



NEWSLETTER

OHA Launches "Project 30"

By Cullom Davis
Chair, Endowment Committee

OHA Council at its February meeting voted to embark on "Project 30," a major campaign to augment the association's endowment fund. The goal of this effort is to raise \$30,000 by 1997, the OHA's 30th anniversary. Accomplishing this goal will give the endowment fund more than \$50,000, the minimum deemed necessary to yield adequate annual income.

Conducting the campaign will be the Endowment Committee, which consists of Cullom Davis (chair), Enid

Douglass, Lila Goff, Ron Marcello, Jim Mink and Charlie Morrissey. They and all current Council members have spearheaded the campaign by already making their own pledges and donations.

Endowment fund income will underwrite new programs and special initiatives and also will provide financial stability to the association, which otherwise is dependent on fluctuating revenues from annual meetings.

Over the next 12 months, members will be asked to pledge a special gift in celebration of our 30th anniversary.

Everyone also is encouraged to remember OHA in their estate planning. Members should consult their own legal or financial advisers for specific language that meets their individual needs. As an example, a bequest could take the following form:

"I give, devise and bequeath to the Oral History Association, a not-for-profit corporation chartered in New York State, [insert here sum or description of property] for support of its Endowment Fund, the income from which is to be used for the benefit of the association in such manner as its elected Council shall direct."

Dynamic Program in Store for Milwaukee

Challenging discussions, dynamic speakers, the first OHA awards and a newly restored historic hotel in downtown Milwaukee await OHA members who attend the 1995 annual meeting Oct. 19-22.

"Reflections on Relationships in Oral History Research" is the conference theme, which has sparked a variety of proposals to explore the complexities of relationships between interviewer and interviewee, between individual and collective memory and between theory and method, among other topics.

Featured speakers scheduled for the conference include: Studs Terkel, who will speak at a tribute to him at the Oct. 20 luncheon; Wilma Mankiller of the Cherokee Nation and Ellen Bravo of the 9to5 Association of Working Women. The first OHA

awards for outstanding oral history book, precollegiate teaching and nonprint production also will be presented in Milwaukee.

Site of the conference is the historic Pfister Hotel, built in 1893 and recently restored. It is located a few blocks from Lake Michigan in the heart of downtown Milwaukee near shops, theaters and fine restaurants.

Preregistration and hotel reservation materials are expected to be available by early summer.

Program co-chairs for the 1995 conference are Michael A. Gordon of the University of Wisconsin-Milwaukee and Gwendolyn Etter-Lewis of Western Michigan University in Kalamazoo. Local arrangements chair is Timothy L. Ericson of the Golda Meir Library in Milwaukee.

Editor's Note

By Mary Kay Quinlan

This is the first OHA Newsletter in the new 12-page format. OHA and oral historians are a busy bunch, and we welcome the opportunity to report in greater depth on issues and activities of interest. Please feel free to suggest topics or, better yet, volunteer to write articles. Please hold your submissions to 2,000 words or less.

Getting your article to the Newsletter is now even easier. I can be reached on the Internet at: cktc52a@prodigy.com. You can still fax your material to 703-379-4381 or mail it to 3023 S. Columbus St., Arlington, VA 22206.



From Your President

By Dale Treleven
OHA President

Spring having just sprung, I am reminded of rain and the OHA Endowment Fund, however improbable the connection.

Back in 1986, at OHA's annual business meeting on board the majestic *Queen Mary*, James V. Mink, an OHA founding member from Los Angeles, presented a cash gift to begin what Jim referred to as a "rainy day fund"--a capital reservoir for undertaking future special activities or projects that OHA considered important but could not support from its operating budget.

Little could Jim Mink--or any of us--have predicted that less than a decade later his seed money would result in an Endowment Fund account exceeding \$20,000 and, eventually, would lead to the most ambitious fund-raising campaign in OHA history.

As described elsewhere in this Newsletter, "Project 30" is a concerted effort to add \$30,000 to the Endowment Fund by 1997, the association's 30th anniversary year.

Your Council, at its February mid-winter meeting in Milwaukee,

provided the foundation for Project 30 by responding swiftly, resolutely and unanimously to Endowment Committee recommendations. First, Council approved a recommended policy to ensure prudent and conservative investment of the fund principal and rolling over and reinvesting interest on principal until the fund's balance reaches at least \$50,000. Council also made a commitment to allocate annually to the Endowment Fund 5 percent of fiscal year income from the OHA operating budget in years of unusually profitable annual meetings.

Moreover, Council enthusiastically endorsed the Endowment Committee's Project 30 action plan and complementary donor contact timeline and procedures to involve all past OHA officers and current members in generating enough capital over a two-year period to reach--better yet, exceed--the goal of a \$50,000 corpus. Each Council member also made an individual commitment to give to the fund in an amount that represents a personal sacrifice.

All told, the key to reaching our Project 30 goal is the generosity and commitment each of us has for building a solid Oral History Association as we move toward the turn of the century. A successful campaign means that current and future committee members will be

able to suggest funding support for innovative and imaginative programming and activities that can be completely or substantially paid for from Endowment Fund earnings. All of you future officers will be better able to evaluate and approve, from both short-run and long-range vantage points, the most compelling and necessary of these proposals.

As for the now of protecting Endowment Fund capital, the OHA executive secretary, constitutionally responsible for managing our financial affairs, will continually consult with members of an Ad Hoc Advisory Committee on Investments, appointed by me and my successors, to ensure wise investment decisions.

Also for the now, I and other officers urge each and every OHA member to join us in launching and completing a successful Project 30. Let's give to the Endowment Fund as much as we're able, but in any case an amount that represents a personal sacrifice.

