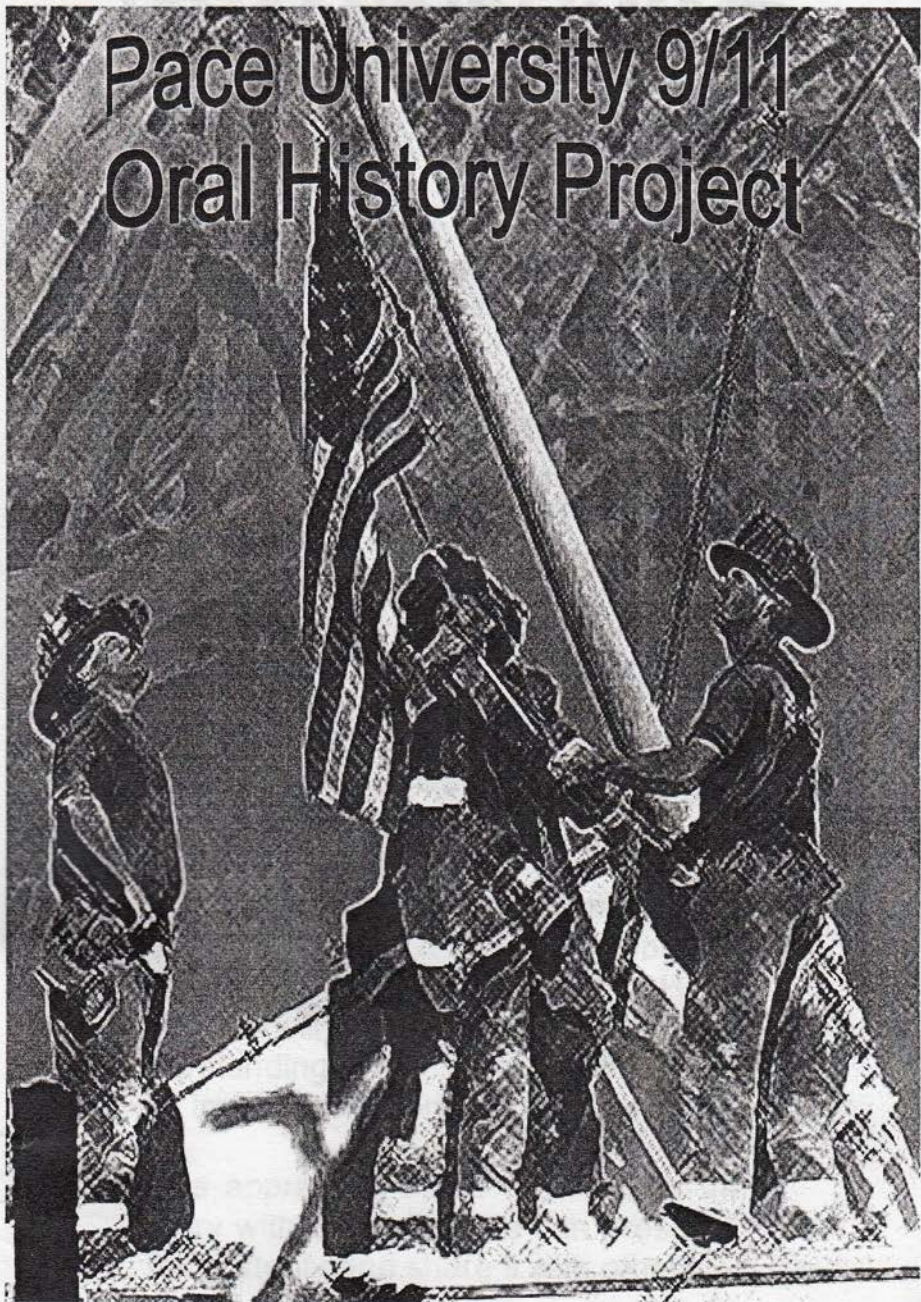


Pace University 9/11 Oral History Project



December 17, 2004



Table of Contents

Introduction: Page 3

Presentation Outline:

Class Introduction:

by Cristina Masiello and Cassie DeSena

Jennifer Davidson	Page 4
Cassie DeSena	Page 5
Amara Erdrich	Page 6
Hayley Kerr	Page 7
Mary Kilcoyne	Page 8
Elizabeth LaTorre	Page 9
Elizabeth Lorence	
Richard Lee	Page 10
Cristina Masiello	Page 11
Amanda Milazzo	Page 12-13
Jillian Pfau	Page 14
Katherine Tucker	Page 15
Teresa Ventura	Page 16

Conclusion

by Amara Erdrich and Jennifer Davidson

Question & Answer Period

Dr. Maria Iacullo Concludes

Introduction

In September 2004, Pace University initiated a 9/11 Oral History Project. This work, to be carried out over several semesters, is dedicated to creating an oral history record of September 11, 2001. The project is being conducted as a public history course that integrates civic engagement with the discipline of history.

