



Summer 2011  
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# ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

## OHA makes plans for meeting in Mile High City

By Jennifer Abraham Cramer and Troy Reeves, Co-chairs

Make your plans now to attend the 45th Annual Meeting of the Oral History Association, Oct. 12-16. This year brings OHA to Colorado for the first time since 1980 with the state's capital city, Denver (and the Renaissance Hotel), as our host. Denver gives us an awesome opportunity: As a thriving U.S. city with access to some of the most beautiful and rugged landscapes in the country, it furnishes this year's attendees with the opportunity to take advantage of being somewhere that can provide intellectual stimulation, as well as the physical and emotional satisfaction of viewing or hiking in the beautiful vistas nearby.

OHA's First Vice President/President Elect Horacio Roque-Ramirez conceived of this year's theme: "Memories of Conflict and Disaster: Oral History and the Politics of Truth, Trauma, and Reconciliation." With the commemoration of the 10th anniversary of September 11, 2001, occurring within weeks of our meeting, the theme felt quite appropriate. The events that occurred in Japan, the Middle East and the U.S. Southeast over the past year add more credence to Horacio's text.

With contributors from all over the country and world, we have built a program that fits our theme while offering space for the presentation of myriad subjects within oral history in general. For example, panelists will address their work documenting events such as the Dust Bowl, the Holocaust and the conflict in Vietnam. Also on tap for attendees are sessions on natural and unnatural

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### Make hotel reservations soon ...

Take advantage of the Oral History Association's special conference rate of **\$130/night** by making reservations now at the **Renaissance Denver Hotel**. It's located at 3801 Quebec St., Denver.

For reservations, call 888-238-6762.



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## From the president

The Denver meeting is approaching with an exciting array of events and sessions. Check out the sneak peeks in this issue! The Program Committee, headed by Troy Reeves and Jennifer Abraham Cramer, have been working feverishly to finalize the sessions and events. Jen Myronuk and Cyns Nelson, local arrangements co-chairs, have done a magnificent job of networking the Oral History Association with local Denver organizations and have some marvelous activities in store. Madelyn Campbell, of course, always orchestrates all these various strands (on her administrative cello!) into the concert that is the Annual Meeting.

Again this year, you will receive in the mail a “preview” or “teaser” of the events, which will also be posted on the website along with the schedule of sessions. The final program will not be printed until September, in order to capture any dropouts and changes that occur over the summer. If you are on the program but for some reason will be unable to attend to present your work, please notify Madelyn or the program co-chairs as soon as possible.

Meanwhile, my focus for the past two months has been on the unglamorous but important job of making appointments to our awards and standing committees. I didn't realize when I signed up for this job that this was such a critical administrative task. How does one beat the bushes beyond one's own network? In a flash of inspiration, I suggested that we put a call on the website for committee volunteers. The response was astonishing, and a great example of the importance of the website. Every week, it seems, we received enthusiastic responses from entirely new folks, many new to the association who want to become involved. I'm thrilled to report that we've been able to give every volunteer (more than 15!!) an appointment, bringing vital new energy into the committees and future leadership. Thank you to all of you who have volunteered. You have not only made my task much easier, but you help insure the future vitality of the OHA.

On the networking front, OHA now has a page on Facebook and is also on LinkedIn and Twitter. We con-

tinue with our soon-to-be updated, I'm told, H-Oralist listserv where you can find new postings, questions and responses every day. The OHA website, however, remains the primary point of information and communication.

The other big news is the appointment of Kathy Nasstrom and Troy Reeves as the new co-editors of the *Oral History Review*. On Jan. 1, 2012, Kim Porter, our current editor of six years, will hand over the reins. This will be the first time *OHR* has co-editors, but given the growth the journal has enjoyed and the opportunities presented by the digital age, this new arrangement seems not only warranted, but highly workable. You can find details in this issue, but I'd like to reiterate here our deepest thanks to Kim for bringing the journal along to this high point, to all those who submitted very thoughtful proposals, and to the Search Committee for a highly professional and thorough process.

This is my last column before passing on to the happy position of past president. It's been wonderful working with such a competent and engaged Executive Council, and of course with Madelyn, who always kept me on track and so patiently walked me through each of my responsibilities. It's been an honor and fun to serve as your president, and I thank everyone for your confidence and support. I look forward to continuing to contribute my energies to new initiatives as they arise next year and beyond, and to adding my small pebble to the growing OHA edifice.

Hope to see you in Denver, and don't forget that the next call for papers will be mid-January for Cleveland.

**Rina Benmayor**



*OHA president, Rina Benmayor*

**Remember to vote in the Oral History Association's  
annual elections this summer!**

**Registration is open for the OHA conference in Denver, Oct. 12-16  
<http://a3.acteva.com/orderbooking/go/oha2011>**

# Exciting changes in store for *Oral History Review*

By Rina Benmayor, OHA President

On Jan. 1, 2012, the editorship of the *Oral History Review* will change hands, and—in a departure for the OHA—an *editorial team* is coming on board. Kathy Nasstrom of the University of San Francisco will become the editor and Troy Reeves, of the University of Wisconsin-Madison, will step into a new position of managing editor.

