



Spring 2008
Volume XLII Number 1

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Historic industrial city to host 2008 OHA conference

This year the Oral History Association is holding its annual meeting Oct. 15-19 in Pittsburgh, Pa., at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel on the banks of the Monongahela River. The meeting will include a full slate of workshops, panels, plenary speakers and events, many of which will explore the impact of digital media on oral history practice.

In the works are sessions on audio tours, archives and digital collections, sites of memory, veterans projects, interviewing strategies, community projects, gender, immigration and migration, the history of technology, social and political movements, popular culture and many other topics. In 2007, Oxford University Press became the publisher of the *Oral History Review*. A session on publishing with the *Oral History Review* will discuss the opportunities that the new online version of the journal provides contributors for the use of multimedia.

New to the meeting this year will be a digital showcase plenary in which attendees will interact with juried presenters who demonstrate and discuss their projects, a public oral history interview at the Senator John Heinz History Center and working groups in which participants discuss recent award-winning books, teaching oral history at the college level, ethical issues raised by digitiza-

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Pittsburgh skyline—courtesy of VisitPittsburgh.

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From the president

OHA remembers the past, looks to the future

We have seen the deaths of several key oral history leaders this past year or two, and it offers us time to pause and reflect on our own purpose as individuals and as an Association. We will be missing the continued contributions of folks like Willa Baum, Bill Moss and Roy Rosenzweig and should ensure that their memory is perpetuated as they have helped so many others preserve theirs. One way is to consider making a donation in their name such as to Rosenzweig's Center for History and New Media fund at the George Mason University Foundation.

As we should protect the importance of the past, we also need to look to the future and concentrate on grooming the next generation of historians, especially as our original founders depart.

As we should protect the importance of the past, we also need to look to the future and concentrate on grooming the next generation of historians, especially as our original founders depart. As I was born the same year as the Oral History Association (1966 in case you forgot), I have been asking myself whether we are having any sort of "midlife crisis," especially as we lose our mentors. After careful analysis, I have come to the conclusion that although there are always challenges for any individual or organization, there is no crisis in the wings as long as we continue to take stock periodically and ensure that we are serving our members and keeping current with the field.

Recently, the Council held its mid-winter meeting in Pittsburgh at the upcoming conference venue at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel and talked about how to keep the Association cutting-edge and relevant. The Council accomplished much work in its weekend-long meeting including the following highlights:

- Decided to utilize the Matrix program at Michigan State University as our new Web site designer and Internet host
- Hired Susan Kitchens of Monrovia, Calif., as Web editor and consultant for our new Web site
- Reconstituted the *Oral History Review* Editorial Board with some new and "young at heart" faces to assist the great work that Editor Kim Porter has accomplished so far
- Charged Tracy K'Meyer with forming a committee to review the Association's Standards and Guidelines and update and streamline them as necessary

We also decided to formally support the idea of holding a joint Sino-American Oral History Conference in November of 2009 with the Chinese People's Political Consultative Conference (CPPCC) who came to visit the Oral History Association this February. The CPPCC is essentially the upper house in the People's Republic, and several members of the Conference were in the United States to see how the Oral History Association operates.

First, they came to Lowell, Mass., where they met with me and several other members of the Association including Professors Jeff Gerson and Lisa Krissoff Boehm. We had very lively discussions during the day in comparing the field of oral history in the U.S. and in China and both groups learned much from the other. After Lowell, the delegation went to Dickinson College in Pennsylvania to meet with Executive Secretary Madelyn Campbell to see how the Association runs from an administrative perspective. After the visitors returned home, we all agreed that this first meeting is just the beginning of a long-term and more formal relationship.

The planning for the Pittsburgh conference, led by Pennsylvania's own Charlie Hardy, is proceeding at a fast pace and should produce a very exciting and engaging annual meeting. The Sheraton Station Square Hotel is beautifully situated along the Monongahela River and at the foot of a series of hills that can be accessed by the Steel City's famous historic incline tram cars. The hotel is consistently busy and we encourage you to book your rooms fairly early as I hope to see many of you at the conference.

Mehmed Ali
Lowell National Historical Park
Lowell, Mass.



Mehmed Ali

Spring Newsletter reminder to check membership status

Current Oral History Association members who have renewed for 2008 and those who were members in 2007 but who have not yet renewed are receiving this spring issue of the **OHA Newsletter**.

Because Oxford University Press now is maintaining the OHA membership list and sent out the renewal notices, some members might not have been aware that an envelope from Oxford University Press was actually their renewal notice and not a junk mail solicitation.

So if you have not yet renewed, please do so soon to avoid interruption in receiving your **Newsletter**, *Oral History Review* and conference registration materials.

Questions about your membership status? Call Journals Customer Service, Oxford University Press, at 800-852-7323. The mailing address to send in

Cold War oral history projects reveal complexities

Oral history projects addressing the complexities of the Cold War were the focus of two panels at the 2007 Oral History Association conference last October. The following stories recount what the presenters discussed.

