



Spring 2011  
Volume XLV Number 1

## ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

### Cambodian-American Community of Oregon describes award-winning project

Approximately 2 million people died during the Khmer Rouge reign and nearly three decades later Cambodian-Americans continue to be haunted by their painful and unforgettable memories. As a nonprofit organization aimed at uniting our communities, preserving our culture and history and empowering future generations, the Cambodian-American Community of Oregon (CACO) recognizes the urgent need to produce an oral history documentary film that tells a story of survival, resiliency and hope.

In addition to the need to heal the older generation, of equal importance is the need to engage our youth and young adults to understand their parents' and grandparents' fight for freedom and survival at a time of famine and death, even with this new-found hope in America.

The project resulted in a 35-minute documentary film/DVD professionally produced and directed by SpinFilms, in collaboration with youths, survivors and a professional oral historian and professor. This media format captures intimate stories from our elders in the community that humanize their experiences of tragedy, sorrow, survival and joy.

Youth and young adults paired with their grandparents to invite a dialog that is usually ignored between parent, youth and grandparent. In some cases, parents

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### 7th Annual Legacy Oral History Workshop

San Francisco – Aug. 4-6

Learn how to plan, organize and conduct fascinating interviews, use current technologies to produce digital media projects, refine your editing skills and prepare oral history print texts for printing or publication.

The workshop is designed to meet the needs of beginning, intermediate and advanced students. Former workshop participants have included university faculty, master's and doctoral candidates, personal historians, historical societies, library and museum staff, government and corporate employees and board and staff of nonprofits.

The three-day intensive workshop is led by oral historians Jeff Friedman and Basya Petnick.



Please see our website for more complete information: <http://www.mpdsf.org/PAGES/PROGRAM/legacy.html>

If you have questions or wish to request a registration form, please e-mail [legacy2011@mpdsf.org](mailto:legacy2011@mpdsf.org) or call 415-255-4800, ext. 823.

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## *From the president*

Greetings from Denver, where the beautiful snowy Rockies string the horizon! Council has just concluded its mid-winter meeting at the site of the 2011 annual meeting, and we have progress to report on many fronts. First, our financial situation is strong, showing a modest increase in income thanks to record attendance at the Atlanta meeting and to Madelyn's foresight and savvy in protecting our accounts from the financial crisis. This enables us to move forward with some new initiatives. For example:

**Scholarships:** Council took a long look at our scholarship offerings in light of recent trends and changing demographics. We added two new scholarship categories, one for community oral historians and another for undergraduate students. Community oral historians might include local or non-local practitioners working with community organizations, nonprofits or other local institutions. Undergraduates were previously missing from student funding opportunities.

The scholarship categories now include:

<i>General presenters</i>	<i>Non-presenters</i>
<i>International presenters</i>	<i>Diversity presenters</i>
<i>Community presenters</i>	<i>Graduate students</i>
<i>Undergraduate students</i>	<i>Secondary school students</i>

This combination of targeted and general pools enables more awards to be given and it loosens competition. It reflects a continued commitment to expanding access to important constituencies. The dollar amounts in each category will vary from year to year, based on precedent, need and budget. This year we will have \$11,800 for scholarship support across the categories!

The Scholarship Committee has recommended an improved and more detailed application form, providing better information and clearer criteria to guide the award process. We encourage applicants to pay particular attention to the new form and to provide full and detailed narratives as requested. Of course, scholarships are only partial and cannot cover the full costs of attending the annual meeting. Typically, invitations to apply for scholarships are sent out once proposals have been accepted, so be on the alert. The Scholarship Committee announces the results in mid-July. The International Committee, which selects the international awardees, announces its awards earlier to enable presenters to secure visas and additional funding. All scholarship recipients automatically receive complimentary registration at the conference, and all are expected to file a one-page report after the conference for publication on the website.

**On the E-Front:** This year we have some major advances in electronic processing to report. Last year, OHA converted to an online conference registration process, which was highly successful and will become the norm. This year, we initiated the first fully online proposal submission process, saving many hours of tedious manual database inputting. This has freed up the executive secretary and her assistants to focus on other tasks. Soon we're hoping to move to electronic voting! Our pamphlet series, now available through Barnes and Noble and

Amazon, will soon be available as e-books through Kindle.

**Website:** Revision and improvement of the website is an ongoing task. Some of the network features of the original site have proven to be cumbersome and we are looking at alternative designs and tools. In the coming months we will be preparing to search for a Web editor and a Web manager so as to continually improve content, interactivity and utility.

We encourage you to consult the website frequently as this is our primary communication vehicle for new information, updates, announcements, current and previous newsletters, resources, committee activity and of course, the annual meeting.

**Membership:** Our membership remains constant, with modest increases. Oxford University Press is promoting OHA in many developing countries around the world, as well as nationally. Given drastic budget cutbacks in libraries across the country, we may see a drop in serial subscriptions. Please consult your university libraries. If your library is planning to drop its subscription, oral history programs may want to consider opting for an individual membership instead.

OHA is making a push on membership renewals. If you have not renewed in the past four years, you will be receiving a friendly e-mail from Madelyn. We've also been working with Oxford University Press to produce more user-friendly avenues for renewal. Rather than sending expensive bank checks to the UK, members may renew using a credit card, setting up an automatic withdrawal with your bank or renewing by phone via an 800 number. We hope this makes the renewal process easier, but if you have any difficulties, please notify Madelyn.

