

## INTERVIEW

### PENNSYLVANIA HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

*Abstract:* The Pennsylvania Historical Association has recently undertaken an oral history project, with the goal of interviewing and recording the stories of key leaders in the field of Pennsylvania history. Fittingly, our first interview features Dr. John B. Frantz, one of the association's most dedicated members. It was conducted by Dr. Karen Guenther, a former student of Dr. Frantz and also a dedicated member of the PHA, on November 20, 2013.

GUENTHER: Hello, this is an interview for the Pennsylvania Historical Association. I'm Dr. Karen Guenther, and this is Dr. John Frantz, who is a long-time member of PHA, if I am correct.

FRANTZ: Yes.

GUENTHER: Okay. So this is part of our oral history interviews with prominent people in PHA to get the record before it's not possible to do so.

FRANTZ: (laughs) I think it would be possible for a long time yet.

GUENTHER: As long as your mother lived, I would think.

FRANTZ: Yes.

GUENTHER: Tell me a little bit about your background. I know you're the son of a Reformed minister.

FRANTZ: Well, I was born in New Haven, Connecticut, and then my parents moved to Woodstock, Virginia, where I spent my early childhood, then moved to Baltimore, Maryland,

where I went to Baltimore public schools, elementary school, and then we moved to Pottstown, Pennsylvania, where I went to junior high school and received a scholarship to The Hill School, a private preparatory school. That was very, very good discipline for me, because at the public school, no matter what you did, within reason, you stayed there; but at The Hill School, if you didn't perform, you were sent elsewhere. I really enjoyed the athletics at The Hill School. The football team had an excellent staff of coaches. The head coach, the line coach, the end coach, the backfield coach, and sometimes the director of athletics would come out and serve as the centers coach. That was my favorite time at The Hill School, the fall during football season. Then I went to Franklin and Marshall College and majored in history. I appreciated the teaching of Professor Fred Klein and Professor Glenn Miller. I belonged to Future Teachers of America, thinking that I would teach history in high school and perhaps do some coaching. Toward the end of my time there, I looked around for teaching positions and decided on a position in Baltimore County, Maryland, at North Point Junior High School. There I taught the core curriculum, which emphasized American history and literature, especially American literature. I taught for one year, but the students asked me so many questions for which I didn't have answers that I decided I should go back to school to learn more. So I went to the University of Pennsylvania, thinking I would earn a master's degree and return to high school teaching, but the university generously gave me an award that covered all my tuition and fees, and because I liked the ability to be able to study exactly what I wanted to study, which was American history, rather than the college experience where your curriculum has to be very broad, I decided I liked it there. I stayed and did all of my course work in one year, and studied for my comprehensive exams for the next year. I didn't know what Uncle Sam had in mind for me at that time, because the Korean War was going on and the draft was operative, but I had messed up my knee, and it turned out that they didn't want me in the United States Army. Previously, I had been dismissed from the Air Force after basic training. They said that the reason was that I had spots on the chest x-ray, but I think they mixed up my knee with my chest and no wonder they threw me out. So I was never called. I felt somewhat bad about that, because my friends had served, but they told me I hadn't missed anything. So that made me feel a little better. I received opportunities to teach at several high schools and also several colleges. Jobs were plentiful at that time. So I decided I would return to

Franklin and Marshall College and become an adjunct faculty member in history. I was there for two years. In my second year, I was an assistant football coach, which I enjoyed. It was a pleasure to work with the head coach, Woody Sponaugle, and assistant coaches George McGinness, Bill Iannicelli, and Mike Lewis. That was a good experience for me. After two years at Franklin and Marshall, I came to Penn State in 1961, and I decided that I liked it here at Penn State. I liked the big school better than the small school. I had a lot more freedom, and the administrators were so busy doing whatever it is that administrators do that they didn't interfere with what we did in the classroom and didn't bother about what you did in your spare time. I remained on duty here until 1998. After I retired from teaching (in fact, the very next day), I moved into another office and became business secretary of the Pennsylvania Historical Association for a second time. I had been business secretary in the early 1960s to the mid-1960s and was asked to do that again toward the end of my teaching career at Penn State, but said that I couldn't handle that again while I was teaching, but when I wasn't teaching anymore, I would. They still wanted me to do it. So I did that until about 2008 when I passed it on to my former student and very efficient business secretary, Karen Guenther, who continues to hold that office and who continues to do very well. So that's basically a mini-biography.

GUENTHER: What was it like growing up the son of a minister?

FRANTZ: My parents were very, very good about that. Teachers were not as understanding. They had higher standards for my behavior than sometimes I did, and so they requested that my parents come to the junior high school from time to time and informed my parents that I should not have done whatever it was I had done that had disturbed them because I was a minister's son. My mother responded that she agreed that I shouldn't have done whatever it was that required their attendance at the school, but not for that reason. And so, at home it was not a problem, but at school sometimes it was. But it never, never really bothered me; I was proud of what my parents did, and I knew they were doing good work, and I was proud of that.

