

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION



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155 ATTEND

6TH NATIONAL COLLOQUIUM AND WORKSHOP AT BLOOMINGTON

Scenes of the Colloquium



Martin Ridge, chairman of the Local Arrangements Committee, enjoys some well-deserved relaxation.



Chester Lewis (left), director of the New York Times' Oral History Program plan, and Louis Starr (right), director of the Oral History Research Office, Columbia, hold an impromptu conference.



Outgoing President Forrest Pogue concludes the ceremonies honoring the late Oscar Winther, professor of history at Indiana University and third president of OHA.



Incoming President Charles Morrissey takes over the podium.



Former OHA President Peter Olch, M.D. (left) and incoming council member Lila Johnson chat with a participant.



Historian James MacGregor Burns, featured speaker at the Colloquium, addresses the membership.

BUSINESS MEETING OF THE 6TH COLLOQUIUM ON ORAL HISTORY

At the annual business meeting of OHA, held during the Bloomington colloquium, Louis Starr read a tribute to the late Allan Nevins, Honorary Chairman of OHA. He spoke on Nevins' contributions to history and of his pioneering work in oral history. Members of the Nevins family are to receive copies of the tribute.

Treasurer Knox Mellon reported that OHA's membership has now increased to 641 and presented his semiannual financial report, showing the Association's assets now on hand to be \$5,874.62.

President Forrest Pogue announced that there will be a joint and selected publication of the proceedings of the

Bloomington and Asilomar colloquiums. Editorial responsibility for this publication will be assumed by Dr. Pogue and Dr. Peter Olch as past presidents of the OHA. President Pogue then publicly thanked various members for their services to the Association during the current year. Those receiving commendation were Samuel Hand, Publication Committee; Warren Albert, Site Committee; James Mink, Editor, OHA Newsletter; Charles Morrissey, Publicity Committee; Dr. Albert Lyons, Nominations Committee; David Larson, Program Chairman, Bloomington colloquium; David Rosenblatt, Workshop Chairman; and Martin Ridge, Local Arrangements Chairman.

An amendment to the OHA Constitution, Article 6, which had been proposed to the membership by mail 30 days before the meeting, was approved at the business meeting. Article 6 as amended now reads: "The president, vice-president, secretary, and treasurer shall constitute an executive committee which shall approve all investments, prepare a budget for submission to the council, and make routine decisions when it is inexpedient to poll the full council. A poll of all council members shall be made upon the request of any council member."

Two motions offered by members failed to carry. It was moved that the council appoint a committee to formu-

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EDITORIAL

The progress of the Oral History Association has been remarkable. During the first five years of its official existence, membership has increased more than sixfold. Published proceedings of the annual colloquiums have found their way into hundreds of private, public, and academic libraries here and abroad. It is fair to say that the quarterly *Oral History Association Newsletter*, concluding its fifth volume with this issue, has contributed significantly to a better understanding of oral history in the academic community and among the public in general. All of this has resulted from the dedicated work of officers and council members, supported by a loyal and enthusiastic membership.

Individuals who have attended our annual meetings for the first time during recent years often comment on the relaxed atmosphere, informality, and good fellowship. Indeed we have created a forum for oral history where without trepidation the most inexperienced neophyte can freely discuss problems with the most distinguished scholar. This is the difference between OHA and other scholarly associations most noted by our newcomers, and "viva la difference!"

We OHA members want to keep it this way. We want to retain and enjoy the reputation of being a dynamic association concerned with the problems and issues of oral history, and not with the trappings of personal status or the mechanistic niceties of organization. The somewhat acrimonious temperament of the debate on the issue of how officers and council members should be elected which occurred at the last OHA business meeting in Bloomington can only have a divisive effect. It simply serves to put OHA members and others on notice that the Association, like so many other organizations, is now beginning to show signs of more concern for organization in itself than the worthy purposes and goals for which the OHA was organized.

We can keep OHA like it is only if we give this election issue, as well as other constitutional questions, just the attention it deserves as a minor pro-

cedural matter, so we can go on with the more important business of how we can best serve the cause of oral history. After all, isn't that what OHA is all about?

