



NEWSLETTER

Durham Features Wide Array of Panels, Programs

By **Alicia J. Rouverol**
OHA Program Co-Chair

A broad range of panels, performances, tours and presentations--and an extraordinarily full program--will be featured at the Oral History Association's 2000 meeting in Durham, N.C., at the Marriott Hotel, Oct. 11-15.

To be held for the first time in Durham-Chapel Hill, OHA 2000 will allow conference participants to examine ways in which oral history narrative gives voice to the experience of individuals and communities undergoing profound social, economic, political and cultural

transformations as a result of global forces.

This year's conference theme, "At the Crossroads: Transforming Community Locally and Globally," drew a host of panels and individual paper presentations exploring the impact of globalization on workers, women and the homeless, among others. But the conference will offer much more.

Participants can meet with like-minded practitioners to consider such topics as: transnational communities, community history, ethnic and gender identity, sexual politics, social activism, education and desegregation and the role of community scholars in

oral history research.

Many presentations focus on the experience of the interviewee, including the impact of interviewing, the process of writing biography and life review and the elderly. Ethics and the Internet, electronic publishing and the use of oral history in multi-media formats also will be explored.

With more than 330 program participants coming from across the United States and as many as 10 other countries, the program may well draw record attendance. To encourage international participation and to diversify the offerings of the conference, program co-chairs Mary
(Continued on page 4)



Award-winning radio documentarians, The Kitchen Sisters, Davia Nelson, left, and Nikki Silva, are among the featured speakers at OHA 2000 in Durham, N.C.

Photo by Laura Folger

Editor's Note:

Copy deadline for the next issue of the OHA **Newsletter** is Dec. 1. State and regional oral history groups especially are encouraged to submit information about their fall activities. Stories about upcoming spring events also are welcome, as are contributions on oral history projects or issues of interest to oral historians.

Mail materials to: Mary Kay Quinlan, 7524 S. 35th St., Lincoln, NE 68516; fax to: 402-420-1770; or e-mail: OHAEditor@aol.com. Please do not send items as attachments to an e-mail message.



From Your President

By **Laurie Mercier**
OHA President

This issue of the **Newsletter** highlights the upcoming OHA annual meeting in Durham, which promises to be one of the most ambitious and important gatherings in recent OHA history.

Program co-chairs Mary Murphy and Alicia Rouverol and their committee have spent the past nine months developing and solidifying a terrific program. Local arrangements co-chairs Beth Millwood and Cathy Abernathy and their committee have worked hard on accommodations and interesting tours and activities for conference participants. Vice President Cliff Kuhn has secured funds and stimulating speakers for the meeting and attended to myriad details. Planners have sent the program book to the printer, and Executive Secretary Madelyn Campbell will mail it to the membership in early August. We hope you will publicize and share the program among friends and colleagues.

The annual meeting traditionally has been, and continues to be, one of the most important of the association's activities. It brings together new and experienced oral historians to share work, converse and stretch thinking about the theory and practice of our craft. Planning and executing the meeting (as anyone who has done this knows) is also very labor intensive. The association has been enormously fortunate in past years to depend on the volunteer labors of program and local arrangements committees and in-kind donations from their institutions.

But with increased demands on OHA members' time, more reluctance on the part of institutions to support necessary service work and the increasing complexity and demands of the annual meeting, the OHA needs to reevaluate past practices. Among other possibilities, we will need to initiate creative fundraising to

continue to support the outstanding conferences we have come to expect. When Vice President Kuhn takes the presidential helm in October, I will volunteer to serve on a reconstituted ad hoc task force on annual meetings.

Profits from the annual meeting support the work of the executive secretary, who spends many months of the year printing and publicizing the program and handling registration and inquiries.

Meeting proceeds also support membership development. In 1995 the OHA Council voted to establish a scholarship fund to assist students, community oral historians and members of underrepresented groups (racial and ethnic minorities, gays and lesbians, working-class people, people with disabilities and others) who may not have financial means to attend the annual meeting.

