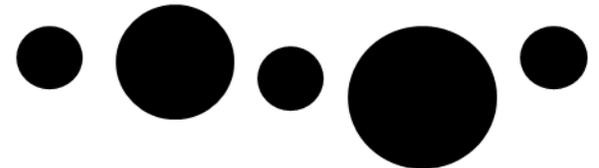
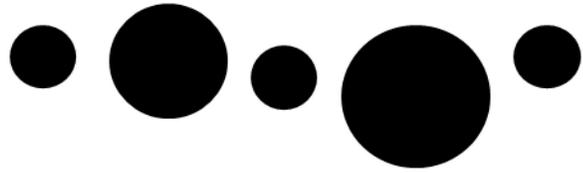


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The Person Behind the Job: The Occupational Folklife Project at the Library of Congress

Nancy Groce
American Folklife Center
ngro@loc.gov



COLLECTION

Occupational Folklife Project

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Featured Content



Sarah Fortin interview conducted by Fred Calabretta, 2017-02-03



Kim Spicer interview conducted by Setare S. Arashloo and Jaime ...



Raquel Volaco Simoes interview conducted by Josephine McLeister ...



Jack Briggs interview conducted by Sarah Bryan, 2017-02-08.



Patrick Wellington interview conducted by Candacy Taylor, ...



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About this Collection

The Occupational Folklife Project (OFP) began in 2010 as a multi-year project by the American Folklife Center (AFC) to document the culture of contemporary American workers during an era of economic and social transition. To date, fieldworkers across the United States have recorded more than 900 audio and audiovisual oral history interviews with workers in scores of trades, industries, crafts, and professions. The completed interviews have been incorporated into the American Folklife Center archive at the Library of Congress.

The interviews, which average 50-60 minutes in length, feature workers discussing their current jobs and formative work experiences, reflecting on their training, on-the-job challenges and rewards, aspirations, and occupational communities. In many cases, interviewees were asked to trace the career choices and educational paths that lead them to their present jobs and share their thoughts on the future of their professions.

The Occupational Folklife Project includes field documentation on selected topics created by dozens of researchers or research teams throughout the United States. To honor the memory of folklorist Archie Green (1917-2009), the Archie Green Fellowshin

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- [Homeless Shelter Workers in the Upper Midwest](#)
- [Illuminating History: Union Electricians in New York](#)
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COLLECTION

American Life Histories: Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936 to 1940

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Featured Content

Staff Conference in Industrial

Present: Aaron, Algren, Conroy, and Walker.

Algren: The purpose of this meeting is to discuss the work in the accumulation of industrial materials as such, go, and collect materials for the purpose of approximating THESE ARE OUR LIVES. The people on the New York

Bessie Jaffey's notes of Nelson Algren's staff meeting on ...

STATE of Illinois
NAME OF PERSON Nelson Algren
ADDRESS 8200 Victoria Avenue
DATE April 15, 1938
STREET Industrial Building of Chicago
NAME OF INFORMANT Davey Day
* You're from that newspaper I guess? I always see newspaper men - I guess there's a story in this of yours?
* Yes, I'm him, Davey Day, that fast-stepping guy up, all right and heavy footwork. And what's your old boss, I guess you know, was you interested? We

Nelson Algren interview of Davey Day, Jewish boxer, Chicago, ...

THE FROG HOLLOW GANG

I was in my teens, we lived on Sandt and Morris Avenues. And with a little creek running through down there much like hoboes in I guess, nailed together or piled sheets of tin. were known as the Frog Hollow

May Swenson records Mrs. John Elterich's reminiscence of 1885 ...

October 17, 1938
NICKNAMES AND THEIR SOURCES - ITALY
... on to an uncle of mine -- Uncle Vincenzo ... the village (Sara Cena, Italy, 4,000 ... and stayed there five or six years, ... ago; then when the people there lived who have been over in the U.S., they ... him about all that he had seen and do

May Swenson learns about Italian nicknames from Vincent Viola ...

