



## OHA announces new universal AV support policy for 2010 conference

By Rina Benmayor, Vice President/President-elect

OHA has traditionally provided audio-visual support equipment for conference sessions specifically requesting and requiring equipment. This has been a cumbersome and expensive process to arrange, and it has not always been possible for all needs to be met.

In recent years, demand for AV support has increased dramatically, and it can be anticipated that in coming years, virtually almost every session might wish support. Fortunately, this demand has been accompanied by the increasing capacity of laptops linked to data projectors to meet needs that previously required a bewildering array of overheads, slide projectors, VHS/DVD players, TV monitors, etc.

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## A sneak peek at the 2010 OHA annual meeting in Atlanta

By Rina Benmayor, President-elect, David Reichard and Tomás Summers Sandoval, Program Co-Chairs

Mark your calendars for Oct. 27-31 for the 2010 Oral History Association meeting at the Sheraton Downtown in Atlanta for events you won't want to miss.

Focusing on the themes of civil rights, human rights, immigration and LGBT history, "Times of Crisis, Times of Change: Human Stories on the Edge of Transformation" will commemorate the 50th anniversary of the Atlanta Student Movement, the founding of the Student Non-Violent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and the fifth anniversary of Hurricane Katrina.

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**OHA ANNUAL CONFERENCE  
SAVE THE DATE : OCTOBER 27-31, 2010**

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

SHERATON HOTEL DOWNTOWN • ATLANTA, GA • [WWW.ORALHISTORY.ORG](http://WWW.ORALHISTORY.ORG)

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## OHA embraces new initiatives

I recently returned from Atlanta, where the OHA Council held a productive mid-winter meeting. We met at what will be the headquarters hotel for the OHA annual meeting in Atlanta, Oct. 27-31. We got a sneak peek at the exciting plans being developed by First Vice President Rina Benmayor and her program and local arrangements committees. These range from a rich approach to program speakers, plenaries and thematic sessions, to a wonderful weave of striking off-site venues and activities, bringing the meeting into Atlanta and vice versa in very engaged, significant ways.

I'll leave the detailed announcements to Rina, but I can say it's going to be a terrific meeting in a wonderfully diverse host city—check out the unfolding features in the **Newsletter** and on our Web site, and make your plans: OHA for Halloween in Atlanta will be all treats, no tricks.

I'll turn now to an informal report on some OHA matters-in-motion, from organizational initiatives to some broader connections.

Starting with the latter: The "Oral History in the Digital Age" project mentioned in my previous column is now under way, gathering steam and approaching warp speed, to use appropriately shifting metaphors. Organized by Michigan State University's MATRIX project and funded by a National Leadership Grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Sciences, this fits oral history to a "T"—aiming to provide leadership on the technologies, targets, tastes, typologies, taxonomies, tenacities, trends, temptations, tradeoffs and tests for the terrain of oral history practice in the 21st century.

While not an official OHA project, the core project team draws leadership from OHA, the Library of Congress/ American Folklife Center and the American Folklore Society, among others from technology to libraries and archives. The project manager is Doug Boyd of the Louis Nunn Center at University of Kentucky and a current OHA Council member, and the leadership group includes me and former OHA presidents Linda Shopes and Charlie Hardy.

We've organized into a number of working groups. Three are focused on the issues as presented in each of the basic stages of oral history process: 1) collecting it; 2) curating/managing /preserving it and 3) disseminating or doing something with it. Three other groups focus cross-cutting dimensions that serve all of these stages, concentrating on: 1) broad technological changes and directions; 2) the increasing centrality of video in our work and 3) the new shape of intellectual property, rights, permissions and related concerns in the digital age.

The group as a whole will explore how the convergence of each of these vantages is defining an overall 21st century shape and direction for a changing oral history. We hope to crystallize best practices and usable frameworks for decisions about options, choices and directions in the practice of oral history across a spectrum of forms and levels. An initial synthesis will be consolidated at a national conference at the Library of Congress later this year and then widely published and circulated for further refinement. By the end of the two-year project, the evolving shape of our field, and how to move around in it, ought to be a lot clearer to everyone.

Inquiries like this have internal resonance within OHA, as witness the ongoing discussion about our own revised Principles and Best Practices document. Many of these present a challenging dilemma: Always a field located at the convergence of diverse interests and practices, oral history is even more so in the digital age, given the widening capacities of informal recording, digital sharing and dissemination of audio and video, digital storytelling

and personal digital scrapbooking and the like. There is something wonderful about this open big-tent interest in testimonies, narratives, stories and memories. But that very openness begs difficult debate about what oral history is, and isn't.

Most of us might agree that the extreme poles of this debate are unlikely candidates for a satisfactory resolution. At one end is a "whatever" posture, comfortable with calling oral history just about anything involving people talking or being interviewed. At the other end is a "gatekeeping" posture, tending towards rules and regulations for what can and can't be called oral history, and, in consequence, who should be included or excluded from that circle. My own sense is that it's the charged in-between ground where these meet that is the most important, most interesting and most consequential for the field, and that's just where discussion is coming to focus.

As directed by Council at the recent meeting, we will soon be opening visible places and spaces on the OHA Web site for moving this discussion ahead concretely, both in general terms and in terms of specific proposals and processes for ongoing edits and revisions of our Principles document, which as I noted in my last column might best take the form of fluid 2.01, 2.02 "updates" on the software model, culminating when appropriate in a carefully considered, comprehensive "3.0" new release.

There are many other dimensions in which OHA is moving our business, services and practices into the digital age.