As one imagines our \$50,000 goal being exceeded and interest revenues accruing and becoming available by the end of the 1990s, a once wisely-envisioned "rainy day fund" shall be a perpetual sunny day revenue source for building a more diverse yet more effective and influential Oral History Association for meeting future needs and challenges as we preserve the spoken historical record.

Executive Secretary's Report

By Rebecca Sharpless

I am extremely pleased to write this column as your new executive secretary. The association office moved from Albuquerque to Waco, Texas, on Jan. 1, and we are gradually finding our way. The moving boxes are almost all unpacked or stored, and the stationery and membership brochures have been reprinted with the Texas address. We're in business!

The OHA office is located on the campus of Baylor University on the top floor of the newly restored Carroll Library Building, built in 1901. The OHA is housed within the Institute for Oral History. We cordially invite you

to visit us when your travels bring you to Central Texas. We're a scant quarter-mile south of Interstate 35, otherwise known as Main Street Texas.

The OHA is fortunate to have the services of Ms. Kezia Ruiz as assistant to the executive secretary. With joint funding from the OHA and Baylor, Kezia (pronounced with a short e) is in the office 20 hours a week. She brings extensive meeting-planning experience as well as superb organizational skills, a sweet temperament and a great sense of humor. Kezia is completing her master's degree in English at Baylor in addition to enjoying her toddler son

and her husband, a Waco policeman. Callers to the OHA telephone number (817-755-2764) will find either Kezia or her voicemail. OHA members will have the chance to meet her in person at the annual meeting in Milwaukee.

The transition from Albuquerque is almost complete. At present we are concentrating on membership renewals and publications orders, with the compilation of the Annual Report and Membership Directory to begin very soon. And, as always, planning is moving along swiftly for the 1995 annual meeting and even reaching toward 1996.

We welcome your suggestions on how we can better serve you.



Nominees Presented For OHA Officers, Nominating Committee

By Lila J. Goff
Chair, Nominating Committee

The OHA Nominating Committee and the Council present the following members for consideration. Election of the officers and of the nominating committee members will be by a mail ballot, which will be sent to each member this summer. Complete biographical information and statements from each of the nominees will appear with the ballots.

For Vice President/President
Elect: **Richard Candida Smith**,
University of Michigan.

For Council (one to be elected):
Rose Diaz, University of New
Mexico; **Alva Stevenson**, UCLA Oral
History Program.

For Nominating Committee (three
to be elected):

Place 1: **Celia Alvarez**, Arizona
State University West; **Deborah
Dandridge**, University of Kansas.

Place 2: **Steve Novak**, UCLA;
Noel Stowe, Arizona State University.

Place 3: **Vicki Haas**, Chicago
Oral History Roundtable; **Lois
Myers**, Baylor University.

Any nominations by petition must
be made in accordance with OHA
Bylaws (see Section 8, paragraph 2 on
page 84 of the 1994 Membership
Directory and Annual Report).

UH Oral History Center Completes Interviews Of World War II Civilians

By Warren Nishimoto
University of Hawaii

"An Era of Change: Oral Histories of Civilians in World War II Hawaii," a five-volume study that documents the demographic, economic, political and social effects of war in Hawaii, is now available at the University of Hawaii system and state regional libraries. In this study, funded by the University of Hawaii, the National Park Service and the Hawaii Committee for the Humanities, 33 individuals from diverse backgrounds share their recollections of World War II Hawaii and discuss the war's impact on their lives, their families and their communities.

Those interviewed include: local workers who left their regular jobs and others who came from the mainland to work in higher-paying federal jobs; business owners regulated by martial law and affected by the sudden presence of thousands of military and civilian defense workers; women who worked for the USO, WARD, the U.S. Department of Ordnance, the Mutual Telephone Company and other places; aliens who were interned and Japanese-American families who were deprived of their usual livelihoods and/or relocated from strategic military areas; public health, social service and law enforcement workers who met the needs of the wartime population and individuals involved in entertainment and recreation (e.g. movies, music and sports) who were affected by the influx of thousands of young newcomers from the mainland.

All interviews were conducted by Center for Oral History staff: Warren Nishimoto, director; Michi Kodama-Nishimoto, research coordinator; Joe Rossi, Jonylle Sato and Holly Yamada, research associates.

For more information on the oral histories or individual interviewees, contact Warren Nishimoto at 808-956-6259 or fax 808-956-2884.

Military Women's War Tales Offer Rich Resource

Collecting oral histories or written memoirs of women who served in the military in World War II can make an important contribution to future generations' understanding of the complexities of war, according to several speakers at a conference March 3 and 4 on U.S. women in the military during World War II sponsored by the National Archives in College Park, Md.

More than 200 historians, active duty military personnel and World War II veterans, mostly women, heard a variety of panels, including one on collecting, preserving and sharing contributions of military women.

Linda Grant De Pauw, a history professor at George Washington University and founder of the Minerva Center, a foundation dedicated to promoting women's military studies, told conferees that to hold a permanent place in history, veterans' stories must be shared beyond conventions of other veterans and their families. Immediately after the war, women were not encouraged to write their memoirs and sometimes even hid their participation, she said, often perceived as either "prostitutes or perverts" for having served in the war.

OHA member Eleanor Stoddard, who has conducted oral history interviews with 37 military women, said she has identified about 40 archival collections around the country that touch on participation of U.S. women in the military during World War II. Most, she said, are interviews with women officers, not enlisted personnel. Many interviews, however, have not been fully transcribed and are not, for practical purposes, easily available to researchers.

De Pauw said the challenge for historians "is to continue this work beyond the current [World War II] commemorative celebration" and to see that interest in it lasts beyond the lives of the women who participated in the war.

The Marilyn Monroe Tapes: Restricted or Not?



By John Neuenschwander
Carthage College

My title promises more than this article can possibly deliver. But if it got you this far, read on and learn more about how a lawsuit over the legacy of one of America's greatest sex symbols, raised a legal issue that should be of major concern to oral historians.

