

## **Madison, Wis., oral history conference draws big, enthusiastic crowd**

MORE THAN 475 oral historians congregated in the shadow of the Wisconsin Capitol and within a stone's throw of the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus for the annual Oral History Association conference, featuring wide-ranging workshops, panels, plenaries and plenty of conversation.

The Oct. 8-12 event at the Madison Concourse Hotel included presentations by musicians, oral history scholars, activists, museum professionals, community oral historians and documentary makers in workshops, panels, roundtables, interest groups, conversations, book signings and a regional showcase of oral history projects in the upper Midwest.

This issue of the *OHA Newsletter* offers a potpourri of conference happenings and other news about the OHA and about oral history work around the country and around the world. ♦

## **OHA mentor program launches in Madison**

*By Ellen Brooks, Wisconsin Veterans Museum*

THIS YEAR'S OHA conference saw the inception of an OHA mentor program. The program partnered individuals who were new to OHA and to the conference with individuals who are OHA veterans. The impetus for the program came from my own experience as a newbie at the OHA conference in Cleveland in 2012 as well conversations I've had with other first-timers and new oral historians.

When I attended the Conference in Cleveland, I had the benefit of attending with my fellow oral history M.A. cohort members from Columbia University. But other than my classmates, who were also all first-timers, I didn't know anyone at the conference nor had I ever been to a professional conference before. I did not know what to expect and I found the experience both stimulating and overwhelming. I left that conference feeling excited about oral history, but also feeling like I had missed out on the opportunity to really connect to the OHA community.

After some thought and conversation it occurred to me (and others) that a mentor program could be extremely beneficial for newcomers as a means of orienting them for the conference and welcoming them to OHA.



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## President's letter

By Paul Ortiz, University of Florida

OUR RECENTLY-CONCLUDED ANNUAL meeting in Madison, Wis., was a wonderful example of the ways that oral history brings people together from all walks of life. Our annual conference was a success thanks to the creativity, labor and organizational skills of countless contributors. We all owe a huge debt of gratitude to Cliff Kuhn and Gayle Knight at the executive director's office for their indefatigable energy and efforts.

Gayle and Cliff were part of what became known in OHA parlance as "The Madison Dream Team." I'd like to take this opportunity to thank OHA 2014 annual meeting co-chairs Natalie Fousekis and Kathryn Newfont as well as Troy Reeves who served as the chair of the local arrangements committee. Natalie and Kathy organized a superb program committee that in turn created one of the most remarkable conferences we've ever had.

Troy Reeves, the director of the UW-Madison Oral History Program, worked for two years to create a welcoming environment for OHA members and guests to Madison. As we created the infrastructure in the

months leading up to the conference, Wisconsinites told us repeatedly that, "If you are working with Troy Reeves, we will do whatever it takes to help you." This is a reminder that so much of what we do in the field of oral history is about building community and relationships of trust.

Madison was truly extraordinary. At "The Sharecroppers' Troubadour" session, Mike Honey and Pat Krueger lead 200+ audience members in the singing of labor struggle songs by John Handcox, the "people's songwriter." Our "Academics as Activists" plenary session anchored by Jacquelyn Dowd Hall spurred us to consider the urgency of engaging in social issues in a time when individual voices are being squelched by large institutions.

Paul Ortiz, OHA president

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## Executive Director's report

By Cliff Kuhn

NO SOONER HAVE we finished work on one annual meeting that it seems we're off and running on the next one. This certainly was true this year, as within a month of the 2014 meeting in Madison, we had the call for papers and the conference submission site all ready for OHA 2015 in Tampa.

Before we get ahead of ourselves too much, though, let's stop and thank all those who made the Madison meeting a terrific one. OHA Vice President Paul Ortiz broke all records in soliciting funds to support the meeting from an unprecedented number of sponsors. Hats off to OHA members Ellen Brooks, Erica Fugger and Kristen La Follette for ushering in the hugely successful mentoring program, which I'm sure will be a fixture at future meetings. Of course a special shout-out goes to Program Committee chairs Natalie Fousekis and Kathy Newfont, along with their committee, who worked long and hard to produce such a fine event. And last but certainly not least, many thanks to Local Arrangements chair Troy Reeves and his exemplary committee. Madison, we'll miss you.

Under the leadership of OHA program associate Gayle Knight, the executive office staff has spent a lot of time this fall taking membership back in-house from Oxford University Press. While Oxford operated on a "subscription fulfillment" model tied to the Oral History Review, we will be operating on a "membership service" model that will be altogether different (and better). We have set up a membership site that will easily enable people to join or renew and that will allow us to better communicate with the members. In addition, we will be working closely with the newly constituted membership committee to ensure that we provide the best possible membership service.

Cliff Kuhn, OHA executive director



PHOTO: MICHELLE LACOSSE

## Endowment Fund Donors

The Oral History Association thanks the following recent donors to the OHA Endowment Fund. Donations may be made at any time and are tax deductible.

The recent 2014 donors include: **Ruth Hill, Paul Hutman Thomas, Mary Larson, Julie Meranze Levitt, Yona Owens and Alex Primm.**

# Inside the 2014 OHA Conference

## Annual meeting covers wide range of topics

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION leaders reported a wide range of accomplishments, including a major bequest, and members approved resolutions concerning international issues at the annual OHA meeting on the last day of the Madison conference.

Executive Director Cliff Kuhn reported that the organization will end the fiscal year with about \$145,000 in operating reserves and an endowment of about \$341,000, bolstered significantly by a bequest of \$100,000 from the estate of Eleanor Stoddard, a longtime OHA member from Maryland, who died in January.

Kuhn noted that only 90 OHA members voted in the annual leadership elections and said the organization needs

to work on increasing participation in governance of the association.

Kuhn also said the executive office will be working on a protocol for establishing partnerships and special relationships between the OHA and other groups. "We have to think carefully about how we partner with other organizations," he said.

President Stephen Sloan reported that the OHA reached an agreement to work with the American Folklore Society to split the duties of identifying workshop presenters for the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project.

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## New logo replaces decades-old image

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION conference attendees got a first look at the organization's new logo, the first rebranding for OHA since 1987, when the then-new logo was said to be "so much more eighties" looking than the one it replaced.

David Laufer, an Atlanta design and marketing consultant, worked with the OHA Council to create a new logo that would be a visual representation usable across all media platforms.

Groups like OHA that only meet in person once a year "rely on touchpoints to keep the faithful together," Laufer said.

Laufer, who boasts a Carnegie-Mellon degree in design, became a book designer for Oxford University Press and created the institution's 500th anniversary brand mark. All told, he's been involved with more than 80 books as a designer, contributor or consultant. His company, BrandBook LLC, specializes in "helping organizations present themselves to look as good on the outside as they are on the inside."