- We've announced a comprehensive new policy offering audio-visual laptop projection capacity as a service in EVERY conference session room, rather than seeing this as an exotic "special" request requiring special arrangements.
- In the Atlanta Council meeting, we decided to shift the publication of our popular OHA pamphlet series to a large and economical print-on-demand vendor with international distribution. This will enable both OHA members and the general public to order these publications directly through **Amazon.com** and other online book sellers, at once saving us money and broadening our outreach significantly.
- We also decided to construct a comprehensive database of OHA service, so it will be possible to know instantly who has (or hasn't) served in what office, run for what position, presented at what conferences, participated in what committees. This will make it MUCH easier to widen the circle of inclusion and diversity, given all the opportunities for drawing people into the exciting work of our community.
- We also decided to post on our Web site the current and recent as well as back issues of this **Newsletter**—so widely regarded as the best available way to learn about specific projects and get a better sense of "what's happening." Down the road, I hope we may develop even more a capacity to offer fluid Web publication of additional stories and links, supplementing the regular publication of the core print **Newsletter** publication that has had and will continue to have such significant value for our members.

More on all of these developments, and others, in my next **Newsletter** column—and, even before then in postings and new features you'll find at [www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org). Stay tuned, or should I say online? ❖



*OHA president, Michael Frisch*

# Cultivating a movement: An oral history of organic farming and sustainable agriculture on California's Central Coast

"I tell the world that the organic movement started in California, in Santa Cruz County," said U.S. Rep. Sam Farr. Farr's oral history is one of 60 interviews conducted by the University of California Santa Cruz Library's Regional History Project with farmers, food retailers and distributors, educators, activists, researchers and policy makers, who, over the past four decades have shaped the organic farming and sustainable agriculture movement on the Central Coast of California and far beyond.



*Cynthia Sandberg of Love Apple Farm was among the women interviewed for the organic farming oral history project.*

the emergence of community-supported agriculture, farmers' markets, natural food retailers and internal tensions within the movement over issues such as certification and scale.

A plethora of sustainable agriculture organizations have roots in this region. For instance, the California Certified Organic Farmers (CCOF), whose standards for organic certification were later used as a template for the federal National Organic Program, began in Santa Cruz in 1973. The Ecological Farming Association has organized the Ecological Farming Conference (Eco-Farm) for more than three decades on the spectacular grounds of Asilomar, on the Monterey Peninsula. Eco-Farm is the largest sustainable agriculture conference in the Western United States, bringing "food system stakeholders together for education, networking and celebration."

Life Lab Science Program also started here in 1978 and became a national leader in sustainable, garden-centered science curricula. The Homeless Garden Project is a national model apprenticeship program recognized in the fight against hunger and poverty. Dedicated to increasing biodiversity by expanding the idea and practice of wild farms, the Wild Farm Alliance's recent research centers on how food safety practices for leafy greens actually increase the risk of pathogens by destroying vegetation and wildlife habitat.

Forty years ago, horticulturalist Alan Chadwick introduced his unique blend of biodynamic and French intensive garden-

ing methods (including the now famous double-dig method) at UC Santa Cruz's Student Garden Project. Today that garden has evolved into the Center for Agroecology and Sustainable Food Systems (CASFS), internationally recognized for its research, education and public service programs dedicated to achieving ecological sustainability and social justice in the food and agriculture system. To date, more than a thousand apprentice farmers have learned soil management, composting, pest control, crop planning, irrigation, farm equipment, marketing techniques and community supported agriculture (CSA) practices, and spread this philosophy and method of gardening and farming across the United States and beyond.

UCSC's collection of interviews is the first large-scale documentation of the history of this movement through oral history. Project director Irene Reti said she hopes that it will inspire more endeavors of this kind. The oral histories explore themes such as confluence of the food safety, farm workers' rights, environmental, back-to-the-land and anti-war movements in the genesis of organic/sustainable agriculture, transnational relationships in the development of agroecology, the challenges of small family farming,

the emergence of community-supported agriculture, farmers' markets, natural food retailers and internal tensions within the movement over issues such as certification and scale.

Many areas of the Central Coast are primarily Latino. Located just south of Salinas, Calif., the Agriculture & Land-Based Training Association (ALBA) "provides educational and business opportunities for farm workers and aspiring farmers to grow and sell crops." ALBA runs two organic training farms that work with primarily Latino farmers. The affiliated ALBA Organics trains ALBA farmers in produce sales and distribution by marketing and delivering ALBA's produce to hospitals and universities throughout the San Francisco Bay Area.

According to the U.S. Department of Agriculture's 2007 Census of Agriculture, more than 30 percent of farms in the United States are operated at least partially by women, and 14 percent are principally operated by a woman. The large representation of women in this oral history series is testimony to the growing participation of women in farming as well as many other aspects of sustainable food systems.

The 2007 U.S. agriculture census also found that more than one-quarter of all farmers in the country are age 65 or older. But across the United States, a new movement is afoot,

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*JP Perez of JP Organics displays a box of fresh veggies. Perez was one of the dozens of organic farmers interviewed by the University of California Santa Cruz project.*

# Post-Katrina memoir spawns defamation lawsuit

By John A. Neuenschwander

Four weeks before Hurricane Katrina struck, Julia Reed moved into a house in the historic Garden District in New Orleans. This move was supposed to signal an end to her hectic career as traveling reporter. In the months and years after the catastrophic storm, she, like the other residents who stayed, slowly began to rebuild their lives and their city.

This experience prompted Reed to write a memoir, *The House on First Street: My New Orleans Story*, which Harper-Collins published in 2008. Because she had grown up in Mississippi and was well acquainted with The Big Easy, her memoir is both a tribute to the city's history and culture and a detailed description of its rebirth. Her book was well received.