Thanks to a successful meeting in Anchorage and a small percentage of endowment interest monies the Council devoted to the fund, the Durham scholarship committee has more than \$4,000 to distribute. As the OHA membership ages, it is vitally important to recruit younger oral historians to the association. And in keeping with the democratic purposes and intent of the oral history movement, it is also critical to recruit members who represent the diversity of the United States.

One of my main goals as president has been to help the association get its financial affairs in order. I revived the finance committee (Jo Blatti, Cullom Davis, Becca Sharpless and Howard Green), which provided excellent advice and cautioned us to spend judiciously and save generously.

At its midyear meeting in April, the OHA Council adopted a 2000 annual budget that tried to heed this advice. The budget, available on the OHA Web site and in the forthcoming 2000 directory, reflects greater expenses for the **Oral History Review** and the office of the executive secretary. It also reflects the revival of the pamphlet series, which ultimately will generate revenue for the association as well as serve members and a wider oral history public. The Council approved the transfer of

\$2,500 to the endowment to support its continued healthy growth and dedicated \$25,000 to an operating reserve, leaving \$11,630 as a balance to carry forward in the operating budget.

The OHA prides itself on its democratic traditions and inclinations. But a democratic association depends on its members to participate in and guide its affairs. My first **Newsletter** column solicited volunteers to serve on ad hoc and standing committees or to help in other ways, such as contributing to the **Newsletter** or **H-Oralhist**, reviewing books for the **Review** or helping out with the annual meeting. I also encourage members to raise questions, issues, ideas and concerns for the officers and Council to consider.

Our next Council meeting will be held Oct. 10-11, before the conference begins in Durham. Please contact me at Washington State University Vancouver, 14204 NE Salmon Creek Ave., Vancouver, WA 98686 or by e-mail: mercier@vancouver.wsu.edu

This is my last column as OHA president. It has been a privilege to work with Executive Secretary Madelyn Campbell, who came on board during my tenure, and officers Cliff Kuhn and Mary Marshall Clark, Council and committee members, liaisons, editors, former officers and the many OHA members who through their enthusiasm and commitment to oral history work make our collective tasks so rewarding.

Conference Planners Advise Making Early Hotel Reservations

OHA members planning to stay at the conference hotel should call early for their room reservations, according to local arrangements co-chair Beth Millwood.

To make reservations as soon as possible, call the Marriott reservation number: 800-228-9280.

Please vote when you receive your OHA ballot!

An OHA Tribute: Remembering Lila Johnson Goff

By James E. Fogerty
Minnesota Historical Society

Lila Johnson Goff, former president of the Oral History Association, died May 4, after a long illness. She was 56. She faced her third incidence of cancer and her final illness with characteristic calm and determination and with the attention to detail that marked her notable career.

Lila began her work at the Minnesota Historical Society as head of the Oral History Office in 1967, a program she created and nurtured throughout her 33-year career. While she went on to head the Society's largest program as assistant director for libraries and archives, she never lost her commitment to oral history.

She served on the OHA Council, as chair of numerous task forces and committees and as president in 1990. She was also founder and first president of the Oral History Association of Minnesota.

In her wider work she was often honored by election to important offices, as deputy coordinator of the Minnesota State Historical Records Advisory Board and to the board of directors (and later chair) of the National Association of Government Archives and Records Administrators and of the Research Libraries Group. She took on the task of managing the construction of the Society's \$80 million Minnesota History Center, a mammoth project that was accomplished on time and under budget. Her keen interest in electronic access to information resulted in her role as the leading proponent of electronic projects in the MHS management.

