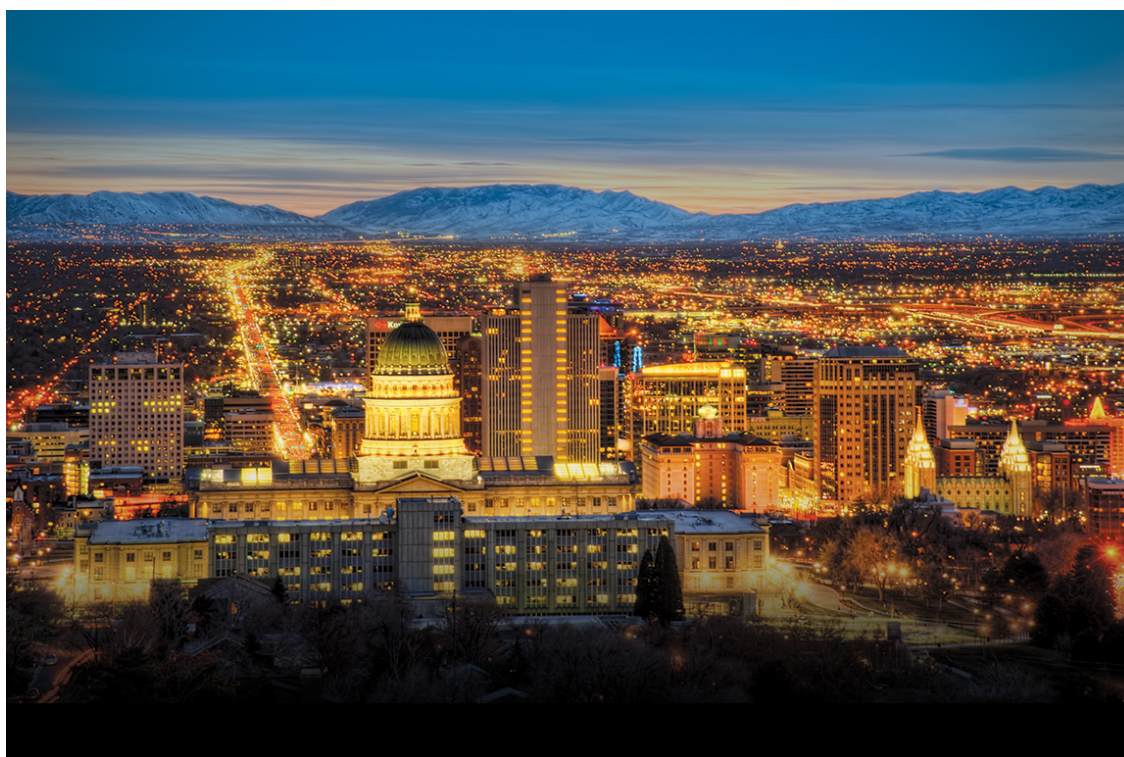




# ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

NEWSLETTER

June 2019 Volume Liii Number 3



## Destination: Salt Lake City, Utah

It's not too soon to register for the 2019 Oral History Association conference in Salt Lake City, Oct. 16-20. The conference is being held in conjunction with the Southwest Oral History Association's annual meeting, which will share the OHA conference program and venue.

Pre-conference workshops will include sessions on oral history basics, an introduction to video and oral history for genealogists. Off-site tours include

visits to the Great Salt Lake, the LDS Church Historical Society and Archives and the site of a World War II-era Japanese American internment camp.

Start the registration process here: <https://www.oralhistory.org/annual-meeting-registration/>

You also may book accommodations at the Sheraton Salt Lake City Hotel, the conference headquarters, at a discounted rate until Sept. 24 or until the OHA reserved block of rooms is full.



President's Column



Co-Executive Directors' Report

## Now's your chance to have a stake in OHA governance

Online voting is open for the following candidates whose biographies and personal statements are below.

