ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

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NEWSLETTER

Communities of Memory

by Edward M. Miggins

Oral history can cover what Robert Bellah and other authors of Habits and the Heart: Individualism and Commitment in American Life defined as a "community of memory" or group that doesn't forget the meaning and traditions of its past. Families, work, ethnic, minority or religious groups, neighborhoods or any other deeply felt and rooted association are the foundation of such communities. In order to both avoid historical amnesia and survive, such a community is constantly retelling its story. It offers examples of heroic people who have courageously embodied its truth or meaning. Communities of memory contain the seeds for hope and growth because they tie us to a larger and more meaningful whole than the history of isolated individuals. They make us see the importance and necessity of contributing to the common good and empower the struggles of people against injustices or against being treated as insignificant.

Oral history can preserve and communicate the cultural richness of communities of memory. We need to appropriate and renew this legacy in an age which celebrates the transitory moment, competitive individualism and materialistic success — regardless of the cost to others and the environment.

Students at the Eastern Campus of Cuyahoga Community College (CCC) are studying and researching the global roots of Cleveland in a community studies class, "Ethnic and Minority Neighborhoods in Cleveland." The course reaffirms CCC's educational mission to help students understand their cultural heritage in historical perspective. It also directly connects students to their family origins and the multicultural life of Cleveland — a source of deep motivation and enlightenment. The class is also an



Edward Miggins (chair facing) interviewing Michael Syntax, an immigrant from Crete, in the Syntax home in Maple Heights. Standing are Gary Manke and David Brodowski, and seated is Dale Kwait, all of WVIZ-TV 25. Syntax was interviewed for a forthcoming documentary, "Journey to a Dream: From Ellis Island to Cleveland," in celebration of the 100th anniversary of Ellis Island.

outgrowth of my interest in the social history of "ordinary people" who live and work in America.

Students in CCC's Community Studies program use the methods of social historians to study the evolution of Cleveland from a New England village to a multicultural metropolis. They concentrate on researching their families, neighborhoods and nationality backgrounds. They are also asked to compare the experiences of different ethnic or minority groups and to listen to other student projects at the end of the course. Oral histories of immigrant and migrant life through case studies also help students understand their global connections that are rooted in the experiences of more than 50 nationality groups living in Greater Cleveland.

The student oral histories are stored with a

collection of similar tapes and transcripts from the Cleveland Ethnographic Museum, the NEH's Heritage Program at the Cleveland Public Library and other communitybased projects at the Greater Cleveland Oral History and Community Studies Center at the Eastern Campus of CCC.

Funded by an Excellence Award from the Academic Challenge Grant of the Ohio Board of Regents, the Center contains video documentaries, slides, filmstrips, instructional materials, a "Cleveland Collection" of printed materials and questionnaires on ethnic life, aging, family and labor history for students, teachers and the general public. It has developed, with Cleveland State University's Department of Education, a Summer Teacher Training Institute in Multicultural and Community Studies.

Ongoing goals of the Center are to collect oral histories on ethnic and minority groups, the elderly and neighborhoods in Cleveland; to promote multicultural and multigenerational understanding among people; to provide a clearinghouse and training program in oral history and community studies; to organize, store and advise student and community-based projects; to develop interdisciplinary courses and public humanities programs; to work with local schools, agenices and organizations; and to develop a greater appreciation and understanding between and among people who are separated by age, ethnic background or race and place of residence. The Center has been described as a "living" resource for the Greater Cleveland area.

"The Peoples of Cleveland: Building Community," an oral history play on the city's immigrant and minority neighborhoods, was derived from CCC's oral history archives. Slides, music and dance also accompany the script.

George and Stephanie Hrbek, the codirectors of the Near West Theater, helped organize the script. It was the inspiring talent and work of the latter person, and her co-

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I want to use this opportunity to thank Linda Beattie and Dan Utley for their willingness to take on the responsibility of producing OHA's *Newsletter*. This issue marks their second *Newsletter* and I think everyone will agree that they are off to a good start. Linda and Dan have some innovative ideas for strengthening *OHAN*. I know they would welcome your comments and suggestions as well as any information about your projects or works in progress in your area that would be of general interest to the membership.

As you know, OHA's editors donate countless hours of work to produce our *Newsletter*, the *Review* and the Pamphlet Series. The work of the Association could not be accomplished without this spirit of volunteerism that has been a trademark of our Association.

However, as our goals and objectives evolve, the business of OHA becomes more complex. To meet these new challenges requires more involvement from our membership. At the risk of sounding as if I'm searching for OHA's version of a "thousand points



of light," I do believe that we need to strive to involve an increasing number of people in the work of the Association.

We now have in place a committee system that encompasses most of the major activities within the Association. Members of the committees generally serve three-year terms. We need to have people involved with these committees willing to bring new and innovative ideas to the discussions, and a desire to devote sufficient time and effort to see that

new ideas are successfully implemented. We need to continually seek new members who are willing to participate and make sure that they are placed on committees in a timely manner and given the opportunity to help OHA.

Most importantly, our members need to know our system is an open, inclusive system. If you have new ideas and/or a willingness to work for the Association, simply contact me, our executive secretary, Richard Smith, any member of Council, or a committee chair. There is always a place for members who are willing to give their time and effort to the work of the OHA.

OHA is not a large professional organization with a full-time staff. It is an association administered largely by volunteers. It accomplishes its mission by creative staffing and budgeting, and dogged determination to complete a goal. I challenge *you* to get involved in OHA activities. After all, this is *your* Association and it can only be as active and effective as you make it.

COLLECTION OPENINGS

Louisiana State University recently announced the opening of the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History. Williams was a popular history professor at LSU and a pioneer in the field of oral history. The nearly 300 interviews he collected beginning in 1957 formed the basis for his Pulitzer Prize-winning biography of Huey Long. The Williams Center is under the direction of Pamela Dean, former acting director of the Southern Oral History Program at the University of North Carolina-Chapel Hill.

Dean, who has also worked at the Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History under Edward D. "Sandy" Ives, said, "I'm delighted with this opportunity to start from scratch and establish a state-of-the-art program. Our first project will focus on the history of LSU and will include more than 100 interviews with faculty, administrators and alumni. Once we complete this series we'll be looking for projects that will document the rich and colorful social, cultural, economic and political life of the state. The Williams Center will also offer advice and technical support not only to those within the community who want to do oral history, but to others throughout the state as well." For more information contact: Pamela Dean, Director, T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History, Hill Memorial Library, Louisiana State University, Baton Rouge, LA 70803.