The holographic postcard tells the story. Hold it one way and you see a green, grassy aerial view of the Rocky Flats National Wildlife Refuge. Tilt it a little, and you see a massive industrial complex that manufactured nuclear weapons components during the Cold War.

But the postcard trick doesn't begin to tell the whole story of the 6,200-acre complex 16 miles northwest of downtown Denver that once housed more than 800 structures and employed thousands, all sworn to such secrecy about their jobs that they were forbidden to talk about them, even to each other.

Filling in the details is the challenge taken on by the Rocky Flats Cold War Museum board members who are former Rocky Flats workers, former government employees, activists and interested community residents who are collaborating to create a museum they hope will be a state-of-the-art, architecturally interesting place dedicated to collecting and telling the story of Rocky Flats and its role in the Cold War.

In December, the museum received \$492,000 in the federal energy and water appropriations bill to jumpstart a fundraising campaign and begin exhibit

development, according to Sen. Wayne Allard, R-Colo.

A key contributor to those exhibits will be the more than 90 interviews already completed and archived at the Carnegie Branch Library for Local History in Boulder, Colo., about 8 miles north of the nuclear weapons plant site.

Kim Grant, vice president of the museum board, told the OHA audience that the effort to develop a museum began in 1999, largely out of a concern for the artifacts that would be lost as the building destruction and cleanup continued on what eventually would become a \$7 billion Superfund cleanup site.

"There's nothing left of this place that was a self-contained industrial city that operated for over 50 years," he said, adding that the museum would be "a vehicle for unlocking the secrecy of the Cold War."

Collaborating with the Carnegie Library, Grant said, added credibility to the museum project but also provided a preexisting infrastructure to make management of the project easier.

Susan Becker, who manages the Maria Rogers Oral History Program at the Boulder library, said the collaboration means the museum won't have to staff archives for the oral histories,



Workers in protective suits at the Rocky Flats Nuclear Weapons Plant are in what was called "The Infinity Room." They are standing on canisters containing plutonium.

Photo courtesy of the Rocky Flats Cold War Museum

which are available and searchable online through the library.

Grant said museum planners hope to link to other related Cold War sites such as those in Oak Ridge, Tenn., Los Alamos, N.M., Las Vegas, and Hanford, Wash.

Museum board president Ann Lockhart said the interviews encompass an extraordinary range of viewpoints from federal, state and local officials, political leaders, protesters, landowners, medical researchers and the wide variety of plant workers.

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Southern Oral History Program receives major grant to go digital with civil rights collection

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation recently awarded a \$937,000 grant to support a collaborative research and publication project centered on the Southern Oral History Program's "Long Civil Rights Movement Initiative" at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.

The three-year grant to the SOHP, the University of North Carolina Press, the university's Center for Civil Rights in the School of Law and the university's library allows the SOHP to join its partners in exploring new ways of producing and disseminating civil rights movement-related scholarship through print and digital media.

Since 2001, SOHP researchers have been documenting social justice activism in the post-1960s South with an emphasis on school desegregation and on struggles for economic justice and gender equality. These efforts have produced one of the nation's most extensive collections of oral history interviews related to social change in the 20th century South.

With Mellon grant funding, according to SOHP director Jacquelyn Hall, the organization will "develop new avenues of communicating its scholarly findings," while using digital technology to "invite the participation of a community of scholars in ways that we would not have dreamed of just a few years ago."

The grant is part of a Mellon Foundation initiative to develop new ways to connect the publishing activities of university presses with the academic priorities of their universities. UNC officials proposed that the project be built around the press and the university's strength in interdisciplinary civil rights scholarship.

Kate Torrey, director of UNC Press, suggested that Hall's essay "The Long Civil Rights Movement and the Political Uses of the Past" might provide the foundation for the grant, and the project partners spent eight months crafting their proposal. A central theme of Hall's essay is that the narrative

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Historic industrial city to host 2008 OHA conference

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Special rate available for OHA members

Oral History Association members planning to attend the 2008 conference can reserve a single or double room for \$125 a night at the conference hotel, the Sheraton Station Square Hotel, 200 West Station Square Drive, Pittsburgh, Pa.

For reservations, call 800-325-3535 or 412-261-2000.

The special rate is available until Sept. 12 or until the OHA block of rooms is filled, whichever is earlier.

tion and dissemination on the Web and interviewing techniques. The meeting also will include a community showcase in which attendees can interact with representatives of regional museums, community and social action groups and others who discuss their uses of oral history.

In line with this year's theme, the meeting will offer workshops on digital audio and video field recording equipment and use, on best practices for the digitization and digital storage of interviews, hands-on production of multimedia presentations and oral history and the law, as well as the popular introduction to oral history workshop. An oral history workshop for K-12 educators will take place on Saturday at the new Fred Rodgers Center at Saint Vincent College in Latrobe, and will include a tour, open to meeting attendees, of its state-of-the-art oral history archive.

