

# Oral History and Hurricane Katrina: Reflections on Shouts and Silences

*Stephen Sloan*

**Abstract:** In the immediate aftermath of Hurricane Katrina in August 2005, many oral historians throughout the nation began to consider the role their methodology could serve in documenting the storm and its aftermath. Interviewing so soon after such a traumatic event creates new considerations for oral history as an approach to recording experience. The problems and possibilities of oral history at such a moment initiated a vibrant discussion on H-Oralhist and at professional meetings in the fall of 2005. This article reflects on many of the topics raised in that dialogue, including issues of historical distance, objectivity, reflection, and emotional trauma. The piece also offers an early review of the work of the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage at the University of Southern Mississippi to document the impact of Hurricane Katrina in Mississippi.

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**Keywords:** historical methodology, Hurricane Katrina, Mississippi, oral history, trauma

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## A storm for all time

On August 28, 2005, Biloxi Mayor A.J. Holloway received an early morning call from the Weather Channel's Jim Cantore to let him know that he was in town and wanted to discuss Hurricane Katrina, at that time plodding across the Gulf of Mexico. Holloway, a hurricane veteran, had met with Cantore before as his city braced for earlier tempests that missed the Mississippi Coast. After their early morning interview, Cantore asked Holloway to return for a follow-up that afternoon

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around 4:30 p.m. At their second meeting, Holloway noted Cantore's demeanor had changed. Cantore disclosed to Holloway that "it wasn't good ... he said this thing is bad ... right now, it is worse than Camille, it's huge, it is covering the whole Gulf of Mexico, there is no way we can miss it, no way out of it." Following their interview, the meteorologist pulled Holloway aside and advised him, "When you leave here, on your way home, you drive around your city, because you won't see it like this tomorrow."<sup>1</sup>

Midmorning, August 29, Hurricane Katrina struck Mississippi with a terrible vengeance. The slow-moving storm buffeted the coast with sustained winds of approximately 120 miles per hour. Lying in the heart of the hurricane's deadly northeastern quadrant, Mississippi experienced the full brunt of Katrina's power. Although the storm was a category three by the time it hit, it had been a category five just twenty-four hours before, and it brought with it a storm surge typical of the most deadly category five hurricane. Katrina inundated the coast with a massive wall of water over thirty feet high in some areas.<sup>2</sup> The torrent flattened structures from the shore to miles inland, leaving a mass of wreckage behind while sweeping thousands of tons of debris back out into Mississippi Sound. As the storm moved inland, the high winds continued the devastation. Only after the hurricane passed Meridian, about 150 miles inland, was it downgraded to a tropical storm. In its wake, Katrina took the lives of more than 230 Mississippians and 49 of the state's 82 counties were declared disaster areas.<sup>3</sup>

Along the entire Mississippi Coast, from Pearlinton in the west to Pascagoula in the east, Hurricane Katrina left utter ruin. Even longtime coastal Mississippians, veterans of colossal storms of the past, were not prepared to comprehend what Katrina wrought. Businesses, homes, and livelihoods were swept away in towns and cities spread across Jackson, Harrison, and Hancock counties. In some areas, such as Waveland and East Biloxi's Point Cadet, entire districts were taken, leaving mangled remnants of neighborhoods. Pass Christian, precariously located at the mouth of St Louis Bay, was flooded from three sides—the Mississippi Sound, St Louis Bay, and northern bayous and rivers. The storm plowed through commercial centers, tourist venues, condominiums, apartments, and private homes, impacting residents at every socioeconomic level in over a dozen communities along the coast and inland.<sup>4</sup> The foundations of life on the coast were shattered, as remembered by resident Elizabeth Brewton in an oral history interview: "It really did look like somebody had picked up our Gulf Coast, shook us up a little, threw us back down, and stomped all over us."<sup>5</sup>

## The wake of Hurricane Katrina

For South Mississippians, the devastation of Hurricane Katrina will long be a reality—destroyed infrastructure, wrecked economies, shifted political power, and broken communities—the power of the storm and the disorder of its aftermath. The local and national response to the crisis both exposed the limits of society as well as underscored the great compassion people have for one another. The human story of Hurricane Katrina, much like the storm itself, is

difficult to comprehend in simple terms. The consequent mass of media coverage and ongoing political discourse surrounding the storm have brought their power to bear in shaping the larger narrative and collective memory of the event, but all have failed to provide a clear depiction of the impact of the hurricane. Fading media coverage post-Hurricane Katrina has reinforced its inability to provide an authentic and enduring portrait of the storm and the lives and communities it changed.

