



Winter 2008
Volume XLII Number 3

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Negro spirituals project wins recognition

By Teresa Bergen, Portland, Ore.

Never heard 100 plus oral historians sing a Negro spiritual together? Then you must have missed the awards dinner at the 2008 Pittsburgh meeting of the Oral History Association.

Lyvonne Chrisman, co-founder of Friends of Negro Spirituals (FNS), led a few rounds of “This Little Light of Mine” after receiving the Elizabeth B. Mason Small Project Award.

“In Our Own Words—the Negro Spirituals Heritage Keepers” is a collection of 10 interviews with musicians and other authorities on Negro spirituals. Based in Oakland, Calif., these narrators all actively promote survival of the spirituals in their community.

“I’m just so happy that we’re able to keep the voices of our enslaved ancestors alive,” Chrisman said. “They deserve it. They were brought over in not so good circumstances, but they were triumphant.”

FNS was born in 1998 when Chrisman attended a concert at Oakland’s Kaiser Center. She happened to sit beside Sam Edwards, whom she soon learned shared her Louisiana background and love of Negro spirituals. Chrisman and Edwards, a licensed clinical social worker, were troubled that the old songs were being for-

(continued on page)

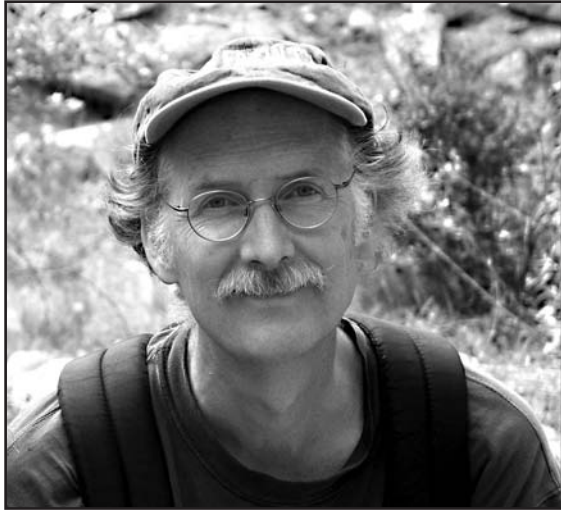


Nancy MacKay of Mills College, Oakland, Calif., and Lyvonne Chrisman, co founder of the Friends of Negro Spirituals, talk to other oral historians about their award winning project at the OHA conference’s digital and community showcase.

In this issue

- From the president 2
- Latino oral history projects: addressing academic and community needs 3
- Scholar describes evolution in Pittsburgh’s black community 3
- OHA conference, members help inspire project to document LGBT stories 5
- StoryCorps founder evokes strong emotions. 5
- OHA Names Award Winners. 5
- Country Music Foundation concludes oral history project 6
- Oxford Journals creates digital archive of Oral History Review. . . . 7
- Documentary preview commemorates Federal Writers’ Project. . . . 7
- In Remembrance... 8
- In the Spirit of Hidalgo: The IOHA meets in Guadalajara. 11
- OHA committee revising Evaluation Guidelines. 12
- State & Regional News 14
- News & Notes 16

OHA accomplishments to report



Charles Hardy III, West Chester University

The past few months have been active ones for the Oral History Association, so there is much news to report, especially about the annual meeting in Pittsburgh, the new Oral History Web site and the movement of the *Oral History Review* to its new home at Oxford University Press.

Annual meeting and conference

In October, the Oral History Association held its 2008 annual meeting in Pittsburgh, Pa. Nearly 470 attendees, including about 300 presenters, participated in four-and-a-half days of workshops, panels, working groups and plenaries. Among them were international presenters from Australia, Canada, Finland, Ireland, Italy, Poland and the United Kingdom. New to the meeting this year were book discussion groups in which participants were able to share time with authors of three outstanding monographs and working groups on the teaching of oral history and on the use of new technologies to present oral histories to public audiences.

A highlight for me was the Digital and Community Plenary Showcase, a laptop poster session with presentations on new software, digital access and search capabilities, Web-based exhibits and archives and more. These ranged from an oral history project conducted by high school students in rural Virginia to large, institutionally based Web sites, including the Edmund S. Muskie and Special Collections Library's "Muskie Oral History Project," winner of the 2008 Elizabeth B. Mason Major Project Award.

In the spirit of a meeting devoted to Oral History in the Digital Age, three of the plenary sessions were videotaped for use, among other places, on the Oral History Association's new Web site. These include live oral history interviews with civil rights movement organizer and former Pittsburgh city councilman Sala Udin and with human rights activist Stetson Kennedy, a veteran of the New Deal Federal Writers' Project, who is still going strong in his nineties.

OHA Web site

October also witnessed the launch of the new OHA Web site, redesigned and hosted by MATRIX—more formally known as the Center for Humane Arts and Letters Online—at Michigan State University and with a new domain name: **www.oralhistory.org**. Recognizing the extraordinary breadth of expertise elsewhere in the United States and abroad, the OHA Web site committee has envisioned the new OHA Web site not only as a source of reliable and thoughtful information about oral history practice, but also as a portal that directs browsers to outstanding sites and resources within the United States and abroad.

Utilizing Web 2.0, **www.oralhistory.org** has a new design and exciting new capabilities, including audio and video, social networking, its own wiki and online submissions of proposals for the annual meeting. Now that the social networking functions are available we need early adopters to log on and build the information and communities that will bring the Web site to life. We also need photographs for the site and for the rotating banner at the top of the home page. So please, send photographs we can consider for use to OHA Executive Secretary Madelyn Campbell.

In developing the new Web site, the OHA Web site committee—whose names can be viewed online—was ably assisted by Susan Kitchens of AuntiAlias and Associates, who will continue as technical advisor. The OHA plans to conduct a national search for a Web site editor and to assemble a team of feature editors. Until the main editor is hired, Marjie McLellan, newly elected to the OHA Council, and I will be sharing the editorial duties of getting new content online.

In doing so we will be assisted by: Doug Boyd, director of the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky, who will help build content and vet material on field recording equipment; George Blood of SafeSound Archives on digital preservation; Geoff Froh from Densho Japanese American Legacy Project on oral history-related Web sites; Linda Shopes on Institutional Review Board issues; and others, whose names and positions you will soon be able to see on the Web site. Building this site is a big project, so any help will be most welcome. If you can lend a hand, please contact Marjie, Madelyn or me.

Oral History Review

In 2008 Oxford University Press became the new publisher of the *Oral History Review*. (Through the efforts of Oxford Executive Editor Trish Thomas, the press also underwrote the riverboat presidential reception at the Pittsburgh meeting. My personal thanks here for Trish's assistance and Oxford's generosity). The OHA Council is delighted with our new relationship with Oxford University Press, which offers an online version of the *Review* with multimedia capabilities. To assist the *Review* Editor Kim Porter, the new *Review* oversight committee—composed of the OHA immediate past president, current president and incoming president—helped Kim assemble a new editorial board with a

(continued on page <None>)

Latino oral history projects: addressing academic and community needs

By Norma Smith, OHA Committee on Diversity

This year marks 40 years of ethnic studies scholarship. The three Latina scholars who presented the roundtable on Latino history projects at the OHA annual meeting exemplified ethnic studies' vision of clear, deep scholarship, conducted by members of the communities being studied. They also reflected ethnic studies' commitment to serving the community. An important focus of all of the oral historians in this panel was to create a research base for future scholars and community organizers while building intergenerational connections and community pride.

In 1968, the ethnic studies vision of community scholarship provided a corrective for dominant culture academics' at best absent or shallow and at worst deeply biased and damaging studies of communities of color. In 2008, the roundtable let audience members know that the vision is still relevant as pan-

elists shared stories of community experience that are not generally well-known or remain untold and hidden.