This year is the 250th anniversary of the founding of Pittsburgh and the 75th anniversary of the beginning of the New Deal. To kick off the meeting, attendees are invited to attend a presidential reception on Wednesday evening that will take us for a riverboat tour of the Pittsburgh waterfront and upper Ohio River by moonlight. The Thursday plenary will commemorate and celebrate the 75th anniversary of the New Deal. Our plenary speakers are StoryCorps founder David Isay, author of *Listening as an Act of Love: A Celebration of American Life* from the StoryCorps Project, and Carnegie Mellon historian Joe Trotter, who will discuss his new book, *African Americans in Pittsburgh Since World War II*. Rethinking labor will be the theme of another plenary featuring an international panel of presenters.

Having undergone a remarkable renaissance since the devastating loss of industries in the late 1900s, Pittsburgh offers rich opportunities for visitors, including the Andy Warhol Museum, the Heinz History Center and Western Pennsylvania Sports Museum, the world-class Carnegie Museums and the Phipps Conservatory and Botanical Gardens. The annual meeting will also offer an architectural walking tour of downtown Pittsburgh, sign-up groups that eat at local restaurants and a bus tour of Pittsburgh's fabled industrial and labor history, with stops at Rivers of Steel and the scene of the Homestead strike of 1892. ❖

Southern Oral History Program receives major grant for civil rights project

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of the civil rights movement has been erroneously limited to the tumultuous decade between the 1954 Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision, which made school segregation illegal, and the Civil Rights Act of 1964.

Hall asserted that the "longer civil rights movement" began in the liberal and radical milieu of the late 1930s, continued well beyond the 1960s and included the political and legal backlash that has led to a re-segregation of schools and neighborhoods and threatens the social aims inherent in the Brown decision.

She argued for a widening of the window of civil rights chronologically, spatially and ideologically, to include contemporary issues such as race and the public schools, economic justice and the women's and gay rights movements that were inspired by civil rights struggles. In so doing, Hall sought to debunk popularized notions of the civil rights movement that, in effect, diminish its lasting meaning and obscure its continuing power and relevance.

The library's Southern Historical Collection is the repository for the Southern Oral History Program's tapes and transcripts. Currently, a \$500,000 grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services is funding collaboration between SOHP and the library's "Documenting the American South" group to make 500 interviews available online. The project is also developing path-breaking tools for synchronizing the voice of each storyteller with a scrolling transcript and making oral histories searchable in ways they have never been before, according to Hall.

While it is far too early to determine outcomes, the people involved in the project believe that this grant can serve as a model for others to follow.

The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation is a private foundation that makes grants in the areas of higher education and scholarship, scholarly communications, research in information technology, museums and art conservation, performing arts and conservation and the environment. ❖

What do oral histories of modern-day mountain men, black Massachusetts legislators and a Cuban traditional drummer have in common?

More than you might imagine.

Presenters at the 2007 Oral History Association conference in Oakland, Calif., whose work has taken them to the mountains of Wyoming, the halls of the Massachusetts Statehouse and the California home of a Cuban bata drummer found common ground in describing the communities that welcomed them and, in turn, changed their lives.

Brooke Murphy, a University of Maryland graduate student, described her experiences documenting the lives of modern-day mountain men who reenact rendezvous, or traditional gatherings of trappers and traders that took place in the American West during the era of the fur trade between 1807 and 1842. The rendezvous reenactors include many Vietnam veterans who have created a community they characterize as simple, independent and free—an image of themselves that may be more fanciful than real, Murphy indicated.

Participating in rendezvous is far more than a living history experience for the veterans. Indeed, rendezvous allow these veterans, who otherwise often feel like misfits in the larger society, to experience a sense of belonging, she found, as they gradually came to trust her participation at the rendezvous.

In a far different setting, Oakland native Umi Vaughan, a musician and anthropologist at California State University, Monterey Bay, described his work with master drummer Carlos Aldama of Cuba, who introduced Vaughan to the rich drumming tradition of the Yoruba people, who brought their cultural legacy to Cuba from Africa.

To the Yoruba descendants, Vaughan said, the drum is a metaphor for life. “It will be here tomorrow, we will die; so today we should play with all our heart and teach,” he said.

But the drumming traditions are in transition as the practice has passed down through generations and moved from Cuba to the African-American community in the United States. “Questions of authority and authenticity arise,” Vaughan said. “Who owns the tradition?”

Like Murphy and Vaughan, presenter Annalise Fonza of the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, also was invited to enter a community with its own culture and traditions when she went to work as an aide to a member of the Massachusetts House of Representatives.

She interviewed members of the Black Caucus and key black staff members—men and women—to understand what drew them to legislative service. Fonza said she was struck by how the women she interviewed “all struggled to convince themselves” that they should run for office, while the men never questioned that they should run when the opportunity arose. “They felt entitled to it,” she said.