**ALERT!!!** If your email has changed in the past five years, please make sure that the OHA office has your current email address (send to: [oha@dickinson.edu](mailto:oha@dickinson.edu)).

**Oral History Review Editor Search:** the Search Committee has just completed a very successful search for a new *OHR* editor and Council has unanimously accepted the committee's unanimous recommendation. OHA will be announcing the results as soon as the contract is signed. Our thanks go to past president and *OHR* editor Mike Frisch, who chaired the process, and Susan McCormick, Dan Kerr and Kim Porter (current *OHR* editor) for their multi-tiered and very thoughtful selection process, one that serves as a model for future searches. We anticipate some exciting new developments from the *Review*!

**Committees:** Along with the task of filling annual vacancies on the various standing committees and appointing their chairs, I will be developing for each committee a set of general and specific charges. In addition, Council approved converting the old Finance



*OHA president, Rina Benmayor*

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# Save the date for OHA in Denver

By Leah Kolb, Jen Abraham Cramer and Troy Reeves, Member and co-chairs of 2011 OHA Annual Meeting Program Committee



Please join us Oct.12–16 at the Renaissance Hotel in Denver, Colo., for the 2011 Oral History Association’s annual meeting. Our theme is “Memories of Conflict and Disaster: Oral History and the Politics of Truth, Trauma and Reconciliation.” Held one month after the 10th anniversary of the September 11 attacks, the meeting will focus on natural and manmade disasters and conflicts, and the interpretation and preservation of these events in light of the search for truth, the documentation of trauma and the quest for reconciliation.

## Here is a sneak peek at event highlights:

The program committee plans to continue the new OHA annual meeting traditions: a special Wednesday evening event to kick off the meeting in style and a presentation at the Thursday evening presidential reception, where we will honor a long-time member of the oral history community. Stay tuned for more information.

- **Friday luncheon keynote speaker:** Doug Boyd, director of the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Libraries. Serving as the project manager for the Institute of Museum and Library Services-funded grant project, Oral History in the Digital Age, Boyd will address how new technologies can advance the practice of oral history and report on the best practices for collecting, curating and disseminating oral histories in the digital age.
- **Saturday evening banquet presentation:** Carolyn Mears, adjunct faculty at the University of Denver’s Morgridge College of Education. A parent whose son was a student at Columbine High School at the time of the shootings in 1999, Mears subsequently began researching the impact of this tragedy on parents and families. Using in-depth interviewing and analysis, Mears continues to explore the effects of trauma and disaster with the goal of helping others process and recover from community-wide crises.
- **Thursday plenary session:** Columbia University Oral History Program’s and Project Rebirth’s efforts to document and preserve September 11, 2001. Project Rebirth’s initial mission was to film the re-development of the World Trade Center site in the aftermath of September 11, 2001. During this time, project leaders also began to chronicle the lives of nine individuals coping with the devastating effects of the terrorist attacks, recording yearly interviews with each subject from 2002 through 2009.

Mary Marshall Clark, director of the Columbia University Oral History Research Office, co-founded the September 11, 2001 Oral History Narrative and Memory Project, a large-scale oral history project aimed at documenting individual narratives of people who were directly and indirectly affected by the terrorist attacks. Clark will consider how oral histories can provide an effective means of documenting and communicating the complexities of human trauma, often in a more powerful and personal way than is possible with mass media reporting. Also, she will discuss how the roughly 1,100 hours (600 of them now accessible to the public) of footage and oral testimonies gathered serve as a unique record, a living history of victims and first responders.

- **Friday plenary session:** Oral History and Environment—A Public Lands Roundtable. This session draws inspiration from Denver’s majestic Colorado Rockies setting and the long prominence of environmental issues in the American West. It will explore the intersections between oral history and environmental history, with an emphasis on federal lands. Drawing on the work of historians within and outside federal agencies, the plenary roundtable will demonstrate how oral history can shed light on public lands history and how environmental inquiry can enrich oral history.

Selway-Bitterroot Wilderness scholar Debbie Lee, Pisgah and Nantahala National Forest researcher Kathryn Newfont and Joshua Tree National Park historian

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## From the president

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Committee into a Development Committee charged with identifying and pursuing large donor sponsorships. If you have particular fundraising skills and are willing to work on funding development, please let us know!

Plans for the Denver meeting are in full swing. Proposal acceptances have recently gone out via e-mail. Check the website in early July for the program of keynotes, plenary sessions, tours and registration and hotel information. A

preliminary schedule of sessions will also be available on the website in July, but the final schedule will be printed in September, to capture last-minute changes. The conference theme, “Memories of Conflict and Disaster: Oral History and the Politics of Truth, Trauma, and Reconciliation,” could not be more relevant and timely. It promises to offer a rich and nuanced look at the importance of oral history in difficult times. I look forward to seeing everyone there! ❖

## Cambodian-American Community

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*I would highly suggest that all communities no matter what race, age, religion, etc, take part in a project like this because everyone has their life stories and they should be told.*



*Daughters Kimberly and Melissa Im interview their mother, Chbunny Sok, for the Cambodian-American Community of Oregon oral history project as a videographer records the session.*

acted as interpreter between the youth and the grandparents. This bridged an intergenerational gap with their loved ones, so that we helped our elders heal, cope and come to terms with their often horrific experiences.

