

## Humanities Alliance maps offer new ways for oral historians to reach out

By Cliff Kubn, OHA Executive Director

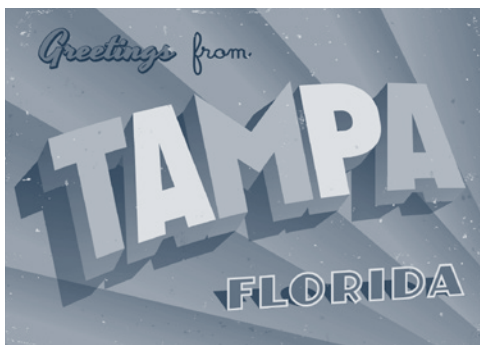
THE NATIONAL HUMANITIES Alliance, a humanities advocacy coalition to which the Oral History Association belongs, has recently launched its new website at nhalliance.org. The site makes it simpler for humanities advocates to make their voices heard, offers multiple ways to explore and promote the rich humanities work happening throughout the country and provides opportunities to support advocacy efforts.

There are two maps associated with the site that we encourage OHA members and oral historians to engage with:

The Engaged Humanities Story Map features an initial 12 examples of collaborative, publicly engaged programs that have built stronger support for the humanities within their communities. Help us fill in the map with more model programs—we know that there are numerous oral history-related collaborations that warrant inclusion. See the instructions on how to participate under “Learn

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## Conference workshops offer wide range of topics



WHETHER YOU WANT to master the basics of doing oral history, explore the challenges of preserving digital video files, get some ideas about using oral history in your classroom or get up to date on legal issues, you’ll find opportunities at the Oral History Association conference in Tampa, Florida.

Five workshops are scheduled for Wednesday, Oct. 14, and the

workshop for teachers is scheduled for Saturday, Oct. 17.

Here is a summary of what you will learn at each of the half-day workshops:

**Introduction to Oral History**, scheduled from 8 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, will present the basics of doing oral history from developing an idea to creating a finished product. Topics will include project planning, technology considerations,

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## President's report

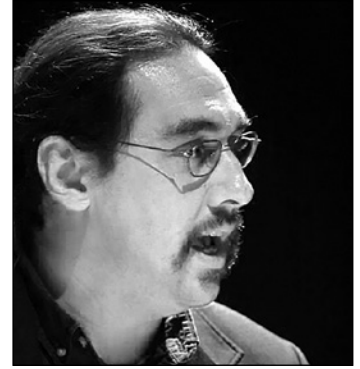
By Paul Ortiz, University of Florida

As I write this column, the nation is still in shock and mourning at the murder of nine members of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina. "Mother Emanuel" is one of the most storied churches in the United States. It was co-founded in 1816 by Denmark Vesey. The church was burned to the ground in 1822 by whites, and 35 of its members were hanged under suspicion by authorities of plotting a slave rebellion that would have coincided with Bastille Day celebrations.

The congregation at Mother Emanuel played a critical role in the modern civil rights movement. Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and many members of the Southern Christian Leadership Conference (SCLC) spoke at rallies organized at the church. A good number of the rank-and-file organizers of the local freedom struggle were Emanuel A.M.E. members, including scores of members who marched in solidarity with the striking hospital workers in Charleston and Coretta Scott King in 1969. For generations, the people who built and rebuilt this church brick by brick breathed life into Emanuel's motto that, "We are brothers and sisters in Christ regardless of race." The

history of Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church is an indispensable part of the embattled, democratic traditions of the nation.

Unfortunately, the man who allegedly murdered nine of members of Mother Emanuel was also motivated by history. Yes, Dylann Roof was a lone gunman; however, he was animated by a racist view of America's past that is promoted by a growing number of web sites, textbooks, teachers and media "experts," according to the Southern Poverty Law Center's Hatewatch program. Ignorance of our nation's chronicles of racial oppression is increasingly enabled by local school boards and textbook corporations. This ignorance was at play in the mass murder at Mother



Paul Ortiz, OHA president

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## Executive Director's report

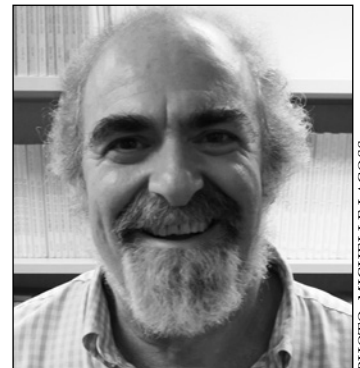
By Cliff Kuhn

ADMINISTERING AN ORGANIZATION like the OHA resembles planting and cultivating a garden. You make sure the soil is fertile, sow some seeds, carefully nurture the plants, try to keep the weeds at bay and hope for a bountiful harvest. And it's been with a real feeling of satisfaction that we've seen many of our labors begin to bear fruit this spring and summer.

