



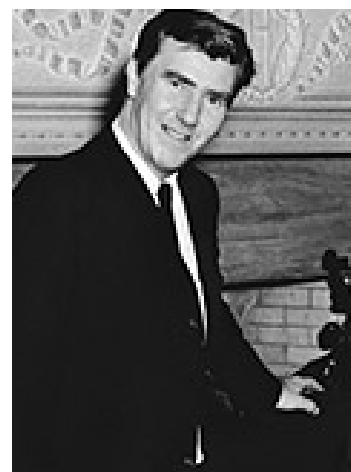
# ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

## Newsletter

## Summer 2016 Volume L, Number 2

# Weather forecast for Sept. 13: Rain, no matter where you are

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But more important than the swag is a chance to be part of growing the endowment, currently valued at just under \$400,000, which will enable the OHA to begin its next half-century with an ability to expand services for which members have expressed support.

[Continue reading...](#)

Donate to the OHA endowment [on any day](#) at [50th campaign](#)



### President's Report



### Award recipients to be honored



### Executive Director's Report

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Part celebration of a half-century's accomplishments and part a peek into what lies ahead for oral history, the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Oral History Association is set for Oct. 12-16 in Long Beach, California. Meeting in conjunction with the Southwest Oral History Association, the conference will feature more than 100 sessions, workshops, plenary speakers, awards presentations and off-site tours to engage oral historians from around the world.



The 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary celebration is set for Thursday evening, Oct. 13, at Long Beach harbor's Aquarium of the Pacific. Here are some highlights of what else is in store, with a rundown of the plenary sessions, keynote, workshops, tours and activities of the OHA labor working group.

[Continue reading...](#)



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# Oklahoma centenarians tell their stories

By Tanya Finchum

Oklahoma State University

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The *Oklahoma 100 Year Life* oral history project, a collaboration with a gerontology faculty member in the College of Human Sciences, took form in the spring of 2013 and concluded in February 2016. An aim of the project was to conduct interviews with Oklahoma's centenarians to explore lived history "back when" as well as how their journeys affect life today. Over the course of three years, 111 Oklahomans over the age of 100 were interviewed, 68 females and 43 males.

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# OHA leader keynotes at UK oral history conference

OHA past president Mary Larson was a keynote speaker in July at the annual conference of the Oral History Society of the UK, held at Whitelands College, University of Roehampton, London. The conference theme



was Beyond Text in the Digital Age? Oral History, Images and the Written Word. Larson's talk was about how oral history formats—transcripts, audio, video and multimedia—mediate how people understand oral histories and reflect underlying assumptions about oral history.

*Attendees at the Oral History Society of the UK conference at Whitelands College, University of Roehampton, London, found time to enjoy the River Thames. Photo credit: Rina Benmayor*

## Historians, preservation experts featured at Denver workshop

Archivists, librarians, collections managers and collections staff who work with oral histories are invited to a one-day conference in Denver on Oct. 5 that will focus on best practices and methods for capturing and sharing oral histories.

Sponsored by the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts and the Denver Public Library, the conference will be held at the Central Library in Denver. OHA president-elect Doug Boyd and past OHA president Charles Hardy III are among the presenters.

Topics to be covered include: basic principles for managing oral histories in a repository, strategies for preserving audio visual materials, providing access, outreach and exhibition.

For more information and to register for the conference, go to: [www.ccaha.org](http://www.ccaha.org).

## National Humanities Center offers residential fellowships

Oct. 18 is the deadline to apply for 2017-18 residential fellowships at the National Humanities Center in Durham, North Carolina. Fellowships can be for the academic year or one semester. Applicants must have a Ph.D. or equivalent scholarly credentials. Mid-career or senior scholars from all areas of the humanities are welcome to apply as are emerging scholars with a strong record of peer-reviewed work.

Fellows have private studies, and a library service delivers all research materials. Fellows receive a stipend and travel expenses. To apply, go to: [www.nationalhumanitiescenter.org](http://www.nationalhumanitiescenter.org).

## PEN America announces major grant for

# oral history work

PEN America, part of an international organization of literary writers and editors that fosters freedom of expression, has announced a new prize sponsored by author and oral historian Jean Stein.

