



# NEWSLETTER

Stories of the Gulag Survivors

## Scherbakov: "Only the Memory of Oral History"

by Thomas L. Charlton

Irina Lazarevna Scherbakov, a Russian scholar whose studies of women's experiences in the gulags (labor camps) between 1918 and 1958 can only now be revealed, was the final-evening plenary speaker at the recent OHA annual meeting at Snowbird, Utah. Her presentation, aided by an interpreter, proved to be one of the highlights of the conference, which also included papers and talks by scholars from several other nations, as well as the usual large number from the United States.

Scherbakov's interest in the gulag dates from conversations in the late 1950s, when in her family's kitchen she first began to hear the stories of forced labor from her parent's friends. Between 1978, when she purchased a tape recorder, and the late 1980s, she conducted approximately 300 oral history interviews with women who described their ordeal in the camps, but the interviews had to remain secret until very recently.

A graduate in German language and literature studies from Moscow State University, Scherbakov made a living translating literature and writing for newspapers in Russia, but her desire was to document the experiences of women, survivors at a ratio of 6 to 1 higher than

*"I was trying to limit my field of activity among the people whom I knew were close to my understanding and those were the middle class women who were teachers and doctors and nurses and dieticians and secretaries."*

*"It was only the memory of oral history."*

Irina Scherbakov



© Photo by Garry Byrant

men, who could tell firsthand of what they endured in the horrific gulag.

Now, thanks to policies of openness instituted by former Soviet President Mikhail S. Gorbachev, people in that nation can again speak openly about the past, and Scherbakov is at work with other intellectuals forming a new Russian University for the Humanities, where an Institute for Oral History is an integral part of the academic planning. The subject of the gulag experience is enormous, since an estimated 20 million people, of whom all but one million (who were shot) served sentences in work camps, were arrested.

It was through interviews that

Scherbakov learned that many women sent to the gulag continued to believe in the Soviet state and its goals. Since the Soviet government, from the 1920s, allowed women to pursue professional careers such as medicine, a high percentage of the women sent to the camps were from the middle class. Many, while not themselves dissidents, were arrested because of their husband's alleged political views or activities. Despite their innocence, women in the gulag experienced overcrowding in cells, degrading physical examinations, hunger, cold, torture, and long hours of heavy labor — some in the forests of remote regions.

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By any measure the 1991 Annual Meeting in Utah was a great success. President Tom Charlton assembled an excellent team that produced a provocative and diverse program for those attending the conference to experience and enjoy. Because I do not want to overlook any one individual who made the meeting possible, let me just take this opportunity to thank the program and local arrangements committees and all of the other people who helped for their hard work on behalf of OHA.

At the business meeting in Utah, OHA dues were restructured so that the Association can be more fiscally responsible and can better serve the membership. I want to encourage all members to renew their memberships during the coming year and to also encourage others to join OHA. A larger membership base would allow us to expand our services in the areas of publications and student scholarships without the necessity of additional dues increases.

Moreover, I want to ask each of you to make sure that your local libraries renew their subscription to the *Oral History Review*. Libraries are cutting back on their journal subscriptions and we need to make sure that our journal remains in as many libraries as possible



so that anyone interested in oral history can have access to the most current and informed writings available.

The work of the Oral History Association goes on year-round through the efforts of Richard Smith, our Executive Secretary, and through our system of committees. New committee chairs for this year include: Celia Alvarez and Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis, Committee on Multiculturality; Jay Haymond, Membership Committee; Ron Marcello, Nominating Committee; and John Terreo, Teaching Committee. Committee chairs continuing their terms are: Carl Ryant, International Committee; Eva McMahan, Publications Committee; Ava Kahn, State and Regional Committee; and Joel Gardner, Endowments and Fund-Raising Committee.

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While in the United States at the invitation of OHA, Scherbakov visited several regions of the nation where she delivered special lectures in each instance. In New York City, where she first entered the U.S., Scherbakov was the guest of the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University and lectured at the Harriman Soviet Studies Center. She also met with students and faculties at the University of Utah; the University of California, Los Angeles; California State University, Long Beach; and Baylor University. At Baylor, she lectured at the university's school of nursing in Dallas, and also gave a public lecture on the Waco campus.

