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ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION NEWSLETTER

Crowd drawn to Oakland for OHA meet

The City of Oakland, Calif., where Socialist adventure novelist Jack London twice lost mayoral races, drew more than 500 oral historians to the 41st annual conference of the Oral History Association, Oct. 24-28.

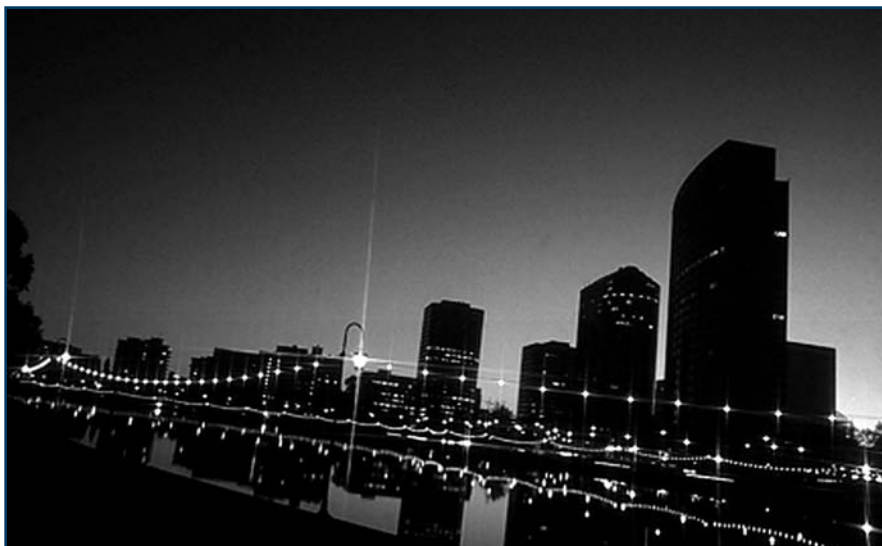
More than 100 wide-ranging conference sessions, workshops, exhibits, book-signings, awards, video screenings, featured speakers, area tours and the annual business meeting reflected the conference theme: “The Revolutionary Ideal—Transforming Community through Oral History.”

At the Sunday morning business meeting, the OHA installed Mehmed Ali, who thanked members for electing the OHA’s “first Turkish-French Canadian-English-Irishman from Lowell, Mass.,” as president.

OHA members attending the meeting voted to lodge a formal complaint with the State Department regarding the denial of a visa to Samir Awad, a political science professor at Birzeit University in Palestine, who was thus prevented from presenting his scholarship at the conference. OHA members also voted to report the visa denial to the Committee on Academic Freedom of the Middle East Studies Association.

Members also approved a resolution recognizing the contributions to oral history of the late Roy Rosenzweig, whose obituary appears elsewhere in this

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Oakland Skyline at Night—courtesy of the Oakland Convention & Visitors Bureau. Photo by Moya Fotografix.

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2007 conference news
coming in the
Spring OHA Newsletter!

From the president

OHA remains open, welcoming

It is with great pleasure that I write this message to you as the newly elected president of the Oral History Association, and I want to thank the numerous mentors I have encountered in my time with the organization. We have heard many times that the Oral History Association is a very welcoming and inclusive organization, and I can attest to that ideal as a relative newcomer to the group.

Although I have been doing oral history work for quite a while, I only joined as a member of the association in 2001. It is an indicator to me of how easily people are accepted in our group to have gone from new member to president in six short years, and I thank the collective membership for helping to foster this type of open environment.

We are all catching our breaths from a fantastic conference in Oakland where we attracted more than 550 attendees and more than 130 new members.

We are all catching our breaths from a fantastic conference in Oakland where we attracted more than 550 attendees and more than 130 new members. I personally enjoyed meeting with the “local folks” who were interested in preserving stories from within the Bay Area and all around the globe and who truly cared that we traveled to their area to help people think and plan about their good work.

I heard from many people that they felt this conference really set the bar for diversity and community interaction, and I want to thank Program Co-Chairs Norma Smith and Horacio Roque Ramirez as well as Local Arrangements Chair Nancy MacKay for their diligent work in helping both OHA and Oakland shine. I would also like to thank our sponsors again for helping to keep the conference fairly affordable in comparison to what other national history organizations are charging these days.

Several changes are in the works with the association; perhaps chief amongst them is the promotion of our

Executive Secretary Madelyn Campbell to a two-thirds time position. Madelyn is forever on the go on behalf of our group and can always be relied on to provide the answers to a multitude of your concerns so we are pleased that she will be available more in the office to attend to the organization’s business.

Another noteworthy accomplishment is our move over to Oxford University Press for the publication of our journal, which should improve our status in the world of academics and community outreach. We were very pleased to work with the folks from Oxford including Patricia Thomas and Nancy Toff, and I want to send my appreciation to Council member Roger Horowitz for leading the effort on behalf of the association.

One of the major undertakings that the association will be working on this coming year is improving our Web site. More and more, the Internet is the first area of engagement with our organization and we need to update the site and make it more informative and interactive. We are just pulling together an ad-hoc group to review the Web site and bring it up to date, and we are very open to input. So please contact me directly if you have any ideas.

Please also consider this an invitation to forward me any thoughts you have on how to make the association better, and I will look forward to working together with all members during this coming year.

Mehmed Ali
Lowell National Historical Park
Lowell, Mass.



Mehmed Ali

OHA members elect new leaders

Oral History Association members elected Michael H. Frisch, professor of history and American studies at the State University of New York at Buffalo, as their new first vice-president. Joining him as a new member of OHA Council is Tracy K'Meyer of the University of Louisville history department.

Elected to the nominating committee were: Cliff Kuhn of Georgia State University, Anne Valk of Brown University and Paul Ortiz of the University of California, Santa Cruz.

Telling stories reveals power to transform

The transformative power of stories was on display at the Oral History Association conference plenary session Thursday afternoon, Oct. 25.

Illustrating that were panelists: Sam Davis, director of United Genders of the Universe, which calls itself a support group open to everyone who views gender as having more than two options; Eritrean immigrant Nunu Kidane, director of Oakland's Priority Africa Network, and the interview team of oral historian Esther Ehrlich and performance artist Neil Marcus.

Davis described how the United Genders group transformed itself from a support group to an activist group with an extensive speakers bureau and educational programs aimed at medical providers, mental health providers, educational organizations and businesses.

Davis said some 70 percent of transgendered people in San Francisco are

unemployed and are victims of violence and discrimination in housing, jobs and medical and mental health services.

Empowering people of "nonconforming genders" to tell their stories has given them increased visibility and has led to better services, Davis said.

Kidane similarly described the powerful transformative effects of sharing stories between African Americans and recent immigrants from Africa, a dialogue that she said started in an Oakland church basement.

African immigrants come to the United States like any other immigrant group, she said, searching for a better life.

"They come profoundly believing in the optimism the U.S. provides," she said, and they have no historic context in which to understand the racism they encounter here, particularly with police profiling, which they find to be horribly traumatic.

"Labels such as black or African are very offensive to African immigrants," she said, because they don't identify themselves by skin color.

The immigrants don't deny being black, she said, but skin color is not an identifying characteristic in predominantly black countries.

Kidane said stereotypes exist on both sides of the immigrant divide, with Americans — of all races — assuming people from Africa have common values and a common agenda.

"Africa is not a country," she stressed. It's a continent with 54 countries and some 3,000 ethnic groups and nationalities.