Pace students will interview individuals directly affected by the tragedy and document their personal 9/11 experiences and aftermath in the context of their life narratives. The Pace Project is not limited to the World Trade Center attacks and can include Washington, D.C. and Pennsylvania.

Through recording, collection and studying the memories of September 11, 2001, the Pace 9/11 Oral History Project will contribute to a deeper understanding of the 9/11 catastrophe and its impact on America and the world.

We appreciate those who shared their story with us so that we can preserve it for posterity and share it with others.

Interviewer: Jennifer Davidson

Age: 20

Year: Junior

Major: History

Minor: Art History

Overall statement: The 9/11 Oral History Project gave those who haven't been able to speak about the events a time and chance to tell their stories.

Interviewee #1: Benjamin Lebish

Job/Role: Sophomore at Pace University during attacks

Reason for interviewing: He was happy to tell his story and talk about what happened.

Interviewee #2: Lorenzo Graziano

Job/Role: Sophomore at Pace University during attacks

Synopsis of interview: It not only effected him but he saw the effect that his family went through waiting to hear if he was ok.

Interviewer: Cassie DeSena

Age: 19

Year: Sophomore

Major: English

Reason for taking the class: Honors Course

Interviewee #1: Katherine Georghio

Job/Role: Pace student, sophomore in Williams St. dorm during attacks

Reason for interviewing: I was interested in a Pace students' experience during the September 11 attacks.

Synopsis of interview: Kat talks about what it was like to be living on Fulton St while the attack was occurring on the World Trade Center. She also describes walking eighty blocks to Astoria, Queens with her father.

Quote: "It was the apocalypse."

Interviewee #2: Anonymous

Job/Role: NYPD detective during the attacks, worked at site

Reason for interviewing: I really wanted to hear what it was like to work with the families of those who were impacted by September 11. I also knew that he had worked in the morgues set up for September 11, and I wanted to know what that was like.

Synopsis of interview: He describes the horror of the World Trade Center site. He tells what it was like to be a detective and have to search for body parts among the ruins of September 11 for almost a year.

Quote: "The burnt flesh, diesel jet smell... concrete...you couldn't get it off you. It was on your boots. That was one thing I remember. It was the most disgusting thing. Like when they told you had to work in the Morgue, it was like, 'Oh I can't go back there,' and we had to go to the landfill too, sifting through all the debris they took out, had to be sifted through, schmucks like us, had to do it."

Interviewer: Amara Erdrich

Age: 19

Year: Sophomore

Major: Undecided

Overall comment: I really enjoyed our class. It was a great experience.

Interviewee #1: Gabriel Krigsfeld

Job/Role: Pace student, sophomore (currently), high school junior during attacks

Reason for interviewing: Gabe is from Brooklyn. We discussed how the events of 9/11 affected his community because it is so close to Manhattan. He feels that a lot has changed in his community since 9/11.

Interviewee #2: Samantha Ryan

Job/Role: Pace student, senior (currently), living in New Jersey at the time

Quote: "Just driving down the highway and stuff everybody seemed normal. Nobody seemed to be crying or anything. Nobody seemed like they were distraught. You know, it's just like this twilight zone; it was just crazy."

Interviewer: Hayley Kerr

Age: 20

Year: Sophomore

Major: Psychology

Reason for taking this class: I took this class to in order to learn more about 9/11 and the impact that it had on the survivors of the attacks and the victim's families.

Interviewee #1: Walt Taylor

Job/Role: Mr. Taylor is a mechanical engineer who witnessed the attacks on the World Trade Center on 9/11.

Quote: "For days I couldn't sleep. Not because I couldn't sleep it was because I chose not to sleep. You know it wasn't like a problem, or a sleeping problem. It wasn't. I decided not to go to bed. Because I was glued to the TV. To find out if my friends are alive."

