



FROM THE CHAIR

Mark Cave, The Historic New Orleans Collection



Our section meeting in Austin was a great success. 100 people enjoyed the live interview conducted by Jim Fogerty with David Gracy. Jim did a wonderful job in conducting the interview, and it was such a great way to honor Mr. Gracy for his contributions to our profession.

Our next section meeting promises to be equally engaging. It is being planned by Vice Chair/Chair Elect Joel Minor and will be devoted to oral history and human rights.

Lauren Kata has been busy since the Austin meeting developing our SAA 75th Anniversary Oral History Project. Lauren has been named as the section's representative on the 75th Anniversary Task Force, which is coordinating all the events surrounding the

anniversary. She is planning for on-site interviews to take place at the annual conference in Washington.

Thank you to those of you who replied to our query to the section membership in October. We received really helpful information related to the interests and needs of the section membership. This information will be helpful in the creation of an online survey, which will be a part of our website, and continually gather information about the section's membership. Past Chair Al Stein along with Nominating Committee members Doug Boyd and Herman Trojanowski will be looking for candidates for Vice Chair and two Steering Committee members for our next election, and will also be reviewing our current bylaws.

A special thanks to Jennifer Eidson for preparing this issue of *Dialogue* and for maintaining the section's website.

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SPOTLIGHT: SAA's 75th Anniversary

Update on the Oral History Project

Submitted By Lauren Kata,
Project Coordinator for the SAA
75th Anniversary Oral History Project

At our August meeting in Austin a few months ago, the Section announced its plans to initiate an oral history project in celebration of SAA's 75th Anniversary in 2011. Our inaugural interview was conducted live during our Section meeting - many of you were in the audience when former Section chair Jim Fogerty interviewed David Gracy on camera about his career and longtime membership and leadership in SAA. In addition, inaugural "mentor" audio interviews were conducted with George Bain and Pam Hackbart-Dean. In Austin, the Steering Committee discussed initial planning for interviewing in 2010 and 2011, and I was happy to officially accept the role of coordinator for this special project through 2011. In this role, I will work with the Steering Committee, Section members and others in SAA to make our anniversary oral history project a sustainable success.

Since our August meeting, I have a few things to report. First, in October I was delighted to have been invited by the SAA-UT Student Chapter as a guest speaker to discuss the Oral History Section and our vision for a 75th Anniversary project. Texas graduate students expressed a lot of interest and enthusiasm for oral history in general, and the project specifically. During the meeting, we had some very interesting conversations when we broke into groups and reviewed past transcripts of SAA leadership interviews. SAA-UT faculty advisor David Gracy also offered some of his thoughts and observations on broad vs. narrow topics and how to put interviewees at ease. It was refreshing to learn that many students already have experience in conducting interviews, and several students offered to help with the project. In fact, SAA-UT student Karen Ballinger worked over her winter break to transcribe the Fogerty-Gracy interview, which is now in its editing stages and which we hope will be ready to be excerpted for the next issue of Dialogue. I really appreciated the opportunity to interact with the UT students and believe that archives students are not just important potential users of SAA interviews, but also should be considered critical potential participants in the 75th

project. Our plan is to continue with student outreach and I hope to see students interviewing both mentors and fellow students.

In addition to student participation, we've also begun the recruiting process for member-to-member interviews, which you will definitely be reading more about in the coming months. Several members, in and out of the Section, have agreed to help and participate in the project. Many thanks to all of you who have helped us so far!

Finally - at the end of 2009, the SAA 75th Anniversary Task Force (TF) was established. SAA Council approved the establishment of the TF, whose purpose is to be "responsible for coordinating a multi-faceted approach to planning and implementing a celebration of the Society's 75th anniversary in 2011." This approach will involve various groups and individuals, including SAA's Council, officers, committees, sections, roundtables, and staff. Our Chair Mark Cave requested that I be included as the Section's liaison to the TF, and indeed I accepted SAA President Helen Tibbo's invitation to participate. I'm happy to share that the TF is an active group of people showing much enthusiasm for a successful anniversary celebration, that will include a vibrant and interactive oral history component. Our own section member and interviewee David Gracy is Chair of this TF, with Lee Stout serving as co-chair. SAA's 75th Anniversary Task Force will be vigorously working all this year and next to plan and implement activities and programs that loosely fall within the following four categories: serious history, advocacy/outreach, fundraising, and fun. A lot of ideas for projects and activities have been discussed to date. As I thought more about the different opportunities and projects, I considered how an SAA oral history project fits into all of these areas. Here are some of my thoughts:

SERIOUS HISTORY

Interviews, particularly those conducted with SAA leaders document knowledge about and experience in the history of SAA and the archival profession. Interviews create a body of institutional knowledge that may be used not just in reflection of SAA but also in practice - a continuation of organizational memory.

