



## OHA marks 40<sup>th</sup> in Little Rock

Some 350 oral history aficionados celebrated the 40th anniversary of the Oral History Association in Little Rock, Ark., Oct. 25–29, with a program that reflected the history of the civil rights movement and the history of oral history.

At the Thursday evening presidential reception, longtime OHA member David Dunaway recalled memories of the late Willa Baum, a founding practitioner of oral history and co-editor with Dunaway of *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*.

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Former OHA presidents Charlie Morrissey, Rebecca Sharpless and Laurie Mercier also described key moments in the organization’s evolution. “We are the unfinished products of a long becoming,” Morrissey said.

The history of oral history theme continued with a Saturday afternoon session chaired by former OHA president

Dale Treleven, who guided panelists Alice Hoffman, Sherna Berger Gluck, Richard Candida Smith and Horacio N. Roque Ramirez in tracing the development of the organization.

The OHA was guided from the start, Hoffman said, by a “democratic, let-many-flowers-bloom spirit.”

An overriding concept of oral history was that “a person could recover, preserve and interpret his own past and not have it imposed upon them,” she said.

Noting dramatic, rapid changes in technology that recently have dominated the field, Hoffman recalled that at the 1969 meeting in Airlie, Va., a representative of audio tape manufacturer 3M told the oral historians that the company’s tapes would even survive an atomic bomb.

“How eminently reassuring,” Hoffman quipped.

Sherna Berger Gluck described her early experiences with OHA as “anything but welcoming” to a feminist historian.

Until the 1988 annual meeting in Baltimore, her experience was that OHA “was a white, patriarchal organization.” But conference planners that year made special efforts to diversify the organization and the conference program, and the OHA’s oral history evaluation guidelines were revised, reflecting “a recognition of the interactive and subjective nature of the oral history enterprise,” she said.

Richard Candida Smith suggested that the oral history movement hasn’t played a major role in changing how history is taught but remains useful for providing “local color.”

Historians, he said, need to synthesize oral interview materials, place them in historical context and “reflect on what we learned that we didn’t know before.”

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## *From the president*

# Many generations celebrate

In my first presidential column, I will reflect upon the Oral History Association's 40th anniversary meeting in Little Rock, Ark., note several key Executive Council decisions and extend an invitation to you to join us in Oakland, Calif., in 2007.

OHA's theme in Little Rock, "Generational Links: Confronting the Past, Understanding the Present, and Planning the Future," was appropriate and useful for articulating the various dimensions of our activities, papers and plenary sessions. The theme was chosen to commemorate the organization's founding and to celebrate the multi-generational relationships that are the foundation of this body.

Indeed, this year it was publicly noted that many of the founding members of the association are regular participants and presenters. It is with both admiration and pride that I overheard several OHA members claiming this to be their 10<sup>th</sup>, 20<sup>th</sup> or 30<sup>th</sup> OHA meeting. One person exclaimed that a few of our elder statesmen and stateswomen can claim to have been at virtually every meeting since OHA's inception in 1966.

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*Oral history is an essential tool in uncovering the hidden histories and missing dimensions in the national narrative as various groups demand equality and justice.*

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With that kind of loyalty and dedication, it is easy for novice and inexperienced oral historians to interact with, ask questions of and glean information from long-term practitioners, published scholars and teachers as well as a variety of artists, authors, filmmakers, genealogists, musicians, storytellers and technology experts.

OHA is my favorite professional group because its members are accessible, forthright, honest and unpretentious. I look forward to attending our annual meetings because being in the presence of OHA's members feels as comfortable as well worn shoes, as warm as family and as familiar as home. In part, this level of camaraderie exists because the seniors in the organization impart their commitment and knowledge to OHA's newest members in formal and informal ways throughout the meeting without exclusivity and hierarchy. These attitudes and values allow OHA to present fresh ideas and new programs every year.

The second connection to the theme came in recognizing the upcoming 50th anniversary of a crucial civil rights event. By inviting members of "The Little Rock Nine" to be the keynote speakers at the awards banquet, the association created tangible links to a group of people who confronted the past in a very dramatic manner on the local level.

By integrating Little Rock's Central High School in 1957, these young people brought national attention to America's failure to adhere to the Supreme Court's ruling in the 1954 Brown decision. In their actions, nine black high school students confirmed their own rendezvous with destiny. Oral histories of this crucial juncture in American history have revealed many lasting consequences that the newspaper head-

lines and nightly television newscasts did not record for posterity.

With Rhonda Stewart as moderator, Minnijean Brown Trickey and Elizabeth Eckford enthralled the audience with their insightful commentary, nuanced analysis and compelling stories. Many of us who listened to them were amazed that these two women were both informative and profound, without being angry or bitter. Their grace and elegance are models from which we should try to understand the present and plan our future.

Hence, oral history is an essential tool in uncovering the hidden histories and missing dimensions in the national narrative as various groups demand equality and justice.

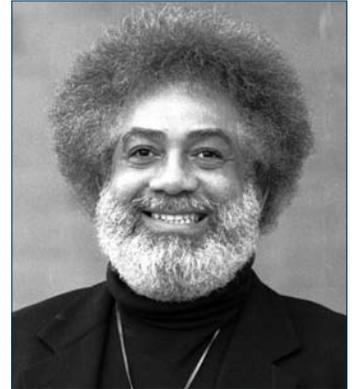
At its annual business meeting, the Executive Council continued to professionalize the association by appointing a Web site editor, granting more scholarship money to support more international participants at the annual meeting and beginning the process of setting up formal review procedures of all OHA paid personnel.

In addition, the Council approved translating the annual call for papers into Spanish, endorsed the American Association of University Professors' statement on Academic Freedom and the Institutional Review Board, entered into contract negotiations with Oxford University Press to publish the *Oral History Review* and approved Pittsburgh as the site of the annual meeting in 2008.

I would like to thank, in the most sincere and warmest terms, all of you who made the meeting in Little Rock such a tremendous success. In alphabetical order, I must make special mention of the exceptional time and work contributions of Madelyn Campbell, Tracy K'Meyer, Francis Ross, Al Stein, Becca Sharpless and David Stricklin. They have passed the torch to the Oakland group. May their fine examples of dedication and hard work shine the light of excitement and triumph onto next year's gathering.

Mark your calendars now for the next annual meeting Oct. 24-28, 2007, at the Marriott Oakland City Center in Oakland, Calif. Next year's theme, "The Revolutionary Ideal: Transforming Community through Oral History," will examine how oral history has become a revolutionary tool in exhuming the many narratives in political protest and social action as tools of transformation. In addition, specific attention will be given to oral history's use by community groups. Finally, issues of institutional and personal survival as well as how technology has changed our lives will be discussed.

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*Alphine Wade Jefferson*

# Courage begets courage: A lesson from Little Rock

By Brenda Edgerton-Webster, Mississippi State University

As I anxiously waited in Salon C of the Little Rock Peabody Hotel for the evening's keynote speakers to begin and watched friends and colleagues of the Oral History Association rekindle old relationships, I thought, "What a unique opportunity for me to be in the presence of two of the Little Rock Nine."