GUENTHER: Your mother was a teacher, too, correct?

FRANTZ: My mother became an English teacher. She had been an English teacher before she married. She was an English teacher at Schaefferstown High School, and then taught in religious education classes in Virginia and again in Baltimore, Maryland. When I was in college and when my

brother was about to be in college, she became a librarian and an English teacher in Pottstown Junior High School. She continued that for about twenty years. She retired when my father did in 1974. My father never really retired; when he resigned as minister at Trinity Church in Pottstown in 1974 after a thirty-one-year ministry there, he served as interim minister for about ten congregations and was doing that right up until the time of his death in 1986.

GUENTHER: What sports did you play in college? I know you mentioned about playing football. Were there any other sports that you played?

FRANTZ: Baseball.

GUENTHER: Baseball? I gather football is how you injured your knee.

FRANTZ: Yes. And maybe baseball, too. Sliding into second base, might have torn a few things that way.

GUENTHER: I don't think sliding into second tears ligaments as much as football does. Now, you were a tight end, correct?

FRANTZ: Yes.

GUENTHER: Which, back then, it was more of a lineman than it is today, correct?

FRANTZ: Yes. Much more blocking. We played the Wing-T, and we had a wing back. But, as you said, it was more linemen blocking—single blocking, double team blocking, depends on where the defensive tackle lined up.

GUENTHER: You didn't have too many crossing routes or anything often.

FRANTZ: We had some plays that involved some crossing, but more often it was in passing plays going out and watching what the defensive halfback did. If he came up, then the right end was supposed to curl around behind him, and the tailback was supposed to watch that. If the defensive halfback came up, then he was to throw it to the end. If that didn't happen, then I was to take out the linebacker—which happened sometimes.

GUENTHER: If he didn't take out you first.

FRANTZ: I know.

GUENTHER: How has college sports changed since you were an undergraduate back in the late '40s/early '50s?

FRANTZ: It's much more wide open. Spread formations, numerous wide outs. Penn State currently uses the tight end more as a pass receiver than what happened when I was playing. The tight end was primarily a blocker at that time, especially when we had very, very tall left ends and very, very fast halfbacks. There is much more emphasis on television, much more

emphasis on money, especially for the Division I schools. Franklin and Marshall played other schools such as Lafayette, Muhlenberg, Gettysburg, Johns Hopkins—and so it wasn't really “big time.” When I first came to Penn State, I didn't have any committee assignments, and I didn't have graduate students, so I would go out and watch practice. As I watched from afar, thinking maybe I could have made it here, but then I saw them come off the field—people like Dave Robinson, and they blocked out the sun.

GUENTHER: They were a bit bigger than you.

FRANTZ: Yes. Then I changed my mind. I would have been killed.

GUENTHER: You would have been practice squad.

FRANTZ: Yes. Or intramural.

GUENTHER: What professors influenced you when you were at Franklin and Marshall and Penn?

FRANTZ: Especially Glenn Miller and Fred Klein. I should mention that I spent my first year at Swarthmore College. That was at the beginning of the Korean War. And Swarthmore College did not get an ROTC unit, so I had contemplated joining the Navy or transferring to another school that had an ROTC unit.

GUENTHER: Gee, you mean the Quakers didn't have an ROTC unit?

FRANTZ: They had Navy V-12 during World War II, but they decided they wouldn't continue that during the Korean War. And so that was one of the reasons why I transferred to Franklin and Marshall College.

GUENTHER: So it's not like F&M pirated you from Swarthmore because you were such a good football player.

FRANTZ: No. Those two professors were very influential. The career guidance person or associate dean (whatever he was) tried to encourage me to go into German to prepare to teach German or teach biology, but I said no, I didn't want to do that. I wanted to teach history. I went to talk to Glenn Miller and Fred Klein. They said if you want to teach history, aim for the top; there is plenty of room there. I don't know if this was the top, but it was close enough. And I enjoyed teaching history right here at Penn State.

GUENTHER: So was there anyone memorable while you were at Penn?

FRANTZ: My advisor, Wallace Davies, was a very, very good advisor. He was willing to let me write on what I wanted to write on. He had his students select their own topics instead of assigning them something he was especially interested in. Roy Nichols, Pulitzer Prize winner for his book on the pre-Civil War period, Franklin Pierce, I think, was a very dramatic

instructor. He would give the speeches as if he were the character in that particular time period. He would end his classes dramatically. You'd be taking notes, you'd look up, and he was gone. It wasn't like he stayed around to answer questions. In fact, he didn't answer questions during his lectures either. One person dared to do that, he asked him how he knew about something or other, and he stared down the student and said, "Because I was there." That took care of that. Other instructors were not as memorable as my advisor, who was a very good lecturer, and Roy Nichols, who as I said was a very good lecturer also.

