

Whatcom County Homemade Music Society oral histories, 2005-2007

Overview of the Collection

Creator	Whatcom County Homemade Music Society
Title	Whatcom County Homemade Music Society oral histories
Dates	2005-2007 (inclusive) 2005 2007
Quantity	.5 linear feet.
Collection Number	XOE_CPNWS0301wchms (collection)
Summary	The collection contains several oral history interviews with members of the Whatcom County Homemade Music Society (WCHMS), conducted by former Fairhaven College student Coty Hogue. For over thirty years, the WCHMS has arranged concerts and music gatherings in the area, and provided an avenue for networking among local musicians.
Repository	Western Washington University, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies Goltz-Murray Archives Building 808 25th St. Bellingham, WA 98225 Telephone: 360-650-7534 cpnws@wwu.edu
Access Restrictions	This collection is open to the public.
Languages	English.

Historical Note

Founded in Bellingham, Washington in the mid-1970s, the Whatcom County Homemade Music Society and its members have been active participants in the folk music scene in Bellingham, arranging concerts and music gatherings in the area, and providing an avenue for networking among local musicians. The group meets on a weekly/bi-weekly basis. Traditionally, these meetings have been held at the Roeder Home.

Content Description

The Whatcom County Homemade Music Society Oral History Collection is comprised of six oral histories of founders and members of the Whatcom County Homemade Music Society, headquartered in Bellingham, Washington. Oral histories were provided by Flip Breskin, Robert Lopresti, Terri Weiner, Laurel Bliss, Laura Smith, Mary E. Penttinen-King, and Richard Scholtz. Interview files contain paper transcripts, and audio recordings.

The oral histories in this collection cover recollections between the 1960s to the present, focusing on interviewees connection to the Whatcom County Homemade Music Society, but also their experiences

with the Puget Sound Guitar Workshop, a Washington-based workshop for guitarists established in 1974 in which all the interviewees took part. Many of the interviewees relate their experiences with both local and national folk singers, including Janis Ian, Pete Seeger, and Mike Marker.

This collection is a valuable resource for anyone interested in learning more about folk music, or the music community in Bellingham.

Use of the Collection

Preferred Citation

Whatcom County Homemade Music Society oral histories, Center for Pacific Northwest Studies, Western Libraries Heritage Resources, Western Washington University, Bellingham WA 98225-9123.

Administrative Information

Arrangement

The Whatcom County Homemade Music Society oral histories are organized according to the following series arrangement: Series I: Interview transcripts and audio recordings, 2005-2007.

Custodial History

Donated by Coty Hogue in January 2009.

Processing Note

CPNWS staff converted original cassette and mini-disc recordings to WAV and mp3 format. Transcripts were created later by Laurie Brion, a CPNWS volunteer.

Detailed Description of the Collection

The following section contains a detailed listing of the materials in the collection.

Series I: Interview transcripts and audio recordings, 2005-2007

Container(s)	Description	Dates
Box/Folder		
1/1	Laurel Bliss oral history Length of recording: 53 minutes MP3. WAVE (format). Transcripts Transcript available in-house and online. Ms. Bliss briefly outlines her early experiences with playing music and some of her early artistic influences, including Simon and Garfunkel, and the Beatles. She spent the majority of her	2006 February 16

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	<p>college career at University of Washington. Ms. Bliss recalls how she was exposed to bluegrass style music, and how she was first introduced to playing the dobro, a lap-played guitar often featured in country and bluegrass music. She relates her experiences playing with the South Fork Bluegrass Band of Bellingham, including playing at the Darrington Bluegrass Festival and the Grass Valley Festival. Ms. Bliss has taught classes at the Puget Sound Guitar Workshop since 1984, and attended Whatcom County Homemade Music Society (WCHMS) music circles at the Roeder house when she was first learning to play folk music. She also describes the recording of a record, Old Pal, in 1994 with long-time friend, Cliff Perry, and discusses her experiences playing Cajun music, specifically with the Bellingham-based band the Happy Valley Sluggers.</p>	
1/2	<p>Flip Breskin oral history Length of recording: 2 hours 30 minutes Audiocassettes. MP3. WAVE (format). Transcripts Transcript available in-house and online. Ms. Breskin briefly describes her experiences as the first Jewish family on Mercer Island, and how this isolation as a child led her to music. She moved to Bellingham in 1970 at the height of the counter-culture movement and recollects her connections with the South Fork Bluegrass Band. She relates her experiences as one of the founding members of the Puget Sound Guitar Workshop, and the various camps and workshops that sprang forth from that, the Sound Acoustic Music Workshop and the California Coast Music Camp for example. Ms. Breskin also discusses the influences she had on the WCHMS, and her thoughts and experiences in the Bellingham folk music scene in general. She explores the impact that musicians like Elizabeth Cotten had on her own folk music experience and her personal connections to other folk artists like Janis Ian, Larry Hanks, Mike Marker, Eric Schoenberg, and Richard Ruskin. She explains her connection to Mama Sunday's, now the Underground Coffee House on Western's campus, its history, and its connection to the music scene in Bellingham.</p>	2006 February 16
1/3	<p>Robert Lopresti and Terri Weiner oral history Length of recording: 53 minutes Audiocassettes. MP3. WAVE (format). Transcripts Transcript available in-house and online. Mr. Lopresti and Ms. Weiner both discuss their early musical memories, including familial influences and popular music influences, including 1960s folk staple, Joan Baez. Both were born on the east coast, Lopresti in New Jersey in 1954, and</p>	2007 March 05