Lawsuits involving oral and video history materials continue to be very rare. Whenever a case does arise, it is usually worthy of some analysis and comment. This casenote will focus primary attention on the single issue of most interest to oral historians: whether a party to a lawsuit may gain access by subpoena to oral history materials that have been restricted by the donor.

Defamation suit

This case grew out of biographer Donald Spoto's alleged defamation of Robert Slatzer, a previous biographer and frequent commentator on the life of Marilyn Monroe. In his biography, "Marilyn Monroe: The Biography," Spoto accuses Slatzer of creating a web of falsehoods and half-truths about the life and death of Marilyn Monroe for his own financial gain. He challenges Slatzer's claims that he was briefly married to her and that he subsequently become one of her closest confidants.

Once the lawsuit had been filed, the discovery phase of the proceedings began. It was in this stage of the litigation that the oral

history materials entered the picture. In 1974 Robert Slatzer published a book entitled "The Life and Curious Death of Marilyn Monroe." Although Slatzer was listed as the author, the work had been ghostwritten by William Randolph Fowler, a well known journalist and writer. In the course of his research, Fowler conducted a number of taped interviews/conversations with individuals who had either known Monroe or had information regarding her death.

In May 1990, Fowler deeded his personal papers to the Urban Archives Center at California State University, Northridge. The oral history interviews he conducted for "The Life and Curious Death" were included in the papers. There were a total of 47 Monroe-related tapes.

Access restricted

Initially, Fowler placed no restrictions on the use of his papers. In May 1992, however, Fowler asked the Urban Archives Center to restrict access to all the tapes and papers dealing with Marilyn Monroe or Robert Slatzer. Unless he personally gave permission, no one was to have access until after his death.

Robert G. Marshall, the chief archivist of the Urban Archives Center, duly implemented Fowler's restrictions. According to Marshall, these restrictions created no problems for the center until early August 1994, when he was served with a subpoena by attorneys for HarperCollins and Donald Spoto. The subpoena ordered Marshall to appear personally at the law offices of Leopold, Petrich & Smith in Los Angeles on Aug. 17, 1994. Since he had been served with a subpoena *duces tecum*, (Latin for "bring with you") he was to have with him all of the materials and tapes in the Fowler collection relating to Marilyn Monroe and Robert Slatzer.

Marshall immediately referred the subpoena to the Office of General Counsel for the California State University System. Although quite familiar with subpoenas seeking

university records, employee files and even committee votes on tenure/retention, James R. Lynch, the attorney handling this matter, had not previously been called upon to decide whether the University System would defend against this type of subpoena.

Subpoena not contested

Lynch subsequently informed Marshall that the general counsel's office would not contest the subpoena. He was to gather up all of the materials requested, including the 47 tapes of interviews conducted by Fowler, and make them available as requested.

According to Lynch, the decision not to defend against this subpoena was grounded in both the law and common sense. There was no archival privilege in California or under federal law that authorized an archive or library to refuse to comply with a subpoena *duces tecum* for any papers, materials or tapes that had been restricted by the donor. There was also no promissory language in the deed of gift that obligated the center to defend against any attempt to gain access to the collection by means of subpoena or court order.

Looking for evidence

From a practical standpoint, neither the center nor the University of California, Northridge was a party to the defamation lawsuit that triggered the subpoena. The attorneys for HarperCollins believed that the Fowler collection might contain evidence that would support their position.

Furthermore, Northridge was a public institution, and the materials in the Urban Archive Center were public records. To have the University System trying to protect donor imposed restrictions on access to public records was not a defensible position. Fowler was advised that he was free to retain his own counsel if he wished to try and defend against the subpoena.

Although the Aug. 17 date for production of the Monroe materials was ultimately postponed, on Aug. 23,

1994, a second subpoena was served on Marshall. This one called for the attorneys to inspect the materials and tapes at the center.

Marshall produces tapes

Thus on the morning of Sept. 29, 1994, Marshall brought all of the papers and tapes named in the subpoena from the closed area of the archive to the front counter. Shortly before the time fixed for the arrival of the attorneys for HarperCollins, he received a phone call. An attorney informed Marshall that they would not be coming to inspect the papers. Their motion for summary judgment had just been granted by the Federal District Court for the Central District of California and the case was dismissed.

Marshall gladly returned the Fowler papers to the closed area of the center but perhaps with the knowledge that the victory was purely circumstantial. If the attorneys for Robert Slatzer succeed in their appeal to the Court of Appeals for the 9th Circuit and the case is revived, he could once again be served with a subpoena.

Rules of evidence

Any analysis of this case must begin with a brief discussion of the law of evidence and discovery. Without such background, it is difficult to assess the decision of the general counsel's office not to oppose the subpoena for access to the Fowler collection.

There is an old saying that "the law is entitled to every man's evidence," which accurately describes the modus operandi of most judges. If someone has relevant evidence, he or she legally can be forced to provide it unless there is a recognized privilege such as doctor/patient or husband/wife. A privilege to withhold evidence is created in one of three ways:

--A constitution may establish a privilege, such as the Fifth Amendment right not to incriminate oneself.

--Legislators may legislate one into existence.

--A court may judicially craft a privilege.

Only the first and last methods are available to the federal courts. While some states follow Federal Rule 501 in this regard, others also allow evidentiary privileges to be created by the legislature.

The specific privilege at issue here is the archival privilege. In other words, can a repository of scholarly resources withhold from a court collections it has agreed to restrict or seal? That is different than the research privilege. The latter privilege is one that individual researchers and scholars have sought to have courts recognize. It presumes that researchers who gather information from confidential sources and who are not party to a lawsuit should be able to avoid having to reveal both their findings as well as the identity of their sources.