GUENTHER: How did you come about choosing your dissertation topic?

FRANTZ: It was something with which I was familiar. I had sat around my grandfather's table with my uncle and my father. And as long as I kept my mouth shut and behaved well, I could stay there. And they were interesting. They talked about Goshenhoppen, New Goshenhoppen, Tulpehocken. At the time, I thought they had a special language all their own. But they were interested in history, my grandfather especially. He took the time to have me learn the names of the presidents, which I could recite while still in grade school. He in a way was a genealogist; he wrote a history of the Frantz family in this country. He had never been to Europe, so he didn't know the details of the European background of the family, but he could trace the family through its arrival here in 1738. He had the genealogical line all mapped out, and he even went into some of the sidelines—who had married whom, and this got him interested in genealogy as well. So I just naturally was inclined toward history and developed a love for it that continued that into school. In junior high school I had a very good American history teacher. At The Hill School, the history experience was not as good as it was in junior high school or in college. We studied Hicks's college textbook. We had quizzes. We had no research papers—despite the fact that the class had between twelve and fifteen students who could have been taught how to do a bibliography, how to outline papers, and so on, but that came in college and graduate school. So I just continued my love for history, especially in graduate school, where I did not have to be distracted by geology and biology and some of the other courses of study in which I was not as much interested. I had German as my foreign language and had a very, very good instructor in German at The Hill School. I took German in college my first year, but I got in the wrong line to register, and by Thanksgiving I learned that I was in the second half of fourth-year German, but it was too late to transfer back to the first half, so I just stayed in it.

That fulfilled my college foreign-language requirement. But it was very good for me to have had that training in German and use German as my second language in graduate school. The other was Spanish, which I never use, unlike German—which I continue to. To answer your question specifically, my grandfather, uncle, and father who were ministers talked about Pennsylvania's religious history, so it was natural that I wrote on that.

GUENTHER: I know what that's like, because I actually had a second major in Spanish as an undergrad, and so when it came time to meet the language requirements, I had the second major—and I didn't have to take the test. And then the other language was German, because I needed that for what I was doing. Although with the Quakers it wasn't quite as important.

FRANTZ: But it stood you in good stead.

GUENTHER: Yes. It's actually come in handy lately with working with the church records. So, I have a list of questions here . . . why did you come to teach at Penn State? I think we've already talked about that.

FRANTZ: Well, I was interviewed at the end of the hall in the hotel in New York at the American Historical Association meeting. Chairman/department head Robert Murray interviewed me. He told me that if I came to Penn State, I would be teaching on television, which is how they intended to begin teaching the survey courses, at least some of them, some sections of them, and I asked, how do you do that? He said we don't know; we never did it either. So it was an experiment, and I enjoyed doing it. I could do some different things on the closed-circuit television that were more difficult to do in the classroom, such as using visuals. There was a very good staff who prepared graphics and illustrations to be shown on the closed-circuit television. You could use music—for example, I had Tchaikovsky's *1812 Overture* prior to a discussion of the War of 1812. And you could use comedy like Stan Freberg's "United States of America," a takeoff on American history. That kind of got the students' attention, and, after I had their attention, I could hit them with the serious stuff. I enjoyed doing the television in contrast to some of my colleagues who didn't want any part of it. We would have maybe 12 or 15 teaching assistants in the individual rooms, and they would conduct discussion with them. We would have 45 minutes of lecture and then 30 minutes discussion session. I would always bring some of the students into the television studio so they could see how it happened (and, in some cases, how it didn't happen). It was good for me and a few other instructors who taught on closed-circuit television to have a live audience there. In time, though,

the Ford Foundation grant that had financed some of this ran out, and the university didn't support the television operation to the same degree as the Ford Foundation had, and then too the students expressed a desire to have their professor right there in the room with them, and that was fine with me. Although I thought the television instruction was better for the students because they had the opportunity to have discussions with their teaching assistants in their rooms rather than being herded into a big lecture hall such as the Forum, which seated 400 students and be talked at for 75 minutes or 50 minutes, whichever schedule we were on. In time, we broke down those big sections into discussion classes that were held at the end of the week with teaching assistants. So we got back to that small group learning situation.

GUENTHER: Right. That's one thing, when I was at the University of Houston, we had monster sections we called them that had 600 students in an auditorium, and as TAs there were three of us for the class. And when it was test time, you got 200 exams to grade—if you were lucky. Unless you had a prof that assigned research papers; then you had 200 research papers to grade.

FRANTZ: That was a challenge, I'm sure.

