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# ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

December 2017 Volume LI Number 4



## OHA Overview: Looking Back, Looking Forward

In this issue of the Oral History Association *Newsletter* you'll find:

- highlights of the 2017 OHA conference in Minneapolis,
- news from OHA President Todd Moye and Interim Executive Director Kristine Navarro-McElhaney,
- information about the OHA's new executive co-directors at Middle Tennessee State University, new *Oral History Review* editors and successful first-time webinar,
- thoughts on the annual meeting from four international scholarship recipients and a call for interviewers for the Global Polio Eradication Initiative,
- a reminder to submit proposals for the 2018 OHA conference at Concordia University in Montreal, Canada, Oct. 10-13
- a look at OHA by the numbers, with a growing membership and important endowment resources, and
- a recap of accomplishments as the organization leaves its institutional home at Georgia State University.

# OHA Conference Highlights



*2017 President Doug Boyd and members at Mill City Museum*

## **Keynote speaker unravels a history mystery for OHA audience**

In the early decades of the 20th century, Greenwich Village was home to an odd character named Joe Gould, who coined the term “oral history,” founded an Oral History Association and walked around New York City claiming to write down everything anyone ever said to him, with the goal of documenting the lives of everyday people. He intended, he said, to write “The Oral History of Our Time,” which he claimed was the longest book ever written.

But when he died in a New York mental institution in 1957, no manuscript ever turned up. Later, in 1964, the New Yorker published an essay by Joseph Mitchell titled “Joe Gould’s Secret,” in which Mitchell claimed that the manuscript never existed outside Gould’s imagination.

Decades later, Harvard historian and New Yorker contributor Jill Lepore assigned a class to read Mitchell’s essay and was herself intrigued. She started digging. What she found, Lepore told an OHA audience, was far from what she expected.

[Read more about the keynote, plenary sessions, and the Presidential reception...](#)



President's Letter



New OHR editors



Executive Director's Report

## New exec office, co-directors



After five years of calling Georgia State University home, the Oral History Association will move in January to Middle Tennessee State University where Louis Kyriakoudes and Kristine McCusker will assume positions as co-directors of the OHA.

Kyriakoudes and McCusker are both history professors, and Kyriakoudes also is director of the university's Albert Gore Research Center.

Middle Tennessee State is located in Murfreesboro, Tennessee, about 30 miles southeast of Nashville.

The move comes after a year-long search for a new institutional home following the untimely death in 2015 of OHA Executive Director Cliff Kuhn. Georgia State's history department and Arizona State University's School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies shared day-to-day operations of OHA since then, with ASU's Kristine Navarro-McElhaney serving as interim executive director and GSU's Gayle Knight serving as program associate.

Kyriakoudes, who is widely regarded for his knowledge of the global tobacco epidemic, earned a bachelor's degree from the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill and master's and doctorate degrees from Vanderbilt University. From 1997 to 2015 he was on the history faculty at the University of Southern Mississippi and served as director of the Center for Oral History and Cultural



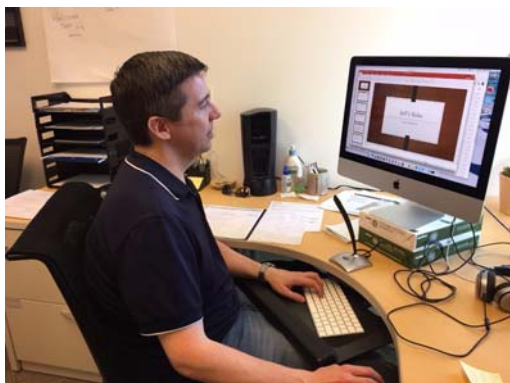
Heritage there from 2008-2015.

McCusker holds a bachelor's degree from the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, a master's degree from the University of Kansas and a doctorate in history, folklore and ethnomusicology from Indiana University. Her particular interest is country music, and she also studies death rituals and culture, gender history and the 20<sup>th</sup> century American South.