And immigrants from Africa face tremendous challenges in maintaining their cultural identities. She cited as examples:

- parents trying to maintain their family's Nigerian heritage while "their kid comes home with his pants sagging and talking hip-hop."

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Video conference on oral history education expands horizons at OHA annual meeting

By Barry A. Lanman, Consortium of Oral History Educators

On Oct. 27, 2007, a precedent setting event took place during the Oral History Association's annual conference in Oakland, Calif. A video conference titled "Connecting Oral History Educators through Video Conferencing – A Model Instructional Approach for the Future" expanded the traditional audience to include sites across the United States. Unique to this session, oral history educators, students, parents and a wide range of individuals interested in this form of technology interacted during the 90-minute event.

Among the participating partners were the University of Maryland, Baltimore County, Cleveland State University, the Educational Service Center of Cuyahoga County, Ohio, and the Professional Development Center, California State University, East Bay (across the street from the Oakland Marriott).

While the video conference transpired in less than two hours, the preparations took more than 10 months. Such

issues as Internet connections, compatibility of equipment, "bridging" and other technological concerns had to be addressed before the actual structure of the session could be planned.

The content of the video conference focused on best practices of oral history education, showcased example projects and explored oral history curricula that focused on community history, diversity, historical empathy and building cultural bridges. While these topics contributed to the overall themes of the Oakland conference, the secondary purpose of the video conference was to demonstrate how video conferencing can expand audiences and make virtual connections that transcend time and distance.

To make this unique opportunity a reality, the following sources generously contributed a significant amount of time and funding:

THE ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

THE CONSORTIUM OF ORAL HISTORY EDUCATORS

PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION OF ORAL HISTORY EDUCATORS: AN ANTHOLOGY OF ORAL HISTORY EDUCATION

CLEVELAND STATE UNIVERSITY TEACHING AMERICAN HISTORY PROJECT CONSORTIUMS

THE CENTER FOR HISTORY EDUCATION, UNIVERSITY OF MARYLAND, BALTIMORE COUNTY

BALTIMORE COUNTY PUBLIC SCHOOLS

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Crowd drawn to Oakland for OHA meet

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The following sponsors helped support the 2007 Oral History Association conference in Oakland, Calif. We thank you.

CALIFORNIA STATE UNIVERSITY,
FULLERTON

CONSORTIUM OF ORAL HISTORY
EDUCATORS

KAISER PERMANENTE OFFICE OF
HERITAGE RESOURCES

KENTUCKY HISTORICAL SOCIETY

NATIONAL PARK SERVICE

NORTHWEST ORAL HISTORY
ASSOCIATION

OXFORD UNIVERSITY PRESS

RANDOLPH MACON COLLEGE

SOUTHWEST ORAL HISTORY
ASSOCIATION

UNIVERSITY OF NEVADA, RENO

Newsletter. The resolution noted that Rosenzweig “provided generous and helpful consultation to OHA members and leaders about a variety of topics.”

It added: “Moreover, through initiatives of the Center for History and New Media and the American Social History Project, he has helped extend oral history into new formats and media and to reconsider the nature of oral history itself. These efforts were part of Roy’s great work to democratize the practice of history, an endeavor in which oral history is key.”

At the business meeting, members also learned:

- The OHA Endowment Fund has approximately \$184,000, and the organization will end the year with about \$113,000 in operating reserves. A campaign to increase the endowment is in progress. A matching offer from an anonymous donor resulted in \$2,850 in endowment pledges at the business meeting.
- Six international scholars received \$3,000 in scholarship support to attend the conference. The international committee urged that scholarship award decisions be made earlier so participants will have more time to obtain visas.
- The Committee on Diversity plans to network with historically black colleges and tribal colleges to encourage participation in OHA. Outgoing committee chair Alva Moore Stevenson also reported that the committee endorsed a continued focus on diversity in conference planning and leadership development, and suggested the OHA consider scholarships for community participants at OHA meetings and a roommate-connecting effort to help attendees defray expenses.
- The Education Committee arranged for continuing education credits for kindergarten through 12th grade teachers who attended the conference’s education workshop and will try to do the same at next year’s conference in Pittsburg. ❖

Volunteers contribute to conference success

By Nancy MacKay, Local Arrangements Chair

As OHA local arrangements chair, I had the opportunity to welcome OHA members to my home city of Oakland. I got to recommend my favorite restaurants via the traditional dine-arounds, to share my city’s history through the Early Bird Walking Tour and to connect OHAers and locals in deep conversation at the Chinatown luncheon.

I also got to witness the workings of conference planning from backstage. I learned that Executive Secretary Madelyn Campbell begins serious work a full year before the event, and that the major planning had to be complete by May, when the program was printed. The pace really picked up in September and October and we communicated daily, as I relayed information about local transportation, catering services and event sites.

But the understated stars are the 22 volunteers who gave their time to keep the wheels running smoothly from way before breakfast through all the evening activities day after day. Some are sea-

soned oral historians, others are students or new to the field, but they all brought competence and enthusiasm to the event.

Thank you to: Alberta Maged (social activist), Attieno Davis (social activist), Andy Kreamer. Anne Grenn Saldinger (Holocaust Center of Northern California), Anne Huang (Oakland Chinatown Oral History Project), Berkeley Carnine, Carol Johnson (Friends of Negro Spirituals), Caroline Picker, Colleen Fong (Cal State University East Bay), Glenne McIlkeney (GLBT Historical Society), Jacquelyn Ajayi (Friends of Negro Spirituals), Lajeanna Reagan (Mills College), Larken Bradley (independent personal historian), Lyvonne Chrisman (Friends of Negro Spirituals), Marcella Conley (Friends of Negro Spirituals), Marilyn Geary (independent personal historian), Mary Lee Eckstein (independent oral historian), Pat Schaffarczyk (City of Fremont Oral History Project), Roy Chan (Oakland



Horacio Roque Ramirez and Norma Smith.
Photo: Madelyn Campbell.

Chinatown Oral History Project), Sharon Nichols (Friends of Negro Spirituals), Tom Coroneos (independent educator) and Yancie Zibowsky (San Jose State School of Library and Information). ❖

Call for Proposals

A Convergence of Interests: Oral History in the Digital Age

2008 OHA Annual Meeting, Oct. 15-19, 2008 • Pittsburgh, Pa.

The Oral History Association invites proposals for papers and presentations for its 2008 annual meeting to be held Oct. 15-19, 2008, at the Sheraton Station Square Hotel in Pittsburgh, Pa.

As always, the Program Committee of the OHA welcomes proposals for presentations on a variety of topics. In keeping with this year's theme, "A Convergence of Interests: Oral History in the Digital Age," the 2008 Annual Meeting will focus special attention on oral history and digital technologies.

Emerging digital technologies continue to expand options for recording, preserving and using oral history interviews and other historically significant sights and sounds, to expand audiences and to draw together once separate communities of practitioners. In doing so, they raise perplexing practical, legal, ethical and theoretical questions.

For its 2008 meeting, the Oral History Association extends an invitation to teachers and students, archivists and librarians, Luddites and media theorists, Web and exhibit designers, documentary producers and media artists, ethnographers, family and public historians, program officers and curators, scholars from a broad

and growing range of disciplines, social and political activists and others interested in sharing their experiences, projects, concerns, ideas and questions about oral history.

