



# NEWSLETTER

## Memories of Struggle Mark St. Louis Program

By Jessica Wiederhorn  
OHA Conference Co-Chair

We are gratified that this year's call for papers has triggered so great a response from scholars and oral historians the world over.

A wide spectrum of presentations on the conference theme, "Bearing Public Witness: Documenting Memories of Struggle and Resistance," provides an opportunity to share the important work being done in this area by so many from near and far. However, it strikes us as sadly ironic that memories and histories reflecting social and political disorder, trauma, violence and even

genocide are so very ubiquitous.

The 35th annual meeting of the Oral History Association will be held Oct. 17-21 in view of the gleaming Gateway Arch, symbol of St. Louis, Mo.

Panels, workshops, performances and films will focus on the philosophical and practical strategies for documenting the individual narratives and collective memories that are in danger of being ignored, erased or forgotten because of silence or denial.

The conference program will include: panels on the silences of traumatic memory, the struggles against totalitarian regimes, the Nazi

legacy, racism and the use of oral history in promoting social justice. Included in the presentations are narratives of Afghan women, Latvian immigrants, Cuban rafters, Brazilian street children, the stolen generation of Aborigines and African victims of torture as well as the experiences of Holocaust survivors, war veterans and the struggles of civil rights activists.

Several presentations will focus on the ethical issues of setting standards for collection and dissemination of narratives of trauma and oppression in digital environments.

(Continued on page 3)

### Editor's Note

By Mary Kay Quinlan

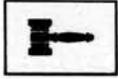
Copy deadline for the next issue of the **Newsletter** is July 1. This is a good chance to share information about state and regional meetings that occurred too late in April or May for inclusion in this issue. Announcements, notices of fall meetings or news and photos about projects are also welcome.

Send to: 7524 S. 35th St.,  
Lincoln, NE 68516. Fax: 402-420-1770. E-mail: OHAEditor@aol.com.



*The landmark Gateway Arch soars over the St. Louis skyline.*

*Photo by the St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission*



## From Your President

By **Cliff Kuhn**  
OHA President

After spending a weekend there for the OHA Council's midwinter meeting, I am writing to sing the praises of St. Louis, site of the 2001 annual meeting. St. Louis is a very interesting, diverse community, which is refreshing in its lack of pretension.

The conference hotel itself is literally only a couple of blocks from the Mississippi River, the Arch, Busch Stadium and the courthouse where the Dred Scott case was argued. As the National Park Service ranger told me when I visited, that courthouse constitutes sacred ground in the history of civil rights.

That seems fitting, given the 2001 conference theme, "Bearing Witness: Documenting Memories of Struggle and Resistance." Program co-chairs Leslie Brown, Anne Valk and Jessica Wiederhorn have put together an absolutely stellar, compelling, chock-a-block program, which promises to set a new standard of excellence for the association.

Jacqueline Dace and the local arrangements committee have similarly done an outstanding job in developing the conference, including the planning of exciting tours and a reception at the Missouri Historical Society. OHA Vice President Mary Marshall Clark has worked diligently to ensure the conference's success. Major thanks to all involved, and I very much look forward to meeting in St. Louis.

In addition to the St. Louis meeting and the 2002 meeting in San Diego, Council more generally discussed the annual meeting, which in recent years has become increasingly large and complex. Linda Shopes and Laurie Mercier are currently heading a task force on the annual meeting and will offer recommendations to Council in the fall.

Among other business, Council discussed the publications series, which will soon have a much more visually appealing design. Stay tuned in the spring for the long-awaited new "Oral History in the Classroom" publication, authored by Linda Wood. Council also launched an initiative to see how OHA might more effectively use our Web site and other electronic publications.

In addition, the Council has approved the naming of the Martha Ross Teaching Award for excellent use of oral history in precollegiate teaching. Since 1969, Martha has been a major force in oral history. Her well-known oral history seminar at the University of Maryland set high standards for the profession and guided new practitioners into the field. She was one of the founders of OHMAR (Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region) and played a central role in establishing professional standards for oral history. She also served as OHA president in 1985. The first recipient of the Martha Ross Teaching Award will be announced at the St. Louis meeting.

On a sad note, I wish to mark the death of Debra Bernhardt on March 22 after a lengthy bout with cancer. Debra's oral history activities were numerous. She was the producer of the eight-part oral history-based radio series "New Yorkers at Work." In her capacity as head of the Tamiment Library and the Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives of New York University, she helped gather scores of interviews with working New Yorkers and veterans of social movements, excerpts of which appeared in her recently published book, co-authored with Rachel Bernstein, "Ordinary People, Extraordinary Lives."

And, between 1996 and 1998, Debra served as OHA program co-chair for the 1998 annual meeting in Buffalo. Her pro-activity, her extensive connections, her grant-writing abilities, her commitment and her high standards were crucial in making the Buffalo meeting a success. As her co-chair for that meeting, I could not have asked for a

better partner. Her oral history activities were only the tip of the iceberg of a life's work dedicated to, in Debra's words, "documenting the undocumented." In its obituary, the New York Times referred to Debra as a "historian of the unsung." She will be missed.