Nothing requires more tending than the annual meeting, and this year's annual meeting in Tampa is in great shape. Program co-chairs Sharon Utakis and Martha Norkunas and Local Arrangements chair Barbara Lewis, always capably supported by OHA vice-president Anne Valk and program associate Gayle Knight, have put together an outstanding and diverse array of sessions and featured events. The preliminary program is available online with more enhancements than ever, and the "early bird special" conference registration rate lasts until August 15.

Gayle has also been the point person in the office for the redesign of the OHA website, which looks more attractive, is easier to navigate and better serves the actual needs of those who go to the site. She also manages OHA membership which, to continue the gardening metaphor, has been

blossoming. In large part due to OHA taking back membership from Oxford University Press, as well as the upgraded website, new membership brochure and generally enhanced visibility and outreach, both total membership and the member renewal rate are up considerably from this time last year. All of which is



Cliff Kuhn, OHA executive director

PHOTO: MICHELLE LACOSS

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## OHA Newsletter changes coming

This will be the last issue of the OHA Newsletter printed and mailed to all members. OHA is moving to a digital newsletter beginning with the Winter 2015 issue. The digital version, to be produced in house, will be emailed to each member and posted on the OHA website. OHA will mail a newsletter to members who request a printed copy. We will continue to keep members updated.

Thank you to graphic designer Alexandra Tzoumas, who has served as the **Newsletter's** design editor since 2006. We're grateful to her for enhancing the **Newsletter** with her enthusiasm and creativity.

## Exercise your right to choose OHA leadership

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION members are urged to exercise their right to choose OHA leadership by casting an online ballot or printing out a ballot and mailing it to the

OHA executive office. Online voting commenced July 27 and will end Sept. 10. Paper ballots will not be mailed this year.

Candidates running for OHA offices are:



1<sup>st</sup> VICE PRESIDENT

**TODD MOYE**

Professor of History,  
University of North Texas;  
Director of the UNT Oral History Program



OHA COUNCIL, POSITION ONE

**TOMAS SANDOVAL**

Associate Professor of Chicana/o-Latina/o  
Studies and History, Pomona College,  
Claremont, California



**CLAYTEE WHITE**

Director, Oral History Research Center  
University of Nevada, Las Vegas, Libraries



OHA COUNCIL, POSITION TWO

**TERESA BERGEN**

Freelance Writer, Editor and  
Transcriptionist, Portland, Oregon



**ALLISON TRACY**

Oral Historian,  
Stanford Historical Society

### NOMINATING COMMITTEE MEMBERS

POSITION ONE:

**MARY MARSHALL CLARK,**

Director of the Columbia Center for  
Oral History Research

**SARAH MILLIGAN,**

Head of the Oklahoma Oral History  
Research Program,  
Oklahoma State University Library

POSITION TWO:

**CHARLES HARDY III,**

History Professor,  
West Chester University of Pennsylvania

**MARJORIE McLELLAN,**

Associate Professor,  
Wright State University, Dayton, Ohio

POSITION THREE:

**CHRISTIAN LOPEZ**

University of Georgia Special  
Collections Libraries

**STEVEN SIELAFF**

Senior Editor and Collection Manager,  
Baylor University Institute for Oral History

## President's letter

*continued from page 2*

Emanuel. Roof's distorted viewpoint of history drove him to commit the unthinkable.

Once again, we have been painfully reminded that history is a life-or-death matter in this country. I call upon all Oral History Association members to do the utmost to use our craft and skills to teach and to promote stories that uplift the dignity of humanity and the solidarity of the human race. We can be proud of the fact that oral historians have played an invaluable role in teaching, publishing and advancing chronicles of mutual aid and human striving. However, there is always more to do. As I stated in my keynote address at the Southwest Oral History Association annual meeting, we live in an era of economic inequality, mass incarceration and a resurgent racism. In this context, we must pledge ourselves anew in the wake of the tragedy at Mother Emanuel to ensure that the stories and aspirations of those committed to social justice are told and re-told.

It is time to register for the OHA's annual meeting in Tampa, Florida, scheduled for Oct. 14-18. Martha Norkunas and Sharon Utakis, Program Committee co-chairs, have done a wonderful job in organizing this year's conference.

Let's take this opportunity to thank all of the members of the Program Committee for putting together a thrilling annual meeting, which is now available for your perusal at OHA's web site: <http://www.oralhistory.org/annual-meeting/>

Another critical initiative connected to our annual meeting is the OHA's Mentorship Program. This is an integral part of our effort to make OHA a welcoming and inclusive place. I urge OHA members to take part in this program as mentors to newcomers. I commend the Mentorship Program development team, composed of Ellen Brooks, Erica Fugger and Kristen La Follette, for leading a program that is doing so much to improve the health of the Oral History Association.