An original collection of videotape in the history of science and technology, produced by Smithsonian scholars, is now open for use. The collection was produced between 1986 and 1991 with funding from the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation and guidance from the Smithsonian Videohistory Program (SVP). Eighteen Institution historians produced 22 projects — for more than 200 hours of tape — that cover a wide range of topics in American science and technology, primarily since the beginning of WWII. Topics include aeronautics and space exploration,

computer development, medical technology, robotics, the Manhattan Project, small arms design and manufacture, slate quarrying, clockmaking, automotive manufacturing and management techniques, paleontology and the conservation of endangered species. Tapes, transcripts and finding aids are available for researchers, and copies are available for a fee. For more information, contact the Smithsonian Institution Archives, 2135 Arts and Industries Building, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560. (202) 357-1420.

OHA SEEKS NEW EXECUTIVE SECRETARY

Richard Candida Smith is completing five years as executive secretary of the Oral History Association, and is stepping down from the post. Terry Birdwhistell has appointed a search committee, consisting of Anne Ritchie, Al Broussard, Rose Diaz and Cullom Davis, to consider candidates for the post.

The executive secretary directs the day-to-day operations of the OHA, works with the officers and committee chairs and is responsible for membership and financial records.

If you are interested in applying or have suggestions for candidates, please contact Anne Ritchie, Gallery Archives, National Gallery of Art, Washington, D.C. 20565. Telephone: (202) 842-6871; FAX: (202) 842-2356.

Alex Haley: An Appreciation

by Martha Ross

Which of us has not been touched by Alex Haley? Whether by his extended interviews with Malcolm X collected in the celebrated Autobiography, or the years of genealogical research that resulted in Roots, or the compelling television series based on that work and still being shown, few living persons are unaware of Alex Haley and his contributions to the understanding of the African-American experience.

I was touched by Alex Haley - literally - at the Oral History Association's Sixth National Colloquium in Austin, Texas. Many of us were disappointed, sad and angry that first week of November, 1972. Richard Nixon had been overwhelmingly reelected to a second term as President, after a campaign that would later prove to have been tainted by the Watergate scandal. We gathered in Austin in the shadow of the Lyndon B. Johnson Presidential Library to listen and to talk about oral history. The banquet speaker was Alex Haley.

Introduced by Chita Fry, who had arranged for his appearance, he began recounting the family tales he had heard from his elders on the front porch in Henning, Tennessee. There was a cadence, a poetry, a melody in his story as he repeated the family folklore of the African named Kinte, the river called "Kimbe bolongo" and the instrument called "ko." For two hours, the au-

dience was spellbound.

Late in his account, he mentioned his efforts to trace his white ancestors as well as the Africans, and he concluded with a chuckle, "There are some white Jackson cousins in Alabama who are going to be mighty surprised..." Since I was a Jackson from Alabama (although my Jackson ancestors were all from Kentucky), I made bold to approach Mr. Haley as he left the banquet hall and introduce myself. He took my hand in both of his large, soft, warm hands and looked at me with smiling eyes. We had a brief conversation, touched with merriment about our possible kinship. I can still see those moments in my mind's eye, still feel the warmth of that genial exchange.

As the years passed and his fame grew, I kept wanting to write to him, recalling our brief meeting and congratulating him on his success. Since he continued his membership in OHA, I always had an address for him in the Membership Directory. I would have written, "This is a fan letter. You don't have to bother to answer." One doesn't want to intrude in the busy lives of those in the public eye, though, and I never did write.

Every time I saw him interviewed or read articles about him, my original impression was reinforced: here was a genuinely warm, caring person — a truly nice man, in the best sense of the term. He did not disdain public duties; in the late 1970s, he served as a chairman of Tennessee Homecoming. Annually, he was listed among the judges of Parade Magazine's photography contest. He lent his name to numerous worthwhile causes.

While bringing to the national consciousness the sweep of the African-American experience, he also alerted his audience to the value of family folklore, of the tales told by the aunts and grandmothers that tell us who we are and where we've come from. Family history by way of oral history was popularized, and genealogical inquiry through interviewing the elders spread abroad.

At the time of his untimely death in Seattle in January, Alex Haley was finishing a book on his hometown, Henning. As was his habit from his years in the Coast Guard, he repaired to a long freighter voyage for the actual writing. Removed from obligations and interruptions, he wrote from late night until dawn, the rhythm of the ship's engines and the lapping of the waves nurturing his efforts.

All those who looked forward to the publication of this work hope that it will go forward as he had planned. And I wish I had written to him just once, telling him how honored I was to have met him and how much I admired him and his work.

COMMUNITIES.

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directors, Lauren Persons and Bob Navis, that shaped the creative vitality of the play. It was first performed at the concluding program of the Heritage Program at Cleveland State University in June, 1983. The play has been seen by more than 100 public audiences: churches, schools, the Cleveland Workhouse, labor, ethnic and neighborhood organizations and the Cleveland Growth Association whose Leadership Cleveland Program voted it the most outstanding part of its training.

The Center has interviewed in excess of 90 elderly people in Cleveland. The project examined how and why different life cycles and cultural heritages have influenced elderly people. Lauren Persons produced "Growing Up and Growing Old," an oral history play based on these interviews, that was performed at CCC's Faculty Symposium, "New Partnerships for a New Cleveland," in March, 1989. We plan to use it as another touring oral history to help overcome the negative stereotypes that equate aging with decline by enlightening the public as to the strengths the elderly develop as they grow older.