The account of Hurricane Katrina and those it impacted spans the scope of the human experience, from powerful fear and great courage to terrible tragedy and surprising humor. It has an elusive complexity which defies any attempt at metanarrative. Aspiring to get at a comprehensive picture of the storm and the countless ways in which it impacted so many seems unfeasible. So how do we begin to understand Hurricane Katrina, an event that fundamentally shook the social order? A profound way to begin is to try to appreciate how the storm manifested itself for an individual, for a family, for a community—and one of the most effective and powerful ways to capture that is oral history.

In the moment, soon after the storm, oral history presents a rich and productive approach to truly understanding Hurricane Katrina. Although interviewing post-Hurricane Katrina presents many challenges and concerns, it also presents great potential to researchers. In these interviews dwell authentic portraits of the meaning and human impact of the storm.

## **Working between tragedy and memory**

A primary consideration in an interview project so soon after the occurrence is the ubiquitous truth that the experience is raw. Devastation, both emotional and physical, is palpable—interviewing narrators in relief centers, FEMA trailers, or possibly a concrete slab where a home had been. People are hurting, confused, and unsettled. Composure is often elusive and emotions can be overpowering. Residents are in the process of trying to understand what happened while beginning the slow course of mending.

It is a precarious point in time to conduct oral history. There are ethical issues involved, from discounting loss to compounding grief. It is an invasive exercise, the oral historian stepping in while others are trying to put their lives back together. This is a moment with which experienced historians are uncomfortable and unaccustomed. It is a time when we are hesitant to ask people questions or to urge them to relive a painful and all-too-recent experience. In most cases, scholars deal with subjects from which we are far removed, both chronologically and emotionally. Working at such a moment requires more of us as professionals.

Despite the difficulties of the moment, I often found in conducting interviews post-Hurricane Katrina that individuals were very willing to talk about their experiences. Moments of calamity are marked by many great paradoxes, including a sense of well-being that often inexplicably emerges in the aftermath of disaster.<sup>6</sup> Studies have argued that disaster causes a break in the sense of ordinary time. This fracture

creates a space in which those things that normally preoccupy us are dramatically removed and life becomes fully focused on present, day-to-day existence. I have often found individuals responding to this shift from the hurried pace of normalcy by allowing themselves to consider their past experience, embracing the desire to reflect even amidst the disorder of recovery.

Drawing meaning from tragic events is an urgent need and an ongoing desire. Traumatic events play a profound role in shaping identity.<sup>7</sup> Reflection is an essential part of creating personal understanding of such events and healing from disaster. Oral histories have allowed and encouraged participants to reflect on their personal experience with Hurricane Katrina.

Sociologist Arthur Neal, who studied reactions to the national traumas of the twentieth century such as the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor in 1941 and the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962, argues the importance of reflection as recovery. Neal maintains that “reflection is required in order for an extraordinary event to be understood and made coherent.”<sup>8</sup> It is in remembering and relating these stories that individuals make sense of, and draw meaning from, the event.

Although a clean narrative was often problematic and drawing meaning from events was in its early stage, I was struck by a common refrain heard in many of the interviews with coastal Mississippians concerning Hurricane Katrina. Whenever I would sit down to interview longtime residents they began telling me of their experience with Katrina by relating it to their prior experience of Hurricane Camille. Hurricane Camille was a category five storm that devastated the Mississippi Gulf Coast in August of 1969 with over 200 miles per hour winds and an over twenty foot storm surge. Hurricane Camille was the benchmark and reference point that residents returned to as they began to understand this newer experience. Most often, it was how the previous storm, in all its ferocity, did not prepare them for Hurricane Katrina. Ironically, however, Hurricane Camille did prepare them in the sense that it gave them a familiar point from which to analogize Hurricane Katrina quickly and effectively. Comparing and contrasting their familiarity with a storm over twenty-five years earlier gave them a basis from which to begin to comprehend this new event. Soon after Hurricane Katrina passed, residents were already drawing meaning from this experience based on the only reference point that they personally held for such an event, the monster storm of an earlier generation.

