

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Volume IX, Number 3

Fall, 1975



MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT

Alice Hoffman

At our Colloquium in Asheville, North Carolina we celebrated ten years of rather remarkable growth as a professional organization. Since 1964 when we gathered at Arden House in Harriman, New York, we have been growing, in the words of the annual report of the Columbia Oral History Research Office, at a "geometric rate."

Then our membership represented less than a hundred projects; today our membership is well over a thousand individual members and represents well over 400 established projects. In the beginning the focus of our thoughts and our attention was a kind of paean of self-congratulation that we had found this marvelous technique with so many possibilities for a new kind of history. We spent most of our time sharing our enthusiasm and our excitement at what we had through a variety of separate pathways and byways found on our own, only to discover that it had been simultaneously found by a number of people in a number of places from a wide variety of disciplines. When we came

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PROPOSED REVISION OF OHA GOALS AND GUIDELINES

The officers of the Oral History Association invite all members of the Association to consider the proposed Goals and Guidelines and offer comments. Formal vote on the matter will take place during the business meeting at the 11th National Colloquium in September 1976.

PREAMBLE

The Oral History Association recognizes oral history as a method of gathering and preserving historical information in spoken form and encourages those who produce and use oral history to recognize certain principles, rights, and obligations for the creation of source material that is authentic, useful, and reliable.

I. GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERVIEWEE

A. The interviewee should be informed of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the particular project to which contribution is being made.

B. In recognition of the importance of oral history to an understanding of the past and in recognition of the costs and effort involved, the interviewee should strive to impart candid information of lasting value.

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1975-1976 OHA OFFICERS

The Tenth National Colloquium of the Oral History Association at Grove Park Inn, Asheville, North Carolina, October 24-26, 1975, had a record 250 registrants, with 197 registrants for the Workshop. As a result of elections held October 26, at the business session, now serving the Association are: President, Alice Hoffman (Pennsylvania State University); Vice President/President Elect, William Wyatt (Western Health Systems, Inc.); Secretary-Treasurer, Ronald E. Marcello (North Texas State University). Council members are: Elizabeth Spedding Calciano, (Apotos, California); Waddy Moore (University of Central Arkansas); and William Moss (John F. Kennedy Library).



Left to Right: Joel Gardner and
Bernard Galm of UCLA

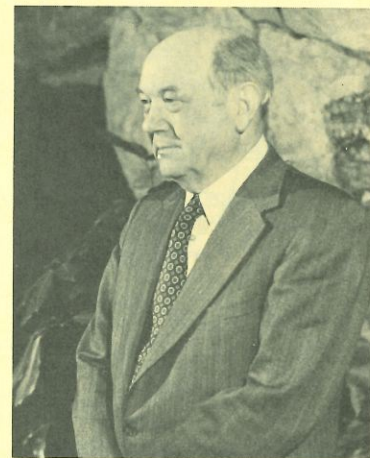
NEWSLETTER MOVES TO BAYLOR FROM UCLA

The editorial office of the Newsletter, which has been in the able hands of friends at the University of California, Los Angeles, since early 1971, has moved to Baylor University in Waco, Texas.

UCLA has given the OHA two Newsletter editors. James V. Mink accepted the editorship in 1971 when Charles T. Morrissey laid down the pen. Bernard Galm, expertly assisted by Joel Gardner, has directed the editorial efforts of the Newsletter for the past several years. The Association is grateful for the leadership UCLA has provided the oral history movement through the years.

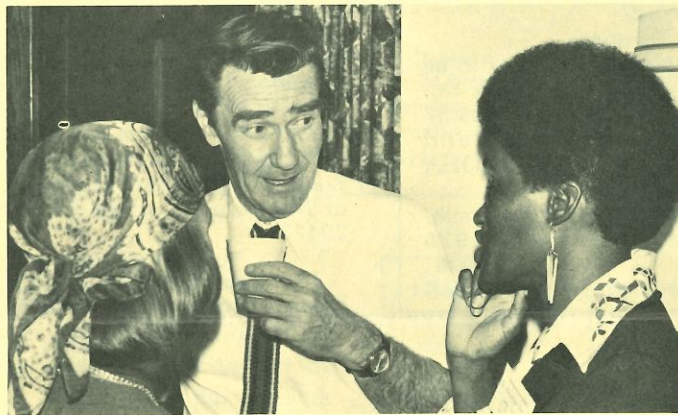
Tom Charlton and the staff of the Oral History Office at Baylor will now edit and publish the Newsletter for the Association. Assisting in layout work and other editorial assignments will be Baylor staff members Adelaide Darling, Judy Edquist, and Margaret Miller. Correspondence concerning the Newsletter should be addressed to the Waco, Texas office.