Of course everyone in the ballroom knew the historic events surrounding their 1957 integration into Little Rock Central High School under the tutelage of Daisy Bates and the NAACP. And everyone seemed just as excited as I to get through dinner and hear from these living historical icons.

When two of the famed group entered the room and OHA officers escorted them to their seats, I remember peeking around the heads and shoulders of people who obstructed my view in hopes of getting a close-up view of these remarkable history makers.

After a few introductory remarks, the mistress of ceremony invited Minnijean Brown Trickey and Elizabeth Eckford to come to the dais and begin the program. As they made their way up to the stage, a chill came over me — I knew that I was in the midst of an extraordinary moment in history. I knew that this was not just the historical moment of these two women who once had been denied admittance to Little Rock High and were now keynote speakers in the same city's premier hotel, but rather a moment in history that, out of the 100 or so people in that room, only I understood.

As the women spoke about their experiences prior, during and subsequent to that infamous fall of 1957, one central theme resonated throughout their discussion— that young people have more courage than they often believe.

"In all the speeches I give to young people, I always tell them that if I had the courage to make it through, then they can do anything," Eckford said. Little did she understand, the impact her acts of courage already had on someone sitting in the audience. Then Eckford stopped my blood cold.

"If I knew that what I did helped one young person be more courageous than they ever thought they could, then I'd

know that it was all worth it and I had done a good job," she said. I thought, "How could she know who I am and that I am here!"

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*At that very moment, I felt a swell of emotion overcome my very being, but knew that I had to hold it together since I might not ever get this opportunity again.*

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When the audience-question-and-answer portion of the program began, I just couldn't bring myself to stand and reveal my direct connection to the experience of these women — it was just too personal. But, once Brother Blue gave his poetic salute and others shared their appreciation for the sacrifice of the Little Rock Nine, I knew that I had to say something to someone. After I made my way through the other audience members, who were vying to take pictures and shake the hands of these two historic women, I finally stood face to face with them and, to my chagrin, Eckford excused herself. Feeling like I had blown my one chance to make my secret known, I simply asked Brown Trickey to tell Eckford that I appreciated their remarks and that undoubtedly they had inspired a young person to be courageous.

Walking away feeling disappointed, I left the ballroom thinking, "So much for my demonstration of courage, or lack thereof."

Remembering the long walk it would take to get back around to the lobby elevators and up to my room, I made a beeline for the single-stall ladies' room nearby and bypassed the larger, more crowded restroom. When I attempted to enter the lavatory, to my surprise, it was occupied and I had to wait anyway. As the door opened, an apologetic voice preceded the appearance of the bathroom's occupant. It was Elizabeth Eckford.

Now, I am never this lucky. So this time, I seized the opportunity to say what had been so very heavy on my heart all night: "Ms. Eckford, thank you so very much for your courage. And, yes, your courage has inspired a young person to accomplish things beyond their imagination. I know this, because I am one of those young people."

As I relayed my story, Eckford looked at me with shock, but also familiarity. In her eyes, I could see that she recognized my story with each word as one remembers and recognizes an old friend. I continued, "You see, Ms. Eckford, when I was a senior in high school back in the early '80's, my family moved to the small town of



*Little Rock Central High School, site of the 1957 civil rights struggle over school desegregation.*

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## Courage begets courage: A lesson from Little Rock

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Fairfield, Iowa, and I was one of two African American kids in my class. The other black girl had spent much of her life there and people were used to her and her family.

“Well, anyway, I had to ride the school bus each day and many of the children (mostly younger, but bigger than my 5’2” 115-pound frame) would call me the “N” word, throw things and spit on me. Like you, I, too, kept this mistreatment from my parents, because I knew they would pull me out of school and I didn’t want anything to interrupt my senior year. That is until one day I just had enough and confided in my English teacher, Mrs. Pettit. In addition to reporting the incidents to the administration, Mrs. Pettit asked me to join the Forensic Club because she had a special reading for me — it was about the experience of you and the integration of Little Rock Central High School.”

At that very moment, I felt a swell of emotion overcome my very being, but knew that I had to hold it together since I might not ever get this opportunity again. I said, “Ms. Eckford, I took that reading and made it my own. Nearly 25 years afterward, your experience ministered,” now my voice began to quiver, “to a very scared little black girl in the middle of Iowa and gave me the courage to remain strong.”

Even though I had just uttered those words about being strong, I could feel my knees weaken and eyes well up and remember thinking, “I can’t believe I’m about to start blubbering in front of one of my ‘sheroes.’”

Somehow I sputtered out, “Ms. Eckford, I want you to know that reading and performing your experience gave me the courage to speak out about

what happened to you and was, then, happening to me. That year, I went on to receive first-place ranking among all high school students in the entire state of Iowa, graduated from both high school and college with honors, had a successful career in television broadcasting and now have become the sixth African American to successfully defend a doctoral dissertation from the oldest and most renowned journalism program in the country — the Missouri School of Journalism.”

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*I only wanted her to know before she laid her head to rest from this long journey of her life that, YES, the courage she displayed back in the fall of 1957 had directly inspired courage in another young person’s life.*

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I started to tell her that I am also a junior faculty member at Mississippi State University, but just then a single tear rolled down her cheek and I stopped mid-sentence.

She simply whispered, “Oh, you sweet baby, I know your pain” and as she hugged me so very tenderly, she continued, “I am so proud of your courage and you must tell your story.”

I explained that I didn’t intend to upset her or even become upset myself since I thought that I’d moved past this painful period of my life. I only wanted her to know before she laid her head to rest from this long journey of her life that, YES, the courage she displayed back in the fall of 1957 had directly inspired courage in another young person’s life.

As we hugged again for the last time and she turned to walk away, I thought,

“Tell my story? I had done well just to tell her.” By the time I returned to the ballroom, I had resigned myself to the fact that really no story existed for me to tell and that the experience had been shared to its fullest extent. I rationalized my hasty decision by thinking, “Even if I told my story, who would really want to hear it?” I figured that if I remembered and had a chance, I would ask the *OHA Newsletter* editor the kinds of stories normally accepted. Surely, my story wouldn’t qualify and that would be the end of that.

The very next morning at the OHA business meeting breakfast, my friend and table companion did not come. Another woman asked if the seat next to me was taken. Looking at my watch and realizing that because of the hour, my friend probably would not show for breakfast and only catch the end of the meeting, I invited her to take the seat. Now of course, since this is my very first OHA meeting, I did not know her. And, as we proceeded with the obligatory introductions, she said, “Hi. I’m Mary Kay Quinlan” and I read “OHA Newsletter Editor” on her badge. It was at this very moment, like George W. Bush, I, too, felt I was receiving a good “thump’n.” In my mind, Eckford obviously was on better terms with the Lord than I since the mere utterance for me to “tell my story” from her mouth was all it took to bring about divine intervention and this article about how courage begets courage.

Thank you OHA, thank you Mary Kay Quinlan, and most of all, thank you Elizabeth Eckford and the rest of the Little Rock Nine for the bravery and strength that you have passed to every person who ever hears your story. Your courage is undeniable. ❖

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## 2006 OHA meeting

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He advocated making oral histories available on Web sites, allowing people to draw their own conclusions about the material. He dismissed privacy concerns about broader access, saying that younger generations “have no sense of personal privacy anyway” and suggesting that it was pointless to “worry about protecting materials from people who will misunderstand.”