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## Executive Secretary's Status Report

By **Madelyn Campbell**

The OHA administrative office is gearing up for our next annual meeting in St. Louis. The conference hotel has changed its name from the Regal Riverfront to The Millennium, but the staff we have been working with will remain the same.

I encourage you to make room reservations early and be sure to request OHA special rates: \$117, single; \$127, double. These rates and the OHA block of rooms will expire Sept. 20. You can avoid disappointment by booking your room now. Call 800-325-7353 or 314-241-9500.

The conference program will be mailed to members in mid-July, but a conference registration form also is available at our Website: [www.dickinson.edu/oha](http://www.dickinson.edu/oha). We hope to post full program details by mid-June. Please feel free to contact our office by phone or e-mail if you have any questions.

If any OHA members are attending other conferences over the summer and would like OHA conference brochures to distribute to others who might be interested in our meeting, please let us know where and how many to send.

As I enter my third year as OHA executive secretary, I want to thank all those who have helped make my tenure both educational and rewarding. I am delighted to be able to work with such dedicated and interesting colleagues.

# St. Louis Meeting to Examine Memories of Struggle, Resistance

(Continued from page 1)

Featured speakers at the 2001 OHA conference will include:

+ Stevan Weine, psychiatrist and director of the Project on Genocide, Psychiatry and Witnessing at the University of Illinois-Chicago, who will present his work with Bosnian survivors;

+ Sam Gustman, executive director for technology at the Shoah Foundation, who will talk about the challenges of oral history accessibility in the digital age;

+ Alessandro Portelli, professor of American literature at the University of Rome and author of several oral history classics;

+ Ann Cvetkovich, associate professor of English and women's studies at the University of Texas at Austin and author of a forthcoming book that includes an oral history of lesbian AIDS activists and

+ Manning Marable, author, editor and director of the Institute for Research in African-American Studies at Columbia University.

Five conference workshops will focus on a variety of oral history practices. The workshops include:

+ Oral History: The Basics, presented by OHA past president Charles Morrissey;

+ Oral History and Filmmaking, presented by Len Morris, president of Galen Films;

+ Creating Cross-Cultural Dialogues in Community Museums, presented by Ron Chew of the Wing-Luke Asian Museum;

+ Oral History in the K-12 Classroom, a workshop for teachers led by Toby Daspit and Petra Munro and

+ Best Practices and Planning for a Digital Future: Preservation, Ethics and Access, presented by Kelly Feltault of the American Folklife Center. This workshop is free but pre-registration is required and limited to 25 people.

New at this year's OHA meeting

are "workshop sessions," for those interested in an in-depth focus on specific subjects. These include:

+ therapeutic uses of oral history interviews in clinical practice;

+ how to teach the Holocaust through storytelling and drama;

+ making video oral history interviews accessible and

+ fundraising strategies for oral history projects.

A wide variety of films and theatrical performances also are planned. Thursday evening's presidential reception at the Missouri Historical Society will be followed by a performance of the acclaimed oral history project "Through the Eyes of a Child," a blending of voices reflecting St. Louis' historically African-American neighborhoods.

Choices for Saturday afternoon will include breakout sessions, performances, films, roundtables and discussions and a variety of tours.

Among the tours will be the Shaw Neighborhood, Tower Grove Park and Missouri Botanical Garden, one of the nation's oldest botanical gardens, including a greenhouse believed to be the oldest continuously

operated greenhouse in the country.

Also on the list of tours is the Cahokia Mounds State Historic Site in nearby Collinsville, Ill., where 65 American Indian tribal mounds dating from the years 900-1500 are preserved.

In addition, an African-American history tour will visit: The Ville, one of the first African-American middle-class neighborhoods; Homer G. Phillips Hospital, the premier hospital for training black doctors at the turn of the century; and Sumner High School, the first high school for blacks west of the Mississippi.

A walking tour of downtown St. Louis also is scheduled, and a tour of the St. Louis Holocaust Museum will be offered Thursday afternoon.

Touched by the conference theme, many presenters have submitted profoundly moving and powerful abstracts and proposals. In organizing this year's conference, co-chairs Leslie Brown, Anne Valk and Jessica Wiederhorn have been affected by the depth of concern and seriousness of purpose of the submissions. We anticipate an annual meeting that will inspire us all.



*The Scott Joplin House Missouri State Historic Site pays tribute to the "King of Ragtime," who spent several of his most productive years in St. Louis at the turn of the century. Photo by the St. Louis Convention & Visitors Commission*

# OHA, OHMAR Recognize "Founding Mother" Martha Ross

Oral History Association President Cliff Kuhn recalled his first encounter with Martha Ross in 1985 when, as OHA president, she found herself as "the eye of the hurricane" when the annual meeting in Pensacola, Fla., was--literally--taken by a storm.

Alfredteen Harrison, history professor at Jackson (Miss.) State and a former OHA Council member, called Martha, a Selma, Ala., native, "one of the soldiers in the war" that was the civil rights struggle of the 1960s.

