



Alex Primm Oral History Collection (SP0054)

Collection Number: SP0054

Collection Title: Alex Primm Oral History Collection

Dates: 1981-2002

Creator: Primm, Alex T., 1945-

Abstract: The Alex Primm Oral History Collection contains audio cassette tapes with oral history interviews conducted by Alex Primm from 1981 to 2002. The interviews cover a range of topics related to life in the Ozarks, including individuals who made their living on or near the Current, Jacks Fork, Little Piney, and Big Piney rivers.

Collection Size: 1 cubic foot
(113 audio cassette tapes)

Language: Collection materials are in English.

Repository: The State Historical Society of Missouri

Restrictions on Access: Collection is open for research. This collection is available at [The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield](#). If you would like more information, please contact us at springfield@shsmo.org. Collections may be viewed at any research center.

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Preferred Citation: [Specific item; box number; folder number] *Alex Primm Oral History Collection* (SP0054); The State Historical Society of Missouri Research Center-Springfield [after first mention may be abbreviated to SHSMO-Springfield].

Donor Information: The cassette tapes were donated to the State Historical Society of Missouri by Alex Primm on May 16, 2019 (Accession No. SPA0057).

Related Materials: Additional materials related to the Alex Primm Oral History Collection can be found in the following collections:

[USS Schley Oral History Project Records](#) (C4068)

[Ozark Rivers Oral History Collection](#) (R1430)

[Carnahan Family Oral History Collection](#) (SP0050)

Processed by: Processed by Haley Frizzle-Green, July 25, 2023

Biographical Note:

Missouri native, Alex T. Primm, was born in 1945 and grew up in St. Louis. After serving as a military correspondent in Vietnam, Primm graduated from St. Louis University. In 1972, he worked as a reporter for *Rolla Daily News* and later became the curator at the Ozark Agricultural Museum at Meramec Spring Park in St. James, Missouri. After training to be an oral historian, Primm recorded hundreds of interviews from around the Ozarks. Other accomplishments include teaching oral history instruction in mainland China and authoring *Ozark Voices: Oral History from the Heartland*, which was published in February 2022. Today, Primm lives in Springfield, Missouri.

Arrangement:

The collection has been arranged into the following seven series:

USS Schley Oral History Project
Grasshopper Hollow, United States Forest Service
Palmer, Missouri Oral History Project
Ozark Rivers Oral History Project
Piney Rivers Oral History Project
Fort Leonard Wood and Piney River Project
Ozark Miscellaneous

Scope and Content Note:

The collection contains a series of oral history projects conducted by Alex Primm. Some of the interviews overlap in topics but are organized by the original project under which they were originally recorded. The audio cassette tapes have been left in their original order.

USS *Schley* Oral History Project

This series contains interviews related to USS *Schley* (DD-103), a Wickes-class destroyer that launched in March of 1918. The ship served in the Mediterranean during World War I before being decommissioned on June 1, 1922. In October of 1940 it was recommissioned and sent to Pearl Harbor. The *Schley* was reclassified in February 1943 as a fast transport (APD-14) and would transport troops to the South Pacific. The *Schley* was decommissioned on November 9, 1945. The interviewees include Missouri natives, Ray Bohnenkamp, Elmer Bowman, Joe Kenton, and Martin Unger, who served on the USS *Schley* during World War II.

Grasshopper Hollow, United States Forest Service

This series contains interviews from Reynolds County, Missouri, residents who lived near Grasshopper Hollow. Today, Grasshopper Hollow is a 593-acre natural area jointly owned by the Mark Twain National Forest, The Nature Conservancy, and Doe Run Mineral Corporation. The site contains the largest, most significant fen complex in unglaciated North America.

Palmer, Missouri Oral History Project

This series includes interviews of former Palmer, Washington County, Missouri residents. Palmer was platted in 1830 and was a popular mining town. The town was unincorporated in 1955 after the post office closed. The interviews contain conversations related to life in and around Palmer.

