

# **The HAL Oral History Project collection 2013-2020**

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## **The Hudson Area Library History Room**

**Hudson Area Library  
Hudson, New York**

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## **Descriptive Summary Notes:**

**Title:** The HAL Oral History Project collection

**Date (inclusive):** 2013-2020

### **Abstract:**

The HAL Oral History Project collection consists of CDs and digital files of oral histories conducted with residents of the City of Hudson, N.Y from 2013 to present, images of the interviewees, and supporting documentation of the project.

## **Administrative information**

**Accession number:** A2021-0001 – Main floor, Archives room

**Extent:** 1 1/2 Linear Feet

**Repository:** Hudson Area Library

**Language (s):** Materials are in English

**Condition governing access:** The collection is open to research

**Condition governing reproduction and use:** Copyright of this material lies with the Hudson Area Library. For permission to reproduce or publish contact the library: 518-828-1792 Ext. 100 or [reference@hudsonarealibrary.org](mailto:reference@hudsonarealibrary.org)

**Preferred citation:** The Hudson Area Library (HAL) Oral History Project collection, Hudson Area Library History Room, Hudson N.Y.

**Acquisition information:** Materials are the property of the Hudson Area Library. The oral histories were created by participants in an oral history workshop with Oral History Summer School led by Founder and Director Suzanne Snider, with assistance from Melinda Braathen. Contract and volunteer community members collected oral histories on the library's behalf.

**Accruals:** New materials will be added to the collection as oral histories are produced under the direction of the library's Director and History Room Coordinator.

**Custodial history:** All materials are stored in archival boxes. All audio/video materials were recorded digitally.

**Processing information:** The collection was processed by members of the History Room Committee and library staff.

## **Historical Note**

This oral history project was a broad based program undertaken to collect oral histories that would reflect and add to the library's local history resources. The audio portion of the collection contains interviews of people from the greater Hudson area collected by participants in the library's 2013 oral history workshop offered in collaboration with Oral History Summer School (OHSS), as well as by OHSS staff and alum contracted by the library to collect life stories of community members. Oral histories continue to be collected both by the Hudson Area Library staff.

The interviews were conducted by Melinda Braathen, John Craig, Jenny Goldberg, Inge Lincoln, Alanna Medlock, Maija Reed, Suzanne Snider, Katharine Umsted, and Robyn Waters.

## **Scope and Content Note**

The HAL Oral History Project collection consists of digital summaries and audio recordings conducted by various individuals with residents of the City of Hudson, N.Y from April 2013 to 2020. The interviewees were Dorothy and Ralph Avery; Leo Bower; John Brodowski; Carmine Ciancetta; Rich Conaty; Joseph D'Onofrio; Mary Hallenbeck; Norma Hart; Suzanna Koski-Cincotti; Arthur Koweek; Kathryn McDonald; Hazel Murray; Nguyen Tasha; Carolyn Russo; Art Smith; Viola Williams. In order to build a profile of social and community life for people growing up, coming into or living in the city, interview topics covered included education, religion, family life, community relations, pre-immigration experiences, WWII, neighborhood living conditions, and memories of Hudson Armory.

## **Arrangement**

The interviews are organized by alphabetical order from April 2013 - August 2020.

**Series 1:** Administrative files

**Series 2:** Audio Oral History Material

## **Subject and Indexing Terms**

- Avery, Dorothy
- Avery, Ralph
- Bower, Leo
- Brodowski, John
- Ciancetta, Carmine

- Conaty, Rich
- D'Onofrio, Joseph
- Hallenbeck, Mary
- Hart, Norma
- Koski-Cincotti, Suzanna
- Koweek, Arthur
- McDonald, Kathryn
- Murray, Hazel
- Nguyen, Tasha
- Russo, Carolyn
- Smith, Arthur (Art)
- Williams, Viola
- CDs
- Hudson --- Columbia County -- New York

**Form/genre**

- CDs
- Digital files of all recordings in a mix of MP3 and WAV
- Release forms
- Photos of workshops, oral history participants. and other related images
- Summaries of the oral histories
- miscellaneous documentation

**Series 1: Administrative records, 2013-2020**

**Box 1**

The series contains the administrative records of the project.