Like journalist's privilege

The researcher privilege is somewhat akin to the newsperson's privilege in that it is grounded on the First Amendment. If a researcher's promise of confidentiality can be broached by a subpoena, then the free flow of information to the public will be chilled because many individuals will refuse to aid researchers.

While a few federal courts have recognized a qualified research privilege, the applications usually have been limited to scientific/medical researchers who can also demonstrate that premature disclosure of their research will severely damage the integrity of the project.

There is only one reported case dealing with the archival privilege. In Wilkinson v. FBI, 111 F.R.D. 432 (1986), the issue was the same as here, namely, could lawyers subpoena records that had been restricted by the donor. Although the court was asked to create an archival privilege similar to the research privilege, the request was denied. The court concluded that "it is simply too great an extension of the federal common law of privilege to permit mere placement of one's records in an archive to exempt the documents from discovery."

"Goofy privilege rejected"

The characterization given to archival privilege in one of the leading

treatises on the subject, "Federal Practice and Procedure" by Wright & Graham, further underscores the absence of any court support for the so-called archival privilege. In an annotated footnote labeled "Goofy privilege rejected," Wright & Graham group the archival privilege with other rejected privileges such as the Nazi-hunter privilege, the employee-employer privilege and the friend's privilege.

Archive policies reconsidered

If you maintain an archive or collection of oral history tapes and transcripts and also allow donors to seal or restrict access, then the experience of Robert Marshall should be highly instructive. Unless there is a specific statute in your state that specifically protects sealed or restricted oral history materials from access by subpoena, then most likely you could one day be gathering up materials from your restricted shelves to be turned over to an attorney.

This prospect alone should not lead you to drop or severely curtail your sealing/restriction policy. However, if you do not currently inform donors that their interviews most likely can be accessed by subpoena, you should do so. This instruction obviously should be handled very diplomatically. Down the road, however, this caveat may help when and if a subpoena arrives and you have to try and explain to the donor and/or his or her heirs why you are not able to defend against this court-ordered access.

Editor's Note: John A. Neuenschwander teaches history at Carthage College and is a municipal judge in Kenosha, Wis. A former OHA president, he also is the author of the OHA pamphlet "Oral History and the Law," available for \$8 a copy from the OHA Executive Office, P.O. Box 97234, Waco, TX 76798-7234.

Neuenschwander extends his appreciation to Robert G. Marshall and James R. Lynch for their kind assistance in the preparation of this casenote, a version of which he presented at the 1994 OHA Conference in Albuquerque.

STATE AND REGIONAL REPORT



SOHO Conference Rated Stellar Success in N.C.

By Cliff Kuhn
SOHA President

The second annual conference of the Southern Oral History Organization (SOHO), held in Durham, N.C., March 10-12, was by all accounts a huge success. About 175 people from a wide diversity of backgrounds attended the 16 sessions of the ambitious program, whose theme was "Oral History in the Contemporary South: Community, Academy and Connections."

Friday's program included six free public workshops made possible through a grant from the North Carolina Humanities Council. Topics included interviewing techniques, oral history and video production, preservation and access, designing community projects, oral history in exhibition and radio formats and oral history in the public schools. A number of local public school teachers and students attended the workshops, as did representatives from various grassroots community groups. Friday's keynote speaker was novelist Lee Smith, author of "Oral History" and other works, who regaled the audience with often-hilarious stories (both oral and written) as she talked about the importance of the spoken word to her work.

Friday also featured a lengthy conference-related article in the Raleigh News and Observer on an oral history of basketball in North Carolina (what else?) before the days of March Madness, compiled by Pamela Grundy for the Museum of the New South in Charlotte. Grundy was

one of the numerous presenters at Saturday's sessions, which covered such themes as oral history as a collaborative process, race relations in the South, oral history in North Carolina communities, oral history and advocacy, oral history and the professions and the public presentation of oral history. Saturday also featured screenings of two new films, "Displaced in the New South: Latino Americans and Asian Americans in North Georgia" by David Zeiger and "The Uprising of '34" by Judith Helfand and George Stoney, as well as a presidential address on the state of southern oral history and remarks by OHA vice president/president-elect Anne Ritchie.

Perhaps the most moving part of the entire conference was the Saturday plenary session, entitled "Silver Rights: One Family's Struggle for Justice," focusing on the heroic effort of the Carter family of Sunflower County, Miss., to desegregate the local schools. Present at the session were two of the Carter children and their mother, Mae Bertha Carter, along with Connie Curry, author of a forthcoming book (Algonquin Press) about the Carters, who Curry has known since 1965. As the Carters told of the intense intimidation and harassment they faced in their attempt to obey the law of the land, the audience was keenly reminded of the courage and righteousness that epitomized the southern civil rights movement and of the crucial role oral history plays in bringing the movement to public consciousness today.

Attendees at Sunday's business meeting agreed to devote most of SOHO's immediate energy to strengthening committees, building membership and otherwise developing organizational infrastructure. SOHO also passed a resolution, similar to one passed by the OHA, calling for reauthorization and continued funding at current levels for the National Endowment for the Humanities. Also, a vote of thanks was extended to the two

sponsoring organizations, Duke University's Center for Documentary Studies and the Southern Oral History Program of the University of North Carolina, and to members of the conference committee: Darnell Arnoult, Leslie Brown, Glenn Burchett, Linda Simmons-Henry, Alicia Rouverol, Annie Valk and Cheri Wolfe. They deserve high commendation for putting on an outstanding conference that greatly advanced oral history in the South.

Minnesota Oral Historians Celebrate 10th Anniversary

By John Decker
OHAM President

The Oral History Association of Minnesota (OHAM) celebrated its 10th anniversary by honoring its founding board members during a luncheon on April 1. Those honored with certificates of appreciation were James Fogerty, Lila Goff, Bruce Bruemmer, Barbara Sommer, Edward Nelson, Gail Cullinan and Jean Toll.