Perry Blatz of Duquesne University reported he still uses handouts on the basics of oral history and on interviewing techniques that Martha prepared decades ago when she taught at the University of Maryland.

Kuhn, Harrison and Blatz were among more than 100 members of OHA and OHMAR (Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region)--including four other OHA past presidents--who paid tribute April 6 to Martha Ross, described by master of ceremonies Donald A. Ritchie as a "founding mother" of OHMAR.

The spring OHMAR meeting in Annapolis, Md., celebrated the 25th anniversary of OHMAR's founding,

## OHMAR's Tribute

OHMAR past president Pamela Henson, who, along with past OHA and OHMAR presidents Donald Ritchie and Linda Shopes, planned the tribute to Martha Ross, presented her a plaque inscribed:

"In appreciation of Martha Ross for her role in founding and fostering Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region, on the occasion of its 25th anniversary: for her skills as a mentor; for her contributions to oral history practice and education; and for the high standards she has set for all oral history practitioners through her teaching and example."

which grew out of a course Martha taught at George Washington University that featured guest lecturers experienced in oral history.

Martha said she decided to hold a luncheon for those guest speakers and also invited OHA members in the Washington, D.C., area, who, she discovered, had never gotten together.

Oral history pioneer Forrest Pogue was there, she recalled. So was William Moss, who would become OHA president. People from the National Archives were there, she said, and "a little guy from the Pentagon--he didn't say a word, he lurked."

That luncheon with her students and area oral historians, she recalled, planted a seed that was to grow into OHMAR.

An array of subsequent OHMAR and OHA officers paid tribute to Martha's leadership and her ever-ready willingness to help newcomers to the field.

The program's keynote speaker was Harrison, who directs Jackson State University's Margaret Walker Alexander National Research Center for the Study of the 20th Century African American.

Harrison praised Martha as a "transitional woman" who managed to transcend her Southern cultural heritage and act on her religious convictions that segregation had to end.

The civil rights scholar said Martha reminded her of the words of First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt: "Many people will walk in and out of your life, but only a few people will leave footprints in your heart."

Showing nearly 40-year-old photos of a petite, brunette, sign-carrying Martha Ross participating in a Selma-to-Montgomery march as part of a National Council of Churches delegation, Harrison declared: "It took courage for this Southern lady" to act on her convictions.

Martha's sign, made on her Bethesda, Md., dining room table, read: "Here is one native Selmian for Freedom and Justice."

A former science teacher of Martha's questioned her participation in the "Negro civil rights demonstration." But she explained in reply: "It was as a child of my father and of Selma that I had to be there."

The women of Selma's First Baptist Church "taught me the principles of Christianity," Martha told her former teacher. And the civil rights movement's insistence on equality of opportunity was, to Martha, the embodiment of Christian principles.

Harrison noted that while the civil rights battles in Selma are well known, other skirmishes are less well documented.

Filling the knowledge gaps, she said, is the goal of the research center she directs at Jackson State. The center has completed 150 interviews on aspects of the civil rights movement in Jackson and has identified 100 sites in the community associated with the movement, 55 of which have been incorporated into a Civil Rights Driving Tour of the city.

Harrison urged oral historians to document white and black perspectives of the civil rights movement. Too often, she suggested, historians have neglected members of the African-American working class, "who were semi-invested in the Jim Crow system."

"America is a better place because of the civil rights struggle," Harrison said, calling on oral historians to use new technology to "create a complete record...so the next generation of oral historians will know we did our job well."

A morning panel at the OHMAR meeting examined the past, present and future of oral history.

Ron Marcello of the University of North Texas, a past OHA president and 10-year executive secretary of the association, noted that historians'

early criticism of oral history focused on concerns about: unreliability of memory, deliberate falsification, opportunities for vindictiveness, interviewees who were too discreet, or who oversimplified complex issues or who distorted their roles, by either downplaying or overplaying their importance.

Oral history pioneers who attended the earliest professional meetings, particularly the 1966 colloquium in Lake Arrowhead, Calif., heard those criticisms and took steps to professionalize the craft of oral history, Marcello said.

Further professionalization came at the Wingspread conference in 1979, when the OHA first codified its principles and standards in the **Evaluation Guidelines** pamphlet, he said, and with the subsequent creation of a pamphlet series, endowment and expanded scholarly journal.

"We've achieved a certain amount of respect," Marcello said.

Kuhn, who teaches history at Georgia State University, agreed, saying: "We've gotten over the credibility hump."

He noted that in recent years, oral historians have focused more on the interview process itself and by drawing from the work of ethnographers, folklorists, feminist thinkers and communications scholars "have created a much deeper awareness of the interview process--that how people remember things is as important as what they remember."

Oral historians, he said, face new challenges with the proliferation of interviews and the increasing use of new technology to disseminate them.

A panel of educators, headed by Barry Lanman, president of the Association of Oral History Educators and past OHMAR president, described a variety of contemporary uses of oral history in secondary and postsecondary classrooms and on the Web. Lanman noted that in the 1970s, at the time of OHMAR's birth, oral history was considered "educational fluff" without much content.