I hope to God to kill me if this a to do is go down to Florence, South Carolina and they'll tell you its the truth. Florence is one of those hard towns to stay out of the white folks way; all fixing to tell you about. His name was his real name, I can't remember it. But him. He wasn't no big guy. He was just used to say he was wicked. He was bad a didn't give a damn about the crackers. Pa

Ralph Ellison hears about an invisible man in Florence, South ...

About this Collection

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Expert Resources

[Finding Aid - United States Work Projects Administration Records](#)
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About this Collection

This collection of life histories consists of approximately 2,900 documents, compiled and transcribed by more than 300 writers from 24 states, working on the Folklore Project of the Federal Writers' Project, a New Deal jobs program that was part of the U.S. Works Progress (later Work Projects) Administration (WPA) from 1936 to 1940. Typically 2,000-15,000 words in length, the documents vary in form from narratives to dialogues to reports to case histories. They chronicle vivid life stories of Americans who lived at the turn of the century and include tales of meeting Billy the Kid, surviving the 1871 Chicago fire, pioneer journeys out West, grueling factory work, and the immigrant experience. Writers hired by this Depression-era work project included Ralph Ellison, Nelson Algren, May Swenson, and many others. The documents often describe the informant's physical appearance, family, education, income, occupation, political views, religion and mores. Pseudonyms are often substituted for individuals and places named in the narrative texts. The life histories comprise a small part of the larger Manuscript Division collection titled *United States Work Projects Administration Records*.

About the Federal Writers' Project

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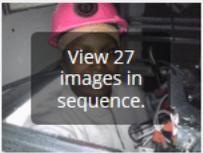
Kim Spicer interview conducted by Setare S. Arashloo and Jaime Lopez, 2017-06-02.

Audio recording of interview with Kim Spicer.
2017-06-02



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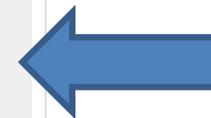
[Images associated with interview.]

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[Transcript of interview with Kim Spicer.]

Download:



Text transcript or log viewable or downloadable here!

About this Item

Title

Kim Spicer interview conducted by Setare S. Arashloo and Jaime Lopez, 2017-06-02.

Summary

Kim Spicer is an A-Journeywirewoman from Brooklyn, who now lives in Electchester. She talks about her hobbies, her previous jobs, and how she became an electrician through the Nontraditional Employment for Women (NEW) program. She speaks about her job at a residential high rise and explains how she would troubleshoot and fix a three-way switch. She talks about the different Union clubs that she is involved with, including the Wellness Club, devoted to keeping electricians healthy; her co-workers and the different ways that she connected with them; and

Part of

[Illuminating History: Union Electricians in New York City, Archie Green Fellows Project, 2016 to 2017 \(22\)](#)

[Occupational Folklife Project \(303\)](#)

[American Folklife Center \(37,183\)](#)

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Kim Spicer interviewed by Jaime Lopez and Setare Arashloo

Jamie Lopez: Okay, so just a little note. This was an idea that was based out of the stories that we share on the job. You get to know journeymen and women. Share stories about each other and create these relationships, but when you leave the job or you separate these stories get lost. This is almost honoring those conversations as well. [00:00:30] If you would like to start by telling us your name and your job title.

Kim Spicer: Kim Spicer, A journey wire woman.

Jamie Lopez: Okay. Can you tell us your background? Where you were born, where your parents are from.

Kim Spicer: Okay, I was born in Brooklyn New York. My mom was born in Staten Island New York and my dad was born in South Carolina. I was going to say New York.

Jamie Lopez: [00:01:00] What neighborhood do you live in now?

About this Item

Title

Kim Spicer interview conducted by Setare S. Arashloo and Jaime Lopez, 2017-06-02.