OHA members have until **July 31** to cast their electronic ballots for OHA first vice president, one Council seat and three Nominating Committee members. Please cast one vote for each position. Here is the link: <https://oha.memberclicks.net/2019-oha-election#/>. You will need to sign in to your membership account to vote. Need

help? Contact OHA at [oha@oralhistory.org](mailto:oha@oralhistory.org) for assistance.



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## First Vice President: Amy Starecheski



Amy Starecheski is a cultural anthropologist and oral historian whose research focuses on the use of oral history in social movements and the politics of history, value and property in cities. She directs the [Oral History MA Program](#) at Columbia University. Starecheski was a member of the Core Working Group for Groundswell: Oral History for Social Change from 2011-2018. In 2015 she won the Oral History Association's article award for "[Squatting History: The Power of Oral History as a History-Making Practice.](#)" She received a Ph.D. in cultural anthropology from the CUNY Graduate Center, where she was a Public Humanities Fellow. Her book, *[Ours to Lose: When Squatters Became Homeowners in New York City](#)*, was published in 2016 by the University of Chicago Press. She is the founder of the [Mott Haven Oral History Project](#), which documents the stories of her neighborhood, as told by the people who live there.

Starecheski has been attending OHA annual meetings since 2002, and has chaired the education committee, served on Council and co-chaired the 2018 annual meeting.

### Personal Statement:

The Oral History Association provides a robust and warm professional home for scholars using oral history across the disciplines. Indeed, it has been my professional home for almost 20 years. The OHA is also, compared to other academic professional associations, exceptionally welcoming to those working outside of, or on the margins of, academia. This is a key source of our strength and dynamism.

As an OHA leader, one of my main goals would be to continue broadening the community of oral historians, welcoming and supporting activists, artists, media-makers, journalists, community historians, K-12 teachers and freelancers. The best practices developed in the OHA are relevant far beyond the confines of the university, particularly in a cultural moment when storytelling is ubiquitous, but we have to keep working to make them part of conversations beyond our own.

I would also continue to cultivate a community of oral historians that is inclusive and grounded in equity. Like our interviews, our professional association should also be an experiment in equality, animated by critical encounters across lines of difference. I would make it a priority to actively welcome indigenous people, people of color, people with disabilities, working class people and others whose work is central to oral history but who have not always been in the professional world of oral history.

Our mentoring traditions, our skills in listening deeply and facilitating dialogue, and our ethics of shared authority will serve us well as we continue to learn and grow as an organization. It would be a privilege for me to serve an organization for which I care so deeply.

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## OHA Council

### Fanny Garcia vs. Yolanda Leyva

**Fanny Julissa García** is a Honduran American oral historian contributing work to Central American studies with a focus on applied oral history and social justice. She is communications coordinator for Groundswell: Oral History for Social Change and is an administrator at the New-York Historical Society. Recently, her work has focused on collecting the oral histories of women from El Salvador, Honduras and Guatemala who have fled their countries to seek asylum in the United States. She has worked for 20 years as a social justice advocate to combat the public health and socioeconomic



impact of HIV/AIDS on low income communities, worked closely with organizations fighting for the end of family detention and supported survivors of sexual violence.

Garcia serves on the editorial board of the Oral History Review and is

the oral historian on The Path Home: Immigrants Making America project, which aims to collect the oral histories of individuals who gained a path to citizenship as a result of the passage of the 1986 Immigration Control and Reform Act. She holds a bachelor's degree in English from UCLA and in 2017 received a Master of Arts in Oral History from Columbia University.

### Personal Statement

I am honored about this nomination and look forward to the opportunity to contribute my skills and expertise in greater involvement with the Oral History Association. I respect and support the values of the OHA and believe that oral history is a process of questioning, listening, recording and preserving diverse historical perspectives. The past several years spent teaching oral history methods inside and outside of academic institutions have taught me that diversity and inclusion must also include outreach to nonacademic practitioners of oral history who work to build connections and movements, facilitate public engagement and create greater understanding of past and current historical moment. If elected to the OHA Council I will do my utmost to create an atmosphere of belonging for all members of the OHA, an endeavor that will hopefully create a wider pool of candidates that represent diverse and marginalized voices from which to consider nominations for years to come.