Horacio N. Rocque Ramirez called the OHA “less stuffy” than many professional academic organizations and called himself “a product of the committee on diversity.”

People of color, gays and lesbians and the working poor have not yet fully found their place “on the other side of the tape recorder,” he said, urging the OHA to more actively encourage emerging diverse scholars. What’s needed, he said, are more “oral histories of the present.” ❖

# Education committee seeks participation

By Amy Starecheski, OHA Education Committee

The Oral History Association's Education Committee has had an active year and an exciting annual meeting in Little Rock, Ark. The committee members and responsibilities are as follows:

- Amy Starecheski, Chair
- Donna DeBlasio, Annual Meeting
- Glenn Whitman, Web Editor, Publications
- Glenn Ruggles, Scholarships
- Chuck Lee, Awards
- Al Stein, Hurricana Katrina, Outreach

Contact information for all members is on the OHA Education Committee Web site.

Two Potomac, Md., high school students who participated in teacher Ken Woodard's Martha Ross Teaching Award-winning project received OHA

educator scholarships to attend and present at the annual meeting. Their excellent presentation and the energy they brought to the conference encourage us in our effort to help the annual meetings continue to welcome students from secondary to post-graduate.

We encourage educators and students to apply for the scholarships available to them and the awards designed to honor their work. This year we are seeking applicants for the Martha Ross Pre-Collegiate Teaching Award.

Donna DeBlasio will continue to work with the program chairs for the 2007 Oakland meeting to put together a program that includes and is interesting to educators and students. She will be circulating an education-related request for proposals for Oakland this fall.

This year we posted our first content on the Web, thanks to the efforts of Glenn Whitman and Madelyn Campbell. Read about featured projects and articles, educator workshops, awards and more at [http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/org\\_com\\_ed\\_test.html](http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/org_com_ed_test.html).

In the coming year, we look forward to working with new OHA Web Editor Rebecca Sharpless to improve the design, accessibility and content of the site. Educators and students can already submit their work for inclusion through the site.

The committee would like to thank everyone who made this a successful year and annual meeting. We get an extraordinary amount of support from people not on the committee and from Council. ❖

## OHA Endowment Fund contributors

The Oral History Association would like to thank the following contributors to the OHA Endowment Fund. Many of the contributors responded to a challenge at the OHA annual meeting from an anonymous donor who agreed to match \$1,000 in contributions gathered during the Sunday morning meeting.

The OHA endowment supports the organization's scholarship program and other special projects. Contributions are tax deductible.

Mehmed Ali

Curtis Austin

Jo Blatti

Chuck Bolton

Madelyn Campbell

Tom Charlton

Jeff Charnley

G. Cullom Davis

Rose Diaz and Andy Russell

Jim Fogerty

Shera Gluck

Charles Groth

Charles Hardy

Ruth and Hugh Hill

Alice Hoffman

Alphine Jefferson

Cliff Kuhn

Elinor Mazé

Marjorie McLellan

Gloria Mims

James Mink

Charles T. Morrissey

John Neuenschwander

Adam Novitt

Kim Porter

Mary Kay Quinlan

Don and Anne Ritchie

Kim Rogers

Frances Ross

Horacio N. Roque

Glenn Ruggles

Rebecca Sharpless

Linda Shopes

Norma Smith

Al Stein

David Stricklin

Brenda Webster

Jessica Wiederhorn

Vernon Williams

## Financial report

Executive Secretary Madelyn Campbell reported at the 2006 annual business meeting that the Oral History Association is in a strong financial position.

The organization's operating and reserve funds total more than \$110,000, she said, while the OHA Endowment Fund totals nearly \$170,000.

# Veterans, immigrant themes win awards

Oral history projects pursuing veterans and immigrant themes were among the recipients of Oral History Association awards presented at the Saturday evening banquet.

The 2006 article award went to Elliott R. Barkan of California State University-San Bernardino for his piece "American in the Hand, Homeland in the Heart: Transnational and Translocal Immigrant Experience in the American West."

Two teachers received the 2006 postsecondary teaching award. They were:

- Kimberly Heikkila of Anoka Ramsey Community College in Coon Rapids, Minn., for her students' interviews with Vietnam war veterans for the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project and

- Erin McCarthy of Columbia College Chicago for her students' interviews in the Greek-American community, which are now in the archives of the Hellenic Museum and Cultural Center.

The 2006 Elizabeth B. Mason project award for projects with a budget of more than \$6,000 went to the National Park Service's Tuskegee Airmen Oral History Project, directed by Todd Moye.

The Elizabeth B. Mason project award for projects with a budget of less than \$6,000 went to the Oral Histories of the Taylor Family and Residence, directed by Jon Hunner.

In 2007, the OHA will present awards for a book, precollegiate teaching and nonprint media using oral history.

Deadlines for nominations are April 15. Visit the OHA Web site for details. ❖

# Scholars scramble to document hurricanes

In the 15 months since Hurricanes Katrina and Rita devastated New Orleans and a wide swath of the Gulf Coast, academic scholars, museum staff members, librarians and others have forged an informal coalition scrambling to document the disaster, a panel told OHA conference attendees.

The results so far: a plethora of Web sites, vastly growing collections of unprocessed information and an ongoing need to develop databases that will make it possible to search and use the information.

For the time being, said Michael Mizell-Nelson of the University of New Orleans, the urge to document overrides preservation and access considerations.

The Louisiana Folklife Program and the University of New Orleans, in collaboration with the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress and George Mason University, are collecting storm stories through the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank, which allows individuals to self-submit stories, photos, audio and video materials, and remain anonymous if they so choose.

Also available is a field collection kit modeled after the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project, with data collection forms, release documents, question banks for survivors and responders and a K-12 lesson guide for teachers.

Gulf Coast researchers themselves were largely displaced by the hurri-

canes and their aftermath, Louisiana folklorist Susan Roach reported.

But by relying on cell phones and e-mail, a loose coalition began to take shape, eventually calling itself "In the Wake of Katrina."

In trying to standardize questions, the scholars discovered that some demographic questions — like addresses and income brackets — were problematic, she said.

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*Survivors telling their stories to other survivors helps them all come to terms with their situations.*

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Roach also noted the irony that most of the funding for hurricane-related oral history work has gone to non-coastal scholars who have had to ask local people for help to carry out their projects.

Mizell-Nelson said the Hurricane Digital Memory Bank, at [www.hurricanearchives.org](http://www.hurricanearchives.org), is an effort to democratize the gathering of hurricane stories. While not true oral history interviews, stories and photos in the memory bank provide a form of hurricane documentation.

People are encouraged to leave their stories by voicemail (up to 10 minutes in length), submit stories and photos online or jot down their stories on postcards and mail them to the University of New Orleans.

Mizell-Nelson said the project seeks to "record stories between the extremes of heroism and hooliganism."

He said the promise of anonymity helps bring out stories that otherwise wouldn't be told.