Maggie Rivas-Rodriguez, professor of journalism at the University of Texas Austin, presented the U.S. Latino and Latina World War II Oral History Project. (see <http://www.lib.utexas.edu/ww2latinos>) The project highlights the civil rights contributions made by Latina and Latino veterans returning to their communities after World War II. Some of these veterans came back, used the GI Bill to get law degrees and began challenging discriminatory laws. These are the folks who founded the Mexican American Legal and Educational Fund.

Rivas-Rodriguez has had her journalism students interview their own grandparents, thus creating new bonds of understanding and respect between generations, while creating a research

base that is accessible to scholars and communities of this and future generations. Products of the project include oral histories, photographs and documents, student papers and articles, educational materials, a theater piece, a book and a Web site.

Mireya Loza, doctoral candidate in American civilization at Brown University, has been working on The Bracero Project, which documents the U.S. and Mexican government guest worker programs that existed from 1942 to 1964. The program brought Mexican workers to the United States, initially to fill shortages of mostly agricultural labor during World War II. The program brought at least 2 million underpaid and legally vulnerable people to the United States, leaving many family members in Mexico as the two governments created and promoted a binational family structure.

(continued on page 6)

Scholar describes evolution in Pittsburgh's black community

A three-year oral history project on African Americans in Pittsburgh since World War II has yielded new insights about the evolution of this important urban center, Carnegie Mellon history professor Joe W. Trotter Jr. told an Oral History Association luncheon audience.

By World War II, Pittsburgh was home to a vibrant African-American community, with its Negro League professional baseball team, the Pittsburgh Courier newspaper, numerous highly regarded jazz clubs and the predominantly black Hill District, which represented the most creative black community in the United States, Trotter said.

But beginning after the war, he said, Pittsburgh entered a long, slow period of economic and population decline as people and jobs went to the suburbs, the South, the Southwest and overseas.

By the 1960s, unequal socioeconomic conditions for blacks helped fuel the rise of the civil rights movement in Pittsburgh, as elsewhere, and when the Rev. Martin Luther King Jr., was assassinated in 1968, the city experienced five nights of rioting, arson, looting, deaths and arrests, Trotter recalled.

Eventually, white community leaders expressed greater sensitivity to concerns in the black community, but their responses "were slow and fundamentally inadequate," he said.

As a result of racism and declining opportunity, young blacks left Pittsburgh, joining a reverse migration of middle class African Americans from northern cities to Sunbelt cities like Atlanta, where they perceived they'd have greater opportunities to succeed.

The black community remaining in Pittsburgh has faced intense social divisions revolving around policy issues related to urban renewal, public housing, public schools, gentrification of the Hill District, youth violence and drug wars and suburbanization, Trotter said.

Interracial tensions increased as well, he added, but the black community responded with hope and energy.

"A new African-American community is evolving in Pittsburgh," Trotter said, that aims "to build a more just and humane social order in this century than the one they recently left behind." ❖

Negro spirituals project wins recognition

continued from page 1

gotten. They banded together and founded FNS. The organization's goals are to study, preserve and educate people about this historic music.

Chrisman grew up in Shreveport, La., where she remembers hearing old people singing songs at the church she attended with her mother. "Even as a child, it was moving to me," she recalled. "It stirred the soul."

While many people are familiar with gospel music, Chrisman explained that spirituals are "the folk songs of the enslaved ancestors. Gospel is from when the slaves were freed, moved to the city and got educated." While gospel music was written down in arrangements, spirituals were not and were therefore more adaptable. Many contained code words so that slaves could communicate in the fields without the overseers understanding their true meaning.

FNS has actively kept the spirituals alive. In its first 10 years of existence, the group has sponsored talks by scholars, arranged forums and community singing of Negro spirituals and published a news journal. Now they've finished their oral history project. Transcripts and recordings are deposited at Mills College in Oakland, the main history room at the Oakland library and the African American Library in Oakland.

Chrisman plans to write to colleges and cultural institutions to see if they would like a copy of the collection. "Most music departments don't have that much on Negro spirituals," she said.

FNS partnered with Mills College on the project. Chrisman met Nancy MacKay, librarian and oral historian at Mills, when Chrisman enrolled in an oral history course MacKay taught. Later, MacKay trained the project's other interviewers and generously shared her expert advice.

Chrisman was not a newcomer to oral history, having been involved with a project at Oakland's African American Library

Coalition. She had also honed her audiovisual skills from 12 years of recording services at her church, some for a television show. But what inspired her to start the FNS oral history project was the death of the singer John Patton.

"I thought we should have had some kind of program where we could have interviewed him and saved his knowledge," Chrisman said. "He would have us laughing all the time. He always had stories to tell." Patton, who died in 2005 at the age of 75, studied under the famed lyric tenor Roland Hayes. He sang with Wings Over Jordan and other well-loved groups.

FNS wrote a mission statement for their oral history project, which described the criteria for choosing Negro spirituals heritage keepers: "Each has a history of preserving the song in the community or home, whether by singing them, conducting choirs that include spirituals in the repertoire, arranging songs for local artists; researching slave songs, lecturing in academic settings or simply by inexplicably influencing others to become interested in them through a deep emotional appreciation."

In keeping with FNS' goal of passing knowledge down through the generations, they sought people younger than 40 to be trained as interviewers. The collaboration of FNS, MacKay and these young interviewers turned out stellar interviews, both interesting and masterfully recorded. And now one can even describe the collection as award-winning.

For more information on FNS, visit their Web site at <http://www.dogonvillage.com/negrospirituals>. ❖

Editor's Note: *A different version of this article appeared in the Spring 2008 Northwest Oral History Association newsletter.*

From the President

continued from page 2

broad range of expertise. Their names are listed in the latest issue of the *Review*. The new oversight committee members will be working with prospective contributors to craft articles that are rich in oral history content and that utilize the multimedia capabilities of the online version of the *Review*. New instructions for prospective contributors will soon be available both in the journal and online.

Other news

Under the superb financial stewardship of Executive Secretary Madelyn Campbell and recent OHA presidents and Council, the OHA is in excellent fiscal health. Conservative investments have enabled the OHA to escape the recent financial collapse unharmed. The organization's financial health has enabled us to engage in initiatives in which OHA members can take pride.

This past year the Emerging Crisis Fund awarded its third \$3,000 award, for the videotaping of oral history interviews that document the ongoing humanitarian crisis along Colombia's Pacific Coast. The International Committee was able to award \$3,000 to five international presenters, four of whom gave presentations at the Pittsburgh meeting, and the

Scholarship Committee awarded 13 scholarships, totaling \$3,750, to non-presenters including students, community oral historians and K-12 teachers, and to presenters who advance OHA's commitment to diversity.

At the Pittsburgh meeting, Stetson Kennedy presented us an offer to endow a new biennial Vox Populi Award to a person or project for conducting outstanding work using oral history for social change. Supporting the development of oral history outside the United States, OHA Council awarded \$3,000 to the International Oral History Association to fund scholarships to presenters from Africa, Asia, and Latin America, who would otherwise have been unable to attend its 2008 international meeting in Guadalajara, Mexico.

To expand these initiatives we need to build the OHA endowment and our membership. At the Pittsburgh meeting 86 people renewed their membership and 95 joined the association for the first time. Like other professional organizations, the OHA depends upon membership for the revenues that keep the organization going. So when you receive your renewal notice from Oxford University Press, please return it promptly. ❖

OHA conference, members help inspire project to document LGBT stories

By Glenna McElbinney, San Francisco, Calif.

A single profound event changed my life and hopefully will benefit the lives of others if Impact Stories Oral History Project has its way.