GUENTHER: Especially as poorly as they wrote! But at the same time, there were also some set up with discussion sections as well. We would have four of the discussion sections, with about 30 students each, and you'd have more TAs in a class like that. The discussion sections would be anything from reviewing previous material or discussion of outside readings for the class. It was great to have the chance to work with the students in a more intimate relationship, because you could remember their names. Of course, when you're going from four sections of 30 versus 200, and you could actually put a face to the name when grading the paper, which helped a lot.

FRANTZ: Some say you shouldn't do that, that it undermines your objectivity.

GUENTHER: Right, but when you're handing it back it makes a difference.

FRANTZ: Sure.

GUENTHER: Especially when you have twenty Smiths.

FRANTZ: And when the students came in to talk to you, it's helpful to know who they were.

GUENTHER: Right.

FRANTZ: And remember their particular work. Well, before we went to those large sections—or returned to those large sections (perhaps they had them

before I came here), Bob Murray, the department head, called me and asked if I would like to have the honor of having the first super-super section. I said, what is that? He said, well, your enrollment exceeded the capacity of the room to which we assigned you, so we are transferring your class to the Forum—which, as I said, seated 400 students. I asked, is this a question? He said, no. So that's what I did.

GUENTHER: Would you like to have the honor, or would you like to have a job?

FRANTZ: Right.

GUENTHER: It could have been worse. Today it could have been in Bryce Jordan, the University's basketball arena.

FRANTZ: Yes. But I thoroughly enjoyed my teaching here, because I enjoyed the freedom to operate my classes the way I wanted to, I enjoyed the freedom to teach what classes and what sections I wanted, indeed, in time, I was even able to tell the scheduling officer when I would like to have my classes. I wasn't particular about that, except when he started scheduling me for early in the morning.

GUENTHER: I remember that.

FRANTZ: Any time during the day or evenings was fine.

GUENTHER: Not before 10:00.

FRANTZ: Right. And I worked with some good people. Department heads were very cooperative and very pleasant, so it was a good experience.

GUENTHER: What types of relationships did you have with the other history faculty at Penn State?

FRANTZ: We would get together periodically, and, in the early years, even the wives would meet, I think it was on a monthly basis. In time that changed, and I don't know whether the wives still get together, but I kind of doubt it. Following football games some of the faculty members would get together, and it would rotate from one faculty member's home to another, which I thought was surprising. I can't imagine that happening now. I doubt that happened at the University of Pennsylvania. I know it didn't happen at Franklin and Marshall College. But it pleased me, because I was interested in sports, and it was good to know that my colleagues weren't always interested only in intellectual matters but they also shared my interest in Penn State football. There was when I came here a group known as the Pie Club, and Bob Murray would take a group of people over to West Halls in the afternoon, and they would sit and talk. I was invited but usually felt I was too busy, had too much to do, and seldom went along

with that gathering. Perhaps I should have done more of that, but I just didn't. But it was an example of how faculty members could get along with each other. There may have been some tensions; there may have been some politicking in the department; but I remained aloof from it, partly because I didn't know anything about it.

GUENTHER: Don't ask, don't tell . . .

FRANTZ: That was a good thing.

GUENTHER: What special committees or projects were you involved with on campus?

FRANTZ: Initially, I was assigned to the library committee, but not having had much experience as a full-time faculty member, I really didn't know what I was supposed to do and probably didn't handle it well. Later on I was on the undergraduate studies committee and the graduate studies committee. I was in the Senate for one term and didn't care to continue in the Senate, because I felt that they didn't make much of an impact on university policy. I think my most rewarding activity for the department, in addition to my teaching and research and writing, was serving as associate head for the Commonwealth Campuses. The department head normally had attempted to go to other campuses and to communicate with people during the year, but some of them found they just had too much else to do and that they couldn't do this as frequently as they wanted to, to the extent they wanted to. So one of the department heads asked me to do this in lieu of a committee assignment. Now that particular department head gave me committee assignments anyway, but subsequent ones honored that agreement, and that would be my committee assignment. So I would go to the other campuses. I would try to hit each of the Penn State campuses on which we taught history campus at least once every two years, talk with the history people at those campuses, and sit in on their classes if that was agreeable to them. There was one instructor who always wanted to have lunch with me, but he didn't want me to sit in on his classes—which was okay; it was his class. I would learn from how they were presenting the material and what material they were presenting, and then listen to whatever concerns they had. Sometimes I had the impression that they felt the grass was greener here at University Park, but then I reminded them that yes, sometimes they taught larger numbers of students than we did and more sections than we did, but they did not have master's candidates and doctoral candidates, so there was a lot of reading of master's theses and doctoral dissertations they didn't do.

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GUENTHER: Yes.

FRANTZ: Maybe they would have rather done that than what they were doing.

