

PLANS FOR 1972 OHA COLLOQUIUM IN AUSTIN, TEXAS ANNOUNCED

The 7th Annual Colloquium of the Oral History Association, to be held in Austin, Texas, from November 10-12, promises to be one of the more unique meetings held thus far. The program chairman for the colloquium is Ronald Marcello, coordinator of the Oral History Collection at North Texas State University, and the local arrangements are being handled by Kenneth Ragsdale, who is director of education services for the Texas State Historical Association with headquarters in Austin. In their endeavor both Marcello and Ragsdale are receiving invaluable assistance from Joe Frantz of the LBJ Oral History project.

An informal canvass of Association members made during and after the Bloomington gathering indicated that a substantial bloc was interested in placing more emphasis on the non-elitist approach to oral history, and as a result the Austin colloquium will endeavor to satisfy that desire. In addition, there will be several sessions dealing with some interesting innovative techniques and methodology developed by practitioners of oral history during the past few years. And finally, attention will be given to old but still unresolved problems that have been with us for years.

The highlight of the activities on Friday will be an evening address by Alex Haley, the author of *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Haley wrote as a free lance for numerous magazines, including *Harper's*, *The Atlantic Monthly*, *The New York Times Magazine* before moving on to *Reader's Digest* as a staff writer. He finally caught on with *Playboy* magazine as its chief interviewer, and one of the personalities interviewed by Haley was the controversial Malcolm X. Shortly thereafter, Haley continued interviewing him over a two-year period, and in 1965 he published *The Autobiography of Malcolm X*. Since then, the book has sold over 3.5 million copies in eight languages and has been named one of the "Ten Best American Books of the 1960s Decade."

For the past seven years Haley has been engaged in a genealogical study of his family, starting with a few slender,



Plans for the upcoming Austin colloquium were discussed in April at the oral history workshop sponsored by the Texas Historical Foundation. Left to right: Charles Morrissey, OHA President; Ronald Marcello, Program Chairman; Truett Latimer, Workshop

Chairman; Kenneth Ragsdale, Local Arrangements Chairman; Amelia Fry, OHA Secretary; William Wyatt, Workshop Instructor; and Thomas Charlton, Local Arrangements Committee Member.

oral history, family lineage clues passed down to him in Tennessee by his maternal grandmother. He finally has traced that side of his family back to a Mandingo youth named Kunta Kinte from the small village of Juffure, The Gambia, West Africa. Haley's seventh-generation forefather, this slave, landed in colonial America on September 29, 1767. Haley's research is now completed, and he is presently in the closing stages of writing the resulting book entitled *Before This Anger*.

The outstanding event on Saturday's agenda will be a bus trip-picnic through the beautiful Texas hill country with stops at the LBJ boyhood home, the LBJ birthplace, and hopefully the LBJ Ranch. At the conclusion of the trip, a Texas barbecue featuring beef, beer, and all the trimmings will take place at LBJ State Park. Following the barbecue, the annual business meeting of the Association will be held in the auditorium at the park. For those who do not wish to go on the bus trip, an afternoon session has been planned at the colloquium headquarters in the Villa

Capri Motel, and after the session these people will have an opportunity to visit the LBJ Library, which is across the street from the motel. In addition, later in the evening, transportation will be available to take those remaining at the motel out to the LBJ State Park, so that they might attend the business session.

At the conclusion of the business session, there will be an important open discussion of the goals and services that ought to be provided by the Oral History Association. In some quarters there has been considerable thought as to what common concerns the Association should be devoting its attention, and it is hoped that this discussion will provide some feedback on how we, as an association, have responded in fostering oral history projects and supporting work in the oral history field. Because the Association cuts across so many subject lines, there is always the question of how relevant it is to the affairs of all the persons represented in it.

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FOCUS ON ORAL HISTORY AT WORKSHOPS AND PROFESSIONAL MEETINGS INCREASES

During 1971-72, oral history has received far greater attention at conferences, institutes, workshops, and professional meetings. There has also been a marked increase in the number of workshops devoted exclusively to oral history which have been conducted in various parts of the country during recent months. In addition to the two-day workshop sponsored by OHA at its Bloomington colloquium last year, and scheduled again this fall for the Austin meeting, a variety of other programs have been offered.

Immediately following the OHA Bloomington colloquium last fall, Paige Mulholland directed an oral history workshop at Kansas State University in Manhattan, Kansas. Under a grant from the Texas Historical Foundation, Truett Latimer, executive director of the Texas State Historical Survey Committee, sponsored a two-day workshop in Austin, Texas on March 31-April 1. At California State College, Fullerton, Professor Gary L. Shumway of the Department of History held a workshop on April 21-22. At the same time, in Nashville, Tennessee, Ann Allen Shockley, director of the Black Oral History Program, Fisk University, held the Black Oral History Conference, April 20-22, under the auspices of the university's library.