The PEN/Jean Stein Grant for Oral History will award \$10,000 to “support the completion of a literary work of nonfiction that uses oral history to illuminate an event, individual, place or movement.”

Submission deadline is Oct. 17. More information is available at: [www.pen.org](http://www.pen.org)

## Stay in touch with OHA on social media

The Oral History Association is expanding its presence on several social media platforms, creating new opportunities to share ideas, pictures and thumbs up on what’s happening in the oral history world.

You can find the OHA on Facebook [@oralhistoryassociation](#);  
on Twitter [@OHAnetwork](#) and  
on Instagram at [ohassociation](#)



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Mary Kay Quinlan, Editor*

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# President's Letter

By Anne Valk, Williams College

It's been a momentous summer for the Oral History Association. Of course, the organization's activities cannot be measured on the same scale of importance as the foiled coup in Turkey, the earthquake in Italy, the Brexit vote and the U.S. presidential election race. But within the OHA a number of initiatives are underway that will significantly shape the history of our association.

First, the association is preparing to commemorate its 50th anniversary. Vice President Doug Boyd, along with program chairs Sady Sullivan and Sarah Milligan, local arrangements chair Karen Harper and numerous others are putting the final touches on the fall conference program. This anniversary conference promises to include sessions that reflect on OHA's history as well as important developments in the field of oral history.

The conference organizers have worked diligently and thoughtfully to design a program that ties OHA's past to its present and future, considering both where we have been and what exciting innovations in the field lie ahead. Already the pace of registration for the conference has surpassed previous years; if you have not already registered, I hope you will come to Long Beach to join the commemoration and to help launch the next phase in OHA's history.

In addition to the conference program and local arrangements committees, a group of members has been working to support UNITE HERE, the union that's vying to represent workers at our conference hotel. Elsewhere in the newsletter members of the Labor Working Group describe ways that conference participants can stand with union members. Hopefully the employees at the Renaissance will feel oral historians' solidarity and their campaign will reap positive benefits from OHA's presence in Long Beach. Thanks to the dedicated efforts of these members, the OHA also may benefit from the unfortunate coincidence of our conference site being the focus of a union campaign and movement to improve working conditions. The union's efforts have already led the council to revise its process for selecting future conference locations. No doubt OHA members' awareness of their power to support campaigns to eradicate sexism, racism, and inequalities from hotels and other workplaces will have a lasting impact.

While plans for our Long Beach conference move ahead, the Council has launched two searches that will articulate new directions for the OHA. A committee to identify a new executive director and an institutional home began its work earlier this summer. The association's current contract with Georgia State University expires next year, and a permanent director to replace Cliff Kuhn must be hired.

Under the able leadership of Dan Kerr, this committee has been encouraging universities and history organizations to submit proposals to host the OHA with the hopes of securing a new contract before the end of 2017.

At the same time, a committee headed by Susan McCormick is just beginning to look for a new editor or editorial team to oversee the *Oral History Review*. The journal is one of the OHA's primary means of outreach and its importance in shaping the creative ideas and rigorous methodologies that define oral history can't be overstated.

Finally, but not insignificantly, the OHA is midway through a campaign to grow its endowment. Along with the search for a director and an institutional home, the search for the *OHR's* new editor(s) and the endowment campaign are essential to OHA's future stability and growth.

In closing, I want to express my deep gratitude to Gayle Knight, Kristine Navarro-McElhaney, Mary Larson, the OHA Council, the members of the committees named above and others in the association who have pitched in in so many ways to help me during a particularly difficult time. Your efforts have ensured that the OHA will keep moving forward to celebrate more anniversaries in the years to come. See you in Long Beach.

# Executive Director's Report

**By Kristine Navarro-McElhaney**  
**Interim Executive Director**

Experience is too valuable not to share.

Like many of you, I remember wading into an oral history project early in my career and wondering, how is this ever going to work? You have the vision, the plan and the commitment, but it seems there are so many question marks that you begin to doubt yourself. For me, the ultimate difference was having a mentor – actually, several of them – who I could turn to for advice.

It is true what they say, that any organization's most valuable resources are its people and knowledge. OHA is no different. We recognize that mentoring can have one of the biggest impacts of anything you can do and is a wonderful way to pay it forward.

