

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY
HST 7700: Research in Local History
Student Oral History Interviews, October 25, 2017
Interview with Alyssa Stark

Interview Information

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Interviewer: Krista Dunkman (KD)

Interviewee: Alyssa Stark (AS)

Interview Transcript

Krista Dunkman (KD): I am Krista Dunkman. It is the 25th of October, 2017. We are in the reading room of the archives in Dunbar Library at Wright State. And we are doing interviews for History 7700. So, if you could just state your name, your major, and your year.

Alyssa Stark (AS): So, my name is Alyssa Stark. I am an anthropology major, and I'm in my senior year.

KD: And, why did you choose Wright State?

AS: I chose Wright State because it was close to home, and I did post-secondary education here. So I came here during my junior and senior year during high school, so I was already familiar with campus and knew my professors. So it was just a really comfortable environment for me.

KD: And what made you want to do anthropology?

AS: Um, I'm interested in the story of humans, like I'm really interested in history as well, so they really overlap. And anthropology is very holistic, so it takes really intersecting perspectives of unique and really common situations. So, it really gets down to the nitty-gritty of how humans live and who we are.

KD: And what was your first day of classes like at Wright State?

AS: I know the first class I would have taken was a physics course. And I sat next to a medical student. She was obviously pre-med. And there were so many medical and nursing students in this class, and the professor was an adjunct professor. And like, I'm now learning all of these words and trying to grasp them, but as a new student here. And he was really weird. He was, he said he liked the physics of sound, so I remember him kind of doing an introduction of that. And he'd often turn off the lights and play, like, AC/DC and the Rolling Stones and music like that, and I've never had a professor like that since. And all of the older students were, or I guess other students, were like, "All your classes won't be like this, I promise." [both laughing] Like, "This isn't how it is." [both laughing] So, I don't know, there was like a strong community support, and we formed like...they took me to study groups and stuff like that, so...yeah, it was nice.

KD: Yeah.

AS: It was good.

KD: So, I'm guessing that that was *not* your favorite class.

AS: [sighs] Yeah, it was weird.

KD: So, what was your favorite class?

AS: Throughout my entire...?

KD: Yeah.

AS: There's been *so many* good classes. I have...no idea. I couldn't choose. I studied American Sign Language, and there's been a lot of good ASL courses. But there's also been, like, Human Variation. I love the variation between and among populations of humans. I think that's really interesting. Uh, but I like the general history courses too. Like, just, I think those have been helpful, but they're all... I love going to class. I love all of my classes, obviously.

KD: Do you have a favorite professor?

AS: I probably tend to like my Anthropology professors more. So, like, I chose my advisor, my department advisor, so Lance Greene, he teaches Anthropology. So, I've enjoyed taking classes with him. There's a few adjunct professors who work in like local museums, like Boonshoft, so Bill Kennedy and Jill Krieg. They've been really amazing professors to take. Uh, yeah... I mean... But they all teach something different. It's really, like, *how* they teach it that's interesting. And I guess those are more hands-on classes.

KD: And what do you want to do after you graduate?

AS: Um, after I graduate next year, um, I'm looking at Public History programs, looking to go get my master's, and then hopefully find a job. [both laugh]

KD: Do you think you want to do the Public History Program here? Or are you still looking elsewhere? Or...?

AS: I've looked at NKU's Public History Program, which is smaller and has only been around for a few years. But Brian Hackett is the department chair there, and he's really amazing. But I've been at Wright State for a long time, and I'm really comfortable here. And I know a lot of the professors. And we have this amazing archive...archives, that... I'm just really at home here, obviously, so if I get in here, which hopefully I will, um, I will probably choose Wright State. [laughs]

KD: Okay, and what's your favorite thing about Wright State?

AS: My favorite thing...? So, I don't know. I have two favorite things.

KD: Okay, go for it.

