



## NEWSLETTER

## New Orleans Meeting Promises Feast for Mind, Body and Soul

**By Pamela Dean**  
**Louisiana State University**

From Nova Scotia to New Orleans, from South Africa to the American South, the Oral History Association's 1997 meeting in New Orleans Sept. 25-28 will offer a veritable feast of sessions reflecting the ways oral historians from around the world are grappling with the major issues of our times. The international contingent will be especially strong this year with participants from Argentina, Brazil, Palestine, India, France, New Zealand, Uruguay, South Africa, Denmark and England among those expected to attend.

Program committee members Steven Novak, Alphine Jefferson, Paul Karlstrom and Tracy K'Meyer have organized the sessions around several threads that run through the conference. Memory and the creation of identity is one that unites several sessions on ethnicity, South American history, childhood, the Holocaust and World War II, while others relate to public history and public policy in areas such as the environment and health. Sessions on music, performance and the arts promise to be both informative and entertaining.

Civil rights and race relations are the subject of a number of sessions, including documentary screenings and

discussions of "The Strange Demise of Jim Crow," on desegregation in Houston, and "Journey for Justice: A.P. Tureaud and Civil Rights in Louisiana." Also featured will be a roundtable discussion of white women in the civil rights movement and a look at "Will the Circle Be Unbroken?" the recent public radio documentary sponsored by the Southern Regional Council.

In a special Friday evening program at the Old U.S. Mint, Lindy Wilson, South African documentary filmmaker will show segments from her work on the Truth and Reconciliation Commission hearings.

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### Editor's Note

By Mary Kay Quinlan

Copy deadline for the next issue of the Newsletter is Dec. 1, a good opportunity for state and regional groups with fall events to report fully on them or any other activities that haven't been covered yet this year. Photos are also welcomed.

As a reminder, my new permanent address is 7524 S. 35th St., Lincoln, NE 68516. Phone: 402-420-1473. Fax: 402-420-1770. You can also e-mail me at: [OHAEditor@aol.com](mailto:OHAEditor@aol.com).



Jazz marching bands evoke New Orleans' unique ambiance.

*Photo from the Hogan Jazz Archives, Tulane University*





## From Your President

By Richard Candida Smith  
OHA President

The Oral History Association's executive committee has approved completing a contract that our executive secretary has negotiated with the University of California Press for co-publishing the **Oral History Review**. The new arrangement will begin with the first issue of 1998. Editorial control remains entirely in the hands of Bruce Stave and the Oral History Association, so many members may not notice any difference other than membership renewal notices will start coming from UC Press.

The UC Press will take primary responsibility for publication services, distribution and marketing. This will free the **Review's** editorial staff to focus their attention on the content of the journal. It will also remove a great many demanding and time-consuming tasks from the executive secretary's office.

The long-term result will be dramatic because it will professionalize our daily operations and allow our people to focus on what they can do best.

We and UC Press believe that the new arrangement will lead to growth in our membership.

As with any significant change, there are dangers as well as opportunities. We will not be relying so intensively on unrecompensed volunteer labor, so our costs will increase. Modest expansions in both library subscriptions and in membership will more than offset these new expenses. OHA currently has a very healthy financial situation, so now is a good time to embark on this transition. For the next two years, we will need to be somewhat frugal and circumspect in launching new ventures, but after that we ought to start enjoying the benefits of a highly professional outreach program.

Other articles in this issue of the

**Newsletter** describe in detail the upcoming annual meeting in New Orleans. I want to thank program co-chairs Alphine Jefferson of the College of Wooster and Steven J. Novak of the University of California, Los Angeles, for the many hours they put in to assure that the program offered something for everyone's interests. They were ably assisted by Tracy K'Meyer and Paul Karlstrom.

Local arrangements chair Pamela Dean of Louisiana State University assembled a wonderful group of new Orleans and Louisiana residents who have contributed their expertise so that we can savor the unique nature of our meeting site. Thanks to them we will be enjoying an evening of Cajun music and dancing Saturday night after the dinner, open to all who have registered for the meeting whether they go to the dinner or not.

We will conclude Thursday's events with a plenary session featuring the noted Haitian anthropologist Michel-Rolph Trouillot, who will be speaking on the oral sense of history. Ronald Grele, Alphine Jefferson and Devra Weber will comment and open general discussion.

At the end of the plenary session, we will reconvene for the Presidential Reception in the beautiful halls of Historic New Orleans, only a few blocks away from the Royal Sonesta Hotel in the heart of the French Quarter. As another special feature, noted political columnist John Maginnis will speak at Friday's luncheon about Louisiana politics.

I look forward to greeting all of you in New Orleans on Sept. 25.

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## OHA Donors Thanked

The Oral History Association thanks the following persons who made contributions to the Endowment Fund between April 1 and July 1, 1997.

Jerry Brandes; James E. Fogerty, in honor of Marjorie Amos Fletcher; Jewell Fenzi; Jane Lord; G. Kurt Piehler, in honor of John Whiteclay Chambers II; and Sharon Zane.

## Executive Secretary's Report

By Rebecca Sharpless

Shortly after you receive this **Newsletter** you should receive the program for the 1997 OHA annual meeting, to be held Sept. 25-28 in New Orleans. We have excellent hotel rates at the Royal Sonesta, right in the heart of the French Quarter, so make your reservations before the room block closes Aug. 24!

