



Fall 2009
Volume XLIII Number 2

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

2009 OHA conference theme: "Moving Beyond the Interview" A Preview

By Michael Frisch, OHA President-Elect

On behalf of Program Co-Chairs Alicia Rouverol and Mark Tebeau, I'm pleased to preview the exciting OHA fall meeting planned for the Galt House Hotel in Louisville, Ky., Oct. 14-18. The complete program is available on the OHA website, www.oralhistory.org.



West Main Historic District, Louisville, Ky., a conference tour destination (see page 5).
Photo courtesy of Louis J. Moseson

Our theme is "Moving Beyond the Interview" — "doing something" with the interviews oral historians collect. As it happens, oral historians in Kentucky have been working this theme intensively, from the Appalachian coalfields to the multicultural complexity of Louisville, from bluegrass music to the world of Kentucky bluegrass horse farms and racing. Kentucky is the only state with a formal Oral History Commission, guiding ambitious projects in communities across the state.

In short, in Louisville OHA comes to a city, region and state that perfectly match our theme and that provide a wealth of resources to enrich the meeting experience. Every OHA meeting offers local and regional connection, but this relationship has shaped the Louisville meeting profoundly, as this overview of major features will show.

(continued on page 4)

DEADLINE EXTENDED FOR PROPOSALS

Oral historians interested in presenting at the International Oral History Association's conference in Prague next July have until **Sept. 6** to submit proposals. The conference is **July 7-11, 2010**. Proposals may be submitted in English or Spanish.

Further information is available online at www.ioha2010prague.cz or www.iohanet.org

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SPECIAL REPORT

OHA members to consider guideline revisions

From its earliest days in the late 1960s, the Oral History Association has sought to develop and promote professional standards for oral historians, with an eye toward creating recorded oral history interviews that will stand the test of time.

"Goals and guidelines" were first published in 1968 and have since been revised and expanded in 1979, 1989, 1990 and 1998 to address changing technology, new uses of oral history and emerging ethical concerns.

Now, a decade after the last revisions, OHA members will be asked to vote on the latest guideline revisions, which will be presented at the conference in Louisville Oct. 14-18.

The complete text of the proposed new document "General Principles for Oral History" and "Best Practices for Oral History," prepared by a task force headed by Tracy K'Meyer, appears in this Newsletter on pages 6-7.

From the president

OHA accomplishments to report

In the past few months my attention has been drawn repeatedly to sound studies and to oral history's under-appreciated contributions to this emerging field of study and practice. Sound Studies has experienced an explosion of interest in recent years, as witnessed in the publication of new monographs and journal articles, scientific studies of brain physiology and the biological foundations of music and a surging wave of works by scientists, composers, artists, documentarians, historians, ethnographers and others. The interest, of course, is also shared by oral historians, as witnessed in our increasing attention to the quality of audio recordings and our concern about their preservation and dissemination. It is also reflected in the theme of the Oral History Society's 2009 annual conference, "Hearing Voice in Oral History," which was held this July in Glasgow, Scotland.

In the past few months my attention has been drawn repeatedly to sound studies and to oral history's under-appreciated contributions to this emerging field of study and practice.

Awareness of oral historians' work in sound studies, however, is not well known outside of our own field. Let me share but two examples. In a fascinating article, "Hearing American History," (*Journal of American History*, September 2008), Richard Cullen Rath examines recent historical scholarship on "hearing the past." Focusing on written histories about sound and hearing, he makes, however, no mention of oral history or of American history scholarship in sound. In *Recording Cultures: Audio Culture and the Ethnographic Experience*, published by Sage this year, communication studies professors Daniel Makagon and Mark Neumann explain how sound documentary can expand ethnographic practice and discuss the growing variety of audio documentary forms, including soundscape recordings, sound walks and sonic maps, radio diaries, earwitness accounts, and audio essays. Oral history, however, is all but absent from their study, and the few passing references in which it is mentioned tend to be misleading or inaccurate.

The omission of oral history in both of these publications says more about the narrow disciplinary specialization so common in contemporary scholarship than about the quality and significance of oral history work related to sound studies. It also, I believe, affirms the importance of the Oral History Association's multidisciplinary membership and eclecticism. It would make sense that the media convergence being wrought by the digital revolution be accompanied by disciplinary convergence; and here, the OHA annual meeting is a wonderful forum to share common interests with people from different disciplines.

So what has the OHA been up to in the past few months? Under Margie McLellan's able editorship, the OHA Web site

continues to expand and improve. April witnessed the launch of the first sections of Doug Boyd's tutorial on audio field recording, which includes sections on digital audio recording basics, three video modules on common portable field recorders and one on adjusting recording levels, a glossary of terms and concepts, and links to online resources. Soon to come are sections on microphones and preservation.

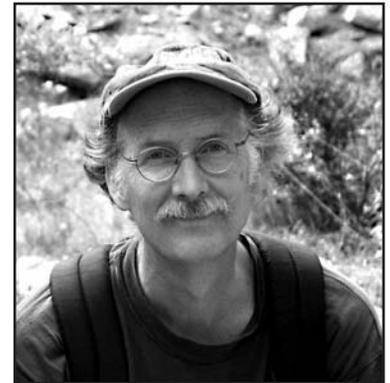
This June the Web site published Linda Shopes' just completed "Oral History, Human Subjects, and Institutional Review Boards," the best introduction to IRB review and oral histories. In the past year a taskforce led by Tracy K'Meyer has been editing and revising the OHA's Evaluation Guidelines into a more concise "General Principles and Best Practices." They are included in this OHA Newsletter and will be posted on the Web site. Members will vote on the revisions at the annual meeting this October in Louisville.

Still to be developed are the OHA Wiki and Network, whose growth and usefulness are dependent upon you. To locate others who share your interests please register on the OHA Network and help us build the Wiki into a rich resource for all interested in the field of oral history.