Among Lila's lasting legacies is the "Oral History Cataloging Manual," a groundbreaking guide to the task of providing coordinated access to oral history interviews. A joint project of the OHA and Society of American Archivists, the manual has become an international standard for oral history collections. She conceived the project, served as project director and ensured publication of the manual and

its wide distribution. The manual, with its many constituencies and valuable guidance is a testament to the outstanding management, superb attention to detail and commitment to public access to information that are the hallmarks of Lila Goff's distinguished career.

By Dale E. Treleven
UCLA Oral History Program

Quite by chance--about the time I received word of Lila's death--one drawer or another yielded a plumpish white ballpoint pen embossed in blue: "Pillsbury, Mill A." A pen with special meaning, a reminder of how in everything Lila undertook no detail was too small. The pen's origin was the 1987 OHA annual meeting at the St. Paul Hotel and historic Landmark Center, where Lila as program chair and Jim Fogerty as local arrangements head staged a superb mix of meaningful sessions and fun-time tours.

The Pillsbury ballpoint? It still writes, as if to remind ever more of a dear friend and colleague who accomplished so much, taking on each challenge with an eye to minute yet important detail.

By Donald A. Ritchie
U.S. Senate Historical Office

The chief preoccupation of any president of the Oral History Association is the annual meeting, which not only offers members a chance to gather together but raises a significant portion of the year's operational finances. When I drew St. Paul, Minn., as the site for the 1987 meeting, Lila Goff was the natural choice for program chair. Along with her colleague Jim Fogerty, who handled local arrangements, she made that year entirely manageable and enjoyable.

As with any task she tackled, Lila applied her good sense and cool-eyed attention to every detail. Inevitably,



Lila Johnson Goff

when anyone raised a potential problem, Lila would reply that she'd already taken care of it. And she had. Nothing seemed to take Lila by surprise. She guided us through the year's planning with composure and a wonderful sense of humor. The meeting came off so smoothly that few probably realized how hard she had worked to make it that way. Three years later, Lila was president, overseeing her own meeting in Cambridge, Mass., another tour de force put together with her special brand of charm and intelligence.

After the day's program was over or during the Saturday afternoon break, Lila liked to join old friends in the hotel lobby or in a nearby restaurant for long conversations--another part of the orality of oral history. She would share reminiscences and observations about past meetings (she had been coming to the OHA since the Arden House meeting in 1967), about her experiences directing the oral history program at the Minnesota Historical Society--and building a whole new headquarters for the Society--and about her family circle. Her many friends will miss those occasions and will remain in her debt for all her numerous contributions to oral history and the Oral History Association.

More tributes to Lila Goff on page 11.

Durham Meeting Boasts Program Variety

(Continued from page 1)

Murphy and Alicia J. Rouverol invited three international scholars to serve on the program committee. Rouverol and Murphy drew widely on the rich resources of the region, including local institutions and conference co-sponsors, the University of North Carolina Southern Oral History Program, the Center for Documentary Studies and the UNC Center for the Study of the American South. Local community scholars and activists engaged in oral history research in the region also have been invited to attend.

A special Thursday morning session, "Narrating the Border: Transnational Stories of Working People," will kick off the conference.

The plenary session Friday morning, "Fast Food, Fast Talk, Fast Change: Globalization and the Transformation of Communities," will deepen this discussion by considering the impact of such forces on identity formation.

A special closing session on Sunday morning, "At the Crossroads: Oral History in the 21st Century," will enable us to assess the terrain covered throughout the conference and also to look ahead toward the concerns, interests and opportunities ahead in our field.

Featured speakers will include:

+ Carol Stack, an anthropologist who teaches social and cultural studies in the Graduate School of Education at the University of California, Berkeley. Author of "All Our Kin: Strategies for Survival in a Black Community"



Leon Fink

and "Call to Home: African Americans Reclaim the Rural South," Stack writes on family policy, race, ethnicity and citizenship in the United States.

+ Ellen Stein, a staff editor/writer for daily newspapers and national magazines and former assistant managing editor for the University of Alabama Press. Stein is completing a book with Carol Stack titled "Tales of Luck and Pluck, with Fries."