Two summer institutes involving oral history are scheduled this year. The institute to be held at Carthage College, Kenosha, Wisconsin, June 26-July 22, was described in the March issue of the Newsletter. Also, the Ohio Historical Society will hold its second annual Archives-Library Institute on Historical Research Materials from July 10-21 in Columbus, Ohio, under the direction of David Larson, Ohio Historical Society. The two-week oral history seminar section at this institute will be taught again this year by David J. Rosenblatt, oral history specialist, Ohio Historical Society.

So far this year the American Association of State and Local History has sponsored eight regional workshops which have included instruction in oral history. Sessions were conducted at Wilmington, Delaware; Raleigh, North Carolina; Salt Lake City; North Andover, Massachusetts; Sacramento, California; Oklahoma City; Indianapolis; and St. Paul, Minnesota. OHA members who have participated as instructors at these AASLH workshops include Peter Olch, Joe Frantz, Knox Mellon, and Ann Campbell.

There is also a growing trend toward including oral history in one or more of the sessions at annual meetings of historical and other professional associations. The session on oral history to be held at the annual meeting of the American Historical Society's Pacific Coast section in Santa Barbara this August is described in this issue of the Newsletter. Also, the American Library Association at its annual meeting in Chicago will include a session on oral history (June 29), which will feature papers by OHA members Charles Crawford and John Wickman.

The increased attention which oral history has been receiving at workshops, institutes, and conferences, inspired by OHA members as well as by those in other organizations, has prompted President Charles Morrissey to circulate a questionnaire on the subject to members of the Executive Council. The questions to be considered are: what OHA's role in oral history instruction should be, and how the Association can assist in making such instruction more

effective. Suggestions from the membership should be sent to the president at The Ford Foundation, 320 East 43rd Street, New York, New York 10017.

NORTH CAROLINA HISTORY TO BE RECORDED

Since joining the staff of the U.S. National Park Service at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park in North Carolina, William Weaver reports that he has found a "fantastic need and growing interest for oral history in this area." The North Carolina side of the park borders on the Cherokee Indian Reservation, and a Cherokee oral history program has been organized with the assistance of tribal officials and the park service historian. The new project has also attracted the interest of the University of Florida with an offer of assistance from Professor John K. Mahon of its Department of History, and there is "moral support" from such institutions as Western Carolina University and the Western North Carolina Historical Association. According to Weaver, "Our main objective is to establish and organize a Western North Carolina oral history project." It is hoped that the project can work with several educational institutions toward the goal of recording "all aspects" of Western North Carolina history.

Bill Weaver also reports that his new location in Western North Carolina has presented further opportunities to pursue his personal project of interviewing Bataan and Corregidor veterans of the Philippine Campaign (December 8, 1941-May 5, 1942). The American Defenders of Bataan and Corregidor holds its annual reunion at the Fontana Village Resort, just fifty miles from Weaver's homebase at Cherokee, North Carolina. Last August, he was invited to attend the organization's meeting and succeeded in obtaining a number of new interviews. This coming August, he will be on the program to speak about oral history and record all of the sessions during the five-day reunion. He will also be seeking additional interviews with veterans. To date, he has conducted over 21 interviews on the campaign and recorded approximately 60 hours of research material.

BRITISH ORAL HISTORY CONFERENCE

A three-day conference on Problems of Oral History attracted some ninety British scholars to the University of Leicester on March 23-25. OHA was represented by its president, Louis M. Starr, who sends a report of the conference. Sponsored by Britain's Social Science Research Council, the meeting had a strong sociology-social history orientation. "There was a great deal of emphasis on interviewing the submerged, and a lively interest in the value of tapes rather than transcripts," Dr. Starr reported.

Paul Thompson of the Department of Sociology, University of Essex, who organized the conference, at one point waved a copy of *Oral History in the United States* at the audience and quoted the statistics in its introduction to make the point that Britain should get moving in oral history. Dr. Starr spoke briefly of its development in the United States, as did Dr. Ralph Schuursma of oral history in Holland, where he heads the Stichting film en wetenschap in Utrecht, and Professor Folke Hedblom of Sweden, where he heads the Institute for Dialect and Folklore Research in Uppsala. The latter has interviewed hundreds of Swedes in the United States.