**Arrangement**

The files are arranged in numerical order.

File	Content	
1	<b>HAL Oral History Project Summaries</b>	Summaries of all oral histories conducted (except Bety Keeler's due to sound quality). <b>2013-2020.</b>
2	<b>HAL Oral History Project Transcripts</b>	Transcripts of oral history interviews of Leo Bower, Carmine Ciancetta, and Art Smith. <b>2013-2020</b>
3	<b>HAL Oral History Project Release Forms</b>	Release forms for interviews, photographs, and transcripts (all except Carolyn Russo and Betty Keeler). <b>2013-2020</b>
4	<b>HAL Oral History Project Draft Summaries</b>	Any drafts of the oral history interview summaries.. <b>2013-2020</b>
5	<b>HAL Oral History Project Workshop</b>	Flyer, press release, photos from workshop, agenda, attendance, and handout. <b>2013-2020</b>
6	<b>HAL Oral History Project Clippings</b>	News clippings related to the project and/or the interviewees. <b>2013-2016</b>

## Series 2: Audio Oral History Interview Material

### Boxes 2-4

**Extent:** 37 CDs, 2 external hard drives

### Arrangement:

This series is arranged in alphabetical order by the interviewees last name.

### Box 2

This box contains CDs of oral history interviews conducted from 2013 to 2020 and related photographs. The interviewees were: **Dorothy Avery** (April 2013); **Ralph Avery** (April 2013); **Leo Bower** (August 2015); **John Brodowski** (December 2015); **Carmine Ciancetta** (June 2015); **Rich Conaty** (August 2013); **Joseph D'Onofrio** (August 2013); **Mary Hallenbeck** (June and August 2013); **Norma Hart** (February 2013); **Betty Keeler** (?); **Suzanna Koski-Cincotti** (August 2013); **Arthur Koweek** (July 2013); (July 2013); **Kathryn McDonald** (July 2013); **Hazel Murray** (December 2015); **Tasha Nguyen** (August 2013); **Carolyn Russo** (January 2016); **Arthur Smith (Art)** June 2015); **Viola Williams** (February 2013). The CD of Part 1 of the oral history of John Brodowski contains related photographs and one CD contains photographs of Viola Williams and Norma Hart.

### Box 3 and 4

These boxes each contain an external hard drive with the oral history interviews.

## Oral Histories Interviews, April 2013 - August 2020

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- |         |   |
|---------|---|
| Box 2-4 | <b>Dorothy Avery, April 13, 2013</b><br>Language of material: English<br>Interview length: 1hr 35 min.<br>Physical description: 3 copies on CD and 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives |
| Box 2-4 | <b>Ralph Avery, April 13, 2013</b><br>Language of material: English<br>Interview length: 1hr 35 min.  |

Physical description: 4 copies on CD and 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives

Box 2-4

**Leo Bower, August 22, 2015**

Language of material: English

Interview length: 1hr 35 min.

Physical description: 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives

Box 2-4

**John Brodowski, December 15, 2015**

Language of material: English

Interview length: 1hr 27 min.

Physical description: 2 copies of Parts 1 (with photos) and 2 on CD and 1 copy of both parts on the two external hard drives

Box 2-4

**Carmine Ciancetta, June 18, 2015**

Language of material: English

Interview length: 1hr 28 min.

Physical description: 1 copy on CD and 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives

Box 2-4

**Rich Conaty, August 2, 2013**

Language of material: English

Interview length: 48 min.

Physical description: 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives

Box 2-4

**Joseph D'Onofrio, August 5, 2013**

Language of material: English

Interview length: 1hr 54 min.