*OHA past president Martha Ross joins past president Alice Hoffman and Howard Hoffman in singing a light-hearted tribute to Martha at the OHMAR spring meeting.*

By the 1990s, however, standards-based education, use of technology and higher-order thinking became educational watchwords, he said, noting that oral history can incorporate all of those trends.

Richard Williams of Plum Borough Senior High in Plum Borough, Pa., said he has been teaching an oral history course since 1976, which he created as an attempt to "make American history relevant to young people--ever tried to do that?"

In 25 years, some 500 students have conducted 1,500 interviews, with a focus on giving back to the community at large and collecting information "you can't copy from an encyclopedia," he said.

Williams praised Martha for training and inspiring teachers and emphasizing the need for research as part of the oral history process.

An afternoon session examined the impact of new technology on oral history.

Roy Rosenzweig, a creator of George Mason University's "History Matters" Web site for teachers, said the Web has "emerged as the medium for presenting oral history" because it permits historians to "interweave interpretation and evidence."

The Web, he said, allows historians for the first time to "add a voice to the voices of the past."

A panel featuring a half-dozen past OHMAR presidents reminisced about the organization's formative years and its then-prickly relationship with OHA. Martha recalled that a hotel stairwell was the assigned meeting space for regional oral historians at one OHA meeting.

Past OHMAR presidents Ben Frank and Alice Hoffman said oral historians should take pride in the contributions they have made.

Hoffman said the "democratic nature" of oral history practice contributed to labor history, women's history and other work documenting lives of ordinary people. "We have changed the nature of history," she said.

Frank added: "We ought to pat ourselves on the back. We've left a legacy."

The panelists predicted that oral history would continue to be a dynamic, interdisciplinary pursuit.

"One of the charms of OHA and OHMAR," Martha said, "is the variety of disciplines using the same methodology for their own purposes."

Yet all show respect for interviewees' memories of their experiences and for their willingness to share it, she said.

"What we do today," Ritchie noted, "is key to the ways future historians will interpret the 20th and 21st centuries."

## ***Debra E. Bernhardt, Labor Historian and OHA Activist, Dies***

Debra E. Bernhardt, long-time Oral History Association member and acclaimed labor historian, died of cancer March 22 at her New York home. She was 47.

Bernhardt was head of New York University's Tamiment Library and the Wagner Labor Archives, jointly sponsored by NYU and the New York City Central Labor Council. She was OHA program co-chair for the 1998 annual meeting in Buffalo.

Bernhardt's oral history work focused on labor issues. She produced an eight-part oral history-based radio series, "New Yorkers at Work," and co-authored with Rachel Bernstein "Ordinary People, Extra-

ordinary Lives: A Pictorial History of Working People in New York City," published by NYU Press in 2000.

In 1998, Bernhardt spearheaded a successful campaign to have New York's Union Square Park declared a national historic landmark to commemorate the site of the first Labor Day parade on Sept. 5, 1882. Her work earned awards from the New York Labor History Association, the National Society of the Daughters of the Revolution and the New York City Central Labor Council.

OHA was among the cosponsors of a May 1 memorial service scheduled in her honor.



*Debra E. Bernhardt*

*Photo by New York University*

## **OHA News Roundup**

### ***Teaching Award Named To Honor Martha Ross***

The Oral History Association's biennial award for exemplary precollegiate teaching using oral history will be named the Martha Ross Teaching Award, and, for the first time this year, will include a cash prize.

OHA President Cliff Kuhn announced the endowed award at the 25th anniversary meeting of Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region (OHMAR), which paid tribute to Martha as an oral history pioneer.

Contributors to the endowment include: Madelyn Campbell, Thomas Charlton and M. Rebecca Sharpless, G. Cullom Davis, Mary Jo Deering, Enid H. Douglass, Ronald J. Grele, Samuel B. Hand, Pamela Henson, Alice M. Hoffman, Margot H. Knight, Elizabeth B. Mason, Donita M. Moorhus, John Neuenschwander, Mary Kay Quinlan, Anne and Donald Ritchie, Linda Shopes and Elinor D. Sinnette.

Other contributors are: Michaelyn Chou, John and Marilyn Fox, Patricia A. Cooper and Ron Marcello.

OHA members can make a tax-deductible contribution to the award endowment by sending a check to the OHA Endowment Fund, Ross Award, Oral History Association, Dickinson College, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013-2986.

### ***Membership Directory Published Biennially***

**By Madelyn Campbell  
OHA Executive Secretary**

In the past, OHA has published a **Membership Directory** annually. To conserve funds, OHA Council has voted to publish the **Directory** biennially in even-numbered years. Thus, OHA members will not receive a **Directory** this August as usual.