Highlights of the program were Paul Thompson's thoughtful discussion of "Problems of Method in Oral History" and George Ewart Evans' remarks on interviewing. Evans, author of *Ask the Fellows Who Cut the Hay*, like Walter Lord and others who have addressed OHA meetings, is a free lance

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SOME NOTES ON THE SELECTION OF TRANSCRIBERS

What are the qualifications of a good transcriber? One point of view is expressed by George A. Magers in an article entitled, "The Blind Employee as Transcriber," *Medical Record News*, February 1965. According to Magers, a minimum of high school graduation with a good academic background in English grammar and spelling is considered a basic requirement for a transcriber. It is usually agreed that a skill of 45 wpm or 125 lines an hour is a good indication of a person's capability for this work. Ability to use the electric typewriter is important. Also, above average intelligence combined with a keen interest in the subject matter is preferable.

Cornell University's Program in Oral History has recently issued some tentative conclusions on the selection of transcribers. These are based on five years' experience with 31 transcribers ranging in age between 19 and 60. According to Peggy Pack of the program's staff, who supervises the selection and training of transcribers at Cornell, "A good typist may be a poor transcriber. While typing ability is essential, a knowledge of subject matter sufficient to recognize whether words are appropriate in a context is equally essential."

Ms. Pack says that the clerical aptitude test administered by Cornell's personnel department has not been useful because it does not measure general knowledge. When its limitations became apparent, she designed her own test composed of words which had been transcribed incorrectly on at least several occasions. The test was then put on tape, simulating the conditions of poor diction frequently encountered in interview situations, including slurs and run-on sentences. Prospective transcribers were asked to transcribe the test double-spaced and leave a blank space if they could not understand what was said. They were also cautioned that a departure from the oral record would be counted as an error. The test follows:

"In order to produce a verbatim transcript, many skills are necessary. Perhaps foremost is that of being a good listener. A wide knowledge of current events and of history are important, as is an extensive vocabulary, the ability to spell, to know when to use quotation marks and other punctuation, when to capitalize, and so forth. Some of these skills can be partially acquired or improved by carefully reading on a daily basis of a wide variety of subject matter—newspapers, magazines, books, and so forth. There is no guarantee that a typist will achieve success as a transcriber unless she is knowledgeable about people and events past and present. Since oral history interviews consist of conversations between two (or more) persons, more skill is required than is needed to type ordinary dictation. Depending upon the types of projects currently under way, a transcriber may have to understand terms ranging from George Meany's cur-

rent problems with an injunction to bale elevators and heifer calves owned by a farm family. A college professor may salt his conversation with academic terms—and be certain that grammatical errors in the transcript were made by the transcriber. An attorney may talk about the right of due process and cite examples of defendants' being deprived of this right. An old-timer on Nantucket Island may speak of whaling in the North Atlantic. A politician may reminisce about Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. A government economist may focus upon the long-range effect of declining profits. A transcriber whose vocabulary is definitely limited may have trouble knowing what words fits the context. She may also have difficulty with Latin phrases such as *sub rosa* and *per se*. Constant reference to a dictionary adds to the time necessary to complete the transcript.

"Since we require that the transcript reflect the tape as nearly as possible, punctuation must be varied in order to indicate pauses in the conversation, false starts, and so forth. The transcriber must watch for changes in thought in order to paragraph properly. She must also accommodate us by typing improper grammar just as it was spoken. To add to her woes, she must be able on occasion to understand regional or foreign accents. All of these skills must be accompanied by a good typing ability. The original transcript is eventually sent to the library archives, so a transcriber's commitment to neatness, accuracy, and careful listening will help insure success.

"A transcriber, however, is not expected to be a lexicographer. An adequate interviewer will provide a list of proper names, scientific terms, and other words which might be difficult, such as l-e-x-i-c-o-g-r-a-p-h-e-r."

Selection of Cornell's transcriber's has been determined at least in part by their performance on this test which indicates their ability to spell the words correctly and to use them in a sentence. However, there are some additional criteria that Ms. Pack applies in the selection process. She believes that interest is another dimension of success in transcription. So applicants are asked what periodicals they read with some regularity. Ms. Pack observes that "young women haven't been good transcribers on subjects which don't command their interest." She thinks the same may be true of men, but Cornell has never had a male transcriber. In the final analysis, "age as an interest factor seems to be related to the need to supplement a family income, young people often having less incentive to become interested in subjects which are outside the perimeters of their current values and aspirations. However, income as the sole (apparent) motivation for transcribers has not been associated with quality of performance."

The Cornell test is reproduced by permission of Director Gould P. Colman, Cornell Program in Oral History.

