



# ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

## Newsletter

November 2022  
Volume LVI Number 5

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### OHA conference attracts hundreds to historic Biltmore Hotel in Los Angeles

More than 400 oral historians, reuniting in person for the first time in three years, called the Los Angeles Millennium Biltmore Hotel home for the 56th annual meeting of the Oral History Association on Oct. 19-22, 2022.

Following the footsteps of Academy Awards winners, countless politicians, movie stars, business tycoons and international dignitaries of all sorts who have enjoyed the Biltmore's crystal-chandeliered ballrooms for nearly 100 years, OHA members celebrated award winners, welcomed newly elected leaders and feasted on the rich program offerings with presenters from around the world.

Read on for a round-up of 2022 OHA news and conference highlights. And be sure to put on your new 2023 calendar the dates for the next annual meeting, Oct. 18-21, in Baltimore, Maryland.

Additional 2022 conference news will be included in upcoming issues of the **OHA Newsletter**.

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### OHA Exec Office heads to Texas



The Oral History Association will start the new year with a new home at Baylor University's Institute for Oral History, with institute director and associate history professor Stephen Sloan becoming OHA's new executive director. Institute editor and collections manager Steven Sielaff will serve as OHA assistant director.

"After five successful years at Middle Tennessee State University, we're looking forward to our new partnership with Baylor, which has one of the premier oral history programs in the country," said OHA's immediate past president Amy Starecheski.

For more than a half-century, Baylor's Institute for Oral History has been recording and archiving oral histories, offering workshops to professionalize oral history practice and is known for creating a widely used oral history style guide, among its many accomplishments.

In the new partnership with OHA, the Baylor institute will provide office space and release time for Sloan and Sielaff as well as additional program support. The OHA will hire a full-time program associate to support the organization's work.

"The Oral History Association has long been the nexus of my professional life, the place where both my passions and practice have been honed and energized," Sloan said. "I am grateful for the community and guidance that OHA and its membership has provided me in so many profound ways, and I relish the opportunity to facilitate that for other oral historians."

Sielaff added: "I am honored to be appointed assistant director, and I am excited to be able to provide this additional level of service to OHA and all oral historians as we venture further into the technological marvel that is the 21st century."

Outgoing OHA co-executive director Kris McCusker and program associate Faith Bagley will oversee the transition of OHA operations to its new home at Baylor. "These five years have gone by so quickly, and I'm looking forward to Professor Sloan and his outstanding team continuing to foster OHA's growth and service to oral historians," McCusker said.

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## We're Hiring!

**The Oral History Association (OHA) seeks to hire a full-time program associate to**

**assist in the operation of its Executive Office.**

Since 1966, the OHA has served as the principal membership organization for people committed to the value of oral history (learn more here). Job tasks assigned to the program associate include assisting in planning the annual meeting, maintaining accounts, overseeing the membership roster, managing the OHA website, and other general administrative tasks. Paid travel to the fall annual meeting and mid-winter Council meeting is required (with costs covered by OHA). The successful candidate should have good project management skills, a friendly customer-service mindset, self-motivation, strong attention to detail, writing and editing skills, as well as experience with online software such as WordPress, QuickBooks, and membership and event registration platforms. Experience with basic bookkeeping and financial management required. Event planning experience preferred.

The OHA program associate will be an employee of the Oral History Association working with the Executive Office at Baylor University, located in Waco, Texas.

**Position begins January 3, 2023.**

To apply, send 1) a letter of application indicating your interest and qualifications and 2) a resume and/or CV. Submit these materials and any questions you have about the position to Stephen Sloan at [stephen\\_sloan@baylor.edu](mailto:stephen_sloan@baylor.edu).

See the full job description here: <https://oralhistory.org/2022/11/28/oha-job-search-program-associate/>.

*The Oral History Association is an equal opportunity employer. We celebrate diversity and are committed to creating an inclusive environment for all employees.*

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[President's Letter](#)

[Executive Director's Report](#)

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## New OHA leaders take helm

Immediate past president Amy Starcheski figuratively passed the president's gavel to President-Elect Tomás F. Summers Sandoval, Jr. at the OHA's annual business meeting on Oct 22.