Because the **Directory** also included annual financial reports, and we know that many members are interested in the association's financial affairs, these reports and a new-member addendum can be requested by phone or e-mail. Call 717-245-1036 or e-mail: oha@dickinson.edu

### ***Space Limitations Prevent St. Louis Silent Auction***

Limitations on secure exhibit space at The Millennium Hotel in St. Louis for the OHA meeting in October will prevent the association from sponsoring a silent auction to benefit the OHA Endowment Fund, according to Jacqueline Dace, local arrangements chair.

For the past five years, a silent auction has raised thousands of dollars for the endowment, which was established as an emergency reserve fund and as a way to finance special projects.

Though they will not be able to bid on auction items in St. Louis, OHA members are reminded that they may contribute to the endowment at any time. Contributions frequently are made in recognition of living and deceased members.

Please send tax-deductible contributions to the OHA at the address noted above.

# The New York Times and Oral History: A Commentary

By Alice and Howard Hoffman

The New York Times in its March 10 Arts and Ideas section published an article on oral history under the title: "Prospecting for Truth in the Ore of Memory: Oral History is Gaining New Respect Through Insights into its Distortions."

At the spring meeting of Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region, OHA past president Ron Marcello spoke on the past of oral history and commented that the Times article was "deja vu all over again." In other words, it transported those of us who remember the early days of oral history back to the beginning when defending the legitimacy of oral history was required.

The article cites Luisa Passerini's comments at a meeting of the International Oral History Association held in Britain in 1979 as follows:

"Irrelevances and discrepancies must not be denied, but these will never be understood if we take oral sources merely as factual statements ...[they] should be taken as forms of culture and testimonies of the changes of these forms over time."

Ron Grele, recently retired as director of the oral history program at Columbia University, said: "Italian scholars have played an important role in beginning to ask questions about the nature of oral sources, questions about memory, about what we learn from people's mistakes, about how history lives on and is transmitted."

The fact of the matter is that the issue of the relevance of memory to the historiographical analysis of oral history documents has been on the agenda of the Oral History Association almost since its inception. The first time that the issue came up directly was at the 5th Colloquium in a talk by T. Harry Williams on using oral history to write biography.

The entire theme of the 11th annual meeting in 1976 was "History Shared Through Memory." At first we asked clinical psychologists to bring their expertise to our attempts to wrestle with questions such as the potential accuracy of memory, of how the interaction between interviewer and interviewee might affect the content of the dialogue.

In the 1978 issue of the **Oral History Review**, John Neuen-schwander wrote a thoughtful piece titled "Remembrance of Things Past: Oral Historians and Long-Term Memory." The article provided a review of the literature on psychological experiments on the nature and limits of human memory. Neuen-schwander called for interdisciplinary "pilgrimages" with psychologists and other social scientists to obtain a better understanding of the dynamics of the oral history interview process.

At about this time, such an interdisciplinary study was under way. It was a 10-year study conducted by Alice Hoffman, an oral historian, and Howard Hoffman, an experimental psychologist, into an analysis of Howard's memory for his term of service as an infantryman during World War II.

That report appeared in a monograph titled "The Archives of Memory" published in 1990. It provided evidence for a subset of memory called "archival memory." That is to say, it was memory for events that were salient in life review, frequently rehearsed in memory, if not in stories, and therefore so stable in character as to be uninfluenced by context. Thus, that category of memory was reliable; but the assessment of its veridicality was dependent upon the application of the standard canons of historical analysis.

In Luisa Passerini's "Autobiography of a Generation," we are asked to accept her post-psychoanalysis account of her past as

accurate. But when it comes to her interviewees, we are asked to see their memories as molded by the motivations and cultural norms of the time. The result is that, much like the writing of Sigmund Freud, we are faced with brilliant insights but not with the corroborating evidence that could be obtained by studies of how the neurophysiology of the brain actually functions to preserve past events.

The New York Times article merely parrots critiques of oral history. The more appropriate response would be to echo Neuen-schwander's call for more collaborative interdisciplinary effort. A great many naturalistic studies of memory have appeared in the literature since 1990. They need to be incorporated into future analyses of oral history.

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## *Tribal Traditions Describe Earthquake*

Seismologists at the University of Washington who have turned to oral histories of the Pacific Northwest Indian tribes are convinced that an ancient tale of a battle between Thunderbird and Whale is the story of a massive earthquake and tsunami that hit the coast about 1700, before European settlers arrived.

The Seattle Post-Intelligencer reported March 2, in the wake of the most recent earthquake to hit Seattle, that seismologists traditionally have searched old newspaper clippings and other documentary sources to identify previously unknown quakes.

But only recently have they recognized that Native American oral traditions embody descriptions of such natural phenomena. The tribal story of an epic battle between Whale and Thunderbird includes descriptions one seismologist said sound a lot like the impact of a major quake and its aftershocks, and tribes all along the coast tell the same story.

# STATE AND REGIONAL REPORT



## OHAM Meeting Focuses On Labor History

By Barb Sommer  
Oral History Association of  
Minnesota

"Uniting the Voices: Documenting the Labor Story" was the theme of the annual meeting of the Oral History Association of Minnesota, held March 31 in the new archives of the Immigration History Research Center, Elmer L. Andersen Library, on the University of Minnesota campus.

