

Audio Review

Title: *Lest We Forget: Spoken Histories, An Audio Documentary on State Institutions, Segregation and the Continuing Movement to Community Integration*

Producer: Jeff Moyer

Executive Producer: Judy Leasure

Publisher: Music from the Heart and Partners for Community Living, 2004

2 CD-Disc Set, approximately 2 hours

www.jeffmoyer.com

Reviewer: Steven E. Brown

Jeff Moyer has written some moving, emotional songs, one of which, *For the Crime of Being Different*, I often play in disability culture workshops. This two-volume audio documentary picks up where the song begins—a narrative of what it was like to live in Ohio institutions in the last half of the twentieth century for those with what these days we call cognitive disabilities.

Between the two discs there are 74 selections, from over 30 oral histories, many quite short, the bulk of which are stories offered by parents, siblings, and most importantly, those who lived, or maybe a better word is survived, these institutions.

Descriptions of smells, food, clothing, sexuality, and fighting are all included. The abuse apparently inherent in these institutions is depicted in great detail.

Jeff's brother, Mark, was one of the prisoners, the word often used to describe the subjects of these stories, of these institutions. He is the subject of *For the Crime of Being Different* and his story is interspersed throughout the two CDs, bringing continuity to all the stories included.

As someone who is not a great audio learner, I delayed listening to these documents. I am glad I did not wait any longer. This is one of the most important historical depictions of institutions in this time period I have encountered.

Jeff's songs, writing, and interviewing are clearly recognizable on this project. While he is an artist and the documentary is focused on Ohio, nothing about this narrative is unique. The stories have been heard from every state that had, or has, institutions.

The best reason to listen, and share, this work is so that we remember what happened at these abysmal places and try to ensure they never happen again—and that whatever takes their place is, and stays, better.