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The colloquium sessions give promise of being both exciting and meaningful. For the members interested in the non-elitist approach, there are panels concerned with old-timers in rural South Dakota and Appalachia as well as sessions dealing with such ethnic groups as blacks, chicanos, and American Indians. Oral history abroad is being given special attention this time as evidenced by the session on oral history in Latin America, and one of the panelists participating in this endeavor is Eugenia Meyer of the Instituto

Nacional de Antropologia in Mexico City. Another unique feature will be the inclusion of several breakfast sessions on topics of current interest to oral historians, including a report by Chester Lewis on the status of the New York Times' oral history micropublication program.

One of the more innovative sessions on the agenda is a report on the rather new oral history program of the American Jewish Committee. The Committee has a funding of

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EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MEETS IN WASHINGTON



Standing, left to right: Charles Crawford, Executive Council Member; Forrest Pogue, Past President; Knox Mellon, Treasurer; John Wickman, Vice President; Charles Morrissey, President. Seated: Sam Proctor and Lila Johnson, Executive Council Members; Amelia Fry, Secretary.

The Executive Council of the Oral History Association held two sessions on April 7-8 in Washington, D.C. since a number of council members were attending the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians. All members were present except the editor of the OHA Newsletter, ex officio. Invited guests included past president Peter Olch; Martin Ridge, chairman of the Nominating Committee; and Samuel Hand, chairman of the Publications Committee.

Treasurer Knox Mellon reported that OHA has an active balance of \$10,156.61 and \$1,719.12 in savings. The savings account has earned interest in the amount of \$83.30 to date. He also reported that the Association's membership has increased from 632 (1971) to 698 members (1972). At present there are 121 institutional memberships, 369 individual memberships, 142 library memberships, 62 student memberships, and 4 life members.

Professor Mellon announced that the OHA has now reached the stage in its financial arrangements with Columbia University where it will receive \$3 per copy from every sale of the directory, *Oral History in the United States*. OHA has sold approximately 200 copies of the 1971 *Bibliography on Oral History*, in addition to those distributed to the membership.

Dr. Peter Olch reported on the preparation of the Asilomar-Bloomington Joint Proceedings. The papers to be included from the Asilomar colloquium are: "Bibliographic Coverage for Oral History," by Arline Custer; "Varieties of Oral History in the West," by Willa Baum; "Oral History Interviewing in Recent Sensitive Subjects," by John Stewart; "Oral History in the Ghetto," by Paul Bullock; "Oral History and the Civil Rights Documentation Project," by Vincent J. Browne; and "Oral History and the Writing of Biography," by T. Harry Williams. Selections from the Bloomington colloquium are the major address by James MacGregor Burns; "Securing Personal Sensitive Information by Interview," by Paul H. Gebhard; papers presented by Louis M. Starr and Robert Warner at the panel, "Personality Theories Applied to Autobiographical History"; and selections from the panel on folklore and oral history. It was agreed that past presidents Forrest Pogue and Peter Olch would put out the joint proceedings, and the final editing would be done jointly by them. The *Bibliography on Oral History* will continue to be sent to new members until the joint proceedings are ready for distribution. Those who attended the Bloomington colloquium will receive a free copy of the joint proceedings,

while Asilomar participants who did not attend the Bloomington meeting will pay for their copies. It was also decided that the joint proceedings would not be sent to Asilomar Bloomington participants who no longer belong to OHA.

The council received a report from Samuel Hand, chairman of the Publications Committee. The council appointed Professor Hand acting editor for the 1973 OHA publication. It was suggested that all main speakers on the program at the Austin colloquium prepare a formal copy of their presentation, or submit a transcript, rather than having the proceedings tape-recorded for later transcription and editing by OHA. This would decrease colloquium and publication expense.

Professor Martin Ridge, chairman of the Nominating Committee, was asked to report on the committee's activity to date. He suggested the possibility of the membership being separated into voting (individual) and non-voting (institutional, library, and student) members. He also recommended that the treasurer and secretary be appointed rather than elected; that they be appointed by the Executive Council and be reviewed every three to five years to provide continuity and stability of the organization and institutional support; and that past presidents serve two years on the Council after completion of their term. The committee also suggested nominating two people for each office, with some provision made for additional nominations by petition. The council then discussed mail ballots and the cost to OHA, as well as the possibility of adding a ballot to the Newsletter.

John Wickman presented a report from the Sites Committee. It was agreed that he be authorized to make on-site inspection of Annapolis, West Point, and Shenandoah. The committee was requested to suggest, by the Austin colloquium, three possible places for each of the next five years based on costs, geographic location, and availability of institutional assistance. In the matter of the site for the 1974 meeting, Amelia Fry was asked to check on the University of Nevada site at Reno, and John Wickman agreed to make an on-site inspection of Jackson Lodge in the Grand Teton National Park at Jackson Hole, Wyoming.