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75th Anniversary SPOTLIGHT (continued)

Interviews may be utilized for future scholarship on the history of archives.

Interviews will be officially archived within the Oral History Series of the SAA Archives at UW-Milwaukee, building the base of that collection.

The project is designed for institutionalization; in other words, the OH Section is committed to working with SAA Staff and leadership to turn this from a "project" to a regular operational program of the Society – similar to records management of SAA records.

ADVOCACY/OUTREACH/MARKETING

Clips or interesting/catchy moments from interviews conducted as part of this project may be used for marketing, outreach, and/or advocacy of the 75th celebrations and beyond – to try to hook folks who may become excited about attending SAA 2010 and/or 2011 and onsite opportunities to conduct member to member interviews along the lines of StoryCorps. Interviews (video footage and/or transcriptions) may be used for future publications (print and non-print alike) - either as they are produced or a few years down the line, they can be used to create an edited anthology.

The Oral History Project provides an opportunity to market and advocate SAA to its own members – a way to reinforce member buy-in to strengthen the organization. The way that the project is designed and imagined allows for every group to have an opportunity to work with the Oral History Section to identify members within their sections/roundtables/working group that should be interviewed, with the promise that those interviews will be centrally preserved with the SAA Archives. A sustainable training program could also be built into the project, and we hope to create opportunities both onsite and year-round to encourage members to interview other members.

The Oral History Section, through its organizational structure and through this project, regularly liaisons with the Oral History Association as well as other regional organizations. This is an opportunity to strengthen partnerships through interviews conducted with joint members, and by scheduling

interviewing during regional meetings.

FUNDRAISING

Oral History Projects, especially those designed with multiple uses in mind, typically are a popular fund selection for both annual fund and major gifts contributions. This may be an appropriate project for corporate sponsorship and/or grants as well. Fundraising can and should be tied to both users and participants of the project.

FUN

Although oral history is traditionally and appropriately labeled as a "serious history" activity, this project is designed on multiple levels and is meant to inspire fun for those who choose to participate.

StoryCorps as a model - several people have mentioned the idea of contracting with StoryCorps as an anniversary activity. Whether we budget existing funds to bring StoryCorps to our meeting or draw from interviewing and technology experts within our memberships, onsite "booths" that provide member-to-member interviewing opportunities not only inspire fun, but also inspire meaningful bonding moments.

Some final thoughts: we (the Section) would really like to plan and promote the 75th Anniversary Oral History Project as a member-driven project, one that draws on the skills, interest and expertise of Oral History Section members, and really any SAA member who is interested in participating. And so my report for this issue ends with a solicitation - please, consider joining our team as a volunteer interviewer, interviewee, transcriber, or even as an on-site interview coordinator. This is a chance beyond serving on the Steering Committee to become involved in a Section project. Please contact me asap if you are interested and would like to help!!

A Note from the Chair on the 75th Anniversary Oral History Project

Submitted by Mark Cave,
Historic New Orleans Collection

The first SAA annual conference I attended was in Philadelphia many, many years ago. I knew only a couple people: Bill Marshall, my Archives instructor at

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75th Anniversary SPOTLIGHT (continued)

the University of Kentucky, and George Bain who was one of my supervisors when I was a student worker at Ohio University. The second day of the conference, George invited me to have breakfast with him. We had oatmeal at what I think was a Shoney's. For some reason this breakfast has stuck in my memory, and in a weird way it has always marked for me, the beginning of my career as an archivist. I have attended many of the SAA conferences since that time, and always look forward to visiting with George, Bill, and the many friends that I have made since that first conference.

At this past SAA meeting in Austin, Lauren Kata and I decided that the best way to test the water of the section's oral history initiative related to SAA's 75th anniversary would be for us to interview some of our mentors. We had devoted our section program to a live interview with David Gracey conducted by Jim Fogerty, but had not planned much beyond that. To my surprise I ran into George in the hotel lobby. He had retired, and I thought our run of visits had come

to an end. I immediately asked if he would be willing to be interviewed and he agreed.

The formality of an interview with George was odd at first, but that wore off. He talked about his first SAA conference, the people that were influential to him, his work in various sections, etc. It was only when I participated in this formal interview process that the significance of my memory of having oatmeal at Shoney's with George in Philadelphia really sank in. It must have been on some level the moment that I became connected to what had gone on before me. At that moment, I became a part of our profession. Providing these interpersonal and generational links is fundamental to what SAA is, and it is what we hope to celebrate in our 75th anniversary Oral History project.

I encourage all section members to participate in some way in this important project. Please contact Lauren Kata if you wish to conduct an interview or help out in other ways.