**Yolanda Chávez Leyva** is a *fronteriza* who was born in Juárez, Chihuahua, and raised in El Paso, Texas. She is the director of the Institute of Oral History at the University of Texas El Paso and an associate professor of history with a focus on border history and public/oral history. She has listened to the stories of border people since she was a child and pursued a Ph.D. to provide a wider venue for the stories of her communities to be heard as a way



to create change. She has published on museum practice, Latina lesbian history and the history of *fronterizo* children. She blogs at [fiercefronteriza.com](http://fiercefronteriza.com). She has curated and co-curated many museum exhibits with her students and has published numerous articles on Chicana, lesbian and border history. Recently, she initiated a new oral history project, “Seeking refuge,” which collects the stories of refugees who have recently crossed the US-Mexico border seeking asylum as well as the activists, faith leaders and others who advocate for them.

### Personal Statement

I am running for OHA Council because I believe in oral history as a way to connect people and communities, as a practice where we can learn to engage each other, and to understand both the beautiful and the traumatic in our lives. I conducted my first oral histories in 1978 when I took an undergraduate Chicano studies class at the University of Texas Austin. In the introduction to the oral histories, I wrote, “A people’s history is an integral part of their existence, and without recognition of their history, they cannot see themselves in the proper context. ... [I]t is our responsibility to find the history that exists in the memory of our people and to make that history ours.” Now, 41 years later, I continue to believe in the transformative nature of oral history and in our responsibility to the histories and to the holders of those histories that live on in our community. To serve our community of oral historians through OHA would be a privilege.

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## Nominating Committee

### Position 1: Sharon Utakis vs. Christa Whitney

**Sharon Utakis** is a tenured professor at Bronx Community College and a union activist in the Professional Staff Congress, CUNY. Her oral history



research has focused on life histories of Dominican immigrants (with colleague Nelson Reynoso) and the story of how PSC-CUNY won paid parental leave. She first attended the OHA conference in 2008 and felt connected enough to the organization to attend every conference since then. Utakis has served on several OHA committees (Post-Secondary Teaching Award Committee, Martha Ross *Photo credit:* Terttu Uipbopuu Teaching Award Committee, Site Selection Task Force and Membership Committee) and, with Martha Norkunas, she was OHA program co-chair for the 2015 conference in Tampa.

### Personal statement:

If elected to the OHA Nominating Committee, I will work to nominate a diverse group of committed individuals to run for positions as OHA officers and Council members. Diversity includes gender, race and sexual orientation and identity, among other things, but also includes people with a diversity of professional backgrounds, such as independent scholars, research institute members and community college faculty. In the more than 10 years that I have been engaged with the OHA, I have met a wide variety of people who are active in the organization. If elected, I will call on the people I have met to help me find candidates who are committed to the values of the organization.



**Christa P. Whitney** is the director of the [Yiddish Book Center's Wexler Oral History Project](#) in Amherst, Massachusetts, a growing collection of more than 900 in-depth video interviews about Yiddish language and culture with people of all

ages and backgrounds. Originally from Northern California, she discovered Yiddish while studying comparative literature at Smith College and discovered oral history shortly thereafter. Since 2010, Whitney has traveled near and far in search of Yiddish stories, gaining skills in filmmaking, video production and archival preservation along the way.

### **Personal statement**

After becoming more involved in OHA in the past few years, I am excited by the idea of further lending my skills to this community. In OHA, I have found a professional community and support network of like-minded practitioners. Having someone to call when I have a tech question or need to debrief an interview experience and gaining inspiration from others' work is what OHA is all about for me, and I am eager to give back and help others access the benefits of a strong professional organization I've enjoyed.

My past involvement at OHA has included giving workshops on video systems and sharing panels with talented colleagues about a variety of topics. I've also served on the awards and international committees. I bring strong organizational skills, deep commitment to the craft and methodology of oral history and plenty of motivation to my involvement with OHA. I look forward to continuing to serve and help to improve this community.