President Morrissey reported on the program plans for the Austin colloquium (see Newsletter, p. 1). The council meeting closed with a discussion on improving OHA's public and professional relations. The council agreed that it was highly desirable for OHA members to be on programs of other professional associations, and a number of council members were asked to contact particular associations to this end.

AHS PACIFIC BRANCH SCHEDULES ORAL HISTORY SESSION

When the Pacific Coast Branch of the American Historical Society meets at Santa Barbara, California in August, oral history will be among the topics scheduled for discussion. On Saturday morning, August 26, three papers will be presented under the heading, "Oral Historians Look at the Foreign Policy of Recent American Presidents." Professor Dennis O'Brien, Sacramento State College, former staff member of the John F. Kennedy Oral History Program, will present a paper on "The Foreign Policy of John F. Kennedy." Dean Paige Mulholland of Kansas State University, who has also served as an interviewer for the Lyndon B. Johnson Oral History Program, has prepared a paper on "The Foreign Policy of Lyndon B. Johnson." Professor Harry P. Jeffrey of California State College, Fullerton, whose oral history research on Richard M. Nixon is well known to fellow OHA members, will discuss "The Foreign Policy of Richard M. Nixon." The session promises to point up the value of oral history in studying recent trends in American foreign policy.

CLAREMONT GRADUATE SCHOOL'S CHINA PROJECT

A special project of the Claremont Graduate School's oral history program concerns the activities of foreign missionaries of various denominations in pre-Communist China. Nearing completion, the project has to date interviewed more than 50 former missionaries and produced over 3,500 transcribed pages.

The idea of a China project came from the late Professor Douglas Adair, a charter member of OHA, and was encouraged by Allan Nevins. There was a ready source of respondents among the scores of former China missionaries living at colonies for aging church workers near Claremont, California. The selected respondents recorded their experiences, assessments, the value of the work they did, and observations on the development of China from a medieval assemblage of satrapies to world power and influence.

The project has been conducted by two Claremont faculty members, Professor Cyrus H. Peake, formerly of Columbia University, and Assistant Professor Arthur L. Rosenbaum, a Yale graduate, who encountered one of the hazards of such work when a former missionary tried diligently to convert him — but failed. According to OHA member Enid Douglass, director of Claremont's oral history program, the specialists hope to compile a monograph on the project's results. Meanwhile, they have reached some tentative conclusions about the missionaries interviewed thus far.

Methodists and Congregationalists were the most active Protestant groups in pre-Communist China. Although many other groups were represented, the Fundamentalist groups appear to have had more enduring contacts with the Chinese people. On the other hand, the more sophisticated or liberal missionaries tended to drift into social work of the type encountered in the activities of the Peace Corps, such as teaching and like pursuits. The objective of this latter group was to show their Christianity through their daily work.

Results also show that many had been unhappy missionaries, but none actually disliked the Chinese as people. They seemed to sense "something of value in the race, a certain charm." Virtually none of the missionaries now opposes the devolution of Chinese missions to Chinese control, although at the time they were in the country they thought it would be a gross mistake. The generation that feared it most is now almost gone.

On the question of what is happening in China today, the research revealed sharply divided opinions. A few of the missionaries are overtly bitter. Although none are pro-Communist, many feel the Reds are not all bad. Some cite the attempts of the Communists to solve many of the nation's severe problems as a basis for their ambivalent attitude towards the present regime. Most still feel a real commitment to China, and many are hoping some day to return.

NOMINATING COMMITTEE

Members are reminded that OHA's bylaws provide that the Nominating Committee will solicit names from the membership for the nomination of officers and council members. At the business meeting in Austin this fall, nominations will be made for vice president, secretary, treasurer, and one council member.

This year the Nominating Committee membership was increased by the council for the special purpose of studying and recommending on the method of electing officers and council members. The December 1971 issue of the *Newsletter* carried a notice that a summary of membership opinion on elections procedures, as expressed to the Nominating Committee, would be published in the June issue. The editor has been informed that, so far, expression of opinion has been negligible. Please send your opinions on elections procedures and your nominations for officers and council members to Professor Martin Ridge, Chairman, OHA Nominating Committee, Department of History, Indiana University, Bloomington, Indiana.