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*A commercially successful book by a large publisher may make a far more inviting target than an oral history program. But a surprisingly large number of defamation lawsuits are filed each year.*

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One New Orleanian, however, was not pleased. Anton Heine, who owned a pawn shop and jewelry store, filed suit against Reed and Harper-Collins Publishers for defamation. The basis of his claim was an account by Reed in the epilogue of her book about her quest to recover some stolen family jewelry. As noted by the Louisiana Fourth Circuit Court of Appeals, Reed used "colorful language and brazen prose" to present her "unabashed impressions regarding Heine and his business operations." *Heine v. Reed*, 2009 WL 4842778 (La. App. 4 Cir.)

The trail that led to Anton's Fine Jewelry began six months after her home was burglarized when a friend asked her about a pair of earrings that were being offered on eBay. As Reed tells it:

"The dealer's name was Anton Feine [sic], from Anton's Fine Jewelry, an establishment that had not come up in Vasser's and my pawnshop search, but when I pulled up outside the building it was clear what kind of operation Anton was running—there were more bars on the windows and doors than in most jails and two doors to be buzzed through before being allowed inside. Stupidly, I had called first. When I walked in, the prissy Anton, heavily bedecked in gold with a head of very badly dyed brown hair, was nervously flitting around while his sister, who looked like a gangster's moll, did all the talking. I couldn't see the earrings unless I paid for them, she said; further I'd have to leave the store until the police, whom I had called, arrived. I had no intention of doing any such thing and noted several conspicuous gaps in Anton's many display cases where items has been sold—or hidden—recently enough that they hadn't yet been replaced."

Following this account, Reed explains that according to the detective handling her case, Louisiana law only requires pawnshop owners to take down the driver's license information for anyone from whom they purchase items and to prepare a complete inventory. Although this had been done by Heine for Reed's jewelry, under Louisiana law he was not required to make any record of who purchased the items. Since the seller was a 20-year-old male with dreadlocks and facial tattoos, Reed surmises that Heine must surely have

known that such an individual would not have legally possessed \$100,000 worth of estate jewelry.

She concludes: "I came to find out he has a handful of steady clients, including some 'nice' Garden District ladies I know—and who also have to know that they are buying hot goods."

In Louisiana, as in all states, a communication is defamatory if it tends to harm the reputation of another by lowering his or her reputation and thus deterring others from associating with or dealing with that person. Courts also must decide whether the allegedly defamatory words expressly or implicitly injure one's reputation. This is an important determination because if the communication falls into the second category, then the party who is suing has a much bigger hurdle to clear.

Because the trial court initially found that Reed's communication did not qualify as defamation per se, the first category, Anton Heine needed to prove that Reed's account of his handling of her jewelry had implicit defamatory meaning and that her statements were false and written with actual malice. After the trial court dismissed his lawsuit because he could not meet this burden he appealed.

On appeal he narrowed his defamation claim to a single statement, "I came to find out he has a handful of steady clients, including some 'nice' Garden District ladies I know—and who also have to know perfectly well that they're buying hot goods." The Fourth District Court of Appeals was not convinced. In rejecting his argument the court wrote that the statement was actually more disparaging of the wealthy Garden District ladies and "says nothing—nor does it imply—that Heine actually knew anything about the true value of the items he was buying and selling or that he was knowingly selling stolen goods."

While this lawsuit involved a personal memoir and not an oral history interview, it nevertheless offers some valuable lessons. With more and more oral historians interviewing the survivors of major natural disasters like Hurricane Katrina, the narratives they collect are just as recent as Miller's personal memoir. Thus, when such materials are opened for research or published, the possibility that someone will take offense is far greater because the characterizations and observations are so contemporary.

To be sure, a commercially successful book by a large publisher may make a far more inviting target than an oral history program. But a surprisingly large number of defamation lawsuits are filed each year by less than famous individuals like Anton Heine. From his perspective, Reed's negative aspersions about his dealings exposed him as well as his business to contempt and ridicule and he sued. ❖

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** John A. Neuenschwander is a past president of the **Oral History Association** and is author of *A Guide to Oral History and the Law* (Oxford University Press, 2009).



# Latino & Latina World War II project celebrates 10 years

By Frank Trejo, Assistant Project Director

In its first decade, the U.S. Latino & Latina World War II Oral History Project at the University of Texas at Austin has compiled more than 700 World War II-era interviews, collected thousands of photographs and documents, published three books, developed educational materials and helped to produce a stage play.

In addition, the project has developed exhibits and art shows as well as academic presentations and discussions. Its photo archive, with photos scanned at high resolution, has become a resource for documentary film producers, journalists and others.

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*An estimated 250,000 to 750,000 Latinos and Latinas served in the armed forces during World War II. The aim of the Latino and Latina Oral History Project is to generate greater awareness of their contributions.*

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And now, 10 years after its inception, the Latino & Latina Oral History Project is broadening its scope to Latinos and Latinas of subsequent generations. In 2009, the project received a federal grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services (IMLS) to expand into Latino and Latina veterans and civilians involved in the Korean and Vietnam wars. Work on this expanded effort began with an October symposium on the two conflicts featuring scholars from across the country. Interviews of Korean and Vietnam-era Latinos and Latinas are now underway.

“We are still going to do interviews with World War II-era people,” said project director Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez. “But we felt that if we are able to do Korea and Vietnam, we should. We have a bit of a start, because many of our World War II veterans also served in the Korean War, and a few served in Vietnam as well.”

Like the World War II portion of the project, the interviews and material collected from this expansion will provide primary source material not only for

academic researchers but also for the general public.

“At this point, we are well positioned to get these stories told,” Rivas-Rodriguez said.