## **Position 2: David Cline vs. Martin Meeker**

**David P. Cline** is an historian specializing in 20th and 21st century U.S. social movements, oral history, the digital humanities and public history. He is an associate professor of history and the digital humanities at San Diego State University. He was previously assistant professor of public and digital history at Virginia Tech and director of the graduate certificate in public history there. He also was associate director (and for a time acting director) of the Southern Oral History Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill.



From 2013-2016 he was a lead interviewer and research scholar for the Civil Rights History Project of the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian



Institute's National Museum of African American History and Culture. He is a co-editor, with Natalie Fousekis, of the Palgrave Studies in Oral History series and has overseen major national oral history projects and local projects focusing on African American, university, social justice and LGBTQ history. Cline is the author of several books that use oral history to explore the civil rights movement and other social movements.

### Personal statement:

I have been a part of the OHA community since 2002. I was chair of the Post-Secondary Teaching Award Committee and served as both member and chair of the Publications Committee and was a member of the Program Committee for the 2012-2013 OHA conference. Most of my oral history work, at the local and national levels, has been in collaboration with diverse and underserved communities. I am dedicated to the practice of oral history at all levels and to the mission of OHA and would be pleased to bring my commitment to diverse communities and ethical practices to the Nominating Committee.



**Martin Meeker** is the Charles B. Faulhaber director of the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley's Bancroft Library. Meeker has been with the center since 2003. Meeker served as an interviewer/historian with the center and conducted hundreds of interviews in several areas, including the history of politics and public policy, health care delivery systems and medical research, and wine and foodways.

He was the center's associate director before being named director in 2016.

After receiving his doctorate in U.S. history from the University of Southern California, Meeker taught at San Francisco State University and at UC Berkeley. He has published numerous reviews and encyclopedia articles and has essays published in *Pacific Historical Review*, *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, and *Journal of Women's History*. Meeker's books include *The Oakland Army Base: An Oral History* (2010) and *Contacts Desired: Gay and*

*Lesbian Communications and Community, 1940s-1970s* (2006).

Meeker has been attending OHA meetings for the past 15 years, and, in the past five years, has served on two OHA annual meeting committees and the 2018 Principles and Best Practices task force.

### Personal statement:

Oral history is a complex activity that, when done well, is of profound value to many groups of people: narrators, whose stories we record and preserve; historians and other scholars, who rely upon these stories to craft their own narratives; and the public at large, whose lives are enriched, expanded and challenged by engaging with the lived voices of history.

While oral history can be done relatively easily with a minimal budget and no institutional support, I think narrators, scholars and the public deserve oral histories that are well recorded, fully preserved and easily accessible. In brief, oral history deserves institutional support. If elected to OHA's Nominating Committee, I would work to help recruit individuals who will explore avenues for greater institutional support of oral history and will work to ensure that voices are not lost and interviews are preserved.

## Position 3: Nishani Frazier vs. Kristina Llewelyn

**Nishani Frazier** is an associate professor of history at Miami University of Ohio. She previously held positions as associate curator of African American History and Archives at Western Reserve Historical Society (WRHS), assistant to the director of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Archives at the Martin Luther King Center for Nonviolent Social Change and



was personal assistant for John Hope Franklin, before and during his tenure as chairman of President Bill Clinton's advisory board on "One America." Frazier's public history work incorporates oral history at its center including: interviews for Anacostia's Black Mosaic Project, WRHS's black veteran project,

King Archives and Library civil rights activist programs and community training sessions in oral history.

Frazier's recent book, *Harambee City: The Congress of Racial Equality in Cleveland and the Rise of Black Power Populism*, was released with an accompanying website of the same title. [Harambee City](#) offers online access to maps, archival documents, teacher lesson plans and oral history interviews.

### Personal statement:

I am deeply interested in expanding oral history practices and OHA membership among communities of color. Additionally, I hope to advocate for stronger engagement with digital humanities. I believe that many of the basic elements of oral history can dramatically inform how digital humanities conceives of access and open source.