It was summer of 2007. I had just viewed the film "Paragraph 175." The documentary highlights the homophobia and mistreatment of gays and lesbians in the Nazi era in Europe from 1933 to 1945. By the time the film ended, I was energized with a new passion. At that moment I wanted to gather and document the stories, heartaches, arrests, fortitude, marginalization, protests,

progress and much, much more of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people who contributed to and led the LGBT rights movement in California.

Impact Stories Oral History Project began in October 2007, just before the Oral History Association's annual conference in Oakland, Calif., my hometown.

So what does a complete novice do to learn how to become an oral historian and run an oral history project? I did not know at all, but I knew I would do the best I could as soon as I could because many narrators are getting up in years.

My background in auto service and auto bodywork, tire and parts sales had been an excellent career, but not anything close to what I was undertaking now.

I saw the film on a weekend and by Monday and Tuesday I was cold calling history professors and oral history projects all over the San Francisco Bay Area. I found out what books to buy and some of the classes offered locally and was urged to immediately sign up and attend the upcoming OHA conference in Oakland. I followed up on all of the advice and by Wednesday of that

(continued on page 10)

StoryCorps founder evokes strong emotions

Radio documentarian David Isay evoked strong emotions from oral historians who attended his Saturday banquet presentation at the Oral History Association's annual conference.

The founder of StoryCorps, which calls itself "the largest oral history project of its kind," shared with the OHA audience excerpts from some of the tens of thousands of recordings that have been made by what StoryCorps calls "everyday people" who share their stories in a conversation with family members or friends.

StoryCorps asks for a \$25 donation for participating in a recording session. Its Web site reports that about one fourth of the recordings are made for free.

The interview excerpts Isay played tugged at audience members' heartstrings. They included:

- a man describing his father's work in the steel mills of Pittsburgh;
- a woman discussing her childhood memories of her father's difficult battle with depression;

- a husband and wife engaged in a last conversation before his pending death from cancer, which left many audience members wiping their eyes.

Isay encouraged audience members to experience more examples from the recordings by buying his book and companion CD, *Listening is an Act of Love: A Celebration of American Life from the StoryCorps Project*.

In a lively question-and-answer session after Isay's presentation, some audience members expressed concern about calling StoryCorps interviews oral history because they lack historical context, whatever their value as stories might be, and do not follow standard oral history methodology.

Sherna Berger Gluck suggested that the interview excerpts Isay played were voyeuristic and took issue with Isay's assertion that interviewing is "an act of love." Rather, she said, oral history interviewing is "an act of listening." ❖

OHA Names Award Winners

Awards for an oral history article, postsecondary teaching and large and small oral history projects were presented at the 2008 Oral History Association conference banquet. The winners were:

- Article award to **Monica Perales** for "Fighting to Stay in Smelertown: Lead Contamination and Environmental Justice in a Mexican American Community" published in the Spring 2008 issue of *Western Historical Quarterly*;
- Postsecondary teaching award to **Barry Lanman**, University of Maryland, Baltimore County, and **Laura Wendling**, California State University, San Marcos;
- **Elizabeth B. Mason** small project award: In our own Words—the Negro Spirituals Heritage Keepers Oral History Project of Oakland, Calif.
- **Elizabeth B. Mason** small project award (tie): The Legacy Project: Mexican American Community Builders, San Jose, Calif., 1960-2000.
- **Elizabeth B. Mason** major project award: Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Collection, Bates College, Maine.

Next year the OHA will present awards for a book, precollegiate teaching and nonprint media using oral history. Details on how to apply for an award are on the OHA Web site, www.oralhistory.org.

Latino oral history projects

continued from page 3

The oral history project interviews participants in the bracero program as well as family members in the United States and in Mexico, men and women who worked alongside the immigrants and other members of the communities out of and into which the braceros came. Loza, herself a daughter of agricultural laborers, described what it means to her to work as a first-generation intellectual laborer as she engages with the middle-aged and elderly narrators. "BITTER-SWEET HARVEST: The Bracero Program, 1942-1964" will open as a traveling exhibit of the Smithsonian Institution's National Museum of American History in 2010. See http://www.sites.si.edu/exhibitions/exhibits/bracero_project/main.htm.

Elena Herrada, Detroit community organizer and doctoral student at Michigan State University, has been conducting oral histories of los repatriados. During the first two decades of the

20th century, Mexican workers were recruited to work in the Ford Motor Co. factories in Detroit. Between 1929 and 1939, during the Great Depression, at least a million of these individuals and their families were deported back to Mexico or intimidated into leaving. Sixty per cent of those deported were U.S. citizens. Some returned to the United States but few of them ever spoke to their children or grandchildren of this humiliating episode in their family history. In fact, they isolated themselves from other Mexicans and urged their children to speak only English.

It was not until the 1970s, when the ethnic studies generation began to question community history, that the story began to be unearthed. The project interviewed elders and descendants of the families and produced a video for Detroit's 300th anniversary, "Los Repatriados: Exiles from the Promised Land." (see <http://www.losrepatriados.org>).

The three panelists described the personal, community and global historical importance of unearthing and sharing these stories of patriotism, hard work, commitment to family and discrimination by the government and institutions of the United States. They also noted the complexity of feelings and relationships between researchers and narrators. The scholars and audience discussed what is now known rather drily as "inter-subjectivity" between interviewer and narrator, what ethnic studies calls engagement.

The three Latina historians showed what it means to be committed academic and community scholars. They reflected to their audience how important it is to be able to feel, authentically, to empathize and to comprehend and express the social meaning of the work they are doing—in short, to weep and think at the same time. ❖

Country Music Foundation concludes oral history project

By John W. Rumble, Nashville, Tenn.

The Nashville-based Country Music Foundation Inc. (CMF) has completed an oral history preservation and access project involving more than 660 interviews, CMF senior historian John W. Rumble has announced. The project was supported by a \$213,475 grant awarded in 2001 by the National Endowment for the Humanities, which CMF matched, for a total project budget of \$426,950.

Hailed by former NEH Chairman Bill Ferris as a "national treasure," these conversations with performers, songwriters and business personnel are housed in CMF's Frist Library and Archive at the Country Music Hall of Fame and Museum. The archive's interviews, artifacts, sound recordings, films and videotapes, songbooks, sheet music, business files, books, historic and current periodicals, photographs and song manuscripts document the history of country music as art and enterprise from its folk origins to the present. The oral history project began in 1974 and contains interviews with people involved in the country music industry since the 1920s.

A project advisory panel helped staff prioritize interviews based on narrators' importance to country music history and American history, varying perspectives based on individuals' occupational roles, insights likely to be provided on topics with substantial research interest and expressive or aesthetic value. CMF began with interview tapes from the 1970s, which were especially unstable due to manufacturing problems of the day.

For each source tape, CMF created new listener cassettes and both master and listening copy CDs.

"We had hoped to create new archival reel tapes for each interview," Rumble said, "but to stay on budget we made new archival reels for some 35 percent of the interviews and emphasized transcription to maximize access."

Using CDs, the foundation will create sound files stored on servers.

CMF transcribed 610 of the 666 project interviews in Microsoft Word files, which were carefully edited by staff experts. Staff also edited 28 existing transcripts without sound sources. Another 28 interviews have special sound problems, and CMF will attempt additional enhancements, then transcribe and catalog these interviews.

The project's advisory board included: James Fogerty of the Minnesota Historical Society, Don Doyle of the University of South Carolina, Harry Rice of Berea College, Kris McCusker of Middle Tennessee State University and media producer and country music historian Robert K. Oermann.

A combined collection guide and descriptive inventory is available on CMF's Web site: www.countrymujshalloffame.com. Click on Experience the Museum, proceed to Exhibits & Collections and the Collection.

"We are indeed grateful to NEH for its generous support," Rumble said, "and we look forward to expanding our collection in the years ahead."