Physical description: 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives

Box 2-4

**Mary Hallenbeck, June 28 – August 8, 2013**

Language of material: English

Interview length: 1hr 26 min.; 1hr 22 min.

Physical description: 3 copies of 6/28/13 on CD, 1 copy of 8/3/13 on CD, and 1 copy of both interviews on the two external hard drives

Box 2-4

**Norma Hart, February 7, 2013**

Language of material: English

Interview length: 1hr 37 min.

Physical description: 2 copies on CD and 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives

Box 2-4

**Betty Keeler**

Language of material: English

Interview length:

Physical description: 1 copy on CD and 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives?? Audio too poor to include in collection

- Box 2-4      **Suzanna Koski-Cincotti, August 7, 2013**  
Language of material: English  
Interview length: 1hr 25 min.  
Physical description: 1 copy on CD and 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives
- Box 2-4      **Arthur Koweek, July 31, 2013**  
Language of material: English  
Interview length: 1hr 28 min.  
Physical description: 3 copies on CD and 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives
- Box 2-4      **Kathryn McDonald, July 31, 2013**  
Language of material: English  
Interview length: 1hr 28 min. (two parts)  
Physical description: 2 copies on CD and 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives
- Box 2-4      **Hazel Murray, December 5, 2015**  
Language of material: English  
Interview length: 43 min.  
Physical description: 3 copies on CD and 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives
- Box 2-4      **Tasha Nguyen, August 3, 2013**  
Language of material: English  
Interview length: 56 min.  
Physical description: 2 copies on CD and 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives
- Box 2-4      **Carolyn Russo, January 16, 2016**  
Language of material: English  
Interview length: 1hr 12 min.  
Physical description: 2 copies on CD and 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives
- Box 2-4      **Arthur Smith (Art), June 16, 2015**  
Language of material: English  
Interview length: 1hr 55 min.  
Physical description: 1 copy on CD and 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives
- Box 2-4      **Viola Williams, February 7, 2013**  
Language of material: English  
Interview length: 1hr 43 min.  
Physical description: 2 copies on CD and 1 copy on each of the two external hard drives

Interviewees	Scope and content note	Biographical note
<b>Avery, Dorothy</b>	In this oral history, Avery discusses her family genealogy, her marriage and children, her work and her involvement in the local Hendrick Hudson Daughters of the American Revolution (DAR) Chapter and the Hudson Fortnightly Club. She relates other local history stories.	Born in Albany in 1927, she is a longtime resident of Columbia County.
<b>Avery, Ralph</b>	In this oral history, Avery discusses his life as a child in Hudson, his D-Day experience, his work career at Lone Star Cement and other local businesses, and his involvement in the Sons of the American Revolution.	Born in Hudson in 1924, he lives with his wife Dorothy in Claverack.
<b>Bower, Leo</b>	In this oral history, Bower describes his life in lower Hudson, his time with his father in Shantytown and his work career. He relates many stories from his life in Hudson.	Bower grew up in Hudson and spent a great deal of time in Shantytown with his father shad fishing and socializing with the people who had shacks there.
<b>Brodowski, John</b>	In this oral history, Brodowski describes his life in lower Hudson, an enclave of Polish immigrants, his schooling, his time in the Army during which he participated in the Normandy Invasion, his marriage and life upon his return to Hudson	Born in Hudson of Polish immigrants, John started his own print shop in Hudson: Johnny's Ideal Printing.
<b>Ciancetta, Carmine</b>	Ciancetta relates his childhood spending time at the river and seeing the Hudson Day Lines and the steam engine trains. He describes businesses and memorable events in Hudson such as the Evans Brewery and St Mary's School fires.	Born in Hudson, Carmine took over Rowles Studio and continued the photography business into the 1980s.

