



## Georgia State to host OHA; Cliff Kuhn appointed executive director



PHOTO: MICHELLE LACOSS

Cliff Kuhn, OHA executive director

THE HISTORY DEPARTMENT at Georgia State University (GSU) in Atlanta will become the new host of the Oral History Association's (OHA) executive office, effective Jan. 1, 2013. Cliff Kuhn, associate professor of history at GSU and a past president of OHA, will serve as the association's first full-time executive director.

These changes are the result of a national search, initiated in August 2011, when Dickinson College, OHA's institutional home since 1999, determined it would be unable to renew its contract, set to expire on Dec. 31, 2012.

Madelyn Campbell, OHA's executive secretary, announced her retirement effective the same date. OHA's contract with GSU extends through Dec. 31, 2017, with an option for renewal at the end of the five-year period.

While numerous institutions around the United States expressed strong interest in hosting OHA, none offered GSU's combination of exceptional institutional fit, considerable community support and an attractive financial package, including support for a respected leader in the field of oral history as executive director, as well as a part-time program associate and graduate student assistants.

According to OHA President Mary Larson: "The move to Georgia State represents the next stage in OHA's evolution, and we're all very excited about the new opportunities this arrangement presents for both our organization and GSU. We are particularly impressed by the level of support and enthusiasm on the part of Georgia State's administration, and we look forward to working with them in the future."

Michelle Brattain, chair of the history department, who submitted the proposal on behalf of GSU and was the university's primary point of contact during contract negotiations, added: "The prospect of hosting the OHA presented us with a terrific opportunity to enhance the department's successful public history program and to strengthen interdisciplinary collaboration among all oral history practitioners at our university and within our community. We couldn't be more pleased with the outcome."

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# From the president

By Mary Larson

AS EVERYONE IS probably aware, for almost a year now the Oral History Association has been in the process of searching for a new home institution, so it is with great pleasure that I announce that we have signed a contract for a new home institution and a new administrative leader. Beginning Jan. 1, 2013, OHA will be housed at Georgia State University, and Cliff Kuhn will serve as our executive director.

While more details appear elsewhere in this newsletter, I want to say how excited we are that this has come to pass. It has been a pleasure working with the Transition Committee, Council and the representatives from GSU. The Transition Committee, particularly, put in many, many hours of work on this process, and I want to thank Rina Benmayor and Linda Shopes (co-chairs), Roger Horowitz, Laurie Mercier and Madelyn Campbell for their service on the committee.

At this point, as we ready for the association's transition to a new home and a new administrative structure, I want to express OHA's extreme gratitude to Madelyn Campbell, who has kept everyone on task, on point, on schedule and organized for the many years that Dickinson College has been our institutional host. She has kept the books, carefully monitored fiscal reserves, negotiated hotel contracts, herded committees

and Councils and ensured that things run smoothly for OHA both as an organization and at our annual meetings. We owe her much for her years of service, and Dickinson College, as well, for their long-time support. Madelyn will be officially retiring at the end of the year, as our location changes and we bring on an executive director, but she will be consulting with and advising the OHA executive office staff throughout our first year of transition, so she will not be far away. When you see Madelyn at this year's annual meeting, please express your thanks and be sure to tell her how much she means to the organization.

I look forward to seeing everyone in Cleveland and exchanging information, news and research. Until then, I wish everyone a wonderful summer and early fall! ❖



OHA president, Mary Larson

## Proposed changes to the Oral History Association Constitution

### OFFICERS AND GOVERNMENT

6. The officers of the Association shall be president, a vice-president/president-elect, a first vice-president, and an executive secretary director. The first vice-president shall be elected by mail ballot for a term of one year and shall serve until the election of his or her successor is announced at the annual meeting of the Association immediately following the election. The person elected as first vice-president shall thereby be vice-president/president-elect the following year and president the third year. The executive secretary director shall be the chief operating officer of the Association and serves at the pleasure of the Council....

### MEETINGS

13. The Association shall hold an annual meeting at such time and place as the Council shall determine, and special meetings may be called by the Council. Notice of each meeting of the Association shall be mailed sent by the executive secretary director at least thirty days before the date of the meeting....

14. The Council shall meet in conjunction with the annual meeting of the Association and shall hold such other meetings as it may determine. Special meetings of the Council for any purpose shall be called by the executive secretary director on the written request of the president or of three members of the council....

### RECORDS

15. The minute-books, correspondence, and other records of the Association and its committees shall be preserved by the officers and chairpersons of committees and shall be promptly turned over by them to the executive secretary director when their terms expire....

### AMENDMENTS

17. The Council is authorized and directed to prepare, adopt, or amend such bylaws as may be desirable to regulate the administrative practices of the Association. An up-to-date copy of these bylaws shall be available to any member upon request to the executive secretary director....

18. Amendments to this constitution must be proposed in writing by at least ten members and filed with the executive secretary director. Copies of the proposed amendments shall be mailed sent by the executive secretary director to all members at least thirty days in advance of the meeting at which they are to be considered....

### ELECTIONS

19. The names of all candidates for Council, and nominating committee shall be placed on the annual mail ballot. The annual ballot shall be mailed sent to the full voting membership of the Association at least six weeks before the annual meeting.... The votes shall be counted and checked in such a manner as the nominating committee shall prescribe and shall be sealed in a box and deposited with the executive secretary director for at least one year....

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# Belfast Project researchers lose court battle

By John A. Neuenschwander

SINCE THE FIRST subpoenas were served on Boston College by the U.S. Attorney's Office in May 2011 for interviews conducted by the Belfast Project, many oral historians have been carefully monitoring the evolving legal proceedings. The central issue here, whether pledges of confidentiality can be overridden by a subpoena issued by a governmental entity seeking information in a criminal proceeding is obviously of importance to oral historians who offer such restrictions to encourage interviewees to be frank and open. Given the complexity of the litigation, it is quite easy to be confused about who the parties are and what has been decided.