The voices of those who experienced the storm are central to gaining any understanding of the true impact of Hurricane Katrina. Many stories have been told in the public media about these individuals, their families, and their communities, but they have not had the opportunity to tell their own story in their own words. It is an opportunity that they rightly deserve. Telling their own story is important not only as a validation of their own view of their experience but also as an enrichment of the historical record. Events such as Hurricane Katrina shake the foundation of the social structure. As people find a way to process the event, oral historians can play an important role. The recorded narratives, individually and as a whole, are part of the healing process, recognizing the need to understand what occurred and helping to garner hope for the future.

## Embedded oral historians

In September 2005, within weeks of the storm, the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage at the University of Southern Mississippi, with support from the Mississippi Humanities Council through funds provided by the National Endowment for the Humanities, began a project to document the experiences of Mississippians impacted by Hurricane Katrina. Based in Hattiesburg, Mississippi, a scant sixty miles from the coast and severely damaged by the storm, USM's oral history program has been active since the early 1970s, conducting interview projects on Mississippi history and culture. With its Hurricane Katrina Oral History Project, however, the center launched an initiative unlike any it had ever conducted before.

As an institutionally based oral history program with established community partners throughout South Mississippi, the Center viewed working at such a time as a responsibility, an opportunity to do what we do best at a time when it was most needed. More than a group of individual researchers pursuing a timely research interest, we were a local research endeavor with longstanding relationships to communities in the state. The close ties to communities and public agencies in South Mississippi endowed the Center with the required access and essential understanding to work in times such as this. In an age when many research endeavors frame approaches with national and transnational angles, instances like this reveal why it is important to remain deeply invested in conducting and understanding history on a local and community level. Interviewees, if not familiar with our work, were familiar with our institution, which lost its coast campus located in Long Beach in the storm surge that came with Hurricane Katrina.

Working so soon after the event opened up possibilities for collaborations with other disciplines working in an arena often avoided by historians. Researchers from diverse parts of the academy, including business, political science, anthropology, health, tourism management, and nursing discovered the worth of oral history as a methodology to gather individuals' experiences of events. Often practitioners in these disciplines found oral history suited the moment well, much better than research methods that they customarily relied on in their work. These scholars were impressed by oral history's potential as a means to gather and understand qualitative data on the impact of Hurricane Katrina. Working with new partners stretched us as an oral history research center, taking us into untouched areas and challenging us to think about the methodology in innovative ways. Sometimes this included new opportunities to document communities with which we had long wanted to work, such as the Biloxi Vietnamese community and undocumented Mexican laborers.

Attempting to gather the story of Katrina with an oral history project is a formidable prospect. Never have we as interviewers been more aware of the fact that by choosing one person to interview we were deciding not to interview thousands. Hundreds of thousands of Mississippians living south of I-20 had some experience with Katrina. Add to that the experience of first responders, relief workers, evacuees, and those that sheltered them, and the impact is broader still.

Although I was keenly aware of the limitations of the scope of the work we were doing, it was an institutional responsibility to run the project. If the self-defined

mission of the center was to record, preserve, and present the history, culture, and heritage of Mississippi, and our historic goal was to continue as our future one, how could we fail to engage in the documentation of an event that would fundamentally change the state? For the eleven municipalities along the coast and the wide variety of groups they encompass, it was an event that had wide-ranging economic, social, and political effects. The need to document these events was clear, both through interviewing soon after events as well as organizing additional initiatives in the future. Hurricane Katrina was a watershed event for a host of distinctive communities in Mississippi. Documenting the breadth and complexity of the event using oral history is problematic but exceedingly valuable.<sup>9</sup>

## The worth of the stories

As a staunch advocate of the tremendous value of oral history to document and understand the past, I discovered that my experiences using oral history post-Hurricane Katrina have only deepened my convictions. Conducting and reviewing oral histories in the wake of Hurricane Katrina reaffirmed to me what is best about oral history: the ability of the methodology to document a chorus of experiences of an event, to capture what individuals thought about and went through, and to hear them begin to articulate *their* views about the significance and meaning of their experiences.

Often as an interviewer I am faced with reluctant narrators. In each case, I try to encourage them by telling them that this is their opportunity to speak, a chance to have their voice heard if they choose to do so. If they do not speak, others will speak for them. This has been especially true with Hurricane Katrina. While others are telling many stories about them, residents need to be empowered and afforded the chance to tell their own stories, in their own words. It is of lasting benefit for the historical record and often of immediate benefit to individuals, families, and communities. Recording in the wake of the storm revealed many reasons why the moment was one well-suited for oral history.