GUENTHER: Plus, I know just from one semester when I was at Berks Campus replacing Bill Pencak, there's not nearly the type of department politics involved at a branch campus or Commonwealth Campus like there is at the main campus.

FRANTZ: And not as many people.

GUENTHER: Not as many people . . . I mean, literally, I was the history person.

FRANTZ: Yes.

GUENTHER: And before then it was Bill.

FRANTZ: That was often the case.

GUENTHER: And now it's the case on a lot of campuses. Maybe two at the most. And obviously you don't have to worry about votes and stuff like that.

FRANTZ: Yes.

GUENTHER: But at the same time, it's nice to have a colleague to talk to if you have a question: "Well, how is this in your class?" Talking to people in different disciplines is not always the same because you have different teaching styles.

FRANTZ: Yes.

GUENTHER: I don't do labs in my classes, for instance.

FRANTZ: Right. So some of those instructors on other campuses became good friends. I keep in touch with some of them even though I haven't done that for quite a few years now. But that was a rewarding experience also. And that reduced my teaching schedule sometimes. One of the instructors who I met on another campus was Bill Pencak, and I told the department head at that time, Gary Gallagher, that he should be here. So they made that arrangement, that Bill would come here and he'd have a teaching schedule and also be editor of *Pennsylvania History* and that my teaching schedule would be reduced somewhat because of my assignment as associate head of the Commonwealth Campuses for the history department. And that worked out well.

GUENTHER: Plus, it's another early Americanist there.

FRANTZ: Yes.

GUENTHER: Which makes a difference. I know how lonely it gets when you're the only one. (laughter) What changes did you see at Penn State while you taught there?

FRANTZ: Do you mean the entire university or the history department?

GUENTHER: Just in general.

FRANTZ: Well, the university increased in size in terms of student enrollment. It was perhaps about 14,000, maybe a little more, when I came here, and during the almost 40 years that I was here it increased to about 40,000. It's more than that now. So there were many, many more students. In the history department in terms of students, we went through cycles. We had a large number of students when I came here. As I said we did closed-circuit television in which some of us were involved when I came here. There was a period of student unrest when the students wanted the instructor right in the room where they could get at us, which was fine with me. Our enrollment declined at one point, and our classes were not as large as they had been, but in time, in the 1980s and 1990s, the numbers came back again. So we went through that cycle of large enrollment, lower enrollment, never disastrously lower, and then large enrollment again. We expanded the faculty, included some additional areas of history that we hadn't covered previously, such as environmental history, and in the case of my own teaching, I divided the course in early America that had been Colonial and Revolutionary America at the upper level, and I maintained that teaching the two together made the colonial period merely the prelude to the American Revolution whereas the colonial period could be taught really as the expansion of Europe and could even be a category of European history. That passed the department and gained the department's approval. And so we had one course on the colonial period of American history and one course on the Revolutionary period of American history. And we went through various changes in terms of the survey course, should it end here in 1865 or should it end at 1877. When I came here, I just missed the time when we had uniform texts in European and American history. Apparently the personnel couldn't agree on the texts, and I was told that faculty members would look at a textbook and determine its validity on the basis of how it handled their specialties. Not being able to agree, they decided to let everybody pick his own textbook.

GUENTHER: I'm sure the bookstore loved that.

FRANTZ: Yes. More women were employed in our department and others, and so there was that very, very significant change. I remember a department head telling one of the women who taught part time that he really didn't want full-time women faculty members because they just got married and had children and leave anyway, which didn't go over very well. The department outgrew that point of view and hired quite a few women. Then,

too, there developed a practice of spousal hiring, so that if a department wanted one spouse, that department cooperated with another department and hired the other spouse as well so the couple could move together. That was something that was unheard of when I came here. The physical environment of the campus changed, as there was a tremendous building campaign underway. The Forum was one of the new buildings. The Forum had eight classrooms arranged in the shape of a pie. It had much more audiovisual equipment that you could use if you wanted to, and there was a staff that would prepare it and present it if you wanted to use that staff. Other buildings included the new Willard Building. That replaced the Armory. The destruction of the Armory was very controversial. Some students climbed up in trees to try to prevent the demolition. This building that had served as the place where the ROTC people drilled, the place where dances had been held, and it was kind of a landmark on campus. But it went, and a very useful classroom building was constructed on that site. The Bryce Jordan Center was presented as an academic convocation building, but actually it was to be an arena for basketball and other kinds of activities, concerts by various groups in which students were interested, and that has made a tremendous difference.

GUENTHER: They hold commencement there now, right?

FRANTZ: Frequently.

GUENTHER: Okay. Because I know when I graduated, it was at Beaver Stadium.