The event also included OHAM's annual meeting and a full day's program titled: "Oral History: Pathways, Possibilities...and Potatoes." Several individual and panel presenters addressed issues such as physical education, teaching, publishing, minor league baseball and local potato culture. The History Department of the College of St. Catherine in St. Paul hosted the celebration.

TOHA Releases 2nd Issue Of 'Sound Historian' Journal

Articles on a prairie doctor, rural Texas women and southern artists along with book reviews are featured in the second issue of the **Sound Historian**, the journal of the Texas Oral History Association. Copies are available for \$5 from TOHA, P.O. Box 97271, Baylor University, Waco, TX 76798-7271.

10-Year Project Culminates With "Her Excellency"

By Ann Miller Morin
Silver Spring, Md.

Editor's Note: For 31 years, Ann Miller Morin accompanied her career Foreign Service officer husband, Laurent Morin, to assignments in the Middle East, North Africa, Europe and Asia. With a background in education, she served as principal of American schools in Baghdad and Algiers. Upon Laurent Morin's retirement, they embarked, virtually single-handedly, on an effort to document the lives of women who served as U.S. ambassadors between 1933 and 1983. The result is "Her Excellency: An Oral History of American Women Ambassadors," published recently in the Twayne Publishers oral history series. The following article describes how this independent researcher undertook her project.

In the beginning my goal was to write the history of America's pioneering women ambassadors. The subject seemed a natural for someone who had spent a large part of her life observing diplomats in action and, moreover, such a study would fill a noticeable gap in American diplomatic history. Ambassador Jean Wilkowski, who had served in Paris and was the first woman ambassador ever sent to Africa, had begun some research and encouraged me to write it, offering her files and help with contacts and fund raising.

We talked to historians, public figures, scholars and diplomats for advice on the depth and scope of the investigation, then I began interviews with the subjects and the attendant archival research. Jean and my husband, Laurent Morin, set about applying for funding, which he believed would be a sure bet. Unfortunately, our timing was off. Reagan administration budget cutbacks meant no government funding was available. We, like so many others, then applied to private foundations where our chances for

help were diluted by the increased number of applicants. Failing there, the two then wrote dozens of letters to individuals known to have assisted projects such as ours, but nothing paid off.

A major shift in emphasis occurred after I attended by first oral history conference the OHMAR (Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region) at Wilmington, Del., in 1986. Listening to oral historians such as Martha Ross and Don Ritchie convinced me an archive of in-depth oral histories of women ambassadors would be of great value to future researchers, and accordingly, the archive became my primary concern. Repeated rejections for funding did not deter--that is, until it became necessary to travel around the United States to obtain crucial interviews, and then expenses soared.

Then, out of the blue, one of my subjects volunteered through her family foundation a sizeable donation that covered all my travel costs. About the same time, as it became evident the work would take several years to complete, Jean, who had other commitments, withdrew from the project. I, by now thoroughly wrapped up in the lives of these extraordinary women, determined to see it through even at considerable personal cost in time, energy and dollars. I was very fortunate that my husband agreed with me on the value of the endeavor and from the

beginning was willing to underwrite a large percentage of the expenses.

Every so often I had misgivings, but gifts from individuals, mini grants and other help from state historical societies, plus a public service grant from the American Association of University Women, provided crucial encouragement. Then, at the 1988 OHA conference in Baltimore, the Twayne Publishers representative, having heard of my project, proposed I prepare a selection of the transcripts of the 34 ambassadors interviewed for their new line of oral histories. The result is "Her Excellency: An Oral History of American Women Ambassadors."

But still, the work goes on. Several of the recorded interviews must be transcribed when funds permit, and the entire collection of oral histories must be indexed and readied for deposit in appropriate libraries so they will be available to others. The reception so far accorded "Her Excellency" convinces me the Women Ambassadors Project has been worth the many years my husband and I have devoted to it. And beyond that, there is this: recently a granddaughter said: "Do realize, Grandmother, that you're a **world authority**!" Which only shows that when you undertake an oral history project, you never know what will happen!



Ambassador Mary Olmsted is greeted by three members of the Tari Clan in ceremonial dress in the Southern Highlands of Papua New Guinea, c. 1978.

An Oral Historian's Travels in the New South Africa

Andor Skotnes
Russell Sage College

Last November I traveled to South Africa for a four week-visit to consult with a wide range of individuals and institutions on building archives and oral history projects. On my first day in the country, I was shown the following passage from the African National Congress (ANC) proposals for a new national archives service:

"People's history programmes, including oral documentation programmes, should be fostered as part of a programme of democratization and empowerment of the voiceless by the Archives Service in collaboration with other cultural and heritage organizations. . ."

I was struck by this passage. In it, the dominant party of the new South African government--the liberation movement that led the overthrow of apartheid and that is now guiding the transition to popular democracy--officially declares that oral history has an important role to play in the construction of a new society.

Role for oral history

Two days later I was attending an international conference entitled, significantly, "Archives for the People: Securing an Archival Heritage." In a presentation to this conference, historian Andre Odendaal, director of the Mayibuye Center for History and Culture, spoke about the potential contribution of oral history in the South African transition in terms very similar to those of the ANC statement. During more than four decades in power, Odendaal pointed out, the apartheid government manipulated the documentary record, suppressed historical memory among the vast majority and rewrote history as a racialized mythology.