It was Rivas-Rodriguez, an associate professor of journalism at UT Austin, who created the Latino & Latina project in the spring of 1999. The idea for the effort had occurred to her in the early 1990s when she worked as a journalist at The Dallas Morning News. While researching articles about Texas Mexican Americans and civil rights, she grew frustrated by the lack of information available on Latinos of the World War II generation, the generation that ushered in the greatest progress in civil rights.

In great part, Rivas-Rodriguez was inspired by the work of journalist and historian Studs Terkel, whose oral histories of ordinary Americans helped develop greater understanding of such important topics as World War II, race relations and the Great Depression.

An estimated 250,000 to 750,000 Latinos and Latinas served in the armed forces during World War II. The aim of the Latino and Latina Oral History Project is to generate greater awareness of their contributions. Of particular importance is the fact that at the end of World War II, many Latinos (particularly Mexican Americans) returned to segregated communities and faced societal barriers. But at the same time, the war had provided them insight, experiences and the tools to meet many of those challenges.

The project’s hundreds of videotaped interviews and digital copies of photographs are being prepared for transfer to the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection and the Center for American History at the University of Texas at Austin.

The project’s efforts have been strengthened by the development of partnerships both on and off campus.



*Interviewee Ramon Galindo gave the motorcycle owner some cigarettes in exchange for a quick ride around an Austrian town on July 5, 1945.*

On campus, it works with the libraries, which house the archives at the Nettie Lee Benson Latin American Collection, digitize the videotaped interviews and host the project’s Web site.

Off campus, one of those partners is the U.S. Department of Veterans Affairs Readjustment Counseling Service, which has vet centers throughout the country. The project also is partnered with the National Association of Hispanic Journalists and the California Chicano News Media Association. Most of the partnerships provide in-kind support: a location and contacts for interviews and, in the case of the journalists, interviewees.

One of the most recent partnerships is with StoryCorps, which has been capturing moments of American life since 2003. StoryCorps has now launched “StoryCorps Historias” to focus on Latinos in the United States. The UT project is helping to coordinate interviews in the Austin area and has been a sounding board as Historias was planned.

“Dave Isay reached out to us,” Rivas-Rodriguez said. “We believe StoryCorps is a wonderful vehicle to achieve greater inclusion. It’s one of many ways our project seeks to link to others who want to include Latinos in the national consciousness.”

The UT Austin campus was the site last fall of the project’s 10th anniversary

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## AV Support Policy

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Beginning with our Atlanta 2010 meeting, OHA is shifting to a universal AV support policy. Every conference room for every session will be provided with a standard data projector and audio amplification, without the need for specific reservations or provision arrangements.

Please note that unlike some much larger and wealthier organizations, OHA cannot provide laptops to which presenters need bring only a jumpdrive containing the presentation. Rather, presenters are responsible for providing a laptop with the appropriate software required to run the presentation. OHA will provide projectors, speakers and standard interface cables for projection and audio amplification (VGA for projectors and 1/8" audio cable for laptop connection). Some laptops, especially some Macs, may require appropriate dongles and

adapters, which presenters are responsible for providing. More detailed information on the specific projector and standard adapters provided will be posted well in advance of the meeting, in time for presenters to assess their computer needs in this regard and obtain whatever alternative adapter may be needed.

To provide this universal support through a contemporary mode meeting virtually any text, illustration, audio or video presentation need, OHA must also make it clear that we cannot support other projection modes, such as tape recorders, audio decks, overheads, VHS or DVD players, or TV monitors. Any such alternative audiovisual equipment must be provided by the presenter, or the presentation must be converted into forms displayable via a laptop and projector, which in most cases is not a difficult or demanding step. ❖

## 2010 OHA Annual Meeting

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Here are some highlights to entice you to come:

- A Wednesday evening special event, "Soul of the People: Writing America's Story," film clips and a panel featuring Stetson Kennedy and filmmakers Andrea Kalin and David Taylor, photographs of the Great Depression and live music performed by the 198 String Band;
- The Thursday evening Presidential Reception will be held at the Carter Library and Museum, featuring a tour of the exhibition and a testimonial tribute to the late Brother Blue, storyteller and longtime OHA member;
- The Friday luncheon keynote speaker will be PBS award-winning journalist, Maria Hinojosa;
- The Saturday evening banquet keynote panel will remember the Atlanta Student Movement and SNCC, featuring Constance Curry and Lonnie King;
- Plenary sessions on new immigration and Lesbian/Gay/Bisexual/Transgender histories;

- Eight book spotlights featuring new 2010 oral history books, including Alessandro Portelli's *They Say in Harlan County*, D'Ann Penner and Keith Ferdinand's *Overcoming Katrina: African American Voices from the Crescent City and Beyond* and Don Ritchie's new *Oxford Handbook on Oral History*;
- Special workshops on digital preservation; Web. 2.0 for oral history; video and oral history; oral history for teachers; train the trainer, for community projects; a community oral history showcase; and a special roundtable on publishing and editing oral history;
- Two tours: civil and human rights in Atlanta and new immigrant communities along the Buford Highway. We've received a record number of panel and paper proposals to make up an exciting and memorable program. Stay tuned for more details in the months to come. ❖

## Oral history training opportunities available

April 30 is the deadline to apply for the Advanced Oral History Summer Institute at the University of California, Berkeley's Regional Oral History Office. The institute is scheduled for Aug. 16-20 and will focus on the methodology, theory and practice of oral/video history.

The institute is designed for graduate students, college faculty, independent scholars, museum and community-based historians who are engaged in oral history work. Cost of the five-day program is \$800, with housing and most meals to be arranged separately.

For more information, contact Robin Li at [rli@library.berkeley.edu](mailto:rli@library.berkeley.edu).