FRANTZ: Yes. Sometimes commencement exercises are held on other sites, but often at the Bryce Jordan Center. I think the largest crowd was when President Bill Clinton spoke at the graduate student commencement. They filled that building, and I was fortunate on that occasion to walk with one of our PhD candidates. I wasn't his major advisor, but for some reason or other his major advisor did not walk with him, and he asked me to walk with him. So I had a conversation with President Bill Clinton. It wasn't very long, of course. I thanked him for being here, and he was his gracious self. I think all of us were thanking him for coming to the Penn State campus and so on. Just as I walked across the stage, Mike's sister took a picture—Mike Gabriel was the student—his sister took a picture of Mike getting his diploma from the president of the university at the time. Of course, it was a wide-angle lens, and she caught me with the president, which is an interesting picture to have. The stadium, of course, moved from its location near the Nittany Lion statue to the eastern part

of the campus. The East Halls dormitories were constructed, and it's said that it is the largest dormitory complex in the world, housing about 7,000 students. University dormitories elsewhere North Halls, West Halls, housed about another 4,000, so that now leaves about 30,000 students living elsewhere. And that has caused significant changes in the community, as the developers have come in to construct high-rises and apartment houses. And the old property owners open their homes and, in some cases, bought houses specifically to be renovated for the use of students.

GUENTHER: Right.

FRANTZ: So those are some of the changes that I observed since I've been here at Penn State.

GUENTHER: How has your family influenced your life and career?

FRANTZ: Well, as I said, my grandfather, my uncle, and my father influenced my interest in history. My wife has been very tolerant of my coming home late from the office for dinner, and she has tolerated my time spent reading, researching, and writing. Our daughter actually came in and sat in on several of my classes and served as a very helpful critic on how I was doing what I was doing. She said that I could have talked her into being an historian, but as my parents always let me decide what it was I wanted to do, so I let her decide what she wanted to do. She initially went to the University of Pennsylvania to study architecture (my brother is an architect), and that was her initial decision. She is talented artistically and musically and in other ways as well, but very early in her time at the University of Pennsylvania she lost her interest in architecture, possibly due to the first instructor she had in architecture, and became interested in psychology. Her undergraduate degree is in psychology, her master's degree and doctor's degree in psychology at the University of Florida, earned a Fulbright fellowship to the Karolinska Institute in Stockholm, Sweden, and a post-doctoral fellowship at the Scripps Institute in La Jolla, California; and then joined the faculty at Georgia State University in Atlanta, where now she is a tenured faculty member and a full professor in the department of neuroscience. She writes articles, publishes articles, writes grant proposals, and has brought in over \$2.5 million to her department, which causes her department head to be very fond of her.

GUENTHER: Yes, we don't find that kind of money in history.

FRANTZ: No, and we don't have to write grant proposals all the time, either, because we don't have that much money in history. So, she organizes a program to interest high school students in neuroscience that she runs in the summers. She says that in her purely academic activities, her research,

her writing, her publications, her teaching, she follows the example of her father, and then in organizing her summer program she follows the example of her mother, who ran the Central Pennsylvania Festival for the Arts for ten years here in State College.

GUENTHER: What led you to get involved in the Pennsylvania Historical Association?

FRANTZ: That happened very early here in my time at Penn State. When I came to Penn State, I was on a two-year terminal arrangement. That didn't mean that I had to stay for two years, and I was constantly looking around more stable employment opportunities. Phil Klein, who was a former president of the Pennsylvania Historical Association and remained very active in the association, was very helpful to me in many ways. He read some of my early articles and may even have contacted the editor concerning one of them. I'm not sure about that. I suspect that he was helpful in that way, too. But he suggested that I go to the Pennsylvania Historical Association meeting. I think it was in Bethlehem that year in the early 1960s, maybe even as early as 1963, 1962—probably '62—and talk to people because it was not a sure thing that I could stay here. Normally people were here for two years and then went elsewhere, which is why I was here at that time, because someone had fulfilled his two years and moved on. And so with Phil's encouragement I went to the Pennsylvania Historical Association, and it was not unusual for Penn State faculty members to go. We usually had a contingent of significant size going to the Pennsylvania Historical Association. So when I was there he would introduce me to people, and I would find some people on my own to talk to, ask if you need anybody in your history department. Nothing came of those inquiries, but it was an interesting experience, similar to what I had gone through previously when I was at Franklin and Marshall and needed to find a more stable position, because I had some experience in talking with people about possible job opportunities. When I became a faculty member here at Penn State, I was asked to be business secretary. At that time—we'll probably talk about changes in the Pennsylvania Historical Association later on.

GUENTHER: Yes.

GUENTHER: What offices have you held? Or is the shorter list what ones haven't you held?