The program will also be on the OHA home page, [www.baylor.edu/~OHA/](http://www.baylor.edu/~OHA/). Special thanks go to program chairs Alphine Jefferson and Steven J. Novak and local arrangements chairs Pamela Dean and Susan Tucker.

The OHA is using an official travel agent for the first time. Association Travel Concepts handles travel for professional organizations, including the Organization of American Historians. By booking through ATC, you will receive 5 to 10 percent off the lowest air fare, and the OHA will acquire points toward free association-related travel. Watch for details in your program.

Work continues on a number of on-going projects. We are near completion of a contract with the University of California Press to publish the **Oral History Review**, as described in the President's Column.

We are also considering site selection for the annual meeting of 2000. We are currently looking at Chicago and Louisville, but we welcome suggestions for any city in Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Michigan or Ohio.

Your election ballot will arrive soon; exercise your membership and vote for this slate of excellent candidates.

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*Many back issues of the OHA Newsletter are available at clearance prices of only \$1.50 per issue. Call the OHA office at 817-755-2764 or e-mail [OHA\\_Support@Baylor.edu](mailto:OHA_Support@Baylor.edu) to learn which issues are available.*



# San Francisco Civil Rights Movement Topic of OAH Breakfast

By Kim Lady Smith  
Kentucky Historical Society

More than 40 persons attended the annual Oral History Association breakfast at the Organization of American Historians meeting in San Francisco on April 19. Guest speaker Al Broussard, associate professor of history at Texas A&M University and past OHA president, spoke on the African-American civil rights movement in San Francisco.

Looking at the African-American experience in San Francisco, a city with a reputation for openness and toleration, Broussard concluded that "there were at least three rather distinct and intense periods of civil rights activity in San Francisco," and that it "appears to be in the midst of a fourth period of civil rights activity."

From the 1850s to 1915, Broussard described a period of racial restrictions that inspired a "vibrant and

dynamic leadership" within the black community that brought about impressive changes by the turn of the century.

Nevertheless, Broussard challenged "the liberal, progressive image of San Francisco's race relations" by sharing several individual accounts of job discrimination that made housework the only available source of work for black females and kept African-American males in unskilled jobs between 1915 and the 1940s.

With thousands of blacks moving into San Francisco during and after World War II, civil rights activities "accelerated tremendously."

Broussard credited civil rights organizations, including the West Coast Regional Office of the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People, the Council for Civil Unity and the San Francisco Urban League, with providing effective

leadership.

Concluding that San Francisco is in its fourth, but not final, period of civil rights activity, Broussard urged oral historians to "reconstruct racial activism and civil rights activity in San Francisco in the final decade of the 20th century."

During the question-and-answer session following Broussard's remarks, several local participants engaged him in a discussion of current research on civil rights in the region and related issues.

Broussard is a native of San Francisco and a Ph.D. graduate of Duke University. In 1993, he published "Black San Francisco: The Struggle for Racial Equality in the West, 1900-1954." His most recent work, "The Stewarts: Three Generations of an African American Family," is scheduled for publication by the University of Kansas Press in 1998.

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## OHA COMMITTEE NEWS

### Education Committee Outlines Agenda For Roundtable

Please join us in New Orleans for an interdisciplinary roundtable on the teaching of oral history on the post-secondary level. We will discuss:

1. How have you approached teaching oral history?
2. What texts do you use/how do you use them? What additional materials do you need?
3. How have you used an interdisciplinary approach in teaching oral history?
4. How do you combine subject material with oral history methodology?
5. What articles can be generated by members of the Oral History Association to help in teaching post-secondary oral history?

6. What resources should the OHA look to organize or produce that will serve the teaching needs of both those who are new to teaching oral history and the more seasoned oral historians?

The planned roundtable session is sponsored by the OHA Education Committee.

### Volunteers Welcomed To Participate in OHA Committee Assignments

Much of the business of the Oral History Association is carried out by its standing committees, special ad hoc committees and liaisons to other scholarly and professional organizations.

If you would like to serve the association as a committee member or

liaison, please forward a letter indicating your interest to: Rebecca Sharpless, OHA Executive Secretary, Institute for Oral History, P.O. Box 97271, Waco, TX 76798-7271; 817-755-1571 (fax); or e-mail: [OHA\\_Support@Baylor.edu](mailto:OHA_Support@Baylor.edu).

Include in your letter a brief summary of your interest in and experience with oral history and the OHA and attach a short vita.

All service to the association is pro bono. It affords the opportunity to get better acquainted with the OHA and its members and to work in a collegial way with OHA members to advance both the association and the practice of oral history.

OHA committees and the organizations with which it maintains liaisons are listed in the Membership Directory.



## New Orleans Feast On Table for Mind, Body, Soul



Wrought iron railings evoke the image of New Orleans' French Quarter at the Royal Sonesta Hotel, site of the 1997 OHA annual meeting.

*Photo provided by the Royal Sonesta Hotel*

(Continued from page 1)

Wilson sites her work in the tradition of Africa's griot/imbongi storytellers. "Europeans," Wilson notes, "who conquered with guns, simultaneously claimed themselves superior to the indigenous people because they brought with them the written word. They scorned the possibility that history could be passed down accurately by word of mouth. In South Africa today we are experiencing the opposite of that notion: it is the written word that has lied to us for generations and it is by word of mouth that we are piecing together what will be nearest to the truth about our immediate past."