<p><b>Conaty, Rich</b></p>	<p>Conaty moved to Hudson in 1998 and founded a radio program, “The Big Broadcast”. He also describes his work driving for COARC.</p>	<p>Born in NYC in 1954, he moved to Hudson in 1998, he previously worked at ABC News and various radio stations.</p>
<p><b>D’Onofrio, Joseph</b></p>	<p>In this oral history, D’Onofrio discusses his family, who have Italian and Lithuanian origins, and life in Hudson. As a researcher of local history, D’Onofrio is able to discuss details about many families, businesses, and memorable events.</p>	<p>Born in Hudson in 1942, D’Onofrio worked at the Universal Match Company and the Department of Social Services.</p>
<p><b>Hallenbeck, Mary</b></p>	<p>In this oral history, Hallenbeck recounts her family and childhood, her work at Columbia Memorial Hospital, and her involvement with the Hudson Historic Preservation Commission and the organizations Historic Hudson.</p>	<p>Born in Claverack in 1930, Hallenbeck trained in nursing at various locations including Bellevue Hospital for pediatrics.</p>
<p><b>Hart, Norma</b></p>	<p>In this oral history, Hart discusses her move from NYC as a child, her childhood and family, and her work at the Hudson Area Library.</p>	<p>Born in NYC, Hallenbeck grew up near Hudson. She attended Hudson High School. Later, after working in NYC as an adult, she then returned to the Columbia County area.</p>
<p><b>Koski-Cincotti, Suzanna</b></p>	<p>Koski-Cincotti moved to Hudson 20 years prior to this oral history. She lived down South until she and her husband moved to NYC. Koski-Cincotta details her work for United Cerebral Palsy of Albany and her time as a special education teacher. She discusses her children and their education in private religious schools and her involvement with local churches and synagogues. She also focuses on the changes in Hudson in the last 20 years and the state of the public education system.</p>	<p>Born In Mississippi, Koski-Cincotti grew up in the South, moved to NYC with her husband, then relocated with her family to Hudson.</p>
<p><b>Koweek, Arthur</b></p>	<p>In this oral history, Koweek details his family’s time in NYC and Red Hook before moving to Hudson. He describes Hudson in the 1950s and his time working at the Urban Renewal Agency. He also describes his marriage and children and the toy store he and his wife ran, The Town Fair, on Warren Street.</p>	<p>Born in NYC, Koweek headed urban renewal in Hudson under Mayor John Kelly.</p>

<b>McDonald, Kathryn</b>	In this oral history, McDonald was born in Hudson and lived at Fountain Head as a child. She describes her father's ice cream parlor on Front Street and the Fountain Head Hotel and property. She discusses her involvement with the Greenport Historical Society and details stories of the area and Hudson specifically.	Born in Hudson, McDonald was involved with the Greenport Historical Society.
<b>Murray, Hazel</b>	Murray came to Hudson from South Carolina and worked at the New York Training School for Girls. In this oral history, she also discusses her catering business and her involvement in Shiloh Baptist Church.	Born in South Carolina, Murray had lived in Hudson for 60 years at the time of the interview. She worked in the New York Training School for Girls and was involved in the Shiloh Baptist Church.
<b>Nguyen, Tasha</b>	Nguyen was born in Hudson and has lived there all of her 21 years. She speaks of the changes in the city with antique stores, homes being renovated but also more violence and problems.	Born in Hudson and lives in the city with her two year old daughter, Nguyen enjoys drawing.
<b>Russo, Carolyn</b>	Russo lived in Hudson all her life and discussed the Italian-Polish neighborhood she grew up in, the bar scene and red light district, community events, and her volunteer work for the Hudson Area Library.	Born in Hudson and worked at IBM in Kingston and reflected on the impact it had when it closed.
<b>Smith, Arthur (Art)</b>	In this oral history, Smith recalls how his father worked for the Gifford-Wood Company and the Atlas Cement Co. His mother worked at the thermal mills. Smith talks about going to the Playhouse Vaudeville theater, playing near the river, getting scarlet fever, and the changes in Hudson through the years.	Smith was born and grew up in Hudson and now lives in Kinderhook. He joined the Navy, worked mainly for [Niagara Mohawk] Power Company and became a Mason.
<b>Williams, Viola</b>	Williams recounts her time growing up in Stockport around WW2, talks about a smallpox outbreak and quarantine in 1900, and her ownership of several historical properties in Stockport, including a home built by Capt Seth Macy in 1816. She also speaks about the paper mills in the area.	Williams is the Stockport Town Historian and has lived there much of her life. She worked at a confectionery store on Third Street, as a seamstress in Philmont and at the A & P.