Just the act of telling their stories is a comfort to many people, he said, as though they are contributing to a time capsule.

Peggy Bulger, director of the American Folklife Center, stressed her agency's work in helping hurricane survivors by providing field schools in Houston, where many sought refuge, to train them as interviewers, thus providing income for displaced members of Gulf Coast communities, much as the Works Progress Administration did in the Great Depression.

Survivors telling their stories to other survivors helps them all come to terms with their situations, she said.

Charles Bolton of the University of North Carolina, Greensboro, who chaired the OHA's Emerging Crisis Oral History Research Fund, announced that the committee awarded a \$3,000 grant to a project called "Floodwall," a 120 feet by 8 feet wall of abandoned dresser drawers salvaged from the New Orleans floodwaters. The project includes 50 audio and video interviews with the former dresser drawer owners. Information about the project is available at [www.floodwall.org](http://www.floodwall.org). ❖

# 2007 OHA meeting set for Oakland, Calif.

By Norma Smith and Horacio N. Roque Ramírez, 2007 OHA Program Committee Co-Chairs

The Oral History Association's 2007 annual meeting will take place Oct. 24–28, in Oakland, Calif. The Program Committee expects to apply our annual meeting theme, "The Revolutionary Ideal: Transforming Community through Oral History," to the Oral History Association itself.

The OHA has made a commitment in the past to seek a diverse membership and to support projects from among historically excluded communities. Oral history is uniquely capable of illuminating the connections among personal, family, organizational, community, regional, national and global history, culture and politics. We hope to broaden our work by acknowledging the fact that a multicultural, multiracial and multilingual approach is necessary to document and understand our changing world.

To a great degree, the Program Committee for 2007 has emerged out of the efforts of the Committee on Multiculturalism that was established to address this recognition and redress past narrowness.

We take seriously the challenge to transform the OHA annual meeting into a model for future organizational labor that accounts for difference and diversity in profound ways. We see this as a way to root the organization's vision of oral history as a way of collecting and interpreting human memories to foster knowledge and human dignity in the world as we experience it.

Oakland is a perfect place to promote this transformation. It is one of the most racially, culturally and linguistically diverse communities in one of the most diverse states in the nation. This trend began at least 10,000 years ago with the Ohlone people, themselves a diverse grouping of small, often multilingual, bands. Numerous distinct languages were spoken in what is now California well before Europeans arrived.

While racial conflict and cultural and political contradiction have been part of the local and regional history at least since the arrival of Spanish explorers, Oakland and the Bay Area also have a tradition of cross-cultural coalition-building in academic and in community-based activism.

This diversity and imaginative approach to community life and social change (including how knowledge is organized in academic institutions) have been reflected in strategies for documentation. The 2007 OHA meeting in Oakland will honor and contribute to this local tradition.

Specifically, we will be working with local and regional projects based in ethnic studies, women's and gender studies, disability studies, labor studies, LGBT/queer studies, HIV, AIDS and public health and other academic programs, and with organizations based in Native American, African American, Latina and Latino, Asian, feminist, immigrant, environmental justice, land-use justice, prison rights, health rights and other communities. Numerous oral history projects are being conducted in the region in academic institutions and in grassroots communities.

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The 2007 OHA Program Committee will work closely with the International Committee, the Education Committee, the Membership Committee, the New Media and Digital Technology Taskforce, the Publications Committee and the Committee on Diversity to create an inclusive and rich gathering of students, scholars, archivists, librarians and organizers committed to the art and practice of oral history.

The Program Committee had its first full meeting in Little Rock. We have begun to develop a number of ideas for plenary sessions, keynote speakers, workshops and tours, as well as sub-themes and threads for regular sessions, performances, community forums and videos and films.

We are exploring the possibility of offering an introductory oral history workshop in Spanish and in an Asian language. We are also planning at least one session on strategies and politics of conducting oral history projects across language, gender and class differences.

We urge OHA members to prepare and submit proposals on time, so we can forge a stellar, watershed program that will attract fresh interest in oral history and new, more diverse membership to the OHA.

To this end, we also invite OHA members to forward the call for papers to your networks and organizations. For an electronic version of the Call for Proposals, go to [http://alpha.dickinson.edu/oha/org\\_cfp.html](http://alpha.dickinson.edu/oha/org_cfp.html)

Questions may be directed to:

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**Proposals should be sent by January 15, 2007, to:**

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We look forward to seeing you in Oakland! ❖

# Institutional review boards threaten scholarly work

A concerted effort by oral historians and other humanities and social science scholars will be required to resolve the problems associated with heavy-handed institutional review boards that administer virtually unknowable rules and threaten academic freedom.

That was the message from an hour-long, online discussion Nov. 8 sponsored by the Chronicle of Higher Education, which addressed the IRB issue in a recent article.

Associations of professional historians can make all the policy statements they want, “but until historians on the local level engage with the administrations, the ambiguity and problems will persist,” Robert B. Townsend, assistant director of research and publications at the American Historical Association (AHA), said in the online discussion.

Townsend and Linda Shopes, past president of the Oral History Association and a national leader on the IRB issue, were the guest commentators in the online discussion, which followed publication this fall of an American Association of University Professors report that takes issue with the federal regulations governing research on human subjects.

Some aspects of the federal rules, which were designed to protect subjects of federally funded biomedical research but which have been extended on many campuses to all research, regardless of discipline or funding source, “constitute a threat to academic freedom,” the AAUP report said.

IRB excesses have become legendary. The AAUP report cited:

- the case of a linguist studying language development in a preliterate tribe being ordered by an IRB to have the people read and sign a consent form;
- an IRB telling a Caucasian Ph.D. student studying career expectations and ethnicity not to interview African-American Ph.D. students because it might be traumatic for them;
- an attempt by an IRB to deny a master’s degree to a student who failed to get IRB approval before calling newspaper executives to ask for publicly available printed materials.

The examples come from many disciplines across the humanities and social science, the AAUP noted, adding that a

researcher cannot appeal an IRB decision denying permission to proceed with a project or requiring extensive changes.

The AAUP added that there is no empirical evidence supporting the benefits of the IRB system, and at least one legal scholar has argued that the federal requirement of prior IRB approval is unconstitutional censorship.

“What is deeply troublesome is the fact that research on human subjects must obtain IRB approval whether or not it imposes a serious risk of harm on its subjects,” the AAUP report said.

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*At the core of the issue ‘is a broad-based misunderstanding or lack of knowledge about the oral history process.’*

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It recommended that “research whose methodology consists entirely of collecting data by surveys, conducting interviews, or observing behavior in public places be exempt from the requirement of IRB review.”

The AAUP report noted that “IRBs have objected to research protocols on the ground that the subjects might find it distressing even to be asked the questions the researcher wishes to ask them.

“We regard that as an unpardonable piece of paternalism where the subjects are adults who are free to end their participation at any time, or to refuse to participate at all.”

The AAUP report also noted that while the federal regulations apply only to federally funded research, most institutions apply the same rules to all research on human subjects, even though one study found that at the University of Chicago, for example, 80 percent of the social science projects subject to IRB review were privately funded or unfunded.

The AAUP urged colleges and universities to “formulate a separate set of procedures for research that is not federally funded.”