The Albert Core Research Center, which Kyriakoudes will continue to direct in addition to his OHA duties, houses among other collections the Middle Tennessee Oral History Project with more than 500 recordings, associated logs and transcripts. The collection focuses on events and people with connections to Middle Tennessee.

In applying to become the new institutional home for the OHA, officials at MTSU emphasized its oral history-related resources in its Public History Program, its Center for Popular Music and Center for Historic Preservation.

Dan Kerr of American University chaired the OHA search committee. Other committee members included: past presidents Rina Benmayor and Linda Shopes and Council member Allison Tracy.



## First OHA webinar attracts world-wide audience

An international audience of more than 200 people interested in oral history registered for the Oral History Association's first webinar "Documenting Your Community: Planning Skills for Oral History Projects..."



## Endowment gifts allow international outreach

Endowment earnings over the years have enabled 28 international oral history scholars to attend OHA...



## 2018 Call for Proposals: Oral History in Our Challenging Times

The Oral History Association, in collaboration with Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, welcomes proposals for its Oct 10-13, 2018, conference...



## Interviewers needed for Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) History Project

Interviewers are being sought in India, Myanmar and Indonesia to help...

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## OHA by the numbers



*Members Jen Cramer, Carlos Lopez, Stephen Sloan, and Sarah Milligan at OHA 2017*

**893:** number of OHA dues-paying individual members as of mid-October, an increase of 43 percent from the post-conference membership tally in 2013.

**24 percent:** proportion of OHA members who are students, up from 17 percent in 2013. People can get their first taste of participation in a welcoming professional organization as students and continue to become the lifeblood of the association.

**589:** number of people who attended the 2016 OHA 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary conference in Long Beach, California, one of the largest OHA conferences on record. More than 480 people attended the 2017 conference in Minneapolis. Conference attendance typically exceeds 400, but in the past five years, attendance dipped to 320 when the annual event was held in Oklahoma City, where travel access was somewhat more limited.

**2,154 and 3,400:** number of Facebook and Twitter followers, respectively. OHA started using Facebook in 2014 and Twitter the following year. Instagram was added to the OHA marketing mix in 2016 and most recently had 357 followers.

**\$50,175:** total scholarship funding for the past five years. Contributions to the OHA Endowment Fund made it possible for 117 oral historians with financial need to attend the annual conferences, including presenters, non-presenters and international scholars.

**\$450,207:** current balance for the OHA Endowment Fund, more than double the \$221,597 that was in the fund in 2013.

**\$98:** the average amount 122 donors gave to the endowment in 2016, for total giving during the 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary year of \$11,982.

**\$4,065:** total giving so far in 2017, with gifts from 60 donors. Those who wish to deduct charitable contributions during the current tax year still have time to make a contribution to the OHA Endowment Fund. Click on the “donate” link at [www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org) or mail your check to Oral History Association, Georgia State University, P.O. Box 4117, Atlanta, GA 30302-4117.



## Accomplishments, initiatives, investments for the future

When Georgia State University was named in 2012 as the institutional home of the Oral History Association and the late Cliff Kuhn was tapped as its first executive director, the organization was poised for change, following more than a decade for OHA at Dickinson College in Pennsylvania.

With a beefed up administrative structure beginning Jan. 1, 2013, OHA’s elected leadership and administrative underpinnings set the stage for internal and external changes through the past five years aimed at solidifying the organization’s position nationally in the humanities world, internally improving management and positioning the organization to better serve members.

Kuhn’s outreach in the broader world of humanities interests and organizations resulted in:

- A partnership with the History Channel that led to creation of “Principles and Best Practices for Oral History Education (4-12),” a guide for teachers on using oral history in their classrooms, from upper elementary to high school grades.
- Election in 2014 to the prestigious 72-member American Council of Learned Societies, which Kuhn hailed as “a validation of oral history as a method and practice.” The ACLS was founded in 1919 by 13 scholarly organizations dedicated to advancing “humanistic studies” and strengthening associations dedicated to the study of humanities and social sciences.
- Collaboration with the Library of Congress Veterans History Project to publish in 2015 the newest addition to the OHA pamphlet series, “Doing Veterans Oral History” by Barbara W. Sommer. OHA also began providing leaders for VHP workshops in collaboration with the American Folklore Society.