SCENES FROM ASHEVILLE



New Oral History Association leaders at Grove Park Inn, Asheville, N.C. L-R, Enid H. Douglass, 1976 Colloquium chairperson; William R. Wyatt, vice president/president-elect; Alice M. Hoffman, president; Leo La Clare, 1976 Workshop chairperson; William Moss, council member.





President's Message

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together we were happy to find each other and to share experiences with others who understood. Those were exciting years in which many of us developed enduring, personal friendships in this Association. I hope we never lose that sense of enthusiasm, but I think now as we begin our second decade it is time for us to begin to enter a new phase of maturity as a professional organization.

As we grow larger, we need to be continually open to the experience and contribution of newer members of our Association. In order to experience continued revitalization and growth we need to find effective channels for contributions from the entire membership. We face a number of critical turning points as we begin this second decade. Many of these were summarized in Charles Crawford's excellent presidential address at West Point in 1973. Among these are the necessity to revise the Constitution and the Goals and Guidelines [Ed. note: Proposed Goals and Guidelines contained in this issue.] to better reflect the needs of the Association. This process has made significant and useful progress under the presidency of Sam Proctor. We need to study the proposed changes and revise and execute them at our next membership meeting.

We also need to look at the question of critical review of oral history. Another problem related to critical review is that growing out of our rapid expansion which has outdistanced the capacity to disseminate necessary information about methodology and technique as well as the ability of bibliographies and directories to describe the existence of important repositories of oral archival collections.

It is my hope to use the pages of the *Newsletter* as a medium for free exchange about all of these issues and to invite the membership to offer their advice and suggestions. To this end I have set up the following committees and would hope that we would be inundated with volunteers to serve on one or another of these committees: Workshop Committee, Leo La Clare, Jim Hammack, Cochairpersons; Colloquium Committee, Enid Douglass, Chairperson; Goals and Guidelines Committee, Amelia Fry, Chairperson; Nominating Committee, Constitutional Review Committee, Regional Workshop Committee (which will be expanded to incorporate the work of the Committee on Oral History as a Teaching Tool), John Neuenschwander, Cochairperson; Committee on Oral History as an Interpretive Device, Finance Committee, Committee on the Mail Ballot, Bill Moss, Chairperson; Committee on Oral History of the OHA, Charles Crawford, Chairperson; Committee to Study the Evaluation of Oral History Program, Waddy Moore, Chairperson.

So then, let us begin our second decade!

Goals and Guidelines

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C. The interviewee should be aware of the mutual rights involved in oral history, such as editing and seal privileges, literary rights, prior use, fiduciary relationships, royalties, and determination of the disposition of all forms of the record and the extent of dissemination and use.

D. Preferences of the person interviewed and any prior agreements should govern the conduct of the oral history process, and these preferences and agreements should be carefully documented for the record.

II. GUIDELINES FOR THE INTERVIEWER

A. Interviewers should guard against possible social injury to or exploitation of interviewees and should conduct interviews with respect for human dignity.

B. Each interviewee should be selected on the basis of demonstrable potential for imparting information of lasting value.

C. The interviewer should strive to prompt informative dialogue through challenging and perceptive inquiry, should be grounded in the background and experiences of the person being interviewed and, if possible, should review the sources relating to the interviewee before conducting the interview.

D. Interviewers should extend the inquiry beyond their immediate needs to make each interview as complete as possible for the benefit of others and should, whenever possible, place in a depository where they will be available for general research.

E. The interviewer should inform the interviewee of the planned conduct of the oral history process and develop mutual expectations of rights connected thereto, including editing, mutual seal privileges, literary rights, prior use, fiduciary relationships, royalties, rights to determine disposition of all forms of the record, and the extent of dissemination and use.