Stack and Stein will present jointly on their research exploring the experience of young workers in fast-food restaurants in Oakland, Calif. Their narrators--predominantly African American, Latino, Mexican American and Asian--reflect on their own migrations and where they are headed in the 21st century.

+ Leon Fink, professor of history at the University of Illinois at Chicago. His numerous publications include: "Workingmen's Democracy," "Upheaval in the Quiet Zone: A History of Hospital Workers' Union, Local 1199" and "Progressive Intellectuals."

During the past two decades, he has pursued oral history inquiries several times, most recently in conjunction with his forthcoming book, tentatively titled "Corn People, Chicken Wages." His presentation will explore the effect of globalization in Morganton, N.C., where a new labor force for the town's Case Farms, Inc., poultry processing plant was recruited from war-torn Guatemala in the early 1990s. Fink will examine the issues of economic change and immigrant acculturation through the eyes of the town's business and governmental leaders, clergy and other professionals as well as other workers.

+ The Kitchen Sisters, Davia Nelson and Nikki Silva, executive producers of National Public Radio's "Lost and Found Sound: A National Collaboration Celebrating a Century of Recorded Sound," which first aired in January 1999.

In May 2000, The Kitchen Sisters received a prestigious Peabody Award

for "Lost and Found Sound." During the Friday luncheon they will present "Lost and Found Sound: Oral History, Audio Artifacts and a National Collaboration, or Never Throw Anything Away."

The Kitchen Sisters also will join radio producers George King and Leda Hartman for a special half-day radio workshop at the Center for Documentary Studies, just one of a series of workshops offered throughout the four-day conference.

Other workshops include:

- + an introduction to oral history practice and theory (full day);
- + oral history as public history, including use of multi-media formats, (full day);
- + a diversity training session (half day);
- + a cultural studies approach to oral history (half day);
- + a training session for community scholars (half day) and
- + an oral history in the classroom course (full day).

Most workshops require advance registration. The community history workshop and the Saturday teachers' workshop are both free of charge, through a grant from the North Carolina Humanities Council.

Friday evening presentations will include "Piedmont Harmonies: Crossing Boundaries in Carolina Cotton Country," a multi-media presentation on the musical traditions of the Carolina Piedmont and their connections to the broader social and cultural history of the region. The program will feature an audio-slide



Carol Stack

show and live performances by an a cappella gospel group, a string band and other traditional musicians with intimate knowledge of the Southern textile industry.

The Oral History Film Festival will feature five films at two different times. Friday night features will include "The Golf War," which explores the reactions of Filipino peasants to the development of their ancestral land for a golf resort, and "The Language You Cry In," the saga of a song transplanted from 18th century Sierra Leone to South Carolina then rediscovered in Sierra Leone in 1997.

Films to be screened on Saturday afternoon include "Nobody's Business," "Shine On: Richard Trice and the Bull City Blues" and "Blue Vinyl: A Toxic Comedy," by Judith Helfand, winner of the OHA 1995 media award for "Uprising of '34."

Filmmakers will be present during the screenings. Presiding over the festival will be Darrell Stover, director of programs at the Hayti Heritage Center in Durham, an African-American cultural center.

Both "Piedmont Harmonies" and the Oral History Film Festival also are free of charge and open to the public through a grant from the North Carolina Humanities Council.

On Saturday evening, the OHA Committee on Diversity invites all those attending the conference to join for conversation and networking at a cash bar reception, followed by the awards dinner.

Awards will be presented for an outstanding article and for small and large oral history projects. No postsecondary teaching award will be presented because of a lack of nominees.

Following the awards ceremony will be a performance by StreetSigns Center for Literature and Performance, a national performing arts and educational center based in Chapel Hill, N.C. StreetSigns will offer highlights of a performance titled "Wave As You Pass," which explores notions of family and home in Chatham County, N.C.