The report said 164 institutions, including Harvard, Princeton, the University of Chicago and the University of California, Berkeley, “have explicitly declined to commit themselves” to impose the same rules on non-federally funded research that apply to federally funded projects.

The AHA’s Townsend said in the online discussion that a key problem is the “lack of clear or consistent standards” about what kinds of research is covered by IRB regulations.

Federal officials repeatedly have told the AHA and OHA that the federal rules are “a floor, not a ceiling” for IRB review, leaving wide latitude for individual campuses to set their own rules, he said.

“Articulation of rules at the local level is pretty scanty,” he said, adding: “Reading through them, the rule seems to be, ‘bring your project to us, and then we’ll make up the rules and policies that apply.’”

The frustration, Townsend said, is that years ago, the AHA and OHA approached federal regulators seeking clarifications at the national level about the applicability of the human subjects rules to oral history interviewing.

“What we have discovered in practice is that the federal regulations just serve as the starting point for regulations developed at the institutional level,” he said. “Risk averse university administrators seem to be the real problem here.”

The variability from campus to campus is significant, the online participants indicated.

At some schools, IRB rules don’t apply if oral history interviews are deposited in archives; at other schools all such interviews are subject to IRB review. Even the use of existing interviews is subject to review in some places.

And the penalties for failing to observe the IRB requirements ranges from a letter of reprimand to retraction of publications or removal from research projects, the online discussion revealed.

Several online participants asked how to go about effecting change.

Shopes suggested the best alternative is to “educate individual IRBs about the methodological particulars — and the existing ethical guidelines — for oral history.”

“In more than one case,” she added, “such action has led to a much more accommodating stance by the IRB vis-à-vis oral history. Most IRB members, after all, are conscientious and thoughtful people, who simply have

not considered the particularities of oral history.”

Katie McCormick, who identified herself as an archivist, oral historian and IRB member from the University of North Carolina, Charlotte, echoed the need for historians to educate their campus IRBs.

“Until there is a clear and unequivocal statement from the federal government exempting ALL oral history from the definition of human subject research and mandated IRB review, you will be very hard pressed to get a majority of the individual institutions and IRBs to acquiesce,” she said.

McCormick said that oral history interviews should be exempt from review if they adhere to the OHA and AHA professional and ethical standards. At the core of the issue, she said, “is a broad-based misunderstanding or lack of knowledge about the oral history process.” ❖

## Oral History Association officers and members of council



*Gathering after the 2006 annual meeting are OHA officers and members of council. Back row, from left, are: Charles Hardy, first vice president; Curtis Austin, council member; Alphine Jefferson, president; Mehmed Ali, vice president/president-elect. Front row, from left, are: Madelyn Campbell, executive secretary; Rebecca Sharpless, immediate past president and Kathy Nasstrom, council member. Also elected to council was Valerie Yow. OHA members also elected Jennifer Abraham, Chuck Bolton and Linda Wood to the Nominating Committee.*

## Family history pamphlet published

*By Irene Reti, OHA Publications Committee*

The Oral History Association announces the publication of *Oral History for the Family Historian: A Basic Guide*, the latest in its pamphlet series. The goal of this 70-page publication is to provide practical guidance, based on OHA guidelines, to the novice who wishes to conduct family oral history interviews.

A good oral history, even a single interview, requires careful planning. Too often, novices and experienced researchers alike jump into an oral history project before giving sufficient thought to technical, legal, access and longevity issues.

This pamphlet is designed to help the interviewer or researcher avoid common mistakes by effectively planning, conducting and preserving a family oral history interview. It also contains an extensive list of sample questions, a sample legal release form and other suggested resources.

Author Linda Barnickel is an archivist in Nashville, Tenn., concentrating on local history and military history. She oversees a project to record oral histories with veterans and has also used oral history in her own genealogical research. ❖

## Legal release request

*By John Neuenschwander, Carthage College*

As many of you know, I regularly comment and write about legal issues involving oral history. In this capacity I have found it worthwhile to conduct periodic reviews of the legal release agreements that oral historians are using.

My purpose in doing so is not to provide a legal assessment for any agreement per se, but to review and comment on the most common types of agreements as well as any novel approaches or significant omissions or problems.

Before deciding to send me an agreement, either as an e-mail attachment or by regular mail, you should know that it will be handled pursuant to the following conditions of confidentiality and use.

First, all agreements will be used in strictest confidence. No identification of any program or individual will be made in any commentary or analysis that is subsequently published.

Also, no legal evaluation will be provided to any program or individual regarding the advantages or disadvantages of the agreement they provide. One will, however, be able to draw some conclusions in this regard from the overall review that will be published.

Thank you for your consideration. You may send your agreement to: John Neuenschwander, Professor of History, Carthage College, Kenosha, WI 53140. You also may e-mail your agreement to me at: [jneuenschwander@carthage.edu](mailto:jneuenschwander@carthage.edu)

**Editor's Note:** *Neuenschwander, a past president of the OHA, is the author of Oral History and the Law, a publication in the OHA pamphlet series, and is a frequent contributor to the OHA Newsletter. In addition to teaching history at Carthage College, he is also an attorney and a municipal judge in Kenosha, Wis.*

# Community projects need access to training

Community oral history projects, often plagued by low budgets, need to connect with other community resources, find appropriate practical training and understand the importance of project planning, three oral historians said at a conference roundtable on community history projects.

Former OHA president Rose Diaz, program manager for the Center for the Southwest at the University of New Mexico, stressed project planning and training for community-based oral history projects.

Sometimes, she said, an outside expert can become a neutral mediator or referee for a community group trying to get its project off the ground.

Creating partnerships with institutions such as public libraries, community centers or cultural centers can be the key to making community oral history projects accessible, she said.

Libraries can be particularly important partners, Diaz noted, because they often have archival recommendations and may have money and can offer research assistance, all of which can be important for long-term access.

Beth Millwood of the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, who works with community groups as outreach coordinator for the Southern Oral History Program, identified three components of a successful community oral history project:

- an interested core of individuals,
- community support and resources, such as churches and businesses, and
- external sources of support and resources.

A community may have very limited resources, Millwood said, but often, “a single individual is the fireplug” that keeps the project going.

She said training is a critical component for community oral history projects because community groups “cycle through volunteers” frequently, creating a need for ongoing training in oral history techniques. She suggested a training DVD or interactive online training sources might offer training options for such community groups.

Nancy MacKay, Mills College librarian who directs the Oakland Living History Program, noted that community oral history projects often have a specific short-term goal in mind, such as commemorating an anniversary.

Thus, she said, community oral historians need the tools to do something quickly, do a great job and then be done with it. They need practical, not theoretical, training, she said.

She stressed the importance of project planning for community history groups, which often haven’t even thought about issues like permanent access to the collections they’re creating. ❖

# Veterans history project seeks workshop leaders

*By Sarah Rouse, Library of Congress*

The Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress still needs oral history professionals willing to conduct half-day training sessions for laymen and women who wish to interview American war veterans for this national project.

Since 2001 when this ambitious Library of Congress documentation program began, many of the general public have conducted interviews with war veterans and donated the tapes to the library’s rapidly growing archive. As of October 2006, the project includes more than 45,000 individual collections.