First Vice President Kelly Elaine Navies now becomes president-elect, joining newly elected First Vice President Troy Reeves of the University of Wisconsin Madison and Council members Nishani Frazier of the University of Kansas and Shanna Farrell of the University of California, Berkeley.

Also elected to OHA leadership positions are the following Nominating Committee members: independent scholar Fanny Garcia, Brian Greenwald of Gallaudet University and Ana Liberto of the University of Kentucky.

Elected to the new Committee on Committees are: independent scholar Linda Shopes, Darold Cuba of the Washington National Cathedral, Regennia Williams of the Western Reserve Historical Society, Lisa Arrastia of the Massachusetts College of Liberal Arts, and independent scholar Ellen Brooks.

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## **Oral History Review seeking new editorial team; here's how to apply**

The Oral History Association is looking for a new editorial team to produce the Oral History Review, the scholarly journal published by Routledge/Taylor and Francis. The new editorial team will take office Jan. 1, 2024, for a three-year term.

The current editorial team--David Caruso, Abby Perkiss and Janneken Smucker--will complete their three years of service on Dec. 31, 2023. With the journal in healthy shape thanks to the editors' leadership, OHA now seeks an editorial team to build from this base while also creating new directions for the journal. OHR is committed to working with our publisher and readership to continue expanding -- and imagining -- an OHR for the 21st century.

When the new team starts in 2024, it will begin to focus on organizing workflows and processes and begin work on a special issue commemorating the journal's 50th anniversary, with advice from the previous editorial team.

The search for a new editorial team is open to all oral history practitioners worldwide-- oral historians, librarians, archivists, freelance/independent historians, instructors and trainers. You may apply for yourself or as part of a team. OHR also seeks to expand the diversity of its editorial team.

**Deadline for submissions: Thursday, Dec. 15, 2022, 11:59 a.m. PST.**

To apply, complete the online application form (<https://tinyurl.com/ohr-editorial-search-2022>) and submit a CV or résumé (two pages maximum) detailing your related service and editorial experience.

Questions? Please contact [oralhistory.org](http://oralhistory.org) with "OHR Editorial Team Search" in the subject line.

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## **Oral historians recognized for award-winning work**

Six Oral History Association awards for exemplary oral history work were announced at the Los Angeles conference. The winners are:

**Article Award:** "Who Speaks for Baltimore: The Invisibility of Whiteness and the Ethics of Oral History Theater," by Mary Rizzo

**Book Award:** "Civil Rights in Black and Brown: Histories of Resistance and Struggle," edited by Max Krochmal and J. Todd Moyer

**Mason Multimedia Documentary Award:** "Documentary: Ver Vet Blaybn? (Who Will Remain?)," by Christa P. Whitney and Emily Felder

**Mason Multimedia Project or Collection Award:** "The Essential Workers," by Teri Finneman, Will Mari and Kristen Hare

**Postsecondary Teaching Award:** Kristina R. Llewellyn, Renison University College at the University of Waterloo, Ontario, Canada

**Stetson Kennedy Vox Populi Award:** Deborah Hendrix, University of Florida

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## Indigenous scholars share stories of perseverance at OHA plenary session

As a citizen of the Navajo Nation, Farina King delved into oral history to learn more about her own family's past in Tuba City, Arizona. There, King, an associate professor of Native American studies at the University of Oklahoma, experienced the empowering stories carried through generations that have helped the Diné to survive.

King, along with Denise Lajimodiere, an enrolled citizen of the Turtle Mountain Band of Chippewa, Belcourt, North Dakota, and David W. Barillas Chón, a Maya from Guatemala who is assistant professor of education at Canada's Western University, shared information at an OHA plenary session that they gleaned from oral history interviews related to Indigenous boarding schools.

King said she interviewed people who had attended the boarding school in Tuba City. "They just started telling me stories," she said, noting that the encounter was not like a typical oral history interview.

She said several uncles were World War II code talkers whose use of the Navajo language served as a communications code the Japanese could not break. Her Uncle Albert, she said, mainly wanted to talk about his boarding school experiences, wanting her to understand that it was like a "foreign invasion" to the children caught up in it.

Lajimodiere, who said she interviewed her parents and grandparents, described her grandfather's experience essentially being stolen from the Turtle Mountain Reservation in North Dakota and taken to a boarding school in Oregon. He spoke no English.