With the election of new council members, liaison assignments now include: International and Nominating, Anne Ritchie; Membership, Kim Lady Smith; Publications, Jo Blatti; State and Regional, Art Hansen; Endowments and Fund-Raising, Terry Birdwhistell; Multiculturality, Al Broussard; Teaching, Tom Charlton.

As we plan for the 1992 Annual Meeting in Cleveland, which will focus on community diversity, let's work together to make OHA a strong and vibrant association. The broad scope and extent of diversity among our membership helps to make the Oral History Association unique among professional associations. Let's build on these strengths and bring our individual and collective convictions to bear on service to oral history work internationally and to the enhancement of OHA.

## Plan Ahead!!

### Future OHA Annual Meetings:

- |      |                         |
|------|-------------------------|
| 1992 | Cleveland, Ohio         |
|      | 15-18 October           |
| 1993 | Birmingham, Alabama     |
|      | 4-7 November            |
| 1994 | Albuquerque, New Mexico |
|      | 27-30 October           |

## OHA NEEDS YOU!

To help the Oral History Association meet the needs of the future and to ensure that we can continue to provide the highest level of services, OHA invites members and friends to support the endowment fund.

The OHA Endowment Fund is a special account, based on but not limited to life memberships, that accumulates a balance so that earnings may be used for special projects or for emergency needs.

For information or to contribute to the endowment fund, write Richard C. Smith, Executive Secretary, Oral History Association, 1093 Broxton Ave., No. 720, Los Angeles, California 90024.

During her third week in the U.S., Irina Scherbakov was the subject of a feature article by Karen Winkler in the October 20, 1991, issue of *The Chronicle of Higher Education*. OHAN readers may wish to consult this special feature for additional pertinent information about Scherbakov's recent research and findings. A book-length manuscript is in preparation, and Scherbakov hopes to find a publisher in the near future to reveal the full story of the Soviet women who, in many cases due to their bonds of friendship with other women in the camps, were able to survive.



The annual spring conference of the **Southwest Oral History Association** will be held in San Luis Obispo, California, April 24-26. For information, contact Robert Pavlik, Program Chair, 750 Hearst Castle Rd., San Simeon, CA 93452.

OHA member **Vicki Ruiz** will be joining the faculty of The Claremont Graduate School in California as Mellon Chair and Professor of History and American Studies.

A new project initiated by the Oral History and Documentation Project of the **Center for Advertising History**, part of the National Museum of American History in Washington, DC, will focus on Kraft General Foods and its contributions to early television advertising and production.

**The U.S. Institute of Peace**, an independent, nonpartisan federal institution created and funded by Congress, has announced the appointment of Jeane Bohlen as director of the Jeannette Rankin Library Program. Her responsibilities will include overseeing the development of oral histories by individuals directly involved in efforts to resolve international conflict.

With a grant from the Nevada 125th Anniversary Commission, the **University of Nevada Oral History Program** has copied its entire 37,500-page collection on microfiche, making this valuable historical resource more widely accessible to the public. The oral histories focus on Nevada and the Great Basin and include such topics as mining, ranching, water rights, ethnicity, and gambling. Sets of the microfiche are available through the Oral History Program (MS 324), University of Nevada, Reno, Nevada 89557.

OHA members, especially those involved in education and in the development of courses and curricula, are urged to utilize the OHA publication, **Oral History In the Secondary School Classroom**.



OHA officers for 1991-92 are: (front row, left to right) Albert S. Broussard, vice-president/president-elect; Jo Blatti, council; Kim Lady Smith, council; Arthur Hansen, council; (back row) Richard Cándida Smith, OHA Executive Secretary; Terry L. Birdwhistell, president; Anne Campbell Ritchie, council; and Thomas L. Charlton, past-president. (Photograph by Brit Allen Storey)

Written by Barry A. Lanman and George L. Mehaffey, the booklet offers background resources and provides significant examples on projects, methodology, and legal, as well as ethical, considerations. For copies, contact Richard Cándida Smith at the OHA office.