We encourage researchers studying the Ohio Valley, technology, industrialization and deindustrialization and labor history to submit proposals. In recognition of the important work taking place outside the United States, we also hope to see a significant international presence at the meeting.

In the spirit of this meeting, the OHA Program Committee encourages presenters to consider a variety of formats and presentation methods, including traditional panels with chair and discussant, roundtables, performances, listening and viewing sessions, workshops and poster sessions.

Once one America's great industrial metropolises, Pittsburgh has been a national and international center of technological innovations — including the home of the nation's first radio station — industrial processes and intense struggles between capital and labor. Battered by deindustrialization in the late 1900s, the city has undergone an urban renaissance and today offers a rich concentration of museums, historic sites, universities

and colleges and an active arts scene. The Oral History Association is fortunate to be meeting in Pittsburgh during celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the city's founding.

Proposal format: submit four copies of the proposal. For full sessions, submit a title, a session abstract of not more than two pages and a one-page vita or resume for each participant. For individual proposals, submit a one-page abstract and a one-page vita or resume of the presenter. Each submission must be accompanied by a cover sheet, which can be printed from the OHA Web site: www.dickinson.edu/oha.

Proposals may be submitted by mail, fax or e-mail and should be post-marked or sent by Jan. 15, 2008. Submit proposals directly to the OHA office at the address below.

E-mail attachments must include the cover sheet in electronic form and must be one complete document in Microsoft WORD format. Please do not send separate attachments. Attachments should be sent to oha@dickinson.edu. Should you not receive e-mail confirmation by Feb. 5, please contact the OHA office to make sure your submission has been received.

Queries may be directed to:

Charles Hardy III
First Vice President
chardyIII@wcupa.edu
610-436-3329

Marjorie McLellan
Marjorie.mcclellan@wright.edu
937-775-2162

Donna DeBlasio
dmdeblasio@ysu.edu
330-941-3158

Proposals should be sent to:

Oral History Association, Dickinson College
P. O. Box 1773 • Carlisle, Pennsylvania 17013
Telephone: 717-245-1036 • Fax: 717-245-1046

For courier service add: Holland Union Building, College and Louther Streets

Telling stories reveals power to transform

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- African immigrants who register their children for school and don't find "Ugandan" on the list of racial or ethnic categories. They don't check the box marked "African-American," but by checking "Other," they inadvertently deprive the school of funding it would otherwise receive.

"Nobody wants to lose themselves in the United States," Kidane said. "That's what they're afraid of."

In a further transformative presentation, Ehrlich and Marcus, who has dyslexia, a medical condition that makes it difficult for him to speak and use a computer, shared their experiences when Ehrlich interviewed the performance artist for the Artists With Disabilities Oral History Project, spon-

sored by the Regional Oral History Office at the University of California Berkeley's Bancroft Library.

Ehrlich did most of the talking at the panel session. "If I had to say, it would take forever," Marcus said.

But his few words were powerful as Ehrlich showed video clips illustrating how the two conducted oral history interview sessions using computer instant messaging alternating with spoken questions and answers.

Ehrlich described Marcus as "a wildly intelligent and wildly creative man."

Indeed.

As Ehrlich read from a forward to the project in which she described his laborious efforts to type — "his finger hovers and strikes, hovers and strikes" — Marcus, grinning impishly, demon-

strated his slow key-pecking technique.

Ehrlich told the audience that the slow pace of the interview taught her to "home in on what matters most."

Marcus, for his part, said in an e-mail to Ehrlich that the process allowed him to think and say things with greater complexity than ever before.

Oral history, Marcus said, "gave me a lot more freedom than my voice could....I talked my head off."

As is customary at many OHA sessions, storyteller Brother Blue, an inspirational fixture at OHA conferences, praised the panelists for their powerful presentations.

Marcus silently rolled his wheelchair into the audience and gave Brother Blue a hug. ❖

Jeff Friedman named Pogue Award winner

Jeff Friedman, a Rutgers University scholar of dance history and theory and founder of the Legacy Oral History Program at the San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum, will be the 2008 Pogue Award recipient, presented annually by Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region.

OHMAR created the award for outstanding and continuing contributions to oral history as part of its ongoing efforts to recognize and promote high standards in the field of oral history.

The award honors Forrest C. Pogue, who pioneered the use of oral history in combat during World War II and also served as an early president of the Oral History Association.

The Pogue Award adds to a long list of national and international honors and recognition for Friedman, whose Legacy project grew out of the devastating impact of AIDS on the San Francisco Bay Area dance community in the 1980s.

Friedman, a Bay Area dancer and choreographer since 1979, was confronted with the deaths of friends and colleagues at early and mid-career. In response, he sought oral history training at the Regional Oral History Office at the University of California-Berkeley, at San Francisco's Holocaust Oral History Project and with oral historian and past OHA president Charles Morrissey in Vermont.

With their guidance, Friedman designed and implemented a plan in 1988 to capture the unique observations and experiences of at-risk performing artists, including jazz dancers, classical ballet, contemporary and experimental dance artists.

The collection, now archived at the San Francisco Performing Arts Library and Museum, has expanded from its original mission of documenting dance history to include other performing arts, including music, theater and interdisciplinary art forms. By the end of next year, the collection is expected to contain nearly 100 oral histories, making it the largest comprehensive oral history project for performing arts outside New York City.

The program also has experimented with electronic formats that go beyond bound transcripts, allowing inclusion of music, video and photographic materials that enhance the interview record. Recent interviews produced in multimedia formats include long-time San Francisco Opera Orchestra manager and violist Thomas Heimberg and Joseph Harris, dresser to the stars of the opera for more than 40 years.

With an undergraduate degree in architecture, Friedman, who was born in Baltimore and grew up in Bucks County, Pa., has performed and taught dance and dance theory for 30 years. Now at Rutgers, his current research includes a qualitative study of oral history interviews with former members of the Twyla Tharp Dance Company.

The Pogue Award will be presented to Friedman at OHMAR's spring conference in New York City, March 14-15, 2008.

A place for homeless voices: oral history's role in ending homelessness

A panel report from Alan H. Stein and Daniel Kerr

Oakland OHA Conference Program Co-Chair Norma Smith, who with Elizabeth Chur and Amanda Gardner organized a session at the 2004 OHA conference in Portland, Ore., titled "Homeless Voices, Home Truths: Stories from the Streets and the Long Road Home," broke new ground by including narrators and researchers who interview homeless people. The overlapping principles at work in Oakland, as in Portland, were to: 1) bring social-justice-oriented researchers together with the communities they research; 2) recognize the authority of the community; 3) hear the voices and engage with the narrators themselves.

Representatives from the Bay Area's homeless community participated in a conference panel, exploring the realities of homelessness with a resonance placed, first and foremost, on human dignity. "Tiny" a.k.a. Lisa Gray-Garcia, co-editor of POOR Magazine, and Laurie McElroy from Poor News Network talked about working more from an alternative media standpoint than with oral history. Both speakers were charismatic and performance-oriented and demonstrated a scene in personal storytelling. Instead of "a shared authority," which was explored in depth at Portland, the Oakland panel of eloquent "poverty scholars" shifted the focus back to the narrator-as-author, calling upon their own interviewing skills to document their social history. In this scenario power sharing is the norm, the narrator is the authority and the storyteller creates a product for media publication.

