient way. I was given an opportunity to work independently and then present my work to the professors who were leading this project. That’s a very unique opportunity that not many students have. To be an assistant in a project of this scale, have the opportunity to have an individual take on it, really dip my toes into something brand new, feel successful at it, and feel like my work is appreciated, not only in the department, but for the research project as a whole, has been exciting.
My previous statements allude to the student-faculty collaboration that Linfield strives to support and something that this project has really, really opened my eyes to. This is something I didn’t anticipate coming into college, but it’s turned into a big part of my college career, which has been a lot of fun. Through this work, I feel as though I’ve become involved in a community so much larger than Linfield. I know these individuals through listening to their voices and their stories. I feel like I have an emotional connection to these people, most of whom I’ve never met. I’ve never been to Pacific City, but I’ve seen enough pictures and video clips that I really sense an essence of what this community is about. And it’s so much larger than my Linfield bubble, which is exciting. As I mentioned, I have been really involved in listening to stories and interviews capturing their importance. I think that just from listening to the stories you heard today, you can understand the emotional impact that these voices have, that a singular photograph has. I think you can understand the essence of the emotional nature of the ties that one can create with these stories. I think through hearing these individual stories, and then as a whole, crafting this essence of the community that we were striving to create, I really have an appreciation for the storytelling aspect. And, I think I have a clear picture of the importance of these individuals who appreciated being heard, who wanted these questions to be asked, and who were so honored that their stories counted, that their stories mattered, and that their relationships, their histories, their traditions meant something more to people outside of Pacific City.

I met a few of these fishermen at a reception that was held at Linfield, and it was so funny. Hearing their voices and seeing them in real life—I felt like I had such a strong connection to them and they had no idea who I was! They had no idea that I had been listening to their voices for months, writing down every word they said and looking up what the words meant to figure out what the heck they were talking about. I feel like that work in itself was a learning experience. But then, meeting these individuals—it was so, fun to think, “That’s exactly what I pictured you looking like,” or “Oh, that’s . . .” Meeting them was such a fun, fun addition. Through my particular work, I really have gained an insight into this community; I’ve learned a lot about dory boats and fishing. But more than that, I’ve learned about the importance of community, of sharing stories, and of being appreciated for the history that these people hold because it’s so unique and so, so important. And, it’s something that I’ll be able to use in the future. Thank you.
Thanks, Mary Beth. I’m going to talk about stories of a different nature. My responsibility as a librarian, in terms of collection management, is to help provide a space for all of this data that’s been accumulated through this recent project. As Brenda mentioned, the institutional repository, DigitalCommons@Linfield, was coming online at the same time the research project was getting started. The repository, in essence, is a digital archive. It’s based on the principle of open access. Our main mission is to promote the discovery, the sharing, and the preservation of scholarly and creative works for the faculty and students and staff at Linfield, as well as to document the history of the college. When librarians talk about institutional archives, we’re usually talking about sets of services that are provided by the institution that are set up to help support these kinds of scholarly and creative projects and the dissemination of that information. Since these two projects were happening in a parallel time frame, we started conversations early on about how we might be able to work together to make more of this data accessible than had originally been envisioned.
This is the home page in the repository for the Dory Project. We did a soft launch of the collection in October of 2011, so we’ve been live with the content for about four and a half years. The primary focus of the research team has been on sharing stories like those you heard today. But as a librarian, one of the things that I’m interested in is trying to unravel the big-picture story of how this information gets accessed, gets utilized, how people are engaging with this research. In the library world we talk about exposing hidden collections. Sometimes we think of that in terms of actual, physical materials that are sitting in a box in an archive somewhere gathering dust. But, from the perspective of digital collection, these can also be hidden in a sense, because previously there hadn’t been any place that aggregated, organized, and presented this material in a way that was accessible to anyone outside of that insider community. Sometimes in communities you need to have that kind of insider status in order to be able to have access to that information. When we expose those hidden collections, what we’re able to do is remove some of those access barriers. For librarians, that’s a really important thing.
We currently have 265 objects, as I call them, that are available through the digital collection. That includes edited audio and video stories, the transcripts of those stories, contemporary and historical images, the exhibit panels that you see on display—we have an entire digital version in the repository—as well as scholarship in relation to the project. That has ranged from presentations that the students who have participated in the research project have given, to a book chapter that Brenda and I co-wrote, to a paper that a student presented at this conference a couple of years ago. So, we’ve collected a wide range of materials there. People can land in this collection in a number of ways: they can navigate directly to the website, or they might also come in to a particular item from a Google search, for instance. Because of this, one of the things we try to do in each record is to link that resource to related resources in the collection. So, for instance, if you land on an image of a storyteller, you would have links to be able to take you to audio stories or video stories from that person. This gets complicated really, really quickly, as you can imagine, with the scale of the project—the number of interviews we’ve done, the number of stories that have been told. One of the things we were trying to approximate was that sort of serendipitous experience that you might get in the library when you go to the shelf, browsing for a particular book, and you see like subjects, like materials on either side. We wanted to approximate that in the digital environment as much as we could.
This slide shows you a visual representation of the collection and how it breaks out in terms of the type of content. Images make up about two-thirds of the collection right now. We expect this to grow in all areas. We have a lot of back content that has yet to make its way live onto the site. But it’s likely that we will remain skewed a bit in terms of being an image-heavy collection, thanks, in part, to Ty. But that’s okay. We like that.
This slide shows you a bit of the growth of the collection during the last four and a half years. You see in the middle there we didn’t really have much growth between 2012 and 2013. That’s, in part, because of what was going on in my other world. Our library was going through a system migration that was pretty labor-intensive. That’s one of the things with collaborative projects. Sometimes one partner is ready to proceed and yet another partner needs to pay attention to something else at that moment in time. So, we all learn to expect there to be some ebb and flow. But from my perspective, in terms of project management, looking at this kind of a curve—this is actually really reasonable. Your growth rate is good but not excessive and you have steady progression.
This snapshot of data shows about a week’s worth of download activity for the period that ended this past Monday. You can see the distribution of usage activity that includes four continents over a single week. We’re always surprised as to who’s clicking on our stuff and where they’re coming from. Since 2011, we’ve seen about 8,500 downloads, about 35,500 page views, as calculated by Google, across the Dory Project collections, and we’ve seen usage activity from 60 countries, all 50 states, the District of Columbia, and Puerto Rico.
This is a list of our most-used items in each of the categories. The image at the top is a bit of an anomaly for us. We couldn’t figure out why all of a sudden we have this really heavily downloaded image of one of our storytellers. In two years, it’s become the fifteenth most downloaded item in our repository—of all time. In talking, Brenda and I remembered that Donna Ludwig Peterson is an artist who is fairly well known. So, probably people are doing Google searches to find some of her artwork, and she comes up because our website is indexed very nicely by Google. This provides an example of how the materials are really discoverable in that way. Donna continues to get lots of download counts. And, we’re all the happier for it. We measure hits rather than downloads for the audio and the video because those are on a streaming server, so they don’t really get counted in the same way. But, you get a sense for the activity there.
So, some things to consider about the Dory Project. We currently have more than 2,000 image files that are awaiting final processing and uploading. We have more than 15 oral history interviews that have not been mapped to identify the potential audio and video stories. We have edited audio and video stories that need to be transcribed. We continue to receive requests from members of the community: “Oh, you really need to go talk to this person still.” We have this extraordinarily complex web of relationships that we are trying to represent. We have all of this data. And we all have other interests that we would love to be able to pursue in addition to continuing work on this. So, there are challenges. I spend a lot of time thinking about this as a librarian. But it’s not specific just to librarians; it’s specific to any researcher.