For additional information, contact Rumble at: jrumble@countrymusicshalloffame.com.

Oxford Journals creates digital archive of *Oral History Review*

Oxford Journals is pleased to announce that soon Oral History Association members will have online access to all issues of *Oral History Review*, from Vol. 1, No. 1 to the present.

The *Oral History Review* is part of the Oxford Journals Digital Archive, a project that involved digitizing all issues of all the journals on the Oxford Journals list to make a full run of back issues available to libraries for purchase or subscription by full or selected subject areas. As part of the publishing agreement between Oxford Journals and the OHA, individual OHA members will have access to the *Oral History Review Archive* as a benefit of membership.

OHA past president Martha Ross and her husband, Don Ross, who frequented many OHA conferences over the years, contributed significantly to the project by providing a full set of print issues dating from the first publication in 1973. Oxford Journals has had them digitized and is now in the process of uploading the content. We expect that the *Oral History Review Archive* will be available to members by the beginning of the new year.

OHA members will log in for online access in the usual way, using your username and the password that you established when you initially registered. (If you have not yet registered, please go to: http://www.oxfordjournals.org/faq/access_purchase/person.html with your subscriber number handy—this is the number on correspondence, member renewals and on the mailing sheet that comes with your print issues.)

When you go to the *Oral History Review* Web page (<http://ohr.oxfordjournals.org>) you should be able to browse current issues back to 2001, and as of January 2009, back issues back to 1973.

If you have any problems accessing the journal online, please contact Customer Service at 1-800-852-7323.

Documentary preview commemorates Federal Writers' Project

History does not repeat itself, but it sometimes rhymes, Mark Twain is said to have remarked.

You couldn't miss the refrain, as Donald A. Ritchie, associate Senate historian, recalled Twain's words while ticking off the similarities between the 2008 financial turmoil and the Great Depression.

"Those of us who study the New Deal no longer have to justify the relevance of it," said Ritchie, who chaired a Thursday afternoon plenary session commemorating the 75th anniversary of the New Deal.

Federal job programs created by the Works Progress Administration left tangible, physical evidence of their contributions, but beyond bricks and mortar, the New Deal programs such as the Federal Writers' Project left an indelible literary and creative legacy as well, he said.

In many ways, Ritchie noted, the Federal Writers' Project gave birth to early oral history interviews with its 2,300 interviews with former slaves. For many years, serious scholars discouraged graduate students from using those interviews, he said, but in recent years, the former slave narratives "have revolutionized how we understand slavery."

Documentary filmmaker Andrea Kalin showed a seven-minute preview of a feature-length program titled *Soul of the People, Voices from the Writers' Project*, which was funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities and is scheduled for broadcast this spring.

The documentary was initially conceived as a historical study, but it now deals with current affairs, Kalin said. The message, she said, is that "voices of ordinary Americans matter."

David Taylor of the Library of Congress' American Folklife Center said the Federal Writers' Project "created a rich, unique and diverse portrait of America."

Stetson Kennedy, a pioneering folklorist who directed the Florida unit of the Federal Writers' Project, noted that the term "oral history" had not been coined at the time the New Deal programs were put in place. Instead, the interviews were called life histories of pioneers, settlers and old timers who could offer first-person accounts of their experiences.

"We were always seeking out people who were there," he said, noting that the validity of such interviews arises from the fact that the informants were participants in and eye-witnesses to what they were describing.

"We thought we were on a treasure hunt," he said, describing his interviewees as "excited as a bunch of kids."

Kennedy recalled that to get a WPA job, "you had to take the pauper's oath" and swear that you had no money, no property and no prospects. "I was eminently qualified," he quipped.

The Federal Writers' Project workers were given a mandate to "hold up a mirror to America," he said, "so that's what we tried to do."

Look for more coverage of the 2008 Oral History Association conference in the spring OHA Newsletter.

In Remembrance...

Enid H. Douglass: oral historian and civic leader



Enid H. Douglass

Enid Hart Douglass, who was instrumental in the development of the Claremont Graduate School Oral History Program, died Oct. 17, 2008, at a care facility in Sunnysvale, Calif., from complications relating to Alzheimer's. She was 81 years old.

Enid joined the Claremont Oral History Program in 1963, the year after it was founded. Initially serving as executive secretary and assistant director, she headed the program from 1971 to 2003.

She was born Enid Marie Hart on Oct. 23, 1926, in Los Angeles and grew up in San Marino, Calif. She was the youngest of three children of Enid Yandell Lewis, a theater and music reviewer for the San Marino newspaper, and Frank Roland Hart, who sold ranches in Southern California and was an accomplished athlete and musician. She attended public schools in San Marino and graduated from South Pasadena High School in 1944.

In 1948 she graduated magna cum laude in government from Pomona College where she was a member of Phi Beta Kappa. It was at Pomona where she met a fellow student who would become the love of her life, Malcolm Paul Douglass, just back from serving in World War II. They married on Aug. 28, 1948. After finishing his doctoral program in education at Stanford University, Malcolm accepted a professorship at Claremont Graduate School (now Claremont Graduate University), and they settled in the Southern California college town, where they lived together for the next 48 years.

While raising her children, Enid continued her education. In 1958 she won a fellowship to enter the master's program in government at Claremont Graduate School, and in 1959 she filed her thesis on the Claremont Planning Commission. She was a student of famed historian Douglass Adair, who inspired

in her a love for the founding period of U.S. history. Understanding the importance of oral memoirs, Adair persuaded the Claremont Graduate School in 1962 to establish an oral history program within the Department of History, the third such program to be established in California. Allan Nevins, founder of the Columbia Oral History Research Office, served as a consultant. Enid joined the new program in 1963.

In 1966 she and Adair attended the first meeting of the Oral History Association at Lake Arrowhead, Calif. As a charter member, she served OHA actively in a number of capacities including Council member, chair of the Evaluation and Standards Committee, and program chair for the 1976 national meeting held at Chateau Montebello in Canada. In 1979 she was program chair of the evaluation conference held at the Wingspread Conference Center in Racine, Wis., which led to the creation of the Oral History Evaluation Guidelines. She served as OHA president from 1979 to 1980.

At the Claremont Oral History Program, Enid oversaw many projects and conducted a wide array of interviews. The first major project the program undertook was the China Missionaries Oral History Project. Inaugurated in 1969 when China was still closed to Christian workers, the project focused on producing material on the interaction of Western values with traditional Chinese values. Over the years the program expanded its focus to encompass economic, political and cultural institutions in Southern California. In the 1970s she began interviewing people active in local, statewide and national politics and government. Enid also conducted interviews focusing on the founding and development of the Claremont colleges.

In the 1970s, the president of Atlantic Richfield Company (ARCO) commissioned her to conduct oral history interviews that would produce both an archival collection and a written history of the company. In subsequent years Enid conducted interviews to preserve the history of Thacher School in Ojai, Calif., and Webb School in Claremont, both private coeducational high schools.

Throughout her career, she helped train future oral historians through workshops and teaching undergraduates and graduate students at the Claremont Graduate School and the Claremont Colleges.

Simultaneously with this effort to understand and preserve history, she deepened the civic involvement that had led her to major in government at Pomona. She joined the League of Women Voters in 1957 and remained active for more than 30 years, including service on its board. She was appointed to the Claremont Planning Commission, and in 1978 she was elected to two terms on the Claremont City Council and was mayor of Claremont from 1982 to 1986. She went on to serve on the State of California's Planning Advisory and Assistance Council for the Governor's Office, representing the League of California Cities.