Community studies and oral history are

RESOLUTION OF COMMENDATION

WHEREAS, the Mississippi Historical Society recognizes the long and distinguished service to the society by Dr. Alferdteen Harrison, who, in 1990, following the death of Mr. Thomas Minniece, assumed the duties of President of the Society; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Harrison has served with distinction, as president in 1991-1992 as the first African-American president of the Mississippi Historical Society; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Harrison has served as one of Mississippi's advisors to the National Trust for Historic Preservation, as a long-time member of the Mississippi Historic Preservation Board, and as a member of the Natchez National Historical Park Advisory Commission; and

WHEREAS, Dr. Harrison has worked diligently to promote historic preservation, oral history projects, and the preservation of archival records;

NOW, THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED by the members of the Mississippi Historical Society duly assembled on the twenty-eighth day of February, 1992, at Natchez, Mississippi, that Dr. Alferdteen Harrison be commended for her splendid contributions to the preservation and study of Mississippi history and that she be presented a copy of this resolution.

two sources of information on our society's multicultural life - the humanity of all nationality groups and races — that make a city like Cleveland smaller as well as larger. For if we investigate the ethnic or minority family, neighborhood and nationality group under a microscope, we will also connect ourselves to the Global Village. The marks of its inhabitants - both locally and internationally - become more visible and meaningful as we become more aware and knowledgeable. As T.S. Eliot, the English poet, stated in "Little Gidding," "we will arrive where we started and know the place for the first time."

Edward M. Miggins is the former research director of the NEH's Cleveland Heritage Program for the Cleveland Public Library and Vice President of the Cleveland Ethnographic Museum. He has been employed at Cuyahoga Community College (CCC) since 1972 and is currently a Professor of History/ Urban Studies and Director of the Greater Cleveland Oral History and Community Studies Center at the Eastern Campus of CCC. He is producing an oral history play on aging and America's Urban Mosaic: The History and Voices of the People of Cleveland, 1796-1996.

Videoconference to Be Broadcast Nationwide

by Thomas L. Charlton

The Oral History Association has entered the modern world of videoconferencing and will serve new audiences through this medium in 1992. On October 15 of this year, as part of the Association's annual meeting in Cleveland, Ohio, viewers at remote satellite sites will be able to participate in a live interactive videoconference featuring this year's OHA conference plus panels of oral historians and guests addressing the theme "Communities, Diversity and Oral History."

This special event, the Association's first venture into satellite transmission, will be telecast via uplink from the downtown studios of the Metro campus of Cuyahoga Community College (Cleveland), one of the co-sponsors of the videoconference and the annual meeting. Scheduled speakers and panel participants are George C. Wright (University of Texas at Austin), Edward Miggins (Cuyahoga Community College), Kathleen Blee (University of Kentucky), Pete Daniel (Smithsonian Institution), Sherna Berger Gluck (California State University, Long Beach), Rose Diaz (University of New Mexico), Rina Benmayor (Hunter College), and Wesley Henderson (Los Angeles community historian).

Between 1:00-3:30 p.m. (Eastern time), these scholars and practicing community oral historians will share their views about the potential of oral history in fostering better understanding among community residents, about the role of social/political advocacy in community historical studies, about the social/political agendas of oral historians and the people they interview and about related issues and topics.

Audiences at remote sites will be able to talk to the OHA videoconference panelists by telephone and may pose questions and participate in the live broadcast. Two videoconference networks will carry the program on Thursday, October 15: National University Teleconference Network (NUTN) and the Community College Satellite Network (CCSN), but institutions and potential viewing audiences which are non-members of these networks can arrange to receive the OHA videoconference at other sites with downlink facilities by calling: CCSN, 202/728-0200; NUTN, 405/744-5191, or Baylor University Institute for Oral History, 817/755-3437.



National University Teleconference Network

Institutions and organizations cosponsoring the videoconference with OHA are: Cuyahoga Community College (host), the University of Kentucky, Baylor University, and Marantz Professional Products. Funding is being provided by the University of Kentucky, by Baylor, and by a grant from Marantz, Cuyahoga Community College is providing studios, equipment and personnel for the event. Directing the program will be Douglas Fox (Cuyahoga Community College); the producer will be Britt Davis (University of Kentucky). On-air host for the videoconference will be OHA president Terry L. Birdwhistell (University of Kentucky), assisted by OHA immediate past president Thomas L. Charlton (Baylor).

Now is an appropriate time for interested organizations to plan to participate in the OHA videoconference. State and regional satellite sites are urged for audiences or oral historians and others who may not be able to attend the annual meeting in Cleveland on October 15-18, 1992. Watch for direct mail



soon to learn how to sign up to host a viewing party. Volunteer to serve as a site coordinator and receive packets of materials for those who join you on videoconference day.

OHA's goal is to have more than 100 viewing sites, from Hawaii and Alaska to Maine and Florida, on the phone line and with audiences in front of video monitors to participate in "Communities, Diversity and Oral History." This event may set a precedent for future OHA programming; it is highly important that the association take advantage of the new technologies which may assist in disseminating information about oral history. Mark your calendars for October 15, OHA Videoconference Day.

Future OHA Annual Meetings

1992 Cleveland, Ohio 15-18 October

1993 Birmingham, Alabama 4-7 November

1994 Albuquerque, New Mexico 27-30 October

CALL FOR PAPERS

The American Culture Association will meet in New Orleans, Louisiana, April 7-10, 1993. Persons interested in proposing papers or complete sessions on oral history and American culture should send a 50-word abstract to Carl Ryant, Department of History, University of Louisville, Louisville, KY 40292; (502) 588-6817; FAX: (502) 588-0770; BITNET: CGRYAN01 @ ULKYVM by September 30, 1992.

TRAVEL TO CLEVELAND

USAir is OHA's official airlines for the 1992 annual meeting in Cleveland, Ohio. To obtain the convention discount, call USAir's meeting and convention reservation office at 1-800-334-8644; 8:00 AM - 9:00 PM Eastern Time. Refer to Gold File Number 69130015.

The fares offered are the lowest available for convention attendees, and this arrangement also benefits OHA.

Nominees for 1992 OHA Election

The nominating committee has completed its work for another year. The following candidates will be voted on later this summer, with results announced at the October Annual Meeting. Additional nominations may be made by submitting a petition containing at least twenty signatures by OHA members to the executive secretary.

For Vice President/President Elect:



KIM LADY SMITH

Kim Lady Smith - Director, Kentucky Oral History Commission. Education: M.A. in History, Marshall University. Oral history experience: interviewer and consultant for numerous oral history projects; supervision of a grant program and a collection of more than 4,000 interviews. Publications: completion of a federally funded project to compile a data-base and publish *The Guide to Kentucky Oral History Collections*. OHA: Council (1990-92); Nominating Committee (1985-87); chair, State and Regional Committee (1986-87); Program Committee (1985); Local Arrangements Committee (1984).