As Mike Frisch's article in the *Newsletter* shows, he and his program committee have put together a terrific annual meeting, the program for which is posted on the OHA Web site. In related news, the 2010 annual meeting is being relocated from Lowell, Mass., because of a change in hotel ownership, to Atlanta, where Rina Benmayor is already lining up committees and sponsors with the assistance of former OHA president Cliff Kuhn and has begun the work of putting together another wonderful program.

In January the *Oral History Review* completed its first year with Oxford University Press and continues to thrive under editor Kim Porter. Submissions are up, especially international ones, as are the number of book reviews, but Kim continues to look for good articles that make use of the multimedia capabilities of the online version of the journal. *The Review* will soon be available through EBSCOhost, giving the journal greater world-wide exposure. As should be expected in this economy, however, subscriptions to the *Oral History Review* — and thus OHA revenues — have declined. Oxford will soon offer a proposal on how to address this issue. Thank you for renewing your own membership and please encourage others to join the association.

Look forward to seeing you all at the annual meeting, Charlie ❖



Charles Hardy III,
West Chester University

Farm, ranch museum updates catalog

The treasured voices of our ancestors are an important resource when it comes to New Mexico history, and the New Mexico Farm & Ranch Heritage Museum has completed two, year-long projects that will make discovering those voices easier.

The Oral History Program at the museum in Las Cruces announces the publication of the third edition of the *Oral History Collections Catalog* for New Mexico. The 264-page publication lists all of the particulars for nearly 10,000 archived interviews from around the state. Each entry lists the names of persons interviewed, the location where it is stored, description of the interview, the geographical coverage, the date range, the format (cassette, reel-to-reel, video, etc.), availability to the public and research aids.

The publication of the catalog coincides with the debut of the museum's new Oral History Program Web site. The rollout of the new Web site and catalog mark a major step forward for the Oral History Program.

"It is our hope that the *Oral History Collections Catalog* will prompt the additional use of existing interviews or the undertaking of new oral history projects as we approach the centennial of New Mexico statehood in 2012," said Cameron Saffell, the museum's curator of history and oral history program director.

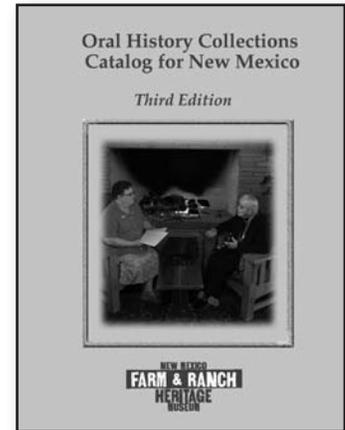
The catalog, first published by the New Mexico Heritage Center, was last updated in 1994 and included only 96 pages.

The new edition expands the descriptions to include specific collections at each institution. Also included in this edition is a name index featuring more than 6,100 names and the inclusion of several collections of New Mexico-related oral histories from repositories outside the state.

The publication of the catalog coincides with the debut of the museum's new Oral History Program Web site. Part of the museum's general site, the upgraded Oral History Program section now includes a searchable database for more than 500 hours of material gathered since the museum opened in 1996

The rollout of the new Web site and catalog mark a major step forward for the Oral History Program. "We have quietly built a very strong program which is integral to our statewide collecting efforts and in the production of our exhibits and public programs," Saffell said. "These additions establish a new research portal for New Mexico history and will become key tools for anyone interested in farming, ranching and rural life in the American Southwest."

Visit the Oral History Program Web site at <http://oralhistory.frhm.org>. To access the new edition of the *Oral History Collections Catalog*, click the link for "Search the Database of Interviews" on the OHP's front page. ❖



Oral history book wins three major awards

Hard Work and a Good Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Minnesota, by longtime Oral History Association member Barbara W. Sommer, has been named winner of three important book awards.

Sommer's book won top honors in April for books about Minnesota, one of eight prize categories in the 21st annual Minnesota Book Awards program, a project of the Friends of the St. Paul Public Library and the City of St. Paul. The eight winners were selected from among 319 books nominated for the awards.

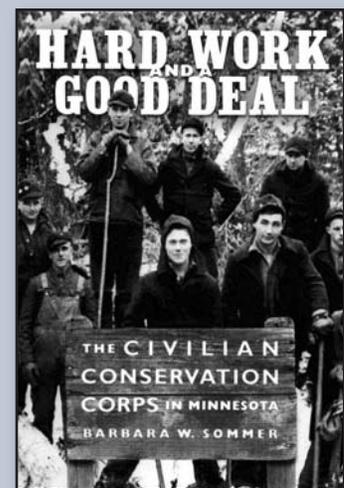
In May, *Hard Work and a Good Deal* also won in the top prize for general nonfiction in the Northeastern Minnesota Book Awards, presented by the University of Minnesota Duluth Library, Lake Superior Writers and Friends of the Duluth Public Library.

And in August, Sommer will receive the American Association for State and Local History's Award of Merit for Leadership in History for her book. The AASLH Leadership in History awards program, in its 64th year, is considered the most prestigious recognition for achievement in the preservation and interpretation of state and local history.

Based on hundreds of oral history interviews with Minnesota participants in the Depression-era Civilian Conservation Corps, the book chronicles the experiences of some of the 77,000 Minnesotans who had jobs thanks to the CCC and who left a lasting legacy of state forests, parks and sustainable soil conservation practices in the state.

Sommer said she was especially pleased that some of the former CCC enrollees were able to attend and be recognized at the gala awards dinner in April at which the Minnesota Book Award was presented.