If we embrace the notion that history is contested, then it is in the period soon after events that it seems most contested, both collectively and individually. Directly after an experience, initial themes and ideas compete to frame understanding. As news continues to break and public debate is high, collective memory is at its genesis. It is a period with a spectrum of possibilities before the crystallization of a dominant narrative. Working as an oral historian at such a time is stepping into the formation of the narrative. Although memories of events are often fluid and can change and shift dramatically at times, it is also true that once some memories are constructed, they stand firm and unyielding—often impervious to challenges or reevaluations. At the moment soon after events there may be no well-established anecdotes or heavily mediated interpretations of events. Recounting of experiences is raw and yet also precise in a different sense, and valuable for that reason.

In our contemporary culture, a disaster of such magnitude as Hurricane Katrina receives immediate and intense national attention. Along with this attention, the documentation of the event occurs at a frenzied pace, but it is done by individuals

working with a different set of concerns and priorities than oral historians. It seems, however, that not only is there room, but there is a dire need for individuals to record the experience with a sense of historicity, addressing the challenge of what it means to think historically at the meeting place of experience and memory, especially a memory that could be painful.

As a historian, not a journalist, I recognize that useful frameworks of history only emerge with distance from experience. But as an oral historian, I also see the value in documenting experience in its immediate aftermath. Interviews can be done later, to be sure, but it is critical that they be done early as well, with proper preparation and execution. Many have argued that a passage of time is needed before it is appropriate to use the methodology in an effective way. The desire for chronological distance between event and reflection, it is hoped, will allow for larger frameworks and historical analogies to form with which to approach these interviews. I argue, however, that it is necessary for oral historians to do this early work as a foundational record, to help shape the way the frameworks emerge and develop. As oral historians, we often argue that the work we do is important because established frameworks of history fall short—at worst they are flawed, and at best they are embedded with significant silences. Why wait for these structures to do our work? Rather, let us be a larger part of the process. The work conducted soon after events has created a distinctive and, as future researchers will attest, a priceless historical record. The worth is not in the narratives' power to achieve an immediate level of synthesis or greater meaning, but in their power to glean out individual experience and meaning, even in raw form. As Mary Marshall Clark well described in her analysis on oral history interviewing after September 11, oral history interviewing depends on memory not just as a source of details, “but also as a rich repository of thoughts, beliefs, and impressions of self-understandings and historical understandings that have evolved over time.”<sup>10</sup> We can also recognize the ways in which this evolution of understanding begins soon after events and remains ongoing. There is a place for oral history in capturing those qualities in the immediate aftermath as well as long after events.

Oral historians have committed much discussion and research to the question of *how* to best conduct oral history. Much of our efforts have worked to establish good standards of practice that have raised the quality of work being conducted using the methodology. *How* and *why* we do oral history are questions to which we have committed much discussion, but the question of *when* is one not often deliberated.<sup>11</sup>

We would take it as a truth that oral history is by definition a reflective experience. But how reflective does it need to be? How far from experience is it best to conduct oral history? We explore, rightly, the fundamental nature of memory, forgetting, and misremembering and how these factors impact what we do. However, when we discuss these considerations in regard to narrators, we focus our conversation on individuals who, if not qualified by age, at least have significant chronological distance from events. As oral historians move to working more with the recent past, however, we include in our discussion how to mediate the worth of stories narrators provide us on recent events. Like historians, we often think that the passage of time brings more objectivity to our view of events. But oral historians know that is a problematic assumption to make. Oftentimes I find as I conduct oral history, in

dealing with people and their past, my ideas of “historical distance” are razed. As a professional historian, I recognize the value of the passage of time and that there is such a thing as “historical distance.” But as an oral historian, I am less certain of what the concept of “historical distance” really is, or if it exists at all.

In the spring of 2006, I drove up to Columbus, Mississippi, to conduct my third in a series of interviews with Mary Ellen Weathersby Pope. Mrs. Pope, a Mississippi native, had recently celebrated her hundredth birthday and was sitting down with me this day to reflect on her experiences in the great Mississippi flood of 1927, a deluge that drove her from her new home in Anguilla, Mississippi, where she was a first-year home economics teacher at the local high school. Relating her story of a nighttime escape via a slow train ride to Natchez amid rising flood waters, she told the story of a young man who appeared out of the night, proposed marriage to a traveling companion, and then disappeared off into the dark and flooded delta.<sup>12</sup> As Mrs. Pope shared this story, emotion overcame her. Here, eighty years after the event, she struggled to manage the almost overwhelming emotion—feelings of fear from the flood and sentiments over the passion of a romantic gesture. Reflecting later on her experience in the interview, I realized we too often assume that chronological distance allows for more dispassionate feelings about the past, and thus provides a more objective account. Whatever the powerful experience, a recent tragedy or a flood of the distant past, emotions are an inextricable piece of what oral historians encounter in conducting interviews.