Saturday night's dance band will be the highly acclaimed Carnivalito,

whose eclectic mixture of mambos, sambas, cumbia and merengue has been described as "percussive fire" and "five-alarm salsa."

The conference also will feature an exhibition, "I-26: Corridor of Change," by award-winning documentary photographer Rob Amberg of Madison County, N.C. The exhibit will feature images from his seven-year documentation of the construction of I-26, which is cutting through his home county.

On Saturday afternoon, four tours will be offered. Conference attendees can:

- + visit the Southern Historical Collection and the Southern Folklife Collection at UNC-Chapel Hill;
- + travel to the Seagrove potteries and the North Carolina Pottery Center;
- + tour Stagville Plantation, Hayti Heritage Center and St. Joseph AME Church or
- + go for a short bus ride and hike at the West Point on the Eno River.

Preregistration is required for all tours.

Those attending their first OHA meeting are invited to join association officers, committee chairs and editors for a complimentary continental Newcomers' Breakfast on Friday morning.

OHA 2000 also will feature exhibits from publishers and vendors of services and equipment useful to oral historians.

A local independent bookstore will offer books related to oral history and will host book signings by featured authors.

OHA 2000 promises to be a chock-full, stimulating conference. We hope to see you there.



Ellen Stein

Items Sought For Silent Auction

Regional gifts, traditional arts and crafts, autographed books and gift certificates will be offered at the seventh annual OHA silent auction. Proceeds go to the OHA Endowment Fund. Bids will be taken throughout the conference, and items will be distributed to the highest bidders on Saturday evening.

Consider donating items that can be packed or shipped easily--cassettes or CDs of regional music, books, crafts, T-shirts, mugs, notecards or services such as transcribing or tape duplication.

To contribute, please contact Linda Sellars, Manuscripts Dept., Wilson Library, CB#3926, UNC-CH, Chapel Hill, NC 27514-8890. E-mail: sellars@email.unc.edu

Bulletin Board Briefs

The **Center for Study of Ethnicity and Gender in Appalachia** at Marshall University invites humanities scholars to apply for a resident fellowship funded by the Rockefeller Foundation. Applications are due Feb. 15, 2001. For details contact Mary Thomas, csega@marshall.edu.

The **Woodrow Wilson International Center for Scholars** invites fellowship applications from social science and humanities scholars. Applications are due Oct. 1 and can be downloaded from the Web site: www.wilsoncenter.org.

The **National Coalition of Independent Scholars** will hold its annual conference in Raleigh, N.C., Oct. 27-29. The theme is "Independent Scholars: The Public Intellectuals of the Future." For information, contact Thomas C. Jepsen at: tjepsen@mindspring.com.

The **Association of Personal Historians** will meet Nov. 3-6 in Dallas. Former OHA president Charles Morrissey will speak.

Shopes Discusses Oral History with Bioethics Advisory Group

By Linda Shopes
Pennsylvania Historical and
Museum Commission

On April 6, at the request of the Organization of American Historians, I presented the concerns of historians about current federal regulations governing research on human subjects at a meeting of the National Bioethics Advisory Commission (NBAC). The commission, appointed by the president and charged with advising the White House and other federal agencies about bioethical issues arising from research involving human subjects, is reviewing the existing federal regulatory framework for this research. I spoke as part of a panel of social scientists and humanities scholars charged with outlining the nature of human subjects research in our various disciplines and addressing the appropriateness of the current regulatory system, which was developed within a biomedical framework, to this research. Excerpts of my remarks appear below. Eric Meslin, NBAC executive director, subsequently told me the commission had never before heard from a historian nor considered the implications of the regulations for our work.

A few words of background and some second thoughts are, perhaps, in order. Currently, ethical principles governing research on human subjects, including oral history interviews, are codified in Title 45, Part 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Protection of Human Subjects (commonly referred to as 45 CFR 46).