**The American Airpower Heritage Museum** in Midland, Texas, has issued a call for proposals dealing with World War II foodways. A symposium, to be held in late 1992 or early 1993, will be entitled: "What Did You Eat in the War?" Proposals for papers, panels, and workshops are welcomed. Preference will be given to those projects that demonstrate a link to World War II aviation or to a museum with a similar focus. For further information, contact American Airpower Heritage Museum, Midland International Airport, P.O. Box 62000, Midland, TX 79711. Phone: 915/563-1000.

**The New England American Studies Association** annual conference, "Multiculturalism and the Americas," will be held April 24-26, at the University of Massachusetts, Boston. Contact Lois Rudnik, president of NEASA, at the Harbor Campus of UM/B, Boston, MA 02125.

## NEW ADDRESSES:

**Oral History in Ohio (OHIO)** has a new mailing address: % Ohio Historical Society, Youngstown Historical Center of Industry and Labor, P.O. Box 533, Youngstown, OH 44501.

**The U.S. Army Center of Military History** is now housed in Building 159, 5th Floor, South East Federal Center/Navy Yard, 3rd and M Streets, SE, Washington DC 20374-5088. The phone number is: 202/475-7868.





# Book Notices

Materials are selected for listing here either because they are based on oral history research or because they are of some general interest to the field. Notes are based on reviews, primarily from *Library Journal*, or on materials directly called to the editor's attention. Readers are invited to submit comments and suggestions for materials covered here. (Information compiled by Cynthia Wranosky and Dan K. Utley.)

Bland, Larry I., ed. **George C. Marshall: Interviews and Reminiscences for Forrest C. Pogue.** George C. Marshall Research Foundation, Lexington, Va., 1991 (revised edition). This book is a compilation of transcripts made from interviews in 1956-57 by George C. Marshall for his official biographer, Forrest C. Pogue. It serves as a research and reference complement to Pogue's four-volume work, *George C. Marshall* (1963-87).

Brugion, Dino A. **Eyeball to Eyeball: The Inside Story of the Cuban Missile Crisis.** Random House, 1992. Brugion, a former CIA analyst, bases his analysis of President Kennedy's decision-making process during the missile crisis on in-depth interviews with participants, as well as on his own expertise in aerial photography.

Buell, Harold L. **Dauntless Helldivers: A Dive-Bomber Pilot's Epic Story of the Carrier Battles.** Orion: Crown, 1991. Buell draws his account of Pacific sea battles from his own diary and from the recollections of other WWII carrier pilots.

Carson, Clayborne, et al, eds. **The Eyes on the Prize Civil Rights Reader: Documents, Speeches, and First-Hand Accounts from the Black Freedom Struggle, 1954-1990.** Viking, 1991. Produced in conjunction with the PBS series *Eyes on the Prize*, this collection includes a 1990 speech by Nelson Mandela, Martin Luther King's "Letter from Birmingham City Jail," and the

Supreme Court's *Brown v. Board of Education* decision.

Chermayeff, Ivan, et al. **Ellis Island: An Illustrated History of the Immigrant Experience.** Collier: Macmillan, 1991. Along with hundreds of photographs provided by the Ellis Island Immigration Museum, this book includes firsthand descriptions of immigrant experiences.

Gioglio, Gerald R. **Days of Decision: An Oral History of Conscientious Objectors in the Military During the Vietnam War.** Broken Rifle Press (Trenton, NJ): Baker & Taylor, Inland, Quality Books, 1991. A book about peace and conflict, *Days of Decision* represents the oral history memoirs of 24 antiwar GIs. Some were sent off to war unarmed and others were imprisoned or discharged for their efforts to organize against the Vietnam War.

Kerr, E. Bartlett. **Flames Over Tokyo: The U.S. Army Air Force's Incendiary Campaign Against Japan, 1944-45.** Donald I. Fine, 1991. Kerr's description of the WWII firebombing of Japanese cities combines background material with the eyewitness accounts of pilots involved. *Library Journal* recommends that it be read as a companion to Hito Edoins's *The Night Tokyo Burned*, an eyewitness account from the ground.