Truly, the immediate aftermath of an event is a messy point from which to reflect, and conducting oral history at this point raises concerns that must be managed. The fact that emotions are raw and confusing is often inescapable. For many narrators, it can be a moment where the narrative is quite muddled and events are confused. However, the need to draw meaning from events, even traumatic occurrences, is powerful and one that emerges quickly as a means of dealing with the recent past.

For some, to be true, it was too soon to tell their story. For other communities and individuals, however, the confusion of recovery and the pace of change following the storm made time of the essence. Shortly after Hurricane Katrina passed, a Red Cross shelter was created in the multipurpose center outside of Hattiesburg, Mississippi. In this shelter, a resident, Barbara, would sweep the small, five-foot square space around her cot—the boundaries of what she now called home. As hours turned into days, and days to weeks, Barbara became a matriarch to the society that formed in the shelter, a space that was transformed into place as a new community established patterns of life and assigned meaning to their new home. Residents promptly recognized the best places to live in the shelter and areas that were less desirable. For these new citizens, rebuilding had already begun in the midst of recovery.

Months later, driving by the facility, now a reclaimed multipurpose space for gun shows, music concerts, and cattle auctions, I thought about the stories of that departed society—a community that left few traces, a group of people now scattered to the wind. I regretted that I did not have the presence of mind to record their presence. I had heard colleagues caution against interviewing too soon, and I had agreed that in many cases they were right. But for these people and for their experiences, regrettably, it quickly became too late.

One of the values of oral history at such a moment is the power of the process to reaffirm and buttress community identity, especially during a period of intense pressure to transform. For some, the wake of Hurricane Katrina offered an opportunity to reevaluate the ways in which the coast had developed over the preceding decades. Just six weeks after Katrina, in the midst of cleanup, Governor Haley Barbour initiated the process of envisioning a new future for the area devastated by the hurricane. In October 2005, 200 architects and community members met in Biloxi to bring New Urbanism to the Mississippi Gulf Coast. The “Mississippi Renewal Forum” and the open community meetings that followed sought to pave a new path for the development of the region. Many local and state leaders argued that Katrina presented a wonderful opportunity: it had washed the slate clean and cleared the way to remake much of the coastline. Unlike New Orleans, where hollowed shells of homes stood to be dealt with, the storm surge scoured the Mississippi Coast, leaving in many cases mere footprints of former structures. Andres Duany, the Miami architect, planner, and author who led the forum, argued that it was a chance to correct the poor ways the coast had developed over the last fifty years: “People know that it took a wrong turn somewhere . . . This place has become a honky tonk, and this is the chance to get it right.”<sup>13</sup> Planners envisioned elaborate pedestrian-friendly town centers and mixed-use districts, but also presented over 240 specific recommendations for infrastructure, economic development, and human services.<sup>14</sup>

As grand master plans of what the Mississippi Coast should become were formed, oral history offered testimony that the roots of a community and place run much deeper than frame and drywall. While envisioning a different future for the Mississippi Coast, many residents still struggled to remind themselves of what was best about their life here. Participating in oral history offered individuals and communities a tool to reaffirm their connection to place. These were voices that needed to be heard but were underrepresented in the planning discussion on rebuilding. After Hurricane Katrina, there was an urgency to document how individuals and each distinct community along coastal Mississippi had endured and persevered. Oral histories speak loudly to the truth that Hurricane Katrina did not create a *tabula rasa*, that within the landscape of mangled and destroyed infrastructure there survives a still-vibrant sense of place and community.

Recovery is excruciatingly slow and it is a process where success is too often measured in brick and mortar. Such indicators of recovery most often fail to satisfy. Oral history and recovery can connect, offering those impacted, who have had stories told about them, to tell their experience in their own words. These oral histories of Hurricane Katrina explore the complexity of the event and stand as authentic portraits of the human experience of the storm.

