



**CITY OF HOUSTON**  
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September 2, 2010

Dear Mr. O'Brien

I am writing in reference to your email dated August 31, 2010 regarding "Oral history not posted to Gregory Library website".

My investigation of this matter reveals that Mr. Bobby Caldwell's oral history interview was indeed conducted in January 2010, and is over four hours long. I realize Mr. Caldwell's oral history interview has taken a great deal of time to complete – but we are systematically working on it. Please know that the transcription of an interview that is several hours in length is very staff and time intensive. Because of the time and attention to detail that this process requires, an interview of this length is worked on a little at a time in small segments. A typical oral history interview is 15 – 20 minutes in length. Shorter interviews can be transcribed and formatted more quickly and, therefore, are placed on the Houston Public Library's website in less time than longer interviews. Before posting each history to the website, we take the time necessary to ensure content accuracy and technological synchronizing in order to produce a final product that we all can be proud of and that represents an acceptable standard.

Due to budget reductions we currently do not have on staff a person that is totally dedicated to taping and transcribing oral history interviews. Further, there was a small gap in interview transcription between the time our full time oral history staff member left HPL and when we able to resume transcription. To resume transcription we have successfully cross-trained a small number of staff members to handle the transcription of oral histories in addition to their regular ongoing responsibilities. So, as you can see, the process has slowed down. We hope to better staff this area as soon as our budget allows.

We thank you in advance for your continued patience as we continue to convert the content of Mr. Caldwell's oral history interview. When the transcription of his interview is closer to completion, we will contact you regarding a date the interview will be posted. We know the time to complete this interview has taken longer than we would have liked but I am sure you and Mr. Caldwell and all who view it will appreciate the care we have taken to do a good job.

We sincerely appreciate your ongoing interest in and support for the Houston Public Library and the African American Library at the Gregory School. Please contact me should you need additional information.

With Warm Regards,

Rhea Brown Lawson, PhD  
Director, Houston Public Library