FRANTZ: I held every office except treasurer. As I said, I was business secretary, and I was a member of the council. I asked for one year off after I resigned from the business secretaryship, and then became a member of the council,

an elected member of the council, and almost continuously from there on I've been on the council of the Pennsylvania Historical Association. At that time, as it was set up, there were three vice presidents, and I became I think the 3rd Vice President, then of course in a few years the 2nd, then the 1st Vice President decided he did not want to be president. He had become involved in a controversy at his institution through no fault of his own, but he had enough to do being concerned about that and so he asked if it would help me to become nominated for president of the association. I said no, it wouldn't help me, it would take a lot of time, but he resigned anyway, and I became president. This was in 1984. I had arranged programs, been on the program committee, and I think it was in 1984 or 1985 convention I think I handled both the local arrangements as we met in Pottstown and the program.

GUENTHER: Yes, that was 1984.

FRANTZ: All right. And it was the 200th anniversary of the founding of Montgomery County, and so we had a good convention. We had a session on the history of Montgomery County by a local judge, a Montgomery County judge, Judge Taxis, who had written on Montgomery County history. We had sessions on the deindustrialization in Pennsylvania, which was a timely topic as large employers in southeastern Pennsylvania, including Pottstown, such as Bethlehem Steel, Firestone, and so on were pulling up stakes and sending their operations elsewhere, including China. And I did this several times, was on the local arrangements committee for the conventions in State College twice, most recently I think it was 2008.

GUENTHER: 2007

FRANTZ: 2007. And we had good conventions here. I was on the program committee several times. I was the associate editor for the journal with Bill Pencak, and what else . . . that might be it. Then, as I said, when I stopped teaching in 1998, I was asked to be business secretary again, and so I did that for another about ten years and enjoyed that. Primarily because it kept me in touch with my colleagues. When I'd sent out the annual bills, sometimes I would put notes on them, and when the members paid their bills, some wrote notes on their invoices. And it was very interesting to be able to stay in touch with them.

GUENTHER: What changes in PHA have you seen since you first became involved?

FRANTZ: Quite a few. When I first became involved, it was somewhat of an old boys club, people were elected and reelected to membership on

council and at some point, I think in the 1960s, we passed a resolution that changed maybe the by-laws that a member of the council could serve two terms and then would have to go off the council for at least one year before being eligible for reelection. And that provided for some new blood to come onto the council, as some people after their two terms did not care to be reelected and had to be replaced. That was I think a good move for the council; we were able that way as I said to get some new people onto the council and get some new ideas and so on and so forth. In addition, we divided the position of secretary. There was no such office as business secretary; you were the secretary. You handled the business, you handled the correspondence, and everything that a secretary does. But I was a bit reluctant to accept the office, because while I handled the survey courses when I first came to Penn State, when I entered the tenure track position after two years, I had new courses to prepare, and of course there's always the need to do research and desire to do research and writing and publishing. So I thought this would be somewhat of an added burden. But Phil Klein explained to me that they gave this position to new people, and if they could handle it, they kept them here. If they couldn't handle it, they sent them elsewhere. I liked it here, so I decided I would handle it, and kept that position for maybe three years. That's how I got into the Pennsylvania Historical Association, and, as time passed, I learned to know people who were in it. They were good people and interesting people, and I enjoyed being with them. So I continued my interest in the Pennsylvania Historical Association.

I had thought that in doing all that a secretary should do was taxing, and so I proposed that we divide the office into corresponding secretary, who would handle minutes and so on and so forth, and a business secretary, who would send out the invoices, receive the payments, and keep track of all that in cooperation with the treasurer. So we divided those two offices. I remained business secretary, and Charlie Glatfelter became the corresponding secretary. And in the mid-1980s, Charlie Glatfelter proposed that we make some changes in the constitution, and he prepared a draft of a new constitution which provided for a president who would serve not three years as previously but two years, and there became only one vice president. And the other changes, such as business secretary and corresponding secretary, continued as they had then according to the earlier changes that we made. I think this has worked out well. Beyond that, we had kind of been waiting for presidents. The retiring president became then the

chairman of the nominating committee, and normally the nominating committee recommended people who then at the business meeting were elected to their offices. I can remember only one case in which there was rejection of a nominee. So, the new constitution worked out well. But as Charlie Glatfelter said, we never really knew what to do with retiring presidents, and so recently there was a change I think in maybe 2010 that we changed the by-laws so that the retiring presidents were no longer automatically members of the council but that they could be elected members of the council. I think perhaps this has resulted in a decreasing interest in the minds of ex-presidents in the association, as some of them don't attend the meetings of the association as regularly as previous presidents had. And maybe that's because they, too, have too much to do. But anyway, that's how we're operating now. And so retiring presidents, former presidents, can be elected to the council, which is what has happened.

GUENTHER: Yes, I was actually on the executive committee when we had discussions about this, and I think one of the issues was that really only one past president ever came on a regular basis. You might know who it is . . . (laughter)

FRANTZ: Yes.