Volunteers or paid staff from local historical organizations, libraries, schools, colleges and universities are encouraged to apply for the Oral History Institute, June 8-10, at Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio. The application deadline is May 3.

The institute costs \$275, including two nights' lodging, six meals and all workshop materials. Ohio residents can apply for partial scholarships from the Ohio Humanities Council.

The workshop emphasizes hands-on activities and will cover all aspects of planning and conducting successful oral history projects. It is sponsored by the humanities council and the Rural Life Center at Kenyon College in cooperation with the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums and the Ohio Historical Society.

For more information, contact Frank Dunkle at: [frankd@ohiohumanities.org](mailto:frankd@ohiohumanities.org). ❖

# Anne G. Ritchie honored as newest Pogue Award recipient

Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region has named Anne G. Ritchie, senior archivist and oral historian at the National Gallery of Art in Washington, D.C., as its 2010 recipient of the Forrest Pogue Award for her outstanding contributions to oral history.

The award is OHMAR's highest honor and is named after Forrest C. Pogue, who pioneered the use of oral history in combat during World War II and who also served as an early president of the Oral History Association.

Ritchie has served as president of OHMAR, president of the Oral History Association and vice president of the International Oral History Association. A graduate of Loyola University in New Orleans, Ritchie holds master's degrees in history and in library and information science from the University of Kentucky. While working at the University of Kentucky Libraries from 1977 to 1988, Ritchie directed oral

history projects on the Frontier Nursing Service and the Christian Appalachian Project, among others.

After moving to the Washington, D.C., area in 1988, she conducted interviews for a community oral history project in Charles County, Md., and served as an interviewer for the Washington Press Club Foundation's Women in Journalism project. Ritchie also is a popular presenter at oral history workshops. Since 1990, she has been the senior archivist and oral historian at the National Gallery of Art. In addition to her oral history activities, she also has been active in the Society of American Archivists.

Ritchie will receive the Pogue Award at OHMAR's spring conference, April 28-29, at the Charles Sumner School Museum and Archives in Washington, D.C. The conference theme is: *Catching Lightning in a Bottle: Documenting Science, Technology and Innovation Through Oral History*. For more information, go to: [www.ohmar.org](http://www.ohmar.org). ❖

## OHA grant available for emerging crises projects

**Applications are due May 1** for an Oral History Association grant of up to \$3,000 to support oral history research in situations of crisis in the United States and internationally, such as wars, natural disasters, political, economic or ethnic repression or other emerging events of crisis proportions.

Funds may be used for travel, per diem or transcription costs for projects in which longer application times may not be practical. Equipment purchases cannot be covered by the grant.

Applicants should submit the following to [oha@dickinson.edu](mailto:oha@dickinson.edu): a one-page research proposal describing the project, including arrangements for preserving the interviews and making them accessible for future use; a research budget, including a justification of all budget items; and a current curriculum vitae.

The Emerging Crises Oral History Research Fund Committee will make its recommendations to the OHA within four weeks after the application due date.

For additional information, contact Stephen M. Sloan, Committee Chairman, at [stephen\\_sloan@baylor.edu](mailto:stephen_sloan@baylor.edu).



## OHA election nominees announced

*The Oral History Association Nominating Committee announces the following candidates for election to the position of first vice president and one Council seat.*

*OHA members also will elect three members to serve two-year terms on the Nominating Committee. Members will vote for one person for each of the three seats.*

**NOMINATED FOR FIRST VICE PRESIDENT: MARY LARSON**, Oklahoma State University

### **NOMINATED FOR COUNCIL:**

- CALINDA LEE, Emory University
- CLAYTEE WHITE, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

### **NOMINATED FOR POSITION ONE:**

- LINDA HEIDENREICH, Washington State University, Pullman
- JULIA E. CURRY RODRIGUEZ, San Jose State University

### **NOMINATED FOR POSITION TWO:**

- JASON FERREIRA, San Francisco State University
- TOMAS F. SUMMERS SANDOVAL JR., Pomona College

### **NOMINATED FOR POSITION THREE:**

- CHARLES HARDY III, West Chester University
- LU ANN JONES, National Park Service

# In Remembrance...

## Remembering Amelia “Chita” Fry Davis, 1925-2009

By Gabrielle Morris and Ann Lage

Friends and colleagues of the Bancroft Library's Regional Oral History Office will be saddened to learn of the death of Amelia Fry Davis late in December 2009 in Carmel Valley after a long illness. She was 84. Known to the oral history world as Chita Fry, she joined ROHO in its infancy in 1959. For the next 25 years she designed and conducted comprehensive projects exploring significant topics in California history and their interaction with regional and national issues. Working closely with Willa Baum, ROHO director for 43 years, Chita was active in the founding of the Oral History Association and the development and direction of oral history throughout the country.

Chita Fry pursued new subject areas in oral history with an unerring sense of their historical value, combined with interviewing skills and a winning charm that turned interviewees into lasting friends of ROHO.

Early in her career at ROHO an interviewee introduced her to his neighbor, Newton Drury, former director of both the National Park Service and the California State Parks and president of the Save-the-Redwoods League. Subsequent oral histories with Drury cemented their friendship and introduced Chita to key figures in the world of conservation, leading to interviews on the National Park Service and a major project on forest history. Her work set the stage for ROHO's continuing strong emphasis on natural resources, land use and the environmental movement.

Drury and Horace Albright, also a former director of the National Park Service and ROHO interviewee, played an important role in launching another of Chita Fry's landmark projects: the documentation of the governorship of Earl Warren. The idea blossomed, according to Willa Baum's oral history, at the 50th anniversary of the fabled UC Class of 1912, of which Warren, Drury and Albright were all members. Drury and Albright worked for two years to persuade Warren to give his blessing for the project, which he finally did, as Willa relates, in an unexpected meeting with Albright on the summit of Mount Olympus in Greece.