ORAL HISTORY CAN HELP ACHIEVE BALANCE IN HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVE

Noted University of California historian W. Turrentine Jackson recently stated this opinion in a book review for the *American Historical Review*, February 1972. In his review of Hiram M. Drache's *The Challenge of the Prairie: Life and Times of Red River Pioneers* (Fargo: North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies, 1970), Professor Jackson categorizes the work as "the type of social history in which the day-to-day activities of the pioneer generation in the Red River Valley of Minnesota-Dakota are delineated." He notes that the author, in turning his attention to the homesteader, has relied heavily on the diaries, correspondence, and account books of well-known farmers, and of course the question is raised — "Just how representative of homesteaders in general were these businesslike, orderly, record-keeping agrarians?" But according to Jackson, the author redeems himself because "a somewhat more balanced picture has been achieved and the advantages of oral history demonstrated by extensive interviews with more typical men and women." The reviewer commends the North Dakota Institute for Regional Studies for "keeping publication standards high in issuing a volume that meets the rigorous criteria set by the professional historian."

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slightly over a quarter of a million dollars for its program development, and it is concerned with prominent Jews in all walks of life. The Committee has regional interviewers throughout this country in addition to an office in Israel. Of particular interest is the Committee's development of "position papers." These "position papers" were drawn up by ten different experts in ten different fields of interest pertaining to Jews. In effect, these papers outline specific fields such as arts, science, politics, manufacturing, etc., giving brief histories of contemporary developments in the fields

and the individuals who should be approached for taping.

Finally, there are a variety of other panels that should have a broad appeal for everybody. Relative to education there will be one session on the utilization of oral history as a teaching tool and another devoted to the use of cameras with tape recorders in oral history interviewing. And, as usual, one of the old bugaboos will be present once again, this dealing with the legal and ethical aspects of oral history.

ACROSS THE EDITOR'S DESK

"Voice Print" and Oral History

Dorothea M. Dryer, Washington, D.C. OHA members who attended the Arden House meeting will remember Dorothea Dryer, who contributed a number of useful suggestions during the membership's final review of the proposed OHA constitution and bylaws. As a member of the legal profession in Washington, D.C., Ms. Dryer has an interest and concern in the implications of "voice print" for oral history and wishes to communicate her views to the membership.

Voice spectrography, the electronic plotting of vocal sounds with a series of lines, is a relatively new technique. Since 1966 it has helped lead to convictions in several lower court cases around the country, but only a few law enforcement agencies have their own "voice print" equipment. In a recent case, U.S. District Court Judge Oliver Gasch ruled (December 16, 1971) that the "voice print" of a defendant — the first to be accepted in a case in a federal court — may be entered as evidence against him. An account of this case appears in the *Washington Post* for December 17, 1971.

Ms. Dryer writes, "In my opinion, all members of the Association should be fully aware of the legal implications of Judge Gasch's ruling, and should make themselves aware of the legal status of 'voice printing' in their own legal jurisdictions. Failure to recognize possible legal hazards in making tapes could result in unpleasantness which could and should be avoided in the interest of all 'oral historians.' "

Replacing Worn Equipment

Ronald Marcello, North Texas State University. The replacement of old and worn equipment has been a critical problem recently at the North Texas State University Oral History Program, according to Dr. Marcello, its coordinator. He applied to the Hillcrest Foundation for a grant and received \$5,000 to replace the program's worn equipment. The grant was awarded in memory of Benjamin H. Wooten, a longtime trustee of North Texas State University. Dr. Marcello suggests that other programs might explore the support potential of local and regional foundations that would provide grants for purposes such as equipment, transcription, or the financing of specific interviews.

"Interpretive Oral History"

William Weaver, Cherokee, North Carolina. Mr. Weaver, who is in charge of the oral history program at the Great Smoky Mountains National Park, believes that the spoken word collected on oral history tape recordings has a potential far beyond its present use in historical research. "I feel we should take a hard look at . . . what could become an important historical function." He defines this as "interpretive oral history . . . a sort of ecology of the human voice" which "preserves our environmental attitudes and reflections." He is concerned with the methodology scholars could apply in their use of the voice medium for writing and research, as opposed to current practices employed in the use of transcripts. He would like to correspond with members and asks that they send their ideas and thoughts by letter or "better yet by tape correspondence (use 3-inch reel-to-reel or cassette)" to Bill Weaver, Route #1, Box 9FF, Cherokee, North Carolina 28719.