The goal of this article is to briefly summarize the two court rulings that have been handed down thus far.

THE FIRST LEGAL challenge was filed by Boston College in 2011 to quash the subpoenas issued by the U.S. Attorney's Office. The interviews being sought were recorded from 2001 to 2006 with former members of the Irish Republican Army and other paramilitary groups who were participants in the "Troubles" in Northern Ireland beginning in 1969. The promise made to all interviewees was that their interviews would remain confidential until their death. A book by the director of the Belfast Project and a public admission by one of the IRA interviewees about an unsolved murder apparently prompted the Police Service of Northern Ireland to seek access to some of the interviews collected by the Belfast Project.

Pursuant to a Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty, the U.S. government at the request of the United Kingdom initially served Boston College with subpoenas for the interviews of Dolours Price and Brendan Hughes. The interviews with the Hughes were promptly turned over because he had died. In August

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[THE RESEARCHERS] MAINTAINED THAT IF THE INTERVIEWS WERE TURNED OVER THEIR LIVES MIGHT BE AT RISK AS WELL AS THOSE OF SOME OF THE INTERVIEWEES.

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2011, additional subpoenas were served seeking "any and all interviews containing information about the abduction and death of Mrs. Jean McConville."

Boston College moved to quash the subpoenas citing the pledge of confidentiality that had been given to all interviewees and the chilling effect that compelled disclosure would have on future research. They emphasized that if the continued flow of information to both journalists and scholars about controversial

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## Georgia State; Cliff Kuhn

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The appointment of Kuhn, who holds a doctorate in history from the University of North Carolina, as executive director signals OHA's further maturation as an organization. It will open up opportunities to develop the association's reach nationally and internationally and to expand programming in ways that advance the field. Among his first duties will be the initiation of a strategic planning process to guide the association over the next five years.

According to Kuhn: "While oral history practice has never been more extensive, much of this work has largely bypassed the national professional organization in the field. With the new structure, the OHA has the potential to become the go-to place for oral history in the United States, the primary portal for anyone interested in oral history. When our colleagues at the American Folklore Society (AFS) and the National Council for Public History (NCPH) upgraded their executive offices, those organizations experienced tremendous growth. We anticipate a similar increase in impact and visibility with the OHA's new structure. I look forward to input from OHA members and others as we move forward into this new exciting phase in the history of the organization and of the field."

Attendees at OHA's forthcoming annual meeting will have the opportunity to meet Kuhn and discuss OHA's future at a special session scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 13, from 1:15 to 2:45 pm. OHA members may also contact him directly at [ckuhn@gsu.edu](mailto:ckuhn@gsu.edu).

Kuhn, who has been a member of the GSU faculty since 1988, has a long affiliation with OHA and oral history. In addition to serving as OHA president in 2000-2001, he has been a member of the OHA Council and Nominating Committee, chaired the 2010 annual meeting Local Arrangements Committee, co-chaired the 1998 Program Committee and chaired the New Media and Digital Technology Task Force. Among his many publications are *Living Atlanta: An Oral History of the City, 1914-1948*, with Harlon E. Joye and E. Bernard West (1990), and *Contesting the New South Order: The 1914-1915 Strike at Atlanta's Fulton Mills* (2001).

He has been a leader in the Atlanta public history community, with involvement in numerous highly acclaimed, award-winning media projects. He has served as a consultant to the National Center for Civil and Human Rights and as co-convenor of the Coalition to Remember the 1906 Atlanta Race Riot. In recognition of this and other work, in 2008 he received the Georgia Governor's Award in the Humanities.

An ad hoc Transition Committee co-chaired by OHA's immediate past president Rina Benmayor and past president Linda Shopes led the search for a new institutional home and executive director, with committee members Laurie Mercier, also a past president of the association, and Roger Horowitz, chair of OHA's Finance Committee. Madelyn Campbell served on the committee ex officio. Their work was facilitated early on by consultations with John Dichtl, executive director of NCPH, and Timothy Lloyd, executive director of AFS. ❖

## Belfast Project

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PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/LAUREN BIGLEY



Boston College

issues was constricted, society in general would be harmed by such restrictions upon free speech. In December 2011, the federal district court not only refused to quash the subpoena for the Price interview but after an *in camera* inspection of all of the transcripts also ordered Boston College to turn over the interviews from seven other participants in the Belfast Project, *In re Request from U.K.*, 831 F. Supp. 2d 435 (D. Mass. 2011).

This decision triggered two separate appeals. The first appeal was filed by Ed Moloney and Anthony McIntyre, the director and chief interviewer for the Belfast Project, and is the basis for the ruling by the First Circuit Court of Appeals on July 6, 2012. The second appeal filed by Boston College addresses the ruling by the district court that BC must release seven additional interviews. The college chose not to appeal the district court's ruling regarding the Price interviews based on her public admissions regarding past criminal activities during the "Troubles."

The appeal filed by Moloney and McIntyre grew out of the decision by the district court. On two occasions they sought to intervene separately in the lawsuit to quash the subpoenas but on both occasions were not allowed to proceed. Both of these attempts appear to have been grounded in their disagreement with Boston College over the administration of the confidentiality provisions and the legal strategy employed by BC to defend against the subpoenas. In their appeal to the First Circuit Court of Appeals they presented three main causes of action: 1) the Mutual Legal Assistance Treaty allowed private interests to intervene to prevent evidence from being released, 2) the district court abused its discretion under the MLAT, 3) the subpoenas should be quashed because they impinged on the First Amendment rights of the researchers.