Enid gave generously of her time to many causes. She served on the board of directors and was a co-founder of Claremont Heritage Inc., an organization devoted to the preservation of the historic character of Claremont through research, education and advocacy. She sat on the founding

Editor's Note

Many OHA members will recall working with Enid Douglass during her long career and in her leadership of the OHA. If you wish to share memories of her, please send them to the Newsletter editor for inclusion in the Spring 2009 issue. E-mail them to: ohaeditor@aol.com. The deadline is March 1.

board of the Claremont Community Foundation (1989) and served as president from 1990 to 1994. Gov. Edmund G. Brown Jr. appointed her to the California Heritage Preservation Commission where she served from 1977 to 1985. She authored several articles on city planning and oral history.

Though life and politics in Claremont were her passions, she also spent much energy on the family's summer retreat on Mount Desert Island, off the coast of Maine. She became active there in environmental preservation and planning, playing active roles in the Somes Sound Association and the Summer Residents Association.

The love and interest in history, politics and education Enid shared with her husband Malcolm has had a lasting impact on their three children, Paul, John and Susan, both personally and professionally. Paul is an English professor at San Jose State University and John is a senior research fellow with the Center for Studies in Higher Education at UC Berkeley. Susan, who was with the UCLA Oral History Program, is now archivist at City of Hope Medical Center and Beckman Research Institute. ❖

Studs Terkel: author, actor, radio host, political activist

Chicago author, actor, lawyer, radio personality and political activist Louis "Studs" Terkel, whose interviews with ordinary people, not the rich and famous, helped popularize the term "oral history," died Oct. 31. He was 96.

Terkel's series of best-selling interview-based books on various social and historical themes started with *Division Street: America*, published in 1967. Subsequent books, also largely based on his knack for drawing people out in interviews, explored the Great Depression, World War II and the experiences of working men and women, among other themes.

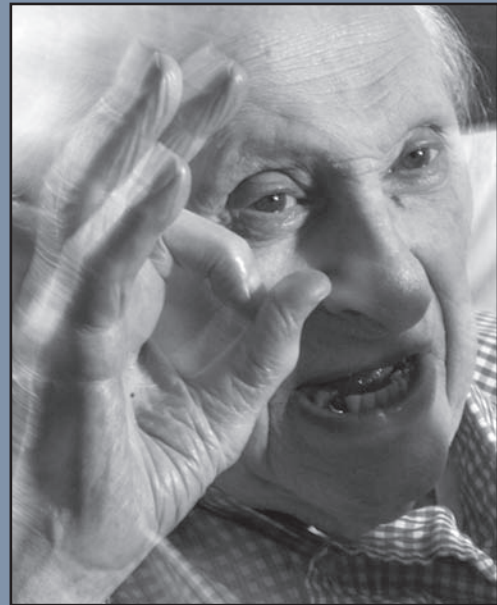
While not a member of the Oral History Association, Terkel is well known to oral historians, many of whom credit him with popularizing interviews with ordinary people, which became a well-accepted practice in the social history movement. He was recognized in a special tribute at the 1996 OHA conference in Milwaukee where he lamented the lack of a sense of history in the nation's popular media.

"It's as though there is no past," he told the OHA audience. "We're suffering from a national Alzheimer's disease."

He described his books as an effort to show what it was like to live in a particular time and place in the past. "We're talking about people who are not celebrated, ... people it's important for young people to know," he said, adding: "Our challenge is to recover a buried past."

Some oral history practitioners have criticized Terkel's books for excluding the questions his narrators were asked and not documenting his methodology or making interview transcripts available. Nonetheless, OHA member Albert Broussard noted at the plenary session, Terkel's work "helped to legitimize the practice of oral history in the scholarly profession."

Several years after that Milwaukee meeting, in 2000, Terkel donated to the Chicago Historical Society some 2,000 hours of unedited interviews, transcripts, correspondence and manuscript material related to his books. According to the historical society, some of the recordings have been reformatted for preservation and research, and some of his papers have been processed. ❖



Studs Terkel. Photo Credit: Charles Rex Arbogast/AP

Editor's Note

Many OHA members have first-hand recollections of encounters with the legendary Pulitzer Prize-winning author. If you would like to share your memories with other OHA members in the next issue of the *OHA Newsletter*, please send them to the editor at: ohaeditor@aol.com. The deadline is March 1.

Project to document LGBT stories

continued from page 5

week I had several oral history books, began making arrangements for attending the 2007 OHA conference, was signing up for classes, researching the latest digital equipment and announcing to my friends and family that I was becoming an oral historian, would be traveling the state meeting with historians and history professors and starting an oral history project. It has been a great ride ever since.

Fate smiled on my efforts. Among the many pieces of excellent advice came a recommendation from Cathy Cade, a personal historian and photographer whom I had met through the San Francisco GLBT Historical Society. Cathy told me about an oral history workshop open to community members at Mills College in Oakland hosted by Mills librarian Nancy MacKay and taught by University of San Francisco history professor Kathy Nasstrom. I attended the one-day workshop, which opened the world of oral history to me in a way that made it seem possible that I could try to pull off what I knew was a large undertaking. Their immediate support, advice and educational approach helped the start of Impact Stories immeasurably.

Attending the OHA conference really gave Impact Stories a huge jump start. I took workshops, went to panels, took copious notes, asked lots of questions, met people doing all kinds of interesting and quality projects, movies, dissertations and papers and mostly was a sponge for information. The overall impression I received as a newcomer to oral histories was how welcoming the oral history community was. I came

home from the conference and described to my friends and family how I now felt part of a tribe. The support of Impact Stories from the OHA community has been outstanding.

Before and after the OHA conference I traveled all over the state meeting with professors, grad students, archivists, curators, oral history project managers, business managers, nonprofit foundation managers, youth organization directors, senior center directors, personal historians and anyone else who had advice with all the questions I had about what I was trying to accomplish.

I was also doing lots of research about the time period 1966 to 1981, considered by many historians as the "Golden Age" of initiating social change for LGBT people in the Golden State, before AIDS changed the LGBT landscape forever. In 1966 the homophile movement formed a coalition in California, started meeting statewide and organized public demonstrations in Sacramento, San Francisco and Los Angeles, the first statewide, organized homophile demonstrations in the United States. Later in the fall of 1966, a full scale riot occurred in San Francisco when a local restaurant tried to kick out long-time transgender and cross dressing patrons. They rose up and fought back in what is now known as the Compton's Cafeteria Riot.

Early on in the project I researched and then met with the board members and archivists at the five LGBT archives in California: The Lavender Library, Archives and Cultural Exchange (Sacramento), GLBT Historical Society (San Francisco), One

National Gay and Lesbian Archives (Los Angeles), June Mazer Lesbian Archives (West Hollywood) and Lambda Archives (San Diego). They spent many hours giving advice, helping with research, opening up their archives, contacting potential narrators and directing me to local senior programs and centers. In several cases they hosted and advertised Impact Stories presentations at their archives to introduce the project to local LGBT community members. Those ongoing efforts have been fruitful in building rapport and trust for the project and bringing in large numbers of LGBT people eager to share, assist or to learn more about our history.

Starting an oral history project and traveling the state is very expensive. So far I have been funding it with my savings, but there are plans for a nonprofit foundation to assist and be a fiscal agent for the project soon. I also was fortunate to be referred to Teresa Barnett at the Center for Oral History Research at UCLA, which has agreed to accept the completed oral histories for archiving and long-term safekeeping. In addition, people I've met all over the state have agreed to serve as project consultants.

