

## FROM THE CHAIR

Al Stein, Chicago State University



Welcome to Austin, where it's all about sustainability. There is much excitement for the upcoming meeting as it will be a great opportunity for learning about how we can contribute to the 75th anniversary of SAA and connecting with the history of our organization. Preparation for that

event is already underway, largely brought about by the efforts of Lauren Kata of the OH Section and Ben Alexander of the Archives History Roundtable. Like historians, archivists explain a particular past, so look for our Section in Austin recording oral histories at the conference, and we look forward to hearing from you about your experiences as an archivist and SAA member.

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## FROM THE CHAIR (continued)

This year a long-held dream was achieved – our first online Section election! The election ballots were open until Friday, July 24th, and then extended a week. We hope you had a moment to read about our candidates and cast your virtual vote. The official election results will be read during our meeting on Friday, August 14th starting at 1:00 pm, and will soon after be posted on our listserv and website for those who cannot attend the meeting. Kudos to Lauren Kata, Jennifer Eidson, and Brian Doyle for making all that happen.

Of the programs and sessions offered this year relevant to oral history, you won't want to miss Session 309: Oral History in Action: Sustaining Organizational Knowledge and Institutional Memory, on Friday, August 14, 8:30am - 9:30am. For the Oral History Section meeting on Friday, the main part of the program will feature remarks from Ben Alexander and Lauren Kata on the 75th anniversary oral history project, followed by a live interview conducted by veteran oral historian James Fogerty with David Gracy. The interview will be taped for our Section, the History Roundtable and SAA.

This newsletter, put together by Jennifer and Joel, spotlights oral history in Texas, where you'll find six fascinating reports on oral history projects and institutes including Baylor University Institute for Oral History (BUIOH). Part of the Institute's vision is "encouraging communities to embrace oral history to preserve and share their common legacy." BUIOH also serves as the headquarters for the Texas Oral History Association. Stephen Sloan, the Director who is leading the Institute in a major digital initiative and conducting workshops throughout the state, presented on Hurricane Katrina and Rita at our Section meeting in Chicago in 2007. Congratulations to Dr. Sloan, and BUIOH for their excellent work in oral history interviewing, archiving, and public programming.

We would be regionally bereft without reports from the Southern Oral History Program and from OHMAR's spring conference, held at the Library of Congress. Hermann Trojanowski gives us an in-depth report on documenting the civil rights movement in Greensboro, North Carolina and Doug Boyd reports on the OHA's launching of an online resource on

digital technologies. Retooling oral history in the digital age presents archivists with some of the greatest challenges and rewards in terms of making collections more widely available at the community level.

This is my last column and the last of my reports for what has without question been a mostly exhilarating and transitional year for me personally and professionally. Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue and past issues sharing important news, information and stories. I look forward to still seeing you in this newsletter, on the web, and through our email discussion list. I know Mark Cave will be hitting the ground running and recording in Austin, so you will have an energizing experience since that is what oral historians do.

I would like to close by mentioning our own responsibility to the story. Like the title of one of Studs Terkel's best known books called "Hard Times," this year has been a burden for many archivists due to the hard times of the current recession, as we have seen a drop off in conference travel and attendance as academic, public and private libraries, museums, and archives have had to cut back. Even the January/February issue of Archival Outlook (with a "Recession Special" photo-cover) reflected this as members talked about the economy and the toll it has taken on institutions and individuals. As SAA continues to document this trend, I would be remiss in not mentioning how important oral history is in preserving our own story -- through good times and hard times.

Take it easy, but take it.

## ORAL HISTORY CALENDAR

### Oral History Related Happenings at the SAA 2008 Annual Meeting

#### Session 309: Oral History in Action: Sustaining Organizational Knowledge and Institutional Memory

Friday, August 14, 2009 8:30 AM - 9:30 AM

Oral history is essential, not merely supplemental, to institutional archival programs. Does this challenge or expand our understanding of traditional uses of oral history? Panelists discuss oral history programs in the US Army and non-profit professional associations, as well as "knowledge storytelling" approaches in information management.

Lauren Kata, Chair  
Archives of the Episcopal Church

Robert Mages  
US Army Heritage and Education Center, US Army  
Military History Institute

Molly B. Alexander  
Association of American Medical Colleges

## SPOTLIGHT: ORAL HISTORY IN TEXAS

### Baylor University Institute for Oral History

Submitted By Lois E. Myers

Since 1970, the Baylor University Institute for Oral History (BUIOH) has sought to deepen understanding of the past by collecting, preserving, and sharing the historically significant memories of individuals from many walks of life. Baylor's collection of first-hand accounts is strong in many of the major subjects of the twentieth century, from religion, music, art, and theater, to war, politics, education, and economics. Among projects currently being investigated are black sacred music, the civil rights movement in Texas, and projects highlighting Central Texas history, including family-owned businesses, philanthropy, 1940s dance clubs, early radio broadcasting, political party transitions, and Waco's 400-acre Cameron Park. In addition, BUIOH is collaborating with community

### Annual Oral History Section Meeting:

Friday, August 14, 2009 1:00 PM - 3:00 PM

Section Business

SAA 75th Anniversary Oral History Project

James Fogerty, Head of Documentary Programs at Minnesota Historical Society, and noted Historian, will conduct a LIVE interview with long time SAA member and educator, Dr. David B. Gracy, III who is from the University of Texas - Austin. The interview will be part of the section's effort to record narratives of SAA members in preparation for the organization's 75th anniversary.

organizations to document the black community in Mart, Texas, and the creation of Waco's Freedom Fountain, which commemorates efforts by local citizens in the 1970s to free Central Texans held captive in North Vietnam.



BUIOH staff: Becky Shulda, Elinor Mazé, Stephen Sloan, Lois E. Myers, and Michelle Holland. Baylor Photography.

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## ORAL HISTORY SPOTLIGHT (continued)

In keeping with its mission to equip community groups in their oral history endeavors, BUIOH has announced a new Community Oral History Grant. Designed to assist Texas nonprofit groups that initiate and carry out an oral history project with a public programming outcome, the grant provides a startup stipend, training and consultation, interview processing, and preservation of the interviews both at Baylor and a local repository. Information on applying for the grant is available from the Institute's Web site at [http://www.baylor.edu/oral\\_history](http://www.baylor.edu/oral_history).

Continual advances in recording technology have challenged BUIOH to adapt and revise, learn new skills, and forge new relationships in order to faithfully preserve its cherished historical narratives. Two years ago, Baylor's oral history collection included 400 volumes comprising more than 61,000 typescript pages created before electronic processing plus 5,285 hours of analog recordings on open reel and cassette tapes. The Baylor Electronic Library offered its resources to ensure the survival of these one-of-a-kind primary materials in useable form. With the help of digital preservation experts and a state-of-the-art scanner and audio lab, digitization of the typescript memoirs is complete and transfer of the analog recordings into digital format is underway. Digitization of these materials makes it possible to provide ready access to them in CONTENTdm via Baylor's Digital Library.