The book was published in 2008 by the Minnesota Historical Society Press. ❖



2009 OHA CONFERENCE THEME: "MOVING BEYOND THE INTERVIEW"

1 WORKSHOPS

Independent of the conference program, OHA workshops offer opportunities to work intensively with national leaders in the field on skills, resources and techniques for oral history. See the program for details on workshop fees and registration.

For 2009, we've broadened the menu of WEDNESDAY pre-conference OHA workshops by offering two "Community Collaboratives," each offering hands-on engagement with Kentucky projects confronting challenges worth exploring in a half-day workshop. A Wednesday morning collaborative involves a multi-institutional project on **Kentucky Holocaust Survivors**; a Wednesday afternoon collaborative focuses on challenges in sustaining a successful broad-based program, in

this case "**Kentucky Remembers**," a statewide oral history/arts program building youth leadership through the history of diverse human rights struggles in Kentucky.

Beyond these innovations, Wednesday pre-conference workshops range from "**Introduction to Oral History**" to "**Digital Audio Field Recording**," "**Digital Preservation**," "**Oral History and the Law**," and a computer-lab based "**Exploring Digitized Oral History Audio and Video**." There will also be two SATURDAY workshops — an educators' workshop on "**Using Oral History as a Cross-Curricular Unit of Study**" and an untraditional opportunity working with keynote artist/presenter SHANNON FLATTERY in a "**Touchable Stories**" workshop experiencing her unique collaborative community practice.

2 WELCOME RECEPTION AND PLENARY PANEL: A SPECIAL TRIBUTE TO STUDS TERKEL



Our meeting officially begins with a special 6-8 p.m. WEDNESDAY evening welcome reception and a panel appreciating the late Studs Terkel — who taught us all what "doing something" with oral history can accomplish. The panel features public radio journalist **Bob Edwards**, as well as **Sydney Lewis**, **Timuel Black**, **Rick Ayers** and **Studs' son Dan**. Appropriately enough given Terkel's longtime public radio base, the event will be hosted at the radio stations of **Louisville Public Media**, a short walk from the conference hotel.

3 PRESIDENTIAL RECEPTION AND "COMMUNITY COMMONS"

THURSDAY's traditional Presidential Reception has a new feature this year — a "Community Commons" in which a selection of Kentucky projects, organized through the Kentucky Oral History Commission, will display work and will have representatives available to discuss it with OHA visitors. The event will be held at the nearby **Frazier Museum of International History**. The Frazier will have just opened a major World War II exhibit based on oral histories, which museum staff look forward to exploring with OHA visitors.

4 KEYNOTE PRESENTATIONS



The FRIDAY luncheon keynote speaker is NYU's **JOHN KUO WEI TCHEN**, co-founder of the Chinatown History Project, which grew into today's Museum of Chinese in America (MoCA) in New York City. In "**Dialogue-Driven at 30: MoCA and Community Cultural Development**," Tchen will discuss oral history in the museum's just-opened major new building, designed by **Maya Lin**, and in the digital MoCA he is helping the Museum to launch.

SATURDAY evening's Awards Dinner will culminate in a multidimensional, multimedia keynote presentation spotlighting the locally grounded but internationally renowned work of **APPALSHOP**, a nonprofit media, arts and education organization in Whitesburg, Kentucky (www.appalshop.org). "**A Crazy Quilt: Appalshop's 40 Years Creating Art from Oral History**" will combine commentary, live performance and clips from all eras and forms of Appalshop work, including films, plays constructed from oral histories, youth leadership development programs and more. Comments by Italy's **Alessandro Portelli** will place Appalshop's practice and influence in a broader, international perspective.



5 PLENARY SESSIONS



"**How the World Works': Explorations in Labor and Globalization**," FRIDAY afternoon's plenary, explores the intricate threads connecting global dynamics to the local contexts and engagements so central to oral history practice. It features an innovative presentation by Caroline Knowles, who works at the intersection of sociology, ethnography and photography, and by California writer, photographer, oral historian and labor organizer **David Bacon**.

In SATURDAY afternoon's plenary, installation artist and oral historian **Shannon Flattery** presents "**Touchable Stories: Building Community Through Art and Dialogue**," which draws on processes and projects developed in her international practice of community-based collaborations (www.touchablestories.org). The session will be placed in context for discussion, by **Richard Candida Smith** of the University at California, Berkeley, and director of its Regional Oral History Office.

2009 OHA CONFERENCE THEME: “MOVING BEYOND THE INTERVIEW”

TOURS

Meaningful tours are a defining feature of OHA meetings committed to a substantive engagement with the host communities beyond the hotel, and this year’s tours do this with a special flair.

“Oral History and African American Life on the ‘Sunny Side’ of the Ohio River” is a SATURDAY morning excursion across the river to an historic Indiana African-American community, including a rich engagement with the oral and public history work of the Carnegie Center for Art and History and other institutions presenting community history and the region’s Underground Railroad heritage as well.

A SATURDAY afternoon tour visits the **Buffalo Trace Distillery** for a behind-the-scenes tour, and a taste — and more — of the Kentucky Bourbon industry. Included will be events and entertainment in the distillery’s “White Dog Days” festival that weekend.

The major SATURDAY event will be a day-long tour of **Kentucky Horse Country**, with commentary by **Kim Lady Smith**, former

OHA president and director of the Kentucky Oral History Commission, who will draw on an extensive oral history of the equine industry. Features include **Churchill Downs and the Derby Museum**; a ride through **Bluegrass Country**; the **Kentucky Horse Park** including a horse-drawn trolley tour and the **Parade of Breeds**; and **Old Friends Equine, Inc.**

Complementing these fee-based Saturday tours will be a free “mobile off-site session” on THURSDAY: “**Main Street Louisville: A Social and Architectural History**,” — a facilitated downtown Louisville walking tour and subsequent meeting with communities involved in the **Main Street Oral History Project**.