F. Interviews should be conducted in a spirit of objectivity, candor, and integrity, and in keeping with common understandings, purposes, and stipulations mutually arrived at by all parties.

G. The interviewer shall not violate and will protect the seal on any information considered confidential by the interviewee, whether imparted on or off the record.

III. GUIDELINES FOR SPONSORING INSTITUTIONS

A. Subject to conditions proscribed by interviewees, it is an obligation of sponsoring institutions (or individual collectors) to prepare and preserve easily useable records; to keep careful records of the creation and processing of each interview; to identify, index, and catalog interviews; and, when open to research, to make their existence known.

B. Interviewers should be selected on

the basis of professional competence and interviewing skill; interviewers should be carefully matched to interviewees.

C. Institutions should keep both interviewees and interviewers aware of the importance of the above guidelines for the successful production and use of oral history sources.

ORAL HISTORY AND GENEALOGY:

A NEW FOCUS ON THE RECENT PAST

Historians and genealogists share a common interest in the compilation of biographical material, and by working together to preserve this information in tape-recorded interviews they can assist each other. This use of oral history is recommended by Prof. Samuel P. Hays, Chairman of the Department of History at the University of Pittsburgh, in an article entitled "History and Genealogy: Patterns of Change and Prospects for Cooperation," in the Fall, 1975 (Vol. 7, No. 3) issue of *Prologue*, the quarterly journal of the National Archives and Records Service in Washington, D.C.

Hays notes that historians and genealogists rely heavily on biographies compiled for local histories, but since about 1920 these publications have appeared infrequently. "Future researchers will have precious little biographical material on which to rely for research after that time," he writes, and he proposes a new reliance on "oral history . . . focused on short biographies of many people rather than intensive information about prominent figures."

Who should do this interviewing and how should it be done? Hays suggests that "Oral history could well be focused on family biography, and genealogists might become as involved in the preparation of genealogical material by and about the living as well as about those who have died. Perhaps we could envisage trained volunteer groups of oral history associates who could develop this source of information."

Hays is one of several scholars who are encouraging a relationship joining oral history and family history at the grass-roots level.

ORAL HISTORY INSTITUTE TO BE HELD AT UNIV. OF VERMONT

Amelia Roberts Fry, Director of the Earl Warren Oral History Project at the Univ. of California at Berkeley and Charles Morrissey, Director of the George D. Aiken History Project at the Univ. of Vermont, will be instructors for the Univ. of Vermont's Oral History Institute to be held July 6-22, 1976, at the campus in Burlington, Vermont. The resource person will be Amy Davis, an 8th grade teacher at Montpelier's Main Street School who has successfully used the "Foxfire" concept of oral history to enrich the learning experiences of her students. Information may be obtained from the Univ. of Vermont, Burlington, Vermont 05401.

BOOK REVIEW

NIGHT RIDERS IN BLACK FOLK HISTORY

By Gladys-Marie Fry. Knoxville: The University of Tennessee Press. 1975. 251 pp. \$9.50.

Reviewed by Ann Allen Shockley (Fisk University)

Gladys-Marie Fry, associate professor of folklore, University of Maryland, has written an important and highly readable scholarly study of the psychological control of blacks by whites through fear of the supernatural. The chronological scope of the work covers slavery through the post-Civil War period. A broader and more polished extension of her dissertation, the book contains illustrations, brief biographical sketches of the informants, a Tale Type Index, bibliography, and index.

The author employs the fusion of folk legends and oral history to corroborate as well as supplement written history. Using the Federal Writers' Project guidelines with some changes, Dr. Fry interviewed 150 black informants from the Washington, D.C. area. They were from all economic classes, age groups and educational backgrounds.

The first and second generations were the most vivid recollectors of slavery. Reluctance of some informants to discuss the dark side of black history (perhaps true until the 1920's) seemed somewhat incredible since the thrust of the sixties was to trace roots for identification. To offset this, Dr. Fry uses a liberal sprinkling of the WPA narratives to document the early phases of slavery and reconstruction. The narratives are divided into two groupings: (1) narratives involving the supernatural, such as ghosts and witches; and (2) narratives concerning the practice of body stealing for medical experiments.