Interviewee #2: Sherrice Parris

Job/Role: Ms. Parris worked in the human resources department in a building directly across the street from the World Trade Center. She saw the second plane crash into World Trade Center.

Quote: "And that's when the second plane crashed, and I wasn't directly underneath it. I was standing about a block and a half away and um you could feel the heat from the explosion it really, it sounded like, gosh you can't even describe what it sounded like. It was kind of like if you take one of those big dumpster cans and you drop it while it's empty, drop it like upside down and you drop it and, you know that loud crashing sound it will make and it kind of vibrates? It was something like that and then a lot of people were screaming and running and I was kind of in shock. Because I really didn't know what to think and to be honest I wasn't even thinking like a terrorist act at that point I had no clue what to think."

Interviewer: Mary Kilcoyne

Age: 20

Year: Junior

Major: English

Overall comment: I think this class was a valuable experience, and I feel fortunate to have been able to participate and to help with the project.

Interviewee #1: Anthony Reinhart

Job/Role: Pace student, freshman living in Maria's Tower during 9/11

Quote: "I remember coming, whenever it was, that Thursday or Friday... And it was this horrible, horrible stench that you could smell from the minute you got off the ferry... It's something like, once and awhile, I don't know what it is I smell now, once in awhile there's something that is a very light, very, very watered down version of that smell. And just like the light sense of that just makes me feel sick. But the overbearingness of the smell, it would like seep into the dorms. You'd go to sleep smelling it; you'd wake up smelling it."

Interviewee #2: Birchchum Wilkins

Job/Role: NYPD cadet during 9/11

Quote: "I don't think if you would have saw me, you would have thought that what was going through my head was, 'I want to leave. I want to leave, and I want to leave now.' But there was another side of me that was saying, 'You have to man your post, so you can't leave. Whether or not you want to leave, you can't leave.' I was actually thinking and not feeling. My feelings were, 'I want to leave, and I'm getting the heck out of here.' But, my thinking was, 'This is your job; this is what you signed up for; this is your duty. This is the duty that you have to do. You have to serve, you know, the people of New York right now. You can't think about yourself.'"

Interviewer: Elizabeth LaTorre

Age: 18

Year: Freshman

Major: undecided

Interviewee #1: Brian Hernandez

Job/Role: Pace Student, here on 9/11

Quote: "I was pretty upset because not too long, like the weekend before it happened, Sunday or Saturday before me and a few other people we actually were in the lobby, or just around, yeah like we walked through the lobby of one of the towers and we were like, 'Oh yeah, do you wanna go up it?' to you know see the observation deck and stuff. It was eleven dollars to go up there. But we ended up deciding no because it wasn't a lot of us and we were just like, 'Oh let's just come back when there's more of us.' You know, it's right here, so close to the school we can just, and so I kinda was thinking about that as it started to fall, I was kinda regretting that I never went up there, 'cause I knew it's gone, it would be awhile until they did build something else."

Interviewee #2: Tammy Villanueva (her mother)

Job/Role: Intelligence/Program Manager at Northrup Grumman (contracting agency for government)

Location: Worked in Washington D.C. at Navy Yard on 9/11
Quote: "I think the government and the intelligence community has always tried to do the best they can and has done a good job, I think, from my standpoint and perspective...the governments always the last to get updated, in other words, our infrastructure is not as solid as the latest technology, we're always, the government, because of the money, that they don't get a lot of times, they're always behind the power curve as far as the latest technology and the latest and greatest thing in sharing information. And in today's society there's so much information overload. There's not enough people to look through it all and the infrastructure doesn't support the easy sharing of information and intelligence so I think there's a lot of stovepipes in the government but I think that's because of the way things used to be with the Cold War and it was like that, and everybody had their own little territory, and now the information has got to be shared easily and things have got to be more horizontal than stovepipe and it just takes a lot of money and infrastructure to do that and I think that the United States is trying to get there but, of course, it takes time."

Interviewer: Richard Lee

Age: 20

Year: Junior

Major: Finance

Reason for taking the class: To learn more about 9/11 from those who were both indirectly and directly effected by it.