**Series 5. cont.**

Subseries 5.2 Subjects by interviews

Box 6

Specific subjects	Interviewees
<b>Entertainment - recreation</b>	<b>Brodowski, John; Conaty, Richard; Ciancetta, Carmine; Hallenbeck, Mary; Koski-Cincotti, Suzanna; Nguyen, Tasha; Russo, Carolyn; Smith, Arthur</b>
<b>Religion</b>	<b>Brodowski, John; Bower, Leo; Hallenbeck, Mary; Koski-Cincotti, Suzanna; McDonald, Kathryn; Murray, Hazel; Smith, Arthur</b>
<b>Disasters - sad occurrences</b>	<b>Avery, Ralph; Ciancetta, Carmine; D'Onofrio, Joseph; Hallenbeck, Mary; Williams, Viola</b>
<b>Education</b>	<b>Ayers, Dorothy; D'Onofrio, Joseph; Hallenbeck, Mary; Hart, Norma; Koski-Cincotti, Suzanna; McDonald, Kathryn; Nguyen, Tasha</b>
<b>Industries</b>	<b>Avery, Ralph; Bower, Leo; Brodowski, John; Ciancetta, Carmine; D'Onofrio, Joseph; Hallenbeck, Mary; Koski-Cincotti, Suzanna; Koweek, Arthur; McDonald, Kathryn; Smith, Arthur; Williams, Viola</b>
<b>Lifestyle</b>	<b>Avery, Dorothy; Avery, Ralph; Bower, Leo; Brodowski, John; Ciancetta, Carmine; Conaty, Rich; Hallenbeck, Mary; Koski-Cincotti, Suzanna; Koweek, Arthur; McDonald, Kathryn; Nguyen, Tasha; Russo, Carolyn; Smith, Arthur</b>
<b>WWI, WW2</b>	<b>Avery, Dorothy; Avery, Ralph; Brodowski, John; Ciancetta, Carmine; Hallenbeck, Mary</b>

<p><b>Immigrant communities</b></p>	<p><b>Bower, Leo; Browdowski, John; Ciancetta, Carmine; D’Onofrio, Joseph; Koski-Cincotti, Suzanna; Russo, Carolyn; Smith, Arthur; Williams, Viola</b></p>
<p><b>Occupation /affiliations / clubs</b></p>	<p><b>Avery, Ralph; Avery, Dorothy; Bower, Leo; Brodowski, John; Ciancetta, Carmine; Conaty, Rich; D’Onofrio, Joseph; Halleneck, Mary; Hart, Norma; Koski-Cincotti, Suzanna; Koweek, Arthur; McDonald, Kathryn; Murray, Hazel; Russo, Carolyn; Smith, Arthur; Williams, Viola</b></p>
<p><b>Racial or ethnic differences/discrimination</b></p>	<p><b>Bower, Leo; Koski-Cincotti, Suzanna; Nguyen, Tasha; Smith, Arthur</b></p>
<p><b>Vice-corruption</b></p>	<p><b>Bower, Leo; Nguyen, Tasha; Russo, Carolyn; Smith, Arthur</b></p>
<p><b>Hudson River, local geography, trains</b></p>	<p><b>Avery, Dorothy; Bower, Leo; Brodowski, John; Ciancetta, Carmine; D’Onofrio, Joseph; Hallenbeck, Mary; McDonald, Kathryn; Murray, Hazel; Nguyen, Tasha; Smith, Arthur; Williams, Viola</b></p>