Both the oppressed and the former oppressors are testifying before the commission. "This juxtaposition, in which each hears the other, often in the same room, is surely unique," Wilson observes, "not only for South Africans, but, possibly, in human

history."

Paul Gaston, professor of history at the University of Virginia, who has written on race relations in South Africa and the American South, and Tom Dent, oral historian, former director of the New Orleans Jazz and Heritage Foundation and author of the forthcoming "Southern Journey: A Return to the Civil Rights Movement," will suggest comparisons with the experience of Americans, particularly southerners, in the generation since the climax of the civil rights movement. This special presentation is supported by a grant from the Louisiana Endowment for the Humanities.

Friday's luncheon speaker, John Maginnis, who has been writing about Louisiana politics since Edwin Edwards' first year in the Governor's Mansion, 1972, will try to explain the state's unique brand of politics, which has been referred to variously as theater, circus and as the state's

favorite spectator sport.

Huey Long set the mold in the '30s, but Edwards has been the quintessential practitioner of the art for more than 25 years. Maginnis is the author of two books on Louisiana politics, "The Last Hayride," (a tale of when Louisiana politics was still fun) and "Cross to Bear," (the 1991 race from hell), about the campaign for governor between Edwards, former governor Buddy Roemer and former Ku Klux Klansman David Duke.

Maginnis publishes a weekly newsletter and a syndicated column and often comments on Louisiana politics for the national media. He is currently writing a book on the politics of gambling.

The local arrangements committee has been cooking up some exciting tours and other activities for your after-conference hours.

Because food and music are the essence of New Orleans, local hosts



will take you Friday night to their favorite restaurants and night spots, the places tourists don't always find. We'll offer a variety of types of food--vegetarian to seafood to soul food to Cajun to haute Creole--with a range of prices as well. Check your registration packets for further information and look for the sign-up sheets at the registration desk.

Then Saturday night, following the banquet, we'll dance the night away to the music of Kristi Guillory and Reveille, among Louisiana's hottest young performers of traditional-style Cajun music and one of the few groups of any age led by a woman.

Guillory, just 18 years old, has been playing accordion since she was 11 and organized her first band when she was 13. She has won several awards, as an accordionist and vocalist, and released her first CD, "Reveille: The New Cajun Generation," in 1995. A second CD came out last year. About Guillory's debut at the 1996 Jazz Fest, the local arts and entertainment weekly said, "Guillory possesses youthful energy as well as a quality of musicianship that makes her young age irrelevant."

The band's name comes from a Zachary Richard anthem about waking up the culture, and Guillory is committed to reviving interest among

her generation in Cajun music and culture. She is majoring in French at the University of Southwestern Louisiana.

Saturday afternoon's tours will offer a sampling of all things wonderful in south Louisiana.

Laura Plantation, built in 1805 and headed by women for 84 years, is one of the oldest and largest existing plantation complexes in the area. It has 12 historic buildings, including two manor houses, slave quarters and creole cottages. The tour is based on 5,000 pages of documents from the Archives Nationales de Paris and Laura Locoul's "Memoires of My Old Plantation Home."

The Honey Island Swamp tour is another enticing choice. Venture into the interior of one of the wildest and most pristine river swamps in America and the Nature Conservancy's first Louisiana nature preserve.

Tour guide Paul Wagner, a wetland ecologist, uses small boats that allow access deep into the swamp interior. Resident and migratory wildlife we may see include alligators, bald eagles, herons, egrets, ibis, owls, osprey, deer, black bear, feral hogs, nutria, raccoon, otter, beaver, mink, turtles and frogs.

Our French Quarter walking tour (wheelchair accessible) offers a memorable walk through one of the oldest communities in the United States, the historic Vieux Carre. The tour emphasizes the history, folklore and architecture of the Quarter and includes visits to two private courtyards.

Or ride in the St. Charles Streetcar to the fabled Garden District, the "American sector," which was developed after 1830. Stroll through this beautiful antebellum neighborhood with its Greek revival mansions, hear the stories of its early residents and visit a private home where you'll meet the present owner who'll tell us the history of the house.

Our African-American history and culture walking tour starts at one of New Orleans' famous above-ground cemeteries. The tour will include visits to Congo Square, Louis

Armstrong Park, the site of voodoo queen Marie Laveau's house and a voodoo temple.

Tour capacity is limited so register early! Also remember that Louisiana can still be quite warm in late September, and all tours involve some walking and time outdoors. We suggest that you wear light, loose clothing and comfortable walking shoes for all tours. Sunglasses and umbrellas are useful accessories. On any given day in Louisiana you'll need both, and umbrellas can provide welcome shelter from sun as well as rain.

The local arrangements committee co-chairs are Pamela Dean, Williams Center for Oral History, Louisiana State University, and Susan Tucker, Newcomb College Center for Research on Women, Tulane University.

The committee includes: Al Kennedy, New Orleans Public Schools; Karen Leathem, Louisiana State Museum; Alfred Lemon, Historic New Orleans Collection; Mark Cave, Historic New Orleans Collection; Dorothy Schlesinger, Friends of the Cabildo; Bruce Raeburn, Hogan Jazz Archives, Tulane University; and Sailor Jackson, Old State Capital Center for Political and Governmental History.

We all look forward to seeing you in New Orleans.