Behind the scenes, internal management of the OHA, sometimes invisible to members, resulted in streamlined administration, facilitated by hiring Gayle Knight as program associate and with the assistance of GSU graduate students. Changes included:

- Upgrades to the OHA website and use of social media tools.
- Adoption of online meeting registration and conference planning software to facilitate the myriad details associated with planning and managing events with hundreds of participants.
- Online submission of abstracts also facilitated the call for proposals and conference program development.
- Reclaiming membership records management from Oxford University Press, which publishes the *Oral History Review*.
- Creation of a membership committee to address beefed up membership recruitment and retention.
- Creation of a 50<sup>th</sup> anniversary task force to plan myriad details associated with celebrating OHA's half century in 2016.

Other efforts through the past five years have yielded visible changes for members. Those changes include:

- A new logo, the first since 1987, that, according to designer David Laufer of Atlanta, was meant to be “bold, bright and modern, perhaps to put an emphasis on the future rather than many people’s image of history as a fixed, backward-looking enterprise.” The colorful logo is in use across all OHA media platforms.
- A strategic plan intended to serve as a blueprint for OHA initiatives in years to come. The plan identifies the organization’s values as democracy, inclusivity and high standards of quality in the practice of oral history.
- Adoption of a mentorship program and speed networking at OHA fall conferences as a way to introduce newcomers to the organization and create networks for new and returning members. The new Young Professionals Committee grew from the involvement of those who helped develop the mentorship efforts.
- Experimentation with meetings for designated interest groups during OHA conferences.
- Institution of mini-workshops and poster sessions at conferences in addition to enhanced variety of pre-conference workshops.
- Standardization of three-year terms on OHA standing committees.
- Digital publication of the *OHA Newsletter*, beginning in Fall 2105, with more frequent online publication in February, April, June, August and November, plus an annual printed edition offering a year in review.





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Mary Kay Quinlan, Editor

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# OHA Conference Highlights

## Keynote speaker unravels a history mystery for OHA audience

In the early decades of the 20th century, Greenwich Village was home to an odd character named Joe Gould, who coined the term “oral history,” founded an Oral History Association and walked around New York City claiming to write down everything anyone ever said to him, with the goal of documenting the lives of everyday people. He intended, he said, to write “The Oral History of Our Time,” which he claimed was the longest book ever written.

But when he died in a New York mental institution in 1957, no manuscript ever turned up. Later, in 1964, the New Yorker published an essay by Joseph Mitchell titled “Joe Gould’s Secret,” in which Mitchell claimed that the manuscript never existed outside Gould’s imagination.

Decades later, Harvard historian and New Yorker contributor Jill Lepore assigned a class to read Mitchell’s essay and was herself intrigued. She started digging. What she found, Lepore told an OHA audience, was far from what she expected.

For starters, the manuscript likely had existed, with Gould filling hundreds of notebooks with his stories about everyday people. But Lepore also found that “Gould really suffered from profound and ongoing mental illness.” He was arrested repeatedly, confined periodically to mental asylums and was obsessed with race and sex, aspects of his life that essayist Mitchell had omitted.

Lepore also uncovered Gould’s obsessive infatuation with Harlem Renaissance sculptor Augusta Savage, whom he stalked for decades after meeting her in Harlem in the 1920s. He claimed he asked her to marry him. Much of his writing about Savage was said to be obscene, and Savage convinced him to destroy it.

Gould is believed to have had a lobotomy in a New York State mental institution in the 1950s, and he never wrote or talked again, Lepore said.

Gould’s oral history association never amounted to much, but his early belief that oral history was a way to document the lives of everyday people—because they were part of history, too—animates much 21st century oral history practice, notwithstanding its dark past.

## Contemporary activism illustrates importance of social media documentation, panelists say

The democratizing effects of social media have opened a new activist era and new forms of documentation reflected in Black Lives Matter and Standing Rock, a panel of human rights activists suggested at an OHA conference plenary session.