The study focuses on a little known aspect of black history—the psychological intimidation of blacks through the nurturing of their transplanted African superstitions and belief in the supernatural. This was implemented for controlling interplantation and intercountry movement of blacks to prevent uprisings and running away. Night became the instrument for promoting fear.

The first group of boogy-man night riders, so-called because they rode between midnight and dawn, were the masters and overseers disguised as ghosts. Antebellum patrollers or "Patty Rollers" were next. Black reminiscences in this work serve to subsidize the paucity of written information on the patrollers' methods which became a model for subsequent night riders. In-

formants described the techniques of surprise appearances and the variations in costume to frighten blacks. Some wore "black caps and put black rags over their faces," and others attired themselves in "white boots, black shirts, broad-brimmed white hats, and black breeches." Dark horses were ridden for they were less visible at night. In addition, informants told of the sadistic and frequent drunken lawless behavior of the night patrollers toward blacks. The author used this to discount published portrayals of the antebellum patrollers as being "discreet and sober men."

A most significant historical fact arising out of this black folk view is the recognition of the black folk hero who outwitted the various systems of control. As one informant stated: "Yes, suh, Cap'n dy wuz a lot happen in dem times dat de mahsters didn't know nuthin' about."

When blacks were freed, the author contends that the white problem of regulating their mobility still remained a crucial issue. By this time, blacks were well versed in the old methods and a new system was needed. Thus, the Ku Klux Klan was organized. Black oral evidence claims the Klan was formed prior to 1865. This is where the validity of memories to document written accounts show weaknesses due to generation removal or confusion as to the actual identification of the disguised night riders. Nevertheless, the folk legends of the treatment by the Klan were consistent.

The final effort to exert psychological control occurred during the 1880's to the end of the First World War. The legend of "mythical doctors who trafficked in living bodies for purposes of medical experiments" was created. This myth was to stymie the movement of blacks to the cities and to keep blacks off city streets at night. Dr. Fry puts to use the bulk of her oral history interviews in this section.

This social history fills a gap in black history by supplying fresh historical evidence through the hardly tapped resource of the black oral tradition. Negating published accounts by white apologists who favor the Sambo concept, it presents, through black eyes, black peoples' own reactions, roles and attitudes as folk historians.

The weight of black history lies heavily in the telling of stories from generation to generation—keeping it alive, preserving it. To those who told these stories, the author notes: "This is their book and theirs who before them lived the stories and told them." Indeed it is.

NUCMC SOLICITS ORAL HISTORY ENTRIES

Harriet Ostroff, acting editor of the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections*, has urged that oral history programs with collections qualifying for inclusion in NUCMC send in their entries.

To qualify for reporting, an oral history collection must be in transcript form and should consist of 10 or more transcripts of interviews unless fewer are justified by the reporter on such grounds as unusual historical importance, research potential, or association value. The interviewing of one person is considered one item regardless of the number of sessions, the number of pages of transcripts, or the number of hours of interviewing.

Oral history collections are to be reported on the Data Sheet for the NUCMC, available from the Descriptive Cataloging Division, Manuscripts Section, Library of Congress, Washington, D.C. 20540.

FORREST C. POGUE GIVES LECTURE SERIES

During the fall of 1975, Forrest C. Pogue gave a series of ten lectures to the Smithsonian Associates at the Museum of History and Technology, Smithsonian Institution, where he is director of the Dwight D. Eisenhower Institute for Historical Research. The lecture series, called "Voices of World War II," concerned ten outstanding leaders of the Second World War. Pogue drew heavily on materials collected from interviews with the individuals discussed or with their contemporaries. His first use of this type of material was during the spring of 1972, in his seminar on World War II when he was the Mary Moody Northern Visiting Professor at the Virginia Military Institute, Lexington, Virginia.

OHA Official Business

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Although there are still some outstanding expenses remaining from the Asheville meeting, the secretary-treasurer is projecting a profit of \$3,500-\$4,000.