Statement of Purpose: There are several critical issues to be addressed by the Oral History Association in the immediate future, issues which, to differing degrees, are influenced by the extraordinary diversity of our constituency. A challenge as well as an opportunity, this diversity requires complex approaches to achieving our goals as a professional organization.

Membership is a particular concern. To retain current membership and attract additional members, the OHA must carefully consider and direct its efforts toward those most likely to benefit from its services. Moreover, it is critical that in our membership efforts we strive to achieve a balance of race, gender and multiculturality. This will not be a simple task. It requires careful planning, continuous reassessment of the quality and nature of our services and a willingness to abandon ineffective, traditional approaches. Our primary services, annual meetings and publications have been relatively successful in reflecting the diversity of oral history. However, both could be used more effectively as membership tools. The annual meetings need to be made more accessible to a broader audience, and our publications need increased visibility.

A key to addressing issues facing the OHA is the use of existing committees. If the Association is to strengthen its ties to the oral history community, it must strengthen the objectives of its committees, particularly, State and Regional and Multiculturality, and, especially, Endowment and Fundraising. Furthermore, better communication among committees should result in a less fragmented approach to solving problems of mutual concern.

For Council:



RUTH EDMONDS HILL

Ruth Edmonds Hill - Audiovisual Coordinator, Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College. B.S., University of Massachusetts: B.S. in Library Science, Simmons College. Oral History Coordinator, Black Women Oral History Project, Schlesinger Library; coordinator for several oral history projects, including women who served in the federal government; National Organization for Women; and Cambodian-American, Chinese-American and Latina women; founding member Oral History Center, Cambridge, Massachusetts; advisor, Wheaton College Oral History Project and Refugee Arts Group; Steering Committee, Oral History Section, Society of American Archivists. Publications: Black Women Oral History Project (ed.). OHA: Nominating and Program Committees; Committee on Multiculturality.

Statement of Purpose: Issues facing the Oral History Association include finances, diversity, community. Concerning finances, OHA should keep the cost of expenditures, including services to members, in balance with income. OHA must find creative ways to increase income, endowment and membership, recognizing also that increased dues might mean a loss of membership. It must also aggressively market the organization, its publications and activities.

Although OHA wants and needs diversity in its leadership, this can only come about from a diverse membership. One answer might be regular official representation at regional meetings in order to promote OHA. OHA must also make some outreach to the many non-academic and community groups doing oral history; these groups will not find the OHA. This is also tied in with finances, as such groups would want to see positive and active benefits from membership.

Who belongs to the OHA "community?" It should include other professional organizations,

both domestic and international; faculty and students at secondary school, college and university levels; community organizations, such as those based on race, ethnicity, gender. An expanded community might lead to a better financial situation for the organization, and a more diverse membership. OHA might ask each member to be responsible for contact with at least one organization to which that member belongs, with the intention of making OHA and its activities known.



LINDA SHOPES

Linda Shopes - Historian, Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. Education: M.A., American Studies, University of Maryland. Oral history experience: interviewer, director and consultant for numerous oral history projects, including the Baltimore Neighborhood Heritage Project; oral history workshop leader and lecturer, particularly for community projects. Publications: articles in numerous publications, including Oral History Review, International Journal of Oral History and Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology and Women's Words: The Feminist Practice of Oral History; contributing editor for oral history, Journal of American History; Book Review Editor, Oral History Review. OHA: Program Committee (1992), Committee to Revise Legal and Ethical Standards (1989), Committee on Principles and Standards (1990), Local Arrangements Committee (1988). OHMAR: president (1984-85).

Statement of Purpose: I believe the practice of oral history and the OHA are uniquely situated to mediate the academic/public diaglogue about history, memory and diversity in American culture. The organization, therefore, needs to reach out deliberately and systematically to other professional organizations and grassroots groups doing oral history. Numerous possibilities exist: collaborative programs/projects with other organizations, development of additional state-wide oral history networks, increased OHA presence within other professional organizations, etc. Such efforts would enhance the intellectual vitality and social diversity, as well as the revenue, of the OHA. I also believe strongly in promoting the quality and accessibility of oral history, particularly that generated at the local level. Here, too, numerous possibilities exist: more aggressive marketing of OHA publications; a systematic

Shopes Statement continued:

effort at regional workshops; awards to recognize meritorious work; greater attention to access and use of oral history material, etc.

Finally, a couple of specifics about diversifying our programs and constituency: first, this should fruitfully originate at the local and regional level, where community projects, especially, get started — hence the need for strong state and regional groups; second, all OHA activities should be intellectually, financially, socially and physically accessible to as many people as possible.



CARLOS VÁSQUEZ

Carlos Vasquez - Director, Oral History Program, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico. Education: graduate training in political science and history at Stanford and UCLA. Oral history experience: interviewer, director and consultant for many oral history projects, including California political history, gerontology and community history. Publications: two books and several articles, mostly on the Hispanic population of the United States. Other professional: read papers in many parts of US and Latin America. OHA: Program Committee (1989), Committee on Multiculturality (1989-1990), editorial board of Oral History Review. Southwest Oral History Association: member.

Statement of Purpose: Not only historians, but scholars in various disciplines have come to appreciate the fecundity of the oral history interview. Today, our concerns should be those of a craft or method which has come into its own. My overriding concern is whether those conducting oral history have been exposed to even the most rudimentary training and preparation. Therefore, standards of quality and accessibility of training should be priority for the OHA. As someone who is building a new oral history program in a region of the country rich with oral tradition, who teaches both graduate and undergraduate students the method and practice of our craft, and who regularly conducts community workshops. I am interested in addressing these concerns. Our nation is rapidly becoming a complex mosaic of ethnic, racial, cultural and linguistic diversity. This is reality. Any scholarly discipline or method of acquiring cultural knowledge which refuses to take that into account is doomed to mediocrity or obscurity. Moreover, we will find that many newcomers to this country - indeed the original natives to many parts of this country - have rich oral traditions which must be recorded and preserved if a great country is to come to terms with its great history.