CONFERENCES

Report on the Oral History Section Meeting and Session #309: Oral History in Action

Submitted by Jen Eidson, Veterans History Project and Lauren Kata, Archives of the Episcopal Church

The last SAA annual meeting was in Austin, TX, home of the bats and a flourishing live music scene. In Austin, the Oral History Section hosted an interview with David Gracy to kick off the 75th Anniversary Oral History Project. It was quite a draw for conference attendees, with standing room only. The audience seemed impressed with the good natured honesty with which he recounted his experiences as an archivist.

The Section-sponsored session, "Oral History in Action: Sustaining Organizational Knowledge and Institutional Memory" was also a packed session, with close to 100 attendees. Robert Mages from the US Army Heritage and Education Center talked about Oral History in the US Army. The next speaker was Molly Alexander from the Association of American Medical Colleges. She spoke about the oral history

project at AAMC and how it's capturing their institutional history.

Mr. Mages gave a presentation on the Army's oral history program, its successes, and its challenges. There are six organizations in the Army which collect the oral histories as one of these four interview types: biographical, subject, exit, or after-action. One reality the project faces is that after-action interviews taken from members of the same unit do not always correlate to each other. Mages stated that it was up to the historians to vet out the differences, but that it's really a good example of how oral history is subjective in nature. All of their interviews are recorded on audio cassette, but since they do not have the resources to store or preserve the audio cassettes, they emphasize the creation and storage of transcripts. Their priority is to keep the transcript, not the audio cassettes. Collected oral histories are used in various Army publications and a portion of the transcripts are available online (<http://www.ahco.army.mil/site/index.jsp> and <http://cgsc.leavenworth.army.mil/carl/contentdm/home.htm>).

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Ms. Alexander talked about the challenges of the oral history program at the Association of American Medical Colleges (AAMC). She shared how her oral history project at AAMC caught the eye of human resources administrators, who recognized that over 94 years of institutional memory was walking out the door as retired leadership moved on from the organization. The AAMC has recognized the value of oral history in orienting new senior staff. Both presenters touched on the use of oral history as a vehicle for knowledge transfer.

Audience members had many questions, ranging from staffing questions to software to the advantages and disadvantages of providing questions to interviewees in advance. With regard to the US Army program, members questioned whether and how Post Traumatic Stress Disorder might affect After Action Interviews, and how the army deals with that. There were also questions about whether institutional interviews are voluntary or mandatory for both programs, and how release forms are handled.

Audio recordings for SAA sessions are available for purchase on the SAA website; <http://www.archivists.org/conference/>.

Summary of the 2009 Oral History Association (OHA) Conference

Submitted by Mark Cave,
Historic New Orleans Collection

The annual meeting of Oral History Association was held in Louisville, Kentucky, October 14-18, 2009. The overarching theme of the conference was "Moving Beyond the interview." The program committee selected presentations with certain subjects or "conference threads" in mind. They included: Oral History as Art and Advocacy; Oral History as Teaching and Service Learning; Oral History as Film and Image; Oral History and Folk life in Community; Oral History as Activism and Social Justice; and Oral History in Museums, Archives, and Digital Environments. The committee smartly identified the sessions in the program with an icon designating the "conference thread," which enabled conference goers to more easily follow a thematic path.

The conference thread devoted to Oral History as Activism and Social Justice had great relevance to our section meeting program in Washington DC which will be devoted to Oral History and Human Rights. The thread at OHA included excellent presentations by Daniel Kerr of James Madison University "Is Oral History Exploitative? Oral History with the Homeless;" and Terry Easton of Gainesville State College "Collaborative Work: Day Laborers, Activists, and Media Specialists."

One of the members of our steering committee, Doug Boyd, served on the conference Program Committee and organized an outstanding selection of pre-conference workshops which included a workshop by Touchable Stories director, Shannon Flattery and a workshop on Digital Applications in Oral History Research, Teaching, and Production.

On Wednesday evening, at the beautiful Louisville Public Media Center, a welcome reception and Plenary Panel Discussion was held to spotlight Stud Terkel's "contributions to the oral history movement and to literary and media creations based on his library of voices." Section member Al Stein was instrumental in the organization of this event which was presided over by OHA Vice President/President Elect Michael Frisch. The Panelists included Bob Edwards who was the creator and long-time host of NPR's Morning Edition; Terkel's friend and collaborator Sydney Lewis; activist, educator, and historian Timuel Black Jr.; Social Justice curriculum expert Rick Ayers; and Terkel's son Dan Terkel.

The Friday afternoon Plenary, entitled "How the World Works: Explorations in Labor and Globalization," featured a lecture by British Sociologist Caroline Knowles, who is currently the Director of the Centre for Urban and Community Research at Goldsmiths, University of London. Her lecture drew from her own travel, and she argued "that the world in which we live is created in the journeys people make around it. Travel is no trivial pursuit. Understanding how people travel is the key to understanding how the world works."