GUENTHER: But that's what's happened. They've almost kind of distanced themselves. I often have to hunt some down to get them to pay their membership dues. So, yes . . . "oh, it just got on the pile of bills to be paid . . ."

FRANTZ: Well, another change is the greater involvement of women. As I said, when I came into the Pennsylvania Historical Association, it seemed somewhat like an old boys' club, with the same people in office and other people coming and going. But, in time more women were elected to council, and indeed women have been elected to the presidency. Betty Geffen was the first female president back in 1981.

GUENTHER: She succeeded you, I think.

FRANTZ: No, she preceded me.

GUENTHER: She preceded you. Okay.

FRANTZ: She preceded me. Betty Geffen of Lebanon Valley College. Since Betty's term, there have been numerous women elected president who have done very, very well, of course. Janet Lindman is the current immediate past president, Marion Roydhouse, Susan Klepp, Leslie Patrick, and Rosalind Remer. I think those are the female presidents who have served. And that's been good, too. It has opened the association even more. Those are the major changes that I remember in the association. In fact, it's been

it's been a very pleasant association—personal association because we all seem to get along so well together. I served also on the board of directors for the Pennsylvania German Society, and it seemed there was always contention within that group. Too many Germans, I don't know. The Pennsylvania Historical Association normally arrives at decisions in the manner of the Friends, by consensus.

GUENTHER: We generally don't have too many knockdown, drag-out fights in council.

FRANTZ: No.

GUENTHER: And I know just from my brief time on the German Society's board of directors. There was definite animosity there between certain elements and others. Too much drama, I'll put it that way.

FRANTZ: Too much drama, right. I remember one president yelling at another former president in the halls of the meeting. 100th anniversary of the creation of the Pennsylvania German Society. Wondering how this had happened and how will we survive. I still wonder about them.

GUENTHER: Yes. I know one of their recent publications was on *taufscheins* in Berks County, and I got the book and looked at it. I worked with them when I was an intern at the Historical Society of Berks County, and they didn't include any of the *taufscheins* at the Historical Society of Berks County in the book. And I talked to the archivist there and asked what's going on, and she said they wanted to have them for free at no charge, and they basically were not going to be a part of it. I actually have to review this for PMHB, and it's like how do I put this in here that I know the backstory.

FRANTZ: Tell it like it is, Karen.

GUENTHER: I can just say, well, it would have been nice if they had looked at these 500 which include examples such as blah, blah, blah that weren't included.

FRANTZ: You know whose decision that was.

GUENTHER: Oh, I know whose decision that was. Yes. And it wasn't the authors of the book. I think I have one final question here.

FRANTZ: Let me say, too, concerning the Pennsylvania Historical Association, there are increasing numbers of young people involved. And as I said at the recent banquet, as I spoke about Gerry Eggert, and it's important that we have more and more young people involved in the association. They're making an impact and expressing their points of view very freely. It's not like they are not at all intimidated by the people who have been in the

association a long time, which also is very good. They have ideas, and they express them.

The emergence of the executive committee has made council meetings more efficient. It began informally as my successor as president, Charlie Glatfelter, Bob Crist, and I met at Bob's house in Camp Hill to discuss various aspects of the association's activities. In time, it came to include all of the officers who now gather several weeks before the council meeting. Among other duties, they determine what issues require the full council's attention. For many years, the council functioned as a "committee of the whole," discussing at length almost every detail of the association's operations. This caused council meetings to last far into the night. Now, the executive committee and the association's committees have the leeway to handle more of the details. Furthermore, program committees now schedule council meetings for late afternoons, instead of after the evening banquet, which may contribute to council members' greater alertness and certainly enables them to get more rest prior to the next day's sessions.

Another change has provided more exact financial reporting. Longtime treasurer Richard Wright's report to the council consisted of telling us that the treasury was in good shape, and if it wasn't, he would make it so. And I'm sure that he would have. I suspect that it was he who secured a bequest for the association that formed the basis of our endowment. His father, Ross Pier Wright, preceded Richard as treasurer. He is said to have commented that the sheriff would never foreclose on the Pennsylvania Historical Association. Father and son were prominent Erie businessmen and loyal members of the association. Charlie Glatfelter and Bob Blackson succeeded Richard Wright and were meticulous in recording the association's income and expenses and in reporting our financial situation to the council, as is our current treasurer Tina Hyduke.

GUENTHER: All right. One final question. If you had to identify one thing as your legacy, what would it be?

FRANTZ: Perseverance in the association. You stay with it. You become involved and continue to be involved. Continue to do what you can to help the association, whatever that might be.

GUENTHER: Thank you for your time.

FRANTZ: It's been a pleasure.