Host of the Texas Oral History Association since 1983, BUIOH is committed to sharing its knowledge and expertise in oral history. In addition to its popular Workshop on the Web, BUIOH spreads oral history training through workshops, classroom lectures, and project consultation services. In January 2009, BUIOH hosted a digital oral history workshop for advanced oral historians, and in July 2009, an online, interactive workshop for newcomers to the craft. In early 2010, the Institute will complete a two-year series of twenty-three workshops held throughout Texas in conjunction with the Texas Historical Commission's effort to preserve and commemorate the roles played by Texans in the military and on the home front during World War II.

Visit BUIOH at [http://www.baylor.edu/oral\\_history](http://www.baylor.edu/oral_history) and send your questions about BUIOH or oral history in general to [BUIOH@baylor.edu](mailto:BUIOH@baylor.edu).

### **The Oral History Project at the Vietnam Center and Archive Texas Tech University: Recording the Vietnam Generation in Their Own Words**

By Kelly E. Cramer, PhD

The American experience in Vietnam can be described in many ways. To some, it was part of a global contest between opposing ideologies, political systems, and military forces. Others view the conflict as a monumental tragedy in which the failure of diplomacy and American leadership resulted in the deaths of over 58,000 Americans and millions of Vietnamese. Still others believe that the war was fought for noble goals and that the American combatants exhibited the greatest of human traits: bravery, sympathy, and the determination to bring about a better world.



*Item number VA000365. Brig. Gen. John Freund, Commander of the 199th Infantry Brigade, presents decoration to Sgt. Stanley C. Goff. Douglas Pike Photograph Collection. Vietnam Archive, Texas Tech University.*

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## ORAL HISTORY SPOTLIGHT (continued)

For over forty years, we as a nation have struggled to define the Vietnam War, to learn from its lessons, and to determine its legacy. Future generations will similarly take up the cause to understand the Vietnam War. Where will they look to find the answers?

Since 1999, the Oral History Project at the Vietnam Center and Archive has been conducting interviews with those who experienced the war, and who lived through the era. We believe it is vital that any true understanding of the war must include the input of those who participated in this historic moment. We strive to include all voices, including both military and civilian personnel who were in Southeast Asia and at support facilities world-wide. We also include those engaged in pro- and anti-war related activities, as well as the Vietnamese point of view from both the communist and anti-communist perspectives.

The Oral History Project has over 2,300 participants from the United States and around the world, and currently has nearly 700 interviews available on our website for researchers world-wide. All interviews are available via streaming audio, and the transcript of each interview is fully word-searchable. Beginning in the summer of 2009, the Oral History Project will also offer free online oral history workshops for veterans organizations interested in conducting interviews among their group. We are also working in cooperation with the Oral History Program of the University of Southern Mississippi collecting interviews with Vietnamese Americans who migrated to the United States in the aftermath of the war.

It is essential that we continue to reach out to war veterans and wartime civilians in both the U.S. and Vietnam to capture their recollections for use by researchers, as well as for anyone who is interested in a more thorough understanding of the Vietnam War. It is imperative that we record those voices before time takes them away, leaving future generations without that vital personal connection to one of the 20th Century's most controversial, tragic, heroic, and enduring events.

Please visit our website at:  
[www.vietnam.ttu.edu/oralhistory](http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/oralhistory)

## Filling Our Carpetbags With Stories: Small Town Oral Histories in Texas

By Peter Myers

We moved to San Antonio in the late 80's - Rob from Illinois and me from New York. Teaching American History survey courses at Palo Alto College - a two year school on San Antonio's southside - we wanted to infuse more local history into our curriculum. Although we had both received masters in history, we had never taken courses about Texas. As we considered the dilemma of infusing the local past into our courses, we recognized that we had our own historians right in the classrooms - the students —Texas born, Texas raised. We would teach the context of the twentieth century and our students would research those who participated in that past. Thus, we'd provide the macrocosm, and our students provide the microcosm.



*World War II Veteran William Roberts telling his story to Palo Alto College student Jonathan Truesdell, October 30, 2007 (San Antonio, Texas)*

Rob Hines has his students focus on small towns in Texas. They travel to these locales with a population under 10,000, and do primary source research. Most of them have never done a research project outside of a library or a Google search. At first, it feels daunting but once they make the trip, they are overwhelmed by what they learn. Part of the project involves interviewing a person from the chosen small town, preferably one that has lived her/his entire life there. The students come away with a totally different view of where history comes from. They recognize that history is not solely from cities. It's history from the perspective of every day rural folks. And this history is an integral part of the American tapestry.

My students need not leave town to do their research, although many do. There are only two pre-requisites for the oral history interview: the students must

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## ORAL HISTORY SPOTLIGHT (continued)

find a person who is over age 55 and that person must be willing to talk about a specific topic of the past. Topics range from the more traditional subjects like the Great Depression and World War II to ones that have not been analyzed in much depth, such as migratory labor and vanishing occupations. Some students venture into small towns and tap into the research that has been done by Rob's students, while others head into the city, and focus their questions on the changing nature of San Antonio.

Rob and I remind students that in most cases they will be the only person who will ever interview their subject. No books exist about this person, and in all likelihood the interviewee is not writing an autobiography. Thus, it's imperative that the student spends the time to research the town/topic before conducting the interview. Getting our students out from behind a book and keyboard is half the battle. Oral history is especially useful in that way.

Over the past decade, the student projects have been placed on our Interactive History Project website. (<http://www.accd.edu/pac/faculty/InteractiveHistory/>) Often we receive emails from those who wish to enrich a small town project (residents with more stories to add), and the high school student who wishes to incorporate a quote and/or photograph from the oral history project into a paper. Years after conducting these interviews, our students can take great satisfaction in contributing another piece to our American history.

### Texas Legacy Archive

By David Todd and Quinn Stewart

The Texas Legacy ([www.texaslegacy.org](http://www.texaslegacy.org)) archive holds over 400 hours of video-taped oral history interviews with more than 225 Texas conservationists, produced in collaboration with the non-profit sponsor, the Conservation History Association of Texas, and its academic partners, the School of Information and the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History (at the University of Texas).

Begun in 1997, the Texas Legacy archive has compiled stories of conservation to recognize veteran individual

environmentalists' contributions, to build a public history of this major social movement, and to teach and encourage a new generation of stewards to carry on the work.

Archive users will find stories of environmental work from the 1930s to the first decade of the 21st century, spanning early struggles to protect land and game, to later work on public health and environmental justice, to continuing efforts for sustainable agriculture, energy, building and transportation systems.

There are archive records of rural conservation in the small towns of Jasper in the Big Thicket, Perryton on the High Plains, San Ygnacio in the south Texas Brush Country and Sierra Blanca of the Trans Pecos, as well as environmental work in the big cities, Houston, Dallas, Austin, and San Antonio.

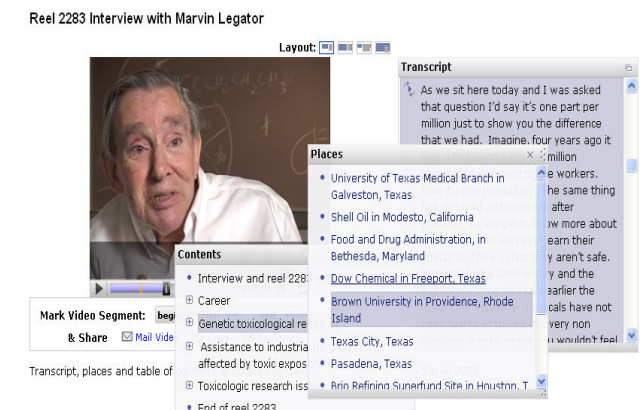
Archive materials reflect the diverse views of blacks, whites and Hispanics, young and old, men and women, from right to left wing, and include scientists and engineers, politicians and lobbyists, attorneys and economists, ranchers and farmers, and many lay citizen advocates.