As a Nominating Committee member, I will encourage recruitment from diverse racial, educational and institutional backgrounds. I also hope to include members who challenge standard oral history practices based on these varied experiences. Finally, I plan to enlist oral historians who actively consider and engage practitioners who are vulnerable or who work with vulnerable communities.



**Kristina Llewellyn** is an associate professor at Renison University College, University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada. Oral history is at the core of her teaching in the history of education and the history of childhood. She is the former president of the Canadian Oral History Association (CHEA), former co-editor of *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale* (with Alexander Freund and Nolan Reilly from 2008 to 2014), and remains a member of the journal's editorial board.

Llewellyn is the author or co-author of several books that incorporate oral history, and she won the Canadian Oral History Association Prize in 2018 for *Oral History and Education: Theories, Dilemmas, and Practices* (with N. Ng-A-Fook). Her current work is on the history of the Model United Nations in Canada, including interviews with former high school participants. She is also the director of the community-driven project *Digital*

*Oral Histories for Reconciliation: The Nova Scotia Home for Colored Children History Education Initiative*, which includes a virtual reality-based history curriculum for students to learn from the oral histories of former residents of the home.

**Personal statement:**

I am honored to be considered for the OHA Nominating Committee. The OHA is an organization that welcomes fresh perspectives and values long-standing experience. As a new member to an OHA committee, I will work diligently to further the reach, engagement and diversity of leadership for the organization. I will reach out to interdisciplinary and community-based networks of practitioners and academics to identify members who will promote and extend the critical work of the OHA. I look forward to building the next 50 years of the OHA by seeking candidates who will provide responsive, collegial and inclusive governance.

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## OHA Cuba trip unaffected by Trump administration's new travel policies

We've had some questions regarding the new Trump/Cuba policies. While the future is unclear for person-to-person travel to Cuba, we've made sure this specific trip is ready for departure.

First, Charles Bittner, our guide, consulted with his attorney and placed the trip in the professional research and professional meetings category. Second, he reserved 20 seats for our members, and those seats have been grandfathered in under the old regulations. Fourteen OHA members have already sent in deposits; we still have 6 seats open.

This may be the last time we're able to go to Cuba until there's a change in the administration, so pack your bags, buy some sun screen and let's go! Here's the link: <https://www.oralhistory.org/2019/03/27/oha-in-cuba/>.

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## OHA member named to first class of community college faculty fellows

OHA member Antonio Ramirez has been selected as one of the first 26 humanities scholars named as Community College Faculty Fellows by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation and the American Council of Learned Societies, of which OHA is a member.

Ramirez is an assistant professor of history and political science at Elgin Community College in Elgin, Illinois, northwest of Chicago. His fellowship project is a faculty-student collaboration titled “Chicagolandia: Oral Histories of Chicago’s Latinx Suburbs.”

The fellowship, which pays a \$40,000 stipend over 18 months, is intended to recognize and support humanities and social science research by faculty members at two-year colleges. The 2019 awards are the first of three annual fellowship competitions for community college faculty.

The ACLS also offers a wide variety of other foundation-funded fellowships and grants for which many OHA members might be eligible. Check out the opportunities and consider applying by visiting:

<https://www.acls.org/news/?category=fellowshipandgrantcompetitions>

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## Fluent in Yiddish? No? Pass this along anyway

The Yiddish Book Center at Hampshire College, Amherst, Massachusetts, has two job openings of possible interest to OHA members.

The center’s Wexler Oral History Project is seeking a native or advanced Yiddish speaker for a one-year, full-time position to process Yiddish-language interviews in the oral history project’s collection.

The center also is looking for an assistant video editor to provide on-site technical support for ongoing processing of the Wexler Oral History Project’s rapidly expanding collection of one- to two-hour in-depth interviews about Yiddish language and culture.

For details, visit:

<https://www.yiddishbookcenter.org/about/employment>

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## Visit the OHA Member Site



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