There are so many OHA members to thank for service to our organization. The 50th Anniversary Task Force is off to an excellent start under the dynamic leadership of former OHA president Mary Larson. I also want to take this opportunity to thank Roger Horowitz for being the longtime chair of OHA's Finance Committee. Roger has put in yeoman's service on all things financial for many years and is now being joined by a newly augmented Finance Committee.

On to Tampa! ❖

## Executive Director's report

*continued from page 2*

great, yet it is imperative that membership continue to grow if the organization is to flourish.

Outside of the office we have also been busy engaging in partnerships and embarking upon new initiatives. In May we sponsored two workshops, "Giving Voice: Interpreting and Preserving Oral Histories," in conjunction with the Conservation Center for Art & Historic Artifacts, and "OHMS: Enhancing Access to Oral History Online," held at Georgia State University, our host institution. We also sponsored a session titled "Public History and Oral History" at the annual meeting of the National Council on Public History. And at the behest of American Historical Association president Vicki Ruiz we have put together an oral history-themed "presidential session" for next year's AHA.

Two initiatives warrant particular attention. In collaboration with the Veterans History Project of the

Library of Congress, we are developing a pamphlet, along with associated digital files, on veterans oral history. Longtime OHA member Barb Sommer is authoring the pamphlet, which will be available by the OHA meeting in October.

We also have been working on a document about oral history as scholarship, for purposes of promotion and tenure. A draft will be ready by the Tampa meeting, and the plan is to publicly announce the final version at the 50th anniversary OHA meeting in 2016. As with the veterans pamphlet, we believe that this effort will have a significant impact in advancing appreciation of oral history and best practices. And as with so much else we do, they both result from careful and thorough nurturing by many people throughout the process—in short, products of the oral history community garden! ❖



THANK  
YOU

## Special thanks to life members

The Oral History Association offers special thanks to the following new life members:

**Anna Kaplan   Samuel Robson   Stephen Sloan   Regennia Williams**

Generous support in the form of life memberships and contributions to the OHA Endowment Fund help enhance ongoing efforts to keep the organization strong for decades to come.



# 2015 OHA Conference Program Highlights

## Conference workshops

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funding, release forms, developing questions, indexing or transcribing interviews and publication. Workshop leaders are: **Jennifer A. Cramer**, director of the T. Harry Williams Center for Oral History, who oversees oral history projects for the Louisiana State University Libraries and manages an oral history collection of nearly 4,000 interviews; and **Troy Reeves**, who has headed the oral history program at the University of Wisconsin-Madison since 2007 and previously directed the Idaho Oral History Center in Boise.

**Share the Wealth: Bringing Oral History to the Public**, scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, will explore creative, engaging ways to bring oral history out of the archive to a wider audience. Participants will learn how to develop public oral history projects in both physical and digital formats. Topics will include big-picture planning as well as specific tasks, such as editing audio clips for a podcast, creating QR codes, producing visual displays and creating interactive listening stations. Workshop leaders are faculty and staff from the Southern Oral History Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. They are: **Jaycie Vos**, archivist and coordinator of collections for the SOHP; **Malinda Maynor Lowery**, associate professor of history at UNC-Chapel Hill and director of the SOHP; **Rachel F. Seidman**, associate director of the SOHP; and **Seth Kotch**, assistant professor of American studies at UNC-Chapel Hill.

**Introduction to Digital Video Oral History**, scheduled from 8:30 a.m. to noon on Wednesday, is a chance for participants to get basic, practical instruction in digital video oral history, with an emphasis on high quality, low-cost options for individuals and institutions. The workshop will include discussions and demonstrations of cameras and related equipment, basic videography techniques for sit-down interviews and location shooting; microphone placement basics; lighting and video media storage, migration and preservation. Workshop leaders are: **Gerald Zahavi**, professor of history and director of the documentary studies and public history programs at the University at Albany, SUNY; and **Susan McCormick**, lecturer in history at the University at Albany, SUNY, where she teaches introductory courses in oral history and documentary studies.

**Oral History and the Law**, scheduled from 1 to 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, is a chance for participants to learn about the major legal issues oral historians need to know about and ways they can implement sound legal practices. Topics will include legal release agreements, challenges to interview restrictions, defamation, privacy torts, copyright and the Internet. The workshop leader is **John A. Neuenschwander**, past president of the Oral History Association and emeritus professor of history at Carthage College. He also served nearly 30 years as a municipal judge in Kenosha, Wisconsin, and is the author of *A Guide to Oral History and the Law*, 2nd edition.