In 2001, the University of Texas School of Information approached the Conservation History Association of Texas about creating an online video archive of the Texas Legacy interviews, using the materials in coursework at the School. Students have worked on information architecture and design, video indexing, and a variety of other topics using the materials. A subsequent IMLS grant to fund the creation of a digitization curriculum helped increase the utilization of the archive.

Video materials and transcripts from the archive have also been utilized in a research partnership with GLIFOS, a software company that specializes in providing creation tools for and access to rich-media content. The current software is based upon extensions to the open-source MediaWiki software, and is compatible with multiple browsers and operating systems. The partnership between the School of Information and GLIFOS has resulted in the completion of approximately 200 hours of searchable rich-media content from the archive, which will be hosted by the Dolph Briscoe Center for American History.

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## ORAL HISTORY SPOTLIGHT (continued)



Example of MediaWiki display content. Texas Legacy Project.

The digitization of these materials has produced some 2.4 terabytes of digital video so far, and the long-term preservation of these materials also presents an educational opportunity for students in the care of electronic archives, along with a growing need for archives to provide these services. Future plans for the archive include research into the usability and use of the collection, voice recognition utilization in transcript creation, increased use of geospatial information, as well as the addition of other resources and services created by School of Information students.

We invite you to view the current version of the collection at:

<http://www.texaslegacy.org/bb/richmedia>

### Texas After Violence Project

By Virginia Raymond, J.D., Ph.D.  
Director, Texas After Violence Project

The Texas After Violence Project is an independent, non-profit organization that conducts oral histories with people directly touched by serious violence, the subsequent investigation and legal processes, incarceration, and executions. Our mission is threefold: 1) we listen with empathy and without judgment to the narratives of lived experience of people most closely touched by these events and processes; 2) consistent with and limited by the desires of our interview narrators, we share our

findings as widely as possible with contemporary and future audiences; and 3) we seek to promote collective, critical, and constructive dialogue about effective ways to both prevent and respond to violence.

In our first 27 months of interviewing, we've recorded the stories of close to seventy (70) women and men: family members and loved ones of murder victims and executed persons, law enforcement officials, media witnesses to executions, lawyers, clergy, and others. These stories come from the Texas Panhandle, the Río Grande Valley, rural East Texas, small towns in north Texas, Huntsville, Houston, San Antonio, Austin, Dallas, and eastern New Mexico.

We are slowly posting segments of these interviews, as they become public and as we work out the technical glitches, online at our website. Please take a look at [texasafterviolence.org/watch.and.listen](http://texasafterviolence.org/watch.and.listen). We hope to eventually post the full DVDs and transcripts of public interviews online, but in all likelihood, we will need to persuade a large institution with a mighty server to host the material. We've also made a small number of presentations to high school and university students and hope to make more visits.

What about dialogue? The practice of the death penalty divides Texans. When people talk to each other about capital punishment, we tend to only talk to people with whom we already agree (or with whom we assume we'll agree). When Texans do talk to people we don't agree with, the discussions are frequently as unproductive as they are unpleasant. At the Texas After Violence Project, our hunch is that we'd all have more fruitful conversations if we could put aside, temporarily, our opinions and beliefs and simply listen to each others' actual experiences. We imagine classrooms, family gatherings, neighborhood meetings, professional trainings, violence-prevention programs, community organizations, religious congregations, and other settings in which people listen to these first-person accounts of violence and its effects. We're hopeful that, reflecting on a common "text" and bringing their own individual experiences to the conversation, people would find more effective ways to both prevent and respond to violence. We'll be working, in the months to come,

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## ORAL HISTORY SPOTLIGHT (continued)

with a wide range of community, educational, and religious organizations to use the interviews to spark critical, collective dialogue.

We'd love to hear your suggestions and comments. Please visit our website at <http://www.texasafterviolence.org>, write to [info@texasafterviolence.org](mailto:info@texasafterviolence.org) or directly to me at [virginia@texasafterviolence.org](mailto:virginia@texasafterviolence.org). Or visit our South Austin office while you are in town! Call us at 512.916.1600.

### East Texas Memories: Preserving and Converting an Oral History Collection

By Emily E. Hyatt, CA  
Archivist, The History Center, Diboll, Texas

During the mid-1970's bicentennial preparations, citizens of Diboll, Texas, began to record the memories of their neighbors. Diboll is a small East Texas town defined by the lumber industry – a former company town founded in 1894 and built by a forward-thinking family and their workers. Those early oral histories caught the attention of several townspeople, and by the mid-1980's, members of the Diboll Historical Society and their hired historians had interviewed over 100 people in almost 200 separate interviews with the goal of producing a book about Diboll's history.

The interviewers focused their questions on family memories, the company and the forest products industry, life in a company town, and memories of the Great Depression. At the time of the interviews, their subjects readily remembered the difficulties of the 1930's and were able to effectively compare their lives and the company's practices before and after the Depression. These interviews are an invaluable source for historians interested in the social history of East Texas lumber towns.

As an irreplaceable and much-used resource, the oral history collection needed to be digitized to aid in its accessibility. The History Center is a small institution with only four full time staff members. After consulting with web designers and colleagues and testing equipment and software it was apparent

that the most efficient way to begin the digitization process was to simply retype each transcript. For the first phase, student workers retyped each transcript, correcting errors and applying a template. Next, a staff member proofed each transcript, referencing the audio recording when necessary, and then a second staff member proofed it again, wrote an abstract, converted it to a PDF file, and uploaded it to the website. In less than a year, with no outside funding, The History Center has digitized and uploaded over 180 abstracted transcripts. Website stat counters indicate that the oral histories are a popular section of the website, and researchers can get a quick summary of the interview without downloading the entire transcript with the pop-up abstract feature.

The History Center hopes to have all of the original interview transcripts digitized by the end of the summer of 2009 and will then continue digitizing transcripts conducted since the original project ended. Staff is experimenting with ways to digitize the audio files.

While the process of retyping each transcript has been time consuming and labor intensive, it has been worthwhile. Staff has been able to correct inaccuracies and verify facts and has become more familiar with the information within each document. The book that resulted from the original interview project, *The Cornbread Whistle*, is an invaluable source for Diboll history, particularly social history. Saving the original interviews, however, is vital to preserving Diboll's past. The voices on the audiotapes provide modern researchers insights into speech patterns and regional colloquialisms that are best preserved in their unabridged form. By preserving their voices and the transcripts of the interviews, The History Center strives to preserve the tangible remnants of Diboll's past.