AS: So, I rock climb, and I love being at the rock-climbing gym on campus. It's something unique, not all campuses... A lot more campuses are getting them now, but it's a fun environment. We go backpacking, and we climb outdoors, so that was a fun, like, community-building, that I don't know, I found on campus. It's nice. Everybody has "that place" on campus. And then my second place would be here in the archives, because I've spent a lot, *a lot*, of my degree here, and I don't know, everybody's family here. And you learn something new every single day. If it's not about archival work or conservation, or local history, it's...I don't know. It's fun to grow every single day, with the people around you.

KD: And, was working in the archives something that you wanted to do? Or was it something that just kind of happened and you grew to love it?

AS: Man... I stalked Chris [Wydman] for a while. He was like, "No, there's no jobs available." And then, something got messed up with my work study my first year, so I couldn't work. And then, the summer of my sophomore year, he emailed me and was like... My work study was fixed, and he was hiring, and so he actually emailed me, telling me that there was a job, after I had emailed him for, like, *semesters*, asking him about it. So, um, persistence.

KD: Yeah. [laughing]

AS: Yeah, but, finally. I mean, it's the only job I applied for on campus. And I mean, it's worked out for me, well.

KD: And when you go into the Public History Program, do you think that you want to do more archives or museums?

AS: Museums.

KD: Oh, really?

AS: I mean, I love, *I love*, working here. And I want to do a little bit of both, because I think it's good to have options when you graduate. It's, I mean, that's the only...you really *need* options right now. But, yeah, my heart's always been with museums. I grew up going to museums. I have an internship right now at the Cincinnati Museum Center. I was a volunteer at Boonshoft, uh, the children's museum, for four years. So, I have a larger background in museums and in education. But, I could go... honestly... you...I would be happy either way. I would be ecstatic either way.

KD: What do you do at the Cincinnati Museum Center?

AS: Um, I'm the... I'm an archaeology lab assistant, so I work on, primarily with artifacts from their... They've been digging at a site called Hahn for a decade, so I'm working with interpreting information and... Unfortunately, it hasn't been like public programs, like I like to do, but I've done a lot of public programs with Jill and Bill and...hopefully, that would be like the dream job, you know, doing public programming, but...

KD: Well, alright. So, describe your typical day at Wright State.

AS: So, I get here *really* early. Normally, my classes start around 10, but I still like to get here at like 7:30, 8:00 o'clock. I'll do my readings for my classes, take notes on my readings, and any notes that I can *before* class. And then I go to my classes, and then I'll probably work here. Doing archaeology, some of my classes are off-campus, like some of them are at Boonshoft, some of them are at Sunwatch, some of them are in the woods, so...sometimes there's a lot of driving. This semester, I have two classes, and then I drive to Dayton, and then I drive all the way back here to work [both laughing] for a few hours, and then I go all the way back home to Dayton. But definitely the main part of my day is getting here early...because of the parking. [both laughing]

KD: Yeah, so, what's your least favorite thing about Wright State?

AS: I think my least favorite thing about Wright State is the large administration that we have, because it causes an imbalance between students and *why* we're here. I think a

lot of times the university will lose focus of why, why we all come here every single day, and a lot of that showed during their financial crisis with what we were keeping and what we were cutting, like sports. But...parking also sucks. [both laughing]

KD: Yes, it does. [both laughing] Alright, and, saved the best question for last: What did you eat for breakfast today?

AS: Um, Cheerios.

KD: Regular Cheerios or Honey Nut?

AS: Regular Cheerios. [KD laughs] I don't like Honey Nut Cheerios.

KD: Aw, really?

AS: Yeah, they're...it's weird. I drink...like, I'll put honey in my tea, but I don't like it on my Cheerios. And, I put sugar in my Cheerios, which I shouldn't do, but... My boyfriend tries to get me to eat Frosted Cheerios because he thinks it's the same thing, and it's *not* the same thing.

KD: No, definitely not.

AS: But I'm about to transition into Mini Wheats when I finish this box of Cheerios.

KD: Oh, going big league.

AS: Yep. [both laughing]

KD: Okay, well, thank you so much for talking with us.

AS: Yeah, thank you.