Presentations highlighted the use of oral history in documenting Minnesota's rich and varied labor history. Dick Hudelson, philosophy professor at the University of Wisconsin-Superior, and Tom Selinski, independent scholar, described work being done in the northeastern part of the state.

Peter Rachleff, history professor at Macalester College in St. Paul, Minn., gave the keynote address. He focused on the changes and complexity of oral history--from finding sources to deciding how to interview people once they are found. He also raised questions about what memory is and how it works.

"We are now thinking that it is not reproduced, but is constructed as part of a person's role in and interaction with his or her community," he said. Thus memory is a "source much deeper and richer" than previously understood and is an avenue to get at a person's subjectivity, at his or her thinking and imagination. Rachleff concluded

with a discussion of the importance for oral historians to try to reach this level of understanding of the people they interview.

The meeting also included a panel discussion by Ed Nelson, Barb Sommer, Beverly Hermes and Jo Ann Hanson, moderated by John Decker, about the nuts and bolts of oral history projects. Taking questions from meeting attendees, the panel discussed project funding needs, equipment, the need to transcribe, opportunities for publishing and the attributes of a good oral history project.

Kathryn Brewer also introduced the new OHAM Website at: [www.oham.org](http://www.oham.org). The site includes a flash page, home page, membership page and a set of interview guidelines from the Minnesota Historical Society oral history program.

Also at the meeting, Jim Fogerty of the Minnesota Historical Society was recognized and thanked for his ongoing support of OHAM and his work as newsletter editor.

## Boise Meet Planned For NOHA Members

By Al Stein  
Northwest Oral History  
Association

"Uses of Oral History: Ways You Know, Ways You Don't Know, Ways You Might Not Have Thought Of" is the theme of the 2001 oral history workshop in Boise, Idaho, on May 24 sponsored by NOHA at the joint annual meeting of the Society of Rocky Mountain Archivists, Northwest Archivists and the Council of Intermountain Archivists.

The oral history workshop moderator is Jodie Foley, and participants include OHA past president Laurie Mercier, Alan H. Stein, Clark Hansen and John Davidson. Other pre-conference workshops will cover security in archives and manuscript repositories

and electronic records issues for archivists.

On May 25, Troy Reeves of the Idaho Oral History Center will moderate an "Oral History in Archives" session. Brad Cole of Northwestern Arizona University will discuss his work on the recently finished project "Voices from the Trading Post," which, in addition to collecting oral histories, created a Website and a CD-ROM with a companion teacher's manual for distribution to Four Corners-area schools.

Matt Nickerson of Southern Utah University will discuss a project to create a "Voices of the Colorado Plateau" digital exhibit, which draws from repositories in Nevada, Utah and Arizona. Todd Welch of the Oregon Historical Society will discuss his work in transferring oral history data to CD-ROM.

## Education Group Presents 1st Award

By Barry Lanman, President  
Association of Oral History  
Educators

Toby Daspit, assistant professor at Western Michigan University, is the first winner of the Betty Key Oral History Educators Award, presented by the Association of Oral History Educators for exemplary use of oral history as an educational methodology.

Daspit, who holds degrees from the University of Southwestern Louisiana and Louisiana State University, is best known as co-author, with Pamela Dean and Petra Munro, of "Talking Gumbo: A Teacher's Guide to Using Oral History in the Classroom." In Louisiana, he worked with local schools and a museum to document African-American oral traditions.

Applications for the 2001 award are due Sept. 15. For information, e-mail: [AOHELanman@aol.com](mailto:AOHELanman@aol.com).

## OHA Looking For Candidates In 2002 Election

By Rebecca Sharpless and Sherna Berger Gluck, Co-Chairs, OHA Nominating Committee

The OHA Nominating Committee is seeking interested, well-qualified people who are willing to be considered for candidacy for election to the OHA Council in 2002. Please take this opportunity to submit nominations for this important and interesting service to our organization.

There will be one position for election in 2002, that which is currently held by Tom King of the University of Nevada at Reno. OHA policy is to have two nominees for each Council position. The OHA seeks a Council that is balanced with regard to gender, ethnicity, geography and affiliation.

Service on the Council is for a three-year term. The 2002 election will be for the period October 2002 through October 2005. It entails meeting twice a year, once immediately preceding the annual meeting and once in February or March, usually at the location of that year's upcoming annual meeting. The first Council meeting for the 2002 Council vacancy will be February or March 2003.

Council members work with the officers to set OHA policy, and they act as liaison between Council and OHA committees.

There is no remuneration for serving on Council, but OHA pays travel to the midwinter Council meeting and half of travel to the annual meeting if the person's institution cannot. All Council nominees must be OHA members in good standing at the time of nomination.

If you are interested in being considered as a candidate for election to the OHA Council in 2002, please send your curriculum vitae to:

Rebecca Sharpless, P.O. Box 97271, Baylor University, Waco, TX 76798, or e-mail it to:

Rebecca\_Sharpless@baylor.edu.