But social media at everyone’s fingertips also raise challenges for archivists who want to assure that saving social media content is accomplished ethically, some suggested.

Panelists included: Wesley Hogan, director of the Duke Center for Documentary Studies; Madonna Thunder Hawk and Beth Castle of the Warrior Women Project; Bergis Jules, an archivist at the University of California Riverside; Anh Pham of the Minneapolis-based RadAzns network; and Robyn Spencer, a history professor at the City University of New York.

Jules described Ferguson, Missouri, activists’ use of social media in documenting the violence that erupted in the St. Louis suburb after the 2014 shooting of an unarmed black teenager by a white police officer. There were discrepancies, Jules said, between accounts of the events on social media and those reported by mainstream media, giving archivists an opportunity to capture an unfiltered perspective of those involved. But doing so, he emphasized, requires an awareness of the potential for harm.

“I’m about radical inclusion into the archival record,” he said. But archivists need to think about what it might mean to preserve such material. The volume of it can be overwhelming, he noted. Moreover, law enforcement and national security agencies have made no secret of the fact that they mine social media for information.

Anh Pham, a Vietnamese-American immigrant anti-war activist, said her organization grew out of a Black Lives Matter support group that canvassed the Asian-American community in North Minneapolis and found that almost everyone said police treated them differently because of the color of their skin. That led to an effort to debunk the myth of Asians as “the model minority,” she said.

Indigenous rights activist Madonna Thunder Hawk recalled the Red Power Movement of the 1960s. “We didn’t have media of any kind,” she said. “We’re invisible.”

But last year, social media “brought the world to Standing Rock,” a Sioux Indian reservation in North Dakota where thousands of protestors gathered to fight construction of the Dakota Access Pipeline over concerns that a potential oil spill would threaten water resources.

Hogan, who chaired the panel, suggested that a broader issue related to archiving social media messages is how to decide what is the dominant narrative. She asked: “Whose knowledge counts?”

## Pioneering oral historians recount lifetime of linking oral history and social justice

Alice Lynd was a nursery school teacher turned draft counselor in the 1960s when she realized that someone should write a book about the unknown men who were conscientious objectors refusing military service in Vietnam. So she wrote it.

*We Won't Go*, published in 1968, was based on oral history interviews, draft board records, letters and diaries of men called up for the draft. "I simply wanted the accounts to be in the individuals' own words," she told an OHA plenary session audience.

That was the first of a series of oral history-based books she and her husband, Staughton, wrote, with a focus always on social justice, whether related to draft resisters, steelworkers in Indiana and Ohio, West Bank Palestinians or death row inmates.

Alice Lynd said that in their work, she and her husband always look for corroborating information, contemporaneous accounts and primary sources. Having such background information is important, she said.

"The interviewer needs to know enough to ask critical questions" in an oral history interview, she said, later adding: "You need independent corroborating evidence."

One audience member asked Staughton Lynd whether the nation should bring back the draft. Staughton noted that when the country had a conscripted army in the Vietnam era, there was considerable discontent within the military. "So people said we can fix that by making it volunteer."

But even in the volunteer army and in society in general, there is a growing movement against today's wars, he noted, citing a Carl Sandburg story about a little girl watching a military parade who says: "One day somebody will call a war and nobody will come."

The Lynds, who are both lawyers as well as oral historians, authors and social activists, were awarded the 2017 Oral History Association's Vox Populi Award, which recognizes lifetime achievement in using oral history to create a more humane, just world.

"We are very honored to be chosen," Alice told the oral historians. "It's not just us; it's you. We need people who desire to carry it on."

## Historic flour mill site welcomes oral historians

What was once the world's largest flour mill on Minneapolis' riverfront was the site of the Oral History Association's annual Presidential Reception, awards presentation and gathering for oral history newcomers and their volunteer mentors.

The Mill City Museum, which opened in 2003, was built in the fire-damaged ruins of the Washburn A Mill, part of a flour milling complex along the Mississippi River that gave Minneapolis the distinction of being the world's largest flour milling center from 1880 to 1930.