Two key principles underlie 45 CFR 46: 1) that human subjects of research must give their informed consent before participating in the research and 2) that protocols for ethical treatment of these human subjects, including for their informed consent, must be reviewed before the research begins by an independent body, referred to as an Institutional

Review Board (IRB). The terms of 45 CFR 46 apply only to research funded by the 17 federal agencies that have adopted the regulations. However—and this is key for oral historians, who generally are not funded by any of these 17 agencies—many universities have agreed that all research conducted under their auspices be reviewed by a campus IRB according to terms of 45 CFR 46.

My comments before the NBAC were considerably informed by historians' responses to a survey by the American Association of University Professors (AAUP), which last fall convened a working group of representatives from several professional associations, including OHA, to investigate ways in which 45 CFR 46 is being applied to work in our disciplines. Donald Ritchie represents the OHA on this group, while I represent the American Historical Association. The AAUP plans to issue a report of its findings sometime within the next year.

As I have thought more deeply about the inadequacies of the current regulations and the need to ensure ethical treatment of human beings while not compromising free and critical inquiry in oral history, I have concluded that for interviews deemed to present no or minimal risk to narrators, review of research protocols should take place among peers at the departmental level, according to the standards articulated in OHA's Principles and Standards and Evaluation Guidelines and AHA's "Statement on Interviewing for Historical Documentation." 45 CFR 46 is proving inadequate on several grounds, and the explosion of privately funded, largely scientific research is creating considerable debate over current regulations at the national level. It is an opportune moment for oral historians to raise our concerns, stay abreast of the debates surrounding the regulation of human subjects research and take appropriate action in our own

interests. I would welcome hearing from oral historians about their experiences with campus IRBs. I can be reached at: lshopes@aol.com.

...For historians, "human subjects" research means oral history, that is, preplanned, open-ended, in-depth and generally tape-recorded interviews with men and women whose first-hand experiences are deemed of some historical significance. The term oral history itself is maddeningly imprecise: it refers to both the process of interviewing and the recorded interview, in both its taped and transcribed forms....

Historians generally conduct interviews for one of two reasons: to develop an archives of primary source material for future scholarly work or as research for their own scholarly project.... There is considerable overlap between these two approaches to oral history in that scholars conducting interviews for their own research are encouraged to place the completed interviews in an archives or public repository so that others can build upon and also interrogate their research....

Oral history is not understood as research on human subjects, but rather research with other human beings...

I think it is important to state that for historians, oral history is not understood as research on human subjects, but rather research with other human beings: an oral history interview is an interactive process, in which the questions of the historian/interviewer elicit the responses of the narrator, which in turn influence the historian's subsequent questions.

Historians view oral history as a unique kind of primary source: the quality of the interview depends as much on the methodology employed and the relationship between interviewer and narrator as it does on the significance of the events being recalled and the sharpness of the narrator's memory.

[Editor's Note: Shopes then described the OHA's process for

codifying principles to guide oral history work in the Evaluation Guidelines and the AHA's briefer "Statement on Interviewing for Historical Documentation." She also recounted a September 1997 meeting among several OHA leaders and representatives of the National Institutes of Health's Office for Protection from Research Risks to discuss the application of 45 CFR 46 to oral history.]

Historians do not dispute the importance of high ethical standards governing research that involves human beings, the review of research protocols involving human beings and the principle of informed consent.

IRBs [are] evaluating oral history projects according to standards and protocols not appropriate for historical research.

That said, the biomedical and behaviorist frameworks within which 45 CFR 46 was developed have resulted in IRBs evaluating oral history projects according to standards and protocols not appropriate for historical research, thereby calling into question the underlying assumption of peer review.

This problem is exacerbated by the tendency for IRBs to be composed of people unfamiliar with methods of historical research.