In a lengthy opinion, *In re request for United Kingdom to the Treaty Between Government of the U.S. and Government of United Kingdom of Mutual Assistance in the Criminal Matters in the Matter of Dolours Price*, a three judge panel for the First

Circuit rejected all three causes of actions brought by the researchers. The most important rejection in this case and for the pending appeal by Boston College was the court's response to the researchers' constitutional challenge. Under the First Amendment, Moloney and McIntyre claimed that they had a constitutionally protected freedom "...to impart historically important information for the benefit of the American public without the threat of adverse government reaction." They buttressed this claim by arguing that they had an academic research privilege that was akin to a reporter's privilege. They also maintained that if the interviews were turned over their lives might be at risk as well as those of some of the interviewees.

To assess this claim of privilege, the First Circuit relied heavily on the precedent established by the U.S. Supreme Court in *Branzburg v. Hayes*, 408 U.S. 665 (1972). In *Branzburg* a reporter refused to testify before a grand jury about information he had received from confidential sources claiming that under the First Amendment he had a privilege not to do so. The Supreme Court, however, refused to recognize such a privilege. Instead, the court stressed that whether confidentiality was offered to shield the perpetrators of crimes or innocent informants, "effective law enforcement aimed at providing security for the person and property of the individual is a fundamental function of the government."

Based on this precedent, the First Circuit ruled that "the choice to investigate criminal activity belongs to the government and is not subject to veto by academic researchers." The court also emphasized that the treaty obligation to assist another nation in a criminal investigation made the government's interest here even stronger than it had been in *Branzburg*.

The court also noted that this litigation might have been avoided had Boston College and the researchers been on the same page regarding the limits of confidentiality. According to the evidence presented to the court, Ed Moloney had been directed by BC to place a provision in each release agreement that the pledge of confidentiality would be protected "to the extent American law allows." This was not done and Anthony McIntyre indicated had he known that the pledge of confidentiality was not ironclad, he would not have undertaken the interviews with former IRA members.

Whether this decision is the final word is still to be determined. The two researchers have several appeal options. They could seek a review of this ruling by the full bench of judges on the First Circuit. They could also file a petition for certiorari with the U.S. Supreme Court. Although the Supreme Court takes very few cases each year, resolving disagreements among the Circuit Courts of Appeal is often an important criterion for acceptance. As the First Circuit noted, the issue of whether *Branzburg* precludes the creation of a reporter's privilege under any circumstance has produced a number of conflicting decisions. Also, the appeal filed by Boston College regarding additional interviews that the district court ordered it to turn over is still pending before another panel of judges from the First Circuit. ❖

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** John A. Neuenschwander is a past president of OHA, an attorney and municipal judge, a retired history professor and author of *A Guide to Oral History and the Law* (Oxford University Press, 2010).

# Tibet Oral History Project documents impact of Chinese invasion, occupation

By Marcella Adamski, Executive Director

**I** HAVE BEEN waiting my whole life to tell what happened in Tibet," said a relieved 82-year-old Sonam Gogyal at the end of his videotaped interview with the Tibet Oral History Project (TOHP). As one of the dwindling number of elderly Tibetan refugees, he fulfilled a longing to describe how peaceful life in his Himalayan homeland was forever shattered by the 1949 Chinese invasion and by the subsequent occupation still oppressing Tibetans today. During the Chinese Communist takeover 1.2 million Tibetans were killed, 6,000 monasteries destroyed and more than 120,000 people were forced to flee Tibet. These refugees, now 70, 80 and 90 years of age, are the elders interviewed by the Tibet Oral History Project.

TOHP was initiated in response to a request by His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama. While conducting an investigation about human rights abuses of Tibetan children under Chinese occupation, Marcella Adamski met with the Dalai Lama and asked what else could be done to help the people of Tibet.

His Holiness urged that the Tibetan elders living in exile be interviewed before they died and their stories were lost forever. He urged that their eyewitness accounts be made available on the Internet for the world to understand the plight of the Tibetan people. He felt that these testimonies, if translated, would educate the next generation of Chinese who have no accurate information about Tibetan history because of their government's control of the media.

To fulfill this request by Tibet's spiritual leader and Nobel Peace Prize recipient, TOHP was founded in 2003 by Adamski as a nonprofit organization. It is dedicated to documenting the life stories of Tibet's exiled elderly generation and to disseminating their oral histories through print, broadcast media and the Internet.

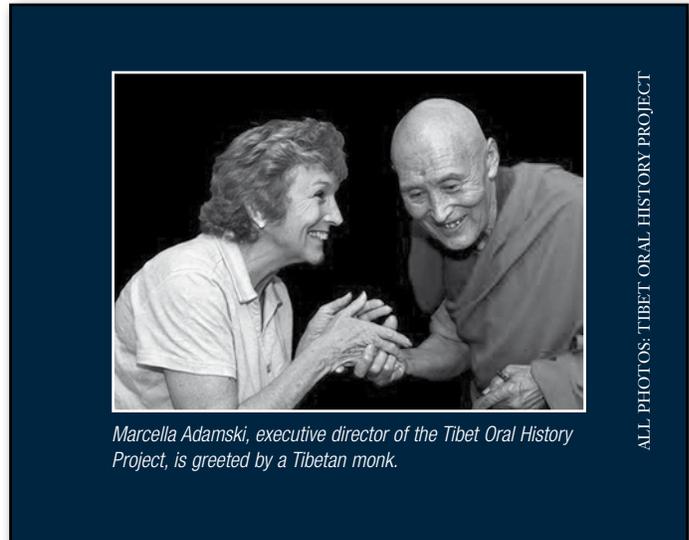
## Tibetan history

To appreciate the catastrophic impact of the Chinese invasion, the history of the Tibetan people must first be understood. For centuries, Tibet, a high altitude country located on the vast Himalayan plateau between China and India, remained isolated from the rest of the world. The widely dispersed population, in an area the size of Western Europe, included farmers, nomads, monks, traders, artisans and scholars. Tibet had its own national flag, its own currency, its own distinct culture and religion and its own government.