The Washburn A Mill closed in 1965 and was later gutted by fire. But it became the foundation of the Mill City Museum, which documents the history of the industry that put Minneapolis on the map.

Although not all were able to be present, OHA 2017 award winners recognized at the reception included:

**Article Award**—Daniel R. Kerr for "Allan Nevins is Not My Grandfather: The Roots of Radical Oral History in the United States"

**Book Award**—Ma-Nee Chacaby and Mary Louisa Plummer for *A Two-Spirit Journey: The Autobiography of a Lesbian Ojibwa-Cree Elder* (University of Manitoba Press, 2016)

**Elizabeth B. Mason Project Award (Major)**—Alex Bishop and Tanya Finchum, Oklahoma State University, for *Oklahoma 100 Year Life Oral History Project*

**Elizabeth B. Mason Project Award (Small)**—Christian K. Anderson and Andrea L'Hommedieu, University of South Carolina, for *University High School Oral History Project*

**Martha Ross Teaching Award**—John Hutchinson, Marin Academy, San Rafael, California

**Nonprint Format, Museum Exhibit**—Calinda Lee, Atlanta History Center, for *Gatheround: Stories of Atlanta*

**Nonprint Format, Podcast**—Eric Marcus for *Making Gay History*

# President's Letter

*By Todd Moye*

The work of oral historians—listening to one another across the lines that too often divide us, thinking critically, developing empathy, building community—seems more important than ever, and I am honored to serve as OHA's president at this particular time. I know that our recently concluded Minneapolis annual meeting, whose program was so packed with opportunities to learn from and enjoy one another, thanks to program co-chairs Rachel Seidman and Dan Kerr and to a supercharged local arrangements committee, energized me for the work of the coming year.

We are all fortunate to have a terrifically engaged Council working on our behalf. Unfortunately, earlier this year Claytee White had to resign her Council seat due to other pressing commitments. We are grateful for her service very sad to see her go, but were relieved when Troy Reeves agreed to step in and serve the remainder of her term. In recognition of the increased workload Council has taken on in the recent past, OHA members agreed to expand the Council by one seat at the business meeting in Minneapolis, so the 2018 election will have one more pair of nominees than you may be used to seeing.

Troy has also agreed to take on the duties of co-chair, along with Sarah Milligan, of the Principles and Best Practices Task Force. They have named a dozen colleagues who come to oral history from a variety of perspectives to the task force. Over the coming year they will revise the document that is in many ways the most important way that OHA interacts with current and future oral historians. I'll have more to say about the work the task force is doing and about the important work of our standing committees—including our newest, New Professionals—in a future newsletter.

Speaking on behalf of Council, we know that you are likely a member of more than one organization like OHA. We all want it to be your primary organization—the most vibrant and diverse, the most responsive to your needs, the one that puts on the annual meeting you look forward to the most. I am more aware than ever that OHA thrives because our members volunteer for committees and task forces and share their ideas for how we as an organization can do better. So please, keep those commitments and ideas coming! We need them.

By the next time you hear from me the transition will be well under way to our new institutional home, Middle Tennessee State University, where our new co-directors Kris McCusker and Louis Kyriakoudes are already planning new initiatives to benefit our organization.

I will be forever grateful to Georgia State University and program associate Gayle Knight, and to Arizona State University and interim executive director Kristine Navarro. Without those institutions' support I literally have no idea how we would have coped with Cliff Kuhn's untimely passing, but they made it possible for us not merely to tread water but to move OHA forward during a very challenging time. Kristine and Gayle's graceful, unflappable professionalism and good cheer set a standard that I will do my best to emulate. They have my undying gratitude.

# Executive Director's Report

## **Farewell but Not Good-bye**

*By Kristine Navarro-McElhanev*

*Interim Executive Director*

It has been a tremendous honor and privilege for me to serve the OHA as Interim Executive Director during the past year and a half. I am grateful to have been a part of the team effort that has strengthened OHA's position going forward as the preeminent membership organization for people committed to the value of oral history. To be able to engage directly or indirectly with you at the very center of our work has been such a rewarding experience. Thank you!