How do you find ways to sustain momentum? How do you find ways to sustain funding? These questions are especially pertinent when you have a project that initially you envisioned as short-term and it transitions to longer-term. How do you maintain that forward momentum when other individuals have other institutional responsibilities or when students graduate? We think about gatekeepers in different ways, in terms of the research team, ourselves, but also in terms of your research subjects. Brenda alluded to the fact that we really needed to gain the trust of the dory community before they would let us in to really begin this project. And so, you really need to think about that and how long that might take for you to gain people’s trust, that you’re going to represent their stories effectively, with sensitivity, and truthfully. And so, sometimes that’s going to create a bottleneck, in addition to all the other kinds of bottlenecks that can creep up. So, how do you deal with those? How do you deal with an ever-rotating cast of characters when students cycle in and out because they graduate, or study abroad, or what have you? The last point is, how do you deal with not knowing necessarily how much data you’re going to wind up with? How are researchers going to use the collection in the future? So, we’re building this collection based on how we think researchers right now might want to make use of it given the current constraints or opportunities that our system presents. We don’t know how these digital environments may change in the future and what that might look like in terms of the ability of people to mine data in the collection. How do you keep thinking forward while continuing to push this information out there?

Brenda is going to wrap up for just a minute to tell us what’s coming next, and then we’ll open it up for questions.
As you have heard, this is a very large project that has expanded beyond any of our wildest dreams. So, what now? We have mentioned several times that we’re still doing additional interviews. Obviously, we are continuing work on editing stories and completing transcripts of them to add to the backbone of the collection. We just received a collection of images in an interviewee’s scrapbooks and family photograph albums. Currently, Mary Beth is digitizing those documents. We expect to receive more of these collections. In terms of scholarly projects, for the most part we haven’t yet had an opportunity to engage in scholarly research using the data beyond what Kathleen mentioned. Our work, thus far, has centered mainly on processing data and building the archival collection. We’re eager to focus on examining the materials from a scholarly perspective to provide insights into the dory community. We use materials from the collection in our courses, particularly those in which we discuss ethnographic and phenomenological methods and interviewing. More than 300 students have had exposure to the project through this coursework. We are still working to find additional appropriate venues for the traveling exhibit. It was on display in Linfield’s Nicholson Library for two months in the fall of 2014. The exhibit now appears each July at Dory Days, which is Pacific City’s annual citywide celebration. We will continue to seek outside funding to support the completion of the archives.
Mary Beth talked about the project as a life-changing activity for her. I think it’s been life changing for all of the faculty and students involved, as well. Since we do a lot of work in our department with culture, co-cultures, and community engagement, this project has come full circle as a way for us to directly study a co-culture. The dory fishers have created a community that has had a major impact on the economic and social history of Oregon. Yet, it remains a relatively unknown community. We hope our work will change that. Thank you.