Fonza also noted that many of the African-American lawmakers had ties to black churches, often reflected in their speech patterns. “Many of them operate out of a sense of the prophetic and the poetic,” she said.

An ordained Methodist minister, Fonza indicated she surprised herself by coming away from the interviews entertaining the idea of running for public office herself someday.

Any oral history work “is going to move something in you,” she said. Murphy and Vaughan nodded their agreement. ❖

Thanks to Endowment Fund contributors

The Oral History Association thanks the following recent contributors to the OHA Endowment Fund:

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PRIYA MOHAN

HORACIO ROQUE RAMIREZ

ROSE DIAZ

ANDREW RUSSELL

SHERNA GLUCK

IRENE RETI

MARY KAY QUINLAN

Also, please welcome Dan Del Fiorentino and Adam Barnhart as life members. Contributions to the Endowment Fund are tax deductible.

Cold War oral history projects reveal complexities

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Hannah Nordhaus, a freelance historian who conducted many of the interviews, said she was surprised at the range of opinions that emerged.

From the time the plant opened in 1952, “secrecy was the watchword,” she said, noting that the compartmentalized nature of people’s knowledge about the plant makes it impossible for anyone to see the big picture.

Managers, for example, were concerned about industrial safety day to day, not the long-term effects of worker exposure to radioactive chemicals or environmental contamination.

The oral histories, Nordhaus said, will help “bring together the fragmented narratives of the Cold War.”

LeRoy Moore of the Rocky Mountain Peace and Justice Center questioned

whether the government’s official secrecy policies actually provided security or “cover for damage and deceit” associated with management of Rocky Flats.

Collecting first-person information about Rocky Flats has been a “remarkably democratic” process, Moore said, calling the oral history project “the democratic voice that’s been missing.” ❖

The diamond-shaped yellow road sign is a familiar warning to motorists of upcoming hazards. But the one on panelist Mary Palevsky’s screen relays an unfamiliar message: “Demonstrators on Roadway. 25 MPH.”

It’s a glimpse of the complexities that unfolded as Palevsky, director of the Nevada Test Site Oral History Project at the University of Nevada Las Vegas, and her colleagues described the large-scale project designed to document the experiences of people associated with and affected by nuclear testing from 1951 through 1992.

Nuclear testing is a complex, arcane field, she said, but oral history proved to be “a powerful methodology” to explore the contradictory and conflicting narratives.

“Our task was not to reconcile these conflicting narratives” or to devise an overarching master narrative, she said, but to collect information from a comprehensive array of interviewees.

Oral historians face a particular challenge in documenting technical fields, Palevsky said, but a lack of technical expertise on the part of interviewers can increase the value of the interview.

“Non-expert interviewers can stand in for non-expert readers,” she said. But researchers need to have the courage to say: “I really don’t understand,” she said, because “this puts their ignorance in the historical record.” This is especially daunting for students.

Project graduate research assistant and office manager Leisl Carr Childers described the challenges of interviewing

ranchers near Baker, Nevada, some 300 miles north of Las Vegas. A third generation Basque rancher described damage to his herds because of radioactive fallout, and recalled that his father bought his own Geiger counter to measure the radioactivity because he didn’t trust the government’s safety data.



Controversy over nuclear testing in Nevada generated repeated protests.

Photo credit: Nevada Test Site Oral History Project

The ranchers thought “safe” meant no damage, but the government monitors meant something entirely different, Childers said. When they said “safe,” they meant an acceptable level of damage.

Digital projects librarian Cory Lampert described the challenges of creating a digital archive of the Nevada Test Site interviews. The goal is to increase access to historical materials as much as possible, Lampert said, but online access will never fully replace hands-on archival research. The retrieval system is designed to allow both for searching for a known item as well as promoting browsing, no small task given the complex nature of the project’s content.

Palevsky said the collection includes some 335 hours of interviews with more than 150 individuals. The interviews average one-and-a-half hours in length, but some go as long as eight hours conducted over several days. Some people were interviewed more than once.

The list of project participants is remarkably diverse, encompassing: national laboratory scientists and engineers, miners, electricians, carpenters, welders, Cabinet-level officials, military personnel, corporate executives, secretarial staff, radiation survivors, Native American tribal leaders, anti-nuclear activists, ranchers and families who lived downwind of the test site.

For some, she said, the oral histories are narratives of personal illness and loss, filled with medical and scientific arguments about causes of illnesses. “These shape their reminiscences of the past,” she said.

Interviewers had to stress to their interviewees that as researchers, they couldn’t do anything to help the narrators with their compensation claims. It was critical, she said, to establish trust with all the groups that have different perspectives on nuclear testing.

Panel commentator Charles Weiner, Massachusetts Institute of Technology emeritus professor, praised the Nevada Test Site project for documenting a broad array of perspectives.