Chita and Willa struggled for another five years to assemble funding for a comprehensive 10-year project on the Earl Warren era in California. Under Chita's imaginative direction, she and her interviewing team conducted nearly 150 wide-ranging interviews with political and governmental figures, labor and civil rights leaders and Warren's friends and advisers.

It became the model for subsequent projects on the Pat Brown, Goodwin Knight and Ronald Reagan governorships and led to ROHO interviews on labor, social welfare, the law and women in politics. The long, blue row of bound interview transcripts on California public policy issues, all of

Photo credit: UC Berkeley, Regional Oral History Office.



*Oral historian Chita Fry, right, uses a reel-to-reel recorder in 1963 to interview Sara Bard Field, the first in a series of suffragists Fry interviewed for the Regional Oral History Office.*

which are now digitized and available via the Internet, continues to provide irreplaceable insights and is still widely used by students and scholars.

After an interview in 1961 with poet, social radical and suffragist Sara Bard Field, Chita developed a seminal project on the suffragists, focusing on the work of the militant National Women's Party and the campaign for women's right to vote. An extended oral history with party founder Alice Paul in 1972 and 1973 was the catalyst for her final work, a biography of Alice Paul.

Chita moved to Washington, D.C., in the late 1970s, following her second marriage to Rex Davis, the retired director of the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco and Firearms and a high school friend from Oklahoma with whom she had fortuitously reconnected. In Washington she continued her research and writing, working in the archives of the National Women's Party and Paul's personal papers. Publication of the first volume of the Alice Paul biography is expected in 2010.

Chita retained her connection with ROHO, becoming the eyes and ears of the office in Washington, continuing to assist in project development and serving as a key adviser to Willa Baum. Throughout her career, Fry taught oral history institutes and workshops and spoke frequently at the Oral History Association's annual meeting and at other professional organizations, as well as publishing numerous articles on her work and larger issues in oral history in a wide variety of journals.

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### Memorial services set for Brother Blue

Cambridge, Mass., storyteller and longtime OHA member Brother Blue (aka Hugh Morgan Hill) will be remembered at two memorial services in Massachusetts in May. The first is set for noon Saturday, May 8 at the Cathedral Church of St. Paul, 138 Tremont St., Boston, followed the next day by a service at 2 p.m. at the Second Congregational Church, 50 Onota St., Pittsfield, Mass.

Brother Blue, who died Nov. 3, 2009, will also be remembered in a special program at the 2010 OHA conference in Atlanta.

Her busy life included active interest in the lives of her three sons, Gary, Randy and Byron Fry, as well as a lifelong love of music. Son Gary recalls, "Mom played the violin and even had a small violin scholarship to the University of Oklahoma. Two of her three sons grew up to be professional musicians and composers. One still is. ... Her love for music and her determination to expose us to all types of it was a constant presence in our lives. It remains perhaps her largest legacy to us."

A memorial program for Amelia Fry Davis was held in January at the Women's Faculty Club on the Berkeley campus, with burial in the Arlington National Cemetery alongside her husband. ❖

## Cultivating a movement

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as young people take up organic farming as a career. That phenomenon is reflected in these oral histories.

Not all participate in the movement as farmers; some are active in the areas of policy and research. For example, Mother Jones magazine recently called 29-year-old UCSC activist and researcher Tim Galarneau the "Alice Waters of a burgeoning movement of campus foodies." Galarneau represents current cutting-edge efforts, largely youth-driven, to transform institutional economic and institutional relationships in the provision and distribution of food, especially between farms and institutions.

Alongside the farmers and nonprofit organizations has evolved a network of organic food trucking companies, co-ops and natural food stores, community supported agriculture ventures (CSA) and farmers' markets. The Central Coast's proximity to the San Francisco Bay Area offers a large market hungry for organic and sustainable produce. Interviews with those on the marketing side of the movement offer a rich source of information for other communities seeking to develop an alternative food system.

The interview period (2007-2009) was marked by: food safety crises; pest infestations; wild fluctuations in the price of

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Chita Fry and past OHA president Charles Morrissey enjoyed the distinction of being the only two people who had perfect attendance at the first 15 years of OHA meetings.

Chita spent 20 years working on a two-volume biography of Alice Paul, but was unable to complete the project after being diagnosed with Alzheimer's disease. Author Jill Zahnizer will be completing the second volume.

OHA members who wish to share their memories of Chita Fry in the next OHA Newsletter should e-mail the editor at: [ohaeditor@aol.com](mailto:ohaeditor@aol.com).

petroleum; sharp increases in the world prices for rice, wheat, maize and soybeans that caused a series of international food riots in the spring and summer of 2008; water shortages in California; the election of President Barack Obama; and the arrival of the worst economic recession to hit the United States since the Great Depression of the 1930s.

"When we set out to do this series, we did not realize that the interviews themselves would be capturing this tumultuous period in American history," Reti said. "But despite living through these turbulent times, all of the project interviewees felt a great sense of hope as we listened to and learned from these women and men cultivating a movement to transform the food system."

The interviews will be released on April 22, 2010, (Earth Day) in full text transcript form on the UCSC Library's Web site <http://library.ucsc.edu/regional-history-project> with accompanying audio clips and images. The entire collection is searchable through the UCSC Library's Digital Collections page <http://digitalcollections.ucsc.edu>.