The revised *General Principals for Oral History* and *Best Practices for Oral History* were approved at the Louisville meeting. The purpose of these documents are to provide summaries of the discipline's most important principals and guidelines, and is not intended to be

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a substitute for professional literature. The intent of the revision was to streamline the document to make it more useable for IRB's and people from a variety of disciplines that frequently reference the documents. The revised guidelines are available for review on the OHA website.

Oral History Association of Australia (OHAA) Conference Report

Submitted by Alison McDougall and Karen George
(Reprinted with permission from *Word of Mouth, Newsletter of the OHAA (SA) Inc, Spring 2009*)

The 16th National Oral History Association of Australia Conference was held in Launceston, Tasmania 17–20 September, close to the Queen Victoria Museum and Art Gallery's Inveresk site. Some 130 delegates were treated to three and a half days of stimulating presentations. After a moving Welcome to Country by Aboriginal Elder, Nola Hooper, the conference was officially opened by His Excellency The Honourable Ewan Crawford, Lieutenant-Governor of Tasmania, who himself had been an interviewee for an oral history conducted for a book on the history of the Launceston Church Grammar School.

The Keynote Address, given by Richard Whiteing, was entitled Remembering Mandela on Robben Island. Richard is the Research Manager of the Robben Island Museum and during the apartheid era he spent fifteen years in exile in Botswana, during which time he joined the African National Congress and operated clandestinely in its political structures for eleven years until he was able to return to South Africa in 1991. Richard generously donated a copy of his recent publication, a tribute to Nelson Mandela on his 90th birthday, entitled *Political Prisoner 466/64: Nelson Mandela on Robben Island*, to each OHAA state branch.

Alan Harris Stein, archival oral historian and Associate Director of the Consortium for Oral History Educators at the University of Maryland, gave a fascinating insight into the life and times of Studs Terkel, the iconic American oral historian who practised his craft through radio, performing arts and activism until his death in 2008 at 96 years of age. Al accompanied his talk with a documentary he co-produced, entitled *Rocking the Boat: Studs Terkel's 20th Century*. One of

Terkel's laments was that young Americans have no memory of (and are seldom taught about) the struggles it took, and still takes, to make their homeland more fair and inclusive. That observation may well apply to Australia. The Chicago History Museum is the repository for the thousands of hours of recordings made by Studs as well as all of his writings. Al said it is often referred to as 'The Studsonian Institution'.

Across the rest of the conference there was a broad range of topics which covered oral history undertakings in every state and territory of Australia as well as one from Manitoba, Canada. There were three sessions which shared people's use of oral history and stories in indigenous communities; the shortcomings of the Victorian Heritage Act which requires Aboriginal people to register otherwise they have no voice, and which makes no reference to oral tradition; Queenslanders reflecting on Prime Minister Rudd's Apology to Australia's Indigenous people (see <http://www.slq.qld.gov.au/coll/aptsi/apology>); how Aboriginal Tasmanians are participating in Telling Places in Country – a research project that re-traces the 'Friendly Mission' undertaken by George Augustus Robinson in the early 1830s, which saw Aboriginal people rounded up for exile – and how it is helping



Richard Whiteing (left) and Al Stein (right) present check to St. Giles Foundation. Conference organizer Jill Cassidy of the OHAA Tasmanian Branch is at extreme left, and next to her is a member of the St. Giles Management Team. St Giles Foundation was founded in 1937 by the Chamber Of Commerce, Rotary, and the City of Launceston, Tasmania, to provide aftercare support to children affected by polio. [Photo courtesy of Jill Cassidy, OHAA]

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them reclaim their history and identity.

Other major topics were: oral history on the Web, oral history and place, art and oral history, war and oral history, and oral histories of work places and of

refugees and migrants. Delegates were treated to a wonderful performance of excerpts from Stella Kent's play *New Tasmanians* which was based on the oral histories of migrants to that state.

ORAL HISTORY NEWS

StoryCorps at the Library of Congress

Submitted by Marcia Segal
Processing Archivist,
American Folklife Center, Library of Congress

The StoryCorps Project began in 2003 as a way to encourage dialogs between family, friends, schoolmates, and neighbors, to name a few interviewer-storyteller pairings. According to David Isay, the project's founder, StoryCorps helps to show that "the stories of everyday people are as interesting and as important as the nonsense that we're fed about [celebrities] that comes through our television sets 24 hours a day."