As announced elsewhere in this issue, the council has appointed a five-member nominating committee that, in addition to bringing in a slate, will study election procedures and make recommendations to the membership meeting at Austin next fall. The chairman of this committee is Professor Martin Ridge, Department of History, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Members who wish to express their views on the election procedures are invited to write to Professor Ridge. Appropriate space will be reserved in the July 1972 issue of the *Newsletter* for a sampling of membership opinion as chosen by the Nominations Committee.

The Editor

BUSINESS MEETING: 6TH COLLOQUIUM

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late procedures for the creation of a fellows program or similar means for honoring significant oral history pioneers for presentation to the membership at the next business meeting (lost 18-23). A motion was made to conduct a referendum on whether members would like to elect officers and council members by mail ballot (lost 28-29).

Dr. Albert Lyons, chairman of the nominating committee, submitted his report as follows: for vice president/president-elect, John Wickman, director, Dwight D. Eisenhower Library; for secretary, Amelia Fry, Regional Oral History Office, University of California, Berkeley; for treasurer, Knox Mellon, director, Oral History Program, Immaculate Heart College, Los Angeles; and for executive council member, Lila Johnson, Minnesota Historical Society. Each candidate was elected by acclamation. In concluding his report, Dr. Lyons recommended that any future nominating committee always include one member of the previous committee.

Outgoing president Pogue was presented with an inscribed gavel as an expression of appreciation for the accomplishments of his term. Dr. Pogue then introduced incoming president Charles Morrissey, who has recently accepted the post of director of the Ford Foundation Oral History Program. President Morrissey announced that the University of Texas and the Lyndon B. Johnson Oral History Program will host the 7th National Colloquium on Oral History, to be held at Austin, Texas, November 9-12, 1972.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL BUSY AT BLOOMINGTON

At the 6th National Colloquium on Oral History the executive council faced a long and varied agenda of topics which necessitated meetings all three days the colloquium was in session. Dr. Peter Olch announced the distribution of the *Wasserman Bibliography on Oral History* to the OHA membership and to the participants in the 5th (Asilomar) colloquium is being handled by the National Library of Medicine. It is expected that sales of this publication will more than cover expenses connected with its preparation and distribution. Remaining copies will be sold through the treasurer's office. The council expressed appreciation to Manfred Wasserman and Charles Morrissey for their work in getting the bibliography compiled and printed.

As guest of the council, Louis Starr reported on the publication of *Oral History in the United States*. Sales and distribution of the directory are being handled by the Oral History Research Office at Columbia. Sales in the first two months already amount to over \$1,500. The council expressed appreciation to Professors Starr and G. Shumway for their work in compiling, editing, and issuing what is unquestionably OHA's largest publication project to date.

Samuel Hand, chairman of the Publications Committee, presented his report which included a recommendation to publish the joint proceedings of Asilomar and Bloomington colloquiums, with the stipulation that this be the final publication of colloquium proceedings per se. The committee recommended that hereafter OHA issue an annual publication composed of selections from the proceedings of future colloquiums and invited and contributed articles on various aspects of oral history. The council accepted the recommendations of the committee, and past presidents Olch and Pogue were appointed to edit the proceedings, with help from the Publication Committee if requested. Ninety-seven was set as target date for publication of the first OHA annual to be distributed to the membership in lieu of the proceedings.

Warren Albert, chairman of the Studies Committee, submitted his report. Committee studies during the past year have revealed that the greatest concentration of OHA membership is in the California, Chicago, and New York-Washington areas. After considerable discussion the council decided to name Austin as the site of the 1972 colloquium, which will again include a workshop. The consensus was that in spite of the difficulties recently experienced

IMPORTANT ANNOUNCEMENT

The council has expressed particular concern that members send their recommendations for new officers and executive council member to Professor Martin Ridge, Chairman, OHA Nominations Committee, Department of History, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana. Nominations are to be made for vice president/president-elect, secretary, treasurer, and one council member.