Kathy will be responsible for the overall management and development of the journal, and Troy will handle its production. In their proposal to edit the *OHR*, Kathy and Troy identified their top priorities as:

- Strengthening the *OHR* as the journal of record for the field of oral history in the U.S.;
- Developing a more thoroughly international, interdisciplinary and multimedia journal;
- Crafting a journal that meets the needs of the association's diverse constituencies.

John Wofford will be continuing as book review editor; Jennifer Abraham Cramer, who has been taking over from Doug Boyd as media review editor, will also continue in her role. And in another departure from tradition, a new position is being created specifically to develop the multimedia capacity of the *OHR*. Doug Boyd will be the *OHR*'s new digital initiatives editor. Stay tuned for more on all of these developments.

Customarily, the editorship of the *OHR* is three-year term, renewable for a second term. OHA began its search in the fall of 2010, as current editor Kim Porter will be finishing her second term at the end of 2011. The Search Committee consisted of outgoing president Mike Frisch, Dan Kerr and Susan McCormick.

The committee received several very serious and worthy proposals. After several rounds of conversations regarding

proposed ideas and institutional commitments, it made its final recommendation to the Council at the mid-winter Council meeting in Denver. The contract was accepted, and contracts have now been signed. Our thanks to Mike, Dan and Susan for designing and conducting a highly professional and careful search process that now serves OHA as a model.

The OHA congratulates and welcomes Kathy and Troy, our new editors, and looks forward to the exciting new developments they have in store. OHA also wants to thank those who submitted letters of intent and full-blown proposals. They were each rich, viable and different. We also wish to express our appreciation to the institutions that stepped forward in support of these proposals, and to both the University of San Francisco and the University of Wisconsin-Madison, who will be the institutional bases the *OHR* over the next few years.

And finally, thanks to our current editor, Kim Porter, for her many years of expert and dedicated service to the *OHR* and to the field. She will be handing over a solid *Review* that nourishes oral historians worldwide. ❖



Kathy Nasstrom of the University of San Francisco



Troy Reeves, of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

## Denver OHA meeting

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disasters, women in science and the wars in the Middle East. Those topics touch on just a few of the more than 70 slated sessions.

Our two plenaries will offer attendees two distinct and relevant subjects. The first, scheduled for Thursday, will highlight groups from Columbia University, including its renowned oral history center, as they discuss 9/11 and how we can teach and learn from that catastrophe. Friday's plenary will focus on environmental history, bringing in presenters from around the country to explore how public lands history, federal agencies and environmental inquiry can enrich oral history.

The program committee also found two keynoters sure to provide much thought to accompany the food. Friday's lunch speaker, Doug Boyd, will discuss Oral History in the Digital Age, a two-year Institute of Museum and Library Studies grant specifically addressing how new technologies affect the process of recording, preserving and providing access to materials.

Saturday night's awards dinner presenter, Carolyn Mears, will discuss her upcoming work, *Reclaiming School in the Aftermath of Trauma*, which offers educators advice based on her research with teachers, administrators and faculty from schools destroyed by violence, natural disaster or acts of terrorism. Mears, as a Columbine High School mother, offers a perspective that joins with this year's theme and location.

Continuing on tradition—both longtime and relatively new—we will offer evening activities on Wednesday and Thursday. On Wednesday evening, the Film Spotlight will show a documentary on bourbon in



Carolyn Mears

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# Workshops offer more learning opportunities

Wednesday and Saturday workshops at the Denver conference will furnish attendees with professional development options for every level of oral history expertise.

## Here's a list of the Wednesday options:



Troy Reeves

- ▶ **Introduction to Oral History.** Lead by Troy Reeves of the University of Wisconsin, Madison and Jennifer Abraham Cramer of Louisiana State University, this workshop will cover all aspects of planning and carrying out an oral history project.
- ▶ **Publish it Yourself: Demystifying Publishing Technologies for Oral Historians.** Lead by Irene Reti of the University of California Santa Cruz, this workshop will offer an overview of how oral historians can take advantage of emerging and affordable publishing technologies to bring oral histories to a wider audience.
- ▶ **Digital Preservation of Oral History.** Lead by Doug Boyd of the University of Kentucky, this workshop will introduce current best practices for preserving multimedia digital oral history resources, particularly focusing on digital video preservation.



Doug Boyd

- ▶ **Motivate, Organize, Train and Accomplish: Oral History and Community-Based Practice.** Lead by Elinor Maze, Michelle Holland and Stephen Sloan, all of Baylor University, this workshop is intended for oral historians who want to partner effectively with community groups on oral history projects. The workshop is intended for people who already know the basics of oral history interviewing and recording.
- ▶ **Gathering Oral Histories with Radio in Mind.** Lead by Rachel Anne Goodman, an award-winning freelance radio documentary producer, this workshop will focus on interviewing techniques and approaches to recording stories and sound that lend themselves to radio storytelling.
- ▶ **Oral History and the Law.** Lead by OHA past president John A. Neuenschwander, emeritus history professor and municipal judge in Kenosha, Wis., this workshop will focus on key concepts oral historians should know. It is intended for all oral historians, from novice to seasoned veteran.