Cajun recording artist Kristi Guillory will entertain OHA members following the Saturday night banquet. *Photo by Lemoine Studio, Ville Platte, La.*

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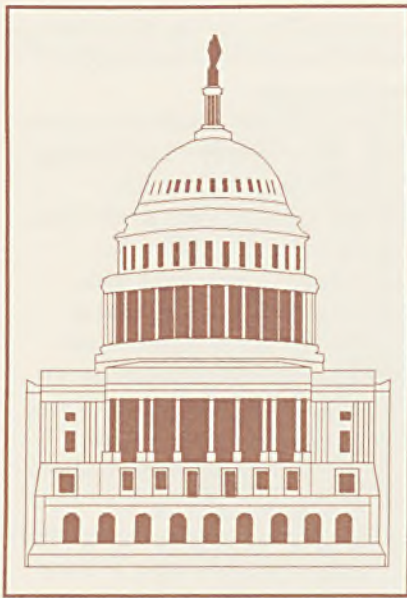
## Silent Auction Benefits OHA Endowment Fund

Lots of goodies will be available to bid on in this year's silent auction to benefit the OHA Endowment Fund.

Items include: tickets to the House of Blues; posters of jazz greats and Mardi Gras Indians; books on New Orleans arts and architecture, including one on Newcomb College pottery; a week in January at a beach-front condominium in Vero Beach, Fla.; an autographed copy of a first edition of T. Harry Williams' Pulitzer Prize-winning biography, "Huey Long," and many other treats.

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## Washington Update

**By Page Putnam Miller**  
**National Coordinating Committee**  
**for the Promotion of History**

*Editor's Note: The National Coordinating Committee for the Promotion of History (NCC) serves as a national advocacy office in Washington for historical and archival professions. It is a consortium of more than 50 organizations, including the Oral History Association.*

*Here are selected excerpts from recent "NCC Washington Update" columns.*

### **Appeals Court Hears Oral Arguments on Public Interest Standard for Unsealing Grand Jury Records**

On June 7 the U.S. Court of Appeals for the Second Circuit in New York City heard oral arguments in the case of Bruce Craig v. United States of America. Craig, a Ph.D. student at American University, filed a petition in 1996--that was denied by the lower court--for an order releasing historically significant grand jury records pertaining to a McCarthy-era espionage investigation of Harry Dexter White, a high-ranking

Treasury Department official accused of being a Communist spy.

Craig sought access to the 79-page transcript of White's grand jury testimony that occurred five months before his death. Craig's petition claimed an overwhelming public interest, rooted in access for genuine historical research, in disclosure of the White grand jury transcript and little interest in maintaining its secrecy.

In oral arguments, the plaintiff's attorney focused on diminishing sensitivity over time and the historical interest in old records in which no harm would result from their release. The government's defense was rooted in the narrow argument that the Court should not deviate from the rule for keeping grand jury records closed. The government did not attempt to make a case that the records in question are not of historical value.

The American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians, the National Council on Public History and the Society of American Archivists filed a brief supporting Craig's petition.

### **Oral Arguments in Electronic Records Court Case**

The U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia heard oral arguments June 27 in the case of Public Citizen v. John Carlin, U.S. Archivist. The American Library Association, the National Security Archive, the American Historical Association, the Organization of American Historians and a number of individual researchers are co-plaintiffs in the case.

The suit challenges the Archivist's promulgation of a "General Records Schedule" authorizing all federal agencies, at their discretion, to destroy the only electronic version of federal agency records stored on agency electronic mail and word processing systems, provided the agency has printed a hard copy of the electronic record on paper or microform. The complaint states that the Archivist has "improperly ignored the unique value of electronic records."

The government rooted its defense in the argument of content versus form,

stressing that while the electronic record is not being preserved, the content is being preserved in paper form. The government also asserted that some agencies are not as technologically sophisticated as others and preservation of content in paper form is what is realistic and that saving all electronic mail would clog the system.

Judge Paul Friedman, who heard the case, interrupted with frequent questions: Would it be all right to destroy all memoranda, regardless of format? Most corporations have record-keeping policies that specify a specific time period for saving materials, why not the same for the government? Why does the government have to have one government-wide plan? Why couldn't it have different plans for agencies that are more technologically advanced?

The plaintiffs argued that the General Records Schedule was intended to deal with routine, narrow administrative records and not with substantive policy records and that electronic records included under this schedule now include programmatic records on the development of agency policy.

Plaintiffs also stressed the importance of format, since electronic records have special research capabilities that paper records don't have.

Plaintiffs stressed they were not recommending that all electronic records be preserved, but that, on a case by case basis, electronic systems, not individual records, should be evaluated for their potential for having historically significant material. Thus, while it may not be necessary to preserve the e-mail from the Bureau of Printing and Engraving, the e-mail of policymakers at the State Department may be slated for preservation because of their significance.

Judge Friedman's questions for the plaintiffs focused mainly on issues of clarification, such as how appraisal of electronic systems would be handled and whether drafts are considered federal records. A decision on the case is not expected for several months.



# Oral History and the Obituary Writer

By Andrew McGowan

*Editor's Note: The following account is excerpted from "Collecting Biography, Obit by Obit," in the Spring 1997 issue of "Alumnus: The City College of New York."*

Imagine my thrill, as an avid reader of [the New York] Times obituaries, when I received a call from Alden Whitman. A Timesman put into what could have been journalistic Siberia, he made the Paper of Record's obituaries into what they should be--daily biography.