To date, the American Folklife Center has received almost 24,000 interviews, as well as almost 60,000 photos (taken at the time of the interviews). An even greater number of interviews actually have been made, which will arrive at the American Folklife Center (if participants have granted permission to archive the interviews), and once the StoryCorps staff has processed them. Due to the sheer size of the collection, the interviews and related materials are not online and can only be heard in the Folklife Center's reading room. Researchers should contact the American Folklife Center's reference staff in advance of any visit with questions (the best means of contact is via email, at folklife@loc.gov). Any requests for copies of materials still must be directed to the StoryCorps staff (inquiries can be made at <http://www.storycorps.org/about/inquiries>).

By 2010, StoryCorps interviews have been recorded all over the United States (in large part due to the recording booths that go on road trips, called MobileBooths). In addition, StoryCorps has conducted collaborative, theme-based initiatives, including the Griot initiative ("the voices, experiences, and life stories of African Americans ... preserved and

presented with dignity"), the Memory Loss initiative (created "to support and encourage people with memory loss to share their stories"), and most recently Historias ("to honor these culturally significant voices, and to ensure these voices are represented on public radio"). While the majority of StoryCorps interviews are in English, some interviews are part or entirely conducted in Korean, Spanish, Hmong, Italian, Swahili, and other languages. As interest has grown in the project, so the project has grown to fit the needs and interests of its audience and participants. Selections from the interviews are highlighted each Friday, on National Public Radio member stations, and the book and CD from the project have been best-sellers. While originally envisioned as a 10-year project, StoryCorps is now open-ended and growing, and may only slow down if people lose interest in hearing stories from the heart.

StoryCorps at Nashville Public Library

Submitted by James Havron,
Special Collections Division

Last year Nashville Public Library (NPL) became the first city other than New York to both host a stationary StoryCorps booth and to receive an archive of the interviews for onsite retention and access (as opposed to having to go to you folks at the Library of Congress.) We have been working to make that archive fully available and have now finalized a finding aid and the making of use copies. The entire collection is available to patrons at the Special Collections Division, along with our other oral histories.

We have four ongoing oral history projects, currently recorded in digital format, and several older collections from projects completed and donated to the NPL in the past. We are also just completing the final stage of a grant funded project to convert our

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older, analog oral history collections into digital format. All these projects were completed (with the exception of the on-going ones, of course) under the tenures of the Special Collections Division Managers, Aimee James and Andrea Blackman, and funded primarily by generous donations arranged by the Nashville Public Library Foundation.

National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) online oral history project—*Pittsburgh and Beyond: The Experience of the Jewish Community*

Submitted by Miriam Meislik
Media Curator, Archives Service Center,
University of Pittsburgh

The University of Pittsburgh Library System (ULS) and the Pittsburgh section of the National Council of Jewish Women (NCJW) have recently launched *Pittsburgh and Beyond: The Experience of the Jewish Community*. The site, containing over 500 audio interviews of the Pittsburgh area Jewish community, can be found at <http://digital.library.pitt.edu/n/ncjw>.

In 1968, the Pittsburgh chapter of the NCJW embarked on what would eventually become a 32-year long project to document the life and experiences of the Pittsburgh area Jewish community. Using trained volunteers, they interviewed community members who came to America from Eastern Europe between 1890 and 1924.

In 1973, the NCJW, after realizing that there were many more stories to be told, launched a second phase of the project to document the contributions that Pittsburgh's Jewish men and women made locally, nationally, and internationally. Overall 516 individuals were interviewed between 1968 and 2001, producing over 1,200 hours of material on 1,100 standard audiocassettes.

This very popular collection of interviews is housed at the Archives Service Center and has been used by researchers in a variety of projects and requested by relatives looking for family histories. The interviews contain invaluable first-person accounts of immigration, of World War II and the Holocaust, of life in Pittsburgh, and many other topics. Prominent

Pittsburgh project participants include Lincoln and Minnie Maazel, former Pittsburgh Mayor Sophie Masloff, former Carnegie Museum of Art Director, Leon Arkus, and internationally renowned Rabbi Walter Jacob.

In order to prepare the collection for online dissemination, the University Library System worked with George Blood of Safe Sound Archive to digitize the content originally recorded on standard audio cassettes. Final products created from the digitization included preservation files (.wav), use files (.mp3), and playlists (.xspf). ID3 tags enabled each cassette side to be associated with its digitized content and rights information. A team comprised of members of the Archives Service Center, Digital Research Library, Information Systems, and Web Services worked together on the project. Staff at the archives were responsible for preparing the metadata for each interview using data extracted by the Digital Research Library from the NCJW's original printed guide, *Pittsburgh and Beyond*. The project relied heavily on MS Excel spreadsheets to organize the nearly 2500 lines of information.

Visitors to the website can search for the name of an interviewee or retrieve an abstract of the interview by using keywords. The collection can also be browsed by personal name, geographic region, or subject. Copies of any interviews are available for purchase on CD.