As a mentor, you bring into play resources and experiences that someone may not be familiar with, helping them reach their potential. It provides a tremendous opportunity for someone to gain the benefit of your experience, while at the same time giving both mentor and mentee a chance to connect with each other on a personal level. That is one of the most important underpinnings of oral history.

There is no better opportunity for you to share your knowledge and experience with aspiring oral historians than our upcoming 50th annual meeting in October in Long Beach. We are so fortunate to have Ellen Brooks of the Wisconsin Veterans Museum, Erica Fugger of Columbia University, and Kristen La Follette of California State University Monterey Bay working hard to keep the OHA mentoring program going strong for the third straight year.

You could be the one person who makes a significant difference for someone new to the field – knowing that someday they will do the same.

If you haven't already done so, please go to

<http://www.oralhistory.org/2016/06/27/oha-mentorship-program-in-its-3rd-year-and-going-strong/> and sign up!



## Weather forecast for Sept. 13: Rain, no matter where you are



*James V. Mink, first Chairman of OHA, started the OHA endowment by presenting the organization with a check for “a rainy day.”*

That’s because Sept. 13 is Make It Rain Day for the Oral History Association’s endowment. It’s a one-day, online fundraising event during which each donor who makes a contribution that day to OHA’s goal of raising \$50,000 will be entered into a random drawing to win OHA 50th anniversary items—a T-shirt, tote bag and lapel pin—all available at the October meeting.

But more important than the swag is a chance to be part of growing the endowment, currently valued at just under \$400,000, which will enable the OHA to begin its next half-century with an ability to expand services for which members have expressed support.

Specifically, the OHA Council has set out several objectives:

- **Enhancing diversity in oral history** by expanding scholarships and fellowships. Council has created a scholarship fund in memory of the late Cliff Kuhn, past OHA president and executive director, to which you can specifically contribute.
- **Preserving OHA archives.** Council has authorized expenditure of \$10,000 to begin digitizing OHA archival materials at the University of North Texas, but more will be needed to develop and implement a preservation and access plan.
- **Continue leading in evolving technologies.** Oral history is technology driven, and OHA should remain in a leadership role in developing new digital tools for oral historians.

OHA can spend up to 5 percent of the endowment annually, so the more it grows, the more funds will be available to support existing initiatives and pursue new ones.

Fittingly, the 50th anniversary campaign marks 30 years since James V. Mink, long active in oral history in California, donated a \$500 check to OHA at the 20th anniversary meeting on the Queen Mary in Long Beach to start the endowment, which he then modestly called “a rainy day fund.”

While some members may be unable to copy Mink’s example with a \$500 donation (worth more than \$1,000 today), please give what you can on Sept. 13 (or any other day, for that matter). And be assured you’re investing in the future of an organization that has become the preeminent voice for people who believe in the value of oral history.

**#MakeItRainOHA**

## Cast your ballot!

OHA members have until Sept. 23 to cast their ballots for a first vice president, an OHA Council member and three members of the OHA Nominating Committee. Members can vote online at [OHA election](#) by validating their membership with the email address at which they receive OHA communications.

The candidates are:

For first vice president: **Natalie Fousekis** of the Center for Oral and Public History at California State University, Fullerton

For OHA Council (vote for one): **David Caruso** of the Center for Oral History of the Chemical Heritage Foundation and **Jennifer A. Cramer** of the Louisiana State University Libraries T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History.

For Nominating Committee (vote for one of each pair):

Position 1: **Chuck Bolton** of the University of North Carolina at Greensboro or **Cyns Nelson** of the Maria Rogers Oral history Program at the Carnegie Branch Library for Local History in Boulder, Colorado.

Position 2: **Rina Benmayor**, professor emerita at California State University, Monterey Bay or **Martin Meeker**, director of the Oral History Center of The Bancroft Library at UC Berkeley.

Position 3: **Tami Albin** of the University of Kansas or **Steven Sielaff** of Baylor University's Institute for Oral History.

# Coming Sept. 1 to a screen near you

**By Andrew W. Shaffer**  
**Social Media Coordinator**

To celebrate the OHA's 50th anniversary, the *Oral History Review* has put together our first ever virtual issue, exploring the nature and value of oral history. This special edition draws from decades of work in the *OHR*, pulling articles from as far back as 1973 and as recent as 2013.