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BOOK REVIEW

Oral History for the Local Historical Society. By Willa K. Baum. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1971. 62 pp.

The rapid growth of oral history research in recent years has confronted many scholars and administrators with the problem of initiating new programs on the basis of limited information concerning the theory, methodology, and organization of such programs. Mrs. Willa K. Baum, director of the Regional Oral History Office at the University of California, Berkeley, has drawn upon her considerable experience to produce a guidebook which will lead the beginner to suitable answers to almost all the questions he will encounter in initiating an oral history project. Mrs. Baum's work is directed, by its title at any rate, toward the local historical society, but all practitioners of oral history research will find it useful, regardless of the type of projects in which they work.

In this tersely written book of sixty-two pages is included probably everything that a person needs to know to start and continue a successful oral history program. Starting with a brief statement of the rationale of oral history, the account proceeds rapidly to an explanation of exactly how to start a program, including what equipment to purchase and how it should be used in conducting interviews. Emphasizing careful preparation and methodical procedures, the book leads the reader step by step through the interview process, from the planning of the project to the final indexing of the recorded interview.

No topics have been avoided in the writer's effort to make this book useful to its readers. For example, the discussion of recorders will be useful to many readers, particularly the section dealing with cassette recorders, since most oral history researchers have had less experience with them. And the book is illustrated by clear and well-selected photographs of equipment and contains examples of legal and administrative forms used in oral history research at Berkeley. It also includes a bibliography, which although brief, is of excellent quality.

Only two reservations appear to be justified about this book. One of them concerns its brevity. So wide an array of topics is covered in the limited space that some readers may be left with the wish that some matters had been explained in more detail — a task that the author is obviously capable of doing. Secondly, the forthright nature of Mrs. Baum's direct and specific recommendations, although manifestly necessary in a guidebook, may provoke some dissent. Considering the lack of uniform methodology in oral history, some of these specific recommendations are certain to be read by those who have successfully followed different procedures. Her book may therefore seem arbitrary and overly prescriptive to some experienced researchers.

Readers who follow the recommendations of this book, however, will be able to start oral history research and continue it in a manner that will produce successful results with a minimum of the blunders that often are made in starting an oral history program without competent advice. And the experienced researcher may find new ideas and perhaps have his old ones challenged.

Charles W. Crawford, Director
Oral History Research Office
Memphis State University

ORAL HISTORY IN RUSSIA

The Soviets have been conducting oral history interviews ever since World War II, according to John T. Mason, Jr., director of the oral history program at the U.S. Naval Institute in Annapolis. He reports on a recent visit to the institute by Professor Doctor Lieutenant General Pavel Andreevich Zhilin. The general was accompanied by two colonels who acted as his aides. Both spoke fluent English, but the general did not purport to do so. There were also several Russian language instructors present from the U.S. Naval Academy who acted as interpreters.

"General Zhilin showed a great deal of interest in our Oral History Program and spent twenty minutes or so talking about oral history and asking me questions," Mason said. "He was particularly interested in the samples I showed him of finished products — bound copies of various memoirs we have accomplished. The general told me that the Russians have an oral history program dealing with military figures. 'How long have they been at it?' I asked. And he replied, 'A long time.' Subsequent questions indicated that the Russian program had been underway since World War II when they began interviewing military figures 'with special attention to Soviet marshals and men of historical significance.' The general said that currently they have a long list of men to be reached. They consider it imperative that tapes be made with these men, but they are not necessarily transcribed, at the moment. I asked him about transcriptions they had made [and whether there was] any question of classification and control. And he replied, 'To tell the truth, they all want to be published.' In a method somewhat similar to ours, when a Russian tape is transcribed the interviewee has an opportunity to see it for corrections 'in case he said something he didn't want to see in print.'"

Mason said that the general told him the Russians are beginning to experiment with video tape. Their idea is to have a library of video tapes for future generations so that they will know a man's point of view and the sound of his voice, as well as his physical appearance.

One of the young Russian language instructors, who acted as interpreter on the occasion of the general's visit to the institute, told Mason that as far back as the 1920s the Soviets were interested in conducting interviews. They have been preserving in this fashion much of the folklore of the country, the word-of-mouth traditions, and the folk music.