Please visit The History Center's oral history project at: <http://www.thehistorycenteronline.com/oralhist-transcripts.php>



## ORAL HISTORY NEWS

### **Greensboro VOICES: Documenting the Civil Rights Movement in Greensboro, North Carolina**

By Hermann Trojanowski  
Assistant University Archivist  
University of North Carolina - Greensboro

On February 1, 1960, Greensboro, North Carolina became the epicenter for the civil rights movement in the United States when four African American students from North Carolina Agricultural & Technical State College (NCA&T) entered the segregated F.W. Woolworth store in downtown Greensboro and requested to be served at the whites-only lunch counter. In the following days and months, demonstrations spread across not only North Carolina but across the South where other sit-ins were held to obtain racial equality through peaceful protests.

Over the next several decades, further incidents took place in Greensboro which reflected the racial unrest of the nation. In 1963, Jesse Jackson, then the NCA&T student body president, participated in civil rights demonstrations in downtown Greensboro to integrate the city's theaters and cafeterias, leading to his arrest. In 1969, a riot at Dudley Senior High School, sparked by a contested student government president election at the school, resulted in the deployment of the National Guard and the death of a NCA&T student. Racial tensions came to a head on November 3, 1979 during an American Nazi Party/Ku Klux Klan and Communist Workers Party (CWP) confrontation in Greensboro's Morningside Homes neighborhood, causing the death of five people and the wounding of ten others.

As the nation observes the 50th anniversary of the Greensboro sit-ins, the city will have an opportunity to reflect on its unique civil rights history. This history is documented on the "Greensboro VOICES" Web site, <http://library.uncg.edu/depts/archives/civrights/>, which was created by the University Archives and the Digital Projects Office at the University of North Carolina at Greensboro (UNCG) to trace the struggle for civil rights in Greensboro and the surrounding area. "Greensboro VOICES" (an acronym for "Voicing

Observation in Civil Rights and Equality Struggles") gives voice to those in the civil rights struggle by making 142 oral history interviews as well as biographical sketches of each interviewee available to students and scholars.

The project was conceived by UNCG University Archivist Betty Carter in 2005 to document the civil rights events that occurred in Greensboro and Guilford County from the 1950s to the 1980s. Realizing that this was a topic of local and national interest and that Greensboro had played a critical role in the civil rights movement, Carter believed that the time was right for UNCG to document this history with a digital library project. Carter hoped that this digital project would eventually be linked to the Web site of the International Civil Rights Center and Museum which was being developed in the historic Greensboro Woolworth building.

Carter knew that grant funding foundations looked favorably upon collaboration and that Greensboro Public Library (GPL) already had numerous civil rights oral history interviews. GPL Library Director Sandy Neerman and North Carolina Librarian Helen Snow were very interested in the project and agreed to loan their collection to UNCG. The plan was to have UNCG staff manage the project and oversee the creation of access copies from the original audio tapes, the digitization of audio tapes, the transcription of the interviews, and the preparation of a finding aid. UNCG was also in charge of creating and hosting a Web site which would make the oral history interviews available to the public. In February 2005, Carter applied for a grant from the Community Foundation of Greensboro to create a civil rights digital library and received \$10,000 to hire students to transcribe oral history interviews and create a Web site in collaboration with the University Libraries' Digital Projects Office. Additional funds were received from the Community Foundation of Greensboro to complete the project.

In order to narrate a comprehensive story of the local civil right movement, Carter combined three oral history collections for a digital library which would be the cornerstone of the "Greensboro VOICES" project. These collections were a wide-range documentation concerning race relations as well as civil rights events

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## ORAL HISTORY NEWS (continued)

which occurred from the 1950s to the early 1980s. The first collection of oral histories was a series of interviews conducted by history professor William Link and other members of the UNCG Department of History. He spearheaded the interviews of eighty-eight people from 1986 to 1990 as part of the short-lived Joint Committee on Civil Rights History, a cooperative research project between UNCG and NCA&T. Link transferred the collection to the University Archives in 1991 to preserve the audiotapes and make them better accessible to researchers. The second collection, loaned by GPL, was comprised of eighty-nine oral history tapes documenting civil rights history in Greensboro. These oral histories were conducted between 1977 and 1983 by oral historian Eugene Paff, Jr. who felt the sit-in participants needed to tell their story about the Greensboro civil rights events which helped shape the national civil right movement.

The third collection of oral history tapes was obtained from the Greensboro News & Record newspaper. The collection included interviews with two women who worked at the Woolworth lunch counter during the Greensboro sit-ins and of a reporter and a photographer who witnessed the event. The four interviews were conducted between 1997 and 2001 by News & Record reporter Jim Schlosser for his newspaper column.

These three collections contain oral history interviews representing a broad spectrum of the community including attorneys, business executives, community leaders, educators, government officials, journalists, politicians, and religious leaders. Several prominent interviewees included in the project are James Farmer, who founded the Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) and three of the four original NCA&T students who started the Greensboro sit-ins in 1960: Jibrell Khazan (Ezell Blair, Jr.), Franklin Eugene McCain, and Joseph Alfred McNeil.

"Greensboro VOICES" has proved to be a successful collaborative community effort to preserve an important collection of local oral histories. The Web site provides access to these interviews as well as a list of resources for additional information related to the civil rights movement. These resources include related oral history Web sites and links to local and national civil rights organizations and projects. The

Web site also contains a comprehensive reading list. Most importantly, "Greensboro VOICES" serves to encapsulate a unique period of time in the history of Greensboro and our nation.

### **Tennessee Methodists Capturing the Oral Histories of Clergy and Their Spouses**

By Jim Havron

Archivist, Tennessee Conference of the United Methodist Church & Nashville Public Library

The Methodist church has for decades made it a point to record, in some manner, the stories of its clergy. These memoirs tend to be published in the journals or other official records some time after the death of the minister, and are often sought by local historians researching a particular church or by genealogists researching a particular individual. Some years ago, the Southeastern Jurisdiction (SEJ) of the United Methodist Church (UMC) encouraged its clergy to consider recording oral histories, but there are not many in the SEJ repository.

This year, the Tennessee Conference of the United Methodist Church, of which I am the "lone arranger" archivist, will begin working with the Clouds of Witness-Memory Ministries and Missions group (of which I am also a member) to record and retain the oral histories of not only clergy, but of their spouses as well. In doing research to bolster our files on past members of the church, I realized how little we know about the wives (and, nowadays, husbands) of clergy. The spouses played important parts in the lives of their various congregations, and their stories should contribute greatly to the historical record of the institution of the church and the communities and times in which these people lived and worked. This inclusion of the spouses is a new angle for the UMC in this area, and I am not aware as yet of another program like it elsewhere in the denomination. I hope that anyone who knows of one, or one in another church, will let me know about their project as well.

The Clouds of Witness-Memory Ministries and Missions (and yes, we do realize that is COW-MMM) is an independent group of volunteers that has started

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## ORAL HISTORY NEWS (continued)

working to find ways to help people preserve history from a personal perspective. It started with my wife and me offering to record oral histories for people suffering from Alzheimer's or other dementia, from terminal illness, or who were very old and wished to have their stories remembered. Our goal was to provide these histories to the individuals and their families for their own use, but to also offer to find suitable repositories for them if they wished. Because I am an archivist for the Methodist church, several have voiced a desire to have their stories retained there. The group has also enlisted the aid of other professionals, photographers, people to help people preserve family documents, and genealogists. It also plans to conduct workshops and offer consultation on preserving family history and the importance of donating to archives and manuscript repositories.