A multifaceted history from the bottom up must now be reconstructed and historical consciousness must be widely disseminated among all of the peoples of this diverse country (South Africa has 11 official languages) if a strong civil society is to be built and a truly unified, democratic nation is to emerge. Oral history, he argued, is

crucial to all of this, not only because it is one of the best methods of recovering and spreading knowledge of the historical experiences of the broad masses, but because, for South Africa, it often is the only way: more than half of the population is illiterate. **South African roots**

As a historian interested in oral history's capacity to empower and to facilitate democratic change, I was extremely excited by the ANC statement, by Odendaal's remarks and by numerous other conversations I had during my first days in South Africa.

My excitement was compounded by the fact of my own background. I was born in South Africa but emigrated with my immediate family before my fifth birthday. I have always been conscious of my South African roots. However, although I had been a long-term supporter of the international anti-apartheid movement, I had always feared--in fact, believed--that apartheid could never be defeated without a devastating civil war. Now, after more than four decades, I was back, and the change that had appeared impossible was underway without a general blood bath. It was an interesting moment for me, and my first days in South Africa made the rest of my trip look very promising. As it turned out, my initial expectations were largely fulfilled, although not always as I expected.

Archivists grant

I was invited to South Africa by the South African Society of Archivists (SASA)--the sponsors of the "Archives for the People" conference --on an "academic specialist" grant from United States Information Service. From mid-November to mid-December 1994, I traveled approximately 5,000 kilometers around the country, from the Northern Transvaal, through the Pretoria-Johannesburg region, around Cape Town and environs, to the Eastern Cape.

I spoke to, conducted workshops for and had conversations with literally scores of people from various ethnic backgrounds--some on university

campuses, some community-based--who were involved with or interested in people's oral history. During these travels, I found that, while there was a real range of experience with and expertise in this field, a common denominator was indeed a commitment to oral history as an intrinsically political practice.

Take the University of the North (UN), in Sovenga, Northern Transvaal, as an example. UN was founded by the apartheid regime in the early 1960s as school for black South Africans. Located deep in the impoverished rural areas of the high veld (although many of its 13,000 students come from the Johannesburg-Pretoria urban area), UN is overcrowded, underfunded and lacks many necessary facilities. For example, it has never had university archives.

Archives a priority

Now, with the South African transition, a high priority for the university is the creation of such archives, as **people's archives**. As University Librarian John Tsebe, who is leading this effort, told me when I first met him, the archives will be devoted to the history of UN as a **site of resistance to apartheid** and to the history of the surrounding rural areas.

Furthermore, Tsebe and his co-workers, although they have little experience with oral history, see this methodology as the cornerstone of their archives project. Enthusiasm for oral history is high at UN.

The one-day workshop I conducted there for nearly 30 people from the university and surrounding areas was the most exhausting I have ever done. It ran nearly eight straight hours and could easily have gone on for days. (UN is now advertising for a visiting oral historian for the 1997 school year through the Fulbright Scholars program.)

There is also, I learned, significant interest in people's oral history in the Eastern Cape, at the southern end of the country. I was based there for several days, in the small city of Grahamstown. The Eastern Cape is distant from the main metropolitan

areas of the country, and there was a strong sense of cultural and political isolation among many people I encountered. But the existing resources for oral history in the region around Grahamstown, I found, are far more developed than those around the University of the North. There are faculty with considerable experience in this field at both the traditionally-white Rhodes University in Grahamstown and the historically-black Fort Hare University in the former homeland of the Ciskei. Moreover, a number of institutions on campus and off are currently collecting oral histories, including Cory Library at Rhodes and the community-based Eyethu Imbali. Additionally, the archives of the liberation movements are to be housed at the Fort Hare University Library, and the ANC is interested in launching an international oral history project on its own organization.

Xhosa chief's struggle

Interest in people's oral history in the Eastern Cape runs deeper, though, than an institutionally-oriented listing can indicate. I led a workshop in a Grahamstown community center (on an astoundingly hot day) with more than 30 participants. After my presentation, an 80-year old Xhosa chief, Sipho Mangindi Burns-Ncamashe, detailed his often-lonely struggle to record the history and traditions of his people, which he, like many others I met in South Africa, explicitly linked to empowerment and democracy.

The response of the workshop was instructive. After listening to the chief respectfully, a discussion ensued over how those present could support each other's oral history activities and over how an oral-history network could be built in the region. I have since learned such a network has been established under the coordination of Sandra Rowoldt of Cory Library.

Oral history in metro areas

However, not surprisingly, the longest, most developed traditions of people's oral history in South Africa are found in the metropolitan centers of Johannesburg and Cape Town. I have no doubt that these two cities have the largest number of oral-history practitioners, with the

most experience, and the greatest organizational support.

The University of the Witwatersrand, or Wits, is at the center of the oral history tradition in Johannesburg. During my brief visit there I encountered no less than five separate oral history archives and met more than a score of faculty and students involved with people's oral history--and they represented nothing more than hastily assembled sample. Wits is also the base of the South African History Workshop, which inspired by its namesake in Britain, pioneered oral and social history in South Africa.

As in Johannesburg, oral history in the Cape Town region has a strong base in the universities and a strong community-oriented focus. Both the traditionally-white University of Cape Town (UCT), and the traditionally-coloured University of the Western Cape (UWC) have a significant number of faculty and students involved in people's oral history. The two schools have conducted a number of oral history projects and oral history-based studies of a range of topics including the forced removals of people of color from areas designated as "whites only" by the apartheid government. Additionally, UWC is home to the Mayibuye Center, whose director, Andre Odendaal was quoted above.

1,000 oral histories

The Mayibuye (which means "let it return" in Xhosa and Zulu) Center is a most impressive institution. Founded in 1992 as apartheid was crumbling, it is a national repository for documents--written, visual and aural--of life and resistance in the apartheid era. Among these documents are 1,000 oral histories, including a project devoted to experiences of political exiles. Moreover, the center is actively involved in popular presentation of people's history--drawing heavily on its oral history collections--through publications, public events, a CD-ROM series entitled "Apartheid and the History of Struggle for Freedom in South Africa," and several major historical exhibitions.