Candidates for OHA Nominating Committee

Rina Benmayor directs cultural studies at the Center for Puerto Rican Studies, Hunter College, City University of NewYork. For 10 years she has conducted life history and ethnographic research in the New York Puerto Rican community, especially among working class women. The team which Benmayor heads has produced popular programs for community use, written on research methods and ethics in minority communities and authored numerous articles and monographs, including Responses to Poverty Among Puerto Rican Women. In her former life as a Spanish literature professor, Benmayor wrote on Judeo-Spanish ballads from oral traditional and Cuban popular song.

Statement: As former co-chair of the Committee on Multiculturality, I worked to promote diversity in OHA membership and programs. We have started what should be a sustained and multifaceted effort. We need leadership with ideas for expanding and promoting OHA's presence as an interdisciplinary, academic and community-oriented association.

Thomas L. Charlton is Professor of History and Director of the Institute for Oral History at Baylor University, where he has led research and public programming in oral history since 1970. For OHA, he has served as editor of the Newsletter, served a three-year elected term on the Council (1983-86) and served terms as vice-president and president (1990-91). In recent years he has been particularly interested in symposia and videoconferencing to attract new audiences to oral history. His newest field research is on rural life in Washington County, one of the oldest settled areas in Texas.

Statement: Oral history is more than a research methodology and should be promoted by OHA as a powerful concept useful for a wide array of social groups and organizations. OHA needs strategies for developing ties with vast potential constituencies such as AARP and others in the fields of gerontology and social service.

Alferdteen Harrison is Professor of History at Jackson State University and director of the Margaret Walker Alexander National Research Center for the Study of the 20th Century African American. She was a co-founder of the African American Smith Robertson Museum and Cultural Center and has encouraged the use of oral history through her association with the National Trust for Historic Preservation Board of Advisors, Natchez National Park Service Commission and the Jackson Historic Preservation Commission. She spent the past year working at the National Endowment for the Humanities where she had many opportunities to discuss and promote oral history.

Statement: Having served on the OHA Council, I understand our traditions, but also why we should seek the involvement of new people and ideas to serve the Association. The quality of the work of the nominating committee will

make a difference in the OHA's leadership in the 21st century.

Mary Marshall Clark's interest in oral history began as an undergraduate at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, where she conducted life histories of civil rights activists. She focused on the relationship between religion and politics in graduate studies at Union Theological Seminary in New York, exploring the place of testimony in the historical development of Latin American, African American and feminist theologies of liberation. Following her studies at Union, she worked for five years as an oral historian and filmmaker for the New York Times. Currently she is Assistant Director of the Columbia Oral History Research Office.

Statement: As a member of OHA's nominating committee I would further its already outstanding commitment to preserve the diversity and richness of the many voices represented in our organization. I would be particularly alert to the new ways to encourage people to become even more actively committed to the OHA.

Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis is Associate Professor of English at Western Michigan University. She received her Ph.D. in Linguistics from the University of Michigan in 1985. Dr. Etter-Lewis has received several major grants, including a Ford Foundation Postdoctoral Research Fellowship, a National Academy of Education Spencer Postdoctoral Fellowship and an NEH Summer Seminar Fellowship. Recently she was named a Distinguished Faculty member by the Michigan Association of Governing Boards of State Universities. She is currently working on a book on the oral narratives of African American women who entered traditionally male professions in the 1920s through the 1940s.

Statement: I view service on the OHA nominating committee as an opportunity to learn as well as to contribute. I feel that each one of us can make a difference and that an organization benefits from a diversity of personnel.

Eva M. McMahan, Professor and Department Chair of Speech Communication at the University of Alabama, received her Ph.D. from the University of Illinois. She is the author of Elite Oral History Discourses: A Study of Cooperation and Coherence. Her teaching and research interests focus on discourse processes, research interviewing and oral history. She chairs the Publications Committee of the Oral History Association.

Statement: If given the opportunity to serve on the Nominating Committee, I would strive to continue the Association's efforts to achieve diversity in leadership and membership. Encouraging involvement from varied constituencies will enhance the strength of the Association.

CONFERENCES/ WORKSHOPS

Dates are now definite for Charles Morrissey's workshops in oral history. He will be teaching a three-credit course at Portland (Oregon) State University from June 29 through July 10, and a no-credit training session at Vermont College in Montpelier on August 3-7. This will be the 13th offering of the Portland summer course since 1979. The Vermont workshops started in 1975. For information call the Summer Session Office at Portland State (503) 725-4081, or Ruth Richardson at Vermont College (802) 828-8800. Morrissey can be reached at (713) 798-4501, or by writing him at the office of the President, Baylor College of Medicine, Houston, TX 77030.

Herb Gardening, Irish Folklore, and African-American Storytelling will be among the dozen classes in traditional folklore scheduled this summer at the 1992 August Heritage Arts Workshops in Elkins, W. Va.

The week-long classes be held July 5 through August 7 on the campus of Davis & Elkins College.

During the program's opening week, July 5-10, North Carolina's Angelyn Debord will host a class in Storytelling, covering topics ranging from collecting community folklore to developing performance pieces. The same week, naturalist Doug Eliott will offer a field study of Woodslore, Herbs and Foraging, while bookman George Brosi will head a workshop in Appalachian Literature.

An intensive class in African-American Storytelling is slated for Augusta's second week, July 12-17. Led by Maryland's Jamal Koram, the workshop will introduce class participants to the tales, traditional performance techniques and the spirit of the African storytelling tradition. Also scheduled that week will be a concentrated class in traditional Cajun Cooking, with award-winning Eunice, Louisiana chef Pat Johnson, and a workshop in the lore and techniques of Herb Gardening, led by West Virginia herbalist Marion Harless.

Harless will also offer a study of traditional herb uses during Augusta's third week, July 19-24. Sharing the week's schedule will be an in-depth class in Irish Folklore, with Irish folklorist/musician Mick Moloney, plus a workshop in Gaelic Language and Song, taught by Bridget Fitzgerald.

The program's fourth week brings a workshop in Storytelling and Performance, hosted by Louisiana native J.J. Reneaux. The course will include individual and group instruction in collecting and composing stories, theatrical improvisation and related topics.

Performance is also the focus of "Performing for Young Audiences" set for August 2-7.