This group has now agreed to start the oral history project on clergy and their spouses. The Tennessee Conference does not have the funds for such work at this time, so it will have to be done by volunteers. As we approach the bicentennial of our Conference in 2012, we hope to have a body of work that may be used to stir interest in further efforts to preserve the historical record of the church and the context in which it has existed for those 200 years. It is hoped that people will also come to see the roles of both sexes in the life of our organization in a different way.

### **Southern Oral History Program (SOHP)**

By Jackie Dean  
University of North Carolina - Chapel Hill

The Southern Historical Collection at the Louis Round Wilson Special Collections Library at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill is pleased to present the new Southern Oral History Program (SOHP) digital collection, at <http://www.lib.unc.edu/dc/sohp/>. This new CONTENTdm collection will take the place of the old SOHP database, found at [http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/sohp\\_interviewee/](http://www.lib.unc.edu/mss/sohp_interviewee/). The old site will be discontinued in the coming months, so users should change their bookmarks/links soon.

The new site provides users with even greater search capabilities and functionality. Most importantly,

the CONTENTdm platform has the ability to deliver digital content on the Web. In addition to the 500+ interviews already delivered digitally by the IMLS funded Documenting the American South's Oral Histories of the American South, users can now access another 330 digital transcripts as well as approximately 290 digital audio interviews from the new CONTENTdm site. These numbers will only continue to grow.

The new site includes a number of browse pages (Interviewee, Interviewer, Project, Occupation, Subject, and Ethnicity), as well as the old site's keyword searches. A powerful advanced search is available from the main Libraries digital collections search page <http://dc.lib.unc.edu/cdm4/search.php> as well.

We welcome any feedback on the new site.

### **Hear the Voices, Feel the Power**

By Judy Simpson  
Submitted by Pam Hackbart-Dean

Southern Illinois University-Carbondale

The Laborers' International Union of North America (LiUNA), Local 773 oral history project began in the fall of 2007. The project was designed to complement the manuscript collections recently received by Special Collections Research Center at Southern Illinois University, Carbondale. The goal of this ongoing project is to collect the personal stories of members from all levels within the organization. These stories will give a broader understanding of the impact LiUNA has had on its members as well as the southern Illinois area as a whole.

One of the first hurdles to jump when collecting labor union history is that of trust. To get the cooperation of the union's leadership you must first convince them that you sincerely want to preserve their story without twisting it to their detriment. To accomplish this with LiUNA, a relationship was cultivated with Edward M. Smith, who at the time was International Vice-President and Assistant to the President. Mr. Smith is an avid student of history and was very anxious to

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## ORAL HISTORY NEWS (continued)

help. He was the driving force in SIU's acquisition of Local 773's papers. With the use of his name, many uncertain individuals relented and agreed to an interview.

After SAA training, the project was begun with minimal equipment: a digital voice recorder, a camcorder, and a tripod. An interview agreement was designed and is presented and signed before each interview is begun. The interview questions are designed to draw out information concerning work environment and safety, race and gender relations, economic and wage concerns, and an understanding of the impact of the union's successes on its members. After each interview a DVD copy of the session is given to the member.

The questions always begin with background information on the member's family. These background questions include the work, education, political views, and religion of the member's parents and grandparents. These are included for two reasons. First, of course, is the sociological history that can be gathered. Second, and more important to the project, these questions make the member comfortable. It is easy to discuss your family and speak of those you respect. Once those personal stories are shared, the member feels a connection to the interviewer and is willing to share his story more freely.

Another challenge came in the form of identifying individuals. Originally, the plan was to interview those who had been members for fifty years or more. Still battling the trust issue, it became easier to start the interviews with members of the LiUNA Retirees' Council. The LiUNA Retirees are busy individuals always looking for ideas for speakers and programs. This gave many opportunities to meet the prospective interviewees, explain the project, and ask them to participate.

It is because of these retiree programs that the project received attention and large amounts of free publicity. At one particular meeting, officers from the Midwest Regional Office attended and were impressed enough to extend an invitation to address a meeting of leaders of locals and district counsels from ten states. This was followed by articles in LiUNA

publications including a regular column in the Local 773 newsletter.

The rewards of this project are numerous. Of course, one is the preservation of stories of working class people and their unique struggles. An unexpected outcome is the increased interest families are taking in their own history. Several members have asked for duplicate copies of their interviews to share with their children. However, the greatest reward is undoubtedly the many new friends made by taking the time to listen to their stories and finding value in their life's work.

### **Recording 100 Years of Forest Products Research: The U.S. Forest Products Laboratory Oral History Project, 2008-2009**

Submitted by Allison Page

Exploring Wisconsin's forests and woodlands can reveal a lot about the state's ecology and history. As Wisconsin author and arborist R. Bruce Allison has eloquently suggested, if trees could talk they would have remarkable stories to tell. Examining the growth rings of a large, hundred-year old Oak, for instance, can tell you about the age of the tree, changes in climate or forest density, or reveal evidence of forest fires. But how does one examine the history of those who helped keep those forests healthy?

In July 2009 the University of Wisconsin-Madison Oral History Program (OHP), in collaboration with the U.S. Forest Products Laboratory (FPL) and the University of Wisconsin-Madison Digital Collections Center, launched an exciting new Web presentation of oral histories documenting the FPL's history as told by former and current lab employees.

The "U.S. Forest Products Lab Centennial Oral History Project" celebrates the centennial anniversary of the FPL's founding and its long history as a leading research facility dedicated to the preservation and efficient utilization of the nation's timber resources. In 2008, OHP staff interviewed 52 current and former FPL employees, including administrators, scientists and technicians, resulting in over 50 hours of recorded interviews on topics ranging from technical research

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## ORAL HISTORY NEWS (continued)

and collaborative projects with the University of Wisconsin-Madison to personal relationships among colleagues and to institutional clubs and activities.

Through audio recordings and transcripts, narrators share unique perspectives about the history and research of the lab, as well as personal biographies and anecdotes. Visitors to the website will be able to browse or search the oral histories and not only listen to the recorded interviews, but read full-text transcriptions of the audio. To listen to the oral histories in the U.S. Forest Products Lab Centennial Oral History collection and to learn more about the project, visit <http://digicoll.library.wisc.edu/FPLHist/>.

The Forest Products Lab, a branch of the USDA Forest Service, has stood as the country's central research facility in the work related to the promotion of healthy forest and forest-based economies through the efficient, sustainable use of our wood resources in Wisconsin and throughout the United States. The FPL was established in 1910 with its research beginning with the preservation of railroad ties and the creation of low-cost housing. Throughout World War I and World War II, FPL made significant contributions to the nation, using fundamental information on wood properties, fasteners, and engineering design to assist in the war efforts. Since then the lab has branched out into research in mycology, truss-frame construction and forest management, becoming a strong advocate in the efficient use of forest resources and recycling efforts.



*U.S. Forest Products Laboratory located in Madison, Wisconsin.*

The University of Wisconsin-Madison Oral History Program is part of the UW Madison Archives. The UW-Madison Oral History Program has become a vital component to the University Archives, interviewing campus faculty, administrators, staff, and students. The OHP is located in Steenbock Memorial Library on the UW Madison campus. Further information about the OHP or the UW-Madison Archives can be obtained by calling (608) 890-1899 or visiting the archives' website at [archives.library.wisc.edu](http://archives.library.wisc.edu).