Membership in the Oral History Association is open to all who are interested in oral history. Dues for individuals and library memberships are \$10.00 per year, and for institutions and associations they are \$25.00 per year. Non-voting student memberships are \$7.50 annually (these members receive all publications but do not participate in the selection of OHA officers). Life memberships are available at \$250. Institutions which generously decide to become Sustaining Members pay between \$100 and \$150 each year.

OHA OFFICIAL BUSINESS

**Ronald E. Marcello,
Executive Secretary**

At the business meeting of the 1975 Colloquium it was decided to combine the offices of secretary and treasurer and locate them at North Texas State University in Denton, Texas. This move on the part of OHA is a prelude to the establishment of the position of executive secretary, a move that will require the approval of the membership. In the meantime, the treasurer's records are being transferred from Immaculate Heart College in Los Angeles to North Texas. This operation will take time to complete, and it is conceivable that the billings for dues renewals will not be sent out until early 1976.

Membership

As of October 1, 1975, OHA had 1,183 members, broken down into the following categories:

Life	3
Institutional	158
Individual	683
Library	260
Student	79

Total 1,183

For further information concerning membership in OHA, write Ronald E. Marcello, Secretary-Treasurer, Box 13734 N.T. Station, North Texas State University, Denton, Texas 76203.

Finances

the OHA treasury appears to be on a sound foundation. As of October 1, 1975, there are \$2,895.37 in the checking account and \$10,600.71 in savings, giving OHA a balance of \$13,496.08.

OHA also stands to make a substantial profit from the 1975 Workshop and Colloquium.

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NEWS

The fourth annual Oral History Workshop was conducted by the Utah State Historical Society June 27-28 at Westminster College. These summer programs, under the direction of Jay M. Haymond, have trained dozens of researchers in the techniques of oral history and its use in documenting community and family histories.

In addition to Dr. Haymond five other leaders in oral history made up the faculty.

Work on the collection of interviews being prepared for the Maryland Arts Council continued during the summer. Paula Rome has interviewed Grace Hartigan and Adelyn Breeskin, and Mary Kleinhans went to Clarissa Lott. Katherine Anne Porter, Leslie Ford (Mrs. Ford K. Brown) and Walter Lord have promised interviews this fall.

Gwendolyn Safier participated on a panel "Oral History in Gerontology" at the 28th Annual Scientific Meeting of the Gerontological Society, Louisville, Ky., Oct. 27, 1975. Dr. Safier also serves as a consultant to the Gerontological Society in its oral history project of the leaders in the field of gerontology.

Betty Key, of the Maryland Historical Society, and Martha Ross, of the University of Maryland, have begun work on an anthology of readings in oral history incorporating representative periodical articles and other statements on the philosophy and practice of oral history today. The goal is to assemble a source book that will make easily accessible in one volume a representative statement of current thinking in the various disciplines using oral history techniques. Send suggestions to Martha Ross, Department of History, University of Maryland, College Park, Maryland 20427.

The New England Association of Oral History held its fall meeting on Nov-

ember 1, at Salem State College, Salem, Mass. Topics presented were "Ethnic History, Local History, Oral History," "Mountain Voices-Mountain Times: In Southern Appalachia," and a workshop on "Program Development and Interviewing Techniques." More information may be obtained from Prof. John J. Fox, Dept. of History, Salem State College, Salem, Mass. 01970.

Communication Quarterly, the journal of the Eastern Communication Association, is seeking manuscripts on human communication. Their aim is to assist in the publication of the best new research and thought in the area of human communication: critical, historical, empirical, pedagogical and theoretical. More information may be obtained from Thomas W. Benson, Editor, Department of Speech Communication, 227 Sparks Building, The Pennsylvania State University, University Park, Pa. 16802.

Catholic Library World devoted its October 1975 issue to oral history. Articles included were: "Tapeworms and Bookworms—Oral History in the Library," by Cullom Davis; "Oral History—A New Look at Local History," by Sister John Christine Wolkerstorfer; "Telling it Like it Was in 1968," by Betty McKeever Key; "Oral History and the Genealogical Society," by John W. Orton; "The Library as Guardian of Oral History Materials: An Example from Berkeley," by Willa Baum; and "Oral History: A New Role for the Library," by William W. Moss.

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