Laufer began the process for designing a new OHA brand mark by interviewing Council members and learning about the organization's past, present and future, then extracting key words that served to inspire design ideas.

"I've never worked for such a disparate group," Laufer said, but he enjoyed digitally creating diverse images that reflected his sense of the organization.

"I was having such fun with it, I way overdid it," he said, scrolling through screen after screen of computer images he developed.

What Council members finally approved is a clean-looking design in a typeface known as Gill Sans, created by a British sculptor, stonemason and typeface designer in the late 1920s.

It's not meant to be symbolic in the same way that an American eagle might represent courage, Laufer said. But he suggested that observers might see the three dots as similar to an ellipsis, which can indicate an open-ended statement or thought. And the circle, square and triangle are basic geometric shapes, which perhaps "signify something fundamental, irreducibly simple," he said, adding:

"We mainly wanted to produce something bold, bright and modern, perhaps to put an emphasis on the future rather than many people's image of history as a fixed, backward-looking enterprise."



The last time OHA Council members considered a new logo, the process presented some challenges.

Donald A. Ritchie, who was OHA president the last time OHA leaders adopted a new design, recalled in an email a 1984 Council meeting "where poor Madeline Buckendorf dragged a slide projector with her on about four different planes between Idaho and Florida so she could show us prospective logos, and we voted them all down!"

OHA was launching its new pamphlet series then and was trying to come up with an identifiable brand for all the publications, he said.

"The ones that we rejected involved little images of people being interviewed," Ritchie said. "The trouble with pictures is you have to deal with every possible race, gender and ethnicity, and no one size fit all."

A designer in Kentucky eventually came up with the simple "OHA."

"I'm impressed that it's lasted this long," Ritchie said in his email to Executive Director Cliff Kuhn, "but not surprised that you'd want something less 'eighties.'" ♦

**Editor's Note:** Look for your redesigned **OHA Newsletter** in the spring of 2015!

## President's letter

*continued from page 2*

Legendary jazz musician Richard Davis captivated us and captured our artistic imaginations as he wove together the ideas and practices of anti-racism, musical virtuosity and critical pedagogy in two unforgettable evening sessions organized by Regennia Williams. Professor Davis convincingly argued that we all need to rededicate ourselves to the struggle for equality in our own institutions and in the society at large.

I would be remiss if I did not thank our annual meeting sponsors. This year's sponsors contributed a record amount of resources to our conference, and we owe them a tremendous debt of gratitude.

We turn now towards the exciting task of preparing for our next annual meeting, which will be held in Tampa, Fla., Oct. 14-18, 2015. OHA Vice President Annie Valk as well as Tampa conference co-chairs Martha Norkunas, and Sharon Utakis are doing great work, and I urge all of us to offer our

assistance to them to ensure that our conference in Tampa will be the most successful OHA annual meeting of all!

There will be many opportunities to contribute to the building of a more robust Oral History Association and we are going to ask for your help in several areas. OHA Council has created two new groups: the Metadata Task Force, which will help us grapple with the technological challenges and opportunities we face, as well as the 50th Anniversary Task Force, which is already beginning to plan a series of productions and commemorations pursuant to our 50th anniversary annual meeting in Long Beach, Calif., in 2016. I've asked First Vice President Doug Boyd to play a leading role in this initiative as we celebrate our past using new technologies that will allow us to spread the story of the OHA to the largest audience in our history. In the weeks and months to come, don't be surprised if you receive an email or phone call asking you to join a task force or a committee! ♦

## Executive Director's report

*continued from page 2*

We have continued to work closely with designer David Laufer in extending the new OHA logo to a variety of formats and applications, from the website to a new membership brochure (and this newsletter). It has been a pleasure working with David and witnessing his creative mind at work.

We have been charged by the OHA Council to develop a document treating oral history as scholarship, to assist people going through the promotion and tenure process. Creating such a document presents a challenge, in light of the multiple audiences for whom the document is intended, the multiple things oral historians do, the multiple tiers of colleges and universities, and the multiple disciplines with which oral history intersects. We have put together a working group within OHA and sought the input of colleagues from other professional associations as we move forward.

In others ways, too, we have been in touch with colleagues outside of OHA. I attended my first meeting of the chief administrative officers of the American Council of Learned Societies, of which OHA is the most recent member, and found it very useful. In January, OHA will sponsor a session at the annual meeting of the American Historical Association, and we will have a presence at upcoming meetings of the Southern American Studies Association and the National Council of Public History. We have also been in close contact with the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress about a range of matters, and have strengthened ties to the history of science and the humanities advocacy communities. The new OHA executive structure enables us to be at the table for numerous important conversations, for which I am grateful. ♦

## OHA members elect new leaders

*Results of OHA elections were announced at the Madison conference. New leaders are:*



### 1<sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT

#### **DOUG BOYD**

Director of the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History  
University of Kentucky Libraries



### OHA COUNCIL MEMBER

#### **KRISTINE NAVARRO-MCELHANEY**

Director of the Institute of Oral History  
University of Texas at El Paso

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

**REBECCA SHARPLESS**, associate professor of history at Texas Christian University

**JEFF CORRIGAN**, oral historian for The State Historical Society of Missouri

**ROSIE JAYDE UYOLA**, New Jersey public high school teacher and activist

# Inside the 2014 OHA Conference

## Oral historians recognized for wide-ranging work

ORAL HISTORIANS WHOSE work focuses on a wide range of 20th and 21st century topics were recognized at the conference's annual awards banquet. The 2014 award winners were:

- **Tracy K'Meyer** for her article "Remembering the Past and Contesting the Future of School Desegregation in Louisville, Kentucky, 1975-2012," published in the *Oral History Review*. Judges said her work provides "a critical counterpoint to existing scholarship and dominant media accounts of busing and school desegregation" as it "highlights the contrast between the memories of blacks and whites on both sides of Louisville's debate over busing."
- **Anna Sheftel and Stacey Zembrzycki**, editors, for their book *Oral History off the Record: Toward an Ethnography of Practice*. Judges said the collection of essays by interdisciplinary scholars examines the complexities of the interviewing process and suggested that the book "will likely remain a useful guide to the field of oral history for many years to come."
- **Kenneth Bindas**, who received the nonprint format award for *May 4th Voices: Kent State, 1970*. Judges said the production used oral history interviews creatively, using current Kent State students to voice interview transcripts, thus bringing the history alive.
- **Luke Lassiter**, who received a grant from the Emerging Crises Oral History Research Fund for his project "Oral Histories of the Charleston, West Virginia, Chemical

Spill." Judges said the project focuses on social and economic concerns related to the January 2014 chemical spill into the Elk River, contaminating drinking water in nine counties, and they noted that the project is "representative of larger emerging environmental concerns in this country and abroad." The research fund makes grants of up to \$4,000 to support oral history research in emerging crises in which a longer time frame for seeking funds may be inappropriate.