"They were made to feel ashamed of who they were," she said, noting that their Indigenous language was called the "devil's tongue." They endured military-style discipline, physical abuse, forced labor, malnourishment and sexual abuse. Moreover, she said, boarding school cemeteries reflect the prevalence of disease, including tuberculosis, pneumonia, measles, accidents, the 1918 flu pandemic, suicide and failure to thrive—a disease of loneliness.

The boarding school experience amounts to cultural genocide, Lajimodiere said. As a result, children never learned parenting skills. They were never hugged, never told "I love you."

"Now I understand how we were brought up," she said, adding: "We persevered; we were not supposed to be here, but we're still here."

Barillas Chón said the same conditions prevailed in Canadian residential schools for First Nations children, the last of which closed in 1996.

The residue of the violence perpetrated through the colonial-driven boarding school experience now can be seen in the child welfare system in which Indigenous children are placed with non-Indian families.

"How do you undo colonialism from within the colonial institutions?" he asked. "I don't know."

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## Keynote speaker describes how Depression-era 'cannery girls' made history

When Vicki L. Ruiz, distinguished professor emerita at the University of California, Irvine, first published “Cannery Women, Cannery Lives” in 1987, it was the first book-length study that focused on the lives of Mexican women in the United States.

And the stories it tells, in the oral histories that comprise the meat of the book, still resonate, reminding oral historians that their work is worth revisiting.

If you go back to interviews 40 years later, Ruiz told a keynote audience, you’ll see things you missed, which may become fodder for new interviews and analysis.

Ruiz’ work documented the lives of the largely Mexican American women who comprised about three-fourths of the cannery workforce, which in the early decades of the 20th century was one of California’s major industries.

Women did the prep work, washing peaches, for example, Ruiz explained. They were paid according to how many peaches they washed, in contrast to the men, who received an hourly wage. The Russian Jewish women who worked alongside the Mexicans in that seasonal job market also got paid more than their Mexican counterparts. The checkers who verified the assembly line work all were men.

The Mexican and Russian Jewish women became friends, at least behind the cannery gates, developing friendships across ethnic boundaries, Ruiz said.

Conditions in the canneries and leadership by the women workers contributed to unionization efforts, which Ruiz’ work chronicles.

A strike during the height of the peach canning season in late August 1939 led to a walkout by some 400 workers. Local merchants donated funds and supplies to the strikers, and the company owners ultimately were forced to the bargaining table.

Women workers took advantage of increased job opportunities as World War II ramped up, resulting in even more power for the cannery workers, Ruiz said.

Even decades later, she noted, there was a common thread among all the cannery worker interviews: They all refused to eat canned food.

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## Oral history interviews in Hawaii pose transcription, translation challenges

On the vast Hawaiian sugar plantations of the late 19th century, workers who spoke Spanish, Korean, Japanese, Chinese, Portuguese, English and Hawaiian found common ground in the evolution of Pidgin—a simplified language that combined elements of grammar, vocabulary and pronunciation from their various native tongues.

It’s a language that remains today. But despite efforts of Pidgin scholars, attempts to standardize it have never gained popularity. And that spells challenges for oral historians, Micah H. Muzukami, associate director of the Center for Oral History at the University of Hawai’i, told an Oral History Association break-out session.

The mashed-together language represents community, “a microcosm of the globe smashed into a little island,” added Dietrix Jon Ulukoa Duhaylonsod, archaeologist and ethnographer.

Even people who move to Hawaii want to learn Pidgin to become part of the community, he said, noting that Pidgin was his first language.

Duhaylonsod noted that contemporary archaeology cannot rely solely on what’s been written about a place or its physical measurements and other characteristics.



Also necessary are stories from elders and descendants of people who can add valuable information to the documentation of an archaeological site.

In Hawaii, collecting that information may involve interviews with people who speak a combination of English, Native Hawaiian and Pidgin, code-switching among the languages as they tell their stories, he said.

Therein lies the challenge for transcribers, as the title of their presentation made clear:

“Bruddah, Braddah, Brada, Bradda or Brother? Cultural and Linguistic Considerations for Transcribing Pidgin.”