In 1949, following the foundation of the Chinese Communist state, the People's Liberation Army invaded Tibet and soon overpowered its poorly equipped army and guerrilla resistance. In March 1959, Tibetans rose up against the Chinese occupiers but were defeated. The Tibetan leader, His Holiness the XIV Dalai Lama, was forced to escape to India. More than 80,000 fleeing Tibetans followed him into exile enduring perilous journeys over the Himalayas.

## Focus of the oral histories

To date, TOHP has videotaped 170 oral histories of this last generation to have lived in a free Tibet. The interviews offer fascinating recollections of early life in Tibet as far back as 80 years ago with descriptions of ancient customs and religious traditions. They provide eyewitness accounts of the devastating impact of the invasion on ordinary people and the dismantling of an age old way of life during the occupation that followed.



Marcella Adamski, executive director of the Tibet Oral History Project, is greeted by a Tibetan monk.

The narrators also reveal how unimaginable it was for Tibetans, who treasure their Buddhist religion, to watch revered lamas, ancient texts and beloved monasteries targeted for destruction. The elders, now in exile, describe the challenge of striving to follow their Buddhist ideals of compassion and non-violence, exemplified by the Dalai Lama, in the face of relentless Chinese control threatening cultural genocide and environmental destruction.

## The urgent need of the effort

Creating such an oral history project seemed daunting but more critical than ever. Not only was time running out to interview these elderly survivors, but 60 years of Chinese occupation was eradicating the language, culture and spiritual practices of the Tibetan people.

The tyrannical rule has become so unbearable that at least 41 Tibetans have set themselves on fire since 2009 and 29 have died to bring world attention to the total lack of religious and political freedom in their country. The Tibetan elders, interviewed in May 2012, grieved over these self-sacrifices but understood the desperation behind them. They also recognized the importance of their stories to help preserve the memory of Tibet's language, cultural traditions and spiritual values embodied in their treasured Buddhist religion.

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# Tibet Oral History Project

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## Conducting the interviews

It took four years of volunteer time researching, planning and fundraising to conduct the first set of interviews. In the first and subsequent two missions, the team travelled to Tibetan settlements in India where large numbers of Tibetan elders reside in order to maximize the number of interviews that could be done in a limited amount of time. For each mission, the project's outreach director located and pre-interviewed 60 to 80 elders who wished to participate. Although many claimed they had little knowledge, they felt it was important to preserve their memories of Tibet for generations to come and were touched by the request of the Dalai Lama that they record their stories.

TOHP teams that recorded the elders' interviews were comprised of an experienced interviewer, translator and videographer. The American and Tibetan team members had a basic understanding of Tibetan history, which improved markedly as more elders were interviewed in each new mission. Interviews lasted approximately two to three hours per person with every question and answer requiring translation between English and Tibetan. Two to three oral histories were recorded each day over a 10- to 12-day period. Interviews were conducted in the elders' tiny dwellings, in monasteries, community centers, hotel rooms and gardens. The challenge was to find comfortable settings for the elders that were quiet enough for recording and light enough for videotaping.

A list of questions, researched and reviewed ahead of time, provided a general outline of topics to be covered. Release forms were signed prior to videotaping. If participants expressed any concern about endangering relatives still living in Tibet by giving the interview, they chose a pseudonym or had their image blurred. The video-taped recordings were uploaded onto hard drives and made into DVDs, which were later translated into English and transcribed. Elders were all given copies of their interviews to share with their families and to be assured that their stories were not lost but were going to be made available for generations to come.

## Content of the interviews

The interviews first explored childhood memories of family life, livelihoods as farmers, traders, herders, housewives and civil servants. Respondents gave detailed accounts of the dynamics of family life and religious traditions. Descriptions of marriage customs, religious festivals, trade fairs, pilgrimages, sky burials and horse races provided a glimpse into centuries old customs and traditions. They recalled the hardships as well as the joys of their life tilling the fields, herding yaks, caring for large families, and studying as young monks in the local monasteries. Life was not always easy but the land was pristine, food was plentiful, the water pure and longevity was common.

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*Pasang Dolkar, 71, was forced to flee from Tibet to Bhutan in 1959 with her husband, whose family were considered rebels for opposing the Chinese. "The story of my life will tell readers the true situation of my country then and now. How peacefully and happily we Tibetans used to live in our own country until the Chinese' forceful invasion."*



*Tashi, who spent his boyhood as a nomad in Tibet, was forced to flee from the Chinese in 1959. Born in 1912, Tashi was interviewed in 2007 in India.*

# Project documents boom-and-bust energy development in Wyoming

By Leslie Waggener, Archivist, University of Wyoming American Heritage Center

ENERGY HAS ALWAYS been a chief concern in the United States. The mere threat of a shortage has often been enough to spur a change in national government policy. As one of the nation's major energy resource producers, Wyoming has been deeply affected by the twists and turns in the energy market. The result for a state that depends so heavily on its natural resources is a continuing theme of economic boom and bust.