To ensure the quality of volunteer-conducted interviews, the project provided printed guidelines and also sought professionals to train groups of volunteers.

In 2002, the Veterans History Project and the American Folklore Society agreed that AFS would create and manage a group of oral historians and folklorists to lead project workshops throughout the country. AFS Executive Director Tim Lloyd manages the training requests and matches up

local workshop leaders with requesting organizations. Trainers are paid an honorarium and, in some cases, travel expenses.

Since 2002, more than 100 oral historians and folklorists — members of the Oral History Association or the American Folklore Society — have conducted 240 workshops and trained 5,000 volunteers.

In July 2006, the Veterans History Project invited a handful of experienced VHP workshop leaders to the Library of Congress for two days of sharing experiences and creating a draft set of “best practices.” These “best practices” comprise eight pages and can be had by contacting Monica Mohindra, program officer, Veterans History Project, at [mmohi@loc.gov](mailto:mmohi@loc.gov).

A few of the tips are distilled here for trainers and those who would like to be trainers.

- Solid advance planning by the workshop leader with the host organization staff — location, tables/chairs, electrical outlets, VHP Field Kits

- Planning by the host organization: how volunteers can seek out willing veterans and providing recording equipment and tape
- Ability to explain the importance of oral history and its value as a historical document
- Up-to-date knowledge of the many facets of the Veterans History Project
- Inclusion of a practicum within the workshop so volunteers can practice in a classroom situation and get feedback from the trainer
- Preparedness in demonstrating the use of recording equipment
- The value of advance research, even if very basic
- Interviewing skills: developing rapport, listening and dealing with emotional moments that arise

If you wish to be considered for the roster of Veterans History Project workshop leaders, please send a resume, including prior training experience, and a cover letter to: Tim Lloyd, Executive Director, American Folklore Society: [lloyd.100@osu.edu](mailto:lloyd.100@osu.edu). ❖

# Oral historian recalls lifetime of interviews

Ninety-year-old Stetson Kennedy, who began collecting oral histories for the Federal Writers' Project in Florida at the age of 21, entranced an OHA audience with his recollections of a lifetime of interviews with former slaves, Ku Klux Klan members, turpentine camp workers and numerous other Floridians involved in social justice, civil rights and environmental issues.

In 1937, Kennedy recalled, no one could get a Works Progress Administration job "without taking a pauper's oath."

"I was eminently qualified," he said, noting that the unemployed people hired for the work in Florida were paid \$37.50 every two weeks.

"No one used the term oral histories," he said. Instead, they were called life histories and involved tracking down old-timers who could talk about Florida's early history.

The writers' project in Florida employed 200 field workers, Kennedy recalled, noting that they were mostly housewives and high school dropouts who developed great rapport with the informants, including prostitutes, voodoo doctors, former slaves and an assortment of "eccentric characters."

The interviewers had no recording equipment, except for a type of disk recorder that ran off of two car batteries. But for the most part, Kennedy

recalled, the interviewers relied on their memories to reconstruct what an



*Conference panelist Stetson Kennedy shares a yarn from his early oral history days with OHA members.*

interviewee said.

Some interviewers turned their work into literary productions, he said. "We had to tell them we didn't want them (the interviews) written up, we wanted them written down."

Kennedy challenged the merits of asking people the same questions. The Florida project has hundreds of interviews in which people talk about making soap, he said, adding: "They all made it the same way."

Nonetheless, the interviews uncovered hidden gems.

"We were like a bunch of kids on a treasure hunt," Kennedy said. "When we'd find something, we'd pass it all around."

The writers' project staff exhibited a great deal of dedication, he said, noting that the program's chief purpose was providing people with jobs.

But the staff members were aware of the importance of what they were doing, he said, adding: "I can't help but think it was much the same all over America." ❖

## Miss America pageants

*By Barbara W. Sommer, University of Nebraska-Lincoln*

Are women of color who have been Miss America contestants being used by the pageant, or have they used the pageant for their own ends?

Mary Linehan of the College of Wooster shared with OHA conference attendees her study of popular culture through an examination of the Miss America pageant, which she said reflects an intersection of race, ethnicity and sexuality.

Linehan said the first woman of color to compete for the Miss America title was Miss Tulsa, a Native American woman, in 1951. Miss Iowa, Cheryl Brown, was the first black woman to compete, in 1970. And Vanessa Williams was the first black woman to win the crown, in 1983. Until then,

Linehan said, women of color got no further than the Miss Congeniality award.

Interviews with black women who competed for Miss America indicated they were not seeking to break down racial barriers as much as they were looking to create an opportunity for themselves, particularly because the scholarships awarded through the pageant were the best available for women at the time.

The black women did not feel exploited by the pageant or believe they exploited the system, Linehan said, but they helped change the pageant from a beauty contest to a celebration of a more modern woman with a focus in her life. ❖

### Special thanks

The Oral History Association thanks the following individuals and organizations that sponsored the 2006 annual conference in Little Rock, Ark.

**Baylor University Institute for Oral History**

**Southern Oral History Program and The Center for the Study of the American South, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

**Stanley T. Harper, MD, MPH**

**Horace Douglas and Ellie May Jefferson**

**Kentucky Oral History Commission**

**National New Deal Preservation Association**

**Randolph-Macon College**

**Stetson Kennedy Foundation**

**Texas Oral History Association**

**The College of Wooster**

**Pryor Center for Arkansas Oral and Visual History, Special Collections Department, University of Arkansas Libraries**

**University of Louisville Department of History**

**University of Louisville Oral History Center**

**University of Arkansas at Little Rock**

**University of California Press**

# In remembrance ...

On Aug. 31, the Oral History Association lost a valued member, **Howard S. Hoffman**. He was 81.

Howard was emeritus professor of experimental psychology at Bryn Mawr College. He made significant contributions to the field of oral history by raising questions about the reliability and validity of human memory.

He began by asking his wife, Alice Hoffman, "To what extent do you think you can rely upon the memory of your oral history informants?"

As they struggled to address this question, they developed a plan to test memory in a variety of ways. This research resulted in a book by Hoffman and Hoffman titled *The Archives of Memory: A Soldier Recalls World War II*. It also led to numerous talks before both audiences of psychologists and oral historians and most recently a chapter in *Handbook of Oral History*, edited by Thomas Charlton, Lois Myers and Rebecca Sharpless, titled "Memory Theory: Personal and Social."

Howard Hoffman's intellectual curiosity and willingness to engage in discussion relying upon his expertise will be sorely missed at meetings of the Oral History Association and by all who knew him.



**Dr. Albert S. Lyons**, a retired gastric surgeon and professor of surgery at Mount Sinai Medical Center in New York who was present at the founding of the Oral History Association, died in September. He was 94.

In the mid-1960s, Lyons founded the Mount Sinai Archives and directed the medical school's history of medicine program from 1970-1986 and created an early oral history program at Mount Sinai Hospital. While he did not remain active in the OHA for long, he was involved in its earliest days, which he discusses in the accompanying excerpt from an oral history interview, which he gave in 1994.