## Saturday workshop options include:



Apollo Theater, New York, NY

- ▶ **Integrating Oral History and the Arts in the Elementary Classroom.** This workshop features three leaders from Harlem's Apollo Theater Education Program who created an oral history project at a Harlem elementary school in which fifth and sixth graders interview community elders, learn about their neighborhood's history and use transcripts of their interviews to develop theatrical performances. Workshop participants will reflect on ways they can connect oral history and theater in their own classrooms based on the experiences of the Apollo Theater project.
- ▶ **Introduction to Grant Proposal Writing.** Jay Katz, publisher of the Colorado Grants Insider and a successful grant writer for more than two decades, will teach participants various strategies for securing grant funding for projects. The workshop will focus on telling your story, creating a needs assessment and evaluation plan and figuring out how to make connections with grant decision-makers. ❖



## Denver OHA meeting

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Kentucky and feature trailers for several other upcoming films that will be screened at the Denver conference.

Thursday brings the annual Presidential Reception, which will take place at the Blair-Caldwell African American Research Library—a Denver public library, focusing on the history, literature, art, music, religion and politics of African Americans in Colorado and throughout the Rocky Mountain West. Along with ample opportunity for food, drink, and mingling in an interesting locale, a long-time contributor to the OHA will be honored. This year, we hope you all join us at the reception, as we give tribute to Timuel Black, Chicago educator, activist and oral historian.

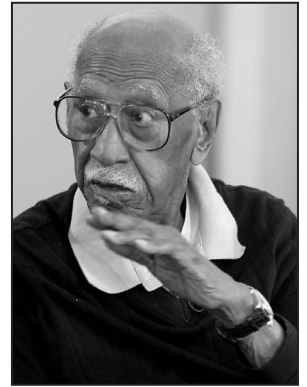
The 2011 conference will also host a book spotlight on Thursday afternoon, titled “New Tools for Teaching and Learning about African American Life and Communities in the 20th Century.” Along with this offering, we have planned two other unique sessions. First, following its success from last year, another two-part effort called “So, What Do You Do?” will appear on Thursday morning. On Friday morning, a round-table-session will spotlight “Oral History in the 21st Century Classroom: A Special Issue of *The Oral History Review*.”

Besides all the programmatic offerings mentioned, and the many more we cannot specifically laud here, the local arrangements committee has brought together a variety of interesting activities. Besides their work on the aforemen-

tioned Wednesday night Film Spotlight, this local group—co-led effectively by Jen Myronuk and Cyns Nelson—also have created a Community Showcase, including several Denver and regional-based projects and programs to display and discuss their oral-history endeavors. Also, they have put together some wonderful dine-arounds and tours, both long-time OHA traditions.

We want to take these last lines to thank the 15 men and women from around the country who graciously accepted our plea to join us on the program committee, particularly Erin Hess and Leah Kolb, who served as our chief lieutenants. Every committee member’s work enhanced this year’s offerings.

We also want to thank Madelyn Campbell for helping take us from Horacio’s initial idea to what all of us will partake in over our October days in Denver. We appreciated her advice, support and wealth of annual meeting-history knowledge. If we may paraphrase Hillary Clinton (and the African proverb she borrowed from), it did indeed take a village to raise this annual meeting! ❖



Timuel Black

## Denver cultural options abound

Coming early or staying a few days late at the OHA conference this year? Or just want to sample the local scene? Denver offers a variety of local tours and cultural activities OHA members might wish to pursue on their own. They include:

- ▶ **Denver Art Museum.** Founded in 1893, this museum is considered the largest art museum between Kansas City and the West Coast. Its two buildings house internationally acclaimed collections, and the buildings themselves are works of art. Visit [www.denverartmuseum.org](http://www.denverartmuseum.org) for more details and information on hours and admission prices.
- ▶ **Denver Botanic Gardens at York Street.** Featuring more than 30 distinct gardens and tens of thousands of plant and fungi species, the botanic garden highlights native and adapted plants that thrive in Western gardens. Visitors to the York Street location can also see the first publicly accessible “green roof,” which demonstrates the value of building-top horticulture. Visit [www.botanicgardens.org](http://www.botanicgardens.org) for details.
- ▶ **Denver Microbrew Tour.** Forget Napa Valley. Denver’s Lower Downtown (LoDo) is one reason the city ranks number one in per-capita beer production. Go to [www.denvermicrobrewtour.com](http://www.denvermicrobrewtour.com) to sign up for a two-hour LoDo walking tour that features stops at four microbreweries and one tap room. You’ll learn about beer making and the role of beer in Denver’s history—in addition to enjoying the samples. Reservations are required at a cost of \$25.



- ▶ **Denver Story Trek.** Create an interactive self-guided tour of Denver featuring stories about museums, homes, parks and other city landmarks to which you can bike, walk or drive. Visit [www.denverstorytrek.com](http://www.denverstorytrek.com) to view predetermined routes or create your own. You can also download audio files to listen to stories about each site you’ll visit. It’s free.
- ▶ **Working Art at The Collaboratory.** A block from the Renaissance Hotel, the OHA’s conference site, is Old Fire Station #26, which has been repurposed into a space for artists who work with welding and metal craft. For information on hours, check the website, [www.thecollaboratory.com](http://www.thecollaboratory.com).
- ▶ **Take a Walk in the Park.** Literally. Just three blocks from the Renaissance Hotel, you’ll find Martin Luther King Jr. Park, one of more than 200 parks and 4,300 acres of green space in the Mile High City. You won’t have to go far if you want to check out a rec center, playground, basketball court, pedestrian path, sports fields and picnic tables. But don’t forget to come back for more great program sessions! ❖



Denver skyline from City Park during a free summer jazz concert.