### OHMAR Spring Conference Report

By Tom Wiener, Historian  
Veterans History Project, Library of Congress

On May 1, 2009, OHMAR (Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region) held its spring conference at the Library of Congress. Co-sponsored by the Veterans History Project (part of the Library's American Folklife Center), the conference explored the themes of War and Conflict. Over one very productive day, historians, researchers, folklorists, program coordinators, and transcribers exchanged ideas about best to capture these subjects through oral history.

Nine panels were convened during the day, in three distinct sessions. In the first session, conference attendees could choose between Issues of Collective Memory and Identity in the Second World War, Issues of Equality and Race in Wartime Service, and Perspectives on the Holocaust.

The second trio of panels offered papers on The Use of Oral History in Documenting Warfare in Europe and the Middle East; the Atomic Age and After: WWII, the Cold War, and the War on Terror; and Using Oral History to Reexamine Service During the Vietnam War.

The final session of the day presented two panels--on The Army Oral History Program From Vietnam to Afghanistan and on Involving Undergraduates in Interviewing Subjects Impacted by War and Conflict—and a roundtable discussion on the Challenges of Recording and Transcribing Oral Histories of WWII and Korea.

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## ORAL HISTORY NEWS (continued)

Brien Williams, honored with OHMAR's 2009 Forrest Pogue Award for outstanding achievement in the field of oral history, spoke to the conference during the midday luncheon break. William has been under contract with the Veterans History Project to interview Members of Congress and other high-profile veterans to add to the VHP's archives.

Sound recording of six of the panel sessions will be made available later this year as a podcast through the Veterans History Project Web site ([www.loc.gov/vets](http://www.loc.gov/vets)).

### 2009 Wisconsin Oral History Day: Summary of Event

Submitted By Troy Reeves  
Head of Oral History Program,  
University of Wisconsin-Madison

The 2009 Wisconsin Oral History Day was held on April 26 & 27 in Eau Claire, Wisconsin. The Sunday night opening session (6-8 pm) was held at the Chippewa Valley Museum with a presentation by Dr. Jim Leary, entitled "Oral History and Public Folklore: Working with Joua Bee Xiong."

Most of Monday's morning activities focused on oral history project planning, beginning with a mini-workshop, led by UW-Madison Oral History Program Head, Troy Reeves, and finishing with a presentation on community planning in diverse setting, given by Baylor University Oral History Program Director, Stephen Sloan. In between those events, students from UW-Eau Claire students offered a case study of project planning as they discussed a current oral history project with the UW-Eau Claire Women's Studies Program.

Monday's keynote was given by independent oral historian/author Barb Sommer. Sommer, who resides in St. Paul, will present, "The Story Behind the Manual:

The Creation of The American Indian Oral History Manual: Making Many Voices Heard. As with Leary's talk, the Wisconsin Humanities Council sponsored Sommer's presentation.

Also, WOHD featured panels/roundtables with students, teachers, and professors. The Day ended with a brief wrap-up, led by Reeves and Sloan, as they and the attendees reviewed what did transpire and how best to move WOHD forward.

When asked what they enjoyed most about the session(s) they attended, several attendees stated that they were struck by the diversity of the presentations, the oral history projects they were involved in, and the stories and reflections of their experiences. One attendee stated that they really liked how the "presenters [were] more personally invested in their projects and clearly deeply engaged in what they're doing" and how "everyone thought and talked about the meaning of their work, our work with oral history." Reflecting upon how they might apply what they learned at Oral History Day, attendees overwhelmingly noted that the Day would significantly contribute to the development of their own projects in the future, including one who indicated that they intend to use what they learned to conduct oral histories with homebound members of the Eau Claire community and document early 20th century life in the city. In addition to these comments, following Reeves' and Sloan's closing remarks several attendees noted that they greatly appreciated ending WOHD with the student panel discussion.

In closing the 2nd annual WOHD built on last year's successes, as the journey continues to build a guild or community of oral historians in the state and region. Next year, WOHD planners will hold the 3rd annual WOHD in or near Milwaukee. For further details concerning WOHD and for more information about the UW-Madison Oral History Program, please contact Troy Reeves at: [treeves@library.wisc.edu](mailto:treeves@library.wisc.edu) or (608) 890-1899.

# ORAL HISTORY PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES

## Mellon Audio Preservation Project

By Janet Gertz & George Blood

Columbia University Libraries (CUL) received an award in June 2008 from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for a two-year project designed to preserve a group of high-priority, seriously endangered analog audio recordings from the Columbia Oral History Research Office (OHRO) totaling 1,200 hours and move them through the steps of digital conversion and metadata creation to facilitate discovery of the preserved content by scholars, and to support preservation of the digital versions. Information about the project is available at [https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/libraries/bts/mellon\\_audio/index.html](https://www1.columbia.edu/sec/cu/libraries/bts/mellon_audio/index.html).

George Blood/Safe Sound Archive (SSA) of Philadelphia, Pennsylvania is the vendor for this project. They are carrying out digital conversion of the audio content and creating technical/structural/capture metadata, and are playing an active role as a partner in developing mutually acceptable metadata specifications and procedures for the project.

An important first step in the project was gaining a fuller understanding of the intellectual structure of the oral histories and how their content was distributed across the physical media. As those who work with oral histories know, there is often not a one-to-one correspondence between the physical carrier (the tape or cassette) and the intellectual content (the oral history). A recording session is a single intellectual object that can occupy one or more physical tapes, and each oral history consists of one or more sessions typically occurring over a period of days or months. Interviewers might start the next session on the same tape immediately after the end of the previous session or they might start a new tape. Sometimes they used empty space on a tape for an unrelated oral history. In other words, one track or side ("face" in the Audio Engineering Society terminology) of a tape may contain the end of one session and the beginning of another, and that second session may or may not be related to the first session.

In order to present the oral histories to listeners in a coherent way, we have determined that it is necessary to create and preserve three versions of each interview. We create and preserve:

- A Preservation master file that consists of the high-resolution capture (96 kHz 24 bit Broadcast Wave file) of a single face of a tape regardless of the number and relation of sessions it holds. The METS (Metadata Encoding and Transmission Standard) record for each master file includes metadata compatible with AES X098B (Draft standard for audio preservation and restoration -- Administrative and structural metadata for audio objects) that describes the physical object.
- A Rendered file that copies portions of relevant preservation master files to concatenate the parts of one session regardless of what physical objects they come from. Thus, different parts of a single master file may be included in rendered files for different interviews. An ADL (audio decision list per AES31-3) maps the exact portions of each master file included in the rendered file. The METS record for each rendered file relates to the intellectual object.
- A Service file that is a lower resolution derivative (44.1kHz/16 bit Broadcast Wave file) of the rendered file, for use by listeners.

While the project is ongoing several things have been learned:

- It is impractical to create a single METS record to describe both the Preservation Master and the Rendered file. The structure map is too variable and complicated. We solved this problem by creating a separate METS record for the Preservation Master and the Rendered. Each cross references the existence of the other version.
- It is critically important to determine up front the basic unit being described by the metadata. Is it the interview in total, the session within the interview, the physical carrier (a tape with multiple sides, tracks and regions), or is it the file representing part of the physical carrier (the "face"). This impacts the way the files are organized and described. For instance, if you have a (very ugly, but not uncommon) situation with

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## ORAL HISTORY PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES (continued)

multiple media types (cassettes and MiniDiscs) and your record is the interview, describing the source documents (the physical carriers) using AES metadata, your data collection needs vastly exceed what is possible with Excel or other common methods of communicating such information.