In addition, the families have a priceless recording of documented history to pass on from one generation to the next. Families also received a full version of the raw footage of their interviews while the community uses this short documentary film as a tool to raise awareness about the effect and consequences of genocide through schools, universities, nonprofit organizations and community groups.

The oral history project was a massive undertaking especially for a grass roots volunteer-based organization like CACO with only a handful of active volunteers. With the generous support from Northwest Health Foundation, Portland Vision into Action program, Spinfilms and the many volunteer community members and community partners, we completed the documentary film in less than 10 months.

From the start we knew it would be a challenge recruiting survivors to do the interviews. Similar to the Holocaust survivors, Cambodian-Americans have a culture of silence when it comes to sharing their story of the genocide. We can empathize as opening up could mean reliving the pain and suffering. Parents and grandparents also have this maternal and paternal instinct to protect their children from more pain.

While some survivors were reluctant and we had to do some convincing, some were freely willing to cooperate. The more people we talk to, the more we realize they do want

their children to know what happen to them so that they can learn from their past. Unfortunately, it was not something that they often talk about over the dinner table or even among close friends. And so, our project gave them a forum to invite this intergenerational dialog.

We were pleasantly surprised when we were able to recruit 20 adults and 19 youth to participate in the interviews. The participants ranged from age 13 to 75. We divided the process into three stages: pre-interview preparation and training of participants; interviewing, recording and editing; and the premier showing and public outreach.

After recruitment, the interviewers were formally trained to conduct the interview in a two-session oral history workshop. Each workshop lasted from two to three hours. Special thanks to professor Patricia Schechter from Portland State University for volunteering her time and expertise out of the goodness of her heart and for her love of history and respect and empathy for the subject of genocide.

Interviewing and recording were spread out over two months. The first month involved one full three-day weekend devoted just to interviewing and recording. Each interview lasted anywhere from one to two-and-a-half hours. Scriptwriting and editing was a challenge because our goal was to produce a short documentary at the same time we had the ultimate challenge of having to strategically select pieces of the nearly 40 hours of interviews into a 35-minute documentary. This extremely difficult and time consuming

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task involved us working very closely with the producer and editor brainstorming and trying to come up with something that is both thought provoking and meaningful. Having been exposed to the talents of SpinFilm through several of their award-winning films, we were confident that they would produce a documentary that would grasp at the hearts of all ages and leave each person wondering how, why and what should be done to prevent such atrocities from happening again.

Through the process, there were tears from the producer, the editor and all those who were involved. It was a powerful experience that left all of us feeling empowered, having a sense that we did something good for humanity. Indeed we did do something good for humanity, as we were honored by the Oral History Association with the OHA's Elizabeth E. Mason Award in Atlanta. It was an honor just to be acknowledged, let alone win an award from a nationally respected organization focused on preserving our world's history.

Stories told in our film are only a short version of our collective stories, however, we are hoping that this will open more doors and families will start to share more and more of their personal stories, both painful and beautiful.

To date we have screened at about 15 venues, including high schools, universities, nonprofit and community-based organizations reaching more than 1,000 people across Oregon. We are currently working on fine tuning our website and are almost ready to launch. We believe once the website is launched we will reach more families beyond Oregon and Washington. Our next goal is to pursue screening through public television like PBS.

We feel this project has had a positive outcome for both the interviewers and the narrators. Below is the comment from one of the youth interviewers. We can safely say her comment is a good representation of how most participants feel about participating in the project:

*"Being a part of the oral history project was something I am so glad I signed up for. It was an amazing experience for both myself, my sister and my mother. I already think of my mother as wonder woman and my hero, but with this project it just makes me think even more of her, if that was even possible. Learning about her struggles and her life story makes me put things into perspective. I am so grateful for all the things I have in my life and for everything that she did to give me the life that I have now. Being a child raised in the posh lifestyles of the U.S., I have nothing to complain about or be sad about. I worry about things that are trivial compared to things my mother was worried about. She feared for her life, her family's life. She had no food to eat, no safety, nothing. The experience robbed her and her other community members of that. She lost her childhood and the innocence that I got to have freely and without struggles.*

*"Being a part of this project opened my eyes. It made me more compassionate and aware. I am closer to my mother after this. Tears were shed that day, hugs were given and love was spread because of this project. I also have such a strong respect for all of the members that participated in this. It was a hard thing to talk about and bring up, but it seems to only positively affect all those that were involved.*

## About the Cambodian genocide documentary

*"An Oral History Project: Healing from the Cambodian Genocide"* is described as a moving, beautiful and historically informed documentary film highlighting the experiences of survivors of the Cambodian genocide of 1975-79. The film features intergenerational interviews of survivors by their children and grandchildren, all now living in the state of Oregon. The survivors' narratives of familial disruption, dislocation and military violence are interwoven with equally powerful stories of strength, resourcefulness and love.

Historical footage and photographs frame the narratives with a cogent re-telling of the history of the Pol Pot regime, giving a vivid social and political context for the suffering and loss endured by millions of Cambodians at the time. By telling their stories and grieving their losses together, the narrators and their interviewers move through a powerful process of healing and regeneration.