Open to anyone who enjoys working with

Oral History in Ohio (OHIO)

The first statewide oral history conference in Ohio was held in 1984 at Kent State University with more than 90 people in attendance. At the meeting, participants agreed to form a statewide association, Oral History in Ohio (OHIO). The association published the conference proceedings and a directory listing 45 oral history projects in the state.

Oral History in Ohio holds an annual meeting in the spring, publishes two newsletters a year, and offers workshops and advice to organizations and individuals undertaking oral history projects. From 1985 to 1989, the meetings were held at the Ohio Historial Society in Columbus. In 1990, the board voted to hold meetings in other parts of the state. Cleveland had been chosen as the site for the 1992 Oral History Association meeting, and the board felt that holding a state meeting there would help to build membership and interest in the national conference. With a \$3,000 grant from the Ohio Humanities Council, a two-day conference was held in April at Cuyahoga Community College's Eastern Campus, with almost 100 people in attendance. The meeting was jointly sponsored by the Greater Cleveland Oral History and Community Studies Center, recently established at the college. The 1991 meeting was held at the University of Cincinnati Medical Heritage Center.

Oral History in Ohio has about 80 individual and eight institutional members. The group is not holding a meeting this spring so it can focus its energies on promoting the national OHA meeting in October. OHIO Past President Donna DeBlasio is chair of the OHA Program Committee, and Vice President Steve Paschen chairs the Local Arrangements Committee. OHIO's major project this year is to compile an updated directory of oral history projects in the state, the first since the 1984 meeting. A questionnaire was sent to more than 500 organizations and individuals in the state, and about 75 have responded, indicating the growth of interest in oral history over the last few years. OHIO President David Mould is compiling and editing the directory which will be available in time for the October meeting. The current officers are:

President

David Mould, School of Telecommunications, Rm. 217, Radio-TV Bldg., Ohio University, Athens, OH 45701. (614) 593-4873.

Vice President & Newsletter Editor

Stephen H. Paschen, Summit County Historical Society, 550 Copley Road, Akron, OH 44320. (216) 535-1120

Treasurer and Past President

Donna DeBlasio, Ohio Historical Society, Youngstown Historical Center of Industry and Labor, P.O. Box 533, Youngstown, OH 44501. (216) 743-5934.

Membership Secretary

Noreen Mulcahy, 177 Olentangy Street, Columbus, OH 43202. (614) 461-1132.

children, the class will explore the full range of the performer's art. Led by singer/song-writer Marcy Marxer, actress/educator Valerie Bayne Carroll, and musician Sue Ribado, the class will include sessions in repertoire building and dramatic techniques, class critiques and a variety of opportunities to work with children.

Augusta's 1992 schedule also includes more than 70 additional workshops in traditional crafts, music and dance, from banjo construction, papermarbling and white oak basketry, to Cajun fiddle, improvisational clogging and shape note singing. Twice a week, evening concerts will showcase the skills of the music staff; other evenings will offer public old-time dances, jam sessions and a multitude of additional activities. Capping the summer, August 7-9, will be the 1992 Augusta Festival, featuring a full week-

end of traditional music concerts, storytelling performances, square dances, children's events and folklife demonstrations.

Lodging and meals during the workshops will be available on the Davis & Elkins College campus, or at nearby hotels, campgrounds or bed and breakfast inns.

A free 56-page catalog, outlining each of this year's Augusta offerings, is available from the Augusta Heritage Center, Box FL, Davis & Elkins College, Elkins, WV 26241-3996; phone (304) 636-1903.

A conference on "Pacifism in American Religious Traditions (Other Than Historic Peace Churches)," sponsored by Goshen College and Pepperdine University and arranged by Theron Schlabach and Richard

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Videohistory: Focusing on the American Past (Part Two)

(Reprinted from The Journal of American History, September, 1991)

BY PAMELA M. HENSON AND TERRI A. SCHORZMAN

(continued from OHA Newsletter XXV, No. 4)

Visual images are powerful, as stimuli to the memory of the interviewee and as devices for presenting history. Thus, retrospective interviewing poses special dilemmas for the historian using videotaped evidence. Images of people recorded when they are elderly may not accurately reflect how they acted and interacted in earlier days or, indeed, mirror their own mental images of themselves. Other problems arise when a group is reconvened. If individuals have experienced varied levels of success and happiness in the intervening years, the group dynamics may have changed considerably. Can the historian assume that the interactions between the interviewees are similar to those of earlier days? The historian must apply critical judgment when evaluating such interactions. On the other hand, Sloan Foundation and Smithsonian scholars found that when a group consisting of a mentor and proteges was reconvened, deference was still displayed toward the senior figure, even though some members of the group had gained prominence in their own right.

How does the historian evaluate the evidence gathered by videohistory? Oral historians use two criteria to evaluate audiotaped interviews: reliability and validity. Reliability is the internal consistency of the testimony of the interviewee. Does an interviewee contradict himself or herself? Validity is the consistency of the testimony with other types of evidence, usually documents, other interviews or contemporary accounts. Videohistory materials should be evaluated by the same criteria. The videohistory interview can contain within itself several lines of evidence: visual, verbal and interactive. The historian must assess whether the evidence is reliable and consistent with other forms of documentation.14

Some scholars have begun to look at films as cultural artifacts, but as yet few historians use the videotaped interviews conducted for documentary films as evidence in their research. A wealth of untapped visual information about past events remains on the cutting room floor of documentary film houses. The long interviews conducted as background for films contain complexities and asides that do not fit the story line of a scripted production. One major obstacle to using such footage for research is lack of availability; original footage is often discarded or withheld from scholarly scrutiny.

Some production houses, such as Blackside Productions, producers of *Eyes on the Prize*, have begun to deposit their interviews in repositories. This trend is to be applauded. Historians must watch for limitations of point of view and incompleteness when using interviews conducted for a scripted production. John E. O'Conner's writings provide guidance on the use of film resources in research and teaching.¹⁵

Visual documentation is being used in a variety of historical projects. Video interviews now appear in museum exhibits and documentary films, on public television and at scholarly meetings. Smithsonian scholars are also incorporating visual information about how objects were used, spaces were organized and individuals interacted into conventional historical articles and books on such topics as the Manhattan Project and the history of space science. The potential of such documentation has not yet been fully realized.¹⁶

The public programming potential of videohistory is a double-edged sword. Videohistory repositories must assure that these powerful images are used in accordance with the wishes of the interviewees. In turn interviewees must be made aware of the potential commercial use of these tapes. Videohistory interviews are covered by copyright law, and their research use, reproduction and broadcast can be restricted. *Principles and Standards of the Oral History Association*, published in 1990, addresses the responsibilities of historians creating and using such materials.¹⁷

"The public programming potential of videohistory is a doubleedged sword."