**Gigabyte, Terabyte, Tetrabyte—Oh my!: A Workshop to Tackle the Challenge of Preservation of Oral History Interviews in Digital Video Formats**, scheduled for 1 to 4:30 p.m. on Wednesday, will tackle issues related to infrastructure and organization required to preserve digital video oral histories. Topics will include: managing enormous file sizes; number of copies that should be kept and where; how often to back up files; best-bet formats for the long term; and organizational schemes for managing growing archives of digital videos. Workshop presenters are: **Christa Whitney**, director of the Yiddish Book Center's Wexler Oral History Project at Hampshire College, Amherst, Massachusetts; and **Emily Felder**, technical assistant for the Yiddish Book Center's Wexler Oral History Project. The project has a collection of more than 450 in-depth video interviews dealing with the Yiddish language and culture.

**Oral History, Cultural Identity and the Arts**, scheduled for 9 a.m. to noon on Saturday, is geared for teachers from elementary through graduate school. OHA conference featured speaker **Judith Sloan** will present this workshop focusing on the art of listening and transforming stories into various forms of artistic expression, such as theater, poetry and multimedia work that can be adapted for all ages. Sloan plans to share images, stories and radio pieces from her award-winning work to illustrate the techniques she has used to create art from oral narratives, a process that can be used across the curriculum.

The teacher workshop fee is \$10. All other workshops are \$40 for OHA members and \$50 for non-members. Please sign up for workshops when you register for the conference online at [oralhistory.org](http://oralhistory.org). ❖



## Make hotel reservations soon!

The **Tampa Marriott Waterside** is the headquarters hotel for the **2015 OHA conference, Oct. 14-18**.

Reserve online or call 1-888-789-3090 and request the **Oral History Association conference rate**, which will be available only until the block of rooms fills.

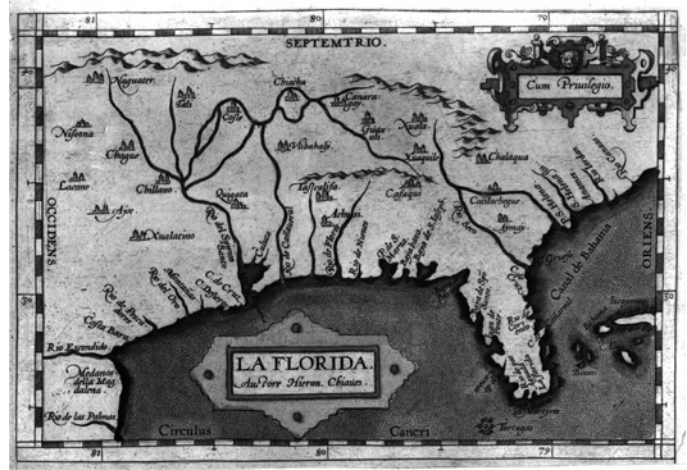
## Tampa's history on display in conference tours

IF YOU THINK Tampa, Florida, is all about football, hockey and spring training for the New York Yankees, you're wrong. It's also rich with a history of Native people, cattlemen, railroad barons and immigrants who established unique industries that make the area a vital place to visit for people with a bent toward history.

Spanish explorer Juan Ponce de Leon—seeker of the Fountain of Youth—made landfall on Florida's east coast in 1513, sailed around the peninsula and claimed the land for Spain, calling it Florida or "The Land of Flowers." Historians dispute exactly where his fleet put ashore on the west coast, but it likely was at Charlotte Harbor, south of Tampa Bay. Subsequently, another Spanish conquistador, Panfilo de Narvaez, is believed to have landed near Tampa Bay in 1528.

In any case, the name Tampa, first appeared on a Spanish map in 1601, nearly two decades before the intrepid Mayflower pilgrims made landfall at Plymouth Rock, Massachusetts. Maps tracing the history of exploration of the region are part of a permanent display at the Tampa Bay History Center, a short walk from the OHA conference hotel, the Tampa Marriott Waterside, and site of the OHA Presidential Reception on Thursday, Oct. 15, from 6 to 7:30 p.m.

The early maps also show numerous communities of Native people the explorers encountered. One group that lived near Tampa Bay, the Tocobaga Indians, are notable for being the only Florida tribe that planted corn as well as hunting and gathering on land and relying on the rich plant and animal life in the water.



La Florida. Auctore Hieron Chiaves. Published in 1584. Cartographer: Chavez, Geronimo de.

The modern tourist industry in the region got its start when railroad magnate Henry B. Plant brought railroads to Tampa in the late 1800s, also building hotels where his rail passengers could stay. The fledgling tourist industry took off, of course, with the subsequent development of the automobile and the road building that followed.

OHA conference attendees can explore some of the region's rich cultural history by signing up for two walking tours that conference planners have arranged. ❖



## Ybor City Walking Tour

ON FRIDAY, OCT. 16, OHA members can attend an hour-long escorted tour of Ybor City, founded in 1886 as a company town that became the center for making hand-rolled Cuban cigars. Immigrants from Cuba, Spain and Italy established a vibrant tradition of mutual aid societies and cultural expression that put Ybor City on the map. The buildings housing the mutual aid societies were ornate, elaborate structures that became known as "cathedrals for the working classes." The tour, led by historian Gary Mormino, will visit the city's first great cigar factory, several of the mutual aid society clubhouses and Jose Marti Park, among other stops.