- **Densho, The Japanese American Legacy Project of Seattle and the African American Oral History Project of Oakland, Calif.**, were co-winners of the **Stetson Kennedy Vox Populi Award**. Judges praised the Densho project, which has been collecting oral histories since 1996, for its commitment to education and its interest in using project narratives to encourage "more ethical, just decision-making." Judges praised the Oakland project not only for collecting significant oral histories, but also for training young oral historians and for its "range of deliverables," including a video, book, website and public events, and noted that the project plans to expand to other communities.

The Vox Populi Award was established to recognize outstanding achievement in using oral history to create a more humane and just world. Nominees may include those who use oral history as a means of furthering social justice as well as those collecting oral histories of social justice advocates. ♦

## Thank you, OHA sponsors

The Oral History Association thanks the following sponsors for their generous support of the 2014 annual conference.

**Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University**

**Center for Oral and Public History,  
California State University, Fullerton**

**Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage,  
University of Southern Mississippi**

**Center for Oral History Research, UCLA**

**Chemical Heritage Foundation**

**Columbia University Oral History Master of Arts Program**

**Department of History, Baylor University**

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**Institute for Oral History, Baylor University**

**Institute of Oral History, University of Texas at El Paso**

**Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History,  
University of Kentucky Libraries**

**Madelyn Campbell Annual Meeting Speaker Fund**

**Oxford University Press**

**Samuel Proctor Oral History Program,  
University of Florida**

**Southern Oral History Program,  
University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill**

**University of North Texas Oral History Program**

**University of Wisconsin-Madison Archives**

**University of Wisconsin-Madison  
Department of Gender and Women's Studies**

**University of Wisconsin-Madison Department of History**

**University of Wisconsin-Madison Libraries**

**University of Wisconsin-Madison Oral History Program**

**University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Music**

**University Products**

**Wisconsin Humanities Council**

# Inside the 2014 OHA Conference

## OHA Mentor Program

*continued from page 1*

This year we paired 47 mentors and newcomers. Although it wasn't possible to pair everyone up with their mentor soul mate, we attempted to make appropriate pairings based on what we learned about participants from brief surveys we asked them to take. We then introduced mentor to newcomer via email, gave some suggestions for when and where to meet up at the conference and let the pairs take it from there.

In general, the program seemed like a success. Pairs were able to meet once or, in some cases, several times throughout the conference, and many people commented on how helpful

the program was for both learning how to navigate the conference and feeling comfortable in the OHA community.

We've gotten some great ideas and feedback about how to construct the mentor program moving forward. We hope to pair more people up for the 2015 conference in Tampa, and we are considering other ways to give newcomers networking opportunities. We also plan to explore how we can make the mentor program happen outside of the conference experience. Stay tuned!

Special thanks to Erica Fugger and Kristen La Follette, whose support and aid made this program possible! ♦

## Annual Meeting Topics

*continued from page 6*

The executive office also will take back from Oxford University Press the management of OHA membership records.

The OHA International Committee reported receiving 10 applications for funding assistance to attend the annual conference. Six people were awarded a total of \$3,500.

The Scholarship Committee reported receiving 53 applications from presenters and 12 from non-presenters to attend the conference. A total of \$6,670 was awarded to 13 presenters and three non-presenters to support their participation.

The Publications Committee reported that OHA has had a banner year in sales of pamphlets in print, and the

committee is discussing video documentation of annual conference sessions.

In other business, attendees also passed resolutions expressing condemnation of the U.S. Embassy in Ukraine for delaying visa approval of a Ukrainian participant who was thus unable to attend and condemnation of violence and intimidation against Palestinian researchers and their archival and oral history collections. Some members objected, expressing concern about OHA involvement in political issues.

The complete texts of the resolutions are below:

### **Resolution concerning Tetiana Boriak**

Whereas Tetiana Boriak of Ukraine had been accepted as a participant at the annual meeting of the Oral History Association; and

Whereas she also had been awarded a scholarship to attend the meeting; and

Whereas the U.S. embassy randomly checked her passport, thus delaying the process of obtaining a visa; and

Whereas this delay prevented her from attending the meeting;

Therefore be it resolved that the Oral History Association formally express to the State Department its condemnation of this action.

### **Resolution condemning Israeli violence against Palestinian researchers and their archival and oral his- tory collections.**

Introduced by: Sherna Berger Gluck, Rosalie Riegler, Karen Harper, Ron Grele and Sarah Loose

Whereas, the Oral History Association is dedicated to the documentation of human experience through the collection and preservation of historical information; and, further, encourages and facilitates contacts between professionals engaged in that endeavor; and

Whereas, this goal cannot be pursued if when oral history collections and the people who create and preserve them are the targets of violence and intimidation; and

Whereas, oral history has been widely used as a means of documenting the expulsion and exodus of the Palestinian population

from what is now Israel and the territories occupied in 1967; and

Whereas, the Oral History Center of the Islamic University in Gaza documents the experiences of Palestinian refugees, and

Whereas, the Israeli Defense Forces attacked the Islamic University in Gaza where the Oral History Center is located on August 2, 2014;

Therefore, be it resolved that the Oral History Association condemns the acts of violence and intimidation by the State of Israel against Palestinian researchers and their archival and oral history collections, acts which can erase the memory of Israel's crimes during the 1948-9 and 1967 war and destroy Palestinians' sense of historical identity; and

Be it further resolved that this resolution be sent to the President of the Islamic University of Gaza, the Israeli Minister of Education, and the Prime Minister of Israel. ♦

# Inside the 2014 OHA Conference

## Jazz musician shares wisdom, music, laughter with OHA audiences

**LEGENDARY JAZZ BASSIST** Richard Davis, with a dozen albums and thousands of recordings to his name, entertained and inspired oral history audiences at two conference events moderated by OHA Council member Regennia Williams.

Davis, who has been a faculty member at the University of Wisconsin-Madison since 1977, is said to have played everywhere with everybody. He's won numerous awards and enthusiastic audiences through a lifetime as a jazz musician. And he tantalized his OHA audience in a sing-along performance of "Summertime," with Williams, herself a musician as well as a history professor, as lead vocalist during the Thursday evening Presidential Reception at the University's Memorial Union.

### MUSIC HAS A WAY OF DEPICTING A STORY, EVEN WITHOUT WORDS.

Williams, the self-proclaimed president of the Richard Davis Fan Club, also interviewed Davis in an unscripted oral history interview during the Saturday banquet, following presentation of the annual OHA awards.

Davis made clear there's little distance between music and storytelling. Jazz musicians, he said, "have to have a story in mind" to create a song. "Music has a way of depicting a story, even without words." And a musical instrument itself is a sensual thing, he told the Presidential Reception audience, adding: "When you breathe into it, bow against it, it becomes a human voice."