“This project focuses on individuals who get to tell their own stories,” he said. “Each has a story to tell...and their stories are all different.” ❖

For more information about the Rocky Flats project, go to: www.rockyflatsmuseum.org. More information about the Nevada Test Site project will be available at <http://digital.library.unlv.edu/ntsohp/> after the archive’s formal opening on April 27.

Columbia University articulates IRB policy

More than four years after the Oral History Association reached what many members thought was an understanding with the federal Office for Human Research Protections about the scope of review required for oral history projects, the Columbia University Institutional Review Board has asserted that “most” oral history is excluded from IRB review.

In a policy statement issued Dec. 27, 2007, the university’s IRB noted that Columbia’s Oral History Research Office “administers the world’s oldest formal university oral history archive open to the public.” Columbia’s policy is that all oral history projects at the university follow the OHA’s guidelines for professional ethical practice and that, for the most part, they do not constitute “human subjects research.”

In August 2003, the OHA and the American Historical Association proposed in a policy statement accepted by federal officials that oral history interviewing activities in general were not designed to contribute to what the federal rules call “generalizable knowledge” and thus do not constitute “research” under the federal rule and are not subject to IRB review.

The scope of the federal rule has been subject to wide variation in interpretation across college campuses.

The Columbia policy statement notes that the federal regulations fail to define “generalizable knowledge.” But it offers specific examples of circumstances under which oral history interviewing could be considered “human subjects research” and thus subject to review.

According to the Columbia IRB policy statement:

“Oral history interviews that only document specific historical events or the experiences of individuals or communities over different time periods would not constitute ‘human sub-

jects research’ as they would not support or lead to the development of a hypothesis in a manner that would have predictive value.

“The collection of such information, like journalism, is generally considered to be a biography, documentary, or a historical record of the individual’s life or experience; or of historical events.

“Oral history interviews of individuals is not usually intended to be scientific or to produce generalizable information and hence is not usually considered ‘research’ in accordance with the federal regulations or CU policy. Therefore, such oral history activities should not be submitted to the CU IRB for review.”

The policy statement further notes that some oral history activities could constitute “human subjects research” if they are “conducted in the context of systematic investigations involving interviews that are designed to elicit generalizable information regarding living individuals.” Such projects would have to be submitted to the IRB for approval.

The policy statement offers as a hypothetical example of the latter a research project in which a faculty member sought to interview members of a veterans post-traumatic stress disorder group about how the war affected their lives, with the specific aim of predicting what kinds of exposure in war situations leads to the development of PTSD. Such a project, the policy statement says, would be subject to IRB approval.

In a statement releasing the new Columbia IRB policy on oral history, Director Mary Marshall Clark thanked former OHA presidents Linda Shopes and Donald Ritchie for their leadership in devising the initial policy statement and for advising the Columbia University IRB. ❖



OHA election nominees announced

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

Nominated for first vice president is **RINA BENMAYOR**, California State University, Monterey Bay.

NOMINATED FOR COUNCIL ARE:

- **MARJORIE MCLELLAN**, Wright State University and
- **JESSICA WIEDERHORN**, The Narrative Trust.

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. The candidates are:

FOR POSITION ONE:

- **VICKI HAAS**, Chicago Oral History Roundtable, or
- **ESTHER EHRLICH**, Story Lines

FOR POSITION TWO:

- **NATALIE FOUSEKIS**, California State University, Fullerton, or
- **ALVA MOORE STEVENSON**, University of California, Los Angeles

FOR POSITION THREE:

- **JEFF FRIEDMAN**, Rutgers University, or
- **ERIN MCCARTHY**, Columbia College Chicago.

OHA members in good standing will receive biographical information, candidate statements and mail ballots this summer.

Additional nominations for officers, council members and Nominating Committee members may be made as provided in the OHA bylaws. Nominees must be dues-paying members of the organization. ❖

Oral history initiatives underway in Wisconsin

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Oral History Program, which is part of the university's General Library System, along with the Wisconsin Humanities Council and other co-sponsors has created Wisconsin Oral History Day, scheduled for April 14 at the Pyle Center on the UW-Madison campus.

The event, open to all Wisconsinites, fulfills outreach and development ideas put forth by the leadership of the UW-Madison's General Library System. For full program information, please visit <http://www.slis.wisc.edu/continued/oralhist> or contact Reeves at 608-890-1899 or treeves@library.wisc.edu.

In addition to the history day plans, two oral history projects have commenced this winter. With support from Forest Products Lab and Brittingham Fund, the OHP, using graduate student support, has begun to interview Forest Products Lab retired and long-term employees, a project that will last throughout 2008. This project will bring together the content gathered by the OHP and the Web presentation skills of the University Wisconsin Digital Collection Center.

The other project will document the stories and memories of the LGBT community in the Madison area, as well as throughout the state, from the 1960s to the present. Reeves, along with OHP volunteer Vicki Tobias, has conducted three interviews so far with Claudia Card, Ron McCrea and R. Richard "Dick" Wagner. The OHP program will look to expand this project by finding volunteer interviewers both on and off campus.