I got the call in 1970, when I was public relations manager at St. Luke's Hospital, where Aleksandr Kerensky, who had been president of Russia between the Czar and the Communists, was a patient. "How's the patient?" Whitman wanted to know.

I knew about some living people's obituaries being written, even set in type, to allow publication on short notice. But I never thought about the obituary writer calling to check on the medical condition of such people. Alden and I became telephone friends as he checked with me every day or so about Kerensky, and we chatted about other things.

Weeks after Kerensky died and the obit was published, I was surprised to get a call from Alden. I wondered if there was an important patient he knew about and I didn't.

"Andy, you know I live just a few blocks from the hospital...I have this car I use only on weekends to go to the Hamptons. It has to be jockeyed to alternate sides weekdays...What is the chance of getting a space in the hospital garage?"

Not likely, I said; did he have any connection with our cousin institution, Columbia University? Stay by the phone, he said.

In no time at all, he called back: "How does 'consultant to the oral history collection of the Columbia University Library' sound?"

Not very strong, I said, but I would try it on the hospital's administration. As expected, they said Whitman's Columbia position didn't compare with those of hospital employees who were waiting for parking spaces.

So that ended my contact with Alden Whitman. I would read his long obits and his occasional pieces on a living but elderly public figure.

Then one Sunday, in the Times Magazine, I saw an article on an aging European prince with Alden's byline. A chill went up my spine as my eyes darted to the bottom of the column, where the paper would have to admit, in a description of the author, that Alden was updating the man's obituary. Predeath knocking. There in italics were the words I remembered very clearly: "Alden Whitman is a consultant to the oral history collection of the Columbia University Library."

It didn't get him a parking space, but it allowed him to ply his trade gracefully.

## OHA Archives Receives Tapes Of Arrowhead Conference

The Oral History Association's archives at the University of North Texas has received a set of audiotapes made at the Lake Arrowhead, Calif., meeting in September 1966 that led to creation of the OHA.

The tapes were made by Victor H. Witten, trustee of the Dermatology Foundation of Miami Tape Studio and Library, who describes himself as a proponent of "aural" history, with a focus on preserving the "voices, manner of speech, method of presentation and the many nuances of the voice of the speaker."

Witten's tapes include a recording of Allan Nevins, who spoke at the organizing meeting on "Definitions of Oral History." The collection also

includes lectures by Louis Starr, James Mink and other OHA founders.

"I hope that these tapes will be of importance and value to you and your organization, but above all, I trust that their contents will be kept intact in the aural format as, in this way, they are, in my opinion, extremely valuable," Witten said in a letter forwarding the tapes.

"It is my pleasure," he added, "to provide these recordings with the hope that they will become part of your permanent library."

## Utah, Washington Students Win OHA Prize At 1997 History Day

Indian boarding schools and World War II's Manhattan Project were the topics of 1997 National History Day entries that each won \$100 prizes from the Oral History Association.

Maren Farnsworth, Heather Spencer and Silvia Pena, who will be ninth graders at Duchesne Junior High School in Duchesne, Utah, won the OHA award for their junior group performance "To Cage an Eagle: The Story of a Forbidden Culture." Their project focused on a Ute Indian boarding school. Duchesne is located near a Ute reservation.

Bernadette Borte, who will be a junior at Port Angeles High School in Port Angeles, Wash., took the OHA prize for her senior individual exhibit "Dawn Over Zero: The Manhattan Project, 1942-1945." In a total of 28 interviews, she talked to scientists involved in research that led to development of the atomic bomb as well as survivors of the blasts over the Japanese cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki.

Since 1988 the OHA has offered two \$100 awards at the annual National History Day to the individual or group in both the junior and senior level competition whose research and final product incorporates oral history.



# STATE AND REGIONAL REPORT



## Floods of '97: Oral History in Action

By James E. Fogerty  
Minnesota Historical Society

Long before the Red River of the North created a 3,000 square mile inland sea, the Minnesota State Historical Records Advisory Board had planned a multi-year project to improve documentation of the state's agricultural communities.

While changes in the urban landscape and the realities of city life have received a good deal of attention, changes sweeping rural communities have received much less. Faced with the retreat of health care, education and retail facilities to ever more centralized locations, rural communities are caught up in a quiet revolution that affects the quality of life on farms and in small towns across the nation.

To lay the groundwork for projects that will deal with these realities, the board commissioned a survey of organizations and individuals serving the needs of farm families and those in small towns. To ensure a workable field of action, the board selected the Red River Valley of northwestern Minnesota for its pilot projects. The completed survey led to a board meeting with community leaders in November 1996 and to a series of meetings and workshops held from May through August this year.

The massive flooding that overwhelmed much of northwestern Minnesota has given extra impetus to the Agriculture and Rural Life Project and has added priorities to its work.

The Minnesota Historical Society has begun an oral history project to document the devastation and its effects, as well as the period of recovery that will stretch for many months. Working in concert with local historical organizations and with the Northwest Minnesota Historical Center at Moorhead State University, the society will create a record of this "once in 500 years" event that captured the attention of a worldwide audience.

At the same time, society staff are capturing information from the major World Wide Web sites established to convey information and images of the flood and to provide links between flood victims scattered over hundreds of miles in temporary shelters. This work is critical to deal with Web sites that sprang up overnight and were abandoned as the crisis passed.