Ozark Rivers Oral History Project

This series contains interviews with individuals living in Crawford, Franklin, Phelps, and Washington counties in Missouri. The interviewees touch on many aspects of rural living near rivers in the Ozarks including farming, religion, local economies, hunting, and trapping.

Piney Rivers Oral History Project

This series includes interviews with individuals living near Little Piney and Big Piney River in Pulaski, Phelps, Texas, and Dent counties. Topics include rural life, farming, local economies, and construction of the dam on Big Piney River in the 1970s. Some interviews also contain conversations about Devils Elbow, a resort town along historic Highway 66.

Fort Leonard Wood and Piney River Project

This series consists of interviews related to the construction of Fort Leonard Wood in Pulaski County, Missouri, and the impact it had on the Big Piney River. Interviewees include Pulaski County residents, including those who lived near Fort Leonard Wood at the time of construction in the 1940s.

Ozark Miscellaneous

This series includes interviews conducted by Alex Primm throughout his career as an oral historian. Interviewees include southwest Missouri natives; topics includes rural living, farming, land conservation, and local economies. These interviews were conducted separately but may overlap in topics.

Container List:

a.c. 1-8		USS <i>Schley</i> Oral History Project
Box 001	a.c. 1	Elmer Bowman, 1998
	a.c. 2	Elmer Bowman (copy), 1998 [missing]
	a.c. 3	Ray Bohnenkamp and Martin Unger, 1997
	a.c. 4	Ray Bohnenkamp and Martin Unger (copy), 1997
	a.c. 5	Marin Unger (copy), 1997
	a.c. 6	Joe Kenton, October 1997
	a.c. 7	Joe Kenton, October 1997
	a.c. 8	Joe Kenton, September 1997
a.c. 9-12		Grasshopper Hollow, United States Forest Service
	a.c. 9	Bob Runner, 1991
	a.c. 10	Charlie Reed, Mary and Bill Burns, 1991
	a.c. 11	Dou Hays, 1991
	a.c. 12	Amel Martin, 1991

a.c. 13-16	Palmer, Missouri Oral History Project
a.c. 13	Dolly Cole Blunt, 1991
a.c. 14	Steve and Flosie Welker, 1991
a.c. 15	Zelma Banta, 1991
a.c. 16	Gladys Compton, Hazel White, Oliver Crocker, 1991
a.c. 17-40	Ozark Rivers Oral History Project
a.c. 17	Ralph Brown, Helen Moze, 1981
a.c. 18	Ralph Brown, 1981
a.c. 19	Herman Brand, 1985
a.c. 20	Jim McCune, 1988
a.c. 21	Charles Smallwood, 1986
a.c. 22	Cecil Murray, Steve Cookson, 1993
a.c. 23	Jess and Charlene Plowman, Will McVickers, Elvis and Genevieve Thomas, 1992
a.c. 24	Jess and Charlene Plowman, 1992
a.c. 25	Rose McKenney, 1995
a.c. 26	Amel Martin, 1991
a.c. 27	Tom and Minnie Martin, 1992
a.c. 28	Tom and Minnie Martin, 1992
a.c. 29	Gates and Duncan Detwiler, 1990
a.c. 30	Bill Cameron, Clark and Katherine Springer, 1985
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a.c. 32	Jack and Lillian Dowler, Jack Toll, 1992
a.c. 33	Paul Dowler, Jack Toll, 1992
a.c. 34	Virginia and Alan Anderson, 1992
a.c. 35	Lottia and Ab Detwiler, Roy Baugh, 1992
a.c. 36	Jewel Wagner, Wayne Miller, Thelma Harmon, 1992
a.c. 37	Gurn and Sadie Garrison, Oliver and Sylvia Beard, 1995
a.c. 38	Willa Pearl Cowan, 1992
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a.c. 40	Alden Duncan, Will McVickers, Elvis Thomas, Bill Oates, 1992
a.c. 41-81	Piney Rivers Oral History Project
a.c. 41	Bill Akers, 1996
a.c. 42	Jesse Sheldon, Etta Williams, 1996
a.c. 43	Kenny Foster, 1998
a.c. 44	Lester Buch, Norma Lea Mihalevich, 1996
a.c. 45	Don Davis, 1998
a.c. 46	Louise and Don Davis, 1996
a.c. 47	Mildred Rollins, 1996
a.c. 48	Clyde McWilliams, 1996
a.c. 49	Bud Massey, 1996
a.c. 50	Homer Hildebrand, 1996
a.c. 51	Homer Hildebrand, 1996
a.c. 52	Homer Hildebrand, 1996
a.c. 53	Bruce Debo, 1996
a.c. 54	Ollie Elliot, Frances and Virgil "Mike" Sheldon, 1996
a.c. 55	Cecil Benson, Larry Baggett, 1996
a.c. 56	Robert "Corkey" Hargis, 1997
a.c. 57	Finis Sheldon, 1998
a.c. 58	Napolean B. Ramsey, 1997