The musician recounted his early musical training and tutored an initially reluctant audience in singing the jazz classic "Take the A Train," and in keeping with a jazz master's improvisational style, he then engaged in wide-ranging, open-ended question-and-answer session with the audience.

In his Saturday evening interview with Williams, Davis recalled how his church upbringing in Chicago shaped his musical life. "When you grow up in the Baptist church on the south side of Chicago, you have a good start at being a musician," he said. "There was always an organ...and a choir that would sway to the music, back and forth. Even today when I play a spiritual, I can see those men and women swaying back and forth."

Davis noted that many black singers, like Sarah Vaughan, Aretha Franklin and Nat King Cole, came out of church music. "The church was a social center where people felt safe and felt loved and felt equal," he said. "It was a good thing just to be inside those doors."

Davis recalled that he bought his first bass when he was 15 years old for \$150, knowing from the moment he picked it up that he would become a professional musician.

After a distinguished professional career, he agreed to come to Madison to teach at the University of Wisconsin, but only after officials agreed to give him tenure. The university invited him repeatedly to join the faculty, he said, but he recalled asking: "Why should I come to a city I never heard of when I'm in New York sitting on top of the world?"

He finally headed west in 1977 and has been teaching in Madison ever since. "My approach to teaching is teaching life," he said.

In addition to his jazz and bass instruction, Davis also started a foundation to encourage young bass players, obtaining half-sized instruments for the youngest to master. His youngest player started at 3 and is now 21 and in demand in New York City, he said.

Davis also is founder of the Madison chapter of the Institutes for the Healing of Racism, whose mission is "combating racism with knowledge, love, fearlessness, intervention, resistance and action." ♦



*Top:* OHA Council member Regennia Williams, associate professor of history at Cleveland State University, conducts an oral history interview with jazz bassist Richard Davis at the OHA annual awards dinner.

*Above:* OHA Council member Regennia Williams, self-proclaimed president of the Richard Davis fan club, engages award-winning jazz bassist and educator Richard Davis at the OHA presidential reception.

# Inside the 2014 OHA Conference

## Songs, too, are oral history

IT WASN'T BILLED as a sing-along, but several hundred audience members at an OHA conference plenary session did just that—and they clapped, swayed and joined in call-and-response lyrics—as four musicians and scholars explored the unique role of music in the history of the interracial Southern Tenant Farmers Union.

The session focused on the work of John Handcox, known as the sharecropper's troubadour, whose talent for rhyming and for combining traditional and original songs enabled him to use music to "hold up a mirror to the times," said Pat Krueger, who chairs the music education program at the University of Puget Sound in Tacoma, Wash.

Handcox, born in 1904, was the grandson of a slave and grew up picking cotton from the age of 6. His father died in 1923, and the family lost everything. But Handcox never lost his "powerful sense of self," said Michael Honey, professor of humanities and American history at the University of Washington Tacoma.

Handcox became an organizer for the Southern Tenant Farmers Union, which grew to 30,000 members by the mid-1930s. Union members staged a successful strike in 1935, Honey said, but the next spring, the planters and bosses drove people out of their shacks and off the land, said Honey, interspersing his comments with guitar and harmonica accompaniment for his and Krueger's renditions of the period songs.

Pete Seeger once called Handcox one of the most important folk singers in the country, but few people knew him, Krueger said. In 1937, Seeger's father, Charles, made recordings for the Library of Congress of Handcox performing many of his songs, excerpts of which were played for the oral historians.

His work resonated with both white and black laborers alike because the songs grew out of a common folk culture shared by black and white rural Southerners, said panel moderator Bill Malone, a leading national expert on Southern working-class music. Malone emphasized that music was important in the lives of poor, largely isolated people because it served as a form of identity for them.

Jonathan Overby, ethnomusicologist and Wisconsin Public Radio celebrity who filled the auditorium with his powerful baritone voice singing passages from black sacred songs, told the audience in his commentary that Handcox was, essentially, an early rap musician, part of a long African-American tradition of oral expression.



Oral historians clapped, sang along and swayed to the music as Michael Honey of the University of Washington and Pat Krueger of the University of Puget Sound sang the songs of John L. Handcox, revered as "the sharecroppers' troubadour."

Overby called it a mistake to think of the music of enslaved Africans as all spirituals or sacred music. In fact, he said, there were sorrowful songs, protest songs, jubilee songs and liberation songs.

"White folks need to take ownership of a genre they helped to create," Overby said, noting that enslaved Africans were not allowed to express themselves any way other than singing because it entertained their white oppressors. The enslaved people sat outside the white churches and combined what they heard in old Hebrew narratives with their own African traditions. Overby speculated that the African traditions also could have been influenced by Middle Eastern musical traditions because of the role Arabs played in transporting people from the east to the west coast of Africa, bound for enslavement in the New World.

Audience members testified to the multicultural, multigenerational nature of the music, joining Overby in "Soon and Very Soon, We Are Going to See the King" and "Joshua Fit the Battle of Jericho."

Too soon, the plenary session was over. ♦

## Community showcase features wide array of oral history work

OHA CONFERENCE-GOERS GOT a taste of the wide range of oral history work under way in the upper Midwest at the Saturday afternoon Community Showcase.

In informal conversations with presenters, visitors could learn about oral history projects with returned Peace Corps volunteers, Wisconsin veterans, new immigrant groups, Wisconsin farms, LGBTQ life at the University of Chicago, bilingual German-English communities in Wisconsin, Madison neighborhood documentation projects and more than a dozen others.

Showcase participants included: Anita Hecht, Live History Services; Thor Ringler, My VA, My Story; Nancy Camden, Spotting Wisconsin; Charles Lee, LaCrosse Oral History; Erin Devlin, University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire; Sarah White, Madison Eastside History Group; Paul Hedges, Wisconsin Historical Society; Phyllis Noble, Returned Peace Corps Volunteers; and Tom Martinelli, Westmorland.

(continued on next page)

# Inside the 2014 OHA Conference

Other participants included: Josh Feyen, Wisconsin Back to the Land; James Levy, Wisconsin Farms; Kathleen Klehr, The Speak Easy; Alyson Sewell, Documenting Wisconsin Heritage; Barb Sommer, Minnesota Commission of Deaf, DeafBlind, and Hard of Hearing Minnesotans Oral-Visual History Project; Monica Mercado, Closeted/Out in the Quadrangles; Andrea Bergman, New Immigrants; Gina Temple-Rhodes, Duluth Oral Histories; Andrea Potter, Edgewood; and Erika Janik, Wisconsin Life.

Troy Reeves, OHA local arrangements chair, organized the showcase, which was sponsored by the UW-Madison Oral History Program and the Wisconsin Humanities Council. ♦

## Oral history interviews find new life in radio documentaries



Radio documentarian John Biewen urges OHA conference attendees to repurpose their oral history interviews to tell powerful audio stories.