At the core of POOR's innovative programming and curriculum for low- and no-income youth and adults is the Race, Poverty and Media Justice Institute, offering programs in digital media, creative writing and online or print media production. The Poor News Network produces monthly broadcasts on KPFA, Pacifica Radio, and an online magazine (www.poormagazine.org).

Is there a democratic process by which homeless people select POOR Magazine to be the mediators between themselves and academics? Academics need to be more self-critical when engaging in this research and to think carefully about what ends their research will be put to.

How does oral history with the homeless people benefit them? Most homeless people are primarily interested in improving their working and living conditions, not becoming authors. They don't care if some academic article in a journal they never heard of has their name, panelists indicated.

Joining the panel from Western Michigan University was Vincent Lyon-Callos, an activist ethnographer, who discussed inequality and poverty and neo-liberal governance in homeless programs. Genevieve (Genny) Nelson, cofounder of Sisters Of The Road, discussed her work with the Portland-based café and shelter. She said: "It is absolutely crucial to create systems that teach self-reliance instead of dependence and ensure that the men and women experiencing the calamities of poverty and homelessness are full participants at the tables where public policy is being decided."

The Sisters' programs consist of a hot meals/barter program, workforce development and research projects, including "Voices from the Street: Truths about Homelessness from Sisters of the Road," by Jessica P. Morrell with a foreword by Genny Nelson. Begun in the fall of 2001, they completed 600 interviews averaging two hours each (see: <http://www.sistersoftheroad.org>).

Some of the panelists also remarked on what they said was the prevalence of hate crimes and violence against homeless people, as well as negative stereotypes reinforced by the media. ❖

OHA audience hears death row tale



Barbara Becnel. Photo: Madelyn Campbell.

Writer turned activist Barbara Becnel kept an Oral History Association audience spellbound at the Saturday evening awards banquet with her account of befriending death-row inmate Stanley Tookie Williams and her subsequent dedication to fighting the death penalty.

Becnel said she no longer believes in the criminal justice system because of the botched execution by lethal injection that Williams suffered in 2005 in a setting at California's San Quentin prison, which she described in detail as akin to theater.

"It was death as entertainment," she said. Becnel spent Williams' final day with him on death row and was among the witnesses to his execution.

Because the established protocols for conducting lethal injections were not followed, Becnel said, "It took Stan 10 long minutes to die."

Williams, co-founder of the violent Crips street gang, was convicted of four murders in 1979 during two robberies. He maintained his innocence, but repeated attempts to win new trials and appeals for clemency were rejected.

By the 1990s, Williams had become a self-proclaimed antiviolence crusader and, with Becnel, wrote nine children's books urging young people to turn away from gangs and violence. Becnel, the executor of Williams' estate, told the OHA audience that at least five more books await publication.

Becnel said she recorded essays and conversations with Williams during the years she became acquainted with him on death row.

"I am a different person and a far better person for having spent 13 years working with him," she said. ❖

Feds invite comments on IRB rules affecting oral history

Dec. 26 is the deadline to submit comments to the Office for Human Research Protections on federal rules that affect how campus institutional review boards treat oral history research projects.

The federal rules that affect research at colleges and universities were intended to protect “human subjects” from potentially harmful biomedical and psychological research. While oral history research is listed in the federal rules as subject to “expedited review,” many colleges and universities have nonetheless thrown roadblocks in the way of academic oral history projects.

For nearly a decade the Oral History Association and American Historical Association have sought clear-cut explanations of the policy from the federal OHRP and have attempted to work with campus IRBs to clarify the distinctions between oral history and biomedical research.

Nonetheless, the AHA said on its Web site on Nov. 6 that it continues to receive “regular complaints that the degrees of history doctoral students have been withheld, the research of some faculty have been put on hold and history teachers and students have been threatened with substantial fines, just for talking to people about past experiences.”

The AHA advises historians to review the changes being proposed for categories of research subject to “expedited review” and forward comments to the OHRP.

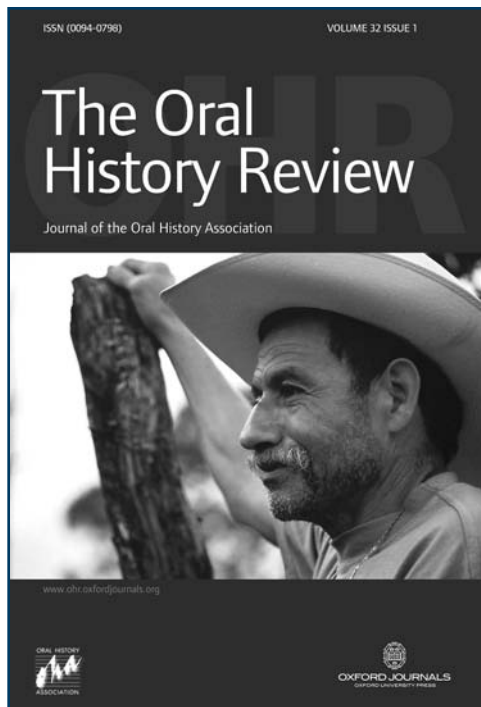
One of the proposed changes “seems to bring projects that merely gather oral histories or personal testimonies for future scholarly research explicitly under IRB review, and goes a step further by excluding it from exemption....At the same time, this also seems to invite review of the use of materials gathered by other scholars and placed on deposit in an oral history archives,” the AHA said.

OHA members can find more information and links to the Federal Register’s Oct. 26 notice of proposed rule change at: <http://blog.historians.org/profession/372>.

The AHA urged historians to “express their objections to the ambiguous and often arbitrary way these policies are implemented in a field where the risk of harm is minimal.”

The best solution, the AHA said, is one advocated by the American Association of University Professors, that “research on autonomous adults whose methodology consists entirely of collecting data by surveys, conducting interviews, or observing behavior in public places, be exempt from the requirement of IRB review — straightforwardly exempt, with no provisos, and no requirement of IRB approval of the exemption.” ❖

Oxford University Press to publish *Oral History Review*



Here’s a sample of the new cover design for the *Oral History Review*, which will be published by Oxford University Press beginning next year.

The *Oral History Review* has a new look for 2008 and a new publisher — Oxford University Press.

Oral History Association members and subscribers will find online issues of the journal at www.ohr.oxfordjournals.org and a greatly expanded electronic environment for OHR that includes information about the journal, instructions for authors, registration for e-mail table-of-contents reminders, helpful links, CiteTrack alerts for newly published content that matches your search criteria and online searching and reference linking.

With a publish-ahead-of-print feature called “Advance Access,” authors and readers will find the latest articles available online within a few weeks of final acceptance for publication.

Best of all, once the back issues have been scanned and processed, all previously published issues of *OHR* back to volume 1, number 1 will be available online in the Oxford Journals Digital Archive for subscribers to the Digital Archive and freely accessible to OHA members as one of the benefits of membership in the association.

The addition of *Oral History Review* will expand and strengthen the Oxford Journals lists in history and cultural studies, which includes *Enterprise & Society*, *Past & Present*, *Holocaust and Genocide Studies*, *American Literary History* and the *English Historical Review*. *OHR* will gain increased international exposure as it travels to conferences and meetings in these and related fields and is included in library consortia agreements throughout the world.

OHA members will receive 2008 renewal notices from Oxford Journals before the end of the year and may contact Customer Service at 1-800-852-7323 (toll-free in USA/Canada) with any questions. Members will continue to receive the **OHA Newsletter** directly from the association.