Impact Stories started doing scholarly oral histories with narrators in the late spring of 2008, then started filming video vignettes in the summer of 2008. A multi-media presentation is in the planning stages, and a Web site is up and being expanded. I am getting good responses from folks all over the state who want to participate, learn about, help with funding and organize Impact Stories presentations. I cannot wait! ❖

THANKS TO SPONSORS of the 2008 OHA Conference

AFRICAN AMERICAN ADVISORY COMMITTEE
AT THE SENATOR JOHN HEINZ HISTORY
CENTER

BOEHM BIOGRAPHY GROUP

CENTER FOR AFRICAN-AMERICAN URBAN
STUDIES AND THE ECONOMY

CENTER FOR HISTORY AND NEW MEDIA,
GEORGE MASON UNIVERSITY

CONSORTIUM OF ORAL HISTORY
EDUCATORS

DUQUESNE UNIVERSITY,
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

EXPLOREPAHISTORY.COM

THE LEMELSON CENTER FOR THE STUDY
OF INVENTION AND INNOVATION

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

OHIO HUMANITIES COUNCIL

ORAL HISTORY IN THE MID-ATLANTIC
REGION

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

STETSON KENNEDY FOUNDATION

UNIVERSITY OF KENTUCKY, LOUIE B.
NUNN CENTER FOR ORAL HISTORY

UNIVERSITY OF PITTSBURGH,
DEPARTMENT OF SOCIOLOGY

YOUNGSTOWN STATE UNIVERSITY

WRIGHT STATE UNIVERSITY,
COLLEGE OF LIBERAL ARTS

In the Spirit of Hidalgo: The IOHA meets in Guadalajara

By Donald A. Ritchie

You can't go far in Guadalajara, Mexico, without running into Don Miguel Hidalgo de Costilla. He was the Roman Catholic priest who, in 1810, denounced slavery and sparked the Mexican independence movement. The city's airport is named for him. His face appears on the 1000 peso note. Statues of him abound in public parks, and murals of him loom above on the ceilings of public buildings. Father Hidalgo was captured and executed in 1811, a decade before Mexico gained its independence, but at 11 p.m. each Sept. 15, Mexicans repeat his famous grito, or shout of independence, marking the time when he called on Mexicans to expel their foreign rulers and govern their own country.

The bunting and bleachers for the annual independence day parade were still up when the International Oral History Association convened its 15th meeting in historic Guadalajara, Sept. 22-26.

Guadalajara is an old city by North American standards, featuring a cathedral whose construction began in 1561 and took so long to finish that it managed to blend Baroque, Neoclassical, and Gothic styles of architecture. The city's center is graced with plazas and parks, notably the Rotonda de los Hombres Ilustres, surrounded by bronze statues of local men and women of accomplishment, among them artists and historians.

Some 400 oral historians from 40 nations—from across South America, North America, Europe, Africa, Asia, Australia and New Zealand—gathered at the University of Guadalajara for the conference, which was organized by Ana Maria de la O Castellanos. Many of the sessions focused on social and political upheaval in Latin America and elsewhere in the world, in the spirit of Hidalgo. Following a series of master classes or workshops, the conference opened on Tuesday evening with a keynote address by Eugenia Meyer and closed on Friday evening with a tribute to Alicia Olivera de Bonfil, the two women responsible for founding and



A spectacular mural of Don Miguel Hidalgo, painted by José Clemente Orozco, appears high over a staircase at the Palacio del Gobierno, where Hidalgo declared an end to Mexican slavery.

Photo credit: Donald A. Ritchie

encouraging the Mexican oral history movement.

Throughout the three-day meeting, presenters introduced an enormous variety of topics. In one panel alone, Alessandro Portelli analyzed the function of miracles in the memories of his interviewees in Italy and in Harlan County, U.S.A.; Alicia del Rosario Lartigue recounted how oral history interviewees have been recording reminiscences of now demolished public landmarks in Argentina; Alberto-Kiyoshi Fonseca Sakai reported on his interviews with Japanese whose families had lived for generations in South America before they returned to Japan, and their obstacles to reintegration; and Cintya Maria Costa Rodrigues of Brazil discussed her interviews with writers who incorporated their personal memories of locations into their fiction. Naturally, Mexican oral historians played a prominent part in the proceedings, presenting interview subjects that ranged from the Mexican ambassadors, museum curators and intellectuals to illegal immigrants in the United States.

Several sessions grappled with traumatic subjects, detailing interviews with those who had been uprooted, exiled, repressed and impoverished and weighing the impact of dictatorships, disease and diaspora. But others addressed everyday life—what one speaker called “memory landscapes”—about how people coped with their normal surroundings.

Interviewers regularly reflected on their own roles and evaluated their relationships with those they interviewed. Liz Wright, for instance, discussed how her own studies in theatrical set design aided her interviews with prominent British set designers, who in turn were studying her relative inexperience in the field as she questioned them. Rina Benmayor described her quest for her own family's memory, by interviewing relatives in Greece who had survived the Holocaust and explained the obstacles to asking probing questions about painful experiences. Philip Seaton speculated about how his being an outsider had helped him interview Japanese war veterans regarding memories and opinions they would have been reluctant to share with other Japanese.

The history of oral historians entered into the discussions when Mark Cranfield compared the pioneering Australian interviewers John Thompson and Hazel de Berg with George Ewart Evans in Great Britain. Drawing on their broadcasts, Cranfield urged oral historians to devote more attention to the recording than the transcript, to capture the “grain of the voice” and a better sense of the individual who is speaking. That theme was reiterated in several sessions, particularly those dealing with Internet postings of oral history video and sound recordings.

An unusual session featured dance students from Brigham Young University who had each interviewed a family member about a difficult passage in their lives and then turned those stories into dance. They first explained the process and then performed it. Their spirited effort provided another reminder that oral history is a fluid

(continued on page 13)

OHA committee revising Evaluation Guidelines

By Tracy E. K'Meyer, OHA Council

In the winter of 2008 the OHA Council asked new member Tracy E. K'Meyer to lead an ad hoc committee charged with the responsibility of updating and revising the organization's Evaluations Guidelines. After soliciting input via H-Oralhist, targeted e-mails to heads of oral history programs across the county and an open forum at the annual meeting in Pittsburgh, the committee has begun its work with hopes of completing a draft of the revised document by the 2009 midwinter council meeting.

The members of the committee are Michael Frisch, Valerie Yow, Mary Marshall Clark, Linda Shopes, Mark Cave, Mary Larson and Troy Reeves.

Based on preliminary work on the revision, the committee has agreed to divide the current document into two parts: a statement of "Principles and Standards for Oral History" and "Best Practices in Oral History." The hope is that this new format will provide both a general statement of the organization's principles and guidance to new and veteran practitioners.

The committee hopes to shorten and tighten the current document by removing repetition, thus making it more user friendly, accessible and more appropriate to oral history done in a variety of contexts.

A final version of the document is expected to be presented to OHA members at next year's annual meeting.

DIVERSITY

Committee Liason: Curtis Austin, University of Southern Mississippi

Chair: Claytee White, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, (2008-2011)

María Beltrán-Vocal, DePaul University, (2008-2011)

Alphine Jefferson, Randolph-Macon College, (2008-2011)

JaJuan Johnson, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, (2008-2011)

Jessica Roseberry, Duke University Medical Center Archives, (2008-2011)

Horacio Roque Ramírez, University of California, Santa Barbara, (2008-2011)

Norma Smith, The Edge of Each Other's Battles Project, (2008-2011)

EDUCATION

Committee Liason: Marjorie McLellan, Wright State University

Chair: Al Stein, Chicago Oral History Roundtable, (2008-2011)

Chuck Lee, University of Wisconsin, La Crosse, (2008-2011)

Howard Levin, Urban School of San Francisco, (2008-2011)

Glenn Ruggles, Michigan Oral History Association, (2006-2009)

Amy Starecheski, Columbia University Oral History Research Office, (2008-2011)

Glenn Whitman, St. Andrews Episcopal School, (2008-2011)

EMERGING CRISES ORAL HISTORY RESEARCH FUND

Chair: Patrick Carlton, University of Nevada, Las Vegas, (2008-2009)