Knaefler, Tom: Kaizawa. **Our House Divided: Seven Japanese American Families in World War II.** University of Hawaii Press, 1991. Using interviews published in 1966, Knaefler recounts the experiences of the families following the attack on Pearl Harbor.

King, R.T., ed. **The Life of a Ranger: Archie Murchie in the U.S. Forest Service, 1929-1965.** Oral History Program, The University of Nevada, 1991. The oral memoirs of career forest ranger Archie Murchie provide an in-depth examination of major federal land management issues spanning parts of five

decades. Considered somewhat a legend in the forest service, Murchie tells of his experiences fighting major forest fires, conducting mustang round-ups in the National Forest, and controlling abuses of overgrazing and timber cutting.

Prades, John, and Ray W. Stubble. **Valley of Decision: The Siege of Khe Sanh.** Marc Jaffe, Houghton, 1991. In addition to articles, reports, and books, Prado and Stubble have used personal interviews and newly de-classified documents to produce what *Library Journal* calls "a comprehensive and definitive analysis," which "does for Khe Sanh what Gordon Prange's *At Dawn We Slept* did for Pearl Harbor."

Yenne, Bill. **Black '41: The West Point Class of 1941 and the American Triumph in World War II.** Wiley, 1991. Yenne bases his account of World War II on his interviews with sixty members of the West Point class of 1941, the last class to graduate before Pearl Harbor. He then follows the lives of nine graduates through the post-war years.





# Report from the Snowbird Conference: OHA Meets in the Intermountain West

The 25th Annual Meeting of OHA went as scheduled on October 10-13, 1991, at the Snowbird Conference Center a few miles southeast of Salt Lake City, Utah. Approximately 300 oral historians and others who wanted to learn about the field of oral history gathered for the meeting, which featured plenary-session presentations by Clyde Benally (Cortez, CO), Irina Scherbakov (Moscow, USSR), Vicki Ruiz (Univ. of Calif., Davis), and cowboy poets from the Intermountain West. More than thirty publishers and other exhibitors were also present throughout the 1991 conference. Papers, panels, and other types of presentations were organized into more than 50 OHA sessions, which included family history workshops, introductory workshop sessions, a daylong workshop for teachers, regional tours, and official business sessions for the association. Scholars from seven nations comprised the program.

Newly elected officers began their terms during the business session on October 13. Dale E. Treleven (UCLA), Michael P. Chou (U. Hawaii), and Lila J. Goff (Minnesota Historical Society) completed their terms of service on the Council.

Officers for 1991-92 are:

President — Terry L. Birdwhistell,  
University of Kentucky

Vice-President/President-Elect —  
Albert S. Broussard,  
Texas A&M University

Council — Kim Lady Smith,  
Kentucky Oral History Comm.

Council — Jo Blatti, History  
Afield

Council (elected for 3-yr. term)—  
Anne Campbell Ritchie,  
National Museum of Art

Council (elected for 3-yr. term)—  
Arthur A. Hansen,  
California State University,  
Fullerton

Immediate Past President —

Thomas L. Charlton,  
Baylor University

Executive Secretary —

Richard Cándida Smith, UCLA

The 1991 Annual Meeting benefited from the leadership of the Program Committee, co-chaired this year by Jay M. Haymond (Utah State Historical Society) and M. Rebecca Sharpless (Baylor University), and of the Local Arrangements Committee, co-chaired by Gregory Thompson and Floyd A. O'Neil, both of the University of Utah. Special appreciation should be expressed to Jessie L. Embry (Brigham Young University) for her supervision of conference on-site registration, and to Peggy Kinard and Janice O'Bryant, both of Baylor University, for pre-conference registration, as well as on-site work.

Responsibility for A/V arrangements during the meeting was in the capable hands of Robert Staab (University of Utah). OHA extends grateful appreciation to Baylor University and to Brigham Young University for their monetary support of the meeting, and to all other local co-sponsoring organizations and institutions, such as the University of Utah, which provided all A/V equipment needed by speakers and sessions.