Interviewee #1: Edmond Jang

Job/Role: Information Technology at the Federal Reserve Bank of New York

Reason for interviewing: Edmond was just two blocks away from the 9/11 attacks. I wanted to learn about what he had gone through on that day.

Quote: "Coming downtown again after two weeks was a scary feeling. I remember coming out of the train and the odor in the air was more than just smoke. It was a very peculiar scent in the air. It might have been bodies burning and I'll never forget that scent. If I smell it anywhere else, it'll bring me back to that third week after September 11th in coming back downtown."

Interview #2: Soo Jin Lee

Job/Role: Student at New York University

Reason for interviewing: Soo Jin was in Westchester during the attacks on 9/11. She was indirectly affected, and I wanted to get her perspective on the event.

Quote: "I can't picture Grand Central without all the army men, police officers and also all the security we have on bridges, tunnels and in the subways. I think that now it has just become a part of our daily lives. If we didn't see these people providing us with security, then we would question why they weren't there. We wouldn't feel as safe and assured that we'd be okay."

10

Interviewer: Cristina Masiello

Age: 19

Year: Sophomore

Major: Criminal Justice

Overall comment: This class has taught me the importance of oral history in the context of 9/11. The stories and testimonies of eyewitness accounts give a greater understanding of the attacks. Words cannot express the emotions of those affected by the events of 9/11—their words recorded on tape reveal the extreme horror and feelings of sadness. Oral history is an important component in the recording of history and sharing it with the public.

Interviewee #1: Joan Illuzzi-Orbon

Job/Role: Assistant District Attorney for Manhattan

Quote: "I've been to a lot of crime scenes, and I can tell you that once you've smelt death, that you never forget it. The entire area of Lower Manhattan in the second I got off the bus everyday was death, bodies."

Interviewee #2: Daniel R. Masiello, Sr.

Job/Role: Field Vice President, American Express Financial Advisors

Quote: "There's been dramatic impacts to everyone, and I think those impacts will be with us for a long time."

11

Interviewer: Amanda Milazzo

Age: 19

Year: Sophomore

Major: Finance

Reason for taking the class: The reason I took this class was to be able to learn more about 9/11 and how it affected the employees of the area because I was personally affected being so close, and I feel that this kind of work is extremely important in understanding what happened on that day.

Interviewee #1: Albert Iannacone

Job/Role: Port Authority Worker (Helicopter Escort)

Reason for interviewing: I choose Albert, due to the fact that he is my uncle and I knew that he had worked at the heliport and had seen the whole thing. He had never spoken about the experience before, but I knew what he had to say was important and pertinent to the after events in his life. He talked about his journey back to the heliport and his ordeal in the streets and reaching the heliport and the remarkable efforts that he saw. The most memorable thing is when my uncle started to get so excited when talking about when the president came through the heliport and how influential he [the president] was in keeping up people's spirits.

Quote: "It was incredible to see just every single boat out in the water, just private boats any boat that could tie into the pier and tie up, and we were able to get people on. People kept coming from all over. We must have put about 2,000, I think I would be underestimating the number of people that came through there within that next hour two hours afterwards, ummm..... I never seen people just helping people like they did that day. And after a certain time we had to stop because we couldn't allow the boats to come in anymore because at that point the military started getting very involved and aww the whole facility started to change its face from a place of transportation to a place of emergency service."

12

Interviewee #2: Marilyn Warbach

Job/Role: Federal Reserve Worker (Library Employee)

Reason for interviewing: I choose Marilyn because she is a family friend from home who knew how people from Staten Island (where I'm from) got home that day. Also I was curious about how the most important central bank, the Fed, handled the event and the precautions they now have. She basically talked about her ordeal inside the building and seeing the events unfold right in front of her eyes. She talked about being on lockdown in the building and how grateful she was that she wasn't outside to see the ordeal. She then proceeded to talk about her ordeal on a tugboat home and how she didn't realize the significance of the event at that moment. The most memorable thing in my interview is when she talked about watching the Tower fall on TV and the feeling of shock she had and about how she felt mortified at this moment.

Quote: "And I remember going back there Amanda and I remember I remember being in the library and I remember saying that it was silent there was no noise outside from before outside with the fire engines, and all the commotion it was a dead silence, it was very eerie, and not thinking we were all shocked we were in a state of shock, and I remember we made a few phone calls, going back saying how come there are no fire engines, and not comprehending that the building you know we knew they collapsed but we couldn't put it together, its so quiet now we were really all shocked and it was just an eerie dead silence, and I remember we made a few phone calls and I remember saying whereas the fire engines and then when we went back and I remember thinking oo my god those poor people all those poor people, and there sitting at their desk and the plane comes and crashes and then their all dead so that was really strange."