Oral History of the U.S. House of Representatives

Submitted by Heather Bourk
Assistant Archivist, Office of History and Preservation
Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

Beginning in the summer of 2004, the Office of the Clerk authorized the first oral history program for the U.S. House of Representatives. Created to make the rich heritage of the U.S. House of Representatives more accessible to Members, staff, scholars, and the general public, the program seeks to include interviews with a wide variety of House employees such as Member aides, committee staff, support staff, and technical assistants. Interviews are conducted by the Office of History and Preservation (OHP).

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Assigned to the Democratic Cloakroom, Bill Goodwin (second from left) answered the telephones and ran errands for Members.

Image courtesy of William Goodwin, provided by Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

The collection and preservation of the stories and experiences of people who have worked on Capitol Hill greatly contributes to the historical record of the U.S. House of Representatives. Detailed descriptions of legislative processes and procedures, personal and political anecdotes, and recollections about the evolving nature of the institution, represent an untapped but vital source of information about the inner workings of Congress. Recording the detailed reflections of people who have worked in various capacities at the Capitol allows current congressional staff the opportunity to familiarize themselves with past House practices, which in turn may inform those making decisions and planning policies in the present. By providing such a resource, OHP also seeks to promote further interest in and study of the history of the U.S. House of Representatives and American government.

Oral history interviews are recorded using audio and/or video equipment. OHP produces transcripts, interview summaries, and electronic copies of the recordings. Audio and video recordings will be archived and made available publicly through the Center for Legislative Archives at the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), and the Library of Congress. Original recordings—as well as any supporting documentary materials such as letters

or pictures—will be stored and protected according to archival standards.



The main room of the House Press Gallery in 1951; Benjamin C. West is standing on the left near the bulletin board. In 1967, the press gallery underwent a major renovation.

Image courtesy of Benjamin C. West, provided by Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

Project Highlights:

- Interviewed a diverse group of people connected to the history of the House (House Officers; committee staff; Member staff; support staff; family of former Members; press gallery employees; Pages; floor staff; and Capitol Police Officers)
- More than 20 people have been interviewed
- More than 100 recorded hours of interviews
- All interviews featured on the project Web site include complete transcripts (PDF and HTML), interviewee biographies, photographs and/or artifacts, and audio interview clips (<http://oralhistory.clerk.house.gov>)
- Searchable Web site
- Many of the interviews featured on the Web site include video interview clips
- Educational resources for teachers which include a lesson plan and activity as well as teaching tips (<http://oralhistory.clerk.house.gov/additional-resources.html>)
- Web site includes links to historical highlights featuring oral history interviewees (<http://oralhistory.clerk.house.gov/highlight.html>)

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- The Web site will be updated periodically (additional interview transcripts; new interviewees; and more educational materials)



The Boggs family walks along the East Front plaza along the House side of the Capitol in this 1950 image. From left to right, Cokie (Roberts), Hale, Tommy, Lindy, and Barbara.

Image courtesy of Cokie Roberts, provided by Office of History and Preservation, Office of the Clerk, U.S. House of Representatives

Loyal Lesley Daughters: An Oral History of Massachusetts Women Teachers, 1925-1965

Submitted by Alyssa Pacy
University Archivist, Lesley University,
Cambridge, Massachusetts

The Lesley University Archives in Cambridge, Massachusetts recently received funding from Mass Humanities, the state-based affiliate of the National Endowment for the Humanities, to present the exhibition, *Loyal Lesley Daughters: An Oral History of Massachusetts' Women Teachers, 1925-1965*, as part of the University's 2009-2010 centennial celebration. *Loyal Lesley Daughters*, opening in May 2010, will exhibit oral history interviews of Lesley's alumnae, detailing their experiences at an all women's institution, the teaching techniques they learned, and the challenges they faced as women building careers in Massachusetts Public Schools.

The title, *Loyal Lesley Daughters*, refers to Lesley's school song, written in 1944 by former president Trentwell Mason White. The song praises the

attributes of the perfect Lesley student – loyalty, honesty, motherhood, friendship – and neglects the School's core mission: to foster intellectual growth and educate women to become early childhood educators. White's lyrics reflect the difficult choice that the all-female student body had to make between career and family. For many of these women, their careers as educators were short lived; once a teacher got married, she would lose her job. Lesley alumnae had to choose between having a career or being a good wife and mother. For the first fifty years of its existence, Lesley was deeply entrenched in competing educational philosophies that surrounded women's place in American social and economic life.

The oral histories to be featured in *Loyal Lesley Daughters* uncover a lost history, one that is not currently told in the documents that Lesley owns. For many of the women, the interviews provide a platform to talk about their experiences and express their opinions, often for the first time. The interview process, with its open-ended questions and stream of consciousness approach, allows a range of emotion – from humor to frustration and from hope to fear. An alternative narrative about women teachers in Massachusetts emerges: one that shows the contradiction of a society that allowed women to be trained as early childhood educators but didn't let them teach.