For more information please email Irene Reti at [ihreti@ucsc.edu](mailto:ihreti@ucsc.edu) or call 831-459-2847. ❖

## Latino and Latina World War II Project

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celebration that featured a dinner to honor project participants and included a one-day symposium on the Korean and Vietnam wars. Among the featured speakers at the dinner were John M. Garcia, New Mexico's secretary of veterans' services; Elliott Naishtat, member of the Texas House of Representatives; and Mary Salas, California Assembly member.

The dinner's guest of honor was Rodolfo P. Hernandez, Medal of Honor recipient. Hernandez was awarded the Medal of Honor for his service in the Korean War as part of the U.S. Army's 187th Airborne Regimental Combat Team.

The symposium included presentations on the Korean War era from Silvia Alvarez Curbelo, University of Puerto Rico; Allan R. Millett, University of New Orleans; and Carlos Vélez-Ibanez, Arizona State University. Presentations on the Vietnam War were made by Mark A. Lawrence, the University of Texas at Austin; Kyle Longley, Arizona State University; and Jorge Mariscal, the University of California, San Diego.

Dinner co-chair Jim Estrada, chairman and chief executive officer of Estrada Communications Inc., summed up the significance of the celebration

weekend's events by noting the nation's growing Hispanic population and the need for positive role models.

"It is universally accepted that the forgotten and never known become the same," Estrada said. "Therefore, we must ensure our community's contributions are chronicled and archived. ... The stories this project collects represent factual accounts that must be included in the historical narrative of our nation."

For more information on the U.S. Latino & Latina World War II Oral History Project, visit <http://lib.utexas.edu/ww2latinos>; or call (512) 471-1924. ❖

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Excerpts and photos from the project can be found in a new book *Beyond the Latino World War II Hero: The Social and Political Legacy of a Generation*, edited by Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez and Emilio Zamora, published by the University of Texas Press.

## Nevada Test Site project receives national award

The Nevada Test Site Oral History Project (NTSOHP) at the University of Nevada, Las Vegas recently received the National Council on Public History's Outstanding Public History Project Award for projects completed in 2008-2009. Project director Mary Palevsky and principal investigators, historian Andrew Kirk and sociologist Robert Futrell received the award at the NCPH annual meeting in Portland, Ore., in March. Also honored was graduate assistant Leisl Carr Childers, who served as the project's assistant director, 2005-2008.

The NTSOHP's mission was to conduct, preserve and disseminate oral histories of persons affiliated with and affected by the U.S. Cold War nuclear testing program in Nevada from 1951-1992. The testing program was a continuation of the World War II Manhattan Project, the Allies' top-secret program to develop an atomic weapon. On July 16, 1945, Manhattan Project scientists conducted the world's first atomic test, code-named Trinity, near Socorro, N.M. Less than a month later, the U.S. dropped atomic bombs on the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki and within days, World War II ended.

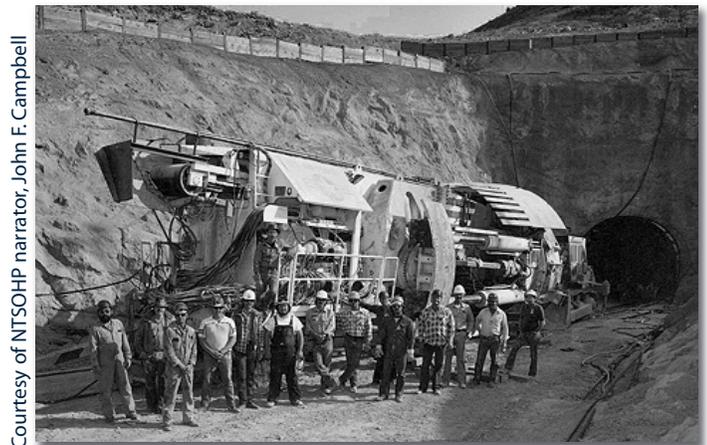


Courtesy of NTSOHP narrator, Dorothy Ciarlo

*The first protest at the Nevada Test Site, 12th Anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, August 1957*

In 1946, the U.S. began postwar nuclear testing in the Marshall Islands. At that time, some scientific leaders argued that a continental test site should only be considered in the case of a national emergency. In August 1949, just four years after Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the U.S.S.R. conducted its first test of an atomic weapon. A series of factors, including the complexity and expense of conducting off-shore tests, security concerns, the onset of the Korean conflict and the race with the Soviets to develop a thermonuclear weapon, caused American leaders to re-examine the continental site. After considering several locations, a site 65 miles north of Las Vegas was chosen.

Between 1951 and 1962, 100 above-ground tests were conducted at the Nevada Test Site (NTS). Although many in the region supported the testing program, it was not without controversy. The first protests at the NTS were in 1957, on the 12th anniversary of Hiroshima and Nagasaki, with faith-based



Courtesy of NTSOHP narrator, John F. Campbell

*Miners with tunnel boring machine for underground nuclear test bed Area 25, Little Skull Mountain, Nevada Test Site*

protests resuming two decades later, some drawing thousands of participants. Other affected groups included Southern Paiute and Western Shoshone people—the latter claiming test site lands under the 1863 Treaty of Ruby Valley—as well as ranches and communities situated downwind of the NTS in Nevada and surrounding states.

In 1963 the Limited Test Ban Treaty prohibited nuclear tests in the atmosphere. The move to underground testing involved major scientific and engineering innovations but neither the U.S. nor U.S.S.R. was able to contain radioactivity underground at all times. More than 900 underground tests were conducted at the NTS until a testing moratorium came into force in 1992.