We have made great strides as an organization and as a force in public history, and there is no better time to be an oral historian, collaborate with oral historians or be associated with significant oral history initiatives. With leadership and direction from our president(s), the council, and committee volunteers, we have established our annual meetings as successful must-attend events with more than 500 members and colleagues in attendance. We developed a strong statement on diversity and inclusivity that reaffirms our values as members. With the support and assistance from council, members and Gayle Knight, our amazing program associate, we developed and implemented several policies, procedures and guidelines that will strengthen the core of the OHA. We have created a framework for financial stability, committee structure and data gathering that will help guide our friends and new institutional team at Middle Tennessee State. We drafted policies for the expenditure of discretionary funds, endowment investment, fiscal roles and responsibilities, council roles and responsibilities, a conflict of interest policy, and we hosted our very first webinar.

None of this would have been possible without a true team effort, and there is not enough space here to thank everyone who deserves it. But please know that your efforts and volunteer time have made a difference!

Finally, I want to thank the leadership at the School of Historical, Philosophical, and Religious Studies (SHPRS) at Arizona State University for recognizing the value of becoming interim institutional host for OHA during my tenure as Interim Executive Director. Their support has been invaluable to me, to OHA and to our members.

Thank you again for all of the support, help and encouragement you have afforded to me personally and to our great team. I'm excited about the future of OHA!

With gratitude,

Kristine

# Endowment gifts allow international outreach

Endowment earnings over the years have enabled 28 international oral history scholars to attend OHA annual meetings in the past five years, enriching experiences for everyone.

In 2017, the International Committee awarded \$4,000 in scholarships to four international oral historians to come to Minneapolis. Here are their thoughts about their experiences:

## **Lorna Barton, Scotland**

The funding I received from the Oral History Association was integral to my ability to present my paper in October 2017 at the annual conference, and I cannot thank the International Committee enough for selecting me. I would not have been able to attend it without it. The funding allowed me to not only connect and network with a small number of academics in the field of queer oral history research at the conference, of which I am a part of, but with the wider oral history community via coffee breaks, workshops and the “Speed Networking” event, which I attended during the conference.

I found there were elements of my research that could relate directly to other oral historians’ work despite our stark differences in focus, such as oral histories with military personnel, of which a large number of the trans narrators in my cohort were members under “Don’t Ask, Don’t Tell.” I found this to be an extremely beneficial opportunity, because I not only needed to verbalize my research quickly and articulately, but it allowed me to share my ideas for the dissemination of my data, receiving feedback from more seasoned oral historians and mentors. Additionally, the opportunity to network during these events or breaks has given me possible future collaborative opportunities, which I would not otherwise have gained without funding from the International Committee.

Moreover, the funding allowed me to glean knowledge and invaluable feedback from presenting alongside other queer oral historians, and my paper was very well received. I also attended two panels that were LGBT focused and thoroughly enjoyed hearing what other queer historians were undertaking and reflecting on their research with regards to my own. Few crucial occasions such as these come around to interact with my community and my peers, and I feel it benefited me extraordinarily. It has given me a new-found passion for my research.

Again, I cannot thank the International Committee enough for granting me this funding as I benefited intellectually from hearing other oral historians’ papers and arguments that were U.S. specific in panels such as “Oral History on the Margins” and “Organizing with Oral History in the Trump Era” and in many ways related politically to the arguments within my own thesis. As an early career researcher, it made me realize that I have knowledge worth sharing.

## **Sophia Isajiw, Canada**

Thank you for awarding me an international scholarship that allowed me to attend OHA’s 2017 Annual Meeting and present my research project on the oral histories of the diaspora children of Ukrainian Holodomor famine genocide survivors in the roundtable session: “Intergenerational Consequences of the Holodomor in Ukraine (1932-33 Famine): What Oral History Accounts from Ukraine and the Diaspora Tell Us.”

It was an honor to present at the OHA with my esteemed colleagues from across Canada and the U.S., who represented different aspects of this genocide research, to a group of interested oral historians who listened well and asked excellent questions that precipitated a very interesting comparison in our research during the discussion that would not have come up otherwise.