In 2010, the University of Wyoming's American Heritage Center (AHC) began an oral history program to explore the circumstances and effects of the state's boom-and-bust traditions and the effects of energy development on Wyoming's mostly rural communities. The first project within this oral history program, which was funded by the Wyoming Humanities Council, the UW School of Energy Resources and the AHC, was an exploration of a natural gas boom in Sublette County, a rural ranching and tourism locale in western Wyoming. The county experienced an intense boom in the early 2000s with a corresponding downturn in the 2008 economic recession.

Most of the county's approximately 4,900 square miles is public land, administered by the Bureau of Land Management (BLM) and the U.S. Forest Service. The county's topography ranges from sagebrush steppe to high mountains with a natural beauty that has long made it a favorite tourist destination. Geographically isolated from railroads and population centers, the county has retained a frontier culture far longer than many other areas of Wyoming and the West and remained one of the least densely populated areas in the state until the start of the energy boom around 2000. The county contains three incorporated towns (Big Piney, Marbleton and Pinedale) along with several smaller community centers.

Sublette County has long been known as a vast source of oil and gas; however, the tight sand formations have frustrated more than a few energy companies since the 1920s. Success did not occur until 1995 when McMurry Oil Company employed a hydraulic fracturing process that effectively unlocked the natural gas resources. Hydraulic fracturing refers to the procedure of creating fractures in rocks and rock formations by injecting a mixture of sand and water into the cracks to force underground cracks to open further. The larger fissures allow more oil and gas to flow out of the formation and into the well bore, from where it can be extracted.

The first section of the county to be developed became known as Jonah Field and was located on BLM land about 32 miles south of Pinedale; the field has a productive area of 21,000 acres. However, the development of a nearby even larger gas field beginning around June 2000, the Pinedale Anticline, also located on BLM land and a stone's throw from Pinedale's southern edge, led to significant impacts as natural gas prices rose and this resource was rushed to be developed.

What were the impacts socially, economically and environmentally on Sublette County? How did residents feel about the impacts? A key purpose of the project was to examine questions like these and to provide raw perspectives for Wyoming residents, officials and scholars to analyze the reactions and adjustments that occur in the wake of energy development.

In 2010, after a summer-long process of background research and contacting potential interviewees, three AHC archivists and a Wyoming historian conducted more than 40 audio oral history interviews with those involved in, and affected by, the activities related to development and extraction of Sublette County's natural gas resources. Interviewees, who were also photographed, included those most directly affected by the energy boom. Following the interviews were two panel discussions in spring 2011—one at the University of Wyoming and another in Sublette County, to allow com-



The local impact of natural gas extraction from Jonah Field, in western Wyoming's Sublette County, is the focus of a University of Wyoming oral history project examining the boom-and-bust cycles of energy development.

munity members and scholars to reflect on the interviews' perspectives in detail.

Interview excerpts from two Sublette County residents who were part of the panel discussions provide a sampling of the information we gathered. An interview with Leslie Rozier, Pinedale native and longtime county nurse practitioner, pointed up ambivalence toward revenue generated by energy development: "For me, it's bittersweet because I can sit here in this new gorgeous clinic. I have every tool...I don't have to send that patient to the hospital [77 miles away]. I've got a full lab...I have a helicopter on this beautiful helipad in 45 minutes. My pocket is full of change. But I really cry because we don't have our sweet little quiet town."

Rozier is also active among a group of county residents who fear the community's decline in air quality. Since 2005, when gas development reached its peak, Sublette County has become notorious for ozone levels exceeding that of major cities such as Los Angeles. "My father has lived here all his life—he's 83...and we know that our air quality has changed in his lifetime," said Rozier. "We do not have what we used to call the... 'severe blue clear day.' Is that coming from outside the area, or is it coming from Sublette County? And that's been a question that we've all asked as concerned citizens is, 'Where has that change in the quality of our air come from?'"

A frequent complaint of county residents is that they no longer recognize other customers in the community's main grocery store, Ridley's. Rozier noted, "My parents are, like I said, in their 80s, and they just are very sad that...when they go to the grocery store anymore, they don't know anybody."

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ALL PHOTOS: UNIVERSITY OF WYOMING AMERICAN HERITAGE CENTER

# Tibet Oral History Project

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The elders were asked about Tibetan government taxes, their support of monasteries and their work as field hands for landowners. The Chinese cited these conditions as reasons to justify their liberation of Tibet. The respondents acknowledged that although their society was not perfect, they did not feel any need to be liberated. They were horrified when Chinese soldiers began firing on nomad gatherings, bombing monasteries in the middle of the night and imprisoning village leaders without cause.

Families fled their villages, hiding in the mountains for years foraging like animals until finally captured by the Chinese. Landowners, lamas and the families of resistance leaders were the first to be targeted, captured, imprisoned, tortured and killed. Many ordinary people were subjected to gruesome and humiliating public “struggle sessions” carried out by other Tibetans who were terrorized into beating their neighbors. Eyewitness accounts were given of starvation in prisons and labor camps, forced sterilization of entire villages and of children being abducted and sent to China for education.

Former resistance fighters gave detailed accounts of heroic attempts to ward off the invasion of the Chinese military. Monks, whose monasteries had been destroyed, recounted how they asked to be excused from their vows to defend their revered lamas and to prevent the destruction of treasured ancient Buddhist texts. Many elders described vivid memories of how the Chinese began to attack the capital of Lhasa. They were among the masses of people that surrounded the Norbulinka Palace to protect the Dalai Lama from being captured by the Chinese. They wept recalling their relief to learn His Holiness had escaped the invading forces.