The major challenge of the NTSOHP was to create a research design that would document this historical complexity following the standards of the Oral History Association and at the same time, meaningfully engage graduate students in all aspects of a large-scale, academic oral history project. The diversity of participants included laboratory scientists and engineers; miners, electricians and labor trades; cabinet-level officials; military personnel of all ranks; industry and contractor executives; administrative staff-members. Integral to the project and archive are Native American tribal leaders; radiation survivors, including atomic veterans; families and communities living downwind of the test site; peace and anti-nuclear activists.

The project provided 40 graduate students with a range of ways to participate: from paid, full-time research assistantships and summer internships, to public history methods classes and independent studies. For example, history G.A. Shannon Applegate used her technical expertise to create the project's data management system, customizing Microsoft Office Access to describe and track all interviews. At any point during the project, reports could be generated detailing where in the process each interview was—ie. transcription, editing, narrator review—how many interviews each student had conducted, abstracts of each interview, etc.

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## Nevada Test Site

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Students attended community meetings, reunions, protests and other gatherings of groups involved with test site history. Whenever possible, students were supported in pursuing their research interests. History intern Joan Leavitt studied the 1988 Joint Verification Experiment during which U.S. and Soviet scientists conducted underground tests at each others' sites in order to finalize protocols for two international treaties. She did extensive research and collected an original series of stories with a range of participants in this previously under-studied program.

Sociology G.A. Suzanne Becker conducted interviews with key participants in the anti-nuclear peace and protest movements. Students conducted half of the project's 335 hours of interviews, with director Palevsky conducting the balance.

In the final year, history G.A. Leisl Carr Childers was central to the transfer of the archive from the College of Liberal Arts to Lied Library, working with manuscripts librarian Su Kim Chung and special collections director Peter Michel. This material included digital audio and video recordings, transcripts, legal/ethical documents, as well as primary materials donated by narrators in conjunction with their interviews: photographs, documents, diaries, letters and artifacts, such as security badges. Childers was a key member of the team designing the project's digital archive and Web site.

From the project's inception, a primary concern of the research team was the accessibility of the archive's subject-matter to researchers, students and the general public. Palevsky worked closely with project transcriber Laurie Boetcher, writing guidelines for archive-wide uniformity, indexing, identifying key individuals and tests in each interview.

Palevsky also developed protocols for discursive tables of contents and annotating of technical content. During the final year, these materials were the starting point for researchers to build the digital archive and Web site in conjunction with the library's digitization team, headed by Cory Lampert. The interdisciplinary team developed metadata categories and search terms that conformed to approved, controlled vocabulary while retaining research relevance and providing multiple pathways into the interviews. All transcripts with audio and selected video clips are on the project's Web site, with the exception of a few who requested their materials only be available in Special Collections. Grants from the U.S. Departments of Energy and Education supported four years of research. The final year was supported by the UNLV Department of History and UNLV Libraries.

For more information, go to: <http://digital.library.unlv.edu> or contact Mary Palevsky at [mary.palevsky@unlv.edu](mailto:mary.palevsky@unlv.edu). ❖

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** The Nevada Test Site project shared the award with the Bracero History Archive, which will be featured in the next issue of the **Newsletter**.

## Canadian member wins prestigious award

OHA member James Morrison of Halifax, Nova Scotia, has been awarded the Order of Canada, his nation's highest civilian honor, for his work in oral history. Presented late last year by Canada's governor general, the Order of Canada citation praises Morrison for "lasting contributions to his province and to the field of historical research."

The citation continues:

"He has had an enduring impact on Nova Scotia's multicultural heritage through his volunteer work with the Pier 21 Society and Museum. There, he contributed to the development of educational programming and exhibitions, many of which are based on the stories of families and individuals who emigrated to Canada, landing at Pier 21 in the Halifax port."

In addition to his work on Pier 21, known as Canada's Ellis Island, Morrison also was recognized for developing the first university oral history course in Canada and for writing many books chronicling the Maritime province's history.

The Order of Canada insignia, a stylized, six-pointed snowflake with a maple leaf in the center, bears the inscription (in Latin): "They desire a better country." ❖

## The OHA Newsletter

### welcomes

## your contributions of

## state and regional

## news.

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## *News & Notes ...*

**Mark your calendars for the 2011 Oral History Association conference,** scheduled for Oct. 12-16, 2011, in Denver at the Renaissance Denver Hotel. The OHA last met in Colorado in 1980, so plan to join a new generation of oral historians enjoying the Mile High City.

### **Vox Populi Award in the works**

Look for more information soon on the OHA Web site about the new biennial Vox Populi Award for outstanding achievement in collecting and using oral histories of individuals or organizations whose work has contributed to change for a better world. Nomination details are still being worked out, but the deadline will be in early August. The award

consists of free registration to the OHA annual meeting and \$200 in cash.

### **Online collection once again available**

Hear the voices of farm laborers, anarchists, ventriloquists and jazz arrangers—among hundreds of others—in the award-winning Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive of California State University, Long Beach, again available online at: [www.csulb.edu/voaha](http://www.csulb.edu/voaha).

The pioneering Web site features nearly 1,100 hours of oral history interviews that bring to life the voices and language of some 343 African Americans, American Indians, Asian Americans, Latinos, Latinas and Southern and Eastern European immigrants who share

the stories of their lives from the 1890s to the 1990s.

The Web site has been a model for other oral history projects in making original interviews available to scholars and the public.

### **Archival workshops offered**

Oral historians are invited to attend the 2010 Society of Florida Archivists annual meeting in Tampa, Fla., May 5-7. Workshops will include sessions on cataloguing archival collections, preservation skills for non-preservationists and implementing digital objects on the Web, all of which could be useful to oral historians.

For more information, go to [www.florida-archivists.org](http://www.florida-archivists.org).

**Visit [www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org) for more information**