Because of his efforts, Mount Sinai's institutional memory remains vital, and he will forever be recorded there.

The *OHA Newsletter* appreciates this contribution from Barbara J. Niss, Mount Sinai archivist. It provides an intriguing insight about the founding of the OHA as the organization celebrates its 40th anniversary.



*Albert S. Lyons*

## Lyons describes OHA's early days

Now, after we had started this [Mount Sinai's oral history program in 1965] — I don't know, it might have been a year or two, I suddenly got a communication from Los Angeles. James Mink, who was, I think, the librarian in UC, at Berkeley, probably, was calling together all the people who were involved in Oral History, to set up an organization, to meet at Arrowhead. We spent, I don't know how many days — The most wonderful friends I made, and the most entertaining time we had. And James Mink deserves the credit for all that.

Now, there was travail in organization. You had to set up committees. You were going to have to formalize this and so on. And on the last day, when the buses were waiting to leave, nothing had been done, I mean, had been satisfied. And they were fighting. Those who were in Oral History as part of a university, those who were in private organizations, those who were interested on a particular subject, those who were interested in writing a book on a subject — they were all at odds with each other. And those from the Midwest and East, and North, and the West, wanted to set it up so they would have something to do with it, because they were afraid they would

be dominated by the bigger institutions. And then when it came to raising money, they don't want to give from their funds — it was really tough. And I remember — again, when you give an oral history, you're always the center of attention, but I've tried to be accurate — I remember getting up and saying, "Mr. Chairman, (it was James Mink) I would like to move that we, everybody here, appoint you, James Mink, the man who started all this, the czar (everybody laughed) of the Oral History Association, (they'd been using the term) with the power to appoint whomever he wants to do with that and those persons, whatever they want. Of course, he'll appoint people who are nearby. How else is the work going to get done? And then to set up a meeting at another place, at another city, with the organizational material all settled." There was silence, somebody said, "Second." An acclamation, and they ran for the bus.

The next year it was at Columbia, at Arden House. And that was interesting, too, because that was really organized. There were no officers and so on. And wouldn't you know, I was appointed Chairman of the Nominating Committee. I don't know if I did such a good job. I'm serious. There were

three of us. One was a fellow by the name of [Raymond] Henle, who was a reporter, and well known, I think, on radio.

Another was a fellow by the name of Knox Mellon. He was, I forget where right now. And we picked a president, Louie Starr. That was a good choice. And we picked a vice-president, the fellow who was really an enemy of [James Mink] — they were enemies of each other.

They had the most awful times against each other. We picked a treasurer, the fellow who was part of our committee, for good reasons: because he had an organization, and his name was Knox (Fort Knox) and Mellon (the same name as the Secretary of the U. S. Treasury), so he couldn't be anything else but the OHA Treasurer.

Actually, he turned out to be a marvelous treasurer. It was the kind of thing he did well. But the secretary we did badly on...and he eventually had to be replaced, in the first year, because he didn't do it. And Louie Starr appointed his associate. She became the secretary, and she was wonderful.

One other thing about that. The fellow I mentioned who we nominated as vice-president, he was from Cornell. Louie Starr and he were enemies from way back. When I told

Louie whom we had nominated, Gould Coleman, I told him for vice-president, he said, "Al, I can tell you right this minute, I will not serve on any committee, any organization, and certainly no group of officers where so and so is a member." I told him that I was outraged. I said, "Louie, I have always admired you. I considered you one of the great people that not only has instructed me on things, but I've learned from and saw how you can carry-things over, and, I think, this is an outrage. Not only that, but here," and I motioned to a room already in preparation. "Gould," (I almost forgot his name), whom I had already spoken to, "you two fellows are going to go into that room, and you're going to consider this organization. I'm going to close the door and I'm standing outside. And Louie, I'm not letting either of you out, until you come out and agree." I shut the door and I waited outside. They were in there about twenty minutes. Door opens, Louie strode out. "You win, Al." And when he accepted the nomination, he said, "And I do want to thank my resident psychiatrist, Dr. Albert Lyons." They all knew I wasn't a psychiatrist. But that was the Oral History Association. ❖

## Congressional oral histories

With dozens of congressmen heading for retirement, involuntarily or otherwise, New York University's John Brademas Center for the Study of Congress has its work cut out in its unique plan to conduct exit interviews with departing House members.

"The Reflections Project: Retiring Members of Congress Assess the Institution" intends to create a permanent collection of interviews with retiring congressmen with an eye toward understanding how Congress has changed.

Some members, the Brademas Center said in a press release, believe

Congress is no longer functioning as it should because of intense partisanship, the high cost of running for public office and pressures of modern political life.

*The project will encourage greater public discussion of Congress and rigorous study of the lawmaking body.*

The Brademas Center, named after former congressman and NYU President Emeritus John Brademas, said that the project will encourage

greater public discussion of Congress and rigorous study of the lawmaking body.

The project is directed by Linda Douglass, senior fellow at the Brademas Center and former chief Capitol Hill correspondent for ABC News.

The center plans to conduct one-on-one interviews, with or without audiences, or invite retiring congressmen to complete a questionnaire. All interviews will be videotaped or audiotaped for the center's archives. Some also may be used for public broadcast. ❖

### Editor's note:

We hope you enjoy the redesigned **OHA Newsletter**. Thanks go to Publications Committee Chair Irene Reti and designer Jessica Bucciarelli. And please welcome Alexandra Tzoumas, the new photo and production editor. Special thanks also to Barb Sommer, who helped cover OHA conference sessions for the newsletter.

What hasn't changed is the **Newsletter's** desire to include a wide array of information about oral historians and their projects and developments in the field. Please send your stories, or ideas for stories, to the editor, Mary Kay Quinlan, at: [ohaeditor@aol.com](mailto:ohaeditor@aol.com). All photos should be sent to Alexandra Tzoumas at: [alexandratz@verizon.net](mailto:alexandratz@verizon.net).

The deadline for the spring issue is **March 1, 2007**. Stories and photos for the summer issue should be sent by **July 1, 2007**.

### **Kentucky Celebrates Commission's 30th Anniversary**

The Kentucky Oral History Commission marked its 30th anniversary Sept. 8-9 at a celebration in Louisville, Ky., titled "Kentucky Conference on Oral History: Accomplished Past. Challenging Future."

The conference featured a wide variety of nationally and internationally known oral historians, including numerous former presidents of the Oral History Association.



### **MOHA Sponsors Full Slate of Workshops**

The Michigan Oral History Association presented workshops every weekend in October as part of its ongoing efforts to teach and consult with local groups interested in developing oral history projects.

Secretary Geneva Kebler Wiskemann reported that MOHA members presented workshops at the Lake Orion Township Public Library, the Northeast Michigan Museum Conference, the West Michigan History Conference, the Eaton County Historical Conference and a National Endowment for the Humanities-funded seminar for teachers.



### **Idaho Women Veterans Recount World War II Stories**

Interviews with four dozen women involved in World War II are featured on a recently completed Idaho Oral History Center Web site and are part of the national Veterans History Project.