Reflecting on the ongoing work of recording narratives of those who endured Hurricane Katrina reveals that there is still a great imbalance in the measure of stories that have been told about the people and the people who have had the opportunity to tell their stories. The work must continue to validate their experience and to seek a better understanding. For South Mississippians, the telling and retelling of their stories is important. It reestablishes confidence in their experience and gathers hope for the future. Wendy Frost, a nurse from Finley, Ohio, and a first responder to the storm, worked in the broken community of Pearlington, Mississippi,

in the weeks after Hurricane Katrina. In her oral history interview, she reflected on the significance of the time she spent in Mississippi and what she discovered about the importance of each individual story she heard and carried with her from her mission to the Mississippi Coast:

The one thing that I promised them, and I promised every single one of them that I met, was that they would never be forgotten again. Somebody asked me what I was going to take from this experience, and even though these people have nothing to give, they have given me a lot. And the one thing that I am gonna take from here is their stories. And I am going to tell their stories and I promised them, every one of them, that they will never be forgotten again. And I will not forget them, and I will make sure other people do not forget them.<sup>15</sup>

## NOTES

- 1 Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage, University of Southern Mississippi, "An Oral History with AJ Holloway" in *Hurricane Katrina Oral History Project*, 2007.
- 2 Federal Emergency Management Agency (FEMA), *Hurricane Katrina in the Gulf Coast, Mitigation Assessment Team Report: Building Performance Observations, Recommendations, and Technical Guidance* (Washington, DC: Government Printing Office, July 2006), iv.
- 3 Office of Governor Haley Barbour, *One Year After Katrina: Progress Report on Recovery, Rebuilding and Renewal* (Jackson: State of Mississippi, August 29, 2006), 4.
- 4 Coastal Mississippi cities and communities affected with population figures: Bay St. Louis (8209), Biloxi (50,644), D'Iberville (7,608), Gautier (11,681), Gulfport (71,127), Long Beach (17,320), Moss Point (15,851), Ocean Springs (17,225), Pascagoula (26,200), Pass Christian (6579), and Waveland (6674); other population centers include Pearlington (1684), Diamondhead (5912), Kiln (2040), and Shoreline Park (4058).
- 5 Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage, University of Southern Mississippi, "An Oral History with Elizabeth Brewton," in *Hurricane Katrina Oral History Project*, 2005.
- 6 Rebecca Solnit explores this phenomenon in "The Uses of Disaster: Notes on Bad Weather and Good Government," *Harper's Magazine*, October 2005, 31–7.
- 7 Dena Elisabeth Eber and Arthur G. Neal, eds., *Memory and Representation: Constructed Truths and Competing Realities* (Bowling Green, OH: Bowling Green State University Popular Press, 2001), 173.
- 8 Arthur G. Neal, *National Trauma and Collective Memory: Major Events in the American Century* (Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 1998), 16.
- 9 As of spring 2008, the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage at the University of Southern Mississippi has completed 327 interviews for its Hurricane Katrina Oral History Project. The range of interviews in the collection is remarkably diverse, from elementary school children who lived on the coast to officials relocated to the state to oversee rebuilding.
- 10 Mary Marshall Clark, "The September 11 Oral History Project," in *History and September 11th*, ed. Joanne Meyerowitz (Philadelphia, PA: Temple University Press, 2003), 124.
- 11 The Oral History Association's creation of the Emerging Crises Oral History Research Fund recognizes the growing role of oral historians in documenting such events. More discussion needs to take place on the dynamics of working in the areas of research the fund seeks to support which "[includes], but [is] not limited to, wars, natural disasters, political and or economic/ethnic repression, or other currently emerging events of crisis proportions" (1) at [http://alpha.dickinson.edu/oha/pdf/org\\_aw\\_crisis08.pdf](http://alpha.dickinson.edu/oha/pdf/org_aw_crisis08.pdf).
- 12 Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage, University of Southern Mississippi, "An Oral History with Mary Ellen Weathersby Pope," in *Mississippi Oral History Project*, 2007.
- 13 Robin Pogrebin, "Gulf Coast: A Vision to Revive, Not Repeat," *The New York Times*, October 13, 2005, E1.

- 14 Governor's Commission on Recovery, Rebuilding, and Renewal, *After Katrina: Building Back Better Than Ever* (Jackson, MS: State of Mississippi, December 31, 2005), 164–75.
- 15 Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage, University of Southern Mississippi, "An Oral History with Wendy Frost" in *Hurricane Katrina Oral History Project*, 2005.