Biewen, a former reporter for Minnesota Public Radio and National Public Radio, said radio is powerful because it restores the original medium for telling stories: the human voice.

Radio is a much closer cousin to print than it is to television, Biewen said, because unlike television, radio broadcasts, like words on a page, "evoke the little movie that runs in your head."

Biewen started little movies running for audience members by playing excerpts from several of his documentaries.

In "Neuvo South," Biewen interviewed men and women in Siler City, N.C., a racially divided town dealing with an influx of brown, Spanish-speaking people. One interviewee compared it to being overrun by roaches. "I get surprised by what people will say," Biewen said.

The documentary maker also has explored stories of farm families, the Korean War, the hospice movement and a little-known 1862 U.S.-Dakota War in Minnesota. In that project, written narratives about event were available, and Biewen used actors to give voice to the story.

Biewen said he considers radio people and oral historians to be first cousins. Expressing a sentiment oral historians often tell one another, he said he always feels a profound sense of gratitude to the people who speak into recorders and considers it a privilege to tell their stories. ♦

ORAL HISTORIANS SHOULD consider creating radio documentaries as a way to repurpose their interviews and reach larger audiences, an award-winning documentary maker told an Oral History Association luncheon audience.

Learn how to use broadcast-quality recording equipment and appropriate editing software to bring interviewees' stories to life, John Biewen said. It may not be easy, "but it's not nuclear science," he said. Biewen directs the audio program at the Center for Documentary Studies at Duke University, where he teaches undergraduate, graduate and continuing education students the skills it takes to create radio documentaries.

## Seeger, Stetson, Studs share New Deal roots, passions, OHA panel says

TODAY'S ORAL HISTORIANS who want to choose their ancestors need look no further than Pete Seeger, Stetson Kennedy and Studs Terkel for the democratic, egalitarian and pluralistic values their lives and work reflect, Truman State University oral historian Jerrold Hirsch told OHA roundtable attendees.

The three men, all associated with New Deal activism, were the focus of commentary by Hirsch, Paul Ortiz of the University of Florida, David Dunaway of the University of New Mexico and Donald A. Ritchie of the Senate Historical Office as well as audience members. Alan Harris Stein of the Consortium of Oral History Educators helped organize the roundtable but was unable to attend.

Ortiz, whose university houses Stetson Kennedy's papers, called Kennedy "a very complex man."

"He held us to a very high standard in supporting human rights," Ortiz said, although he was rejected by his family for his civil rights activism. "Stetson made it OK for us to embrace marginality," turning marginality and dissidence into a strength, Ortiz said.

Dunaway, an award-winning biographer of Pete Seeger, said the folk musician and social activist used to say, "If music alone could change the world, I'd only be a musician."

The impact of songs may be hard to measure, Dunaway said, but popular music "has always served as a barometer of society." Even Chinese emperors sent servants to document songs workers were singing as they built the Great Wall of China, he noted.

Seeger, Kennedy and Terkel, a prolific author, labor activist, actor, radio and TV personality, all aimed at popular, not academic, audiences.

"Studs just thought of his audience as his fellow Americans," Hirsch said.

Ritchie, who suggested the roundtable aptly might have been titled "the voice of the people," noted Terkel's remarkable ability to interview people across a wide social spectrum, from rank and file workers as well as the industrialists who employed them.

Audience member Ron Grele, a past OHA president who interviewed Terkel for his landmark book *Envelopes of Sound*, said Terkel could successfully engage with so many different kinds of people because he "did incredible preparation prior to every interview." ♦

# Inside the 2014 OHA Conference

## Oral historians share experiences as scholars, activists

FOUR ACADEMIC ORAL historians recounted their experiences as activists at a conference plenary session, challenging OHA members to stand up for what matters to them.

**Jacquelyn Dowd Hall**, founding director of the University of North Carolina's Southern Oral History Program, **Rachel F. Seidman**, associate director of the UNC program, **Jeffrey W. Pickron**, history department lecturer at the University of Wisconsin-Oshkosh, and **Ian Lekus**, a lecturer in LGBT studies at the University of Maryland, described what it means to play dual roles as a scholar and social activist.

Hall, whose extensive list of honors and recognition testifies to her passion as a humanities scholar as well as a 1960s civil rights activist, told the audience by speakerphone, "I feel a tremendous sense of urgency about breaking out of the academy."

Hall, who was among hundreds of protesters arrested last year for demonstrating at the state capitol, said conservative think tanks in North Carolina have put forth their own versions of the state's history, creating a challenge for historians to advance narratives that illuminate the state's long history of civil rights, labor and working class activism.

Siedman, whose activism focuses on improving the lives of women and families, said she has long believed that academics

and activism are inherently linked. "What we write and teach about matters to the world at large," she said.

Siedman, who calls herself a "second-wave feminist," said she considers it imperative to model the kind of activist behavior she wants her students to adopt.

Lekus, who has taught at Harvard, Duke, Tufts and the University of Georgia as well as Maryland, has had a parallel career in human rights activism and social justice issues. Presently, he serves as an LGBT specialist for Amnesty International USA.

He described the challenges of LGBT advocacy in African countries, where the LGBT rights movement is seen as an unwelcome Western invention.

Pickron, who was involved in efforts to fight Wisconsin Gov. Scott Walker's bill to rescind collective bargaining rights for all public employees except police and firefighters, told OHA members, "Academics need to stand up for the work we do."

A labor historian, Pickron was involved in organizing busloads of people to go to the state capitol in Madison to demonstrate and attend legislative hearings on Walker's proposal, which ultimately took effect.

"There isn't a happy ending to this story," Pickron said. ♦

## OHA members recall life of Kim Lacy Rogers



AN OHA CONFERENCE panel recalled the prolific scholarship, award-winning teaching, oral history leadership and warm friendship that characterized Kim Lacy Rogers, a history professor at Dickinson College and former OHA president, who died unexpectedly in February at her home in Carlisle, Pa.

Madelyn Campbell, who served as executive secretary of OHA at Dickinson College, described Rogers as "a committed member of the campus community" who was dedicated to diversifying the college's enrollment.

Campbell also read a tribute from former student Ryan Koons, who was unable to attend the Madison conference. Koons, now a doctoral student at UCLA, said, "I affectionately came to call her my academic grandmother."

He highlighted Rogers' interest in marginalized people who she could draw out in interviews with "deft subtlety."

Rogers had a remarkable ability to use facial expressions to show she was truly interested in her narrators, Koons said.

Independent scholar Valerie Yow said she valued Rogers' focus on inner changes in her narrators. When Rogers conducted interviews focusing on the civil rights movement in the Mississippi Delta, Yow said, her last question to narrators always was: "What is the meaning for you of the changes you've helped to make?"

Eva McMahon, professor emeritus at James Madison University, who met Rogers in 1985 at the OHA meeting in Pensacola, Fla., praised her interdisciplinary approach. "Kim was a fearless scholar," McMahon said. "Her un-judgmental curiosity inevitably won over the people she wrote about."