A major benefit for me and for all of us was being able to bring information about the Holodomor to a broader audience of oral history researchers and scholars to increase awareness of this little known and long suppressed history of genocide and to our current oral history research being done in this area in the hopes it will spark some further research or collaborations in the future.

It was also, significantly, the first time we were able to come together and speak with each other about our research as a group and compare information in public, which turned out to be a very valuable experience.

I very much enjoyed being part of the conference and participating in other sessions. It was beneficial to participate in the work of other oral historians in workshops and to network with others in the field and share information. It was also striking to note that oral historians who have been practitioners for some time are such warm, curious and interested scholars who absorb information deeply, listen well and of course ask good questions not raised by other audiences on this rare topic. Thanks for that.

## **Hong Jiang, China**

As a first-time attendee, I was greatly impressed by the diversity of Oral History Association’s membership and a wide range of activities offered at the annual meeting. Besides getting constructive feedback on my current oral history project, I have also learned practical skills, gained inspiration and expanded my network. Attending workshops informed me of various cutting edge technologies, such as OHMS, which would largely benefit oral historians’ daily practice.

The lifework of the Lynds motivated me to continue with oral history as an academic pursuit. Personally, the highlight of this year's OHA meeting was the presidential reception at the Mill City Museum. This event not only featured the excellence in the field, it also demonstrated OHA's invaluable support for newcomers to the profession. The well-designed museum itself was a stimulating eye-opener for me. It encouraged me to explore more creative ways to utilize oral history and engage audiences, making a city's or a nation's rich history accessible to the world.

I would like to take this opportunity to extend my great gratitude to the International Committee for their generous support. Receiving the scholarship enabled me to embark on this fruitful journey in the first place. Many thanks to Professor James Karmel for his consideration and instructive comments. I also want to thank Gayle Knight for her kind assistance prior to and during the conference. Having gained so much from this incredible experience, I strive to return the favor and contribute to the growth of OHA by sharing my experience and introducing the organization to my fellow oral historians in China.

### **Riikka Taavetti, Finland**

In this year's OHA Annual Meeting, as a first time attendee, I was fascinated by the strong emphasis in the presentations on the diverse aspects of civil rights movements. These perspectives on activism truly showed how oral history can open the breadth of the movements and their meanings for people's everyday lives. Moreover, the keynote by Jill Lepore, was incredibly educating and opened multilayered perspectives to the past of oral history.

As this was not only my first OHA Annual Meeting but also my first academic conference in the U.S., it was extremely interesting to experience what the debates in the field look like from American perspective. For instance, working myself partly on post-Soviet topics, the perspectives on post-socialism discussed in one of the panels were very inspiring.

Despite the fascinating panels and Lepore's excellent keynote, the most important aspect of the Annual Meeting was, after all, the welcoming atmosphere. I was also glad to hear that many are planning to attend IOHA Finland conference held in Jyväskylä next June. I hope we can be as welcoming hosts for all new and old friends from OHA.

## First OHA webinar attracts world-wide audience



An international audience of more than 200 people interested in oral history registered for the Oral History Association's first webinar "Documenting Your Community: Planning Skills for Oral History Projects."

The Nov. 3 online workshop was presented by Mary Larson of Oklahoma State University and Jeff Corrigan of California State University Monterey Bay.

Corrigan said more than 85 people watched and participated in the live webinar, and a total of 234 registered to either watch live or get a link to the presentation for later use.

Participants represented a wide array of individuals from local historical societies, libraries, museums and state and federal government agencies, including historians, students, teachers, genealogists and independent scholars, he said. Most participants were from the United States, but people also registered for the workshop from Canada, Australia, Germany and Turkey.

The webinar focused on community oral history basics, including how communities can assess available resources, determine the scope and planned outcome of oral history projects, to choose interviewers and interviewees and figure out what additional resources and expertise community projects might require.

People who participated are being asked for their feedback to help OHA leaders determine whether future webinars are warranted.