SPECIAL FEATURES

Louisville extends popular features of recent OHA meetings — the **Newcomer’s Breakfast Wednesday morning**, **OHA Award Winner Presentations mid-day Saturday**; **coffee-break Book-Signings**; **Authors’ Tables in the Exhibits area** and **oral history related screenings** at various points in the meeting.

The OHA’s traditional **Dine-Around Dinner Groups** on FRIDAY evening will find plenty to feast in Louisville’s expansive, diverse restaurant scene — sign up for posted options ranging from down-home local to global to trendy.

And after dinner, come back to the hotel for a new, special OHA FRIDAY evening feature — “**{it is in you}: Health Justice Performance in Tanzania**,” an oral-history-grounded performance with international dimension. This “critical ethnography,” performed widely in Africa and the U.S., was generated through collaborative storytelling, oral tradition and artistic/activist engagement in Tanzania, and links dance, development politics and public health. Performed by **MARIE GARLOCK**, it was suggested for OHA by **DELLA POLLOCK**, who will introduce and comment on the program.

THE PROGRAM ITSELF

Finally, there is the heart and center of the OHA meeting — the more than 70 concurrent sessions crafted into a powerful program by a creatively pro-active Program Committee inspired and ably led by co-chairs **ALICIA ROUVEROL** and **MARK TEBEAU**. Their program offers a stunning profile of the diversity of current work and reflection in oral history, from practice to theory to pedagogy to collection management, almost all variants on dimensions of the conference theme “**moving beyond the interview**.”

To navigate this rich, dense landscape, Mark and Alicia have identified **seven “threads” of focus or application** running through the program’s sessions. In the program each individual session is marked with a symbol identifying the thread to which it contributes. The threads thus constitute a map permitting attendees to follow one or more sequences of resonant sessions through the meeting.

Mark and Alicia have prepared an even more innovative SUNDAY morning feature: **seven synthesis sessions**. In each, a program committee member will facilitate integrative discussion of a particular thread and all the sessions comprising it — a way, we

hope, to draw the conference together so that the whole ends up representing much more than the sum of the individual sessions and features comprising our program.



Skyline of Louisville, Kentucky, site of the 2009 OHA conference.

So this is OHA Louisville 2009! Explore the printed or online program in detail, register in advance, and plan on joining us in Louisville for an exciting, energizing meeting in every dimension.

Oral history refers both to a method of recording and preserving oral testimony and to the product of that process. It begins with an audio or video recording of a first-person account made by an interviewer with an interviewee (also referred to as narrator), both of whom have the conscious intention of creating a permanent record to contribute to an understanding of the past. A verbal document, the oral history, results from this process and is preserved and made available in different forms to other users, researchers, and the public. A critical approach to the oral testimony and interpretations are necessary in the use of oral history.

The Oral History Association encourages individuals and institutions involved with the creation and preservation of oral histories to uphold certain principles, professional and technical standards, and obligations. These include commitments to the narrators, to standards of scholarship for history and related disciplines, and to the preservation of the interviews and related materials for current and future users.

Recognizing that a clear and concise guide can be useful to all practitioners of oral history, the Oral History Association has since 1968 published a series of statements aimed at outlining a set of principles and obligations for all those who use this methodology. A history of these earlier statements, and a record of the individuals involved in producing them, is available on the Oral History Association webpage at <http://www.oralhistory.org>. Building on those earlier documents, but representing changes in an evolving field, the OHA now offers *General Principles for Oral History and Best Practices for Oral History* as summaries of the organization's most important principles and best practices for the pre-interview preparation, the conduct of the interview, and the preservation and use of oral histories. These documents are not intended to be an inclusive primer on oral history; for that there are numerous manuals, guidebooks, and theoretical discussions. For the readers' convenience, a bibliography of resources is provided online at the Oral History Association Web site.

General Principles for Oral History

Oral history is distinguished from other forms of interviews by its content and extent. Oral history interviews seek an in-depth account of personal experience and reflections, with sufficient time allowed for the narrators to give their story the fullness they desire. The content of oral history interviews is grounded in reflections on the past as opposed to commentary on purely contemporary events.

Oral historians inform narrators about the nature and purpose of oral history interviewing in general and of their interview specifically. Oral historians insure that narrators voluntarily give their consent to be interviewed and understand that they can withdraw from the interview or refuse to answer a question at any time. Narrators may give this consent by signing a consent form or by recording an oral statement of consent prior to the interview. All interviews are conducted in accord with the stated aims and within the parameters of the consent.

Interviewees hold the copyright to their interviews until and unless they transfer those rights to an individual or institution. This is done by the interviewee signing a release form or in exceptional circumstances recording an oral statement to the same effect. Interviewers must insure that narrators understand the extent of their rights to the interview and the request that those rights be yielded to a repository or other party, as well as their right to put restrictions on the use of the material. All use and dissemination of the interview content must follow any restrictions the narrator places upon it.

Oral historians respect the narrators as well as the integrity of the research. Interviewers are obliged to ask historically significant questions, reflecting careful preparation for the interview and understanding of the issues to be addressed. Interviewers must also respect the narrators' equal

authority in the interviews and honor their right to respond to questions in their own style and language. In the use of interviews, oral historians strive for intellectual honesty and the best application of the skills of their discipline, while avoiding stereotypes, misrepresentations, or manipulations of the narrators' words.

Because of the importance of context and identity in shaping the content of an oral history narrative, it is the practice in oral history for narrators to be identified by name. There may be some exceptional circumstances when anonymity is appropriate, and this should be negotiated in advance with the narrator as part of the informed consent process.

Oral history interviews are historical documents that are preserved and made accessible to future researchers and members of the public. This preservation and access may take a variety of forms, reflecting changes in technology. But, in choosing a repository or form, oral historians consider how best to preserve the original recording and any transcripts made of it and to protect the accessibility and usability of the interview. The plan for preservation and access, including any possible dissemination through the Web or other media, is stated in the informed consent process and on release forms.