In the final phase of the interviews, the elderly described how they fled in massive numbers or small family groups, often pursued by Chinese soldiers, as they made their way, children on their backs, over the perilous mountain passes. They expressed deep gratitude that they were able to have the presence of their spiritual leader, the Dalai Lama, in India with them. This generation of Tibetans concluded by describing a wide range of reactions about the Chinese but most salient of all was their attitude to maintain a non-violent attitude and political commitment to refrain from violence in seeking freedom for Tibet through negotiations rather than force.

## **Accomplishments and plans**

TOHP has thus far videotaped 170 oral histories of Tibetan elders living in exile. Interviews were conducted in three large Tibetan settlements in India: Bylakuppe in 2007 (64 interviews), Mundgod in 2009 (53 interviews) and Dharamsala in 2012 (50 interviews). Three initial interviews were conducted in California in 2006.

The Tibet Oral History Project is the first, and currently the only, oral history collection to provide complete transcripts of interviews with Tibetan elders translated into English and made accessible worldwide through the Internet. The first 67 interviews are now posted on the project’s website:

**[www.tibetoralhistory.org](http://www.tibetoralhistory.org)**. TOHP also provides DVDs of the interviews, and video edits from actual interviews are posted on international websites as well as on the project’s own site.

The U.S. Library of Congress requested to serve as the archive for TOHP’s current and future oral history collections of transcripts and DVD interviews because they provide extraordinary documentation of the language, culture and history of Tibet.

The first collection of 67 interviews conducted in Bylakuppe, was bound into four volumes and along with the DVDs, was delivered to the Library of Tibetan Works and Archives in Dharamsala in May 2012. This is the only collection of oral history transcripts available in the library that have been translated into English and that are also available on DVDs. TOHP’s collection has been sent to universities such as Stanford and the University of California Berkeley as well as other libraries and Tibetan community centers around the world.

Radio Free Asia’s Tibetan Service is broadcasting TOHP’s interviews on its weekly radio program “Life in Exile.” The producer reports that Tibetans living in India, Nepal, China and Tibet are pleased to hear the elders’ oral histories in a variety of dialects familiar to them.

A 30-minute film, “With My Own Eyes,” which includes video clips from the interviews, provides a moving description of the period of Tibetan history lived by the elders. In addition to copies of the film with English subtitles, a new version with Chinese subtitles is being prepared for distribution to help educate a younger generation of Chinese about what happened in Tibet.

His Holiness the Dalai Lama on a visit to Stanford University in October 2009 met with TOHP’s founder, Marcella Adamski, and expressed deep appreciation for the work of the Tibet Oral History Project. The Tibet Oral History Project is deeply honored to have the privilege of meeting these extraordinary elders and will strive to ensure that their stories inform and inspire generations to come. TOHP will continue to record their oral histories while these elders are still with us. Perhaps a book will be published or a documentary film made.

## **How the link to Tibetan refugees evolved**

In addition to being in private practice as a psychologist, Marcella Adamski was the director of Survivors International, an organization that treated torture survivors from around the world who had suffered human rights abuses. Because of this expertise, the Tibet Justice Center, a legal organization working on Tibetan issues, asked if she would help interview recently escaped Tibetan women living in Dharamsala, India, in 1998. They planned to write a shadow report for the United Nations Committee to Eliminate Discrimination Against Women. China had signed on to this document and the aim of the investigation was to identify areas where China was not upholding its statutes.

A year later, the Tibet Justice Center asked Adamski to return to Dharamsala and interview 64 recently escaped Tibetan children so the center could write a shadow report for the U.N. Committee on the Rights of the Child. The aim was to confront the Chinese delegation to that committee about conditions for Tibetan children under Chinese rule.

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# Oral historians to sing, shout, say it out loud in Cleveland

By Elinor Mazé



ON OCT. 10, community activists, public historians, students, filmmakers, musicians, dancers, scholars, teachers, archivists and many others will come together in Cleveland, Ohio, at the 46th annual meeting of the Oral History Association to explore how oral history preserves and presents disparate voices, in many forms and through many media, to deepen our historical record and expand our understanding of ourselves and our world.

Over the course of the five-day conference, presentations in almost 70 sessions will showcase the best of recent work to record, archive, analyze and share oral history. Conference-goers will have opportunities in every session to engage with presenters and each other in lively discussions, forming new bonds with colleagues, discovering new resources, and making creative new connections with ideas, processes and technology. Conference planners have worked to shape the session schedule so that both specialized and eclectic interests can be served by selecting from offerings in concurrent sessions.

In response to the conference theme, “Sing It Out, Shout It Out, Say It Out Loud: Giving Voice through Oral History,” a significant number of presentations will focus on the role of performing arts in collecting and presenting oral history. Another prominent thread will be activism and struggles for social justice, with many sessions organized to address the many ways oral history gives voice to diverse populations and movements.

Educators in all levels of instruction will find a rich offering of presentations on both oral history pedagogy and the role of oral history in service learning and student engagement with communities. Sessions showcasing technology and new techniques for digital preservation and presentation will foster discussions of both the practical and theoretical implications of rapid, ongoing technological change.

Workshops have always played an important role in OHA meetings, and a variety of learning opportunities will be offered in Cleveland.



A view of Cleveland's skyline.

PHOTO: SHUTTERSTOCK/RUDY BALASKO

Among the workshops offered on Wednesday and Saturday of the conference will be sessions on recording and using oral history interviews for documentary films, tools and practices for digital preservation, digital presentation technology, and oral history methods for middle, secondary and higher education. In addition, there will be a workshop introducing basic oral history practice, and another on legal aspects of oral history.