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# Toward developing guidelines for oral history credits

By Scott McConnell

**H**ave you ever looked at movie credits as they roll before your eyes or stare at you from the bottom of a movie poster and wondered about their meaning? Credits for screenwriters, for example, can include “Story by,” “Screenplay by,” “Adaptation by.” And if it is a dual credit the writers’ names can be joined by “and” or “&,” all of which have very different and specific meanings. And for good reason.

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THE ORAL HISTORIAN IS THE ESSENTIAL ELEMENT  
IN A DYNAMIC, CREATIVE PROCESS.

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Each year the Writers Guild of America (the premiere representational organization for screenwriters) arbitrates on about 150 screen credit disputes. Although there have been disputes over oral history credits, none has been litigated, so there is no case law in our field. But disputes will increase as the number of published oral histories multiplies.

I believe the Oral History Association--as the premier professional organization in our field--should develop guidelines for published oral histories credits. These guidelines need to be developed for our own protection and reward.

Following are some considerations I hope will engender debate toward developing such guidelines.

First some context and background. Why do oral historians deserve any credit for their work in producing histories? The simple answer is that an oral history is the result of a co-authorship between and interviewer and interviewee. There is an unusual status to a published oral history because it has at least two parties involved in its creation. Let me focus on the contribution of the interviewer. What unique and creative powers does the interviewer bring to the process and end result?

An oral historian often initiates, devises, researches and knows the life of the interviewee more objectively than the interviewee himself. The interviewer creates and structures questions, conducts the interview and often edits the inter-

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## U.S. history knowledge remains low for high school seniors, study shows

Younger black and Hispanic students narrowed the gap with their white peers in history knowledge, but more than half of high school seniors lack even a basic level of knowledge about American history, according to the most recent National Assessment of Educational Progress.

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MORE THAN HALF OF HIGH SCHOOL SENIORS LACK EVEN A BASIC LEVEL OF KNOWLEDGE ABOUT AMERICAN HISTORY.

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Student performance on the 2010 U.S. history assessment showed overall improvement among black and Hispanic eighth graders, and the lowest performing fourth graders also improved their scores, the U.S. Department of Education said. But 12th graders showed no significant improvement in American history knowledge in 2010 compared to 2006 scores.

Education Secretary Arne Duncan said in a statement: “These results tell us that, as a country, we are failing to

provide children with a high-quality, well-rounded education. A well-rounded curriculum is key to preparing students for success in school and life. That’s why we’re putting a greater emphasis on courses like history, art, drama and music in our efforts to fix No Child Left Behind.”

The history assessment, a mix of multiple choice and constructed-response questions, was administered by the National Center for Education Statistics to nationally representative samples of public and private school students, including 7,000 fourth graders, 11,800 eighth graders and 12,400 twelfth graders.

Questions were designed to measure students’ knowledge and analytical skills in U.S. history in the context of four historical themes: democracy, including basic principles and core values developed from the American Revolution through the present; culture, focusing on how different racial, ethnic and religious groups interacted and the traditions that resulted; technology, focusing on the transformation of America’s economy from rural frontier to industrial superpower and its impact on society,

ideas and the environment; and world role, the movement of America from isolationism to worldwide responsibility.

At grade 4, students who scored at or above the Basic level (73 percent) were likely to be able to interpret a map about the Colonial economy; students scoring at or above Proficient (20 percent) were likely to be able to understand that canals increased trade among states; students scoring at Advanced (2 percent) were likely to be able to explain how machines and factories changed work.

At grade 8, the 69 percent of students scoring at or above Basic were likely to be able to identify a result of Native American-European interaction; the 17 percent at or above Proficient were likely to be able to identify a domestic impact of war; the 1 percent at Advanced were likely to be able to explain two differences between plantations and small farms in the antebellum South.

At grade 12, the 45 percent of students scoring at or above Basic were likely to be able to understand the context of a women’s movement document. The 12 percent who scored at or above Proficient were likely to be able to understand Missouri statehood in the context of sectionalism; and the 1 percent who scored at Advanced were likely to be able to evaluate Civil War arguments. ❖

# Oral history memoir presented to Library of Congress

By Annie Segan

At a holiday party in December 2009, the host, who knew that I had been collecting oral histories following completion of my doctoral degree, suggested to me: “See that little lady sitting over there? Go give her your card.”

I introduced myself to Vivian Hewitt one month before her 90th birthday. She soon invited me for an interview in her home, where I was dazzled by the magnificent art covering every wall. She told me that I was heaven-sent and hired me on the spot, explaining that for years she had been urged by family and friends to record the stories of her life but had been unable to sustain the effort without the assistance of an oral historian.

On May 23, 2011, Vivian Hewitt and the heavily-illustrated oral history book that we produced together, *The One and Only*, were celebrated at the Center for the Book at the Library of Congress as part of the author series, Books & Beyond.