While the flood was unexpected and destructive, its documentation is important to the project and to the larger goals of the Minnesota Historical Society. As the society's staff meets the challenges of improving documentation of rural life, it must also deal with calls for information on the preservation of family photos, diaries, letters and objects. And it must deal with the needs of county and local historical organizations whose buildings and collections were caught in the path of flood waters.

The oral history project will last for six months to deal effectively with the aftermath of the flood.

Documenting the crisis has been done; documenting the far longer and more difficult period of cleanup, reconstruction and coping is a major goal. The oral histories will be part of the much larger Agriculture and Rural Life Documentation Project.

For additional information, contact James E. Fogerty, Minnesota Historical Society, 612-296-9989. E-mail: james.fogerty@mnhs.org.

## University of Florida Honors Sam Proctor

The University of Florida's Oral History Program has been named in honor of Samuel Proctor, distinguished service professor emeritus. Proctor founded the program in 1967 and recently retired after 50 years on the University of Florida faculty. He served as Oral History Association president in 1974-75.

The university's oral history program aims to preserve for future generations an eyewitness account of the economic, social, political, religious and intellectual life of Florida and the South. The collection includes some 3,200 interviews with more than 80,000 pages of transcribed material available for use by scholars, students, journalists, genealogists and others.

The Samuel Proctor Oral History Program is interviewing Florida business leaders, University of Florida Olympic athletes, Florida political leaders and UF faculty, administrators and alumni.

The program is funded by the Department of History and the College of Liberal Arts and Sciences and receives support from the Colleges of Medicine and Law and the UF Foundation.

## UCLA Award to Novak

Steven J. Novak, senior editor in the UCLA Oral History Program, was the recipient of a 1996-97 UCLA Library Staff Incentive Award for Individual Achievement.

Novak was honored for his contribution as lead editor and interviewer for the Oral History Program's successful ongoing participation in the Pew Scholars in the Biomedical Sciences Oral History and Archives Project sponsored by The Pew Charitable Trusts.

Novak is co-chair of the program committee for the 1997 OHA meeting in New Orleans.



# Oral History in the Classroom and on the World Wide Web

**By Marjorie L. McLellan**  
Miami University

On the first day of my U.S. History Survey course, we do a quick demographic survey. Using a regional map of the United States, students jot down the regions or nations where they, their parents and their grandparents were born. Two students tabulate the results on the blackboard and, by the grandparent generation, a surge of migration from Appalachia to southern Ohio becomes evident.

Along the way, I ask how many students have, or have heard that they have, American Indian ancestry. The result averages out to one in six, generally claiming Cherokee ancestry.

We discuss the patterns evident or absent from the resulting table as well as the factors that might make a college classroom an inaccurate sample population.

In this 40-minute exercise, students learn to gather and interrogate data as they identify historical developments shaping both the region and their own lives. This leads into their big assignment for the semester: the oral history project.

A few years back, I assigned a family history project based on Allen Davis' "Your Family in Modern American History" in order to learn more about my students. I had almost despaired of bringing my own research into survey courses, when the students seized on these family history projects.

As a result of their research, students had something of their own to bring to discussions of how Americans responded to the Great Depression and World War II. To my surprise, I learned that one student grew up in a commune and another traveled the Midwest with her gospel-singing family. The results led me to teach more about industrial history, Southern history and the history of religion.

Impressed with the quality of their work, I created an oral history

assignment for introductory students. Students work in pairs or small groups to make and transcribe their own tape-recorded interviews around either life histories or topics like the Vietnam War.

When Judith Helfand, co-producer of the documentary, "Uprising of Thirty-Four," teamed up with a local labor union president for a public screening of her film, the ensuing discussion gave rise to new student research opportunities with the union. Selected tapes and transcripts will be archived in the Special Collections Library at Miami University, and student projects are shared with the public via the World Wide Web.

Two years ago, my campus sent me to a distance learning conference at Ohio State University's Center for Advanced Study in Telecommunications. In a two-hour workshop, I learned the rudiments of HTML (HyperText Mark-up Language), which provides the codes that give form, color and interconnectivity to the Web pages on graphical browsers like Netscape.

I was and remain apprehensive; new technologies offer opportunities and raise disturbing problems. Last year, I and many other teachers took our students for a spin on the new superhighway. I almost crashed from road fatigue.

I sought a distant partner to share the experience. Theresa Healy volunteered her class at the University of Northern British Columbia. Our students produced annotated interview transcripts and papers, which I attempted to convert to HTML. We had hoped to have students correspond via a Listserv about the interviews, but by the time I overcame some of the technical problems, the term was slipping away.

Students wanted to create a magazine look with photographs and artwork, but I had trouble with simple problems like aligning margins. A computer aficionado wanted to include sound on his page; instead of a

snippet, he sent me an audio file of the entire interview, which swamped my computer. When we invited the people we had interviewed to see the results, the university connection to the Internet broke down.

Technical problems aside, the Internet raised ethical questions I still grapple with. Student research is no longer confined to classroom discussions; it is available to the world as well as to local audiences. Personal stories of hard-drinking grandparents, the wise-cracking of a political insider, a generational divide in a local church--the stories and words of often named and even more often identifiable individuals--seem all too accessible. I worked with the Human Subjects Research Committee at Miami University to develop appropriate guidelines and procedures for student fieldwork and WWW publication. The results are on line at: <http://www.muohio.edu/oralhistory/release.html>

My students are engaged in historical research and public history. We discuss questions of libel, ethics and privacy as well as fact checking and historical interpretation. I have moved slowly to add material to the Miami Valley Cultural Heritage Project home page as we explored these issues, yet the students and the people involved in the interviews are ever eager to see themselves on the Internet.