Along with these projects, the OHP has continued its tradition of interviewing long-term faculty and staff. During the winter OHP staff met with faculty from throughout campus, including Ralph Andreano, Akbar Ally, Bill Cronon, Dan Doeppers, David Hayman, Standish Henning, Tom Hoover, Dick Ringler and Jim Stotlman. These interviews are multi-session affairs to capture the individual's contribution to UW-Madison, as well as getting a context of his or her life outside of this campus.

The OHP was established in 1971, eventually becoming a part of the UW Archives and Records Management Services. The OHP's staff and volunteers gather oral histories to form an invaluable part of UW-Madison's historic record, including life history or project-driven interviews with administrators, faculty, staff and students. New goals include preserving and providing access to extant and future recordings using the most current technology. For more information about the OHP, visit its Web site at <http://archives.library.wisc.edu/ORAL/oral.htm> or e-mail Troy Reeves at treeves@library.wisc.edu.



MOHA reports on busy year for oral historians

The Michigan Oral History Association's (MOHA) 2007 program was highlighted by recording memories of people who came from many states to celebrate the 50th anniversary of the Mackinac Bridge in Bridge View Park, St. Ignace, Mich., in July. The Department of Natural Resources provided a mobile unit that was refitted as a recording studio, and the Michigan State Police provided a power source for field recording.

Volunteers contributed their expertise and time to capture the spoken words of administrators, iron workers, painters and laborers who built and maintain the bridge. The resulting audio productions are deposited in the Archives of Michigan. Transcription of these recordings is planned to complete the project.

Another highlight last year was the presentation and roundtable commentary by Donald A. Ritchie, associate Senate historian, at the Oral History for Michigianians 2007 conference offered in partnership with the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries in the fall.

A MOHA member recruited interviewees for WKAR Radio/TV, a PBS affiliate, in production of "The War: Michigan Voices" and interviewed women who lived through World War II and its aftermath for StoryCorps Door-to-Door.

Other highlights were the development of the free online Michigan Oral History Database and publication of a revised Guide for Doing Oral History. Participating in history-related conferences, Teaching American History seminars for teachers, a seminar in partnership with the Central Michigan University and the Michigan Women's Historical Center and Hall of Fame, contributing to museum exhibits, judging student submissions for Michigan National History Day and conducting workshops filled the calendar.

The MOHA education team is scheduled to present a session on "Criteria for Excellence: Problems and Solutions" during the 50th Michigan in Perspective Local History Conference at Wayne State University in Detroit on April 4. Also scheduled is an April 27 workshop at the Macomb Community College, Clinton Township, Macomb County.

MOHA also will partner with the Michigan Department of History, Arts and Libraries and the Huron Shores Humanities Council in offering Oral History for Michigianians 2008 conference on Nov. 7-8 in Rogers City, Mich. Planners are excited about designing an event close to the oral history practitioners in the northern part of the Lower Peninsula and the Upper Peninsula. The conference is for everyone, everywhere. Join us in Michigan!

Oral historians join Pacific Northwest conference

Oral historians will be among the historians, scholars from related fields, teachers, students, history buffs and general public who gather April 17-19 in Corvallis, Ore., for the 61st Pacific Northwest History Conference and the associated meeting of the Northwest Oral History Association.

This year's conference theme is "Across Time and Terrain in the Pacific Northwest."

For more information, go to: <http://washingtonhistory.org>.

Oral history joins program at Oklahoma State

By Tanya Finchum, Oklahoma State University

The Oklahoma State University Library would like to introduce the newly established Oklahoma Oral History Research Program that is part of a new interdisciplinary Center for Oklahoma Studies at Oklahoma State University. The program will incorporate the library's existing oral history projects and will develop new projects exploring the lives and contributions of Oklahomans from all walks of life.

Three main oral history projects are underway.

- The "O-STATE Stories" project records interviews with alumni, administrators, faculty, staff and supporters connected to Oklahoma A&M College and Oklahoma State University as a means of preserving memories and campus history.
- The "Women of the Oklahoma Legislature" project chronicles the lives of women who have served or are currently serving in the Oklahoma Legislature.
- The "Inductees of the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame" project preserves the voices of women who have been inducted into this prestigious statewide group recognized by the Oklahoma Commission on the Status of Women.

A past project of note is the "Women in the Dust Bowl" project. With the vast majority of Dust Bowl research focusing on the point of view of men, this oral history project profiles the plight of Oklahoma women from the Dust Bowl's epicenter and their memories of this tumultuous time.

Stay tuned as we begin to collect and share more "voices from Oklahoma."

Site documents history of Shenandoah Valley

Researchers interested in immigration, labor, agricultural and environmental history will find a treasure trove in the Shenandoah Valley Oral History Project Web site. The site features interviews conducted by James Madison University students that document the region's poultry industry from the perspective of growers as well as processing workers.