Viewers, in turn, are educated, challenged and left with a profound message about hope and survival that has universal resonance in a world still torn by militarism and genocide. This film is suitable for classrooms and libraries, community groups and government agencies that are interested in Cambodian culture, the history of genocide, immigration and community building, and the human survival of war and related trauma.

**Produced by:** SpinFilm & Cambodian-American Community of Oregon

**Producer:** Skye Fitzgerald

**Editor:** Garrett Russell

*"Sharing a story can mean so much, and I thought that I had heard it all, but my mother brought up things in that interview that I was unaware of and was blown away by. In these genocide/war stories, the sharing part, I feel, although very hard, is cathartic. All these memories and gut-wrenching images that were suppressed and held back because of the fear and the suffering. But it seemed that once it was let go and shared, positive energy was also released. The youth and the offspring of all the survivors should be grateful for everything their parents/grandparents did for them. I am so thankful for my mother and my father for fighting so hard for life so that I could have mine. I am truly blessed and this project let me see that.*

*"Everyone in this project was strong and wonderful. I am so proud to be a part of the oral history project. I think it is and was a beautiful thing!"*

— By Kimberly Im ❖

*For questions, please contact Sophorn Cheang 503-998-2939 or Mardine Mao 503-548-3202, who submitted this report.*

# Australian project focuses on women in Alice Springs gaol

**Editor's note:** *The following two pieces by Megg Kelham, a freelance historian from Alice Springs, Australia, first appeared in the Autumn 2010 and Spring 2010 issues, respectively, of "Word of Mouth," the newsletter of the South Australian Branch of the Oral History Association of Australia. They are reprinted here with permission of Kelham and "Word of Mouth" editor Alison McDougall. The OHA Newsletter appreciates the opportunity to share this fascinating project with our readers.*

## Looking For Women Who Spent Time In Alice Springs Old Yellow Gaol

I am a freelance historian living and working in Alice Springs currently undertaking research for a community arts based exhibition to be created in the old Alice Springs Gaol, located, for those who may have been to Alice, next to the Royal Flying Doctor Service on the southern end of the town's heritage precinct.

The idea for this exhibition came from a lengthy oral history interview with gaol matron, Telka Williams. Telka's gaol career spans three decades from 1956-1984, a period of enormous change in the social status of Australian women. These changes, both the positive and the painfully negative, are reflected in the world behind bars.

Like her predecessors in the Stuart Gaol, Telka acquired her position as matron by virtue of her marriage to the head gaoler. At the beginning of her career Telka was paid an annual stipend to supervise the small number of women who found themselves inside. In the early days the inmates were mostly grog drinking Aboriginal women with a love for the company of European men.

By the end of her career, Telka was a full time, uniformed employee and one of the first women in the Territory public service to be granted equal pay, now looking after increasing numbers of well educated European women who found themselves on the inside as a result of drug addiction.

A passionate craftswoman, Telka took her crafts with her to work. The result, at least as Telka paints the picture, was a vibrant and creative prison environment, in which women prison officers and inmates challenged traditional jail culture as they created a space where city bred vegetarians and indigenous meat eaters taught each their version of home cooking on benches the women tiled themselves, in colourful uniforms they designed and sewed, in cells they painted, as they slept on beds adorned with their own hand made quilts. At one point, in support of a woman doing a journalism degree at college, the women produced a weekly gaol newsletter. And very occasionally, in a move which is still considered 'radical' by many correctional centres today, this group of women found themselves united in mutual adoration of a resident toddler spending time inside with their mum.

What I would like to do now is talk to some of the women who spent time inside to hear their perspectives. Given the often close links between Alice Springs and Adelaide, and that fact that until the introduction of hospital based mental health facilities in Alice Springs sometime in the 1980s, most of those women incarcerated for 'lunacy' were sent south to Adelaide, I am thinking that someone may have come across some of these inmates in their oral history travels.

I would be really grateful if anyone with already recorded interviews or with knowledge of women who have spent time inside in Alice Springs could either put these women in contact with me or me in contact with them.

My contact details are 08 8952 9006 or email [meggkel@yahoo.com](mailto:meggkel@yahoo.com) and put Alice Gaol in the subject box. Thanks. ❖

## A Happy Gaol?

*Megg Kelham interviews Telka Williams*

Oral history interviews, at least the ones I've done, are usually conducted in the comfort of people's homes. Very occasionally I have found myself, lapel microphone attached, following an extraordinary individual on a personalized tour of a particular place. Such interviews are apparently a nightmare to transcribe (thanks NTAS!). **[Editor's note:** *This is a reference to the Northern Territory Archives Service.*] As sources of information for the development of interpretive signage for heritage sites however, they are invaluable sources of information. And often, they have a more powerful emotional intimacy than the traditional interview, an intimacy drawn from the unexpected and detailed memories that a return to place can trigger.