Summary

Kim Spicer is an A-Journeywirewoman from Brooklyn, who now lives in Electchester. She talks about her hobbies, her previous jobs, and how she became an electrician through the Nontraditional Employment for Women (NEW) program. She speaks about her job at a residential high rise and explains how she would troubleshoot and fix a three-way switch. She talks about the different Union clubs that she is involved with, including the Wellness Club, devoted to keeping electricians healthy; her co-workers and the different ways that she connected with them; and also explains how she feels unsafe when working with careless people. She recounts growing up in Brownsville (Brooklyn), where she was raised to be careful and pay attention to her environment--a skill which she also developed as an electrician. She states that dust and insects are the most annoying part of her job, and wishes there were nicer, cleaner, and more comfortable job site bathrooms. Kim explains how her job feels creative when she works on data racks and conduit work--neat, clean, and organized. She passes tools on to apprentices when she sees potential in them, and also mentions her favorite Local 3 tradition--mentors giving A-cards to their mentees when they complete their apprenticeship. Being an IBEW [International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers] Journeyman makes her feel proud and accomplished, and she notes the challenges of being the electrician and handyman in her family. She talks about her apartment in Electchester, which is quiet, and convenient for attending union meetings; discusses Free programs, like karate for community children--her daughter attends; and notes that she shares her mechanical skills with her daughter at every opportunity.

Contributor Names

Spicer, Kim, interviewee.

Lopez, Jaime, 1986- interviewer.

Arashloo, Setare S., interviewer.

Occupational Folklife Project, sponsor.

Created / Published

2017-06-02

Subject Headings

- Spicer, Kim--Interviews
- Accidents
- Apprenticeship programs
- Blue collar workers
- Clubs
- Diversity in the workplace
- Hazardous occupations

Part of

Illuminating History: Union Electricians in New York City, Archie Green Fellows Project, 2016 to 2017 (22)

Occupational Folklife Project (303)

American Folklife Center (37,183)

Library of Congress Online Catalog (1,104,982)

Format

Audio Recording

Contributors

Arashloo, Setare S.

Lopez, Jaime

Occupational Folklife Project

Spicer, Kim

Dates

2017

Location

Long Island City

New York

Language

English

Subjects

Accidents

Apprenticeship Programs

Blue Collar Workers

Clubs

Color

Digital Photographs

Diversity in the Workplace

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Notice: Out of an abundance of caution, all Library of Congress research centers will be closed to the public (including researchers and others with reader identification cards) until further notice, to reduce the risk of transmitting COVID-19 coronavirus. All Library-sponsored public programs are also postponed or cancelled through July 1. Online resources and reference services, such as [Ask a Librarian](#), will continue to be available during this time. For more information, see: [Pandemic information for the Public](#).

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Nearly 25 hours of recordings featuring 300 performers that John and Ruby Lomax recorded during their three-month trip through the southern United States in 1939.



BY THE PEOPLE: LOMAX

Help transcribe and review crowdsourced Alan Lomax transcriptions!



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Bess Lomax Hawes Collection: Materials relating to the life of Bess Lomax Hawes



NEW COLLECTION ONLINE

Civil Rights History Project: New interviews added



NEW COLLECTION ONLINE

New collections added to the Occupational Folklife Project Collections



FOLKLIFE & FIELDWORK

Fourth Edition 2016: available for download online and in print by contacting AFC



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ALL EVENTS/ANNOUNCEMENTS

Occupational Folklife Project

The Occupational Folklife Project is (OFP) a multi-year documentation project that seeks to capture a portrait of America's workforce during a time of transition. It gathers community-based oral history interviews with workers across the United States, discussing their workplace experiences, training, and occupational communities. The [American Folklife Center](#) (AFC) at the Library of Congress serves as the primary repository for the resulting oral history collections. Copies of local projects also may be retained by the local library, museum, organization, or individual that collects and submits the material.

The Occupational Folklife Project concentrates **on unedited audio and video interviews** and interview-related digital images. Participants in the Occupational Folklife Project are asked to follow specific guidelines, which include:

1. Supplying all data requested on the Interview Metadata Form.
2. Creating an audio or video interview in an approved format.
3. Obtaining required Library of Congress permission/release forms from interviewees.
4. Electronically completing and submitting all of the above following the guidelines provided.