In keeping with the goal of long-term preservation and access, oral historians should use the best recording equipment available within the limits of their financial resources.

Interviewers must take care to avoid making promises that cannot be met, such as guarantees of control over interpretation and presentation of the interviews beyond the scope of restrictions stated in informed consent/release forms, suggestions of material benefit outside the control of the interviewer, or assurances of an open-ended relationship between the narrator and oral historian.

Best Practices for Oral History

Pre-Interview

1. Whether conducting their own research or developing an institutional project, first-time interviewers and others involved in oral history projects should seek training to prepare themselves for all stages of the oral history process.

2. In the early stages of preparation, interviewers should make contact with an appropriate repository that has the capacity to preserve the oral histories and make them accessible to the public.

3. Oral historians or others responsible for planning the oral history project should choose poten-

tial narrators based on the relevance of their experiences to the subject at hand.

4. To prepare to ask informed questions, interviewers should conduct background research on the person, topic, and larger context in both primary and secondary sources

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Pre-Interview *continued*

5. When ready to contact a possible narrator, oral historians should send via regular mail or e-mail an introductory letter outlining the general focus and purpose of the interview and then follow up with either a phone call or a return e-mail. In projects involving groups in which literacy is not the norm, or when other conditions make it appropriate, participation may be solicited via face-to-face meetings.

6. After securing the narrator's agreement to be interviewed, the interviewer should schedule a non-recorded meeting. This pre-interview session will allow an exchange of information between interviewer and narrator on possible questions/topics,

reasons for conducting the interview, the process that will be involved, and the need for informed consent and legal release forms. During pre-interview discussion the interviewer should make sure that the narrator understands:

- oral history's purposes and procedures in general and of the proposed interview's aims and anticipated uses.
- his or her rights to the interviews including editing, access restrictions, copyrights, prior use, royalties, and the expected disposition and dissemination of all forms of the record, including the potential distribution electronically or online.

- that his or her recording(s) will remain confidential until he or she has given permission via a signed legal release.

7. Oral historians should use the best digital recording equipment within their means to reproduce the narrator's voice accurately and, if appropriate, other sounds as well as visual images. Before the interview, interviewers should become familiar with the equipment and be knowledgeable about its function.

8. Interviewers should prepare an outline of interview topics and questions to use as a guide to the recorded dialogue.

Interview

1. Unless part of the oral history process includes gathering soundscapes, historically significant sound events, or ambient noise, the interview should be conducted in a quiet room with minimal background noises and possible distractions.

2. The interviewer should record a "lead" at the beginning of each session to help focus his or her and the narrator's thoughts to each session's goals. The "lead" should consist of, at least, the names of narrator and interviewer, day and year of session, interview's location, and proposed subject of the recording.

3. Both parties should agree to the approximate length of the interview in advance. The interviewer is responsible for assessing whether the narrator is becoming tired and at that point should ask if the latter wishes to continue. Although most interviews last about two hours, if the narrator

wishes to continue, those wishes should be honored, if possible.

4. Along with asking creative and probing questions and listening to the answers to ask better follow-up questions, the interviewer should keep the following items in mind:

- interviews should be conducted in accord with any prior agreements made with the narrator, which should be documented for the record.
- interviewers should work to achieve a balance between the objectives of the project and the perspectives of the interviewees. Interviewers should fully explore all appropriate areas of inquiry with interviewees and not be satisfied with superficial responses. At the same time, they should encourage narrators to respond to questions in their own style and language and to address issues that reflect their concerns.

- interviewers must respect the rights of interviewees to refuse to discuss certain subjects, to restrict access to the interview, or, under certain circumstances, to choose anonymity. Interviewers should clearly explain these options to all interviewees.

- interviewers should attempt to extend the inquiry beyond the specific focus of the project to create as complete a record as possible for the benefit of others.

- in recognition of the importance of oral history to an understanding of the past and of the cost and effort involved, interviewers and interviewees should mutually strive to record candid information of lasting value.

5. The interviewer should secure a release form, by which the narrator transfers his or her rights to the interview to the repository or designated body, signed after each recording session or at the end of the last interview with the narrator.

Post Interview

1. Interviewers, sponsoring institutions, and institutions charged with the preservation of oral history interviews should understand that appropriate care and storage of original recordings begins immediately after their creation.

2. Interviewers should document their preparation and methods, including the circumstances of the interviews, and provide that information to whatever repository will be preserving and providing access to the interview.

3. Information deemed relevant for the interpretation of the oral history by future users, such as photographs, documents, or other records, should be collected, and archivists should make clear to users the availability and connection of these materials to the recorded interview.

4. The recordings of the interviews should be stored, processed, refreshed and accessed according to established archival standards designated for the media format used. Whenever possible, all

efforts should be made to preserve electronic files in formats that are cross platform and nonproprietary. Finally, the obsolescence of all media formats should be assumed and planned for.

5. In order to augment the accessibility of the interview, repositories should make transcriptions, indexes, time tags, detailed descriptions or other written guides to the contents.

6. Institutions charged with the preservation and access of oral history interviews should honor the stipulations of prior agreements made with the interviewers or sponsoring institutions, including restrictions on access and methods of distribution.

7. The repository should comply to the extent to which it is aware with the letter and spirit of the interviewee's agreement with the interviewer and sponsoring institution. If written documentation such as consent and release forms does not exist, then the institution should make a good faith effort to contact interviewees regarding their intent. When media become available that did not

exist at the time of the interview, those working with oral history should carefully assess the applicability of the release to the new formats and proceed — or not — accordingly.