You can sign up for the Ybor City tour, scheduled from 6 to 7 p.m., when you register online for the conference. The cost is \$15. ❖

## So what's the long-range weather forecast?

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION members last convened in Florida 30 years ago when the conference was held in Pensacola beginning Oct. 31, the same day Hurricane Juan, which had been traversing the Gulf of Mexico, hit Pensacola. The storm dropped 10 inches of rain in parts of the Florida Panhandle and challenged OHA members trying to get to the conference from other parts of the country.

The late Martha Ross, who was OHA president that year, enjoyed retelling how she and conference planners approached virtually everyone who managed to get there to create impromptu panels to discuss whatever projects they were working on. No one could turn down a request from Martha, so the conference went on, albeit with many program changes. ❖



## Tarpon Springs Greektown Historic District Tour

**THE GREEKTOWN DISTRICT** in Pinellas County is Florida's first listing on the Traditional Cultural Property National Register. This 140-acre district includes nearly 300 buildings, sites and structures, including about a dozen sponge boats, which reflect its strong ethnic and maritime heritage. Greeks started arriving in significant numbers around 1905, and the Tarpon Springs area is the only Greek-American community based on harvesting sponges, an industry that still pumps an estimated \$2 million into the Tarpon Springs economy annually. Tina Bucuvalas, curator of arts and historical resources for the city of Tarpon Springs, will lead a walking tour that will include visits to locations in the Greektown



Sponges in Tarpon Springs Florida. Photo: JATillard.

District that are associated with the sponge industry, religion and tourism.

OHA members who sign up for the tour, which is scheduled for Sunday, Oct. 18, from 9:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., will take a shuttle bus from the conference hotel to Tarpon Springs, where the walking tour will also include free time for lunch and shopping before returning to the hotel. OHA members will have time to attend the annual meeting early Sunday morning before the tour.

As with the Ybor City tour, you can sign up to visit the Greektown Historic District when you register online for the conference. The cost is \$40. ❖

## Tampa conference offers smorgasbord of choices

**DOZENS OF PANELS**, film screenings, featured speakers, performances, interest group meetings, roundtable discussions, workshops, plenary sessions, mentoring opportunities, historical walking tours and social gatherings abound on the 2015 Oral History Association conference schedule.

Set for **Oct. 14-18 at the Tampa Marriott Waterside Hotel in Tampa, Florida**, the annual conference will explore the theme "Stories for Social Change and Social Justice."

Pursuing that theme, conference plenary sessions will examine: projects that work with activist communities at the boundaries of social change; the Guantánamo Public Memory Project, which aims to build public awareness of the long history of the U.S. naval station at Guantánamo Bay, Cuba, and foster dialogue on its current uses and possible futures for the site; and the youth activism and social media explosion that occurred in the wake of the police shooting of an unarmed black teen last summer in Ferguson, Missouri.

Other events featured at the conference are:

### Keynote speaker Charles E. Cobb Jr.

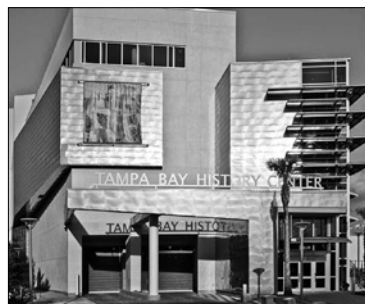


Cobb's presentation at the **Friday, Oct. 16 noon luncheon**, is titled "Remembering and Telling the History of the Southern Civil Rights Movement." Cobb is the author of a number of books on various aspects of the civil rights movement, including, most recently *This Nonviolent Stuff'll Get You Killed: How Guns Made the Civil Rights Movement Possible*.

Cobb was a field secretary for the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC) and in 2011 helped establish the SNCC Legacy Project, working with SNCC veterans to archive historical documents and tell the story of the civil rights movement in America. Earlier this year the SNCC Legacy Project, along with Duke University, launched a One Person One Vote website, [www.onevotesncc.org](http://www.onevotesncc.org), and Cobb serves as "scholar/activist" on the Duke campus for the project.



### Presidential reception and featured performance



The Tampa Bay History Center, near the conference hotel, is the site of the **Thursday, Oct. 15**, presidential reception beginning at 6 p.m. It will be followed by a presentation of an original play titled "Gator Tales," devised and directed by Kevin Marshall, professor of theatre at University of Florida, in conjunction with the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program. The performance features stories of African-American students at the University of Florida over the past 50 years. The character's stories are drawn from the SPOHP oral history archive and the Alachua County African American History Project.