The Center for the Book opened in 1977 and was given the mission of highlighting literary heritage and calling attention to the importance of books, reading, literacy and libraries. The Books & Beyond author series features writers from around the country who have a relationship with the Library of Congress. It was particularly appropriate to celebrate Vivian Hewitt’s life and oral history memoir here because she has been associated with the Library of Congress since 1979 when she served on the first national advisory board at the Center for the Book. That’s when she first met John Y. Cole, the founding director (and still director) of the center.

Vivian Hewitt has another connection to the Library of Congress through the Local Legacies project of the Library’s American Folklife Center, which documents community life throughout the United States. The genealogy of Hewitt’s extended family, now several thousand individuals who trace their ancestry to the seven daughters of Silvy, a West African slave, is one of the Local Legacy projects representing the State of North Carolina. The American Folklife Center also produced a documentary in celebration of her family’s 100th consecutive annual family reunion in 2006.

Hewitt’s life has had a dramatic trajectory and embodies many of the social, political and cultural transformations of the 20th century. From humble beginnings during the Great Depression in western Pennsylvania, she rose to the top of her profession as chief librarian for three institutions with international reach. She and her late husband, John, during 50 years of marriage, led a rich personal life among the social, political and cultural elite in New York City. They also collected art throughout their life together.

Hewitt is a real “librarian’s librarian.” She graduated from library school at Carnegie Institute of Technology in 1943 where she was the only African American in her class, after which she was hired as the first African-American public librarian in Pittsburgh. Hewitt taught library science at Atlanta University and then pursued a career in New York City where she eventually became, in succession, chief librarian of the Rockefeller Foundation, the Carnegie Endowment for International Peace and the Council on Foreign Relations.

During her exceptional career she also served terms as regional and national president of the Special Libraries



Vivian Hewitt and her cousin, Mel Watt (Rep. D-N.C.)

Association. In her personal and professional lives, Hewitt always sought the mantle of leadership and mentored many individuals. As a result, she played an important role in shaping, transforming and enriching the culture and the countless individuals who were fortunate enough to cross her path.

On the day of Hewitt’s event at the Library of Congress, Cole graciously provided a brief but inspiring tour as we made our way from the soaring rotunda of the Jefferson Building to our destination, the sixth floor of the Madison Building. He led us through the underground tunnels that connect the buildings that house the library, stopping along the way to identify points of interest. Cole’s most recent book about the library itself is *On These Walls: Inscriptions and Quotations in the Buildings of the Library of Congress* (Scala Publications, 2008).

As the Books & Beyond program convened in the Montpelier Room of the Madison Building, Cole introduced James Billington, the long-serving Librarian of Congress with whom Hewitt became acquainted professionally through the Special Libraries Association. Billington had attended the 100th annual reunion of Hewitt’s family. Rep. Mel Watt, D-N.C., who is Hewitt’s cousin, also spoke at the event. He described the respect and admiration that he and their extended families have for Hewitt and her accomplishments.

Hewitt began her comments at Books & Beyond by mentioning how grateful she was to have found an oral historian who made use of her extensive collection of photographs to elicit stories from her past. (We used more than 100 of these photographs in the book.) She spoke about her education, her career and her personal life and her journey from western Pennsylvania to the executive suites of Rockefeller Center and the halls of the United Nations in New York.

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## Guidelines for oral history credit

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view material. Each interview is unique because of the distinctive personality, skill and values of the interviewer. Imagine two interviews of George W. Bush about his childhood—one conducted by Germaine Greer and the other by Pat Robertson. In short, the oral historian is the essential element in a dynamic, creative process, and without his or her efforts the content of the interview (or at the very least a great part of it) would not exist.

Oral historians need to establish guidelines for apportioning proper credits to interviewers. These guidelines should then become the basis of a legal contract between the interviewee and oral historian and any other involved party. I believe that the ruling principle of what that credit should be depends on the type and degree of contribution the interviewer has on the final, published interview.

### **What are some of the considerations regarding this range of credits?**

One consideration is who initiated and managed the interview process. Often an oral history interview is initiated by an academic oral history department or oral historian. The historian generally then manages the whole process and many times is involved all the way from the first light bulb of an idea to turning on the tape machine at the first interview to the book being on your local Barnes & Noble bookshelf.

A second consideration is how much editing was done to the raw transcript and by whom. One important (though not infallible) lead to answering the first part of this question is the format of the published work. If it is in Q-and-A format, chances are that it is much closer to the original creative input, vision and structure of the interviewer, especially if he or she is one of the editors. How much the interviewee (or an outside editor) was involved in the editing might be important. It could mean a lesser credit for the interviewer if, for example, an outside editor completely changes the interview structure and rewrites all the “dialogue” from regular conversation to more polished written prose. Or even more critical: if the editor changes the form from a Q-and-A transcript to a straight narrative.

It is necessary to consider here what new material the interviewee (or someone else) may have added to the interview without the input of the interviewer. Let’s assume that the oral historian has only a minor role in editing the raw interview transcript, and that later the interviewee adds many new questions and answers to the transcript. At what point (if any) does the interviewer deserve less credit?

As the above discussion indicates, there are many possibilities for types of credits and for establishing criteria. Let’s look specifically at two types.

There are many fields where creative individuals cooperate to create something. Examples include fiction, song and speech writing, architecture and journalism. One endeavor where the credit system is well known and developed is the science journal, where first authorship goes to the person who did “most of the work.” What constitutes “most work” here is determined by who did most of the research and had the greatest creative contribution in it. The other authors had progressively lesser degrees of creative input.