This was certainly the case when I accompanied former gaol matron Telka Williams and friend on a tour of the women's section of Her Majesties Gaol and Labour Prison Alice Springs, Telka's workplace for almost three decades, from the mid 1950s to the early 1980s. The joyful memories the visit sparked was something of a surprise. Aren't jails meant to be miserable? This extract begins with Telka remembering some of the activities which took place in the women's common room:

*We had the editor of The Advocate at the time, his wife was a qualified yoga teacher, and I thought it might be good for the girls that were on drugs to calm them, etcetera, and they loved it.*

*And the staff bated it, because the staff would be standing in that doorway there, watching, and they'd feel like going to sleep too, as this lassie was saying:*

*- And the water is babbling across the brook, etcetera, etcetera.*

*And, yes, they just bated the yoga classes, but the prisoners derived a lot of benefit. And of course the Aboriginal prisoners just went straight to sleep anyway [Laughs], so they loved it from that point of view. They didn't have to do anything while they were sleeping. Yeah, we had quite fun.*

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## A happy gaol?

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*We did all sorts of things in here. We had a dressmaking teacher used to come in, a Mrs Darling, who's still in town, I believe. We had our pottery teacher, our craft teacher. Yes, this was a hive of activity all day long.*

*We painted the whole area, inside and out, because I was going through a period: women are as good as men, we can paint our own section. They kept telling us they didn't have the time or the money, and I just felt it needed doing. So I said:*

*—Okay. If we can provide the labour, can you provide the paint?*

*Yes, they could, so we had prisoners up on ladders, and we all the outside done. And inside here, we decided we wanted brightness and lightness, so each cell we had the green room and the blue room, all the cells were painted a different colour.*

*And the girls had made patchwork quilts out of odd bits of material, and they put them on the beds. So the rooms — we never called them cells, they were always the girls' rooms. And they used to quite like looking after them. Once again it was encouraging them to do something with their lives.*

Does it bring back good memories to walk through here?

*It brings back a lot of good memories. ...*

*At Christmas time all these bars were all decorated with tinsel. We used to have a real Christmas. And we'd co-operate with the men—the girls didn't cook Christmas dinner, the male staff cooked the Christmas dinner. They had the turkey and plum pudding with all the trimmings.*

*And the females used to make little baskets of lollies for the male prisoners, because they were doing our cooking. We cooked them sweets, home-made sweets, etcetera, as a reciprocal thing, which was really very good. And there was special visiting on Christmas day too....*

When you married Taffy, did you know that part of the marriage contract was ending up being the matron?

No.

He didn't mention it?

*No, heavens no. Well, no. Taffy was only a prison officer; didn't have any status at all. He was down on temporary transfer from Darwin, actually.*

[J.N.]: Fate.

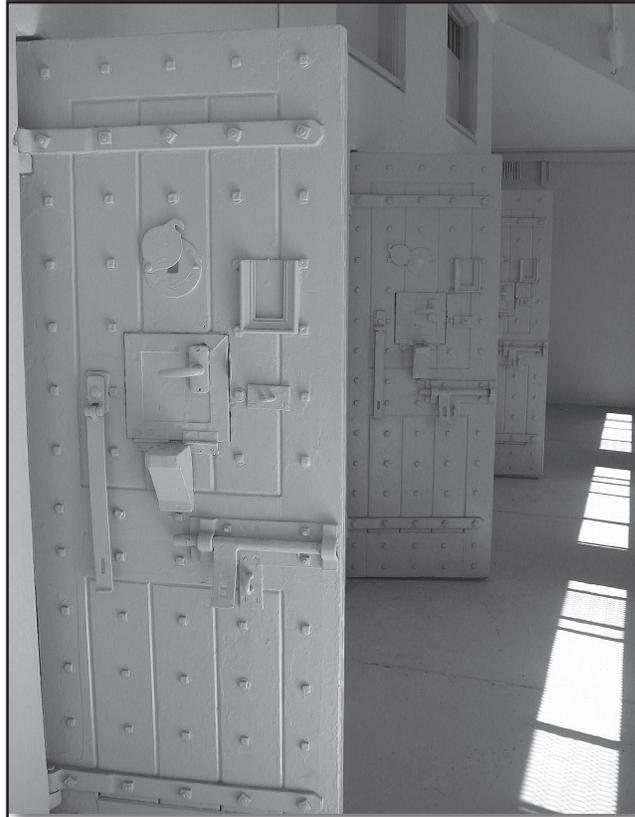
*Fate, yes....*

.... So did you ever—like if you hadn't wanted to do this work here, could you have said no?

*Yes, of course I could.*

Okay.

*I found it a challenge, and I did find throughout my time of working here I enjoyed it, which sounds a strange thing today. But we weren't here to judge the prisoners. The courts had already done*



*Pictured above: Australian oral historian Megg Kelham.*

*Pictured below: The interior of Alice Springs Old Gaol.*

*that. We were here in a custodial role, to make sure that the prisoners didn't escape.*

*And why not make their life better? They had to go back out into that wide world. So that's why I used to think up all these hare-brained schemes [Laughs], but fortunately, mostly they were agreed to.*

A full copy of this interview can be found in the Northern Territory Archives Service Interview (NTAS) 2006-09 who did the transcription and in the Alice Springs Collection of the Nevil Shute Library, Alice Springs. The interview was commissioned by The National Pioneer Women's Hall of Fame, the current custodians of "Telka's" gaol. ❖

**Editor's note:** Kelham reported by e-mail that she "finally interviewed one former inmate of the gaol — an Aboriginal woman who a friend of a friend knew had been inside. I had the loveliest morning talking to Janie on site in the women's cell block which she called 'home' and regarded as a safer place to sleep than on the outside. Not sure that very many people will actually believe that! And unfortunately the recording may not prove much because Janie's accent is so heavy that most people will not be able to understand her English. From the historian's perspective thought it was very interesting and at least one confirmation of Telka's view that the women's section of the gaol was a happy place."