Oxford Journals and the OHA look forward to expanding the reach of *Oral History Review*, acquiring new readers and authors and increasing the profile of the journal and the OHA. ❖

Conference panelists remember oral history pioneers

The occasion could have been sad, but as panel chair Ron Grele noted, when you think about the deceased oral historians the panelists were gathered to remember, “it becomes quite funny....They were wonderfully funny people.”

Certainly that was a hallmark of Saul Benison, recalled Charles Weiner, a historian of science and technology at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Benison, who died late last year, was an oral history pioneer, a distinguished historian of medicine and science, a bibliophile and “a funny guy who always had a story to tell,” Weiner said.

The child of garment factory workers who had emigrated from czarist Russia, Benison grew up in Bedford-Stuyvesant in New York City. He got his first library card at the age of 5 1/2 and became an incessant reader.

Benison graduated from Queens College and went to graduate school at Columbia University where he worked as an assistant to oral history pioneer Allan Nevins from 1953-1961. The interviews he conducted there run to more than 12,000 pages of transcripts. There, too, he honed his practice of conducting 100 hours of research for every hour of interview, Weiner said.

Benison’s research and interviews with a leading virology researcher led to publication in 1967 of his award-winning book *Tom Rivers: Reflections on a Life in Medicine and Science — An Oral History Memoir Prepared by Saul Benison*.

Weiner said that Benison believed oral historians were obligated to provide documentation and background information, and he frequently interwove supporting information into his footnotes, saying, for example: “Dr. Rivers’ memory does not serve him well in this instance.”

Benison had “amazing retention of detail” and was a prodigious storyteller, Weiner recalled, noting that Benison said he had learned to tell stories because his parents told him stories as a child to get him to eat.

Grele credited Benison with the observation “we live in an envelope of sound,” which inspired the title of their book *Envelopes of Sound*.



Donald A. Ritchie of the U.S. Senate Historical Office recalled with self-deprecation the first time he met Benis M. Frank, founder of the U.S. Marine Corps oral history program, who died March 10 at age 82.

It was in 1972, Ritchie remembered. Two years earlier Ritchie had been drafted into the Marines and, upon meeting Frank, suggested with enthusiasm that it might be a good idea for the Marine Corps’ oral history office to do social history interviews with young Marines about their lives in the barracks.

Frank listened for about a minute, as Ritchie recalled, and then told the young historian: “I only interview generals.”

Ritchie said that since corporal was the highest rank he ever attained, he figured he’d never make Frank’s list.

By the time Ritchie first encountered the Marine veteran of World War II, Frank’s Marine Corps oral history office was well on its way to establishing a first-rate reputation in documenting military history. And while Frank started out interviewing only generals, his later work included interviews with a wide array of subjects, documenting the conditions under which they served.

Frank was a pioneer in oral history organizations, serving as the first president of Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region in 1976. He received OHMAR’s Pogue Award in 1982, named after an earlier oral history pioneer, Army historian Forrest Pogue.

Frank stopped coming to Oral History Association meetings in 1989, Ritchie said, and “like an old soldier, he faded away.”

Oddly, however, Frank’s passion was participating in annual Scottish Games, wearing a kilt and dancing with the Royal Scottish Dance Society. Frank was not of Scottish heritage, Ritchie noted, but he had met members of the Royal Scots Regiment while stationed in Korea, became fascinated with them and immersed himself in Scottish culture.



For an oral historian, Mary Ellen Glass, who died March 15, was remarkably unwilling to be interviewed about her life’s work, said Tom King, who succeeded Glass in 1983 as director of the University of Nevada oral history program, which she founded in 1964.

“I knew her for 24 years, but unfortunately, I never knew her at all,” King said. When she retired from the university, “she pretty much disappeared,” King said, dividing her time between homes in Yuma, Ariz., and Lake Tahoe, Nev.

King said that long after her retirement, she agreed to a brief interview, and he came to see her as “a fascinating person of great strength.”

She needed it, apparently.

Glass earned bachelor’s and master’s degrees from the University of Nevada but was told not to bother getting a Ph.D. because she was only a woman and it would be pointless, King said.

In his brief interview with her, King said she “made it clear she had not been entirely happy with the way her career unfolded.”

Glass ran an under-funded and under-appreciated oral history program that literally was housed in a library basement custodial room until donations of Gannett Co. stock from two local newspaper reporters put the oral history program on more solid financial footing and helped launch its regional reputation.

Glass was actively involved in faculty governance at the university but eventually she became fed up with the politics of it all.

“She essentially gave me the keys to the office and said, ‘In the bottom right-hand drawer you’ll find Friday’s agenda,’ then she left,” King said. So he opened the drawer, “and there was a half-gallon of sherry.”



(continued on page 15)

Video conference on oral history education expands horizons at OHA annual meeting

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In addition to the content presented, the video conference shared a moment of celebration when Charla Helmers was presented the Oral History Association's Pre-collegiate Teaching Award. What made this ceremony unique was the fact that Amy Starecheski, chair of OHA's Committee on Education, and Alphine Jefferson, OHA president, made the presentation in Oakland while Helmers gave her acceptance remarks from Baltimore. One observer noted that the split-screen effect captured the event as if they were actually standing in the same room.

After the video conference, considerable dialogue continued at the various sites to discuss the overall implications of the session. Cell phone conversations also extended the analysis along with lively discussions at the awards banquet.

Jefferson said that while he was impressed with the technological aspects of the video conference, the session demonstrated the potential ways in which expanded audiences can participate at future OHA meetings.

Rex Shepard, social studies coordinator for Baltimore County Public Schools, said the technological connections

gave students an opportunity to present their work well beyond the classroom and allowed young researchers to share quality historical products in a professional forum – an opportunity not usually reserved for students.

Alan H. Stein, associate director of the Consortium of Oral History Educators, put the video conference into the following perspective: "The passing of Roy Rosenzweig symbolizes the need for a next generation of oral historians to take the torch and keep the flame burning by conducting digital oral history interviews. Ironically, the same week that OHA remembered Roy, an eighth grade student presented her video interview with Congressman John Lewis about his role in developing the March on Washington in 1963. The quality of her work astounded many of the participants of the video conference and demonstrated the importance of this instructional methodology. The presentations, delivered at the various sites throughout the country, seemed to represent the essence of oral history education and demonstrated how this type of technology will impact the formative experiences for the next generation of oral historians." ❖

Iraq war journalists tell their stories

For journalists' perspectives on the Iraq war, check out the Columbia Journalism Review's Web site, www.cjr.org/iraq, to read and hear audio excerpts from oral history interviews with more than 40 reporters, photographers, translators and other journalists who have been covering the war. The magazine also published extensive excerpts from the interviews in its 45th anniversary issue, dated November/December 2006.

Reporters interviewed for the project included: Anne Garrels of National Public Radio, Richard Engel of NBC News, Farnaz Fassihi of the *Wall Street Journal*, Borzou Daragahi of the *Los Angeles Times* and many others.

"Many of these people have been in Iraq longer than some of our soldiers and diplomats," an editor's note pointed out. "We need to hear them. They know things." ❖

International story-sharing day planned for May 16, 2008

The Museum of the Person International Network (Brazil, Portugal and the United States) and the Center for Digital Storytelling in Berkeley, Calif., are part of an international movement of practitioners who view listening, collecting and sharing life stories as a critical process in democratizing culture and promoting social change.