- Moving the documents (physical tapes and resulting files) between institutions is a two-edged sword. On the one hand, it stresses the readability of documentation in a way that either affirms the rules of entry and controlled vocabulary, or it breaks in unpredictable and confusing ways. Further, certain information is site specific, such as file paths. If the path names are written for the home institution, the vendor cannot test the files directly and vice versa.
- The standards for digitization are more advanced than the standards for metadata – for instance, the AES standard mentioned above is only in draft form (documentation). METS functions as a wrapper for many metadata sub-parts (technical, structural, administrative, descriptive, etc.). The choice of standard for each sub-part and the organization of the subparts within the METS wrapper is institution-specific. Making such records machine-readable and interchangeable between institutions is a significant programming challenge. METS self-describes the standards being used and that makes it possible. That doesn't make it easy. Even before assuming that separate institutions will interpret a standard in the same way!

This project, by design, breaks little new ground. From the beginning we have insisted on using existing models and standards (PREMIS, OAIS, METS, AES31-3, Sound Directions, etc). At this point we're comfortable that the existing models and standards are adequate to the task of preserving and describing audio. Bundling all the parts into a working whole is an altogether greater challenge.

### Using Oral History Contractors

Posted to H-NET/OHA Discussion List on Oral History on February 23, 2009

By Paul Ferrel

As an oral history contractor myself I can tell you my recent experiences. First the contractor writes out a detailed proposal for doing the oral histories based on communications with the client. The proposal is very specific laying out the costs, standards, schedules, etc. The client agrees to the proposal and a contract is drawn up by the client and signed by the client and the contractor.

1. It is good to find a contractor that is an expert on your specific topics and is also an expert on oral history, but often that is not possible. It's best to find a contractor with at least a working knowledge of the subject and with the ability to do research on the topic. You need to find a contractor familiar with archival and public records research - a graduate degree in public history would be good. You also want a contractor with good communication skills that can get out into the field and work like a newspaper reporter gathering information about specific topics or individuals before an interview.
2. I believe a fixed rate per interview is the best way to pay for interviews. A minimum and maximum amount of interview time should be established for each of the interviews. Transcription costs, editing, and proofreading of the transcripts should all be included in the fixed rate. All of the above should be the responsibilities of the contractor. The client pays when the contractor delivers the complete package.
3. Technical standards/requirements do need to be agreed upon - high-quality digital is the only way to go for everything.
4. You don't want to try to be too much in control, you have to back off and let the contractor do his work. But you should insist on regular progress reports and I feel a phone call from the contractor to the client done before and after each interview keeps everybody "on the same page," without getting into micro-managing.

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## ORAL HISTORY PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES (continued)

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5. The contracting approach is the best way to go. A good contractor can pay off in the short run and long term. A good contractor will leave behind a framework for future oral history projects to build upon. I have taught dozens and dozens of workshops for groups, like schools and local historical societies that start their own oral history projects. Quite frankly, most fail -- and they leave behind a mess that gets swept under the rug. Interviewees are forgotten and end up feeling that they were treated with disrespect (never to participate again in an oral history project), interviews are left un-transcribed, un-appreciated and eventually get lost. There are a lot of "important details" to take care of in an oral history project and I've seen enthusiasm wane and oral history projects quickly fall apart.

I think the most important consideration in finding an oral history contractor is you want a contractor with a good track record. You want someone who can run an oral history project, not just do oral history interviews. So take your time, look around, and pick someone with project experience.

### H-Oralhist Listserv Topic Survey, May - July 2009

Compiled By Bonnie Gurewitsch  
OH Section Steering Committee Member (2007-2009)

*H-Oralhist is a network for scholars and professionals active in studies related to oral history. It is affiliated with the Oral History Association. The Oral-hist archives are searchable on the H-Oralhist website at <http://www.h-net.org/~oralhist/>.*

*What are oral historians talking about lately?*

#### OH METHODOLOGY

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How necessary are written transcripts? Is digital indexing a good substitute?

Methods of Indexing audio recordings

How-to guide to abstracting/indexing oral histories

Request of interviewee to delete specific anecdotes from transcript, restricting part of an interview from

public consumption

Guide for creating time-coded abstracts/indexes of oral history interviews

Request for suggestions for programs that honor tradition bearers or community elders

Advice sought on oral histories with children

#### TECHNOLOGY

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Industry standard for preparing files for downloads

Recording phone interviews on land-lines or cell phones; use of microphones

Recording equipment advice

Improving sound quality when editing using Macs GarageBand program

Sound reduction or improving sound quality for radio broadcasts

Using Digital Speech Standard (DSS) Player software for creating transcripts

Video camera recommendations

Replacing a tape recorder/transcription machine with newer technology

Experiences with Marantz CDR 310

Renting a recorder in Chicago

Transcription of digitized files on a PC

How to access the bottom end of the audio recording product lines and still get reasonably good quality recordings and transcription capabilities.

#### OUTREACH AND USING ORAL HISTORY

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Oral History volunteering

Spring donations campaign by H-Net to help us reduce the strain on our cash flow,

Uses of oral history in exhibitions and displays

ALA Connect - Oral History & Libraries community

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## ORAL HISTORY PRACTICAL PERSPECTIVES (continued)

### EDUCATION

Workshops: Exploring Ethnic History with Map Models, PhilaPlace Teacher Workshop, Wednesday, May 20

#### Summer Classes:

Oral History with the Student Press Initiative

Columbia University Teaching Oral History Online – how to structure a course on Oral History as a Multidisciplinary Teaching Tool

#### Conferences:

The Oral History Association of Australia (OHAA), with support from the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery and the Launceston City Council, will hold its 16th biennial conference in Launceston Tasmania, 17-20 September 2009.

Migrating Music, an International Conference at the Brunei Gallery, London, 10-11 July 2009

CFP: XVI International Oral History Conference, Prague, July 2010

### PUBLICATIONS

Concordia University's Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling (<http://storytelling.concordia.ca/oralhistory/index.html>) publication of a special edition of the Journal of Canadian Studies entitled: Sharing Authority: Community-University Collaboration in Oral History, Digital Storytelling, and Engaged Scholarship.

Oral History and Performance Proceedings Now Online- The multimedia proceedings Web site for the 2008 OHMAR Oral History and Performance Conference is now online.

The Southern Historical Collection together with UNC Libraries is pleased to present the new Southern Oral History Program digital collection: [http://www.sohp.org/content/news/news-item/new\\_digital\\_collection/](http://www.sohp.org/content/news/news-item/new_digital_collection/)

Oregon Historical Quarterly, Call for Proposals

The Baylor University Institute for Oral History welcomes applications for a fellowship for the academic year 2009-2010, open to individuals in any

field who can benefit from the holdings of Baylor's oral history collection.

The Baylor University Institute for Oral History is offering an online, live workshop on two consecutive Wednesdays in July: July 22 and July 29.