## Save the date: OHA in Denver

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Hannah Nyala West will offer insights from their oral history work on particular federal tracts. National Park Service historian Lu Ann Jones will discuss her recent work spearheading that agency's oral history program. Environmental historian Paul Sutter of the University of Colorado will chair the roundtable and put the work in broad context. Together these presentations will offer insights into environmental history, oral history and the meanings of Americans' public lands inheritance.

### Workshops to be offered include:

- **Introduction to Oral History**, with presenters Troy Reeves and Jennifer Abraham. This full-day workshop serves as an informative overview of the art and science of oral history from the initial idea through the finished product. Additionally, the workshop will contain interactive exercises to hone listening and interviewing skills.
  - **Motivate, Organize, Train and Accomplish: Oral History and Community-Based Practice**, with presenters Elinor Mazé, Michelle Holland and Stephen Sloan. This workshop is intended for oral history practitioners who want to work effectively with community groups on oral history projects. The goal will be to move beyond an introductory discussion and focus on building a tool kit for oral historians to do collaborative work with community groups.
  - **Digital Preservation of Oral History**, with presenter Doug Boyd. This workshop will provide an introduction to the best current archival practices for the preservation of multimedia digital resources created by oral historians. We will cover issues pertaining to the choice of acquisition formats, obsolescence cycles, digital storage options, file formats, file management and analog to digital conversion for preservation and access purpose and we will examine the technological needs for appropriately processing digital audio, images and video for archival preservation purposes.
- **Publish it Yourself: Demystifying Publishing Technologies for Oral Historians**, with presenter Irene Reti. This interactive workshop will provide an informative and practical overview of how oral historians can take advantage of emerging and affordable publishing technologies to bring oral histories to a wider audience.
  - **Gathering Oral Histories with Radio in Mind**, with presenter Rachel Anne Goodman. Participants will learn interview techniques and approaches to recording stories and sound that lend themselves well to the narrative structures of radio. The workshop will also cover how to approach narrative storytelling for radio using existing archival audio and new material.
  - **Integrating Oral History and the Arts in the Elementary Classroom**, with presenters Shirley Taylor, Alvin Keith and Debbie Ardemendo. Workshop participants will reflect on ways they can connect oral history and theater in their classrooms. During the workshop, participants will utilize interactive hands-on activities that are used in the classrooms at C.S.154, The Harriet Tubman Learning Center; a New York City public elementary school in Harlem. In addition, multi-media documentation and perspectives from key personnel involved in the project will further engage participants in the process.
  - **Introduction to Grant Proposal Writing**, with presenter Jay Katz. In this class, workshop participants will learn the art of telling your story, creating a needs assessment and evaluation plan and strategizing to make connections with grant decision-makers. Participants will break out into small groups to review two actual proposals to put theory into practice.



Finally, the program committee received paper or panel proposals from nearly 300 people. From those submissions we have built a draft program with approximately 75 panels. The program committee will now spend the spring refining the program, including putting panels in their appropriate time slots and finding chairs and commentators for panels that need them. If you are interested in chairing or commenting on a panel, please let the program committee know. ❖

*Pictured: Denver, Colo., skyline at night.*

## Now Online: Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame Oral History Project

The Oklahoma Oral History Research Program at Oklahoma State University is proud to announce the website launch for its Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame Oral History Project. This collection of interviews, along with its companion online resource, aims to preserve the experiences and accomplishments of inductees to the Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame. These women have served as pioneers in their fields, made significant contributions to the state and publicly advocated for issues important to women. The website features a photo and short biography of all the inductees since 1982, including interviews with 28 of the notable women, with more to be added to the site in the future.

"In many respects, these women have served as 'firsts' in their field, opened doors and blazed trails," said Assistant Professor Juliana Nykolaiszyn of the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program. "From humble beginnings, most of these women overcame obstacles to pave the way for generations to come, and their stories are a reflection of that."

The website, located at [www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/owhof](http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/owhof) will serve as a platform to educate, inspire and showcase great Oklahoma women and their powerful stories. Even though not all the women are Oklahoma natives, their actions have still made a difference in the lives of others in the state.

Of the 104 inductees, 63 are still living. Notable inductees include Angie Debo, Betty Boyd, current Governor Mary Fallin, and University of Oklahoma women's head basketball coach Sherri Coale.

The Oklahoma Women's Hall of Fame Oral History Project is just one collection in the holdings of the oral his-

tory program. Formally established in 2007, the Oklahoma Oral History Research Program at the OSU Library has collected and preserved firsthand accounts from individuals who have played a part in Oklahoma's history. The program explores the lives and contributions of Oklahomans from all walks of life.