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# 2015 OHA Conference Program Highlights

## Tampa conference

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### Welcome reception film showing

OHA members who arrive on **Wednesday, Oct. 14**, should plan to attend the welcome reception at 6:30 p.m. They will be treated to a documentary film screening and talk by independent filmmaker Andrew Garrison of Austin, Texas. His award-winning documentary, *Trash Dance*, focuses on sanitation workers and their garbage trucks.

### Hari Kondabolu performance



In what may be a first for an OHA conference, stand-up comedian and human rights activist Hari Kondabolu will perform for attendees on **Friday, Oct. 16 at 8 p.m.** The native New Yorker will answer questions after his performance. *The New York Times* has called him, “one of the most exciting political comics in stand-up today.”

### Judith Sloan performance of “YO MISS!”



Actor, writer, human rights activist and poet Judith Sloan will perform after the **Saturday evening banquet, Oct. 17**. Her performance, which combines theater, radio and music, is described as an eye- and ear-witness account of an artist retelling stories of teaching immigrant and refugee teens and incarcerated youth who are coming to terms with the events that shaped them. Sloan portrays various characters who confront issues of race and

cultural divides as they find resilience, humanity and humor in each other’s stories.

Sloan, who has won numerous awards for her interdisciplinary productions, is a cofounder of EarSay, which describes itself as a “nonprofit arts organization dedicated to uncovering and portraying stories of the uncelebrated.” ❖

## Mini workshops focus on digital techniques

IF YOU WANT to brush up on or leap into all things digital, consider attending one or all four of the mini workshops scheduled on Thursday, Friday and Sunday of the Tampa conference.

The 90-minute sessions are narrowly focused on specific techniques oral historians can use and are ideal for attendees who may not be able to come earlier for the more extensive, half-day Wednesday workshops on digital topics.

The workshops include:

- **Digging into Digital Platforms: One Interview, Four Tools**, scheduled for Thursday, Oct. 15

- **How to Build a Website that Curates Oral History Interviews on Multiple Levels**, scheduled for Friday, Oct. 16
- **Oral History in the Digital Archive: Strategies for Classroom Use**, also scheduled for Friday, Oct. 16 and
- **Digital Video Oral History: A Practical How-To**, scheduled for Sunday morning following the OHA annual business meeting. ❖

## Conference co-chairs offer thanks

By Martha Norkunas and Sharon Utakis,  
2015 Conference Program Co-Chairs

WE WOULD LIKE to thank our outstanding Program Committee members for all of their hard work, ideas and commitment to the conference. We would also like to take a moment and thank Gayle Knight, Cliff Kuhn and Annie Valk for all the assistance they’ve given us as we shaped the 2015 OHA conference.

We are looking forward to seeing everyone in Tampa! ❖



Gayle Knight, Cliff Kuhn and Annie Valk.



## Award winners to be honored in Tampa

OHA is pleased to announce the 2015 Oral History Association award winners. The awards will be presented at the 2015 OHA annual meeting in Tampa.

### ARTICLE AWARD

*“Squatting History: The Power of Oral History as a History-Making Practice”*

Amy Starecheski  
*The Oral History Review*,  
Summer/Fall 2014

### BOOK AWARD

*Listening on the Edge: Oral History in the Aftermath of Crisis*

Mark Cave and Stephen M. Sloan,  
editors, Oxford University Press, 2014

### ELIZABETH B. MASON PROJECT AWARD (MAJOR PROJECT)

*Crossing Borders, Bridging Generations*

Brooklyn Historical Society

### ELIZABETH B. MASON PROJECT AWARD (SMALL PROJECT)

*Freedom Summer Oral History and Library Curation Project*

Samuel Proctor Oral History Program  
in collaboration with the George A.  
Smathers Libraries, University of Florida

### MARTHA ROSS TEACHING AWARD

*David Jones*

Eastside High School,  
Gainesville, Florida

### ORAL HISTORY IN A NON-PRINT FORMAT AWARD

*“Goin’ North: Stories of the First Great Migration to Philadelphia”*

Charles Hardy III, Janneken Smucker  
and Doug Boyd

### STETSON KENNEDY VOX POPULI (“VOICE OF THE PEOPLE”) AWARD

*Michael Kline, Talking Across the Lines*

## Poster session offers chance to get project feedback

Oral historians attending the 2015 Tampa conference will have a chance to present and explore ideas at a **Saturday afternoon poster session** intended to create a forum to exchange new ideas, get useful feedback and discuss new work and work in progress.

Emerging scholars and community groups as well as seasoned oral historians are encouraged to consider presenting a poster.

The poster session is a chance for presenters to meet and chat with viewers one-on-one to discuss their oral history work in a setting more informal than panel presentations. Posters may showcase a completed project or explore ideas about research in progress.