Another model, and one similar to oral history in having multiple creators and credits, is screenwriting. For more than

60 years the Writers Guild of America has developed and implemented a system for awarding and arbitrating on screenwriting credits. On its website ([www.wga.org](http://www.wga.org)) one can read the Screen Credits Manual and Credits Survival Guide, which contain the results of a rich experience of awarding credits, an expertise that might be adapted to the oral history field.

The purpose of the guild’s credit system is to determine a “true and accurate statement of authorship” based solely on the writers’ contribution to the shooting script, that is, the final script from which the movie is made. The guild carefully defines key terms such as “writer” and the many possible credits (and the criteria for them), for instance, “Written by”, “Adaptation by” and “Screenplay by.” For this last credit, the guild is so specific as to mandate a percentage of how much a writer must contribute to the shooting script to be awarded this credit: If the script is an original screenplay any subsequent writer must have contributed 50 percent of the final script; if it is not an original, any writer must have contributed 33 percent.

The guild also arbitrates on the order of names in multiple credits. In awarding dual credit, an “&” indicates that this was a writing team that created the script together, whereas “and” tells the world (and prospective employers) that the first writer was rewritten by the second, that they didn’t work together but that both writers created enough of the script to be credited.

If a credit for an oral history is determined by the type and degree of one’s contribution, what are some possible credits for oral historians?

The most minor credit could result when oral history extracts are excerpted and used as quotes in a narrative biography. A fair credit in this context could be a thank you or mention in the book’s introduction. A more advanced credit could be when the oral history is published in Q-and-A format but with many changes by the interviewer. If the raw interview transcript is the basis of the published oral history and generated 33 per cent of the published transcript then the interviewer could receive a front cover credit such as, “Based on the oral history by X” or “As told to X.” The interviewer, in such a case, could write an introduction or preface explaining the interview and editing process.

It could be argued that if the raw transcript is the basis of the published oral history, irrespective of how much is used in the final publication, that this has automatically earned the interviewer a front cover credit in some form.

I believe that the most significant credit is due when the oral historian has managed the whole process of creating the oral history and has done the majority of the editing. The historian thereby deserves a sole front cover credit. This is even more appropriate if the publication is a collection of interviews of different people by one interviewer.

As indicated above, determining credits for creative, cooperative work can be complex but it is important that we oral historians—as an organization—formulate credit rules as soon as possible. Historians have a right to be publicly and objectively acknowledged for their work so as to advance their careers or even to negotiate and earn royalties. This is more than an issue of the simple justice of oral historians being recognized for their creative work and results. Clear, industry-

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## Guidelines for oral history credit

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wide rules on credits will result in more recognition for oral historians, encourage more oral history work and publishing, and increase respect for this important form of history recording and publishing. With the formulation of objective oral history credit guidelines only history can win. ❖

**Editor's note:** Scott McConnell is the author of *100 Voices: An Oral History of Ayn Rand* and is a documentarian based in Los Angeles.

## Memoir presented to Library of Congress

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She described how their home had become a salon where artists, intellectuals and activists met, surrounded by the Hewitts' growing collection of African-American and Haitian art. She recalled how she and her husband basked in the afterglow of the Harlem Renaissance and how they socialized with many artists, politicians, diplomats and leading cultural personalities of the day, including Langston Hughes, Malcolm X and Josephine Baker.

Hewitt said a major portion of their African-American art collection was purchased by NationsBank (now Bank of America) in 1998, with the condition that it be retained intact and used for educational purposes. As a result, The John and Vivian Hewitt Collection is now the cornerstone of the Harvey B. Gantt Center for African American Arts and Culture in Charlotte, N.C.

Another attendee at Books & Beyond was someone who had been a strong influence on my doctoral research: Donald A. Ritchie, historian of the U.S. Senate, past president of the Oral History Association and author of *Doing Oral History* (Oxford University Press, 2003). I was gratified to have Ritchie present to enjoy the fruits of my oral history project.

The oral history of Vivian Hewitt is full of vivid personalities, beautiful art and cherished photographs that elicited the little stories that led to great achievements. It was a privilege and a joy to assist her in preserving her storied memories for future generations and to see her illustrated oral history memoir celebrated at the Center for the Book in our venerable national institution, the Library of Congress. ❖

## Oral historians express concern about Boston College subpoena

Compiled from news reports

Oral historians are closely watching a legal battle unfolding in U.S. District Court in Boston over an effort by the Justice Department to seek confidential oral histories at Boston College with former members of the Irish Republican Army.

Those who participated in the interviews were promised confidentiality and were told the interviews would only be released after they died.

The college went to court in June asking that the federal subpoena be quashed.

that if the subpoena is successful, it would damage the "trust and rapport [that] are at the very core of the oral history enterprise."

In a brief filed in July, the Justice Department rejected the college's arguments saying no researcher could grant a right of confidentiality that would withstand a subpoena.

"To grant the motion to quash would encourage other persons engaged in collecting 'oral histories'—whether they be legitimate academics or the purveyors of pulp fiction collecting 'confessions' about organized crime—to promise complete confidentiality, relying on the court to enforce that ill-advised promise," the brief said, adding:

"Courts have not recognized an 'academic privilege' akin to the attorney/client privilege of the Fifth Amendment protection against self-incrimination."