In fact, the center is now involved in establishing a permanent museum to the anti-apartheid resistance on the

Cape Town waterfront at the point of departure to the planned historical park on Robben Island, where Nelson Mandela and many others were once imprisoned. Others in South Africa--many others--are also involved in historical exhibition drawing on personal testimony and aimed at multi-class and multi-ethnic audiences. Indeed, this is one of the most exciting oral history-related developments since the fall of apartheid.



Finally, I want to raise the question of the status of theory in South African oral history. The South Africans say they are in the Dark Ages in this regard. But in my opinion, some of the most interesting theoretical discussions around oral history that I have encountered are occurring there. One example: A number of intellectuals, who are deeply committed to the transformation of South Africa, are beginning to challenge the hegemony of the History Workshop/social history paradigm. Gary Minkley and Ciraj Rassool of the UWC, in an intriguing paper presented at last fall's International Oral History Conference in New York, argue that in pursuing "history from below" through oral history interviewing, South African people's historians have often unwittingly forced their own interpretive frameworks on their interviewees. Specifically, according to Minkley and Rassool, historians have imposed romanticized narratives of class and nationalism--of "history

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BULLETIN BOARD

Opportunities

Irish-American Studies Grants

Grants ranging from \$1,000 to \$5,000 for scholars of all disciplines whose work examines the Irish-American experience are available from the Irish American Cultural Institute of St. Paul, Minn. Proposals dealing with the Irish in the Midwest or New York are especially encouraged. Deadline for proposals is Aug. 15.

For information, call or write the IACI, 2115 Summit Ave., #5026 St. Paul, MN 55105. Telephone 612-962-6040.

National Endowment for the Humanities

The National Endowment for the Humanities Division of Preservation and Access announces a new annual deadline of July 1 for projects beginning May 1 of the following year.

Announcements

Columbia Summer Institute

The Columbia University Oral History Research Office will sponsor a summer institute for advanced oral history training June 5-16 in New York City. Four courses will be given in: theory, method, community history and audio presentation.

Faculty will be: Mary Marshall Clark, Ronald Grele, Charles Hardy and Linda Shopes. Registration is \$800. Housing is available on the Columbia campus at reasonable rates.

For information and registration forms, write: Oral History Research Office, Box 20, Butler Library, Columbia University, New York, NY 10027. Telephone 212-854-2273.

Women's Military Artifacts

The Women in Military Service for America Memorial Foundation, Inc. (WIMSA) is mounting a national search for artifacts to include in the permanent collection of the memorial, to be built at Arlington National Cemetery. WIMSA is seeking women's military artifacts from all periods of American history including: uniforms, medals, insignias, photographs, military issue personal items, diaries, medical equipment and other appropriate materials from both war and peacetime periods. Especially needed are items that depict the type of work women performed in the military, prisoner of war experiences and items from active duty servicewomen.

For information, call Kathryn Sheldon, curator, at 800-222-2294.

Book Published on WWII Women Workers

Jossey-Bass Inc., Publishers announces release of "A Mouthful of

Rivets: Women at Work in World War II," by Nancy Baker Wise and Christy Wise. The book is based on interviews with women who took jobs previously considered "men's work"--riveters, welders, geologists, mail carriers, pilots, crane operators and truck drivers.

Essays on Memory Available

University Press of America has released "Memory and History: Essays on Recalling and Interpreting Experience," edited by Jaclyn Jeffrey and Glenace Edwall. The collection of major essays by oral historians and cognitive psychologists contrasts the views of how people recall and interpret the past based on differing perspectives of the sciences and the humanities. Numerous OHA members are among the 16 contributors of essays and commentaries included in this interdisciplinary collection.

"Doing Oral History" Available

Twayne Publishers has released "Doing Oral History," by Don Ritchie, associate historian of the U.S. Senate and a former president of OHA. Offering a Q-and-A format and hundreds of examples, the book covers all aspects of how to plan, carry out and make use of an oral history project.

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as resistance"--on the testimony they have collected, and they have thereby suppressed the contradictory multiple identities and the complex subjectivities of their informants.

The irony, Minkley and Rassool believe, is that, despite the desire of these historians to give the inarticulate a prominent place in the historical record, "[t]he hidden and silenced have been inserted into histories largely as 'contextual device,' and have remained hidden and silenced in social history." Whatever the justice

of these criticisms, they herald a debate worth having, especially since it is occurring from within a struggle for human liberation.

This then is a brief reflection on my travels in South Africa. I became depressed after I returned to the United States, because, although much is dismal and discouraging in that country, a sense of change permeates the social atmosphere--change, that is, for the better.

As the United States sinks into a swamp--where the left is defined in the dominant discourse as Clintonian neo-conservative vacillation, the

center as the Contract on America and the right as God-knows-what--and as progressive intellectuals, whether oral historians or not, despair of their relevancy to anything, we might do well to look at South Africa more closely.

Perhaps a relatively poor country of less than 40 million people, can help guide us, infinitely more powerful and prosperous, into a more humane 21st century. Or, at the least, maybe we can fruitfully exchange some ideas about and experiences with people's oral history.

Archival Records Guide Issued

The Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission has published "Organizing Archival Records: A Practical Method of Arrangement and Description for Small Archives," by David W. Charnicheal. The book is designed as a guide for professionals and volunteers at historical societies and small archives.

For information, call 717-783-2618.

Nevada Gambler's Oral History

The University of Nevada's Oral History Program recently released a behind-the-scenes look at the state's gambling industry in "Always Bet on the Butcher," from oral history interviews conducted by Ken Adams with famed gambler and casino operator Warren Nelson.

For information, call 1-800-227-4551.