8. All those who use oral history interviews should strive for intellectual honesty and the best application of the skills of their discipline. They should avoid stereotypes, misrepresentations, and manipulations of the narrator's words. This includes foremost striving to retain the integrity of the narrator's perspective, recognizing the subjectivity of the interview, and interpreting and contextualizing the narrative according to the professional standards of the applicable scholarly disciplines. Finally, if a project deals with community history, the interviewer should be sensitive to the community, taking care not to reinforce thoughtless stereotypes. Interviewers should strive to make the interviews accessible to the community and where appropriate to include representatives of the community in public programs or presentations of the oral history material. ❖



BRIEN WILLIAMS

OHMAR recognizes Brien Williams

Brien Williams received the Oral History Mid-Atlantic Region (OHMAR) 2009 Forrest Pogue Award for outstanding achievement in the field of oral history at OHMAR's annual meeting held at the Library of Congress on May 1, 2009. Former OHMAR president Roger Horowitz observed that Williams "is kind of the mild-mannered reporter who has done a lot more than most people know. I chaired a session at the last OHA meeting where he spoke and was astounded by his resume."

Indeed, Williams is a past president of OHMAR, was on the program and local arrangements committees for the 2003 OHA meeting, and is one of the few veteran OHMAR members who continues to be involved and contributing via workshop presentations and attending both OHMAR and OHA meetings.

In his short biographical write-up, Williams defines himself as an oral historian and video producer. He currently is directing the Robert J. Dole Oral History Project for the Dole Institute of Politics at the University of Kansas and interviews members of Congress and others associated with former Kansas senator.

Williams serves as a special oral historian for the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress interviewing members of Congress and others about their military service. He was a video producer for the Smithsonian Videohistory Project covering

contemporary science and technology and works with the Smithsonian's Lemelson Center on the documentation of inventors. For a number of years, Williams served as historian of the American Red Cross responsible for the study and dissemination of Red Cross history and for a national Red Cross Oral History Program.

He received his Ph.D. in radio-television-film from Northwestern University and taught media production and theory at Indiana and George Washington universities before becoming a Washington-based, independent video producer and oral historian.

Williams will be interviewed and an abbreviated version of the interview will be featured in the next OHMAR newsletter. The entire interview will join those of past Pogue Award recipients on the <http://www.o%20hmar.org> Web site.

Oregon Historical Quarterly seeks manuscripts

The Oregon Historical Quarterly seeks proposals for manuscripts that will consider how Oregonians have experienced and responded to large-scale economic hardship, including but not limited to the panics and ensuing recessions/depressions of 1873 and 1893, the Great Depression and the recessions of the late 1950s and early 1980s.

The Quarterly encourages proposals that address this history from social, economic or political perspectives and that consider the topic across broad times and geographic regions or as associated with a specific place, incident or person. Proposals for manuscripts based in oral histories are also encouraged.

Some questions that may be addressed include but are by no means limited to: How have federal, state and local governments influenced Oregonians' experience of recession and depression? What has been the effect of recession and depression on cultural institutions? How have recession and depression been tied to and affected by the state's historic dependence on a natural-resource economy? What have been the long-term effects of depression and recession? What alternative economic models have local communities created in response to depression and recession? How have people managed to survive during times of severe economic depression? How do Oregonians remember times of recession and depression?

Proposals are due by Sept. 1 and should include a narrative of not more than 300 words, a short bibliography for the proposed manuscript, and the author's resume or CV.

Send proposals to: Editor, Oregon Historical Quarterly, 1200 SW Park Ave., Portland, OR 97206. Questions? Send an e-mail to eliza.canty-jones@ohs.org.

The Oregon Historical Quarterly, a peer-reviewed, public history journal, has been published continuously since 1900 by the Oregon Historical Society, an independent, nonprofit organization. OHQ brings well-researched, well-written history about Oregon and the Pacific Northwest to both scholars and a general audience. With a circulation of around 5,000, OHQ is one of the largest state historical society journals in the United States and is a recognized and respected source for the history of the Pacific Northwest region.

Nicaragua project receives 2009 emerging crises grant

The 2009 Emerging Crises Oral History Research Fund Committee is pleased to announce the latest recipient of the award, Christopher D. Hartmann, an M.A. student in geography, environment and society at Ohio State University.

Hartmann received the annual award of \$3,000 from an impressive pool of more than 40 scholars and projects. The funding will allow Hartmann to carry out his case study of a threatened community living in a municipal waste site in Managua, Nicaragua.

Current efforts in Managua to radically overhaul a local municipal dump will relocate the 1,267 persons who have lived there since the 1970s. The local government has planned for the site to be cleared and sealed in the late summer or fall of 2009,

with a new recycling facility built on site. Along with documenting this endangered and underrepresented community, his project explores the growing relevance of the complexities and tensions often found in environmental and social justice movements.

Hartmann will spend six weeks in Managua collecting oral histories and will provide transcripts and written analyses of

these records to a local non-governmental organization, *Esperanza en Acción* (Hope through Action), and other organizations and development agencies. Through his work, Hartmann said he hopes that the testimonies of this community's experience will encourage these agencies to plan more "effective and just" projects in the future. ❖

OHMAR performing arts conference goes online

By Amy Starecheski and Jeff Friedman

In March 2008, Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region (OHMAR) held its annual spring conference in New York City, partnering with Columbia University's Oral History Research Office and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. Inspired by New York City's status as a global center for the performing arts, the OHMAR board chose oral history and performance as the conference theme.

The program committee (Renee Braden, Jeff Friedman, Susan Kraft, Harriet Lynn and Amy Starecheski) organized the conference around three strands: oral history of performance, oral history as performance and performing oral histories. We encouraged a wide variety of presentation formats by allowing presenters to propose a mix of papers, performances and performative papers in a range of time slots, providing flexible spaces with multimedia capacity wherever possible, and organizing a staged evening event — "The Oral History Revue" — showcasing three oral history-based performances.