Included among the more than 50 interviews online are also the stories of labor, civil rights and community activists, environmentalists, Native Americans, Latino immigrants, ex-offenders, homeless people, gays and bisexual people.

Started by the James Madison University history department in 2005, the project is an effort to bridge the gap between the university and the surrounding community. The online interviews include digital recordings, most with full transcripts, interview guides and background journals. The site is at: <http://publichistory.jmu.edu/SVOHP/>

Chicago women's movement focus of new project

The Chicago Area Women's History Council has initiated a new project, "Documenting the Women's Movement in Chicago 1960s-1980s," to provide a comprehensive survey of significant Chicago-area personalities, organizations, actions, issues, cultural innovations and other elements of the women's movement.

The council said it will serve as a catalyst for documentary projects, initiate oral history interviews, identify archival material and develop an online database to provide access to information about resources.

The history council, founded in 1971, is a nonprofit organization that promotes research, writing, teaching and preservation of women's history. It is a network of academic historians, archivists, teachers, museum professionals, public historians, independent scholars, preservationists, activists and others interested in Chicago women's history.

For information about the Chicago Area Women's History Council, contact Mary Ann Johnson, president, at Majohn4@prodigy.net.

Columbia inaugurates MA degree in oral history

Columbia University, home of the nation's oldest university archival oral history program, has announced the creation of an interdisciplinary Master of Arts degree in oral history.

The program, which will be housed in Columbia's Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy (ISERP), will link the disciplines of history, sociology, anthropology, literature and public health and hopes to attract students from disciplines where interdisciplinary fieldwork is required for their theses and projects, according to Mary Marshall Clark, director of Columbia's oral history office.

Clark said she and Peter Bearman, who directs ISERP, will co-direct the master's program for the first year. Bearman is a sociologist who worked with Columbia oral historians to document the events and aftermath of the Sept. 11 attack on the World Trade Center.

Clark described the master's program as being built on a series of core courses plus five electives. The core courses include: oral history method and theory, fieldwork and documentation, social sciences contributions to the analysis of narrative and life history, oral history workshop, a lecture series and a thesis.

Students also will be able to choose an elective on oral history radio production or on transforming oral history narrative into literature. Other Columbia departments and insti-

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Training opportunities available

Kenyon College in Gambier, Ohio, is the site of a June 3-5 Oral History Institute sponsored by the Ohio Humanities Council and the college's Rural Life Center in cooperation with the Ohio Association of Historical Societies and Museums and the Ohio Historical Society.

With an emphasis on hands-on experiences, the program will train participants in planning and conducting successful oral history projects. Participants will have time to consult with experts about projects they are planning.

Volunteers or paid staff from local historical organizations, libraries, schools, college and universities are encouraged to apply. Attendance is limited to 30 people.

The institute costs \$250, which includes two nights' stay, six meals and all workshop materials. For information and to download an application, go to: www.ohiohumanities.org or call the council at 800-293-9774. The application deadline is May 2.

"Oral History, Advocacy and the Law" is the theme of the 2008 annual Summer Institute on Oral History at Columbia University, scheduled for June 8-22.

The institute will explore parallel uses of oral history and legal testimony in the classical definition of advocacy as "finding and giving" voice. Topics to be explored include: relationships between human rights commissions, tribunals and oral history documentation; land claims work involving oral memory in indigenous communities and documentation of vulnerable communities in transition.

Registration fee for the institute is \$1,500. Low-cost dormitory rooms are also available. The application deadline is April 15. Information is available at: www.columbia.edu.

The Regional Oral History Office at Berkeley's Bancroft Library is getting ready to move into newly refurbished and modernized offices this summer and will be unable to offer its advanced oral history summer institute this year.

But the 2008-09 academic year will feature several weekend workshops on various oral history topics, including project organization, legal and ethical responsibilities, interviewing and using oral sources along with other historical evidence.

A symposium is planned in early winter 2009 on genres of narrative and documentation, theories of memory, recall, performance observation and recording.

For more information about ROHO's plans, go to: <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/>.

The Legacy Oral History Program at San Francisco's Museum of Performance and Design will offer its 13th annual oral history training workshop June 12-14, taught by Legacy founder Jeff Friedman and Basya Petnick, Legacy program manager.

The San Francisco workshop offers beginning, intermediate and advanced training in all aspects oral history project planning. Many examples used in the workshop are drawn from the performing arts, but the training is appropriate for people in other fields as well.

The workshop will cover project design, legal and ethical issues, technology, funding, interviewing and cross-cultural issues, transcription and editing and creating a research-quality document.

The cost of the workshop is \$300 for those who register before May 1 and \$350 thereafter. Attendance is limited to 22 participants.

For more information, contact legacyoralhistory@gmail.com or call 415-255-4800, ext. *823.