Thus, IRBs have asked historians how narrators would be recruited, when in fact recruitment is not the issue. A request for an interview is based on the potential narrator's sometimes unique relationship to the person or topic under consideration. We have been asked what the consequences would be if a person refused to consent to an interview. Again, this simply isn't an issue in oral history research, unless, of course, one considers the consequence of not having a particular person's version of events on record, though obviously that's not what the regulations refer to.

Historians report that they have been told by IRBs to submit detailed questionnaires prior to conducting any interviews, to maintain narrator anonymity both on tape and in their

published work and to either destroy their tapes or retain them in their private possession after their research project is completed.

Each of these requests misconstrues oral history and violates fundamental standards of historical practice. An interview is an open-ended inquiry, generally structured around a set of biographical and broadly historical questions. It does not follow a rigid schedule of questions but is shaped by the interview exchange. While anonymity is an option in oral history, and indeed appropriate in some cases, anonymous sources lack credibility in most historical scholarship. The precise identity of an interviewee often matters, as a way of gauging that person's relationship to the topic under discussion and hence assessing the perspective from which he or she speaks. In fact, most narrators agree to retain their identity in archival collections and published scholarship. And although narrators can choose to restrict all or a portion of their interviews for a period of time, hoarding or destroying tapes contradicts a primary canon of historical research: that sources not only be cited, but also be available and accessible as a way of assessing the validity and integrity of the work that draws upon them.

For the full text of Shopes' and others' remarks, see the Web site: www.bioethics.gov

And most incredible to me, some historians report that IRBs have questioned their use of sources in the public record, including newspapers and manuscript collections, as well as properly archived oral history interviews, simply because they deal with the activities of human beings! Some also question whether the current extensive and often bureaucratically complex review to which proposed oral history research projects are subjected, including even interviews assigned as a classroom project, is, in fact, appropriate for a research activity that generally presents the most minimal of risks to the narrator....

There is a deeper disjunction between the biomedical model of

research on which current human subjects regulations are based and the research of historians and perhaps of those in other humanities and social sciences disciplines.

Some historians have been told not to ask questions about certain sensitive subjects.

This lack of fit is suggested by reports by some historians that they are requested by their IRB not to ask questions about certain sensitive subjects....It is suggested by the current regulation that "where appropriate, a statement that significant new findings developed during the course of the research, which may relate to the subject's willingness to continue participation, will be provided to the subject." It's suggested by the need to identify the "risks or discomforts" an interviewee may experience during the course of an interview. In all of this there is the possibility, or at least the hint, that, according to current regulations, controversial, difficult or challenging topics cannot be addressed in historical research.

The need to treat individual narrators with honesty and respect is not the issue here. Nor is the need to apprise them of the nature and purpose of any interview. What is at issue is the notion of critical inquiry, inquiry that does challenge, that may be adversarial, that may even "expose," as interviews with Klansmen and women and with Nazi collaborators, for example, have done.

Yet current regulations, interpreted narrowly, can have a chilling effect on historians' freedom to pursue difficult topics. Moreover, historians pursuing research on some 20th century topics may find they have acquired critical, if controversial, information with profound consequences for public life. They may further determine that the public's need to know may have greater urgency than may be allowed for in current regulations.

The boundaries of current regulations are admittedly unclear about these sorts of issues, but historians believe it is imperative that they not be used to hinder the recording of our recent past.

International Meeting Focuses on Crossroads of History

By Rebecca Sharpless
Baylor University

High above the turquoise waters of the Bosphorus Strait, Bogazici University hosted the 11th meeting of the International Oral History Association in June, welcoming more than 300 oral historians from six continents to the amazing city of Istanbul.

Conference organizer Gunhan Danisman and his colleagues deftly handled all of the logistics, made possible by the generosity of the university. The conference committee, chaired by Janis Wilton of Australia, assembled an ambitious program with a wide array of panels and workshops in English, Spanish and Turkish, many with simultaneous translation. It was an embarrassment of riches: too many papers in too many sessions in too little time--an actual world of oral history to talk about in a mere four days!