13

Interviewer: Jillian Pfau

Age: 18

Year: Freshman

Major: Undecided

Reason for taking class: In order to expand my knowledge of 9/11 and help in preserving the stories of those involved in the event.

Interviewee #1: Emine Kansay

Job/Role: Student

Quote: "I think... people have a misconception of who we are. I think people view us to be something that we're not, I think people judge us quicker than they tend to judge other religions and I feel like their judgments are sometimes incorrect, most of the time their judgments are incorrect, because they like to judge us before getting to know us first and I feel like it has given, it's portrayed us to be hurtful people that are inconsiderate and we're all about war and terrorism and taking over, and we don't think America's great, but that's not what it's about, and that's what I don't like, in a sense, it gave the Muslim religion a bad name."

Interviewee #2: Pete D'Ancona

Job/Role: Firefighter at Ladder 10

Quote: "I couldn't see a name on a street anyway, the dust was like clay. It stuck to everything. Every building was gray, nothing was brown, nothing was green, nothing was red, everything was gray. I didn't even know where in the hell I was, and it was dark, it was dark, it looked like midnight."

Interviewer: Katherine Tucker

Age: 19

Year: Sophomore

Major: Applied Psych

Reason for taking the class: Fulfillment of AOK1 & Honors Credit

Interview #1: Maria Ruiz-Ayala

Job/Role: Cashier in Pace Cafeteria

Reason for interviewing: Chosen because of it's a different perspective, Hispanic/immigrant perspective.

Synopsis of Interview: She was born in a rural area of Puerto Rico and moved here when she was 20. Maria was working in the cafeteria when the planes hit the WTC. She stayed in the cafeteria and served firemen, policemen, and other relief workers at the WTC site. She left Pace's building at 5:30 after much of the commotion had died down and walked over into Brooklyn where she caught a train and later a bus to get home to Spanish Harlem at 9:30 that night. She was tremendously affected by that day and can never linger around the WTC. Although she did have a skin rash shortly after 9/11, she is not interested in being a part of the WTC Health Registry. She was here when the initial WTC attack occurred in the early 90s, making this latest attack even harder to deal with.

Quote 1:

Maria: "I had...you know...I had hoped that they were alive. Understand?"

Katherine: "Mm-hmm."

Maria: "I always—I always said, 'No, they are...you know...' there may be some people who were wounded but they would be okay like us, you know? I always ha...always had, like, a hope that there wouldn't have been so many deaths. You understand? I was always swearing that they would find so many more than they actually did."

Quote 2:

"It was terrible. And afterwards, to get home, to have the television reporting so much on it when...the planes were falling, they were hitting...uh-uh. I tell you, for three weeks I didn't like to watch the television. Because it was always the same, the same, the same...and on the Hispanic channels even more."

Interviewer: Teresa Ventura

Age: 19

Year: Sophomore

Major: Computer Science

Reason for taking the class: Honors Course/AOK 1

Interviewee #1: Michelle Federico

Job/Role: Pace student, living in Maria's Tower during the attacks, freshman year.

Reason for interviewing: I chose this person because I was interested in the Maria's Tower experience of 9/11.

Synopsis of interview: Michelle talks about herself and her experience moving into Maria's Tower. She then talks about the frightening experience of the World Trade attacks from the point of view of a student living at Pace.

Quote: "You looked out the window and all you saw was grey. You could not see anything for the life of you, and people were coming in from outside, and if they were injured, they already had body tags on them assuming, God forbid, something would happen."

Interviewee #2: Lourdes Rodriguez

Job/Role: Worked in 7 World Trade

Reason for interviewing: I chose this person because I really wanted to find out about the experience of a worker who had a very close encounter with the 9/11 attacks.

Synopsis of interview: Lourdes tells about her early life and how she came to work in 7 World Trade. She also gives a detailed account about the day of September 11, 2001 and the horrendous experience she had.

Quote: "You know how those war movies in Vietnam and Korea where you see everybody running because of a bomb or something. That was how it was; it felt like I was in another country in another time."