Container(s)	Description	Dates
	<p>Weiner in New York in 1956. Both also found their initial interest in folk music during high school, and discuss the reasons that they were drawn to folk music. They relate the difference in the way music was experienced on the east coast in the 1960s and 1970s compared to the west coast, the accessibility of the music scene and the musicians in the Northwest that was not true for them on the east coast. They re-located to Bellingham in 1987. They discuss their first experiences with the concerts at the Roeder House and the WCHMS. Relate their musical experiences in Bellingham, including seeing such acts as Richard Scholtz, Ani diFranco, and Bob Franke. They also discuss their experiences with the monthly concert series put on by the Homemade Music Society and put on at the Roeder House.</p>	
1/4	<p>Mary Penttinen-King oral history Length of recording: 38 minutes Audiocassettes. MP3. WAVE (format). Transcripts Transcript available in-house and online. Ms. Penttinen-King was born in Pasadena, California in 1942, and recounts her early experiences with music, as both a performer and a listener. She sang in her junior high and high school choirs, and recalls her father listening to jazz and Big Band music when she was a child. She recalls her own early influences, including Mike Seeger and Elizabeth Cotten. She attended the University of Maryland and San Diego State, where she saw Peter, Paul and Mary, and Joan Baez perform. While in San Diego, Ms. Penttinen-King was active in the American Civil Liberties Union, taking part in picketing during the Civil Rights movement, and she picked this back up after moving to Bellingham in 1982. She briefly discusses the connection between those movements and singing. She explains the structure and organization and activities of the WCHMS. She discusses her experiences hosting the concert series at the Roeder House, and the acts that she has brought to Bellingham as host, including Hank Bradley and Kathy Whitesides.</p>	2007 February 24
1/5	<p>Richard Scholtz oral history Length of recording: 1 hour 10 minutes Audiocassettes. MP3. WAVE (format). Transcripts Transcript available in-house and online. Mr. Scholtz was born in Los Angeles, California in 1947, and spent parts of his childhood in Ventura and Alton before heading to Antioch College in Yellow Springs, Ohio. As a child, Mr. Scholtz played piano and trumpet, and took music theory courses in college though he majored in Psychology. His first exposure to folk music came in high school when he heard Pete</p>	2005 October 20

Container(s)	Description	Dates
1/6	<p data-bbox="320 180 1147 489">Seeger and the Weavers, and after college he took up the auto-harp. He recalls his experiences meeting Flip Breskin, and his work with the Puget Sound Guitar Workshop. He also relates how he came to found the WCHMS, and his continued work with the group. Mr. Scholtz acted as head of the Washington State Folk Life Council for 8-10 years, and has taught music classes at Western and at Whatcom Community College. He describes the Bellingham music scene, and its influence and impact on groups like the Homemade Music Society.</p> <p data-bbox="320 537 659 569">Laura Smith oral history</p> <p data-bbox="320 575 971 674">Length of recording: 37 minutes Audiocassettes. MP3. WAVE (format). Transcripts Transcript available in-house and online.</p> <p data-bbox="320 680 1147 1199">Ms. Smith was born in Hawaii in 1947. She recalls that her early exposure to music came from her father playing classical piano and ragtime when she was growing up. Her main musical outlet was choir, and she sang in her church choir through high school. She went to college in Portland, Oregon, and continued to sing there. Ms. Smith recalls her musical influences and interests during those years, including Joan Baez, Mimi Farina, Mark Spoelstra, and Steve Young. She relates how she began playing banjo, and how this led to her playing with Larry Hanks, her husband. She moved to Bellingham in 1979, where she and Larry reconnected with Robert Scholtz and became involved in the WCHMS. As a host, she has sponsored various acts including The Wanderers, Bill Merlin and Carl Allen, the Bird's Creek Boys, and Sarah Gray. She discusses briefly where she sees the WCHMS headed.</p>	2007 February 11

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Subject Terms :

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[Folk Music--United States--History--Sources.](#)

[Folk music--Washington \(State\)--History--Sources.](#)

[Musicians--Northwest, Pacific--History--Sources.](#)

[Music--Societies--Washington \(State\)--Bellingham--History--Sources.](#)

[Music--Washington \(State\)--History--Sources.](#)

Personal Names :

[Bliss, Laurel](#)

[Breskin, Flip](#)

[Hogue, Coty--Archives](#)

[Lopresti, Robert](#)

[Penttinen-King, Mary E.](#)

[Scholtz, Richard](#)

[Smith, Laura](#)

[Weiner, Terri](#)

Corporate Names :

[Whatcom County Homemade Music Society](#)

[Puget Sound Guitar Workshop](#)

Geographical Names :

[Whatcom County \(Wash.\)--History--Sources.](#)

Other Creators :

Personal Names :

[Bliss, Laurel](#) (creator)

[Breskin, Flip](#) (creator)

[Lopresti, Robert](#) (creator)

[Penttinen-King, Mary E.](#) (creator)

[Scholtz, Richard](#) (creator)

[Smith, Laura](#) (creator)

[Weiner, Terri](#) (creator)