Barbara Tuchman Revisited

Barbara Tuchman, a guest speaker at the fourth OHA colloquium, Airlie House, Virginia, has some further words on oral history in an article, "Distinguishing the Significant from

the Insignificant," published this spring in the *Radcliffe Quarterly* (Vol. 56, No. 1). Ms. Tuchman writes: "With the appearance of the tape recorder, a monster with the appetite of a tapeworm, we now have, through its creature Oral History, an artificial survival of trivia of appalling proportions. To sit down and write a book, even of memoirs, requires at least some effort, discipline and perseverance which until now imposed a certain natural selection on what survived in print. But with all sorts of people being invited merely to open their mouths, and ramble effortlessly and endlessly into a tape recorder, prodded daily by an acolyte of Oral History, a few veins of gold and a vast mass of trash are being preserved which would otherwise have gone to dust. We are drowning ourselves in unneeded information." Ms. Tuchman should hastily add here that among the useful and scintillating sources I found were two verbal interviews with General Marshall tape-recorded by Army historians in 1949. Marshall, however, was a summit figure worth recording, which is more than can be said for all those shelves and stacks of oral transcripts piling up in recent years."

Ms. Tuchman's forthright assessment of oral history is somewhat reminiscent of the views of Professor Edward Shannon and others who have criticized the method since the early 1950s. They should not be taken lightly or dismissed. As Ms. Tuchman comments, in a recent letter to the editor, "I wrote that paragraph under an oppressive sense of the overproliferation of everything, nevertheless I respect the purpose and much of the product of Oral History but think the criteria of uniqueness, importance, and significance should be applied in advance of a project, and leaching sternly avoided."

[*Radcliffe Quarterly* article reprinted in part with permission of Barbara W. Tuchman.]

NEWS IN BRIEF

Ms. Francis Scott Key, formerly of the Eugene McCarthy Oral History Project, reports that she has been busy promoting oral history at numerous library and women's club meetings from her base at the Maryland Historical Society in Baltimore.

In Georgia, Dr. Alton Hornsby, Jr., chairman of the Department of History, Morehouse College, plans to launch "Black Atlanta — An Oral History Project," to interview a broad range of local citizens.

The Oral History Business Project at the University of Texas, founded in 1969, recently issued its first report. The director, Professor Floyd S. Brandt, reports, "The project has produced enough tape recordings to stretch more than thirty miles."

Louis M. Starr reports that 249 OHA members have ordered copies of *Oral History in the United States* from Box 20, Butler Library, Columbia University, N.Y. 10027 at the member's \$1.50 rate. Total sales through mid-April were 1,731 copies, and running.

Part One of Columbia's Oral History Collection went before the cameras of Microfilming Corporation of America in April, and filming of all 55,000 pages of transcriptions on microfiche and microfilm was expected to be complete.

The National Archives of Rhodesia in Salisbury has issued, in mimeographed form, a three-page guide for interviewers, "Notes on Oral History Procedures." Interviewers are exhorted to append a confidential report to the transcript regarding the subject's "state of health, eyesight and hearing, memory, chips on the shoulder, grudges against the Archives, incompatibility with the interviewer," and so forth. The report is then closed for thirty years.

The Imperial War Museum in London plans an oral history program and has joined OHA. Early military aviation, 1912-18, will be its first project. Respondents are to be selected from 2,000 former members of the Royal Flying Corps and the Royal Naval Service.

The National Archives of Australia in Canberra continues to pursue its oral history program initiated several years ago.

Aufbau, the leading German weekly in New York, carried a long feature story on the Columbia University oral history project in its issue of April 7, perhaps the first such to appear in German.

James V. Mink, University Archivist and Director, UCLA Oral History Program, has been elected to a two-year term as president of the Society of California Archivists, a newly formed organization on the West Coast, composed of archivists, historians, librarians, oral historians, and historical society personnel. Among the organization's hundred charter members are a number of active OHA members.

Ann Campbell, formerly with the Kennedy Library's oral history project, has been named chief of the Archives Branch at the San Francisco Federal Records Center — the first woman to be appointed to such a position in the NARS system. Her previous position in San Francisco was that of assistant to NARS's regional director. In February, Ms. Campbell was the faculty member for oral history at the Western Regional Workshop for Historical Administration sponsored by the American Association for State and Local History in Sacramento. In April she spoke to the Southern California Local History Council on local oral history.

Last December, in a two-day stint on an NBC quiz show, she won over \$5,000 in prizes — including a new car. One of the less difficult questions asked was who appointed Robert McNamara as Secretary of Defense — a tough one for a former JFK Library staffer!

The National Agricultural Library has recently acquired a series of taped interviews on the development and expansion of the Federal Tobacco Inspection and Market News Services.

First developed and conducted as an individual project within the Tobacco Division, Agricultural Marketing Service, the National Library, in cooperation with the Agricultural History Branch, Economic Research Service, is continuing and expanding the series as part of a formal oral history project.