Mary Marshall Clark of Columbia University, a past OHA president, said Rogers was an enthusiastic supporter of the growth and diversification of the oral history movement.

Audience members, too, offered their reflections.

Alphine Jefferson, also a past OHA president, called Rogers "a soul mate of 30 years" who was brave, passionate, respectful of ordinary people, devoted to research and a top-notch historian.

And she had good taste in jewelry and loved to shop, added Rina Benmayor, another past OHA president.

Her death, Benmayor said, "is such a loss to our oral history community." ♦

# CALL FOR PAPERS

STORIES OF SOCIAL CHANGE AND SOCIAL JUSTICE

## 2015 OHA ANNUAL MEETING | OCT. 14–18, 2015

Marriott Tampa Waterside | Tampa, Fla.

The Oral History Association invites proposals for papers and presentations for its 2015 annual meeting to be held Oct. 14–18, 2015, at the Marriott Tampa Waterside in Tampa, Fla.

The Program Committee welcomes proposals for presentations on a variety of topics. In keeping with this year's theme, "Stories of Social Change and Social Justice," the 2015 conference will focus on the power of oral history to uncover links between political and cultural change and to inspire civic engagement.

With its roots in social history, oral history long has offered a means to record stories of social change movements nationally and internationally. Oral history has been particularly useful in amplifying the voices of the people who have protested, inspired or responded to economic crises, political resistance and waves of migration. Within our increasingly connected world, oral history combines with social media and digital technologies to offer innovative ways to share these histories and engage the public with history and culture.

The popularity and flexibility of oral history raises numerous questions for consideration: How does oral history overlap with other forms of public narrative? How does it differ? Can oral history be useful

in advancing political change? What are its limits? And how does its use by political activists and as a means of public engagement impact the place of oral history in the academy?

Tampa, Fla., provides an exciting location in which to explore these themes. A rapidly growing city, Tampa represents the demographic diversity brought about by waves of immigration. Politically, the state of Florida has been the stage for national debates regarding voting rights, immigration policy, gun control and civil rights. Surrounded by water on three sides, Florida has long been the entry site for immigrants and refugees, as well as retirees and other migrants. Florida is also a place where scholars, activists and community members, from Zora Neale Hurston and Stetson Kennedy to more recent journalists and writers, have creatively recorded and preserved diverse voices of Americans.

We invite people to submit papers that consider how contemporary applications of oral history in the digitized world create opportunities and challenges with profound legal, ethical, political, social and cultural consequences. We seek contributions from community groups, activist organizations, museums, historical societies, archives and libraries, teachers, media/technology professionals, independent consultants and

scholars. The program committee solicits the representation of oral history community work through traditional academic methods and classroom or community programs. We further encourage field representation from film, drama, radio, television, exhibits, performance and electronic technology.

We especially encourage international participants to share their work and ideas. International presenters may apply to OHA for partial scholarships. A limited number of small scholarships are also available for presenters and others who attend the meeting.

### PROPOSAL FORMAT:

Submit proposals at [www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org)

### PROGRAM CO-CHAIRS:

Martha Norkunas  
Middle Tennessee State University  
[mknorkunas@gmail.com](mailto:mknorkunas@gmail.com)

Sharon Utakis  
Bronx Community College  
[sharon.utakis@bcc.cuny.edu](mailto:sharon.utakis@bcc.cuny.edu)

### FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

Oral History Association  
Georgia State University  
Dept. of History, P.O. Box 4117  
Atlanta, GA 30302-4117  
Phone: 404-413-5751  
Email: [oha@gsu.edu](mailto:oha@gsu.edu)

For details on how to submit proposals electronically, go to:  
**[WWW.ORALHISTORY.ORG](http://WWW.ORALHISTORY.ORG)**

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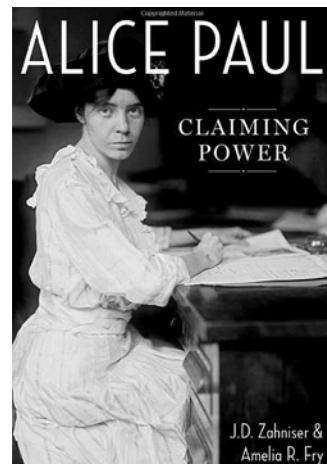
**JANUARY 12, 2015**

# Oral history-based biography of Alice Paul published

ALICE PAUL: CLAIMING Power, a biography being written by oral historian and longtime OHA member Amelia Fry before her death in 2009, has been completed by J.D. Zahniser and published by Oxford University Press.

The book, based largely on oral history interviews, chronicles Paul's early upbringing as a Quaker and her transformation as an activist and agitator for women's rights in the first two decades of the 20th century. The book addresses often-ignored aspects of the early feminist activism, including racism within the suffrage movement and Paul's own prejudices.

Fry's interviews with Paul, who died in 1977, were conducted through the Regional Oral History Office at the University of California, Berkeley in the early 1970s as part of the Suffragists Oral History Project. They are available online through the Bancroft Library. ♦



## Armenians in Connecticut Oral History Project

By Bruce M. & Sondra Astor Stave

THE ARMENIANS IN Connecticut Oral History Project, consisting of 20 interviews, has been completed and transcripts are now online in the Oral History Office collection at UConn's Thomas J. Dodd Research Center. (See <http://doddcenter.uconn.edu/asc/findaids/COH/MSS19840025.html#ref1207> ).

The members of the Connecticut Armenian community interviewed shared and preserved their stories to provide an understanding of immigration, cultural diversity and identity relevant to the Armenian diaspora in the state. Many described their family's experience with the 1915 genocide, and discussed their attitudes toward Turkey.

Questioning probed how the interviewees gained information about the events of that time. As often is the case with extreme traumatic events, some parents were reluctant to inform their children of the suffering; others poured forth and transferred memory to the next generation. One interviewee remarked, "My father has essentially refused to speak of those times very much. I think it is too difficult for him to do that." Another commented, "My father spoke very little about himself. My mom cried a lot, and repeatedly told her horrible stories, to the degree where it infiltrated my being."

Generational differences regarding intermarriage demanded attention. A *hai*, or pure, Armenian woman married an *odar*, or non-Armenian, because there were too few Armenian males in her community with whom to mate. Her grandfather, however, warned, "You have to—you should marry an Armenian man." On the other hand, reflecting a shift in generational values, her father seemed less concerned, and her sister married out of the group as well. The interviewee, who wished to preserve her ethnic identity despite marrying an *odar*, retained her Armenian surname as part of a hyphenated married name.