You may nominate yourself or you may suggest other people. The Nominating Committee will begin its work in October 2001 and must have its slate of candidates ready for presentation at the time of the midwinter Council meeting in 2002.

## Series Seeking New Manuscripts

By Bruce Stave and Linda Shopes

Palgrave, the academic trade imprint of St. Martin's Press, announces a new series, Palgrave Studies in Oral History. The editors invite proposals for manuscripts that employ edited oral history interviews to explore a wide variety of topics and themes in all areas of history.

While we expect interviews to dominate the text, we seek work that places interviews in broad historical context and engages issues of historical memory and narrative construction. Fresh approaches to the use and analysis of oral history as well as to the organization of text are encouraged.

We welcome work based on interviews conducted within and outside the United States, as well as cross-cultural and comparative work. Books in the series typically will be aimed at general readers, students and scholars, will range from 200-250 pages long and will include photographs.

Proposals based on completed oral history projects or interviews already undertaken for a scholarly project are preferred, but those premised on interviews to be conducted specifically for the proposed manuscript also will be considered.

For information about submitting proposals, contact Bruce Stave at: [stave@uconnvm.uconn.edu](mailto:stave@uconnvm.uconn.edu) or Linda Shopes at: [lshopes@aol.com](mailto:lshopes@aol.com).

## 'Born in Slavery' Interviews Now Available Online

More than 2,300 first-person accounts of slavery, recorded in the 1930s as part of the Federal Writers' Project (FWP), are now available online as part of the Library of Congress' National Digital Library Program.

"Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project 1936-1938" comprises more than 9,500 page images with searchable text, bibliographic records and 500 black-and-white photographs of former slaves. The photos of former slaves are linked to their narratives.

The online collection features an extensive introductory essay by Norman R. Yetman of the University of Kansas, which includes information about the interviewers, the people interviewed and the processes of collection and compilation as well as a wealth of fascinating stories and candid portraits of former slaves.

The FWP originally made no plans to collect slave autobiographies and reminiscences. Interviews with former slaves were undertaken spontaneously after the inception of the project and were included among the activities of several Southern Writers' Projects for almost a year before these isolated efforts were transformed into a concerted regional project coordinated by the FWP national headquarters in Washington, D.C.

On April 1, 1937, formal collection of slave narratives began with the dispatch of instructions to all Southern and border states directing their writers' project workers to interview former slaves. Today, the collection provides a unique and virtually unsurpassed collective portrait of a historical population.

The collection is part of the American Memory Web site: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/snhtml/>

# ANNOUNCEMENTS, OPPORTUNITIES

## **Columbia University Plans Summer Oral History Institute**

The Columbia University Oral History Research Office annual summer institute in oral history is scheduled from June 18-29. This year's topic is "Documenting Memories of Struggle and Resistance: Social Change and Social Memories." Faculty this year include: Alessandro Portelli, Leslie Brown, Anne Valk, Linda Shopes, Ann Cvetkovich, Steve Rowland, Josh Brown, Ted Bongiovanni, Ronald Grele, Mary Marshall Clark and Alexander Freund.

This year's program will focus on the challenges and complexities of documenting memories of social and political change through interpreting ways in which individuals remember their participation in social movements, communities and long-term political struggles.

For information about remaining space availability, contact Mary Marshall Clark at: [mmc17@columbia.edu](mailto:mmc17@columbia.edu).

## **Aug. 1 Deadline Set For Fulbright Scholars**

The Fulbright Scholar Program is offering 141 lecturing/research awards in American history for the 2002-03 academic year. Awards for both faculty and professionals range from two months to an academic year. While foreign language skills are needed in some countries, most Fulbright lecturing assignments are in English.

For information visit the Web at: <http://www.cies.org>.

## **African-American Workers Featured on Railroad Video**

The Virginia Museum of Transportation has released "African Americans on the Norfolk and Western Railroad, 1930-1970," a video composite of oral history interviews that provide glimpses of life on the railroad in the days of segregation.

The museum, located in Roanoke, Va., also features a permanent exhibit about African-American contributions to Virginia's railroad heritage.

For more information, see the museum's Web site: [www.vmt.org](http://www.vmt.org) or call 540-342-5670.

## **Book Available on Oral History Of Women's Democratic Club**

The Woman's National Democratic Club Educational Foundation has published "Democratic Women: An Oral History of the Woman's National Democratic Club" by OHA member Jewell Fenzi and Allida Black.

Based on more than 50 interviews with club members, the book traces the club's history from the 1920s to the present, detailing notable and lesser-known women, the political causes they espoused and the role they played while their party was in and out of office through the 20th century.

The book includes a detailed chapter on First Lady Eleanor Roosevelt, enlivened by a 1999 interview with her granddaughter, Eleanor "Ellie" Seagraves, who recalled birthday parties in the East Room of the White House and who offered reflective observations on much that has been written about her grandmother.

For more information, contact the WNDC at: [WomansNDC@aol.com](mailto:WomansNDC@aol.com).