The critical literature on videohistory is still thin. Most articles published fall into the "Let's do it!" and "This is how we did our project" categories. The historian who wishes to try his or her hand at video interviews can begin with Brad Jolly's *Videotaping Local History*. Although its technical sections are out of date, it provides a layman's introduction to using video for historical documentation. Bruce Jackson's *Fieldwork* provides an excellent introduction to video documentation, with methodological and technical sections. A good technical work is *Working with Video* by Brian Winston and Julia Keydel. 18

Preservation of original tapes is crucial for video documentation. Transcripts of audiotaped interviews provide a reasonable facsimile of the original interview, but visual information resides only on the tape. The

original tape should be copied for research use and stored under constant temperature and humidity conditions. All of the archival projects mentioned above make their interviews available for research. Archives now routinely accept such collections and announce them through the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections major oral history directories. Historians who record video documentation should make every effort to deposit their original tapes in an appropriate repository, where they can be duplicated, cataloged and transcribed. Visual cues on time-coded transcripts provide good intellectual access to the visual information on the videotapes. Historians working on the twentieth century are now likely to find videotaped interviews in their research area easily accessible at many archival centers. 19

The evidence captured by videotaped interviews enriches the scholarly product with first-person accounts, visual information, movement and interactions. As historians have gained experience with videography, they have developed techniques for capturing new types of visual evidence. The challenge is now for the historian, teacher and curator to incorporate videohistory into his or her monographs, lectures, exhibits and documentaries. For historians who wish to begin collecting and using such documentation, a small but growing literature is available and can be supplemented by contacting the projects mentioned here for further advice. Videohistory collections span a broad range of topics focusing on the American past, from urban to rural, elite to community life. The video camera has demonstrated its potential to document all aspects of modern life, from observing the galaxy to making clocks. Such documentation will be a powerful tool for disseminating history in a high-tech society.

FOOTNOTES FOR PART TWO:

¹⁴Alice Hoffman, "Reliability and Validity in Oral History," in *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, ed. David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum (Nashville, 1984), 67-73.

¹⁵Kim Lacy Roger, "Oral History and the History of the Civil Rights Movement," Journal of American History, 75 (Sept. 1988), 574; John E. O'Connor, Images as Artifact: Historical Analysis of Film and Television (Malabar, 1990) John E. O'Connor, Teaching History with Film and Television (Washington, 1987); Paul Smith, ed., The Historian and Film (Cambridge, Eng., 1976).

16Jo Blatti, "Public History and Oral History," Journal of American History, 77 (Sept. 1990), 615-25; David DeVorkin, Science with a Vengeance: The Military Origins of the Space Sciences in America (New York, forthcoming, 1992); David DeVorkin, "Study of NRL Laboratory Life" (videocassette, Washington, D.C., 1990); Stanley Goldberg, "The

(Continued on page 9)

Conferences,

continued from page 7

Hughes, will be held on the Goshen campus, Thursday evening through Saturday evening, Sept. 24-26, 1992. Papers will be presented on cases from Mormons to Catholics to Black Pentecostals and more. For a brochure write: Pacifism Conference/Box A53/Goshen College, Goshen IN 46526.

13-17 September 1992 - The annual meeting of the Society of American Archivists will be held in LeCentre Hotel, Montreal, Canada. Of potential interest to oral historians is the Oral History Section meeting 15 September and a session 17 September called "Documenting African History: Taking It to the Streets." Presenters will discuss the Black Women Oral History Project and the complementary exhibition, "Women of Courage," (Schlesinger Library, Radcliffe College, Cambridge, MA). They will demonstrate ways to popularize the material for teenagers and adults in the community, including converting the stories to music, rhythm and dance.

MISCELLANEOUS

Dramatic advances in technology for acquiring, managing and sharing information promise to reshape the workplace by eliciting new behaviors and introducing new organizational patterns. For academic medical centers, the integration of information technology into programs of education, research and patient care is essential for increased organizational effectiveness.

At Baylor College of Medicine, we have developed information-sharing and management tools, collectively called the Virtual Notebook System (VNS). The VNS is a multiuser, workstation-based hypermedia system that serves as a technologically extended analog of the laboratory notebook used in biomedical research. We are deploying the VNS in scientific groups at Baylor, and are applying oral history techniques to assist its impact.

Excerpted from "Oral History and Information Technology: Human Voices of Assessment" by Lesley Williams Brunet, Charles T. Morrissey and G. Anthony Gorry in the Journal of Organizational Computing, 1 (3), 251-274 (1991).

WASHINGTON, May 14 — Following on the success of Ken Burns' epic "The Civil War," Zvi Dor-Ner's "Columbus and the Age of Discovery" and other recent documentary films, the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) today announced a special funding opportunity to encourage the creation of new documentary film productions. A grant of up to \$2.5 million may be awarded by NEH through this funding op-

portunity for the production of one outstanding documentary film series a year.

"Documentary film series help millions of Americans and people around the world learn about the ideas, events and people that have contributed to the humanities," said NEH Chairman Lynne V. Cheney. "We are very pleased with the past successes of documentaries funded through NEH, and look forward to supporting more outstanding projects resulting from this new funding opportunity."

Like all NEH-supported media projects, documentary series proposals must be on a subject central to the humanities in order to be eligible. Applicants must demonstrate that the proposed topic has significance for a broad, general audience. In addition, the quality and depth of the scholarship must be evident in the application to NEH.

These projects are supported by the NEH's Division of Public Programs, which offers grants for projects designed to increase public understanding of the humanities. It supports the planning, writing or production of television and radio programs in the humanities intended for general audiences. Non-profit institutions and public television and radio stations are eligible to apply for grants.