A number of special events will entertain, inform and inspire as well. Documentary filmmaker Molly Merryman will start off on Wednesday evening with a showing of *Country Crush*, a film based on oral history interviews with farm machinery demolition derby enthusiasts. Keynote speaker for the conference's Friday luncheon will be nationally recognized NPR journalist and author Neenah Ellis, who will share her rich experience as a journalist and an oral historian, gathering and presenting a wide variety of voices telling stories of remembered lives. After the Saturday evening awards banquet, Sam Stephenson, creator of the Jazz Loft Project, will showcase his pioneering work to document, preserve and present the rich trove of recordings and photographs created by New York photographer W. Eugene Smith.

The career of the late Harold Williams, a leader in the Cleveland-area civil rights movement, will be

celebrated by family and colleagues in Thursday's plenary session, and on Friday, music archivists working across a spectrum of musical genres, from Pete Seeger to the Grateful Dead to Aaron Copeland, will share their experiences and insights. On Friday night, a theater production, *May 4th Voices*, will be performed by a cast of Kent State University students and community members. The script, based on the ongoing May 4th Oral History Project, tells the human story of the tragic events of May 4, 1970, on the Kent State campus.

Informal social networking is always an important part of OHA conferences, and several receptions and other opportunities for casual enjoyment and talk are planned. At the presidential reception on Thursday evening, conference-goers will be treated to the sounds of the renowned Presidential String Band, with OHA President Mary Larson and three other well-known oral historians joined by special guests. And on Saturday evening, the Ohio-based Spiritual Gifts Gospel Choir will perform as part of the reception hosted by the OHA Committee on Diversity.

As at previous meetings, the Cleveland conference will offer a community showcase to feature regional projects from around the Great Lakes, south through Ohio, and from around Cleveland.

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## Cleveland Annual Meeting

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*Neenah Ellis, NPR journalist and author, is the Friday luncheon keynote speaker.*

Each year, the Oral History Association recognizes a number of oral history projects and publications with special awards. Awards include those for the best article, book, work in a non-print format and post-secondary teaching, as well as the Elizabeth B. Mason Project Award and the Emerging Crises Research Grant. In addition, the Vox Populi Award will honor outstanding achievement in collecting and using oral histories of individuals and organizations whose work has contributed to change for a better world. The awards will be formally presented at the Saturday evening banquet.

The OHA conference will take place in the Cleveland Marriott at Key Center, in the heart of downtown Cleveland. This convenient location

puts much of the rich cultural and historical heritage of Cleveland within easy walking distance. Conference attendees will be able to set out on their own to explore the diversity of Cleveland's urban areas, neighborhoods, and historical and cultural attractions. In addition, the conference will offer a Friday cruise of the Cuyahoga River, guided and narrated by a local riverboat captain, concluding with a tour of the city's famous West Side Market.

Online registration for the conference is available through the OHA website at <http://www.oralhistory.org/>. Further information about the conference, including the complete schedule of sessions and events and information about travel and accommodations, is also available on the website. ❖

## Tibet Oral History Project

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During that human rights investigation in 1999, Adamski attended a meeting with His Holiness the Dalai Lama and asked him what else could be done to help the Tibetan people. He told her that the elders should be interviewed before they died and their stories were lost forever, and Adamski vowed to try to find a way to do so. Hence, the Tibet Oral History Project was developed step by step, meeting by meeting, donation by donation over a four year period. Then, she said, "I decided to take a leap, travel to a large Tibetan settlement and just do it."

To Adamski, the project has been "a labor of love as well as an incredible privilege to interview these remarkable, courageous and loving Tibetan elders."

### Facing translation challenges

The Tibet Oral History Project's most adept translator, Tenzin Yangchen, who is also project's Outreach Director, has faced challenges finding other highly skilled interpreters. It is difficult to find people with the necessary qualifications who are available because they are usually working or teaching. Another difficulty is that they may understand Tibetan but not the various dialects or the old Tibetan words because the translators often grew up in India as refugees.

To add to the challenge, even if they do understand the Tibetan, their English language skills may be limited. The project has tried to rectify this issue by having Tenzin Yangchen, who speaks several dialects and is proficient in English, review every interview word by word and provide an exact translation in the transcripts of what the elder said even when the interpreter did not convey it accurately during the interview. At times, some of the follow-up questions seem incongruous because the elders' statements were literally "lost in translation." ❖

## A labor intensive project

The Tibet Oral History Project represents intensive work by several interview teams. The project's May 2012 mission to conduct interviews in India included four people who located and pre-interviewed 70 elders. Collectively, the following people produced a total of 50 interviews.

### INTERVIEW TEAM 1

**Interviewer:** Marcella Adamski, Ph.D., Founder and Executive Director, Tibet Oral History Project

**Interpreter:** Tenzin Yangchen, Outreach Director, Tibet Oral History Project

**Videographer:** Pema Tashi

### INTERVIEW TEAM 2

**Interviewer:** Rebecca Novick, Writer and Executive Producer of The Tibet Connection radio program

**Interpreter:** Thupten Kelsang Dakpa, Founder, Tibetan Art Collective

**Videographer:** Ronald Novick.

Project Administrator, Jennifer O'Boyle, coordinated all written documentation; managed and edited the video footage.

Liaison to Tibetan Government, Pema Delek, arranged meetings with Tibetan government officials for TOHP representatives.

Project photographer, Martin Newman, photographed all elders being interviewed for future publications and archival purposes.

Local Coordinator, Pasang Tsewang

## In memoriam: Past OHA president Samuel B. Hand

SAMUEL B. HAND, a New York City native who became an award-winning expert on the history of Vermont, died June 29 in Burlington, Vt. Hand, who served as Oral History Association president in 1986, was 80 and suffered from a form of Parkinson's disease.