The next OHA Annual Meeting will be held in Cleveland, Ohio, at the Stouffer Tower City Plaza Hotel, on October 15-18, 1992. Donna DeBlassio (Youngstown Historical Society) is chair of the 1992 OHA Program Committee. A unique feature of the Cleveland conference will be a videoconference which will be available via satellite. More information about this new OHA activity will be forthcoming.

While a complete report on official transactions will be published next summer in the 1992 OHA Membership Directory, it is important to note that

major decisions were made at Snowbird regarding the association's constitution and dues structure. Significant changes were required to bring the association's guiding document up to date under the laws of the State of New York, which issued the original OHA charter in 1967. A comprehensive report on changes adopted by the membership at Snowbird is available from the executive secretary. OHA is grateful for the legal assistance of Norman Silber, an attorney in New York City and a member of the association, for assisting the officers over the past two years in revising the association's constitution.

Revision in OHA dues came after a year-long study chaired by Vice President Birdwhistell and several financial projections by Executive Secretary Smith which indicated that the association could no longer afford to use a sliding-scale dues structure based on members' annual personal incomes. After lively floor debate at Snowbird, including a slight modification of the study committee's recommended dues structure, the following was adopted and is now in effect:

## INDIVIDUAL MEMBERSHIP

Student — \$25.00

Regular — \$50.00

Contributing — \$75.00 or more

Life — \$500

## INSTITUTIONAL MEMBERSHIP

Library — \$50

Regular — \$75

Sponsoring — \$120 or more



## Wisconsin Oral History Workshop Offered

The University of Wisconsin — Madison School of Library and Information Services will offer a two-day workshop on Oral History Projects, March 17-18, 1992. The course will provide information on directing oral history projects and will include training in oral history interviewing.

The course instructor will be Karen M. Lamoree, who inherited a large oral history program when she became an archivist at Brown University. During her four years there, she revised the program, taught oral history courses, and developed reference services for users of the collection. She has served as a consultant to other oral history projects and is currently a collections development archivist at the State Historical Society of Wisconsin.

The course will be held on the University of Wisconsin-Madison campus. This is a non-credit program that provides 1.5 continuing education units from the university. It will be followed on March 19-20, by a course entitled: "Archives and Manuscripts: Public Service, Reference, and Access." For a brochure, with course descriptions and fees, contact Jane Pearlmutter, Program Coordinator, SLIS Continuing Education Services, 600 N. Park Street, Madison, WI 53706. Phone: 608/262-6398.



Among those who served as hosts for the OHA Snowbird Conference were: (left to right) Philip Notarianni, Utah State Historical Society; Robert Staab, University of Utah; and Jay M. Haymond, Utah State Historical Society. (Photograph by Thomas L. Charlton)

## Marcello to Speak at OHA/OAH Breakfast

Ronald E. Marcello will be the featured speaker at the 1992 Organization of American Historians Oral History Breakfast, April 4, 1992. The breakfast, sponsored by the Oral History Association, is part of the OAH annual meeting, April 2-5, at the Palmer House in Chicago, Illinois.

Marcello is past-president and former executive secretary of the Oral History Association. He is presently Associate Professor and Coordinator of the Oral History Program at the University of North Texas, Denton. The subject of his talk at the OAH breakfast will be, "Why It Happened: Pearl Harbor as Seen From the Lower Decks."

Marcello and his UNT colleague, Robert S. La Forte, are the editors of the recently published book, **Remembering Pearl Harbor: Eyewitness Accounts by U.S. Military Men and Women** (Scholarly Resources, Inc. \$24.95), which brings together forty oral histories of December 7, 1941, and its immediate aftermath. Soldiers, sailors, aviators, nurses, and chaplains who were stationed at Pearl Harbor tell in their own words where they were, what they said, how they reacted to the attack, and how they felt that day. The memoirs are full of fascinating details, both of the events of the attack and of its impact — immediate and lingering — on the military's rank and file.

*The Oral History Association Newsletter* (ISSN:0474-3253) is published quarterly by the Oral History Association for its members and subscribers. **Copy deadlines are: January 1, April 1, July 1, and October 1.**

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**Oral History Association Newsletter  
Baylor University, P.O. Box 97271  
Waco, Texas 76798-7271**

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Waco, TX  
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