Topics such as religion and life in contemporary Armenia also received attention. There are four Armenian churches in Connecticut and, divided by political differences, they do not always cooperate. Three are in relative proximity in the Hartford area. Since attendance at Sunday services frequently is small, one interviewee, urging unification, worried, "if there's ten people in church, what's going to happen a generation from now?" For Armenians, descendants of the



Armenian bread.

first Christian nation established in 301 A.D., the church definitely plays an important role in shaping community.

While most of those we interviewed recognized that the Turks of today were not responsible for what has been labeled as the genocide of 1915, almost all agree that an explicit apology and clear admission of the deed on the part of the Turkish government is in order.

Until that happens, and perhaps in perpetuity, for at least one interviewee, hard feelings prevail. She explained how when she needed the exterior of her house painted, she put the job out for bids. One company provided the best price, but when a representative visited, "I noticed an accent that I didn't feel comfortable with. And before I committed to anybody, I said, 'Where are you guys from?' What do you think they said? Turkey! I said, 'Thank you very much,' and sent them on their way, and that was the end of that....And I don't even apologize for any of that, because you know, some people will say, 'Well, these people weren't responsible.' You're right. These people who came to my house were not responsible. But as long as their government says this has never happened, that's it."

Her cultural identity and that of many other Armenians was shaped by tragic events that occurred a century ago. Despite

(continued on page 14)

## Longtime OHMAR, OHA member dies

**NORTHERN VIRGINIA LIBRARIAN** Sara Collins, who used oral history to develop an exemplary local history collection at the Arlington County Public Library, has died. She was 85.

Friends said she had been cheerfully recovering from a serious illness but died unexpectedly on Dec. 3.

Collins was a longtime member of the Oral History Association and Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region, which awarded her its Forrest Pogue Award for outstanding contributions to oral history. She was always eager to teach oral history skills to anyone who wanted to learn them, and she had an unquenchable curiosity and ever-present sense of humor.

Sara Jean Dobie Collins was a native of Detroit and a 1951 graduate of Albion College in Albion, Mich. She earned a master's degree in library science from Catholic University in 1966, followed by an illustrious career at Arlington County Public Library.

A resident of Northern Virginia for more than 60 years, she was involved with numerous library and historical organizations in addition to OHA and OHMAR, including the Arlington Historical Society, Virginia Library Association, the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference, National Archives, the Northern Virginia Association of Historians, Arlington Historical Affairs and Landmark Review Board, the Arlington Bicentennial Committee and the Black Heritage Museum.

Collins was a member of Arlington United Methodist Church, where she served as librarian, led the sesquicentennial celebration, and played violin in the orchestra. She enjoyed Scottish country dancing, piano playing and community gardening.

Survivors include a sister, daughter, son, five grandchildren, four great-grandchildren, six nieces and nephews and an extensive circle of friends. Her family said donations in her name to the Arlington United Methodist Church, the Society of St. Andrew ([endhunger.org](http://endhunger.org)), Arlington Public Library's Center for Local History or the Arlington Historical Society would be greatly appreciated. ♦



## Noted scholar of black history dies

**LOUISE DANIEL HUTCHINSON**, retired research director at the Smithsonian Institution's Anacostia Community Museum and the 1986 winner of the Forrest Pogue Award from Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region, has died. She was 86.

Hutchinson, who was recognized in particular for her work documenting African-American history in Washington, D.C., helped make the museum, formerly known as the Anacostia Neighborhood Museum, a showcase for using stories of individuals to illuminate broader community themes. She particularly was passionate about documenting the role of black women in black history.

The Washington Post reported that people who worked with Hutchinson knew she insisted on absolute accuracy, expecting her researchers to examine old photos with magnifying glasses. By doing so, she once was able to identify Harriet Tubman and W.E.B. DuBois in a previously unidentified picture.

Hutchinson, who lived in Washington, D.C., retired from the museum in 1987. A daughter told the Post that she died Oct. 12 of vascular dementia. ♦

*Louise Daniel Hutchinson, holding a photograph of her parents, preserved African American history as director of research for the Smithsonian Institution's Anacostia Community Museum.*



VANESSA BARNES/HILLIAN/THE WASHINGTON POST

# Armenians in Connecticut

*continued from page 12*

being born in the United States, the suffering of their ancestors scarred a collective psyche and perpetuated strong ethnic salience.

Most of our interviewees had never visited Armenia, and those who did had mixed reactions. One was a frequent visitor and established a very successful program for young women who otherwise would be greatly disadvantaged after leaving orphanages. Others were turned off by what they viewed as a corrupt society.

To get a better sense of the “old country,” its life and culture, in conjunction with the project, we visited Armenia and met with scholars at Yerevan University. Not having been knowledgeable about Armenia before beginning our work, the visit, as well as the background research we did in preparation for interviewing, gave us a sense of the culture with which we were dealing.

While we expected to get a list of those to be interviewed, as often is the practice in such projects, that did not happen. As a consequence, we consulted sources such as church membership lists and also depended upon the “snowball effect.” Interviewees recommended others to interview, which has the advantage of expanding the pool of narrators, but the disadvantage of “inbreeding.”

While a few of the narrators could speak Armenian, among the second and third generation Armenian-Americans with whom we spoke, all were fluent in English. As the purpose of the project was to explore the group’s development in the state, only three of the interviewees were immigrants, two relatively recent; spoken English did not present a problem for them, although one appeared to have difficulty with the transcript. Nor did language require special expertise on the part of the interviewers, which is frequently the case when dealing with new immigrants.

Interviews generally lasted between one and two hours and were conducted with residents of 14 Connecticut communities: Newington, New Britain, Kensington, Farmington, West Granby, North Granby, Southington, Willimantic, Trumbull, Avon, Ellington, Fairfield, South Windsor and West Hartford.

We asked interviewees if they could contribute materials to

the project, and several provided copies of letters, documents such as passports or visas, ship manifests, family photos and books. These will be maintained with the oral history collection. We conducted the project as consultants, and it was sponsored by UConn’s Norian Armenian Programs Committee with support from the Alice K. Norian Endowment. It concluded with a program at the University of Connecticut School of Social Work attended by more than

50 people during which Bruce Stave made a presentation about the project’s conceptualization and implementation and Sondra Astor Stave moderated two panels that included interviewees responding to questions. Audience participation was enthusiastic. ♦

**Editor's note:** Bruce M. & Sondra Astor Stave are principals in The Stave Group: Oral History Consultants.

## Barcelona oral history congress focuses on power and democracy

*By Mark Cave, The Historic New Orleans Collection*

THE 28TH INTERNATIONAL Congress of Oral History was held in Barcelona, Spain, July 9-12. The driving force behind bringing the conference to Barcelona was Catalan historian Mercedes Vilanova. She selected the theme Power and Democracy because, as Vilanova noted, “They are two related themes, and each one by itself is of extreme importance in our globalized world and in the manner we interview.”

