

OHA ANNUAL MEETING CALL FOR PROPOSALS

Oral History: Bridging Past, Present, and Future

October 30–November 2, 2024

Hilton Netherland Plaza – Cincinnati, Ohio



Inspired by past, present and future oral historians and oral history projects, the 2024 Oral History Association Annual Meeting looks to reflect not just on oral history work throughout its nearly 70 year history, but also to explore how that work has had an impact on the work we do today and how the work we do today will influence and benefit practitioners and communities of the future. Accordingly, we invite you to consider the following questions as examples of the ideas and discussions we hope to include in the 2024 program:

Past: What projects, interviews, or practitioners inspired your professional path or your project aims? What oral history standards and practices have changed over the decades, and how has that had an impact on your work? What history or stories of the past were not recorded, and what can be done to fill in that historical gap?

Present: What's the current technology you're working with? What oral history-related questions are you grappling with today? What current events, individuals or communities are informing and inspiring your oral history practice; how have recent events, such as the pandemic or climate change, shaped or inspired your oral history practice? Does your work reshape, or recenter, oral history practice to better align with social justice efforts?

Future: What do you hope for the future of your collection or your project; what are the imagined or expected future uses for the interviews you've conducted? What advice would you give to future (and current new) oral history practitioners? How do you hope or expect the practice of oral history (or OHA) to change in the future? Is there a speculative nature to your current project or the interviews you've conducted; asking narrators or communities to look ahead and imagine the future they want or expect to see?

We welcome panel and presentation ideas that address the above, or any other subjects that reflect the bridge between oral history of yesterday, today, and tomorrow.

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Contemplating bridges over time we can imagine that those bridges connect us to the past and to the future, and vice versa. Instead of a linear view, past to present to future, we consider all the different ways that time and stories can flow. As historians (either professionally or casually) we understand how powerful the past is and what it means to us today; what it can teach us and what happens if we don't let it. In many ways, as we've seen all too clearly lately, the past repeats itself. We may all agree that as oral historians we can play a vital role in preserving the past for the future; but what role can, or should, we play in shaping that future? How can we build stronger bridges to connect communities, generations, and stories across time?

All of this rich discussion & debate--intended to connect all attendees, from newcomers to those returning for another year of OHA--will take place in Cincinnati, known to some as Cincy, the Queen City of the West, or Porkopolis. Whatever one calls it, this vibrant city offers much more than the fictional radio station WKRP or the very real Big Red Machine, both from the 1970s; visitors today can explore the National Underground Railroad Freedom



Center, the Cincinnati Museum Center at Union Terminal, and the American Sign Museum, and check out the offerings of the Findlay Market and tours of the Over-the-Rhine neighborhood or brewery heritage tours.

Cincinnati sits along the banks of the Ohio River, across from its neighbors, Covington and Newport in Kentucky. Attendees can sit or walk along the riverfront, contemplating the thoughts and ideas presented in our workshops, panels, plenaries, receptions and collegial chats, while taking note of the many bridges that span the river, providing the inspiration for this year's theme.

The Conference Committee welcomes broad and creative interpretations of the conference theme. We especially encourage presenters to think about innovative delivery models including interactive sessions and the use of digital media. In addition, we welcome proposals from the diverse communities that carry out oral history work - academics, independent scholars, activists, librarians, museum curators, web designers, teachers, community historians, documentary film producers, artists, creative writers, ethnographers, public historians, and others whose work relates to this year's conference theme.

We hope to have a significant international presence at the meeting and particularly welcome proposals that highlight oral history work outside the United States. If accepted, international presenters may apply for partial scholarships, made available by the OHA in support of international presentations. Small scholarships are also available for accepted presenters and others who attend the meeting.

Proposal format: The online proposal site will open in December 2023 and submission information will be posted on the OHA website, oralhistory.org.