By making these selected articles accessible in this format, we aim to encourage contemplation about the changing nature of oral history and to stimulate continued conversations about the particular values our discipline has to offer. We hope this is the first of many themed virtual issues to come, and are eager to hear from all of you with ideas about what to take up next.

You can check out the virtual issue online beginning Sept. 1 at <http://bit.ly/OHA50>, or

suggest themes and collections for future issues by contacting Editor in Chief Kathryn Nasstrom at [nasstromk@usfca.edu](mailto:nasstromk@usfca.edu).

# Deadline approaching for expressing interest in hosting OHA headquarters

Sept. 30 is the deadline for institutions interested in hosting the OHA's headquarters to send an initial letter of interest and a preliminary explanation of how the OHA would benefit the institution and other factors that would make it a good home for OHA.

Viable candidates will be invited to submit a formal proposal by Feb. 1, 2017, with a decision expected in April 2017, to take effect by Jan. 1, 2018.

Identification of an executive director need not be part of the host institution's proposal. If it is not, OHA and the host institution will embark on a search for an executive director to be selected by October 2017.

Since 2013 the OHA executive offices have been hosted by Georgia State University and its operations overseen by Executive Director Cliff Kuhn, who died unexpectedly in November 2015. Currently, Kristine Navarro-McElhaney serves as the interim executive director, and Gayle Knight serves as the association's program associate.

Search Committee chair Dan Kerr ([kerr@american.edu](mailto:kerr@american.edu)) and members Linda Shopes ([lshopes@aol.com](mailto:lshopes@aol.com)) and Rina Benmayor ([rbenmayor@csumb.edu](mailto:rbenmayor@csumb.edu)) will address any questions interested applicants may have. Representatives of institutions that wish to submit a letter of interest are urged to attend the fall OHA conference in Long Beach where they can meet with search committee members.

For complete details, please visit [OHA begins search](#).

# OHA Award recipients to be honored Oct. 13

Recipients of OHA awards for article, book, projects and teaching are among those to be recognized on Thursday evening, Oct. 13. The winners to be recognized are:

## **Article Award**

### **“Under Storytelling’s Spell? Oral History in a Neoliberal Age”**

Alexander Freund, The University of Winnipeg  
*Oral History Review*, Winter/Spring 2015

## **Book Award**

### ***Memory, Subjectivities, and Representation: Approaches to Oral History in Latin America, Portugal, and Spain***

Rina Benmayor, Maria Eugenia Cardenal de la Nuez, and Pilar Dominguez Prats, editors  
Palgrave Macmillan, 2016

## **Elizabeth B. Mason Project Award (major project)**

### **New Roots/Nuevas Raíces: Improving Global Access of Latino Oral Histories**

Latino Migration Project, Southern Oral History Program, and the University Libraries at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill

## **Elizabeth B. Mason Project Award (small project)**

### **Talking the Blues: An Oral History of Blues Musicians in Austin, Texas**

Roger Davis Gatchet, West Chester University

## **Postsecondary Teaching Award**

Brooke Bryan, Antioch College

## **Stetson Kennedy Vox Populi (“Voice of the People”) Award**

Mario T. Garcia, Distinguished Professor of Chicano Studies and History, University of California, Santa Barbara

## **Emerging Crises Oral History Research Fund grant**

### **“Climate Refugees: The Vanishing of Isle de Jean Charles, Louisiana”**

Heather Stone, University of Louisiana at Lafayette

# OHA@50: Traditions, Transitions and Technologies from the Field



Part celebration of a half-century's accomplishments and part a peek into what lies ahead for oral history, the 50th anniversary of the Oral History Association is set for Oct. 12-16 in Long Beach, California. Meeting in conjunction with the Southwest Oral History Association, the conference will feature more than 100 sessions, workshops, plenary speakers, awards presentations and off-site tours to engage oral historians from around the world.

The 50th anniversary celebration is set for Thursday evening, Oct. 13, at Long Beach harbor's Aquarium of the Pacific. Here are some highlights of what else is in store, with a rundown of the plenary sessions, keynote, workshops, tours, and more.