*Editor's Note: Marjorie McLellan serves as chair of the OHA Education Committee.*





# BULLETIN BOARD

## Meetings

### 1997 OHA in New Orleans

See you in New Orleans, Sept. 25-28. Reserve early!

## Calls for Papers

### National Council on Public History

The National Council on Public History invites submissions of papers, sessions, workshops, media presentations and other information formats for the 1998 meeting in Austin, Texas, April 15-19, 1998.

Themes of the meeting include the international practice of public history, ways in which the practice of public history includes multicultural perspectives and the interactions of various disciplines in public practice.

Obtain detailed instructions from program co-chairs Carl Phagan and Kris Mitchell at Batelle Complex, P.O. Box 30020, Building 12-2B, Amarillo, TX 79120-0020. E-mail: KMITCHEL1@pantex.com.

## Opportunities

### Field Research Grants

The Center for Field Research at Earthwatch invites proposals for field research that investigates and documents oral history around the world. Earthwatch provides researchers with nonspecialist, English-speaking volunteers who are screened according to the project's needs and who join researchers in the field to assist with data collection.

Field grants average \$22,000 with the amount determined by the number of volunteers utilized over the course of a field season. Proposals are reviewed monthly and should be received one year in advance of anticipated field dates.

For more information, contact Abby Armstrong, program officer, at CFR, 680 Mt. Auburn St., Box 9104, Watertown, MA 02272. Telephone: 617-926-8200. Fax: 617-926-8532. E-mail: aarmstrong@earthwatch.org.

### Baylor Solicits Manuscripts

Baylor University Press is soliciting manuscripts in the field of oral history. It is especially interested in contemporary and historical works in religion and ethics as well as the history and culture of Texas and the Southwest.

Inquiries may be directed to: David Holcomb, Acquisitions Editor, Baylor University Press, Baylor University, Box 97363, Waco, TX 76798. Telephone: 254-755-3217. E-mail: David\_Holcomb@baylor.edu

### Pennsylvania Scholars Program

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission invites applications for its 1998-99 Scholars in Residence Program. It provides support for full-time research and study at any commission facility, including the State Archives, State Museum and 26 historical sites and museums. Residencies are available for four to 12 consecutive weeks between May 1, 1998, and April 30, 1999, at the rate of \$1,200 a month.

The program is open to all who are conducting research on Pennsylvania history, including academic scholars, public sector professionals, independent scholars, graduate students, writers, filmmakers and others.

For information and application materials, contact: Division of History, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108; 717-787-3034.

Deadline is Jan. 16, 1998.

## Announcements

### Navy Oral History Collections

David F. Winkler, with the Navy oral history program, thanks all who took the time to respond to a survey sent in the spring to identify repositories having Navy-related oral histories. Nearly 50 repositories were identified, collectively holding about 4,000 interviews covering a broad spectrum of social, cultural, political,

military and historical issues.

The end product will be a "Directory of Navy Oral History," to be published early in 1998, having a cross-referenced listing of the repositories, interviewees and subjects.

If a repository was overlooked, there is still time to provide information for the directory. Contact Winkler at: dwinkler@erols.com. Telephone: 301-984-0629. Or write: Senior Historian, Naval Historical Center, 901 M St. SE, Bldg. 57, Washington Navy Yard, Washington, D.C. 20374-5060.

### Alaska Native Cultural Preservation Project

The Denakkanaaga "Spirit of Our Ancestors" project in Fairbanks, Alaska, is assembling a comprehensive cultural resource inventory as part of its effort to preserve the cultural traditions and values of the Athabascan people of the Alaskan interior.

The inventory will allow villages and schools to learn about and gain access to audio and video interviews, written material and publications that have been done by Athabascan elders throughout the region.

Those who can assist in identifying any collections of oral interviews or written materials that deal with cultural traditions and values of the interior region is asked to contact: Cathi Ipalook, Project Coordinator, Denakkanaaga, Inc. "Spirit of Our Ancestors" Project, 411 Fourth Ave., Suite I, Fairbanks, Alaska 99701.

### Museum Studies Program

Baylor University has announced it will offer new undergraduate and graduate minors in its Department of Museum Studies aimed at providing museum professional training to students majoring in history, art, biology, geology, anthropology, education and business administration.

For information, call T. Lindsey Baker, assistant professor, Department of Museum Studies, 817-755-1233.



**Call for Papers**  
**"Crossing the Boundary, Crossing the Line:**  
**Oral History on the Border"**

**Oral History Association Annual Meeting**  
**Hyatt Regency, Buffalo, New York**  
**Oct. 15-18, 1998**

The program committee for the Oral History Association's 1998 annual meeting invites proposals for presentations on all aspects of the practice and interpretation of oral history. We are particularly interested in proposals relating to the conference theme, "Crossing the Boundary, Crossing the Line: Oral History on the Border."

Borders and boundaries suggest many things: margins, edges and limits; inclusion and exclusion; identity and difference; geography, definitions of space and mapping. Oral history itself is located along many borders: between narrators and interviewers; between history and memory; between public and scholarly history; between academic disciplines; between private and public lives. Oral history is thus particularly well situated to bridge the gaps that historically have divided many communities, constituencies and fields.