Debra Schultz, International Center for Transitional Justice (2008-2009)

Stephen Sloan, Baylor University, (2008-2011)

EVALUATION GUIDELINES REVISION

Chair: Tracy K'Meyer, University of Louisville

Mark Cave, Historic New Orleans Collection

Michael Frisch, State University of New York, Buffalo

Mary Marshall Clark, Columbia University Oral History Research Office

Mary Larson, University of Nevada, Las Vegas

Troy Reeves, University of Wisconsin, Madison

Linda Shopes, Editor and Consultant

Valerie Yow, Independent Scholar

FINANCE

Committee Liason: Charles Hardy III, West Chester University

Chair: Roger Horowitz, Hagley Museum and Library (2008-2011)

Patricia Partnow, Partnow Consulting (2006-2009)

Cullom Davis, Springfield, Illinois (2008-2011)

INTERNATIONAL

Committee Liason: Valerie Yow, Independent Scholar

Chair: Jessica Wiederhorn, The Narrative Trust, (2008-2011))

Paula Hamilton, University of Technology, Sydney (2008-2011)

Leslie McCartney, Kings Cross Voices of Oral History Project, Dublin (2008-2011)

Elizabeth Millwood, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill, (2006-2009)

Rob Perks, British Library Sound Archive, London (2008-2011)

Susan Rose, Dickinson College, Carlisle, Pa. (2008-2011)

Elisabeth Pozzi-Thanner, Oral History Productions, New York (2008-2001)

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Committee Liason: Rina Benmayor, California State University, Monterey Bay

Chair: Paul Ortiz, University of Florida, (2007-2009)

Esther Ehrlich, Story Lines, (2008-2010)

Natalie Fousekis, California State University, Fullerton, (2008-2010)

Jeff Friedman, Rutgers University, (2008-2010)

Cliff Kuhn, Georgia State University, (2007-2009)

Annie Valk, Brown University, (2007-2009)

ORAL HISTORY REVIEW OVERSIGHT COMMITTEE

Mehmed Ali, U. S. State Department, (2008-2009)

Charles Hardy III, West Chester University, (2008-2010)

Michael Frisch, University at Buffalo, SUNY, (2008-2011)

ORAL HISTORY REVIEW EDITORIAL BOARD

Ruth Hill, Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study

Daniel Kerr, James Madison University

Marta Kurkowska-Budzan, Jagiellonian University
Tracy K'Meyer, University of Louisville
Susan McCormick, University at Albany, SUNY
Kathy Nasstrom, University of San Francisco
Mary Palevsky, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Horacio N. Roque Ramirez, University of California, Santa Barbara
Troy Reeves, University of Wisconsin, Madison
Thomas Saylor, Concordia University, Saint Paul
Elly Shodell, Port Washington Public Library
Bruce Stave, University of Connecticut
Glenn Whitman, Saint Andrews Episcopal School

PUBLICATIONS

Committee Liason: Tracy K'Meyer, University of Louisville
Chair: Kathy Nasstrom, San Francisco State University, (2008-2011)
Teresa Bergen, Teresa Transcribes (2008-2011)
Teresa Barnett, University of California, Los Angeles, (2006-2009)
David P. Cline, Southern Oral History Program, University of North Carolina, (2008-2011)
Todd Moyer, University of North Texas (2006-2009)
Gerald Zahavi, University at Albany, SUNY, (2008-2011)

SCHOLARSHIP COMMITTEE

Committee Liason: Marjorie McLellan, Wright State University
Al Stein, Chicago Oral History Roundtable
Claytee White, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Ana Maria Mauad, Brazilian Oral History Association

WEB SITE COMMITTEE (2008-2009)

Mehmed Ali, U. S. Department of State
Doug Boyd, University of Kentucky
Madelyn Campbell, Oral History Association
Michael Frisch, University at Buffalo, SUNY
Charles Hardy III, West Chester University
Marjorie McLellan, Wright State University
Todd Moyer, University of North Texas
Irene Reti, University of California, Santa Cruz
Linda Shopes, Editor and Consultant
Bruce Stave, University of Connecticut
Glen Whitman, Saint Andrews School

2009 BOOK AWARD

Chair: Kim Lacy Rogers, Dickinson College
Ron Grele, New York, NY
Valerie Yow, Independent Scholar

2009 NON-PRINT MEDIA AWARD

Chair: Mary Larson, University of Nevada, Las Vegas
Geoff Froh, Denso Japanese American Legacy Project
Dan Del Fiorentino, National Association of Music Merchandisers (NAMM)

2009 MARTHA ROSS TEACHING AWARD

Chair: Jajuan Johnson, Butler Center for Arkansas Studies
Kenneth Woodard, Stone Ridge School
Linda Wood, Independent Scholar

In the spirit of Hidalgo

continued from page 11

methodology, with seemingly universal application.

The IOHA program benefited greatly from the participation of 13 scholars who attended on scholarships, thanks to generous donations from the Oral History Association and other national oral history organizations. They came from Lebanon, Namibia, Kenya, Israel, Guatemala, Colombia, Panama and Argentina, helping to make it a truly international gathering.

The program provided English-Spanish translations for three panels during each time slot, giving the audience an ample selection of sessions to

attend and allowing for multilingual discussions following the presentations. Oral history meetings are rarely limited to formal sessions, however, and the conversation flowed over into large tents where Mexican cuisine was served for lunch each day. In the evenings, conference participants attended a colorful folk ballet at the stately 19th-century Teatro Degollado and were treated to a fiesta on the plaza of the 18th-century Basilica of the Virgin of Zapopan.

Organizing an international meeting of this scale is no easy task, and considerable difficulties in communication preceded this one, but during the meet-

ing the problems were overwhelmed by the friendly hospitality of Mexican Oral History Association and the University of Guadalajara.

The IOHA is in the process of redesigning and expanding its Web site, to provide greater services to its members, including more timely announcements and online registration for future conferences. In addition to the semi-annual newsletter, the Web site will eventually post the IOHA journal, Words and Silences. Moving on from Mexico, the IOHA plans to hold its next meeting in Prague, July 6-11, 2010. ❖

Fledgling Midwest Oral History Group explores ideas

A fledgling group of Midwest oral historians, still looking for a catchy name, met on Oct. 17 during the Oral History Association conference in Pittsburgh. Troy Reeves, head of the oral history program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, convened the session. Eleven men and women from six other states attended.

A lively discussion ensued, trying to answer Reeves' primary question: What would or could or should such a group do? Many good ideas for both short- and long-term goals emerged. Initially, the group decided to establish an online social network/listserv, Midwest Oral History Group, powered by Ning, at: <http://oralhistory.ning.com/>.

The participants also discussed what states or regions within states might want to join a Midwest group. Initially, the group appears to encompass a large region from the Great Plains to the Mississippi River basin. States included in the initial target area are: North Dakota, South Dakota, Nebraska, Kansas, Missouri, Iowa, Illinois, Minnesota, Wisconsin, Michigan, Indiana, Ohio and Kentucky.

Group members tentatively plan to meet either by teleconference or in person in the spring to discuss steps to become a formal organization. The group also plans to have a presence at the 2009 OHA conference in Louisville, Ky.

If you would like to join or have questions, comments or concerns, call Troy Reeves at 608-890-1899 or e-mail him at: treeves@library.wisc.edu.

Seed magnate, radio pioneer focus of oral history

By Kimberly K. Porter, University of North Dakota

For people living in the central United States, Henry Field's name should be a familiar one—a seed catalog bearing his name lands in their mailbox shortly after Christmas, and always before New Years every year. Field started his seed company in Shenandoah, Iowa, in 1899, continuing to labor for its profit until days before his October 1949 death.