## Plenary sessions call for reflection

OHA conference attendees can grapple with observations about the past and future of oral history at two plenary sessions.

"Oral History, Now (and Tomorrow)" is the theme of the Thursday, Oct. 13 plenary session featuring remarks by oral historians and OHA leaders Doug Boyd, Paul Ortiz, Stephen Sloan, Amy Starecheski and Natalie Fousekis. They will address various developments in the field, such as increased professionalization, the use of oral history to effect change and to document current events, the rise of story booths as a form of oral history, the impact of technology on oral history and assorted ethical questions. Plenary planners hope the session will generate a lively dialogue as oral historians embrace the future.

"Examining Methodology through Interdisciplinary Work" is the theme of the Saturday, Oct. 15, plenary session. Three scholars and activists from disparate disciplines will reflect on how the interdisciplinary nature of oral history affects how oral history is practiced. Past OHA president Donald A. Ritchie, historian emeritus of the U.S. Senate, will moderate the discussion.

Panelists scheduled to participate are:

- Nan Alamilla Boyd, professor of women and gender studies at San Francisco State University and founder of the oral history project at the GLBT Historical Society in San Francisco;
- Roxanne Dunbar-Ortiz, historian, memoirist, feminist, human rights activist and most recently, author of *An Indigenous Peoples' History of the United States*;
- E. Patrick Johnson, the Carlos Montezuma professor of performance studies and African American studies at Northwestern University.

## Keynote speaker is director of USC Shoah Foundation

Stephen D. Smith, executive director of the USC Shoah Foundation—The Institute for Visual History and Education, is the 2016 OHA conference keynote speaker on Friday, Oct. 14. A theologian by training, Smith is particularly interested in the impact of the Holocaust on religious and philosophical thought and practice.

Smith is committed to making the testimony of survivors of the Holocaust and of other crimes against humanity a compelling voice for education and action. Through his leadership, the institute focuses on finding ways to optimize the effectiveness of the testimonies for education, research, and advocacy.

He founded the UK Holocaust Centre in Nottinghamshire, England and cofounded the Aegis Trust for the prevention of crimes against humanity and genocide. He was also the inaugural Chairman of the Holocaust Memorial Day Trust, which runs the National Holocaust Memorial Day in the United Kingdom.

Smith is involved in memorial projects around the world. He is a delegate of the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance. He was the project director responsible for the creation of the Kigali Genocide Memorial Centre in Rwanda and trustee of the South Africa Holocaust and Genocide Foundation.



## Workshops offer opportunities to hone oral history skills

Four workshops on Wednesday, Oct. 12, and two on Saturday, Oct. 15, will give novice and experienced oral historians a chance to refresh their skills. Here's the lineup:

**OHMS: Enhancing Access to Oral History Online.** Callie Holmes and Christian Lopez of the University of Georgia will help workshop attendees learn how to use the Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS), an open source, free, web-based system to enhance access to oral histories online.

**Oral History and the Law.** John A. Neuenschwander, a past OHA president and retired history professor and judge, will cover major legal issues that could affect oral historians. Participants will learn about legal release agreements, challenges to restricted interviews, copyright, defamation, orphaned interviews and other matters with legal ramifications for oral history.

**Creating Digital Oral History Exhibits.** Janneken Smucker of West Chester University will show workshop participants how open source, free and low-cost online tools can make it easy to create oral history exhibits online by embedding audio clips and adding images, maps and other contextual information. Participants are encouraged to bring a laptop computer to check out the options.

**Podcasting and Oral History.** Molly Graham of Rutgers University and Folklife Research, Inc. will teach the basics of telling stories with sound, including the basics of sound editing, publishing, processing and outreach.

**In the Presence of the Past: An Introduction to Oral History Tools, Techniques and Methodology.** Virginia Espino of Moon Canyon Films will introduce basics of oral history in this Saturday morning workshop.

**Creating Brave Spaces for Oral History—Teacher Workshop.** Cliff Mayotte and Claire Keifer of Voice of Witness present a hands-on Saturday afternoon workshop for educators that emphasizes oral history as a powerful mode of inquiry. Teachers can earn continuing education credit by registering for both Saturday workshop sessions.