NEWS IN BRIEF

Nancy H. Marshall is currently conducting research on the economics of a group of selected oral history programs in connection with her seminar work related to special problems in archives-manuscripts administration at the University of Wisconsin. She has found from a survey of the literature of oral history that there is "little in the way of hard facts on the economics of oral history programs." A four-page questionnaire is being used as the means of gathering data for the study. The selected programs are being asked to supply information such as annual cost breakdown on clerical and administrative salaries, costs of interviewing, editing, recruitment and training, transcribing, equipment, and supplies. When completed, the Marshall study should provide some important economic guidelines for those institutions presently considering the establishment of an oral history project.

The Naval War College in Newport, Rhode Island, is considering the feasibility of setting up an oral history unit. John T. Mason, Jr., director of the oral history program at the United States Naval Institute, Annapolis, acted as con-

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sultant in a day-long meeting with the college's president and 11 department heads. Recently the president said that "the obvious value of oral history to the Naval War College has been fully established here . . . At this juncture proposals are under consideration for the implementation of the college project to be operated by our Naval Historical Collection with the assistance of the Naval War College Foundation."

The International Association of Sound Archives held its third annual working session in St. Gallen, Switzerland, in joint meeting with the International Association of Music Libraries during the week of August 23, 1971. Of special interest to oral historians was the IASA's section devoted to recorded historical documentation. Rolf Schuursma, Film and Science Foundation, Utrecht, described the program of recorded interviews his organization has recently undertaken. Donald Leavitt, Library of Congress, spoke generally on the oral history movement in the United States and introduced OHA's new directory to the participants. Wolfgang Adler, Sender Freies, Berlin, outlined some of the special problems encountered in the cataloging of spoken-word recordings.

OHA President Charles Morrissey has been granted a year leave of absence from the directorship of the Vernacular Historical Society in order to direct the Ford Foundation new oral history program. The program will interview and present trustees and key staff members of the foundation in order to document Ford's 21-year history as largest philanthropic institution in the world. President Morrissey's address in New York is Apartment 326, East 77th Street, New York 10021.

The Rand Corporation has instituted an oral history program. So far 20 interviews have been conducted with Rand administrative and research staff, and all of these have been transcribed. The interviews were done by Vaughn D. Bornet, former Rand historian and presently consultant to the corporation. Professor Bornet is chairman of the Social Sciences Division, Southern Oregon College, Ashland, where he is also professor of history. The principal themes of the interviews are corporation history and research atmosphere. At the present they are restricted to the internal use of Rand.

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL

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by some members in obtaining subsidies to attend the annual meetings, OHA should continue to hold annual meetings and not change to a biennial schedule. The council also agreed to take under consideration three alternative sites recommended for the 1973 colloquium: Arden House (Columbia University's conference center), Colonial Williamsburg, and Shenandoah National Park.

At its final session the council discussed plans for the Austin colloquium.

Dr. Ronald Marcello, coordinator of the Oral History Program, North Texas State University, Denton, will serve as program chairman for the 1972 colloquium.

The council authorized the president to decide upon requests from outside firms and agencies for the OHA membership list. This includes the discretion of whether to release or sell the list.

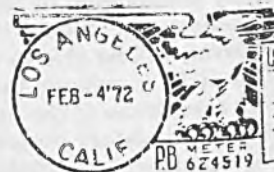
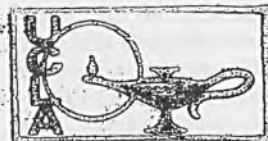
In view of the close vote on the question of having a referendum of the membership on the preference for mail

balloting, the council decided to increase the size of the Nominating Committee. Carlotta Herman, who served on the previous committee, was reappointed and is joined by Walter Moore, Mary Ellen Glass, David Senblatt, and Martin Ridge, who will serve as chairman. In addition to recommending a slate of candidates for officers and council, the committee will study nominating and voting qualifications and procedures and make recommendations to the members at the next business meeting.

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