Selma Chervin Bell, here in 1948 and 2009, graduated from Lesley University in 1948 and later was a teacher in the Lexington Public Schools for over 20 years.

The exhibit will highlight 12 narrators who are representative of the over 40 interviews conducted to date. Gallery visitors will be able to listen to audio excerpts of each interview, 30 seconds to 30 minutes

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ORAL HISTORY NEWS (continued)

in length, on an iPod shuffle. Mounted on the gallery walls will be a short biography of each narrator and a historical explanation of the interview excerpt. A framed, black and white photograph of each narrator will be displayed along with any relevant photographic or historical materials that the narrator has donated (for example, a photograph of the narrator teaching, a lesson plan used by the narrator, or the narrator's senior photograph from Lesley).

Playing in a continuous loop on a monitor at the gallery entrance, a 6-8 minute video will introduce the exhibit and place the women's stories in historical context. The video, using still images, voiceover, and music, will outline the cultural, economic, and political climates that the women faced each decade. History about the roaring twenties and the Great Depression will be interwoven with the women's personal stories of intellectual discovery and professional freedom. World War II and the American post-war consciousness will be highlighted next to the stories of women facing the burden of recreating American family life and its affect on their teaching careers. Finally, the budding American feminist movement will be explored in the context of Lesley students and alumnae challenging the status quo.

The exhibition will run from May 26, 2010 to July 1, 2010 at the Marran Gallery at Lesley University in Cambridge, Massachusetts.

Film Review: *Soul of a People*

Submitted by Al Stein, Chicago State University

Soul of a People: Writing America's Story, was the subject of a series of organized exhibits, lectures, and panels at over 30 libraries throughout the United States in 2009, sponsored by the American Library Association and supported by a grant from the NEH. Last fall saw the completion of the acclaimed feature-length documentary produced and directed by Andrea Kalin and written by David A. Taylor, Olive Emma Bucklin and Kalin for the Smithsonian Networks, funded by the National Endowment for the Humanities. Nominated for the prestigious Writers Guild of America Award (during the 2009 season in the category "best documentary other than current events") and narrated by award-winning actor, Patricia Clarkson, *Soul of a People* is the story of the most chaotic and influential cultural experiment in

American history: the Federal Writers' Project.

In the grip of the Great Depression, unemployed men and women joined an unlikely WPA program to document America in guidebooks and interviews. With the Federal Writers' Project, the government pitted young, untested talents against the problems of everyday Americans. From that experience, some of America's great writers found their own voices, and discovered the Soul of a People. Archival oral history and film is perfected as we see and hear the witnesses (Studs Terkel and Stetson Kennedy among them) and biographical sketches of John Cheever, Richard Wright, Zora Neale Hurston, Vardis Fisher, and Jim Thompson: writers all. The film is masterfully crafted with archival footage that comes to life thanks to both HD and carefully crafted movement and graphics over stills and documentary footage. I believe this technique using a rostrum camera is totally perfected so that the period is at once alive, contemporary and relevant to the witnesses' memories and stories (especially the "American Stuff" excerpt of Jim Thompson as well as the folklore sequence). A diverse group of leading authors, poets, and historians including Douglas Brinkley and David Bradley, provide witty and heartbreaking insights into the rise and fall of the Project.

Taylor's companion book to the documentary is entitled: *Soul of A People: The WPA Writers' Project Uncovers Depression America*. It was published on the 75th anniversary of the New Deal. Andrea Kalin, the founder and president of Spark Media, is an award-winning filmmaker whose work has earned more than 50 industry awards in the past decade. Employing superior storytelling gifts to promote social change, her films depict lives of courage, perseverance and dignity set against brutal injustices and seemingly insurmountable hardships. Her multimedia firm, officially launched in 1989, truly is a "spark," as it utilizes visual narratives to increase awareness among cultures and gives audience members a chance to become more engaged in the world in which they live.

Winners and nominees will be honored at the upcoming 2010 Writers Guild Awards on February 20, 2010, in Los Angeles and New York. We wish Kalin, Taylor and Associate Producer Oliver Lukas all the best!

continued on next page

ORAL HISTORY NEWS (continued)

Update on *Oral History and Digital Technology Online Resource*

Submitted by Doug Boyd,
Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History,
University of Kentucky Libraries

Digital technologies associated with oral history are rapidly changing and the transition for many oral historians and archivists can be frustrating. The Oral History Association's website is hosting a relatively new resource, "Oral History and Digital Technologies," [<http://www.oralhistory.org/technology/>] which provides practical information on technologies associated with the practice and preservation of oral history interviews. This growing resource includes detailed information and user friendly tutorials on some of these rapidly changing recording and preservation technologies as well as providing links

to other related resources online. Currently, the site contains detailed information and tutorials on the basics of digital audio, audio recording with proper input levels, an ongoing series of brief video tutorials on many of the most common digital field recorders, as well as providing a downloadable glossary of terms and concepts pertaining to digital audio.