The New Yorker earned a bachelor's degree from New York University in 1953 and served in the U.S. Army in Korea. He earned a doctorate in history from Syracuse University in 1960 and the following year joined the faculty at the University of Vermont, where he taught until he retired in 1994.

In addition to his service to OHA, Hand was president of the Vermont Historical Society and received numerous awards for his teaching and research on Vermont history. He was particularly noted for his work on 19th and 20th century Vermont politics.

Vermont colleagues and former students praised him for advocating—and teaching—rigorous historical inquiry and for his unwillingness to accept unquestioningly popular assumptions about the past.

Hand is survived by his wife, Harriet, three daughters and two grandchildren.

### EDITOR'S NOTE:

OHA members who remember Sam Hand are urged to share their reflections, which will be published in the next OHA Newsletter. Please email them to [ohaeditor@aol.com](mailto:ohaeditor@aol.com), no later than Nov. 1.

## Energy development in Wyoming

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Cally McKee is a senior regulatory coordinator with Ultra Petroleum, a company with a number of gas leases in the Pinedale Anticline. She is also a longtime Pinedale resident, arriving in the town with her family when she was starting fourth grade, long before the gas boom. Her excitement at changes in the town is evident in her interview. A sentiment of a lost ethos is not part of her perspective. She is a member of the Pinedale Fine Arts Council board, which, at the time of the interview, was organizing its yearly gala.

McKee said, "...one of the things that Jo Crandall, who started the Fine Arts Council...keeps coming to me and saying is, 'How do we get all the oil and gas people...involved in what's going on, coming to the performances and stuff?' Going to the [San Jose] Taiko [concert] the other night...I saw people there and I was like, 'Oh, what are they doing here? I wouldn't have picked them for a Pinedale Fine Arts performance.' They're certainly starting to become more and more of a part of the community. But I still hear from people, 'I go in the grocery store and I just don't know anybody in there anymore.' And I say to people, 'So what? Well, stop and introduce yourself.'"

Through the interviews, we found that Sublette County and its leaders demonstrated familiarity with the boom cycle, but, just like in previous Wyoming booms, the county felt its way through the dark in the boom's initial stages and into its escalation, even though towns in their region had experienced their own booms. As in the past, the number of natural gas workers expected to arrive was hazy. Industry officials did not seem to have the answer; nor did the leaseholder, BLM. Thus, Sublette County had few clues. The State of Wyoming, although knowledgeable of boom effects, appeared to leave it up to Sublette County to handle the majority of the issues, although encouraging grass-roots efforts.

Overall, we found that the tension between the thirst for mineral development revenue and the need to look after community well-being and the natural environment still exists in Wyoming and probably will until the state's economy diversifies. Sublette County native Ward Wise summed up a common philosophy we found in the interviews: "We're holding our cowboy hats in one hand and our fist full of dollars in the other. We'll be asking ourselves, 'Were we better off?'"



*The Aquatic Center in the western Wyoming town of Pinedale, population 2,030, is a byproduct of the natural gas boom.*

Results from the Sublette County project inspired an idea by AHC archivist Leslie Waggener. She proposed a longitudinal oral history program to explore the existing and prospective effects of a budding oil boom in Wyoming communities within the Niobrara Shale, an area of tremendous oil-producing potential that lies in southeast Wyoming, as well as areas of Colorado, Kansas and Nebraska.

For more information about the program, please contact AHC archivist Leslie Waggener at 307-766-2557 or [lwaggen2@uwyo.edu](mailto:lwaggen2@uwyo.edu). ❖

**EDITOR'S NOTE:** Established in 1945, the AHC is the University of Wyoming's repository of manuscripts, rare books and university archives. Its approximately 75,000 cubic feet of collections focus on Wyoming and the Rocky Mountain West and a select handful of national topics: environment and conservation, the mining and petroleum industries, air and rail transportation, popular entertainment, journalism and U.S. military history.

### The Oral History Association

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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.com](mailto:alexandratz@gmail.com)

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## News & Notes ...

### OHA elections now online

OHA members should have received a postcard this summer with full voting instructions, or you may visit our website and link directly to the election site. You will need your member ID# (without leading zeros), which is printed on this *Newsletter* above your address.

We hope you will participate in this important process of governing your association.

### International oral historians to gather in Argentina

The 17th meeting of the International Oral History Association will take place in Buenos Aires, Argentina, Sept. 4-7, 2012. It will be hosted by the Floreal Gorini Center of Cultural Cooperation, the San Martin Cultural Center and Casa Virrey Liniers, all of

which are located in the civic center of Buenos Aires.

The Buenos Aires program will feature such specialists as Rob Perks, curator of the National Life Stories at the British Library, Daniel James, expert on labor movements and gender studies, and Silvia Rivera Cusicanqui, a tireless proponent for creating awareness and inclusion of indigenous peoples. Diverse thematic panels will address issues of oral history methodology, ethics, gender, inequality and identity construction. The conference organizers intend to make every effort to promote networking among the participants.

The web site, <http://www.baires2012.org/index.php?lang=en>, provides information about the program, registration and hotel accommodations. It also features a distinctive logo that represents the diversity of Buenos Aires.

The conference organizers will bring together oral historians from around the world and offer workshops, lectures, panel discussions, interest groups and other opportunities for conversation and the exchange of knowledge and experience, including visits to their beautiful city, and—of course—a chance to tango.

### Sept. 17 is the deadline for preferred rates at the OHA conference hotel

Call the Cleveland Marriott at Key Center at 216-696-9200 to make your reservation. The discounted rate is available only until the reserved block of rooms is filled, which could be before Sept. 17, so don't delay if you want to stay where all the conference action takes place!



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