We received proposals from academics, artists and activists all over the world, significantly more than we could accept. The excitement generated by the topic and the quality of the work submitted inspired us to think about creating some kind of proceedings to document the three-day conference for future reference and research uses.

The presenters in the final program took full advantage of the opportunity we provided to perform and use media, and we couldn't imagine trying to share the conference experience with a wider audience through text alone. We agreed that a multimedia format was needed to adequately represent the diverse conference presentations. Next, we needed to find an inexpensive, relatively simple multimedia format. A Web site emerged as the obvious choice, and the Oral History Research Office generously agreed to host it.

The Columbia University Libraries had recently created a multimedia proceedings Web site for a conference on human rights archiving and documentation, and we were able to use that site's basic template for our own. Our process, however, was different: creating a proceedings had been a part of the plan for the human rights conference from the beginning, budgeted and planned for. That conference only had one track of programs and everything was videotaped.

OHMAR, on the other hand, had several parallel sessions during most time slots and had not budgeted for professional videotaping. It would be impossible to document the entire conference. We decided to use a dual approach to documen-

tation: taking responsibility for videotaping, to the best of our ability, the staged performances, and putting out an open call to all other presenters to document their sessions however they could and submit them to us for inclusion in the online proceedings.

In the weeks and months after the conference, we got photos, videos, PowerPoints, audio, Web sites and even a few papers. While it would have been ideal to have planned for proceedings from the beginning of the conference planning process, having even a few weeks notice did allow presenters to think about how and if they might want to share their work with an audience beyond the 150 people who attended the conference.

Jeff Friedman and Amy Starecheski co-edited the proceedings, which involved working with Columbia staff to make sure that the work we had collected was coherent, properly formatted and legally available. (All submitters were asked to sign legal releases allowing us to post their work). After the proceedings were unveiled, in May 2009, we received a few more submissions, which we will be able to add to the site.

This relatively small-scale project allowed us to experiment with creating a multimedia conference proceedings site, and the response thus far has been positive. We did this project without any funding, drawing on the resources of Columbia and the volunteer efforts of the conference program committee and presenters. Ongoing challenges will include maintaining and promoting the site to future users.

Since the site has been available to the public, recent users have included:

- Columbia Oral History Research Office Summer Institute fellows who participated in a teaching unit on dance and oral history,
- Rutgers University students in Friedman's "Oral History and Performance" honors courses and
- Columbia Teachers College graduate students in Starecheski's "Oral History as a Multidisciplinary Teaching Tool" course.

Friedman also plans to use the site for students next year in his course at the University of Music and Performing Arts in Frankfurt.

We encourage our colleagues to monitor the site for future teaching and research opportunities in this exciting new oral history sub-genre.

The site: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/conferences/2008/ohmar/index>. ❖

Chicago oral historians commemorate John Hope Franklin

By Alan Harris Stein

The Chicago Oral History Roundtable saluted the late historian John Hope Franklin at its June 4 meeting at the Chicago State University Library. About 25 people attending the event in memory of Franklin, who died March 22 in Durham, N.C. Franklin was chairman of the history department at the University of Chicago from 1964 to 1982.

The event featured longtime Oral History Association members Timuel Black and Alphine Jefferson, who both knew Franklin.

Franklin, best known for his landmark book *From Slavery to Freedom*, wrote the introduction to Black's *Bridges of Memory*. He applauded Black's book as "the saga of many Chicagoans whose narratives tell us that the story of 'Black Metropolis' would not be complete without their voices."

Black recalled the voices of struggle of his own parents: "I think of the oral history of my late parents and grandparents. For me it gives a vivid picture as they spoke, not only of the conditions of that time, but I could feel the vibrant, emotional parts when they talked about their ancestors—their fathers and mothers, born into slavery, they were sharecroppers—and the things they had to do in the South at that time to survive."

Jefferson noted how significant it was that Franklin lived long enough to see Barack Obama elected president of the United States.

"When he was a child growing up, his mother told him to tell people when they asked what his career goals were that he wanted to be the first Negro to be president of the United States," Jefferson said. That was an "unfathomable thought," according to Jefferson, who added that Franklin had a moment with Obama before he died.

Jefferson recalled that Franklin was one of his teachers in Chicago in 1969, and in his "gentlemanly way," Franklin offered this advice: "There's always room at the top." What impressed Jefferson during the time he was Franklin's student is what the history teacher said in the days before black studies.

"He did not believe in teaching 'Negro' history," Jefferson said. "He said that there is no such thing as a separate and distinct black history. I think time taught him differently, but in 1969 that is what he believed. He said if American history is taught correctly you do not need a separate black narrative. Tragically American history is not taught honestly and we do need that history, that narrative."

Jefferson noted that Franklin was born and raised in Oklahoma and lived in a segregated community, experiencing a life of insults, indignations and restrictions. In 1995, President Bill Clinton awarded Franklin the Presidential Medal of Freedom. ❖

Bill would promote preservation of historical records

States would be entitled to federal aid for historical records preservation under the Preserving the American Historical Record Act introduced May 5 by Reps. Maurice Hinchey, D-N.Y., and John McHugh, R-N.Y.

The bill would authorize \$50 million a year for five years for states and local agencies to preserve and provide access to historical records.

Among its provisions, the bill would support:

- creation of access tools, including archival finding aids, indexes and images of key records online;
- efforts to protect historical records from harm, prolong their lives and preserve them for public use, including digitization projects, electronic records initiatives and disaster preparedness and recovery;
- initiatives to use historical records in new and creative ways, emphasizing the impor-

tance of state, local and community history;

- education and training for archivists and others who care for historical records.

The bill has the support of the Council of State Archivists, the Society of American Archivists, the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administration and the National Coalition for History, of which the Oral History Association is a member.