To learn more about the program call 405-744-7685, e-mail [liboh@okstate.edu](mailto:liboh@okstate.edu) or visit <http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory>. ❖

## Tool allows online searches of museum collections

Interested in what you could find at the Great Lakes Naval Museum? How about the Ethan Allen Homestead Museum in Burlington, Vt.? Or maybe the Ah Tah Thi Ki Museum on the Big Cypress Indian Reservation in Florida?

Online searches of historic collections held by small, local museums as well as the Smithsonian, the National Park Service and the U.S. Navy, among many others, are available now through a partnership between the American Association for State and Local History (AASLH) and American Heritage Publishing.

The website [www.NationalPortal.org](http://www.NationalPortal.org) is intended to help museums achieve greater visibility and give them a low-cost way to put their collections online.

Terry Davis, president and CEO of AASLH, said in a press release the partnership and its creation of the National Portal represents "a milestone in this effort to digitize these collections and make them available online."

Each institution in the National Portal has a personalized main page that allows for searches of that museum's collections as well as a national search page to search across multiple collections. ❖

## Online collection features interviews, songs from Suffolk, Wales, Ireland, Scotland

Interviews recorded between 1956 and 1977, including some with interviewees born in the 1870s, are featured in a newly available collection on the British Library's Archival Sound Recordings website.

The collection of 250 recordings was made by British oral history pioneer George Ewart Evans (1909-1988). They document late 19th and early 20th century rural life and agricultural work, mainly in Suffolk, and to a lesser extent in Wales, Ireland and Scotland. The interviews also document folk beliefs about animals, medicine and witchcraft and include folk and popular songs of the day.

The collection includes interviews with about 170 individuals, the oldest of whom, Aldeman Ling, was born in 1875. He recounts his experiences bell-ringing. George Messenger, born in 1877, talks about threshing and working on barges at Snape in Suffolk, and Susan Mullenger, born in 1878, recalled eating fried mice as a whooping cough remedy.

While much of Evans' collection documents disappearing Suffolk rural life, his interviewees also described coal mining in Wales, Zeppelin attacks on the Suffolk market town of Bungay during World War I and an outbreak of bubonic plague in Ipswich around 1910.

To find the George Ewart Evans collection easily, go to <http://sounds.bl.uk/> and click on the oral history tab. For more information, contact Rob Perks, oral history lead curator, at [Rob.Perks@bl.uk](mailto:Rob.Perks@bl.uk). ❖

## 2011 Emerging Crises Oral History Research Fund invites applications

The Oral History Association announces a grant of up to \$3,000 to undertake oral history research in situations of crisis in the United States and internationally. These funds may be applied to travel, per diem or transcription costs for research in places and situations in which a longer application time schedule may be problematic. Such crisis situations include but are not limited to wars, natural disasters, political or economic or ethnic repression or other currently emerging events of crisis proportions.

Applications should be formatted in **Microsoft Word** and sent electronically by **May 1**, to: [oha@dickinson.edu](mailto:oha@dickinson.edu).

While membership in the Oral History Association is not required, it will be appreciated if you choose to affiliate with OHA, thus supporting its ongoing efforts to enhance the use of oral history methods in academic research.

### GUIDELINES:

1. To apply for a grant, applicants should submit the following materials:
  - A one-page research proposal that addresses the importance and scope of the project. Applicants should explain the nature of the emerging crisis they are researching, provide details about the interviews planned and suggest arrangements for preserving the interviews and making them accessible for future use.
  - A research budget that demonstrates how the grant funds will be spent. Typically, funds will be spent for travel, per diem and/or transcription costs, although other reasonable expenses associated with oral history research may be considered. Equipment purchases, however, will not be allowed. A brief justification of all budget items should be included.
  - A current *curriculum vitae* should also be included.
2. The Emerging Crises Oral History Research Fund Committee will review applications and forward its recommendations to the Oral History Association, which will make the award(s).
3. The Committee will make its recommendations within **four** weeks after the application due date.

FOR ADDITIONAL INFORMATION, PLEASE CONTACT:

STEPHEN M. SLOAN, Chair  
Emerging Crises Oral History Research Fund

Oral History Association  
e-mail: [stephen\\_sloan@baylor.edu](mailto:stephen_sloan@baylor.edu)

Office: 254-710-6290 • Cell: 254-230-7605

## OHA to try electronic voting

The Oral History Association hopes to move to electronic balloting for the 2011 election. Members will receive a mailing this summer with full instructions. You will need your member ID number, which appears on this Newsletter above your address, in order to vote.



## New members appointed to Education Committee

OHA President Rina Benmayor has appointed **three new members** to the Education Committee. They are:

- **Leni Anderson**, *artist, archivist and librarian at the Columbus, Ohio, Metropolitan Library;*
- **Debbie Ardemento**, *education manager for school programs at the Apollo Theater in New York City;*
- **Allison K. Tracy**, *coordinator of the University of Nevada Oral History Program in Reno, Nevada.*

Their terms will commence at the OHA conference in Denver.

