

Oral historian hears words of time

By Bill Graf

During a 44-year career in agricultural communications he has seen much Nebraska history unfold.

Today, for posterity's sake, George Round continues a seven-year effort to "preserve the human side of NU's and Nebraska's history."

So far, Round's work as an oral historian, which is enshrined on the shelves of the NU archives in Love Library, has yielded 260 transcribed interviews with Nebraska's greats and near-greats.

"Much of this history hasn't been recorded by the press." So it's important to get these historical pieces from the people who were involved first hand before they pass on, he said.

"I'm not an historian and I don't mean to pose as one."

Bronze Cross given to Cadet MacMillan

UNL Army ROTC Cadet James M. MacMillan has been named one of two cadets in the western United States to receive the Legion of Honor Bronze Cross for Achievement.

MacMillan, a senior in electrical engineering, was given the award at a ceremony Thursday in the UNL Military and Naval Science Building by Col. E.H. Kauffman, a member of the sponsoring Legion of Valor, Inc.

The Legion of Valor Bronze Cross for Achievement is provided annually for achievement of scholastic excellence in military and academic subjects to stimulate development of leadership in ROTC cadets. It is based on the cadet's performance through the third year of ROTC.

MacMillan is a Cadet Lieutenant Colonel and commander of the cadet battalion. He is a four-year Army ROTC scholarship winner and has been designated a Distinguished Military Student.

Historians may say, 'this guy Round don't know what he's talking about.' But that don't bother me," he added.

Student takeover remembered

Some of Round's work includes interviews with Joe Soshnik, the first president of NU and Dan Ladely director of the Sheldon Film Theater about their roles in the 1970 student takeover of the Military and Naval Science building on the UNL campus. He also interviewed Ed Weir, a Nebraska All-American tackle from the 1920s.

Other interviews include those of George Beadle, the only Nebraskan to win a Nobel prize; Cliff Hardin, former NU chancellor and U.S. Secretary of Agriculture; UNL Athletic Director Bob Devaney; former Nebraska State Sen. Terry Carpenter; former Sherman Hendrickson from Eagle, national corn-picking champion of 1933. Besides these, Round has 252 other interviews.

Most of the background for the interviews comes from his long experience with NU and Nebraska's past, Round explained.

Round, who joined the NU staff in 1933, said that when he started this project in 1973 most of the interviews were about Nebraska agriculture. But after a short time, the interviews covered other aspects of Nebraska.

Rich media history

Several interviews deal with what Round calls "Nebraska's rich history of radio and television." Some are based on his experiences as chairman of the university's Educational Television Committee in the early 1950s.

The committee was responsible for establishing KUON-TV, NU's television station.

Round also helped put several programs on the air, including "Backyard Farmer," now in its 27th year.

Round retired from UNL as a professor of agricultural communications in 1977. And although funds for his oral history research ran out, the university still supplies him with an office. And the list of interviews gets longer.



Photo by Colin Hackley

George Round

Round, who is often too humble to say I, instead of we, said, "We had a small grant when we started. But it was gone a long time ago. It's strictly volunteer."



William C. Spelman, Supervisor, Power IC Development

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