a.c. 59	Ronald and Roger Potts, 1997
a.c. 60	Ruby and Claud Harris, 1991
a.c. 61	Frank Widener, 1989
a.c. 62	Clyde Huskey, 1989
a.c. 63	Cecil King, 1989
a.c. 64	Cecil King, 1991
a.c. 65	E. L. "Jack" Fore, 1989
a.c. 66	Alva Brown, 1991
a.c. 67	William F. Burns, 1991
a.c. 68	Norman Brown, 1997
a.c. 69	Tollie and Ferrell Dabblemont, 1998
a.c. 70	Finis Sheldon, 1997
a.c. 71	Robert "Corkey" Hargis, 1997
a.c. 72	Irene Morgan, 1998
a.c. 73	William "Dick" Hively, Virgil "Mike" Sheldon, 1994
a.c. 74	C. W. Parker, Jackie and Bill Jones, 1994
a.c. 75	Leo Cook, 1998
a.c. 76	Ray Wood, 1996
a.c. 77	Jigs and Dorothy Miller, 1994
a.c. 78	Bruce Debo, Jesse Rench, 1994
a.c. 79	Harriet Graham, Lorraine Rigsby, 1994
a.c. 80	Louis York, Ross Bridge, 1994
a.c. 81	Ray Webb, 1998
a.c. 82-97	Fort Leonard Wood and Piney River Project
a.c. 82	Bud Massey, 1996
a.c. 83	Ollie Elliot, 1996
a.c. 84	Bruce Debo, 1996
a.c. 85	Ray Wood, 1996
a.c. 86	Ray Wood, 1996
a.c. 87	Jesse Sheldon, Etta Williams, 1996
a.c. 88	Curt Stone, 1996
a.c. 89	Curt Stone (copy), 1996
a.c. 90	Curt Stone, 1996
a.c. 91	Frances and Mike Sheldon, Ollie Elliot, 1996
a.c. 92	Homer Hildebrand, 1996
a.c. 93	Homer Hildebrand, 1996
a.c. 94	Mildred Rollins, 1996
a.c. 95	Mildred Rollins, Reba Parker, 1996
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a.c. 98	Gerald Angel, Loeman Martin, 1991
a.c. 99	Lou Gold, David Haenke, 1990
a.c. 100	Art Corn, 1999
a.c. 101	Brewer Burgdoff, 1989
a.c. 102	Lead mining, 1990
a.c. 103	Edwin Moutray Gerlach, 1984
a.c. 104	Homer "Pop" Dillard, 1989
a.c. 105	Ray Hastings, 1995
a.c. 106	Joe Ed Bowels, Winnett Doc Denis, Ed Gill, 1989

a.c. 107	George Gruner, 1986
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a.c. 109	Haenke, 1988
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a.c. 111	John Ballard, 2002
a.c. 112	Bob Walsh, fiddle, 1986
a.c. 113	Ethel Hickey, 1991

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