**The OHA Newsletter welcomes
your contributions of state and regional news.**

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tutes will offer access to graduate courses to fulfill additional elective requirements.

Luisa Passerini of the University of Turin in Italy will teach fieldwork and theory in the fall semester. She also will participate in a public lecture series.

May 1 is the application deadline.

Congress urges everyone to interview a veteran

In the week before Veterans Day in 2007, the House and Senate unanimously passed resolutions supporting the designation of a National Veterans History Project Week and urged people to interview at least one veteran in their families or communities, following the guidelines of the Veterans History Project.

Authorized by Congress in 2000, the Veterans History Project, housed in the Library of Congress' American Folklife Center, contains tens of thousands of oral history interviews with veterans, largely conducted by students and other volunteers.

The congressional resolution notes that some 17 million wartime veterans in America have stories that can "educate

people of all ages about important moments and events in the history of the United States and the world" and can "illuminate the meanings of service, sacrifice, citizenship and democracy."

The resolution encourages local, state and national organizations as well as government institutions at all levels to participate in and support efforts "to document, preserve and honor the service of American wartime veterans."

For more information about the Veterans History Project and details about how to participate in it, go to: www.loc.gov/vets/.

SOHA plans tours, workshops, reader's theater events

The Southwest Oral History Association annual conference is set for Tempe, Ariz., April 18-20, featuring workshops for beginners, teachers and on digital technology. OHA President Mehmed Ali also is scheduled as a guest speaker.

Other scheduled events include a reader's theater from oral histories on the Great Depression and an awards luncheon.

For more information, visit the SOHA Web site: www.southwestoralhistory.org. ❖

Funds available for emerging crisis research

May 1 is the application deadline for an Oral History Association grant of up to \$3,000 to support oral history research in crisis situations in the United States and internationally, including wars, natural disasters, political and economic or ethnic repression or other current events of crisis proportions.

The OHA's mission statement for its crisis research fund asserts: "Scholars conducting oral history research on these types of projects often begin interviewing informants within weeks or months of the crisis or even while the crisis event is unfolding. Obtaining funding for such research is generally difficult because of the extended application time schedule of most funding organizations."

Applicants for the OHA grant should format their request in Microsoft Word and send it electronically to: Patrick Carlton, Chair, Emerging Crises Oral History Research Fund, at: carlton@unlv.nevada.edu.

Applications should include:

- a one-page research proposal describing the project, interviews planned and arrangements for preserving the interviews and making them accessible for others;
- a research budget and justification of all budget items. Travel, per diem and transcription costs may be funded, but equipment purchases will not be.
- a current curriculum vitae of the applicant.

The committee will make its recommendation within four weeks of the application deadline. ❖

News Notes ...

Conference to focus on oral history and health

Who Cared? Oral History, Caring, Health and Illness: Marking 60 years of the National Health Service is the theme of the 2008 Oral History Society annual conference in Birmingham, England, July 4-5. The conference is co-sponsored by the Centre for the History of Medicine, University of Birmingham.

The program will feature presentations dealing with the experience of formal and informal caring in community and institutional settings and among professionals, the cared for, care-givers and kin.

For more information, contact Joanna Bornat at J.Bornat@open.ac.uk.

Stories of place to be in spotlight

The University of Plymouth, England, is the site of a Sept. 5-6 conference with the theme Place, Writing and Voice, sponsored by the Cornwall Audio Visual Archive.

The conference will use written and oral narratives to explore concepts of place and relationships between the written and spoken word.

For information, contact the Cornwall Audio Visual Archive at CAVA@exeter.ac.uk.

Rural issues focus of online journal

Oral historians interested in rural places, events and issues may wish to contribute to the new Online Journal of Rural Research and Policy.

The peer-reviewed journal will cover topics spanning all academic disciplines and invites papers dealing with qualitative, historical, legal and quantitative research about the challenges and changes facing rural communities.

For more information, visit:

www.ojrrp.org or contact Thomas HP Gould, Kansas State University, at: tgould@ksu.edu.

Nunn oral history center hires Doug Boyd

Longtime Oral History Association activist Doug Boyd is the new director of the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Libraries.

Boyd, who previously managed the digital program at the University of Alabama, is returning to Kentucky, where he had been director of the Kentucky Oral History Commission.

Boyd is a graduate of Denison University and holds a Ph.D. in folklore from Indiana University. He is widely respected for his pioneering work in digital applications of oral history and expanding electronic access to oral history collections.

The University of Kentucky's Nunn Center is internationally recognized for its collection of more than 6,500 oral history interviews on a wide range of topics, including politics and public policy, Appalachia, military history, medical history, agriculture and education reform.

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

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

Submit photographs to Photo and Production Editor Alexandra Teoumas at alexandratE@gmail.net

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

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Oral History Association, Inc.

Oral History Association
National World War II
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

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U.S. Postage
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PERMIT NO. 210