The conference organizing committee included Carles Santacana, Queralt Solé, Irene Castilla, Gerard Corbella, Verònica Guarch, Rafel Folch, Maria Gas and Francisco Martínez Hoyos. Two committees were established for the selection of papers in both Spanish and English. U.S. Senate historian Don Ritchie chaired the English language committee, which included Sean Field, Regina Fitzpatrick and Tamara Kennelly. Carles Santacana chaired the Spanish language committee, which included Mercedes Vilanova, Pilar Domínguez, Cristine Borderias, Jordi Ibarz, Xavier Roigé, Gerard Corbella and Roger Costa.

The opening sessions of the congress were held in a beautiful historic lecture hall on the old campus of the University of Barcelona. In tribute to the host city, Vilanova gave an introductory plenary address titled “Beginning and End of a Dream: Republican Barcelona Between 1931 and 1939.”

Nearly 120 sessions and panel discussions were held in Spanish and English and included speakers from nearly 50 countries. Translation has been a persistent problem with past IOHA conferences, primarily because of the cost. It was great to see that the Barcelona organizing committee took notice and made a strong effort to insure that a significant number of the sessions offered simultaneous translation into Spanish and English.

Likely because the conference had two committees to review incoming proposals and organize sessions, it seemed that a greater percentage of the sessions had been deliberately planned rather than simply put together as individual paper proposals were submitted. There also seemed to be a greater attentiveness to tying session themes to the overarching theme of the conference. Session titles included: Democracy and Oral Histories of Political Elites; Power and Social Dynamics in Sport; Democratizing History in Conflicted and Post-Conflict Settings; and Individual, Social, and Collective Voices and Contestations of Democracy in Algeria, Germany, and Zimbabwe.

The general assembly of IOHA members at the end of the congress reflected the conference theme of Power and Democracy. Speeches were made, ballots contested, and after a contentious debate, a new president, vice presidents and council members were elected. Indira Chowdhury of India was elected as president. Bangalore, India, was selected as the host for the 2016 Congress. It should be a spectacular site for the program, and if the organizers are as thoughtful and attentive as the Barcelona organizing committee was, (and I know they will be), it should be a wonderful experience for oral historians. ♦

# 口述历史

## Oral history in China

By Donald A. Ritchie, U.S. Senate Historian

“WE ARE ENTERING an age where the public wants to know the truth,” said a speaker at a recent conference on “Local Culture and Oral History” at the Hunan Public Library in Changsha, China.

The first oral history interviews date back 3,000 years to the Zhou dynasty, when court scribes recorded the sayings of the people for use by court historians, but the modern concept of oral history has only recently taken root in China. In the 1980s, when the first article on oral history appeared in a Chinese journal, it was mistranslated as “oral tradition.” Now, however, a Chinese oral history association has been established and the first Chinese journal of oral history, *Oral History Studies*, has just been published. The journal’s editor, Yang Xiangyin, director of the Institute of Oral History at Wenzhou University, summarized both the long and short history of the practice in China.

In October 2014, the Evergreen Foundation, a San Francisco-based organization that supports rural libraries in China, sponsored the conference at the Hunan Public Library that attracted oral historians from across China, Taiwan and Singapore. Among the overseas oral historians who participated were Don and Anne Ritchie, Nancy MacKay, Lauren Kata, Brian Cannon, Michael Umphre and Ruth Olson of the U.S., Rob Perks of the U.K., Jasmine Ninkov of Serbia and Steven Kotze of South Africa.

Workshops and sessions dealt with such universal themes as principles and best practices, planning, digital technology, metadata and the struggle to get resources and funding for oral history in libraries and archives. Other sessions dealt with specific educational uses and the impact of oral history on local communities. Speakers advocated moving oral history beyond books into public presentations in museums and community theaters.

China is a vast country with a huge cultural diversity among many minorities, whose different dialects and accents create unique problems for transcription. Nevertheless, Chinese oral historians feel compelled to collect their stories to include in the national narrative. This is particularly urgent for the “lost communities” that have been transplanted due to rapid economic development.

Oral history projects have also uncovered events that had fallen absent from public awareness and written documentation, most notably the Great Famine of 1959-1961, for which it is still possible to record survivors’ memories. Other projects have scaled the “big memory division” in China caused by its revolutionary past. In a project that interviews veterans of the Anti-Japan war in the 1940s, one old soldier commented that he did not fight for either the Kuomintang or the Communists, he fought for China.

The National Library in Beijing has established the China Memory Project to record and preserve Chinese culture and heritage. Its subjects have included such traditional arts and



Top left: “Oral History” in Chinese. Above: Photograph from left to right, conference speakers Don Ritchie (Senate Historical Office), Anne Ritchie (National Gallery of Art), Sandra Fried (Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation), Rob Perks (British Library), and Xuming Zho (deputy director of the Hunan Library).

crafts as lacquer and silk, contemporary musicians, scientists and the library profession. The project makes its information accessible on its website.

“Everybody has a story to tell, and everybody loves to listen to stories,” speakers assured the conference audience. Oral history means that “everyone can be a writer of history.” And by opening up the forgotten past, “Oral history work is irreversible.” ♦

## Inaugural issue of Chinese journal features American oral historians

THE INSTITUTE OF Oral History at Wenzhou University and the Association of World Chinese Oral Historians is publishing this year the inaugural issue of a new Chinese scholarly journal focusing on oral history, titled *The Oral History Studies*.

Donald A. Ritchie, U.S. Senate historian and past president of the Oral History Association, is author of the journal’s feature article “The World of Oral History.”

Ronald J. Grele, Corie T. Robie and Mary Marshall Clark, all of Columbia University’s Center for Oral History, are contributing an article about oral history archives, and the Bancroft Library at the University of California Berkeley is the subject of an article by two Chinese scholars.

The journal also will include sections on oral history and women’s studies, literature studies and regional oral history practice.

Books scheduled for review in the inaugural edition include: *Preparing the Next Generation of Oral Historians: An Anthology of Oral History Education* edited by OHA members Barry A. Lanman and Laura M. Wendling; *A Guide to Oral History and the Law* by OHA past president John A. Neuenschwander; and *They Say in Harlan County: An Oral History* by Alessandro Portelli.

OHA members scheduled to contribute book reviews for the new journal include Neuenschwander, Nancy MacKay and Linda Shope. ♦

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**Kay Quinlan**, 7524 S. 35th St.,  
Lincoln, NE 68516, or via e-mail at  
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**Do you have colleagues who use oral history in their classrooms? Or in their ongoing research projects?**

**Do you know of community groups exploring the use of oral history to document their work? Or local museums eager to engage area residents?**

**Chances are you do.** And there's also a chance those people are not members of the Oral History Association. But you can fix that. Share this **Newsletter** with them. Brag about the *Oral History Review* online. Tell them about the workshops and thought-provoking sessions and like-minded new friends they'll find at an OHA conference.

**And then encourage them to join OHA. They'll be glad they did.**

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