## **World War II Veterans' Stories Detailed in Texas Publication**

The University of North Texas Oral History Program has released "Heroes: Oral History Interviews with World War II Veterans." Edited by Richard W. Byrd and OHA past president Ronald E. Marcello, the book is an annotated finding aid for the oral history program's World War II holdings. The descriptions of several hundred interviews detail the "experiences of the men and women who fought and won the Mighty

Endeavor," Byrd and Marcello wrote in their introduction, adding: "These oral histories are our attempt to pay tribute to the men and women who won World War II. We feel privileged to have been allowed to preserve the story of their sacrifices and triumphs."

## **Pregnant Women in Military Focus of Interviews**

The Vietnam Archive Oral History Project at Texas Tech University is seeking to collaborate with other institutions interested in documenting experiences of the many thousands of military women discharged due to pregnancy during the Vietnam War years from 1964 to 1973.

Texas Tech oral historian Stephen Maxner said his university's oral history project focuses only on those who served in Southeast Asia, but he would like to create complimentary and cooperative oral history projects with other institutions, which could document the experiences of women who served stateside or in other parts of the world during the Vietnam era.

The issue is a "difficult and important aspect of American military history," Maxner said. Options for pregnant military women included abortion, adoption or discharge from the military, often with discharge or re-enlistment codes indicating they were "undesirable" for retention or re-enlistment. Many of these women found themselves on the street with little or no support. Fathers of their out-of-wedlock children were not held accountable, and in some cases, pregnancies resulting from rape were treated no differently.

"Obviously," Maxner said, "the story of trauma and hardship suffered by these women deserves our attention as oral historians and scholars."

Those interested in the issue can call Maxner at: 806-742-9010 or e-mail him at: [lisfm@lib.ttu.edu](mailto:lisfm@lib.ttu.edu).

# A Found Poem

By Mrs. Belle Miller Spivey Hood  
Submitted by Randall A. Wells, Director  
Horry County Oral History Project

Chinese junk came into Conway  
tied up at the old warehouse  
before 1941, before the war.

They wore red in my mind's eye  
Almost a carnival almost, go on boat, trinkets for sale,  
tin, paper, don't remember anything else but that.  
Was at least one family of Chinese  
it seems that my father told me more than one

They told my father that was the blackest water they'd ever seen,  
on the darkest night you felt like you were out at sea.  
They had been all around the world.

Several others remember it coming. Not necessarily more than one time

Boat I think was red with lanterns

[Editor's Note: Randall A. Wells, English and speech professor at Coastal Carolina University, Conway, S.C., submitted this example of "serendipitous art"--lines he typed during a telephone interview last year with Mrs. Hood as part of his compilation of memory-based material for a forthcoming book on Horry County, S. C. Wells noted that the black water to which Mrs. Hood referred is the Waccamaw River in northeastern South Carolina.]

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## OHA Pamphlet Order Form

Add to your professional reference library the Oral History Association's pamphlets. OHA members get a 10 percent discount for orders of 10 or more copies. Clip and mail this coupon, with your check made out to OHA, to:  
Oral History Assn., Dickinson College, Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013.

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All prices include shipping via domestic mail. Inquire for costs of Federal Express delivery. International shipping by surface mail at no extra charge; add 30 percent to your order if you prefer international airmail delivery.

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Oral History and the Law, 2nd ed., by John A. Neuenschwander, 1993	\$8.00	_____
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## 2002 Slate Presented

By **Rebecca Sharpless and Sherna Berger Gluck, Co-Chairs, OHA Nominating Committee**

The OHA Nominating Committee is pleased to present the following candidates for first vice president and one Council seat.

For first vice president: **Rose Diaz**, University of New Mexico.

For one Council seat:

**Charles Hardy**, West Chester University, and **Tracy K'Meyer**, University of Louisville.

OHA members also will elect members to the Nominating Committee. Three two-year positions are to be filled. Members will vote for one person from each of three places.

Place 1: **Wendy Ng**, San Jose State University, or **Eric Wat**, independent oral historian, Los Angeles.

Place 2: **Jacqueline Dace**, Missouri Historical Society, or **Adrienne Petty**, Columbia University.

Place 3: **Gloria Holguin Cuadraz**, Arizona State University West, or **Horacio Roque Rodriguez**, University of California Los Angeles.

The OHA election will be by mail ballot sent this summer to each OHA member in good standing. Biographical information and statements from each of the nominees will be included with the ballots.

The Nominating Committee and Council will accept additional nominations for officers, Council members and Nominating Committee members in the following manner (See OHA bylaws, section 9, paragraph 2, on page 61 in the 2000 **Membership Directory**):

A petition signed by 20 or more OHA members in good standing may be submitted for each nomination, stating the particular office for which the nomination is made.

A petition nominating a first vice president or Council member must be in the hands of the Nominating Committee by June 15. (Send to Rebecca Sharpless, Institute for Oral History, Baylor University. P.O. Box 97271, Waco, TX 76798.)

A petition nominating a candidate for the Nominating Committee must be sent to the OHA Council by June 15. (Send to Cliff Kuhn, 960 Los Angeles Ave. NE, Atlanta, GA 30306.)

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