Pidgin words amount to snapshots in time, Duhaylonsod said. But transcribing them phonetically into American English “whitewashes a significant part of Hawaii’s identity,” he said, masking the multicultural reality of the Aloha State. While such transcriptions may not have a nefarious purpose, they nonetheless affect the interpretation of an oral history interview by taking away from a narrator’s original meaning, he said.

At the same time, Mizukami noted, some older speakers may be ashamed to be seen speaking Pidgin.

Duhaylonsod suggested possible solutions for handling transcription of such multilingual interviews might include adding an editor’s note saying that the person’s words have been changed to make it more easily understood by non-Pidgin speakers. Alternatively, he said, an interview might be transcribed in Pidgin and then translated into English, an approach that allows for building bridges in a multilingual, multicultural environment.

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## **OHA past president Cullom Davis, author of early oral history textbook, dies at 87**

Cullom Davis of Springfield, Illinois, who served as the Oral History Association’s president in 1983-84 and launched the OHA Endowment Fund, died Sept. 9, 2022, in Springfield. He was 87.

An Illinois native, Davis earned a history degree from Princeton University and went on to earn a Ph.D. in American history at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign. He taught in the history department at Indiana University Bloomington but was recruited to be a founding faculty member at Sangamon State University, which opened its doors in 1970 and is now known as the University of Illinois Springfield.

At the new university Davis established an Oral History Office and in 1977 wrote an early oral history textbook titled “From Tape to Type.” From 1991 to 2008, he directed the Lincoln Legal Papers Project, aimed at finding, interpreting, indexing and digitizing all the known legal works of the 16th president.

Upon his retirement, Davis remained active in local civic affairs in Springfield.

Past OHA president Donald Ritchie recalled that when Davis launched the OHA Endowment Fund to commemorate the organization’s 30th anniversary, “he called it 30 for 30 and aimed to raise \$30,000. He’d be pleased at how much it’s grown since then.”

Indeed. As of the 2022 annual meeting in October, the fund was valued at \$688,673.

## Grants available to support oral history work

Applications are open for Charlton Oral History Research Grants from Baylor University's Institute for Oral History.

Named for the late Thomas Charlton, the institute's founding director and longtime Oral History Association leader, the grant program offers \$3,000 for an oral history scholar who is conducting interviews in a subject area to which oral history methods have not been extensively applied. The one-year grant program covers June 2023 to May 2024.

The institute welcomes interdisciplinary and cross-cultural research on local, national or international subjects.

According to the institute, the goal of the research grant program is to "bring the strengths of oral history to new topics of investigation, create partnerships with scholars doing noteworthy fieldwork with oral history, build a substantial research collection at Baylor University through the work of a skilled oral historian and provide long-term scholarly access to significant applications of oral history methodology that model best practices."

The application deadline is Jan. 27, 2023.

For more information: <https://www.baylor.edu/library/index.php?id=974472>

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## Oral history for social change is focus of new online training, certificate

The Institute for Diversity and Civic Life, a Texas-based nonprofit organization dedicated to using the power of storytelling to document and engage in discussions about the state's rich diversity, is offering an online training and certificate program for people interested in using oral history to advance social justice.

The certificate program comprises five on-demand courses for a total of 15 hours of asynchronous coursework offered through ReligionAndPublicLife.org. The curriculum includes: an introduction to oral history, oral history and social justice, oral history project planning, conducting oral history interviews and curating and archiving oral histories.

Each course includes video and audio materials, interactive games, discussion and reading materials.

For more information on costs and how to enroll, visit:

<https://diversityandcivicle.org/resources/oral-history-training-and-certificate/>

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## Focus on education for 2023 OHA conference in Baltimore

The Oral History Association welcomes your proposals for papers and presentations at the 2023 annual conference set for Oct. 18-21 at the Hyatt Regency Baltimore Inner Harbor. Next year's conference theme: Oral History As/And Education: Teaching and Learning in the Classroom and Beyond.



Conference planners urge members to take an expansive view of the conference theme and to consider innovative delivery methods, including workshops, interactive sessions, case studies, personal reflections by students, teachers, narrators and other project participants, interpretive performances and use of digital media.