That's a message past OHA president John A. Neuenschwander has been telling oral history audiences for years. Neuenschwander, author of *A Guide to Oral History and the Law*, told Inside Higher Education that he has searched unsuccessfully for legal precedent that would support confidentiality pledges by oral historians.

**"OUR POSITION IS THAT THE PREMATURE RELEASE OF THE TAPES COULD THREATEN THE SAFETY OF THE PARTICIPANTS, THE ENTERPRISE OF ORAL HISTORY AND THE ONGOING PEACE AND RECONCILIATION PROCESS IN NORTHERN IRELAND."**

Acting on behalf of the British government, Justice Department lawyers served college officials with a subpoena in May asking that two of the dozens of confidential interviews in the college's Center for Irish Programs be turned over, apparently in connection with a British investigation into unsolved murders that occurred during the decades known as "The Troubles" in Northern Ireland.

Spokesman Jack Dunn said in a statement issued by Boston College: "Our position is that the premature release of the tapes could threaten the safety of the participants, the enterprise of oral history and the ongoing peace and reconciliation process in Northern Ireland."

Cliff Kuhn, past president of the Oral History Association, filed an affidavit supporting the college and attesting

(continued on page 11)

## Minnesota immigrant oral histories online

By Jim Fogerty, *Minnesota Historical Society*

*Becoming Minnesotan*, an online resource for teachers and students, is now a reality.

Developed by the Minnesota Historical Society with a grant from the Institute for Museum and Library Services (IMLS), this new curriculum debuted in May and includes a variety of information and tools for use in schools across the state and beyond. Working with teams of history and social studies teachers, and with representatives from each of the immigrant groups represented, project staff developed lessons, teaching aids and related resources suitable for use in a variety of classroom settings.

The main website for teachers and students ([www.mnhs.org/immigration](http://www.mnhs.org/immigration)) includes both audio and transcript excerpts from oral history interviews grouped into subject areas developed by the teacher advisers to suit classroom needs and the teaching standards required by both state and federal guidelines. The teaching units also include photographs, timelines, maps, podcasts, a role-playing guide and links to websites offering additional information on each immigrant group—all approved by the community representatives.

The oral history interviews featured on the website are those from multiple projects conducted over the past 15 years by the society in cooperation with the Asian Indian, Tibetan, Hmong, Cambodian (Khmer) and Somali communities. The website allows the addition of many more interviews from ongoing projects such as those underway with the Latino, Vietnamese, Korean, Lao and Filipino communities



Wangyal Ritzequra, Abdisalam Adam, and Ram and Neena Gada celebrate the completion of the Minnesota immigration project.

in Minnesota. As interviews in those projects are completed, interview excerpts, photographs and related information are prepared for addition to the curriculum later this year.

To facilitate wider use of individual interviews, a related website ([www.mnhs.org/ioh](http://www.mnhs.org/ioh)) has been developed to offer full text access to each interview. For further information on this project and its products contact James E. Fogerty ([james.fogerty@mnhs.org](mailto:james.fogerty@mnhs.org)). ❖

## OHMAR spring meeting focuses on disparate communities

By Lu Ann Jones, *National Park Service*

“An impressive array of oral history projects, use of new media and promising young people entering the field” is how Harriet Lynn of the Heritage Theatre Artists’ Consortium in Baltimore summed up the spring meeting of Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region, co-sponsored and hosted by the Chemical Heritage Foundation in Philadelphia April 20-21, 2011.

Reflecting the conference theme of “Displacement and Community: Using Oral History to Document Transitions, Evolutions and Adaptations,” more than 30 presentations shared research about a variety of interviewing projects that documented a number of diverse communities.

Among the “promising young people” were four students from Brown University’s John Nicolas Brown Center for Humanities and Cultural Heritage program who discussed “Putting Voices on the Street: Using Oral History to Create an Audio Tour.” Rebecca Soule, Kaitlynn War, Shana Weinberg and Eric Boyle described how they researched and documented the Fox Point neighborhood and produced an audio tour that reflected the community’s rich ethnic heritage.

Another group of young professionals from New York City—Joanna Steinbert, Samantha Gibson, Keara Duggan and Margaret Fraser—described projects and exhibits that used oral history to document avant-garde artists who performed in a Greenwich Village church sanctuary and the lives of taxi cab drivers, and to link students in an after school program with people who shared their memories of the Brooklyn Dodgers.

A panel that focused on “uncovering hidden communities” included presentations by Hilary Domush on the scientific community of mass spectrometrists and Abbie Reese on the individual and cultural identities in a cloistered monastic community.

Other presentations included discussions of such disparate communities as Gypsies in Turkey (Gul Ozatesler); transnational Salvadorans (Sarah Loose and Francisco Ramirez); residents of Northern Ireland who remembered “the troubles” (Jill Strauss); Dominican immigrants and retirees (Sharon Utakis and Nelson Reynoso); Baltimore neighbors who turned memories into theater (Harriet Lynn); New York students and teachers in Communist Party adult labor schools (Marvin Gettleman); pioneers of scientific and technical information systems (Sarah Hunter); civilian and military personnel undergoing base relocation (Melissa Ziobro); inmates in prisons (Caitlin J. Taylor); and Philadelphians who created an intentionally integrated neighborhood (Abigail Perkiss) and those who underwent deindustrialization (David McAllister).