The site is being managed and edited by Doug Boyd, Director of the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Libraries. Over the next few months the site will expand to include more information regarding analog and digital preservation, video-recording, as well as a featured section focusing on microphones. This is an exciting new initiative by the Oral History Association. Suggestions for specific topics and resources featured on the site should be sent to Doug Boyd (doug.boyd@uky.edu).

ORAL HISTORY CALENDAR

April

Oral History of the Mid-Atlantic Region (OHMAR) Spring Conference, 2010

April 28th & 29th, 2010

"Catching Lightning in a Bottle: Documenting Science, Technology & Innovation Through Oral History"

Submission deadline extended to Feb. 19, 2010

Charles Sumner School Museum and Archives
1201 17th Street, NW, Washington, DC
Contact: ohmar.conference@gmail.com
Website: <http://www.ohmar.org/confercurrent.html>

SAA Workshop

Oral History: From Planning to Preservation #0136
April 30th, 2010

Newport News Public Library System
Newport News, VA
Early-Bird Registration Deadline: March 30, 2010
[SAA Continuing Education Calendar](#)

June

Panel and Workshop to accompany exhibit:
Loyal Lesley Daughters: An Oral History of Massachusetts Women Teachers, 1925-1965
June 4th & 19th, 2010

A panel discussion with the participants will take place on June 4, 2010 and an oral history workshop will take place on June 19, 2010. Both events are free and open to the public. For more information, please contact Alyssa Pacy, Lesley University Archivist, at apacy@lesley.edu or visit www.masshumanities.org.

July

July 2-3, 2010

Oral History in Art, Craft, and Design: Oral History Society annual conference in association with the Victoria and Albert Museum, London.
[Oral History Association Calendar](#)

July 7-11, 2010

International Oral History Association and the Czech Oral History Association invite you to participate in The XVI International Oral History Conference, "Between Past and Future: Oral History, Memory and Meaning" that will be held in Prague, Czech Republic.
[Oral History Association Calendar](#)

ORAL HISTORY SECTION ANNOUNCEMENTS

Online Section Election Information

From Brian Doyle, SAA's Director of Member & Technical Services.

Please take note of the following changes to section voting and the dates for nominations and voting this year. There will be further announcements via the Oral History Section listserv.

1. Sections shall conduct annual elections via an online ballot system provided by the SAA staff. Members must vote via the online ballot.
2. Formal calls for nominations shall be issued by the Section leadership and collected ten (10) weeks prior to the Annual Membership Meeting. (For the coming year: **June 1, 2010.**)
3. Basic ballot information (e.g., introductory message to voters, listing of offices, number of vacancies for each, names of candidates, and links to candidate statements) shall be submitted to the SAA staff eight (8) weeks prior to the Annual Membership Meeting. (For the coming year: **June 15, 2010.**)
4. Supplementary ballot information (e.g., candidate photos, biographies, and statements), if desired, shall be posted by the Section leaders to the Section website six (6) weeks prior to the Annual Membership Meeting. (For the coming year: **June 29, 2010.**)
5. Online ballots containing basic ballot information shall be prepared by staff and made accessible during the first week of July and shall remain open for at least two weeks. (For the coming year: **July 6-20, 2010.**)
6. Section members who are in good standing on June 30 shall be eligible to vote. Members who join after this date shall be eligible to vote during the following year.
7. Ballot results shall be reported by staff to the Section leaders in order to be announced at the Annual Meeting.



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 2009-2010

Section Chair

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

Vice-Chair/Chair-Elect

Joel Minor
Texas State University-San Marcos
minor@txstate.edu

Past Section Chair & Nominating Committee Chair

Al Stein
Chicago State University
astein@csu.edu

Member (term 2008-2010)

Douglas A. Boyd
University of Kentucky
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Member (term 2008-2010)

Hermann Trojanowski
University of North Carolina at Greensboro
hermann_trojanowski@uncg.edu

Member (term 2009-2011)

Beth Ann Koelsch
University of North Carolina-Greensboro
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Member (term 2009-2011)

Marlene Justsen
The National Press Club
mjustsen@press.org

Newsletter Editor/Ex-officio Member

Jennifer Eidson
Library of Congress Veterans History Project
jeid@loc.gov

Project Leader for 75th Anniversary Oral History Project (term 2009-2010)

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

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



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