Now, nearly 60 years later, Kimberly K. Porter, editor of *The Oral History Review* and a professor at the University of North Dakota, has begun a project to document the life of the gardener, seedman, radio pioneer and politician.

Creating the documentary source material for a biography of Field, Porter has conducted interviews with Field's one surviving child, John Henry Field, 91, as well as his sole surviving daughter-in-law, Ethel Field, 91. Moreover, by spending time in the Shenandoah area, Porter was able to conduct interviews with three Field nieces: Margery Driftmier Strom, Dorothy Driftmier Johnson and Ruth Shambaugh Watkins.

While considerable material is available on Field and his gardening enterprises, as well as on his political goals, little has been preserved with regard to the life of seed house employees or KFNE, the radio station on which many of them performed. Beginning in 1924, Field and his "seed house gang" frequently blanketed the United States with "old-fashioned music," predominantly gospel, country and western and other familiar standards.

Flouting the Federal Radio Commission, predecessor to the Federal Communications Commission, Field often would "crack open the sky" to see just how far he could send his signal. On one February night he managed to reach each state in the Union as well as the majority of the Canadian provinces and many Latin American nations. Henry Field himself often took to the airwaves over the noon hour each weekday to read from his "letter basket" of notes from listeners and customers.

Porter hopes to interview former employees of the station as well as employees of the seed house in her effort to produce the Field biography.

Arkansas History Award Nominees Sought

The Arkansas Women's History Institute announces its call for the 2009 Susie Pryor Award submissions. The award is named in honor of Susie Hampton Newton Pryor – mother, community leader, local historian and writer from Camden, Ark.

The award offers a \$1,000 prize annually for the best unpublished essay on topics in Arkansas women's history. Manuscripts are judged on their contributions to knowledge of women in Arkansas's history, use of primary and secondary materials and analytical and stylistic excellence. The winning paper may be published.

Deadline for submission is Feb. 15, 2009. The winner will be announced at the 2009 meeting of the Arkansas Historical Association in Magnolia, Ark., April 23-25, 2009.

For guidelines, or for more information about the Susie Pryor Award, visit the Arkansas Women's History Institute Web site at: www.uarl.edu/awhi or contact:

ELLEN COMPTON, CHAIR

AWHI Susie Pryor Awards Committee • Special Collections, University Library
365 North McIlroy Avenue • Fayetteville, AR 72701-4002 • 479.575.725 • ecompton@uark.edu

Call for Papers

Moving Beyond the Interview

2009 OHA Annual Meeting, Oct. 14–18, 2009 • Louisville, Ky

The Oral History Association invites proposals for papers and presentations for its 2009 annual meeting to be held Oct. 14–18, 2009, at the Galt House Hotel in Louisville, Ky.

Collecting and preserving stories via interviews long has been the central focus of oral history method and practice. The 2009 Annual Meeting celebrates this basic unit of our field, the interview, by placing it within a circle of critical issues necessarily encountered in working with oral histories—in “doing something” with the materials oral historians collect. Too often relegated to the methodological sidelines, these include technological, philosophical, analytical, archival, collaborative, ethical, educational and public aspects of working with oral history interviews.

Interviews are always conducted within a social or political context, and oral history interviews demand sensitive collaboration beginning with the social contract between interviewer and interviewee. But this requirement extends well beyond the interview to the processes and questions surrounding archives and use, access and presentation, analysis and exposition, ethics and morality and teaching, research and public engagement.

Oral history is both process and product; it is human interaction and human voice; it is the “raw” interview and the “cooked” documentary and everything in-between.

It is on that in-between ground that the Program Committee hopes to center the Annual Meeting’s discussion: How do we make an oral history into History? How do we transform oral history into exhibits, Web sites, multimedia, and public programming? How do we incorporate oral history into research, writing, documentary and community settings, applications fostered by everything from technological advances to the changing nature of humanities and community research? And how do these concerns alter understandings of the method and meanings of oral history itself?

The Program Committee especially welcomes proposals exploring this middle ground of engaged use from a variety of vantages and in a variety of modes. We invite proposals from individuals and panels, as well as for roundtables, performances, listening and viewing sessions, workshops and poster sessions.

OHA is open to proposals from the variety of fields traditionally repre-

sented in our meetings, such as folklore, history, sociology, anthropology, communications, American studies, political science and urban studies. We also hope to see a significant international presence at the meeting. And, as always, OHA welcomes proposals from independent scholars, community activists and organizers, archivists, librarians, museum curators, Web designers, documentary producers, media artists, ethnographers, public historians and all practitioners whose work is especially relevant to this meeting’s interest in “moving beyond the interview.”

Proposal format: Visit the OHA Web site, www.oralhistory.org, for complete details on the mechanics of submitting your proposal. The deadline is Jan. 31, 2009.

Proposals should be NOT be sent to program chairs, but they will be happy to respond to your queries. If you have not received e-mail confirmation by Feb. 13, 2009, please contact the OHA office to make sure your print or e-mail submission has been received.

Queries may be directed to:

Alicia J. Rouverol
Independent Scholar
2009 Program Co-Chair
ajrouver@earthlink.net

Mark Tebeau
Cleveland State University
2009 Program Co-Chair
m.tebeau@csuohio.edu

Michael Frisch
University at Buffalo, SUNY
2009–10 OHA President
mfrisch@buffalo.edu

Send Proposals directly to:

Madelyn Campbell, Executive Secretary

Oral History Association, Dickinson College

P. O. Box 1773 • Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013

Telephone: 717-245-1036 • Fax: 717-245-1046 • Email: oha@dickinson.edu

For courier service add: Holland Union Building, College and Louthers Streets

News & Notes ...

UVA project interviews Kennedy

The University of Virginia's Miller Center of Public Affairs is about halfway finished with an in-depth oral history project documenting the life and times of Massachusetts Sen. Edward Kennedy, whose career spans nine presidents and nearly a half-century of political life, the Associated Press has reported.

The project, for which Kennedy has sat for some three dozen interviews recounting personal anecdotes and insights about his career, took on added importance after Kennedy was diagnosed earlier this year with brain cancer.

In addition to the Kennedy interviews, dozens of his current and former aides, political activists, family members, foreign officials, friends and Senate colleagues are being interviewed, according to James Sterling Young, project director.

The no holds barred interviews will not be made public until the project is completed.

New faces join OHA leadership

The 2008 Oral History Association election resulted in several new faces—and several familiar ones—on the OHA Council and Nominating Committee.

Elected first vice president was Rina Benmayor of California State University, Monterey Bay. Joining OHA Council is Marjorie McLellan of Wright State University.

OHA members elected to serve on the Nominating Committee were: Esther Ehrlich of Story Lines, Natalie Fousekis of California State University, Fullerton and Jeff Friedman of Rutgers University.

Michael Frisch of the University of Buffalo, SUNY, moved up from first vice president to president.

OHA reports healthy finances, urges endowment contributions

Oral History Association Executive Secretary Madelyn Campbell reports that the OHA's operating fund will end the year with about \$140,000 in the bank. In addition, the OHA Endowment Fund, the earnings from which support OHA projects and conference scholarships, totals about \$188,200.

Tax deductible contributions to the endowment are encouraged in an effort to meet the goal of establishing a \$200,000 endowment.

Recent contributors to the endowment include: Mehmed Ali, Madelyn Campbell, Cliff Kuhn, Todd Moyer, Mary Kay Quinlan and Irene Reti. The OHA also welcomes new life member Dan Del Fiorentino. ❖

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

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

Submit photographs to Photo and Production Editor Alexandra Tzoumas at alexandratz@gmail.net

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

**Copyright 2008
Oral History Association, Inc.**

Oral History Association
NEWSLETTER
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

Nonprofit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Jefferson City, MO
PERMIT NO. 210