As the OHA convenes along the U.S.-Canadian border and at the edge of the 20th century, we hope the program will reflect the numerous ways in which this theme can be approached. Possible topics include, but are in no way limited to: mediations among diverse communities; class, ethnic, racial and gender perspectives; interdisciplinary approaches; transnational issues; new frontiers in technology; lesbian and gay history; relationships in interviewing; shifting borders in oral history and ethical and legal boundaries.

We hope the annual meeting will reflect the wide variety of disciplines and settings in which oral history is practiced, and so we welcome proposals from academic scholars, public history professionals working in museums, historical societies, archives and libraries, community historians, media professionals, independent researchers, graduate students and teachers. We especially seek presentations that directly engage current issues in the field of oral history, rather than simply integrate data from interviews into the discussion of a specific topic.

In addition to traditional research leading to publication, sessions may address the many uses of oral history in other formats. While sessions may be organized in the customary panel format, we encourage proposals for roundtables, workshops, media and performance-oriented sessions, off-site sessions and other formats. Along this line, we plan to develop poster sessions featuring brief presentations of work in progress, and to convene interest groups for networking. Proposals for poster sessions and suggestions for interest group topics or convenors are welcomed.

The program committee encourages proposals for entire sessions, though we will also combine proposals for single

presentations into full sessions, and, as necessary, add a single paper to sessions where time is available. A proposal for a full session should include a chair and no more than four participants, including one or more commentators. Proposals that do not conform to this rule must be revised.

The committee encourages sessions in which participants represent the diversity of oral history practitioners, including international oral historians, and sessions that break down traditional intellectual and professional borders within the field. Finally, we encourage sessions that are not simply descriptive, but reach for analysis, reflection and evaluation. We welcome proposals in French for presentations from French-speaking Canadians, as well as proposals from other professional organizations, including the state and regional oral history associations affiliated with the OHA.

OHA policy prevents those who will have presented papers at the 1997 annual meeting from doing so in 1998. Such individuals, however, may serve as session chairs and commentators. All program participants are expected to register for the meeting.

Each proposal must include a cover sheet that includes the information listed below. Proposals for entire sessions should include a one-page description of the issues and questions the session will address and a one-page abstract of each paper in the session. Proposals for an individual paper or presentation should include a one-page abstract of that presentation. A one-page vita of each participant must be included with each proposal. Applicants must submit four copies of each proposal.

**COVER SHEET INFORMATION:**

- 1) Type of proposal--panel, roundtable, workshop, single paper, media presentation, poster session, other (please specify);
- 2) Title of session or single paper;
- 3) Proposer, chair, presenters, commentators--name, institutional affiliation, address, phone, fax and e-mail numbers for EACH. Also include title of each presentation.

Send all queries and proposals to the program chairs:

Debra Bernhardt, Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives,  
70 Washington Square South, New York, NY 10012.  
Telephone: 212-998-2640. Fax: 212-995-4070.  
E-mail (queries only): [berhndt@elmer1.bobst.nyu.edu](mailto:berhndt@elmer1.bobst.nyu.edu)

Cliff Kuhn, Department of History, Georgia State  
University, Atlanta, GA 30303. Telephone: 404-651-3255.  
Fax: 404-651-1745. E-mail: [hiscmk@panther.gsu.edu](mailto:hiscmk@panther.gsu.edu)

**PROPOSAL DEADLINE: Dec. 15, 1997**



# Long-Range Planning Committee Continues Work

By Anne G. Ritchie, Chair  
Long-Range Planning Committee

The Oral History Association's long-range planning committee held a meeting at the Organization of American Historians conference in San Francisco in April to review the committee's work to date and to outline tasks for the coming months.

Committee members Tom Charlton, Cullom Davis, Tom King, Anne Ritchie, Kim Lady Smith, Alva Moore Stevenson, Dale Treleven and OHA executive committee members Richard Candida Smith, Rebecca Sharpless and Linda Shopes spent most of a day discussing the OHA's future. Other committee members who were unable to attend were Terry Birdwhistell and Lila Goff.

On the committee's agenda is a review of our annual meetings, finances, membership development, publications and administrative structure. The committee has divided into smaller working groups, each

addressing one of these topics, and a representative from each group reported on its area of study. The reports provided the range of possible directions for the future. Discussions on each report raised many additional questions, both practical and far-reaching, involving the OHA's well being and future growth.

For that meeting, committee members gathered information on the operations and strategic planning of other professional organizations. These comparisons provided some useful ideas for our work.

What the committee needs now is to hear from OHA members, since you will be participants in the recommendations that the committee will offer. For instance:

Do OHA publications meet your needs and expectations? Are you satisfied with their content, format and frequency?

What changes would you like to see in the annual meetings?

Should OHA create new

committees, such as a technology committee, to study the impact of new technology on oral history, or a financial planning committee to assist with OHA's business?

How can OHA expand its membership?

What would encourage nonmembers who attend OHA's annual meetings to join the organization?

The committee will mail a survey to all members before the annual meeting in New Orleans. We encourage each of you to return the form with your suggestions and ideas.

In New Orleans, long-range planning will be part of the various committee meetings and will be on the agenda for the general business meeting.

In the meantime, all of the committee members would welcome your comments and suggestions. So please get in touch with us and share your concerns.

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