## Tours feature art, architecture of Long Beach

OHA conference attendees can get an expert's view of the Art Deco buildings that tell the story of the development of Long Beach or an up-close view of contemporary Latin American art by participating in off-site tours on Saturday and Sunday, Oct. 15 and 16.

On Saturday morning, John Thomas, president of the Art Deco Society of Los Angeles, will begin a walking tour about the history of Long Beach, beginning at the WPA mural at Third Street and the Promenade, just northeast of the Renaissance Hotel.

On Sunday afternoon, take advantage of the opportunity to visit the Museum of Latin American Art, the nation's only art museum dedicated to contemporary Latin American art. The museum includes an outdoor sculpture garden, gift shop and restaurant.

## International scholarship winners named

Oral historians from three continents have been awarded scholarships to help defray their costs of attending the Long Beach OHA conference. Five recipients were selected from a strong field of applicants.

Joana Craveiro, Portugal  
Marella Hoffman, UK  
Meera Anna Oommen, India  
Annie Pohlman, Australia  
Samantha Prendergast, Australia

The OHA is pleased to be able to offer financial support to oral historians from around the world whose participation in the annual conference adds international perspectives that enrich the event for everyone.

## Labor working group urges solidarity with hotel workers

### By Paul Ortiz, Labor Working Group

For the past several months, members of OHA's ad hoc Labor Working Group have been in close contact with representatives of UNITE-HERE, Local 11, which is seeking to organize at the Long Beach Renaissance, the OHA conference hotel that the union is boycotting.

The OHA signed its contract with the Renaissance long before the boycott was announced, and the OHA would face severe financial penalties if it broke the hotel contract. Nonetheless, oral historians attending the conference can show their

support for labor in several important ways.

The OHA Labor Working Group has organized an international letter writing campaign in consultation with UNITE-HERE asking that hotel management allow workers to vote for union representation immediately. At the conference, we are organizing a Friday morning informational picket in solidarity with hotel workers that will take place outside of the Renaissance from 7 a.m. to 8:30 a.m. In addition, we are urging annual meeting participants to wear solidarity T-shirts and bumper stickers for the duration of the conference. (T-shirts and bumper stickers will be available for sale at the annual meeting.)

We will also be convening a special OHA Labor Forum Saturday morning between 8:30 and 11:45 at the International Association of Machinists union hall at 319 W. Broadway, just three blocks from the conference hotel, which will include the latest information about the labor situation at the Renaissance.

For information on how to get involved, please contact, Labor Working Group chair Paul Ortiz, [ortizprof@gmail.com](mailto:ortizprof@gmail.com). Also go to [Hotel Updates](#) for more information.

# Oklahoma centenarians tell their stories



*Herman J. Harper, farmer and Navy veteran, was one of the Oklahoma centenarians interviewed for an Oklahoma State University oral history project. Photo credit: Oklahoma State University*

**By Tanya Finchum**  
**Oklahoma State University**

*Alas for those that never sing, but die with all their music in them.* (Oliver Wendell Holmes)

The *Oklahoma 100 Year Life* oral history project, a collaboration with a gerontology faculty member in the College of Human Sciences, took form in the spring of 2013 and concluded in February 2016. An aim of the project was to conduct interviews with Oklahoma's centenarians to explore lived history "back when" as well as how their journeys affect life today. Over the course of three years, 111 Oklahomans over the age of 100 were interviewed, 68 females and 43 males.

The project had two phases. In the first phase the faculty member would visit with the centenarian, conduct a series of exercises to evaluate cognitive status and validate age. Oral history interviews were then arranged with those who passed the cognitive and age benchmarks.

An abbreviated life history was recorded along with their memories of living through historical times such as attending rural one-room schoolhouses, traveling by horse and wagon, managing without running water, and living through the Great Depression, just to name a few. Early day farming practices were also discussed along with inventions that seemed to make life a little easier.

One interviewee remarked, "We used horses altogether, until the rubber tires come out, and boy when they come out, changed everything" (Harper, 16). At the time of his interview he was still farming and was still driving a 1949 tractor his brother "put in for" at the end of World War II. [insert photo here]

With several of the centenarians interviewed, consequential strangers and a little luck positively altered their journeys. One centenarian shared that at the age of 20 his brother-in-law talked him into traveling to Oklahoma City to try to land a job with a meat-packing company. He recalled, "I just went up there and stood on the line. That was back kindly in the end of the Depression.... I went out there Monday morning, Tuesday morning. That Wednesday I told my brother-in-law, I said, 'Well, if I don't get to go to work out there today, I'm going to catch the watermelon truck back home. Forget this stuff.'