International Day, May 16, 2008, will be an opportunity for people around the world to gather in community halls, classrooms, public parks, theaters, museums, auditoriums, as well as virtual environments to experience one another's life stories.

Activities could include story circles in people's homes, workplaces, schools, community centers and virtual environments, public performances, exhibitions and celebratory events.

Please visit us at <http://internationaldayblog.storycenter.org> for life story event ideas as well as a worldwide calendar of events honoring the day. ❖

OHA Awards

Recipients of the 2007 Oral History Association awards were recognized at the Saturday evening conference banquet. The awards and the winners are:

- Book award for outstanding use of oral history: *Life and Death in the Delta: African American Narratives of Violence, Resilience, and Social Change* by **Kim Lacy Rogers**.
- Nonprint media award for outstanding use of oral history: *Good Work, Sister! Women Shipyard Workers of World War II: An Oral History* produced by the **Northwest Women's History Project**.
- Martha Ross teaching award: **Charla Helmers**, Dundalk Elementary School, Dundalk, Md.

At the OHA's 2008 conference, awards will be presented for an outstanding article, outstanding postsecondary teaching and the Elizabeth B. Mason outstanding project award. Visit the OHA Web site at www.dickinson.edu/oha for details on how to apply.

FBI special agents oral history project goes to law enforcement museum

The National Law Enforcement Museum will become the official repository of an oral history collection created by the Society of Former Special Agents of the FBI, the two organizations announced in August.

The museum, set to open in Washington, D.C., in 2011, plans to put interview transcripts from the FBI Oral History Heritage Program online by the end of next year.

The former FBI agents project was featured in the fall 2007 edition of the **OHA Newsletter**. Spearheaded by former special agent Brian Hollstein and Susan Rosenfeld, a former FBI historian, the society has collected more than 130 interviews and four written memoirs about events dating from the 1930s. The collection includes interviews dealing with: Watergate, the Joseph McCarthy hearings, Cold War counterespionage, organized crime, the neutralization of the Ku Klux Klan and many other subjects that reflect the inner workings of the FBI and little-known perspectives about the history of the 20th century. ❖

New community history pamphlet published

By Irene Reti, OHA Publications Committee

The Oral History Association (OHA) announces the release of the revised and expanded version of *Using Oral History in Community History Projects* by Laurie Mercier and Madeline Buckendorf, originally published in 1992. This is the latest publication in the OHA series, *Practices in Oral History*.

Many community history projects are successful, but others are launched with great enthusiasm, only to languish, die or produce uneven results. These failures are often the result of inadequate planning or unskilled execution rather than the fault of the oral history method itself.

This 60-page pamphlet is designed to guide individuals and groups who wish to use oral history in community history projects. It contains specific suggestions on setting up and carrying out such projects and addresses common concerns.

The authors provide a detailed, step-by-step guide to project planning and execution, address common pitfalls that may arise in an oral history project and suggest ways to avoid or minimize them.

Finally, they feature 10 sample projects from across the country that in the past decade successfully used oral history in creative and meaningful ways to illuminate community history. These projects represent a range of regions, cultures and methods.

A brief bibliography directs readers to more specific guidance about oral history methods and means of interpretation.

Authors Mercier and Buckendorf bring extensive community history experience to the new pamphlet. Mercier is associate professor of history at Washington State University Vancouver and has worked as a public historian and high school history teacher. She was president of the OHA in 1999-2000. Buckendorf has worked form more than 25 years in the field of public history and has directed community history and cultural resource projects in Idaho, Oregon, Washington and Nevada.

Other booklets in the OHA pamphlet series include *Oral History and the Law* (2002), *Oral History Projects in Your Classroom* (2001), *Oral History for the Family Historian: A Basic Guide* (2006). All may be ordered for \$15, which includes shipping. An order form is on the OHA Web site at http://alpha.dickinson.edu/oha/pub_ps.html. ❖

OHA member honored for Hurricane Katrina role

The Society of American Archivists (SAA) honored Alan H. Stein with its annual Spotlight Award at the group's meeting in Chicago in August, recognizing him for his foresight in disaster planning before the 2005 hurricane that devastated New Orleans.

Stein, a longtime Oral History Association member, was head of the Louisiana Division and City Archives Collection at the New Orleans Public Library, one of 200 jobs eliminated in the wake of the disaster. Stein was the last person to leave the New Orleans Public Library before Hurricane Katrina struck.

The SAA said its Spotlight Award recognizes an individual who works for the good of the profession and archival collections, work that would not typically receive public notice.

The selection committee noted: "His foresight in disaster planning played a significant role in preparing the New Orleans Public Library (Louisiana Division) for pending disaster. Though displaced himself, Alan has continued to focus attention on the need for disaster preparedness by historical and cultural institutions."

Stein is currently a librarian specialist with the Consortium of Oral History Educators and is co-chair of the SAA oral history section.

Stein recently co-authored "Oral History, Folklore and Katrina" with OHA member Gene B. Preuss for the Routledge Press anthology *There Is No Such thing as a Natural Disaster: Race, Class and Hurricane Katrina*.

State & Regional News

OHMAR conference to focus on performing arts

By Jeff Friedman

Oral history and performance is the theme of the spring conference in New York City sponsored by Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region (OHMAR) in collaboration with the Columbia University Oral History Research Office and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts.

The conference is scheduled for March 14-15, 2008, at Columbia University.

As one of the great performing arts meccas of the world and a vital center for community-based and grassroots oral history research, New York City is an ideal place to explore the intersection of oral history and performance.

The conference program committee promises to bring together performing artists, oral historians and other practitioners in a multi-disciplinary conference that will highlight the diversity of work centered on oral history and performance.

The intersection of oral history and performance is an important emerging field of endeavor. The arena is rich cross-disciplinary resonances across anthropology, sociology, history, performance studies, art history, public history, arts-based education, community development and many other areas.

Performances in a variety of genres are a powerful means for increasing access to oral history sources and engaging broad audiences with diverse historical materials.

The program committee has received a wide variety of exciting proposals from throughout the United States and abroad using multiple approaches falling at various points along a continuum of theoretical papers to theatrical performances.

Please check the OHMAR Web site at www.ohmar.org for the most updated information.

Program committee members include: Renee Braden, National Geographic Society, Washington, D.C.; Jeff Friedman, Rutgers University/Legacy Oral History Program, San Francisco; Susan Kraft, New York Public Library for the Performing Arts; Harriet Lynn, Heritage Theater Artists Consortium, Maryland; Amy Starecheski, Columbia University Oral History Research Office.



Georgia low country focus of February symposium

African-American life and culture along the Georgia coast from the 18th to the 20th century is the focus of a symposium scheduled for Feb. 28-29, 2008, in Savannah, Ga.

The conference is sponsored by Savannah State University, Armstrong Atlantic State University, Georgia Southern University, the Georgia Historical Society and the Ossabaw Island Foundation. Other partners include the King Tisdale Cottage Foundation and the Coastal Heritage Society.

Presenters will explore themes of cultural survival, acculturation and resistance and the extent to which traditional African-American communities can survive in the 21st century.

For more information, go to: www.ossabawisland.org or call 912-233-5104.

Project to document history of Illinois

The history of Illinois agriculture is the focus of an interactive digital oral history project underway at the Illinois State Museum.

Supported by a \$565,000 grant from the national Institute of Museum and Library Services, the project involves using existing interview collections and creating new digital oral history interviews about the land, plants, animals, people and technology of agriculture in Illinois history.

