

ORAL HISTORY AND THE CALIFORNIA STATE ARCHIVES

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We appreciate this opportunity to showcase the work of the State Government Oral History Program with the publication of the oral history interview of former Associate Justice Cruz Reynoso. It is also a pleasure to work once again with the California Supreme Court Historical Society. We have had a long relationship with the Society through its grant to digitize the working papers of the 1879 Constitutional Convention,¹ and through articles prepared by Archives staff, particularly Court Records Archivist Sebastian Nelson.² Readers of *California Legal History* will also be familiar with the article on our holdings in this field that I was proud to co-author with Society Board Member John Burns, my predecessor as

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¹ Laren Metzger, "State Archives Digitizes Constitutional Convention Papers," *California Supreme Court Historical Society Newsletter* (Fall/Winter 2008): 22–23; available at <http://www.cschs.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/08/2008-Newsletter-Fall-State-Archives-Digitizes-Papers.pdf>.

² Sebastian A. Nelson (Court Records Archivist), "Nineteenth-Century Supreme Court Resources in the California State Archives," *California Supreme Court Historical Society Newsletter* (Spring/Summer 2013): 17–19; available at <http://www.cschs.org/wp-content/uploads/2014/05/2013-Newsletter-Spring-State-Archives-Resources.pdf>.

State Archivist.³ It is, therefore, especially appropriate for us to authorize the publication of Justice Reynoso's oral history in this journal.

The State Government Oral History Program (SGOHP) was established at the California State Archives in 1985 to enhance the historical understanding of legislative and executive processes and policymaking in California. Government Code section 12233 requires the California Secretary of State to conduct a regular governmental history documentation program to provide through the use of oral history a continuing documentation of state policy development as reflected in California's legislative and executive history.

This systematic and disciplined effort to record history, and preserve and make it available for future research supplements the official record. It serves to document California's institutional memory and provides much needed content in a digital age when paper files increasingly give way to either non-recorded conversations or electronic documents that can be easily erased.

Since 1986, the SGOHP has completed over 200 interviews. Interview subjects are people who have had a significant role in California state government: former members of the legislature, constitutional officers, agency and department heads, and others who have shaped public policy and/or are identified as being influential in political and public developments at the statewide level. They were selected on a non-partisan basis, with the goal of illuminating key aspects of California government history. Interviewees include Supreme Court Justices Stanley Mosk, Frank C. Newman, and Cruz Reynoso.

Earlier this year, the Center for California Studies at California State University, Sacramento provided the funding for completion of an oral history interview with the late William (Bill) Hauck who held a number of positions in state government including Deputy Chief of Staff to the Governor, Chief of Staff to two Assembly Speakers, and Chair of the Constitution Revision Commission and Co-chair of the California Performance Review Commission. The interview was donated to the State Archives for inclusion in the Archives' State Government Oral History Program. The

³ John F. Burns & Nancy Lenoil, "The First California Statute: Legal History and the California State Archives," *California Legal History* 4 (2009): 443-76.

Center for California Studies has recently completed another interview with former Legislative Analyst Elizabeth Hill which will also be donated to the State Government Oral History Program.

The oral history interviews supplement the historical records in the Archives and provide researchers with a broader and more complete picture of California government than can be gleaned from documents alone.

Further information about the State Government Oral History Program and a catalog of available transcripts is available at <http://www.sos.ca.gov/archives/admin-programs/oral-history/>.

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