"Well, there wasn't but about 75 or 80 of us sitting out there on the curb wanting a job. [The] boss had a man on vacation and he needed somebody just for a couple of weeks. He come out there and picked me out of the bunch. He told me, he said, 'I can use you for a couple of weeks, but,' he said, 'that's all I can promise.' .... So I went in and started working, driving a horse to a two-wheeled cart, cleaning up on the yard there" (McMahan, 7). Sitting on the curb those three days was a turning point in his life and he went on to work for that company for more than 43 years.

According to the United Nation's *World Population Ageing 2013* report, "The older population is itself ageing. Globally, the share of older persons aged 80 years or over (the "oldest old") within the older population was 14 per cent in 2013 and is projected to reach 19 per cent in 2050. If this projection is realized, there will be 392 million persons aged 80 years or over by 2050, more than three times the present."

Living longer does not always mean living well. One hope of this project was to gather data that other researchers could use to examine various aspects of living a 100-year-life, not just the historical events they may have witnessed, but how living through them affected their philosophy or approach to life. Early analysis suggests that finding a way to be content, to grieve briefly and move on and to have faith in a positive tomorrow potentially improve one's chance of having a long-lived and well-lived life.

When working with this population it is important to keep in mind not to assume just because they are the oldest old that they are all alike and all infirm. In this project more than one-fourth continued to live independently in their own homes, and more than one-fourth resided with a child and required minimum assistance. Most were ambulatory with some continuing to drive themselves to the grocery store and church.

When setting up recording equipment be sure to inquire if hearing in one ear is better than the other. When asking questions, give them time to ponder the question and their answer. While long-term memory is often easier to recall, at 100 they have a lot of data to sift through.

Also do not be surprised if you get caught off guard with a humorous response. A case in point, we once posed the question, "What gets you up in the morning?" The response, "The alarm clock." Humor has been a common thread through this collection of interviews and suggests even a little laughter can positively affect the "history" to come.

As interviews move through the transcribing and reviewing process, they are being made available through the project's website [www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/digital/100](http://www.library.okstate.edu/oralhistory/digital/100). When the project was initially planned, the goal was meeting a dozen Oklahomans who were 100 years or older but the people and stories were such that we changed our goal to 100 100s and finally had to draw the line at 111...for now, perhaps.

## Oral historians meet in India



*Indian traditional puppeteers, out from behind a screen, performed for people attending the International Oral History Association Conference in India. Photo credit: Don Ritchie*

### **By Donald A. Ritchie and Mark Cave**

Those who attended the biennial meeting of the International Oral History Association in Bangalore, June 27-July 1, 2016, brought back memories of the fragrant flowers, colorful saris and honking car horns that are so prevalent in India. Oral historians from 32 nations gathered at the Sristi Institute of Art, Design and Technology to consider the latest developments in oral history, particularly highlighting work underway in Asia and the South Pacific, achieving the intent of moving the meetings to different regions of the world.

Under the theme of “Speaking, Listening, Interpreting,” the conference featured plenaries on putting oral histories online, dealing with disasters and trauma and recording postcolonial history. Participants were also treated to a spirited performance of traditional puppetry, narrating tales from Indian epics—the Ramayana and Mahabharata.

Two OHA members were elected to leadership positions: Martha Norkunas was elected as North American representative on the council and Mark Cave as president. Outgoing President Indira Chowdhury will be heading up an effort to create an International Directory of Oral Historians. Membership in IOHA is necessary for inclusion in this online resource, so please renew your membership soon.

The 2018 conference will be held June 18-21 in Jyväskylä, Finland, in the heart of the Finnish Lake District. 2018 marks the centennial of the end of the Finnish Civil War and the end of the First World War, so one of the sub themes under the main conference theme of Memory and Narration will be War and Remembrance. For more information about the conference go to <https://www.jyu.fi/en/congress/ioha2018>