The next deadline for grant applications is Sept. 11, 1992. For more information on the special funding opportunity for documentary series as well as other grant opportunities for media projects, contact: NEH Division of Public Programs, Humanities Projects in Media, Room 420, 1100 Pennsylvania Ave., N.W., Washington, D.C., 20506. The telephone number is (202) 786-0278.

The National Endowment for the Humanities is an independent federal agency that supports education, research, preservation and public programs in the humanities.

The State University of New York Press has announced a new book series in oral and public history under the general editorship of Michael Frisch, Department of American Studies at State University of New York, Buffalo. The first two books in the series include A Shared Authority: Essays on the Craft and Meaning of Oral and Public History, by Michael Frisch, and The Death of Luigi Trastulli and Other Stories: Form and Meaning in Oral History, by Alessandro Portelli.

SUNY Press is soliciting manuscripts that address issues useful in exploring the meaning and potential of these forms of scholarship.

Manuscripts may vary in topic and content, however the series is primarily concerned with broad methodological questions. Selection of manuscripts for publication will be based on the quality of scholarship, the clarity and style of presentation, the significance of the issues addressed and their marketability.

For more information, contact Rosalie Robertson, Editor, State University of New York Press, State University Plaza, Albany, New York 12246.

From the Texas Oral History Association Newsletter, Fall, 1991

Footnotes,

(Continued from page 8)

Private Wars of Leslie Groves' (in Stanley Goldberg's possession).

¹⁷Principles and Standards of the Oral History Association (Los Angeles, 1990); John N. Neuenschwander, Oral History and the Law (Denton, Tex., 1985)

¹⁸Brad Jolley, Videotaping Local History (Nashville, 1982); Jackson, Fieldwork, 105-256; Brian Winston and Julia Keydel, Working with Video: A Comprehensive Guide to the World of Video Production (London, 1986).

¹⁹Joseph G. Empsucha, "Film and Videotape Preservation Fact Sheet," in Footage 89: North American Film and Video Sources, ed. Richard Prelinger (New York, 1989), 828-29; Ron Grele, "On Using Oral History Collections: An Introduction, "Journal of American History, 74 (Sept., 1987), 570-78; Jim Wheeler, "Long-Term Storage of Videotape," SMPTE Journal (1983), 650-54. For guidelines on processing videohistory collections, contact Terri A. Schorzman, Smithsonian Videohistory Program, Smithsonian Institution Archives, Washington, DC 20560. Manuscript Section, Special Materials Cataloging Divisions, Collections Services, Library of Congress, National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (29 vols., Washington, 1959).

OHA NEEDS YOU!

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

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

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

CAREER OPPORTUNITY

The Bureau of Reclamation is initiating an oral history program addressing the full spectrum of Reclamation experience through interviews with managers, workers, irrigation district representatives, families on Reclamation projects, construction workers, environmentalists, etc. The oral history program will concentrate primarily on a few historic projects of Reclamation selected by each regional office. Planning is in progress, and major interviewing efforts in this oral history program will begin not later than fiscal year 1994 (which begins in October of 1993). Major interviewing efforts may begin in the fiscal year starting October of 1992. It is possible that some interviews will be closed to research for a period of time.

Reclamation will have two needs: to train volunteers and Bureau of Reclamation employees to do oral history interviews; and to conduct oral history interviews.

If there is sufficient interest from oral historians with faculty appointments at colleges and universities, Reclamation may use the Faculty Fellowship Program to staff its oral history program. Faculty Fellowship Program appointments are special appointments into the federal civil service system for not more than 130 working days per year. Travel expenses are covered at normal federal per diem rates, and salaries could range from GS-9 (\$26,798/year) to GS-12 (\$38,861/year). Annual and sick leave does accrue to Faculty Fellows, but other benefits do not apply. The work schedule can be flexible to suit the requirements of academic appointments and work may be done during vacation and break periods.

Reclamation has several potential geographic focuses for its oral history program: the Washington, D.C., Office; the Denver Office; and the 17 western states which are divided into five regions with offices in Billings, Montana, Boise, Idaho; Sacramento, California; Salt Lake City, Utah; and Boulder City, Nevada.

To permit planning for the oral history program, Reclamation solicits brief expressions of potential interest in the Faculty Fellowship Program with Reclamation. If the Faculty Fellowship program is used, preference will be given to faculty with interest and experience in relevant fields in Western American history and with experience in oral history interviewing and transcription.

To send expressions of interest, or for further information, contact Brit Allen Storey, Senior Historian (D-5530), Bureau of Reclamation, Denver, Colorado 80225-0007. Telephone (303) 236-8723.

COLLECTION GUIDE

The University of Wisconsin-La Crosse Oral History Project Collection Guide is now available at the price of \$5.00 per copy. The Guide is bound, paperback and 176 pages long. Each entry includes biographical information, interview dates, a summary of the interview, subject index and access information. To purchase a copy of the Guide, send \$5.00 per copy (check made payable to the University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse) to: The Oral History Project, Department of History, University of Wisconsin-LaCrosse, La Crosse, WI 54601.

NEWS

The UCLA Oral History Program and the University Library cosponsored academic year 1991-92 campus lectures by prominent oral historians. Fall, winter and spring oral history lecturers were Irina Sherbakova, Moscow State University; Ronald Grele, Columbia University; and Sherna Berger Gluck, California State University, Long Beach. Plans are underway for continuing the lectures on the UCLA campus during the 1992/93 academic year.

During the 1991 Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists' Oral History Section, its members decided to begin an oral history program for the Society's archives. Because the interviewing, transcribing and editing are being done by volunteers, the program is, of necessity, narrowly defined. James E. Fogarty of the Minnesota Historical Society has begun to interview former SAA presidents. The plan is to continue the program by interviewing the outgoing president each year. The interviews will be limited to about an hour, and discussion will be restricted to SAA in general and the presidency in particular. The unedited tape and an edited transcript of each interview will be deposited in the archives after the narrator has had an opportunity to review the transcript.

OHA Newsletter Copy Deadlines

JANUARY 1 APRIL 1 JULY 1 OCTOBER 1

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Address editorial matters to: L. Elisabeth Beattie, Editor-in-chief, Oral History Association Newsletter, Elizabethtown Community College, 600 College Street Road, Elizabethtown, KY 42701, or phone 501/769-2371, ext. 408.

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