Before beginning a project you must obtain permission from the American Folklife Center to submit the materials you collect to the Library of Congress. If you are interested in participating, please review the [General Information About Interviews](#) page and then contact AFC Folklife Specialist Nancy Groce at ngro@loc.gov or 202-707-1744.

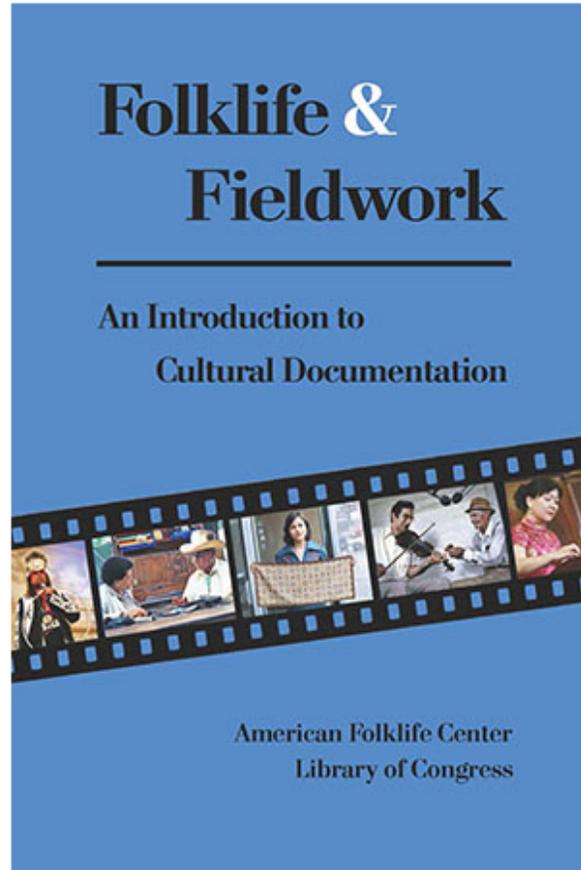
This site contains introductory information on the steps outlined above. You will also find tips on interviewing and sample interview questions, which we recommend you use as guides.

- ▶ [Project Home Page](#)
- ▶ [General Information](#)
- ▶ [Interview Questions](#)
- ▶ [Release Forms](#)
- ▶ [Submission guide](#)
- ▶ [Folklife & Fieldwork](#)
- ▶ [OFP Online Collections](#)



Kim Spicer, an A-journeyman wirewoman and International Brotherhood of Electrical Workers member, was interviewed for the Occupational Folklife Project "Illuminating History: Documenting

Folklife and Fieldwork: An Introduction to Cultural Documentation



Fourth Edition, 2016

By Stephen Winick and Peter Bartis

[View or download full text in PDF](#) [47 pp.; 3.36MB]

[Go to the list of resources](#)

For print copies contact us at folklife@loc.gov

When the first edition of *Folklife and Fieldwork* was published in 1979, our readers had a difficult choice to make: the better audio quality offered by a bulky reel-to-reel tape recorder or the convenience of the newfangled cassette deck. With one of those two machines, plus a single-lens-reflex camera and a few rolls of film, the 1979 fieldworker was equipped to document the world. Earlier editions of this guide gave great advice regarding the handling and preservation of these older forms of documentation. These tips are still relevant for some archival collections, but not for most fieldwork. Born-digital documentation requires a whole new set of practices—new ways of recording and new methods of preservation.

Since the first edition appeared there has also been a surge of interest in personal archiving. Preserving family history,

genealogy, and community history has never been more popular. Popular interviewing projects like the Veterans History Project and StoryCorps are leading the way in a new era of oral history collecting, and both of their collections are part of the American Folklife Center archive. While this book prioritizes the documentation of folklife, by which we mean traditional culture and heritage, the guidelines offered here for interviewing and documentation apply to a broad range of topics.

A Spanish language version of this edition is available (fourth edition, 2018)

Available as a PDF
[download at
this link.](#)

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