**The OHA Newsletter  
welcomes your  
contributions!**

**Contact  
[ohaeditor@aol.com](mailto:ohaeditor@aol.com)**

## Calling for volunteers! We know. You're busy. Everyone's busy...

But organizations like the Oral History Association grow and prosper when members step up to play a role in furthering the OHA's mission. Here are two opportunities to contribute to your professional association:

- **Volunteer for an OHA standing committee** like the members listed above, who have been appointed to the Education Committee. Other committees include diversity, finance, international, publications and awards. Interested? E-mail Executive Secretary Madelyn Campbell at [oha@dickinson.edu](mailto:oha@dickinson.edu).
- **Volunteer to serve as a chair or commenter** on a panel at this fall's convention in Denver. Let Troy Reeves ([treeves@library.wisc.edu](mailto:treeves@library.wisc.edu)) or Jennifer Abraham Cramer ([jabrah1@lsu.edu](mailto:jabrah1@lsu.edu)) know your areas of interest, and they may be able to match you with an appropriate panel.



## OHA election nominees announced

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

OHA members also will elect three members to serve two-year terms on the Nominating Committee. Members will vote for one person for each of the three seats.

Elections will be held this summer.

### NOMINATED FOR FIRST VICE PRESIDENT:

**Stephen Sloan**, *Baylor Institute for Oral History*

### NOMINATED FOR COUNCIL:

**Paul Ortiz**, *University of Florida*

**Daniel Kerr**, *James Madison University*

### NOMINATED FOR NOMINATING COMMITTEE POSITION ONE:

**Lois Myers**, *Baylor University*

**Karen Harper**, *independent oral historian*

### NOMINATED FOR POSITION TWO:

**Ruth Hill**, *Radcliffe Institute for Advanced Study*

**Curtis Austin**, *University of Southern Mississippi*

### NOMINATED FOR POSITION THREE:

**David Reichard**, *California State University, Monterey Bay*

**Teresa Bergen**, *independent oral historian*

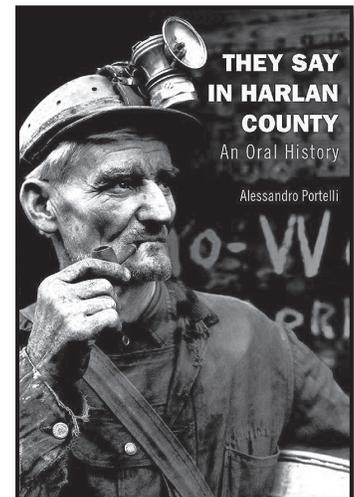
*It moves me that  
the community of  
Appalachian scholars  
has chosen to recognize  
a book by an outsider  
who now, after all this  
time, feels welcomed  
into the fold.*

## Portelli book wins Appalachian award

ALESSANDRO PORTELLI, prolific author, oral historian and American literature professor at the University of Rome, has won the Appalachian Studies Association's Weatherford Award recognizing his book *They Say in Harlan County: An Oral History*, published this year by Oxford University Press. The award honors works that "best illuminate the challenges, personalities and unique qualities of the Appalachian South."

Portelli, a popular participant at Oral History Association conferences, said in an e-mail to OHA President Rina Benmayor:

"Many of you had a hand in different ways in the making of the book; many others have been bored by my stories about it for the last 30 years. So here it is. It moves me that the community of Appalachian scholars has chosen to recognize a book by an outsider who now, after all this time, feels welcomed into the fold." ❖



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](mailto:ohaeditor@aol.com)

Submit photographs to Photo and Production Editor Alexandra Tzoumas at [alexandratz@gmail.net](mailto:alexandratz@gmail.net)

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

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Oral History Association, Inc.

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

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

## News & Notes ...

### Columbia summer institute to focus on 9/11

"Re-Thinking 9/11" is the theme of the Columbia University Oral History Research Office 2011 summer institute, June 13-24. While the application deadline has passed, you are welcome to contact Assistant Director Corie Robie at [ctrobie@columbia.edu](mailto:ctrobie@columbia.edu) to see if any slots are still available.

### Book documents Oregon leader's life

*Remembering the Power of Words: The Life of an Oregon Activist, Legislator, and Community Leader*, by Avel Louise Gordly, with Patricia A. Schechter, grew out of an oral history in which Gordly recounts her personal and professional journey from growing up black in

Portland, Ore., in the 1950s and '60s to eventually becoming the first African-American woman elected to the Oregon State Senate. The book is available from Oregon State University Press, [www.oregonstate.edu/dept/press](http://www.oregonstate.edu/dept/press).

### London conference will examine research on Nazi persecution survivors

For those who can plan ahead, the Imperial War Museum in London has scheduled its fourth international multidisciplinary conference Jan. 4-6, 2012. The conference theme is "Beyond Camps and Forced Labour" and will focus on current international research on survivors of Nazi persecution, including Jews, Gypsies, Slavonic people, Jehovah's Witnesses, homosexuals, Soviet prisoners of war, political dissidents,

members of underground movements, the disabled and others persecuted by the Nazis or their allies from 1933 to 1945 and who survived World War II.

### Study highlights threats to sound recordings

The state of sound recording preservation is the focus of a study commissioned by the Library of Congress' National Recording Preservation Board and released late last year. The study, *The State of Recorded Sound Preservation in the United States: A National Legacy at Risk in the Digital Age*, reports that major areas of the nation's recorded sound heritage have been destroyed or are publicly inaccessible. Pre-1972 recordings are particularly at risk, the study reports. Go to: [www.clir.org/pubs/reports/reports.html](http://www.clir.org/pubs/reports/reports.html).

Visit [www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org) for more information