The bill notes: "History connects people to community — whether the community is a family, a neighborhood, a city, a State or a Nation. Connections to the past are essential to sustaining democracy, educating students, creating a sense of place in family and community, supporting information needs in business and legal affairs, and making reasoned decisions about the Nation's future direction." ❖

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Call for Papers

Times of Crisis, Times of Change: Human Stories on the Edge of Transformation

2010 OHA Annual Meeting, Oct. 27–31, 2010 • Atlanta, Georgia

Times of great crisis may offer the prospect and promise of great change. The economic, political and environmental tensions of the present are powerfully reshaping our world. People find themselves trapped within global forces that often appear to act upon people in ways beyond their control. At the same time, moments of great crisis engender powerful new visions of change and transformation. Whether as involuntary subjects or active agents, people live and embody these changes. Their memories are critical windows on human struggles, resilience, myth-making and the political power of stories, forcing a reckoning with the past as well as a reconsideration of the future.

The theme of the 2010 annual meeting of the Oral History Association is inspired by the times in which we are living and the setting for our conference. Atlanta is an historic city defined by a vibrant and sometimes contested history of activism for civil and human rights. It is also a city transformed by waves of rural to urban migration, immigration, urbanization and changes in the global economy, all of which have produced crisis, real or imagined, in Atlanta's complex network of local communi-

ties. Taking a cue from this dynamic setting, we ask: How have people struggled and survived in times of crisis? How do people create change and bear witness to it? How do they construct their stories of these moments? In what ways have stories of crisis and change shaped public memories of pivotal historical eras? How do we reconcile contradictory stories of crisis and change?

The Program Committee welcomes broad and diverse interpretations of the conference theme as reflected in proposals for panels, individual papers, performances, exhibits, roundtables and other approaches to interactive sessions. Presenters are reminded to incorporate voice and image in their presentations. OHA is open to proposals from the variety of fields traditionally represented in our meetings, including history, folklore, literature, sociology, anthropology, American and ethnic studies, cultural studies, political science, information science and technology, communications and urban studies. We also hope to have a significant international presence at the meeting. And, as always, OHA welcomes proposals from independent scholars, community activists and organizers, archivists, librarians, museum cura-

tors, Web designers, documentary producers, media artists, ethnographers, public historians and all practitioners whose work is relevant to this meeting's interest in narratives of crisis and change.

Proposal format: For full sessions, submit a title, a session abstract of not more than two pages, and a one-page vita or resume for each participant. For individual proposals, submit a one-page abstract and a one-page vita or resume of the presenter. Each submission must be accompanied by a cover sheet, which can be downloaded.

The **deadline** for submission of all proposals is **Jan. 15, 2010**. All proposals should be submitted via e-mail to oha@dickinson.edu, or if available, through the online submission page on the OHA Web site, at www.oralhistory.org. The cover sheet and all proposal documents must be combined into one attachment in Microsoft WORD format. Please do not send the documents as separate attachments. If you do not receive e-mail confirmation by Jan. 29, 2010, please contact the OHA office to make sure your submission has been received.

Proposal queries may be directed to:

David A. Reichard

California State University Monterey
Bay, 2010 Program Co-Chair
david_reichard@csumb.edu

Tomás F. Summers Sandoval

Pomona College
2010 Program Co-Chair
tfss@pomona.edu

Rina Benmayor

California State University Monterey
Bay, 2010-11 OHA President
rina_benmayor@csumb.edu

For submission queries or more information, contact:

Madelyn Campbell, Executive Secretary

Oral History Association, Dickinson College

P. O. Box 1773 • Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013

Telephone: 717-245-1036 • Fax: 717-245-1046 • Email: oha@dickinson.edu

For courier service add: Holland Union Building, College and Louthier Streets

The Oral History Association Newsletter (ISSN: 0474-3253) is published three times yearly by the Oral History Association for its members. Copy deadlines are: March 1, July 1 and Nov. 1.

Submit stories to Editor Mary Kay Quinlan, 7524 S. 35th St., Lincoln, NE 68516, or via e-mail at ohaeditor@aol.com

Submit photographs to Photo and Production Editor Alexandra Tzoumas at alexandratz@gmail.net

For membership, change of address, subscription and delivery inquiries, call: Oxford University Press
800-852-7323

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Oral History Association, Inc.

Oral History Association
NEWSLETTER
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

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News & Notes ...

The Galt House Hotel, conference headquarters, will offer a special rate of \$129 per night for OHA members. The rate is available only until Sept. 13. For hotel reservations, call 800-843-4258.

Questions? Please contact **Madelyn Campbell**, executive secretary, 717-245-1036 or oha@dickinson.edu.

Oral historians, particularly those in the Great Lakes region, should mark their calendars for the 2009 annual Oral History for Michigianians Conference, sponsored by the Michigan Oral History Association in

partnership with Northern Michigan University in Marquette, Mich., Sept. 25-26.

The conference will feature an oral history workshop, roundtable and panel presentations, featured speakers, a walking tour of local sites and the Michigan Iron Industry Museum and an opportunity for teachers and librarians to earn continuing education credits.

Oral historian and author **Barbara W. Sommer** is the keynote speaker.

For information and registration materials, contact **Geneva Wiskemann** at 517-321-1746, or email her at gwiskemann@arq.net.

Baylor University's Institute for Oral History has established an annual \$2,500 grant program to

support Texas community history projects. The institute said it will partner with local, nonprofit grant recipients to provide training, equipment, consultation and processing of interviews and make them available online and at Baylor University and a local public archive.

More information about the grant program and other institute resources is available at www.baylor.edu/oral_history.

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION MEMBERS planning to attend the fall conference in Louisville, Ky., can easily REGISTER ONLINE.

Go to www.oralhistory.org and follow the links for easy directions.