The original transcripts and tapes are in the National

The National Trust for Historical Preservation is printing a condensed version of "Oral History and the Mythmakers," by Charles T. Morrissey, for inclusion in an information packet entitled, *Preservation for the Bicentennial*. This kit contains reprints of other articles and items for use in preliminary planning during the upcoming bicentennial of the American revolutionary era. Copies of the kit may be ordered at \$3 each from the National Trust's headquarters at 740-748 Jackson Place, N.W., Washington, D.C. 20006.

Baylor University's oral history program, Waco, Texas, has experienced significant advancement during the first year of its operation, according to Thomas L. Charlton, a member of the Department of History and program director. The first interview was conducted on January 18, 1971 and since that time, over 80 interviews have been completed. Interviewing has gone forward in several subject areas, with the main emphasis on religion and culture and its impact on the state of Texas. This special project began with a study of the Baptists in Texas but has now been expanded to include other denominations and their influence on the state's history.

The Archivo Sonoro, located in Mexico City, carries on an active oral history program under the direction of historians Alicia Bonfil and Eugenia Meyer. The objective of the program is to preserve through oral history valuable information about the Mexican Revolution of 1910 by interviewing many of its key survivors. The most important interviews have been published in pamphlet form and receive wide distribution because of their low cost to students and scholars. The tapes covering those interviews not published are carefully registered and kept in the archives for future reference by scholars.

The collection of "oral tradition" has been one of the major projects at Haile Sellassie I University, Addis Ababa, Ethiopia during the past eight years, according to the director, Bairu Tafla. Its fieldwork has focused mainly on Ethiopic poetry and biographical studies of significant personalities. A plan is now being developed to include folk music, tales, legends, myths, and other aspects of oral tradition. Some of the materials are tape-recorded, but the method of collecting in longhand is also used.

The University of Kentucky, Lexington, has received a \$20,000 grant from the Governor's contingency fund to start a pilot project in oral history connected with manuscript collections in the University Library. At the outset, interviews will be recorded to supplement the papers of Alben Barkley, Carl Vinson, and Rogers Morton. Members of the Departments of History and Political Science will be utilized for advice and to serve as interviewers.

This year's National Book Award in history went to the late Allan Nevins for his *Ordeal of the Union*, an eight-volume history of the Civil War published by Charles Scribner's Sons. Mrs. Nevins was present in New York to receive the award.

1972 COLLOQUIUM-WORKSHOP INFORMATION

The 7th National Colloquium will be held in Austin, Texas, November 9-12. A workshop preceding the colloquium is scheduled for November 9-10. The fee for the colloquium, including room, board, and registration is \$100. The fee for the workshop, including room, board, and registration is \$30. Information concerning the program and other planned activities scheduled for the 1972 colloquium will be mailed to the membership soon. Inquiries may be directed to the local arrangements chairman: Kenneth Ragsdale, Director, Educational Services, Texas State Historical Association, Sid Richardson Hall, Austin, Texas 78712.

OHA MEMBERSHIP

Membership in the Oral History Association is open to all who are interested in oral history. Dues for individuals are \$7.50 per year, and for institutions and associations they are \$25.00 per year. Non-voting student and library memberships are \$5.00 annually (these members receive all publications but do not participate in the selection of OHA officers). Life memberships are available at \$150. Institutions which generously decide to become Sustaining Members pay between \$100 and \$150 each year.

MORE NEWS IN BRIEF *Continued from page 7*

The UCLA Oral History Program has concluded arrangements with the School of Library Service to make use of the School's portable Sony video recorder in taping at least one hour of each future interview conducted by the program. From each hour of recording, a ten- to fifteen-minute segment will be selected and copied for permanent retention in the University Archives.

Nearly twenty different southwestern Indian tribes were represented at a two-day seminar held in Tucson, Arizona on February 22-23. The program brought together directors and staff of cultural centers maintained by Indian tribes throughout the Southwest. Participants considered how they could utilize these centers to preserve and interpret history and traditions for both the Indian and non-Indian. Among the topics considered was the use and techniques of oral history. This session, held on the second day of the conference, was presented by OHA member C. Gregory Crampton, director of the Western History Center of the University of Utah, which has been active in oral history for many years.

OHA members Knox Mellon and Estelita Sherman were married this past June after receiving their M.D.'s in history from the Claremont Graduate School.

MEMBERSHIP APPLICATION

Please enroll as member of the Oral History Association. Enclosed find check in payment of the OHA membership dues for the current year.

Check one: Individual membership (\$ 7.50 Minimum)
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Checks should be made payable to The Oral History Association, Inc., and forwarded with the above information to Knox Mellon, Treasurer, Oral History Association, Immaculate Heart College, 2021 North Western Avenue, Los Angeles, California 90027

Oral History Association Newsletter

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