# Interviewers needed in India, Myanmar and Indonesia for Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI) History Project

*By Mary Hilpertshauser*

*Project Manager, GPEI History Project*

Interviewers are being sought in India, Myanmar and Indonesia to help document the stories of those involved in polio vaccination programs or who are polio survivors. If you know anyone in these countries who would be willing to conduct interviews, please contact Mary Hilpertshauser, [asf5@cdc.gov](mailto:asf5@cdc.gov).

The project's main objective is to ensure documentation of the history of global polio eradication through the efforts of the GPEI. Project partners include: the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, The World Health Organization, UNICEF, The Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation and Rotary International. All have representatives in the project, and all contribute equally. The partnership, initiated in 1988, is nearing its end with an imminent (fingers crossed) eradication of polio. That said, the GPEI history project is in the process of documenting the steps leading to the 1988 WHO declaration, the global partnership itself, the lessons learned, and to recognize those involved in the efforts.

Specifically, the project will:

- Identify existing archival and historical collections held by each of the GPEI partners and other organizations with a significant role in polio eradication. This should include archival collections, publications, artifacts, moving images, sound recordings, oral histories, etc.
- Identify gaps in the archival record
- Identify collecting criteria for GPEI (rather than institution-specific) records
- Conduct oral histories of selected individuals including polio survivors and workers from around the world

The second objective is to bring the story of the eradication of polio and the GPEI to a broader audience both now and after eradication. This will be accomplished by creating an online repository of GPEI current, archival and historical collections, using *Global Health Chronicles* or similar website.

## New OHR editors

Three oral historians within a stone's throw of each other—if you could throw a stone 100 miles—bring an array of disparate experiences to their new posts as editorial team members for the ***Oral History Review***.

David Caruso of the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia is the new ***OHR*** editor, Abigail Perkiss of Kean University in Union, New Jersey, is the new managing editor, and Janneken Smucker of Philadelphia's West Chester University will take on the new position of digital editor.

The new editorial team, which will begin its duties in January 2018 replaces Editor Kathy Nasstrom and Managing Editor Troy Reeves, who developed the multi-editor leadership model for the ***OHR***, enabling it to respond more nimbly to changes in academic publishing.

Caruso brings his experience as ***OHR*** Book Review editor and as director of the Center for Oral History at the Chemical Heritage Foundation. Perkiss, a history faculty member at Kean University, brings her experience as ***OHR*** pedagogy editor. Smucker, also a history faculty member at West Chester, assumes the new position of digital editor, bringing her background in developing innovative digital projects. The new position reinforces the ***OHR***'s commitment to digital engagement with oral history content.

Independent scholar Nancy MacKay will be the new book review editor, and a search is still underway for a new pedagogy editor.

In their six years heading the ***OHR*** editorial team, Nasstrom and Reeves expanded the ***Review***'s content, including addition of an annual pedagogy section and inclusion of online multimedia content. They created a social media presence for the ***Review***, and in a unique first, they published a virtual issue to celebrate the Oral History Association's 50th anniversary.

Members of the search committee for the new editorial team included: Susan McCormick, SUNY-Albany; Martha Norkunas, Middle Tennessee State University; Seth Kotch, University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill; and Nasstrom, who served as an adviser.

# 2018 Call for Proposals: Oral History in Our Challenging Times



The Oral History Association, in collaboration with Concordia University, Montreal, Canada, welcomes proposals for its Oct 10-13, 2018, conference.

Conference co-chairs Steve Estes of Sonoma State University and Amy Starecheski of Columbia University, along with OHA Vice President Natalie Fousekis envision the annual conference as a means to “harness the power of oral history in these challenging times.”

As a culturally and linguistically international city, Montreal offers an exciting location to highlight innovative oral history work taking place across the Americas. And Concordia University’s Center for Oral History and Digital Storytelling, the conference host institution, boasts strengths at the intersection of oral history and performance, place-based storytelling, visual arts and participatory media.

Conference planners welcome diverse presentations from the array of disparate practitioners who carry out oral history work in a multitude of settings.

For details on how to submit your proposals, see [2018 Call for Papers](#).