**The proposal deadline is Feb. 24, 2023.**

For a complete description of the call for proposals, visit:

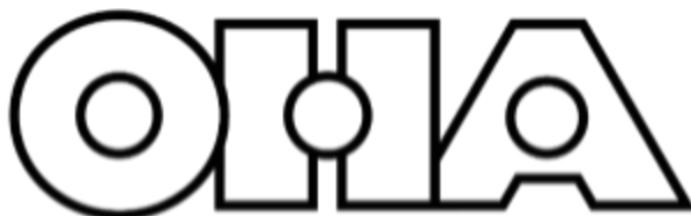
<https://oralhistory.org/2023-call-for-proposals/>

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# Co-Executive Directors Report

Greetings from the Executive Office.

We hope everyone is doing well and has rested up from what was a stellar conference in Los Angeles. It was so nice to see each other and to share our work in person.

Since returning to Tennessee, the executive staff has been finishing out the year with the usual post-conference activities including paying bills and planning for the next year, including next year's meeting in Baltimore, Oct. 18-21, 2023.

We will hold OHA's Day of Giving on Tuesday, Nov. 29, 2022. The money raised will go towards supporting the OHA's Indigenous Initiative. If you haven't donated already, you can donate here: <https://oha.memberclicks.net/2022-day-of-giving>.

We are hard at work transitioning the Executive Office to Baylor University. We are still planning various portions of the move, but we will be transferring the actual office materials in December as well as the financial responsibility for the organization. We have put in place a vigorous support system for the new executive officers to ensure a smooth transition, including hiring a new program associate as soon as possible. Come the first of the year, the Institute for Oral History at Baylor University will be OHA's new institutional home.

Finally, thanks for a great five years. We are grateful for the opportunity to work with you all. Serving the members of OHA and helping advance the field through the association has been an honor.

Kristine McCusker  
Louis M. Kyriakouides

# President's Letter

## Looking Back, Looking Forward November 2022 Newsletter

As I step into the role of Oral History Association president, I find myself both looking back and looking forward. I look back with a profound sense of gratitude for the many people who have not only sustained the OHA through the pandemic years but also kept it growing and improving in service to our mission.

Our OHA Executive Office at Middle Tennessee State University—our faithful OHA Co-Executive Directors Kris McCusker and Louis Kyriakoudes, and Faith Bagley, our program associate—are certainly at the top of that list. They conclude their five-year term as our official “home” at the end of the year, and their dedication and creativity have meant so much to the OHA in that time.

They leave us with the largest membership in our history; in as financially secure a position as we have ever been; and with an intentional set of operations for future executive offices to follow. Simply put, they've helped move the OHA to the next level. We've been lucky to have them, and we'll be forever grateful for their service to the OHA.

The work of our executive office is what it is because of scores of volunteers who commit their personal time to implementing the mission of the OHA. The gratitude I feel extends to all of them, too, including the many dedicated members who staff our committees (or serve as committee chairs), as well as those who guide our task forces and who build community through our caucuses. Our volunteers include our OHA Council, which meets monthly to set policy and ensure our mission and operations remain pertinent to all our current and future members. As an all-volunteer organization, I know you share my gratitude for all those who give of their time to make that OHA what it is.

The gratitude I feel as I look back comingles with excitement as I look forward to the year ahead. It's an excitement for the transition to our new executive office at the Institute for Oral History at Baylor University. Stephen Sloan will be the OHA's new executive director and Steven Sielaff the assistant director. I know both are going to continue to make the OHA into the member-focused organization we want and need.

I'm equally excited at the commitment the OHA has made to commit some of its financial and other resources to promote the success of Indigenous oral historians and support meaningful and ethical oral historical projects within Indigenous communities. Over the next year, we'll be meeting with Indigenous partners and organizations throughout the field to hear from them about ways the OHA can support their goals and needs. While the OHA Indigenous Initiative takes shape, I hope you'll consider making your own contribution to the fund. The annual Day of Giving—on Tuesday, Nov. 29—is a great time to do so.

Finally, I'm excited about YOU, our members. Hundreds of members—returning and new—joined us in Los Angeles for our first in-person conference in three years. I know hundreds of you will also be joining us online, as we continue to develop an exciting program of professional and social events related to oral history throughout the year. And I hope you'll join us in October 2023, as we gather for our next annual conference in Baltimore, Maryland.

We're at an exciting time in our organizational history. We're grateful and excited to have you all as part of it. See you in 2023!

Tomás F. Summers Sandoval Jr.  
Claremont, California