The project will create an interactive Web module, called the Audio-Video Barn, to allow users multiple ways to search and explore the collection.

OHA member Michael Frisch of the University of Buffalo and Randforce Associates, whose multidimensional indexing technology will be used in development of the Web module, are partners in the oral history project.

Book chronicles Civilian Conservation Corps

More than 77,000 Minnesotans got jobs during the Great Depression, thanks to the Civilian Conservation Corps. Oral historian Barbara W. Sommer's forthcoming book, *Hard Work and a Good Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Minnesota*, tells their story.

The book is based on nearly 100 interviews with the "boys" of the CCC, as they called themselves, and recounts their experiences in the camps and their contributions to the conservation of Minnesota's natural resources.

The book is published by the Minnesota Historical Society Press and will be available in February. For more information, go to: www.mhspress.org.

Pennsylvania offers research stipends

If anything related to Pennsylvania history is on your research agenda, consider applying for the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission's 2008-09 Scholars in Residence Program.

The residency is open to academic scholars, public historians, graduate students, independent scholars, writers, film-

makers and the like and supports up to eight weeks of full-time research at \$375 per week in any of the commission's artifact or manuscript collections. Scholars may schedule their residencies any time between May 1, 2008, and April 30, 2009.

The deadline for applications is Jan. 11, 2008. For a detailed description and application materials, go to: www.phmc.state.pa.us.

Morrissey workshop set for San Francisco

Charles T. Morrissey, former president of the Oral History Association, will present his 14th annual Morrissey Oral History Workshop at the Fort Mason Center in San Francisco Feb. 28-March 1, 2008.

The three-day intensive workshop is intended for family historians, public historians, independent historians, academics and anyone else who wants to learn oral history skills from a respected master.

The early-bird registration deadline is Feb. 11, 2008. For complete information on tuition and area accommodations, call Elizabeth Wright at 415-928-3417 or e-mail her at: Elizabeth@HistoryInProgress.com.

SOHA plans spring meeting

By Sarah Moorhead

The Southwest Oral History Association (SOHA) welcomes OHA members to attend our annual conference, April 18-20, 2008 in Tempe, Ariz., just east of Phoenix.

We will offer workshops on Friday, April 18 and sessions all day Saturday, April 19 and Sunday morning, April 20, as well as a reception, reader's theater, an awards luncheon and Saturday night dinner with discussion themes.

From Tempe, it is only a two-hour drive to Tucson or Sedona and a few hours more to the Grand Canyon.

For more information about SOHA, visit our Web site at www.southwestoralhistory.org. For conference questions e-mail sarahemoorhead@yahoo.com or call Sarah at 480-962-6227.

Wisconsin oral history program goes (a little) digital

The University of Wisconsin's oral history program has done its first few interviews using digital technology. Physics professors Robert March and Don Reeder and journalism professor Jack Mitchell are three of the half-dozen faculty members interviewed recently using new digital flash memory card recorders, purchased with General Library System funds.

"We now have three recorders, which will allow our some of our staff and volunteers to conduct future interviews digitally," said Troy Reeves, new head of the oral history program. Reeves also noted that "this equipment will help bring the program into the 21st century."

Also helping to bring the program into the 21st century was a software loan from the UW Digital Collections Center. This new software allows the oral history program to create a digital copy of its extant analog collection. Patrons who request a recording can now purchase a CD or a cassette copy.

"Everyone who has requested a recording has jumped at the chance of getting a CD instead of a tape, even with the slightly higher cost," Reeves said, adding: "This tells me that making digital copies of our extant collection is the way to go."

Reeves said the program needs to double, at least, the number of digital recorders to insure that all staff and volunteers can record using current technology. Reeves and staff have digitized about 30 hours of the roughly 3,000-plus hour collection.

"It's a drop in the bucket," Reeves said. To digitize the whole collection quickly and efficiently, according to Reeves, will take "the usual suspects: more people, more equipment and more money."

The oral history program was established in 1971, eventually becoming a part of the UW Archives and Records Management Services. Staff and volunteers gather oral histories to form an invaluable part of UW-Madison's historic record, including life history or project-driven interviews with administrators, faculty, staff and students.

With new leadership in 2007, the OHP will continue that goal while seeking to expand its services, including preserving and providing access to extant and future recordings using the most current technology.

For more information, visit its Web site at <http://archives.library.wisc.edu/ORAL/oral.htm> or e-mail Troy Reeves at treeves@library.wisc.edu. ❖

**The OHA Newsletter welcomes
your contributions of state and regional news.**

In Remembrance...

Several prominent members of the oral history community have died within the past year. Summaries of their lives are included here. The OHA Newsletter invites readers who wish to contribute a reflection about any of these oral historians to send comments to the Newsletter Editor, 7524 S. 35th St., Lincoln, NE 68516 or by e-mail to: ohaeditor@aol.com. Comments will be published in the next issue if they are received by March 1, 2008.

William W. "Bill" Moss

By Pamela M. Henson, *Smithsonian Institution Archives*

William W. "Bill" Moss, 72, oral historian, archivist and teacher, died Aug. 1, 2007, in Williamsburg, Va., of cancer. He wrote an early, widely respected oral history manual and served as president of the Oral History Association in 1978-79.

Moss was born in New York City but grew up in Williamsburg. He received his undergraduate education at Haverford College and graduate education at Columbia University. He served in the U.S. Naval Reserve on active duty from 1958 to 1962 and was employed by the U.S. government for most of his career.

Moss was an intelligence research analyst in foreign language with the National Security Agency from 1964 to 1968. He joined the staff of the John F. Kennedy Library in 1968,

serving first as an oral historian and later as chief archivist. In 1983, he was appointed director of Smithsonian Institution Archives.

After retiring from federal service in 1993, he spent six years teaching English in China, notably at the Foreign Affairs College, China's diplomatic academy. He also served two years, from 1999 to 2000, as assistant state archivist of the Tennessee State Library and Archives.

While with the Kennedy Library, Moss wrote a book on the practice of oral history, *The Oral History Program Manual* (1979), which was widely acclaimed. He later joined with P.C. Mazikana of Zimbabwe to write a work on oral history and oral tradition for the UNESCO records and archives management program that has been extensively quoted in subsequent work on oral history. While in China, and later, in his Williamsburg retirement, he helped to edit three award-winning Chinese-to-English dictionaries. ❖

Saul Benison

Oral history pioneer Saul Benison, a specialist in the history of medicine and science, died of pneumonia Oct. 5, 2006, at a Baltimore, Md., nursing home. He was 85 years old.

A native of New York City, Benison graduated from Queens College in 1941 and served as a historian for the War Production Board during World War II. After the war, he enrolled in Columbia University's graduate history program, where he earned his Ph.D. in 1953. Benison was a research associate at Columbia's Oral History Research Office from 1953-1961 and became a highly regarded expert in oral history.

Benison's academic career included teaching assignments at City College of New York, Sarah Lawrence College, Long

Island University, Brandies University and the University of Cincinnati, from which he retired in 1990.

The New Yorker became an oral history adviser to numerous organizations, including the National Foundation for Infantile Paralysis, The American Archives of Art, the American Institute of Physics and the National Library of Medicine.