Are you a librarian involved with oral history? A new member community called Oral History and Libraries has been created within the American Library Association's ALA Connect website - <http://connect.ala.org>

Graduate Student Travel Award Western History Association for graduate students (MA or PhD) to attend the Western History Association Meeting, held this year in Denver from October 7-10.

AFC Lecture-- Filmmaker John Cohen: The High Lonesome Sound Revisited

Centre for Life History & Life Writing Research events, England

Pew Biomedical Scholars Oral History Collection – Short Term Fellowship, Pennsylvania, The Center for Contemporary History and Policy Deadline: 2009-08-15

Looking for potential panelists for a proposed panel discussion entitled "Oral History and the Marketplace" for the XVI International Oral History Conference in Prague in July 2010.

The Coalition for Western Women's History (CWWH) invites your participation in a writing group that will meet during the 2009 Western Historical Association Conference.

Discovering Community Through Video Documentary: A Four-Day Video Intensive Workshop, Vermont, July

Oral history and human rights - expertise required for conference "Responsibility to the Story: Testimony and Ethics in Human Rights" at York (UK) University Sept 9-11.

Invitation and query to feminist oral historians to participate in a dialogue group at the International Oral History Association conference next year.

## ORAL HISTORY ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Oral History Association Launches Online Resource on Digital Technologies**

The Oral History Association's website is hosting a new resource, "Oral History and Digital Technologies," (<http://www.oralhistory.org/technology>), which provides useful information on technologies associated with the practice and preservation of oral history interviews. The resource, edited by Doug Boyd, Director of the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History, University of Kentucky Libraries, includes detailed information and user friendly tutorials on rapidly changing technologies. Over the next few months it will grow to include information on preservation and videorecording. Suggestions for topics and resources should be sent to Doug Boyd at [doug.boyd@uky.edu](mailto:doug.boyd@uky.edu).

interest in social, economic and cultural rights; use of new media such as the internet). The use and study of testimony have been driving forces behind these developments. But the ethical implications of the rise of testimonial work, particularly in the global media age, remain under-explored.

The aims of this event are to investigate what responsibility researchers, practitioners and artists have to the stories they use, and to disseminate best ethical practice.

Conference fee: £70 waged; £30 unwaged/student  
Film festival: £5

For further details please see <http://www.york.ac.uk/inst/cahr/Events/Index.htm> - or contact Judith Pink, at [jkp2@york.ac.uk](mailto:jkp2@york.ac.uk)

### **Responsibility to the Story: Testimony and Ethics in Human Rights**

**Research and Narratives  
Centre for Applied Human Rights,  
University of York (UK)**

**9-11 September 2009**

This international conference will launch an important new journal: the Journal of Human Rights Practice. It is hosted by the Centre for Applied Human Rights, University of York (UK), and Oxford University Press, in collaboration with Amnesty International, the Medical Foundation for the Care of Victims of Torture, and Panos London.

The conference will bring together academics, practitioners and artists to explore ethical concerns surrounding the use of testimony. Human rights research has expanded significantly in the academy over the past decade in a range of disciplines (law, politics, anthropology, literature). Cultural output, ranging from child soldier autobiographies to documentary films about transitional justice, is similarly prominent. Practitioner research has had to adapt to its own forms of expansion (growing

## ORAL HISTORY SECTION ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **Online Election Results, 2009**

Please welcome the new Oral History Section Steering Committee Members!

#### **Joel Minor, Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect Texas State University-San Marcos**

##### **San Marcos, Texas**

Joel is an archivist for the Southwestern Writers Collection (SWWC) at Texas State University-San Marcos. In an effort to get an official oral history program started at SWWC, Joel wrote an oral history plan, manual and release form, and has so far interviewed two authors whose papers are housed at SWWC. He is also active in migrating older interviews on cassette tapes to digital format. In 2007 he helped author Joe Nick Patoski research for his book, *Willie Nelson: An Epic Life*, by conducting interviews over the phone with various friends and associates of Nelson. In 2006 Joel volunteered to take over the vacant position of newsletter editor/webmaster/ex-officio member of the SAA Oral History Section. He has worked closely with past OH Section Chairs, Debbie Whalen and Lauren Kata, and current Chair, Al Stein, to turn the newsletter into a more frequent, dynamic and extensive publication. He also took over webmaster duties for the OH Section and has taken an active role in the steering committee. In addition, Joel is a member of the Texas Oral History Association and currently serves on the executive board of the Society of Southwest Archivists.

#### **Beth Ann Koelsch**

***Steering Committee Member, 2009-2011***  
**University of North Carolina-Greensboro**  
**Greensboro, North Carolina**

Beth Ann is the Curator of the Betty H. Carter Women Veterans Historical Project at University of North Carolina at Greensboro. The Project has conducted and recorded over 275 oral history interviews with women veterans who served in World War II up to and including the Gulf Wars. Beth Ann is responsible for managing the project, donor relations, researcher queries, editing the transcripts, and also conducting oral history interviews.

Beth Ann received her undergraduate degree from Duke University, an MFA in creative writing from the University of New Orleans, and an MLS from the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Her research interests include collaborative efforts between academic and nonacademic institutions, public programming, issues about gender and the military, and generational differences in oral history interviewees in discussions about sexism, racism, homophobia and other related topics.

#### **Marlene Justsen**

***Steering Committee Member, 2009-2011***  
**National Press Club**  
**Washington, DC**

Marlene Justsen graduated from the University of Reading, England with joint BA(hons) in Modern History and International Relations and worked in the UK for some years before changing careers into archives. After completing her MLS, specializing in Archives at the University of Maryland in 2003, she worked for one year helping to start up the Center for Information Policy. In February of 2005, Marlene was asked by Maygene Daniels to join the National Gallery Archives as the Paul Mellon Archives and Records Management Fellow to head the Slide Digitization Project. Upon completing the fellowship she became the Archivist at the National Press Club where one of her primary duties is to liaise with the Oral History committee and manage the vast program which includes cataloging current tapes holdings, funding for their transcription project and digitizing their holdings. It is this that makes her interested in serving on the committee after coming to appreciate the complexity of creating and maintaining an effective and accessible oral history program.



# Oral History Section

[www.archivists.org/saagroups/oralhist/index.asp](http://www.archivists.org/saagroups/oralhist/index.asp)



**SOCIETY OF  
American  
Archivists**

## Purpose of the SAA Oral History Section

The Oral History Section of the Society of American Archivists is composed of members of the Society and others who are interested in or are actively engaged in conducting oral history interviews and/or teach oral history methodology. The Oral History Section provides a forum for news, for discussion of issues and developments, and for establishing and maintaining communication and cooperation with other professional organizations.

Read the rest of the Section's [By-laws](#)

## Steering Committee Members

### 2008-2009

#### Section Chair

Al Stein  
Chicago State University  
astein@csu.edu

#### Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect

Mark Cave  
The Historic New Orleans Collection  
mark@hnoc.org

#### Past Section Chair & Nominating Committee Chair

Lauren Kata  
The Archives of the Episcopal Church, Austin, TX  
lauren.kata@gmail.com

#### Member (term 2007-2009) & Interim Newsletter Co-Editor

Jennifer Eidson  
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New leadership assumes office at the close of the annual meeting of the section.



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