Australian Oral History Guide

The South Australian Branch of Australia's Oral History Association has published the third edition of its "Oral History Handbook," by Beth Robertson, which contains a comprehensive introduction to all aspects of oral history.

For information, write: Oral History Association (SA Branch), Institute Building, 122 Kintore Ave., Adelaide, SA 5000.

Southern Textile Strike Film

Hard Times Productions has recently completed a documentary about the general textile strike of 1934 that affected communities throughout the South. "The Uprising of '34" is scheduled to air on the Public Broadcasting Service series "P.O.V." (Point of View) on June 27. Filmmakers George Stoney and Judith Helfand encourage educators and community groups to sponsor group screenings and discussions to explore issues raised by the film.

For information, call Helfand at 212-529-3328.

Films Explore Legal Doctrine

California Newsreel recently released three documentaries that explore the evolution of contemporary legal doctrine. "Super Chief" features the story of Chief Justice Earl Warren.

"The Road to Brown" chronicles Charles Houston's legal campaign that led to the landmark Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision. "Doing Justice" is about lawyer Arthur Kinoy and the key civil rights and liberties cases of the past 40 years.

California Newsreel also has added to its African American Writers Video Library a new film biography of author Richard Wright, tracing his rise from sharecropper's child to influential writer.

For information, call 415-621-6196.

Augusta Summer Workshops

The Augusta Heritage Center of Davis and Elkins College in Elkins, W. Va., is offering more than 100 week-long summer classes in the traditional arts, in topics ranging from old-time fiddling to white oak basketry. Workshops run from July 9 to Aug. 13, and this summer's emphasis is on folklore, including Appalachian folktales and ballads, Irish folklore, Gaelic language and songs, herbs, storytelling and folklore for kids. Participants also can learn mountain rifle construction, fly tying, square dance calling and several styles of fiddling, among other skills.

For a free catalog contact: Augusta Heritage Center, Box GN, Davis and Elkins College, Elkins, WV 26241. Telephone 304-636-1903.

Sociology Journal on Oral History

A special issue of Sociological Imagination, the journal of the Wisconsin Sociological Association is devoted to "Oral and Life History." Guest edited by OHA member Bob Wolensky, the issue contains five papers and one book review, all by sociologists. Topics include: Scottish biography and history; union organizing in the garment industry; women's grass roots environmental activism; oral history in a small town Jewish community and collective memory among Holocaust survivors.

The issue (Vol. 31, No. 2, 1994) is available for \$5 from: Editor, SI, Department of Sociology, University of Wisconsin-Whitewater, Whitewater, WI 53190.

Call for Papers

Oral History Association

The OHA invites proposals for papers and presentations for its 1996 annual meeting, scheduled for Oct. 10-13, 1996, in Philadelphia. The meeting theme is "Oral History, Memory and the Sense of Place." Deadline for proposals is Dec. 15.

For information or to submit proposals, contact: Howard L. Green, New Jersey Historical Commission, CN 305, Trenton, NJ 08625 or Linda Shopes, Division of History, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108.

International Annual of Oral History

The International Annual of Oral History, formerly the International Journal of Oral History, provides a forum for worldwide developments in oral history that raise major theoretical, methodological and interpretive issues. The IAOH is seeking articles that focus on oral history and work in folklore, women's studies and disability studies and, in those areas, welcomes papers on theoretical, historiographical and methodological issues, substantive case studies and review essays.

Send three manuscript copies, a separate cover sheet and self-addressed stamped envelope to Jerrold Hirsch, Editor, IAOH, Division of Social Science, Northeast Missouri State University, Kirksville, MO 63501.

National Council on Public History

The NCPH invites proposals for papers, sessions, panels and workshops for its 1996 meeting in Seattle on "History and the Public Interest." The program committee encourages presentations that emphasize historians' public service mission. Proposals should include a one-page summary and brief resume for each presentation. Deadline is July 1, 1995.

Send proposals to Robert Weible, Division of History, Pennsylvania Historical & Museum Commission, P.O. Box 1026, Harrisburg, PA 17108. Phone 717-783-9867.

Julian Bond Traces Voting Rights History For Historians

The 1965 Voting Rights Act was the "most effective civil rights legislation ever passed," Julian Bond, a teacher, writer, civil rights activist and former Georgia legislator, told about 40 persons attending the Oral History Association breakfast at the annual meeting of the Organization of American Historians/National Council on Public History on April 1 in Washington, D.C.

Describing his experiences as a direct beneficiary of the voting rights law, Bond said it led to a "dramatic, if slow, reversal" of the traditional black exclusion from participation in the American electoral process.

Today, Bond said, blacks participate in the electoral process at levels nearly equal to that of whites, which, he noted, is dismally low. "Large numbers of Americans, regardless of color or condition, just don't believe the process helps them in any way and they've opted out," he said.

Bond is a distinguished scholar in residence at the American University in Washington, D.C., and a faculty member in the History Department at the University of Virginia.

The lawmaker turned history professor, traced key court cases that relied on the Voting Rights Act to expand black participation and representation in Georgia and elsewhere, particularly in redistricting battles that followed the 1980 census.

Racist arguments used against creation of black-majority congressional districts then are the same arguments used by today's "neo-segregationists" battling oddly-shaped congressional districts in North Carolina, Florida, Georgia and Texas, he said.

In a question-and-answer session following his talk, Bond put in a good word for the legislative seniority system. "I initially thought it was foolish and stupid, but by 1981 [when he was a committee chairman

and key player in the Georgia redistricting machinations], I thought it was absolutely correct," he said, drawing laughs from the audience.

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For information or to contribute to the fund, write to: Rebecca Sharpless, Executive Secretary, Oral History Association, P.O. Box 97234, Baylor University, Waco, Texas 76798-7234

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