Visit the OHA website, [oralhistory.org](http://oralhistory.org), for more details. ❖

## Surprise awards



Rob Perks, secretary of the Oral History Society in the U.K. surprises long-time Oral History Association leaders Anne and Don Ritchie with an award of lifetime memberships at the Society's annual meeting at Royal Holloway, University of London. Don Ritchie said he and Anne “were quite touched by the gesture.” OHA First Vice President Doug Boyd was the keynote speaker, and Ronald E. Doel of Florida State University presented the wrap-up session at the conference, which focused on oral histories of science, technology and medicine. Photo credit: Doug Boyd.

## From the archives...

SEVERAL HUNDRED PEOPLE from around the world typically attend Oral History Association annual conferences in cities with enough hotel space easily to accommodate them. But when Columbia University's Louis Starr was hosting the fledgling OHA's second national colloquium in November 1967 at Arden House, then the university's conference center north of New York City, space apparently was at a premium.

The second OHA *Newsletter*, mailed that November to 57 institutions and 55 individuals then listed as members, contained the following urgent notice:

"We've been asked to call your collective and undivided attention to an urgent request from Dr. Louis Starr, host for the SECOND NATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON ORAL HISTORY at Arden House.

"Although the waiting-list for accommodations has already been pared to two persons, Dr. Starr asks that those who find they have to cancel do so at once by calling him collect at Area Code 212, 280-2273. In this way, those persons on the list, as well as the inevitable late-comers, will stand a chance, albeit a last-minute one, of attending."

The subsequent issue of the *Newsletter* in January 1968 reported that "a total of 151 persons from 34 states, Canada and Israel taxed the facilities." Conference planners expressed pleasure that attendance was geographically dispersed, which was accomplished in this way: "Instead of mailing all of the invitations at once, distances of the addresses from New York were taken into account and the mailings were staggered accordingly. This done, the reservations could still be accepted on a 'first come, first served' basis without any danger of geographic skewering."

Conference planners also filed a financial report showing total receipts and expenditures for the event balancing out at \$12,445.50. ❖

## More from the archives...

EARLY ISSUES OF the OHA *Newsletter* generally were filled with short summaries of oral history projects individual members submitted.

The November 1967 issue included an account submitted by OHA member William J. Weaver Jr. of Chinle, Arizona. Weaver apparently was connected with an organization called World Tapes for Education, which reportedly was encouraging the recording of oral histories and had accumulated 800 tapes on various subjects that its members had recorded.

According to the *Newsletter*:

"Weaver...is now interviewing ten veterans of the Indian Wars. In a session with one of them, Weaver learned that the interviewee was stationed at Fort Bowie, Arizona Territory, in the 1890s. Much of Weaver's work to date has been restricted to the Southwest, notably Arizona and New Mexico, owing to a lack of supporting funds....

"Even so, over the past five years he has accumulated over 150 taped interviews in which farmers, cowboys, cattlemen, railroad men, miners and preachers recount the stories and incidents from which Weaver hopes to construct a 'comprehensive history of the Southwest at the turn of the century.'

"A major tenet of Weaver's is his insistence upon the preservation of the original tapes, since the person's speaking voice, with all of its 'accents, inflections, hesitations, even imperfections, secures all of the character, color and humor which often escapes the printed word.'

"Eventually, Weaver hopes to combine an extensive collection of color slides (e.g., a group of 175 slides which follow the entire process of Navajo rug weaving) with appropriate tapes for a new direction in oral history--- 'audio-visual oral history.'" ❖

**Editor's note:** The editor thanks past OHA president John Neuenschwander for sharing his complete set of OHA *Newsletters* and copies of the proceedings of the first two oral history colloquia in 1966 and 1967. The collection is a treasure trove from which we hope to share more gems as the organization heads into its golden anniversary celebration next year.

## Think your vote doesn't matter? Read this.



WHEN THE ORAL History Association took root in September 1966 from an inaugural Colloquium on Oral History, sponsored by the University of California Los Angeles Oral History Program, James V. Mink,

who directed the UCLA program, was elected chairman of a steering committee to structure the new organization.

After the following year's colloquium in New York, members voted by mail to approve articles of incorporation and a constitution and by-laws and elected the first officers and three members of an executive council for one-, two- and three-year terms. All told, 115 ballots were cast.

The January 1968 OHA *Newsletter* reported that Election Committee Chairman Enid H. Douglass and committee

members Jane A. Kimball and Robert Knutson "enjoyed a less than smooth ballot-counting session."

According to the *Newsletter*:

"On the afternoon of 15 January, the ballots had all been counted. And recounted. There was a tie for the two-year council berth.

"On the 17th a call from Jim Mink interrupted the committee's quandary. His car, which had been in the garage for extensive repairs since the day he had posted the ballots to the membership, had just been returned to him. And in the front seat, he explained, he had discovered a single unmailed ballot.