His oral-history-based biography *Tom Rivers: Reflections on a Life in Medicine and Science; An Oral History Memoir* was published in 1967 and won laudatory reviews as well as the American Association for Medical History's William H. Welch Medal for distinguished achievement in medical historiography. He also conducted numerous interviews with pioneering polio researcher Albert Sabin and was a collaborator on an extensive biography of physiologist Walter B. Cannon. ❖

Roy Rosenzweig

George Mason University historian Roy Rosenzweig, a pioneer in using digital technology to broaden historical knowledge and understanding, died of lung cancer on Oct. 11. He was 57.

Known for his commitment to seeking a diversity of voices for the historical record, Rosenzweig founded the Center for History and New Media at George Mason in 1994 and was regarded as a leader in efforts among historians to expand the use of new media in teaching and learning about the past.

Rosenzweig was a New York native raised in Queens who graduated from Columbia University in 1971. He studied history at St. John's College of Cambridge, England, before earning his Ph.D. from Harvard University in 1978. He joined the faculty at George Mason in 1981.

Rosenzweig was involved in numerous digital history projects, including Web sites on U.S. history, historical thinking,

the French Revolution, the history of science and technology, world history and the terrorist attacks of Sept. 11, 2001. His September 11 Digital Archive and the "History Matters" Web site are widely recognized and received prizes from the American Historical Association.

The author, co-author or editor of numerous prize-winning books and CD-ROMs, Rosenzweig also received the Pogue Award in 2004 for distinguished work in oral history from Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region (OHMAR).

In a Jan. 22, 2004, oral history interview with OHMAR member Pamela Henson, Rosenzweig commented that his interest in oral history and digital technology reflected his "commitment to a diversity of voices in the historical record and recovering this diversity of voices" as well as a "commitment to a diversity of practitioners of history" that make possible the creation of a democratic historical record. ❖

Conference panelists remember oral history pioneers

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Gabrielle Morris, retired oral historian from the Bancroft Library's Regional Oral History Office, remembered her boss, Willa Baum, who died May 18, 2006, as an oral history pathfinder who never let go of a good idea, winning national respect for her oral history program.

Baum handled all aspects of an oral history project, Morris said, from idea to fundraising to interviewing and everything else it took to "seeing it out into the world."

To Baum, Morris said, "It was not enough for them [interview transcripts] to sit in their blue bindings down in the stacks." She constantly sought out news reporters who would write stories about ROHO's oral history projects.

Under Baum's leadership, ROHO established a reputation for inclusiveness in its oral histories. She worked with countless community organizations and energetically attended meetings of the Oral History Association, which she helped found. "She was kind of a one-woman network," Morris said.

Grele said OHA leaders "many times tried to convince her to run for OHA president," but she never would.

An extensive obituary of Willa Baum appears in the Fall 2006 edition of the **OHA Newsletter**.



Grele concluded the formal portion of the panel by reading a remembrance of Dick Allen, another oral history pioneer and leading figure in the New Orleans jazz world, who died April 12. OHA member Joel Gardner submitted his reflections on Allen but was unable to attend the conference.

Allen, who established the Tulane University Jazz Archives, "had to die to get on the OHA program," Gardner said, recalling his unsuccessful attempt to get a program slot for Allen when OHA members met in New Orleans a decade ago.

Gardner noted in his statement that African-American jazz musicians were largely marginalized in the 1950s, but Allen sought them out and helped the New Orleans jazz community find new audiences. "Dick had a way with everyone," Gardner said, "but especially musicians. Black or white, it made no difference."

As curator of the Jazz Archive at Tulane, Allen conducted hundreds of interviews. He was "brilliant, charming and much respected" by colleagues in the jazz world, Gardner said.

Dick Allen is the subject of an extensive obituary in the Fall 2007 edition of the **OHA Newsletter**.



While not listed in the conference program, recently deceased oral historians William "Bill" Moss and Roy Rosenzweig also were remembered by conference panelists.

Except for Rosenzweig, all of the other oral historians recognized at the session were linked by the fact that they all experienced World War II and its aftermath, all came to maturity in the 1940s and all "came to oral history when there wasn't such a thing as oral history," Grele said.

Nearly a generation separated Moss and Rosenzweig, Ritchie noted. Moss wrote one of the early manuals on how to do oral history while Rosenzweig came along when oral historians were confronting the digital revolution. He realized, Ritchie said, that "historians had to get beyond paper."

"His work was really crucial," Grele added. "One of the things all of these folks were about is destroying boundaries.... [Rosenzweig] helped the rest of us along." ❖



Roy Rosenzweig

National Archives acquires Nixon Library

Historians of all things Richard Nixon got a mid-July windfall when the Richard Nixon Library and Birthplace Foundation completed the transfer of its Nixon materials to the National Archives and Records Administration, the National Coalition for History reported.

As part of the transfer, 165 tape-recorded conversations, totaling more than 11 hours, were scheduled for release. The transfer agreement also called for the Nixon foundation to donate to the National Archives some 800 hours of previously

withheld tapes, which are expected to be available by the middle of next year.

The Nixon Library also opened some 78,000 pages of previously withheld documents, most from a collection of special files the Nixon White House created to segregate sensitive information from the president's personal files, office files and the files of close aides such as H.R. Haldeman, John Erlichman, Charles Colson and John Dean. ❖

News & Notes ...

American historians make plans for 2009 meeting

The program committee for the Organization of American Historians is accepting proposals for its 2009 conference, whose theme is "History Without Boundaries."

The conference is scheduled for March 26-29, 2009, in Seattle.

Planners for the 102nd OAH meeting encourage an eclectic array of proposals reflecting creative use of history in research, education, the media and public presentations. The committee, co-chaired by Donald A. Ritchie of the Senate Historical Office, also encourages international participation and sessions that emphasize oral history, museums, archives and broadcast and electronic media.

For more information about submitting proposals, visit the OAH Web site:

www.oah.org.

Nominations invited for archivists award

Have you read a great new book about archives? Have you come across an exceptional finding aid for a newly-processed archival or manuscript collection? Have you encountered a documentary publication that is head and shoulders above the rest?

If you have, consider nominating it for the Waldo Gifford Leland Award?

The Leland Award subcommittee of the Society of American Archivists invites you to nominate a monograph, finding aid or documentary publication published in North America in 2007 for the Waldo Gifford Leland Award. (Please note: periodicals are not eligible.) The prize is awarded each year to encourage and reward "writing of superior excellence and usefulness in the field of archival history, theory, and practice."

Established in 1959, the award honors American archival pioneer Waldo Gifford Leland, president of the Society of American Archivists in the 1940s and

one of the driving forces behind the founding of the National Archives.

More information and nomination forms can be found at <http://www.archivists.org/recognition/index.asp>. The deadline for applications is Feb. 28, 2008.

Diversity Committee plans outreach

Claytee White, newly appointed chair of the Committee on Diversity, has asked Alphine Jefferson, immediate past president, and Alva Moore Stevenson, former Diversity Committee chair, to design and write a tri-fold brochure illuminating the activities, history, initiatives and membership of the Diversity Committee.

Please send your ideas, information, project descriptions and comments for the brochure to awjefferson@rmc.edu and astevens@library.ucla.edu. We thank you for your support and look forward to a strong and diverse meeting in Pittsburgh next year. ❖

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Submit stories to **Editor Mary Kay Quinlan**, 7524 S. 35th St., Lincoln, NE 68516, or via e-mail at ohaeditor@aol.com

Submit photographs to **Photo and Production Editor Alexandra Tzoumas** at alexandratz@gmail.net

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