The interviews, conducted by history center staff, interns, volunteers and outside contributors, record the stories of women who served in the Army, Navy, Marines and Coast Guard. The project also interviewed Red Cross workers, nurses, factory workers and women who lived as civilians in Japan, Russia, Germany, the Netherlands, England and the United States during the war.

Troy Reeves, recently named state historian at the Idaho State Historical Society, said in a press release that the stories "depict the various experiences of women engaged in this worldwide conflict, making for a more complete picture of this period."

The oral history center is continuing to seek veterans and women who lived through World War II and who are willing to be interviewed.

The Web site is: [www.idahohistory.net/women\\_vets.html](http://www.idahohistory.net/women_vets.html).

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

## *New publications*

### **What To Do After the Interview**

Archivist and oral historian Nancy MacKay leads readers through the tasks they need to accomplish after an oral history interview in *Curating Oral Histories: From Interview to Archive* published by Left Coast Press Inc.

The practical guide covers transcribing, cataloging, preserving archiving and making oral history interviews accessible to others. It includes planning strategies and useful resources to make an oral history recording "archive ready."

### **Examining Hurricane Katrina**

*There Is No Such Thing As a Natural Disaster: Race, Class, and Hurricane Katrina*, edited by Chester Hartman and Gregory D. Squires and published by Routledge, is a compilation of 14 essays that examine the aftermath of Hurricane Katrina, which devastated the Gulf Coast last year.

OHA members Alan H. Stein and Gene B. Preuss are among the distinguished essayists. Their chapter is titled "Oral History, Folklore and Katrina."

### **Women Shipyard Workers on DVD**

The Northwest Women's History Project has created a 20-minute media production on DVD titled *Good Work Sister! Women Shipyard Workers of World War II: An Oral History*.

Using period music, posters, photos and interviews, the production tells the stories of women who performed skilled ship-building jobs in Portland, Ore., and Vancouver, Wash., from 1942 to 1945.

For information on obtaining the DVD, visit the project's Web site: [www.goodworksister.org](http://www.goodworksister.org).

# Call for Papers

## The revolutionary ideal: Transforming community through oral history

### The Oral History Association

invites proposals for papers and presentations for its 2007 annual meeting to be held October 24–28, 2007 at the Marriott Oakland City Center in Oakland, Calif.

As always, the Program Committee of the OHA welcomes proposals for presentations on a variety of topics. However, in keeping with this year's theme, "The Revolutionary Ideal: Transforming Community through Oral History," the 2007 Annual Meeting will concentrate on the revolution in oral history as it relates to social and political change, community survival and changes in technology.

Oakland is a symbolic center of revolutionary thought, and action, and the committee is especially interested in realizing how "revolutions," both large and small, have an impact on society and community. The Association is seeking presentations that deal with social and economic justice, environmentalism, Black Power, civil rights, gender and gay/lesbian/bisexual/transgender peoples, migrant and immigrant communities, peoples with disability and independent living, and regional, Pacific and Western histories.

Communities have transformed rapidly over the years and the topics generated by such change will be explored at the conference.

Proposals that deal with issues such as gentrification, urban renewal, community health, globalization and local empowerment are strongly encouraged. Technological changes will be another major component of the conference and topics such as digitization, consumption of oral history, community archiving practices, and the democratization of knowledge will be presented. Oral history projects that deal with specific revolutions such as the Chinese Revolution and the Sexual Revolution will also play a focal point in the conference.

Regional historians and students of the Bay Area, Calif., the Pacific Northwest and Canadian history are encouraged to submit proposals. In addition to those whose work concerns international topics, the committee invites proposals for presentations that reflect on the "revolutionary" process of oral history and the role of technology and theory in its practice. A variety of formats and presentation methods are welcome, including traditional panels with chair

and discussant, workshops, and poster sessions, as well as media and performance-oriented sessions.

At the conference, we also look forward towards helping to create a community that can continue revolutionizing the field of oral history after participants have left Oakland.

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

[www.dickinson.edu/oha](http://www.dickinson.edu/oha).

Proposals should be postmarked by **January 15, 2007**. They may be submitted by mail or fax. E-mail attachment will also be accepted, but must include the "cover sheet" in electronic form and must be one complete document in Microsoft WORD format. Should you not receive email confirmation by February 5th, please contact the OHA office.

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**Submit proposal directly to the OHA office at the address below.**

**Queries may be directed to:**

**Mehmed Ali,**  
First Vice President  
[mehmed\\_ali@nps.gov](mailto:mehmed_ali@nps.gov)  
978-275-1826

**Horacio Roque Ramirez,**  
Program Co-Chair  
[roqueramirez@chicst.ucsb.edu](mailto:roqueramirez@chicst.ucsb.edu)  
626-354-1808

**Norma Smith,**  
Program Co-chair  
[nsmith@igc.org](mailto:nsmith@igc.org)  
510-465-2094

**Proposals should be sent by January 15, 2007, to:**

**Madelyn Campbell**  
Oral History Association, Dickinson College  
P. O. Box 1773 • Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013  
Telephone: 717-245-1036 • Fax: 717-245-1046

## 13th Annual Morrissey Workshop Set in San Francisco

The 13th annual Morrissey Oral History Workshop in San Francisco is set for Feb. 23–25, 2007, at the Fort Mason Center.

Taught by former OHA president Charles T. Morrissey, the workshop covers project management, interviewing techniques, ethical dilemmas, transcription, fund raising and an opportunity to network with a wide variety of oral history practitioners.

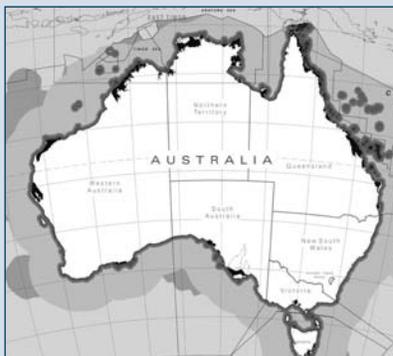
Previous workshops have drawn participants from throughout the United States, including Alaska and Hawaii, and from Guam and Canada. Class size is limited to 30.

For registration details and information on accommodations, contact Elizabeth A. Wright at 415-928-3417 or by e-mail at: [Elizabeth@HistoryInProgress.com](mailto:Elizabeth@HistoryInProgress.com).

## Australians Invite Oral History Proposals

“Old Stories New Ways” is the theme of the 2007 national conference of the Oral History Association of Australia, set for Sept. 27–30 next year at the Riverglenn Conference Center, Indooroopilly, Brisbane, Queensland, Australia.

Conference planners invite proposals on interpreting stories, working with



communities, understanding memory, oral history and independent practitioners and addressing changing technology.

Feb. 28, 2007, is the proposal deadline. For details, visit the association's Web site: [www.ohaaqld.org.au](http://www.ohaaqld.org.au).

## Pennsylvania Offers Research Stipends

Anyone conducting research on Pennsylvania history is invited to apply for the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's 2007–08 scholars in residence program.

Scholars receive a stipend of \$375 a week for up to eight weeks for research in manuscript and artifact collections in any of the commission's archives, museums and historic sites.

The application deadline is Jan. 12, 2007. Complete details are at: [www.phmc.state.pa.us](http://www.phmc.state.pa.us).

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