"Needless to say, the committee lost no time in contacting the neglected voter, extending their apologies, and soliciting his decisions in the election. Results? The beginning of a two-year council term for Willa Baum [of the University of California, Berkeley], and the end of a two-day dilemma." ❖

# Humanities Alliance

continued from page 1

More and Recommend a Program” in the banner of the map. And please help bring a higher profile to the map and the programs it highlights through social media under the hashtag #engagedhumanities.

The clickable Humanities Landscapes Map features more than 33,000 humanities organizations. It is a resource for organizations looking to connect with others, as well as a way to showcase the vibrancy of local humanities organizations to elected officials and other community stakeholders. Take a

minute to explore the humanities landscape in your town, city, county or state, and contact the National Humanities Alliance if there are additional organizations that should be included.

These maps represent a far-ranging undertaking by the National Humanities Alliance to creatively and effectively illustrate broad-based support for the humanities. And precisely because of its collaborative nature and often strong community emphasis, the work of oral historians can play a significant role in this initiative. We encourage you to take part. ❖

## Senate breaks gridlock, agrees on Ritchie recognition

IN RARE SHOW of bipartisanship, the U.S. Senate passed Resolution 147 on April 22, 2015, designating OHA past president Donald A. Ritchie as historian emeritus of the U.S. Senate.

Here’s the official text from the day’s proceedings:

*Mr. MCCONNELL (for himself and Mr. REID) submitted the following resolution; which was considered and agreed to: S. Res. 147*

*Whereas Donald A. Ritchie will retire from the United States Senate after serving with distinction, first as Associate Historian from 1976 to 2009, and then as Senate Historian from 2009 to 2015;*

*Whereas Donald A. Ritchie has dedicated his Senate service to preserving, protecting, and promoting*

*the history of the Senate and its members;*

*Whereas Donald A. Ritchie has produced or guided production of numerous publications detailing the rich institutional history of the Senate;*

*Whereas Donald A. Ritchie has been instrumental in preserving, organizing, and making available to scholars the vast archival holdings of the Senate and its members;*

*Whereas Donald A. Ritchie has assisted in the Senate’s commemoration of events of historical significance and in the development of exhibitions and educational programs on the history of the Senate and the Capitol;*

*Whereas Donald A. Ritchie has guided the Senate’s comprehensive*

*Oral History Project to capture and preserve the institutional memory of Senators, Senate officers, and Senate staff;*

*Whereas Donald A. Ritchie has upheld the high standards and traditions of the Senate, and has performed his duties in a professional and nonpartisan manner; and*

*Whereas Donald A. Ritchie has earned the respect and esteem of the United States*

*Senate;*

*Now, therefore, be it resolved, that, effective June 1, 2015, as a token of the appreciation of the Senate for his long and faithful service, Donald A. Ritchie is hereby designated as Historian Emeritus of the United States Senate. ❖*

## The value of oral history, according to historian Arthur Schlesinger Jr.



*The Letters of Arthur Schlesinger, Jr.*, published posthumously in 2013, reveal enthusiastic support for oral history by the historian, Pulitzer Prize-winner, Democratic Party activist, presidential adviser and prolific letter-writer.

The book includes a Sept. 19, 2003, letter from Schlesinger to Sen. Edward M. Kennedy, who had agreed to be interviewed about his life and career as

part of the presidential history work at the University of Virginia’s Miller Center.

In his “Dear Ted” letter, Schlesinger wrote: “You ask what the value of oral history is for the historian. The value is very considerable, especially when oral history is professionally done.”

Schlesinger praised the work being done by the “professional team” at the Miller Center.

“Oral history is not a job for amateurs,” he wrote.

“The interrogator must be immersed in the career of the interrogatee and in the context of the times in order to ask useful and intelligent questions.”

He told Kennedy he was “delighted” that the Massachusetts senator had agreed to participate in the oral history project, adding:

*“Think how greatly history would be enriched if we had oral histories of the great senators of the past—Clay, Webster, Calhoun, La Follette, Norris, Wagner; or, for that matter, suppose we had oral histories of Shakespeare, Caesar, Socrates! You have played a considerable part in the history of our times, and historians in the future will be grateful to you and to the Miller Center.”*

Kennedy ultimately participated in 29 interviews for the Miller Center project. Details about the project, which began in 2004, can be found at: <http://millercenter.org/oralhistory/edward-kennedy>. ❖



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**Do you have colleagues who use oral history in their classrooms? Or in their ongoing research projects?**

**Do you know of community groups exploring the use of oral history to document their work? Or local museums eager to engage area residents?**

**Chances are you do.** And there's also a chance those people are not members of the Oral History Association. But you can fix that. Share this **Newsletter** with them. Brag about the *Oral History Review* online. Tell them about the workshops and thought-provoking sessions and like-minded new friends they'll find at an OHA conference.

**And then encourage them to join OHA. They'll be glad they did.**

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