A lunchtime panel featured OHMAR veterans Linda Shopes, Donald A. Ritchie, Mary Marshall Clark and Anne M. Valk describing the challenges and rewards of editing oral history interviews for publication.

David Caruso, oral history program manager at the Chemical Heritage Foundation, and Lu Ann Jones, staff historian with the National Park Service, were program co-chairs. Caruso also organized local arrangements. ❖

## Listening to Louisiana Women symposium held in Baton Rouge

Louisiana State University professor Alecia P. Long began the process of obtaining oral histories from Louisiana women in 2009. The fruition of her efforts and those of her students resulted in a dynamic symposium held on May 25 at the Louisiana State Museum in Baton Rouge.

Long and her students interviewed nearly 50 women, ranging in age from 22 to 92, from around the state about how they felt their gender affected them economically, civically, legally and socially. The oral histories of their experiences will be housed at the T. Harry Williams Oral History Center at LSU.

The symposium featured several panels that addressed themes that emerged in the interviews.

A panel headed by Jennifer Abraham Cramer, director of the T. Harry Williams Oral History Center, and Elaine Maccio of the LSU School of Social Work, emphasized the importance of oral histories in teaching and culture and traditions. Memories of everyday people bring history to life and link it to the present, they said, which can inspire and help humanize history to today's students.

"When young folks see and hear (through oral histories) how those who came before them, survived the hardship and thrived afterward, it shows the student that the hard things can be accomplished," Maccio said.

The Listening to Louisiana Women project was realized through the generosity of the Louisiana women who shared their stories and the LSU students who worked diligently to listen and co-create the oral histories.

Funding for the project was provided through: the Ford Foundation, LSU, Louisiana State Museum, LSU College of Humanities & Social Sciences, LSU Department of History, the T. Harry Williams Oral History Center and Planned Parenthood Gulf Coast.

The Listening To Louisiana Women Oral History Project is ongoing. If you would like to participate or know someone who would, please contact us at: [listentolouisianawomen@gmail.com](mailto:listentolouisianawomen@gmail.com). ❖



From left: Donna Brazile, Alecia Long, Julie Mickleberry and Jennifer Abraham Cramer.

## Boston College Subpoena

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Reporters covering the story sought comments from a number of other OHA leaders.

- OHA past president Mary Marshall Clark of Columbia University's oral history program told the New York Times: "This is our worst-case scenario."
- Mary Larson, OHA first vice president, praised Boston College for fighting the subpoena. She told the New York Times: "What all of us in the oral history community are afraid of is this is going to have an incredible chilling effect on what we're able to do."

- OHA Council member Doug Boyd of the University of Kentucky told National Public Radio that the case should make oral historians realize there may be limits to promises of confidentiality. "It's very different when talking about rural farmers in Kentucky," Boyd told

NPR. "[You] might say something bad about a brother or neighbor that they don't want on the record, but when you're talking about stories that are going to contain criminal confessions, I think we need to take a very realistic look at what we can and cannot do." ❖

**Editor's note:** OHA members interested in legal issues relating to oral history are reminded that Neuenschwander will present a workshop on oral history and the law at this fall's OHA conference in Denver. Look for details elsewhere in this issue of the **Newsletter**.



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## *News & Notes ...*

### **Simmons College invites visiting scholars**

Distinguished practitioners, educators or researchers known for their work in oral history, reference or the study of librarianship and information service in humanities are invited to apply to the Allen Smith Visiting Scholars Program at the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at Simmons College in Boston. There is no deadline for proposals. For more information, contact professor Candy Schwartz at [candy.schwartz@simmons.edu](mailto:candy.schwartz@simmons.edu).

### **Oral History of American Music adds young composers to collection**

Yale University's Oral History of American Music, now an official component of Yale's music library, has added video interviews with

incoming graduate student composers to its ongoing oral history work. Additionally, Libby Van Cleve has been named the new director of OHAM, following the retirement of Vivian Perlis. OHAM also hired its first archivist, Anne Rhodes, who is both a library professional and a vocalist specializing in contemporary music.

### **Root cellars documented with interviews, maps in Newfoundland**

Newfoundland and Labrador's Intangible Cultural Heritage Program has embarked on an effort to document Newfoundland root cellars, a symbol of traditional agriculture in communities that depended on storage and preservation for healthy, year-round food. The root cellars that have been identified are being measured, photographed and mapped, and inter-

views are being conducted with people who can shed light on their uses, historically and today. For more information, contact Crystal Braye at [folklore.coop@gmail.com](mailto:folklore.coop@gmail.com).

### **Minnesota homelessness oral history exhibit displayed**

Audio recordings and photos of Minnesota individuals and families experiencing homelessness were on exhibit in July in the rotunda of the Russell Senate Office Building. The exhibit was created by St. Stephen's Human Services, the Family Housing Fund and Heading Home Minnesota and was displayed at the invitation of Sen. Al Franken, D-Minn. Project sponsors said the first-person audio and photos of people in "economic limbo" depict personal strength, joy and community success as well as suffering and injustice. ❖

**Visit [www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org) for more information**