The papers and panels demonstrated the truly global nature of oral history practice. Many of the themes echoed work that has been showcased at OHA meetings in the United States: women as agents of cultural change, immigration and migration, natural disasters, religion, media, narrative, childhood and stories, public/private memory, sometimes as many as 10 sessions in a single time slot.

But for many of the participants, the most striking aspect of the conference was not necessarily content, as interesting as it was, but the sense of being part of an international movement, where people from Singapore share the same concerns as people from the Netherlands and from Vancouver. A session might feature papers on similar topics from Chicago and Rio de Janeiro or Sierra Leone and Theresienstadt, allowing for comparative comments on a worldwide scale.

Numerous sessions demonstrated that some aspects of American life are not necessarily unique to the United

States. For example, a subplenary session on Saturday morning, crammed with speakers, highlighted the movements of people around the world: Indonesians to the Netherlands, Koreans to the United States, English people to Australia, Turks to Sweden. Hearing stories that are familiar and yet so different definitely caused listeners' perspectives to shift.

Language served as both barrier and bridge, as numerous monolingual Americans found themselves among people from other nations fluent in two, three, four languages. The skillful simultaneous translation, however, allowed even the most monophonic participants to follow the sessions in fine fashion.

Perhaps the most remarkable session featured narratives of the Armenian genocide, the story of the conflict beginning in the late 19th century between the Turkish government and the Armenian peoples living in the eastern third of the nation, and the subsequent deaths of many Armenians at the hands of the Turks. The subject is still one of enormous sensitivity to the Turkish government, and one of the conference funders objected to the session and withdrew support.

The IOHA and Bogazici University pressed on, shifting the venue and absorbing the financial costs. The session may have been the first time the Armenian issue had been raised publicly at a scholarly meeting within Turkey. The presenters focused on the words of the interviewees and defused a potentially hostile situation, and the session allowed thoughtful, civil discussion.

Generous Turkish hosts also provided for the social side of things, with a cruise up the Bosphorus and folk dancing by Bogazici students. Conference attendees remarked on the good humor of all present, despite sessions with too much to say and not enough time to say it, language obstacles and the Istanbul traffic. Most attendees took advantage of the opportunity to see Istanbul, a pulsating

city of 10 million people, astride the divide between Europe and Asia. The Aya Sofia, built in its present form by Roman emperor Justinian in 527 as the eastern seat of the Christian church, echoed with the voices of thousands of school children on year-end field trips.

Just across the street, the Cami Sultanahmet, or Blue Mosque, attests to the power of Islam in the life of the city. Just a short distance away, the Topkapi Palace recalls the glory days of the Ottoman empire. And beside it all, the water of the Black Sea moves steadily toward the Mediterranean, as Istanbul residents use rods and reels to bring out small silver fish by the bucketsful.

The IOHA business meeting proved to be as lively as usual, with heated discussion over the venue of the 2002 meeting, tentatively set for South Africa. OHA members Anne Ritchie and Rina Benmayor were elected as vice president and council member, respectively. Marieta de Moraes Ferreira of Brazil succeeded Mercedes Vilanova of Spain as IOHA president.

IOHA dues are US\$60 for two years. For more information, see the IOHA Web site at: www.bcn.es/tjussana/ioha

(Thanks to Howard Green, Jim Lane, Laurie Mercier, Anne Ritchie, Don Ritchie, Linda Shopes and Al Thomson for sharing their impressions with me.)

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*Please do **not** send changes to the OHA Newsletter.*

STATE AND REGIONAL REPORT



MOHA Volunteers Travel Widely in State

**By Geneva Kebler Wiskemann
Michigan Oral History Association**

The summer and fall schedule of the Michigan Oral History Association continues to be filled with events throughout the state.

A team of volunteers, including William R. Gulley of Wayne State University, were panelists at the June 22 meeting of the Michigan Archival Association in Frankenmuth. President Lynn Spietz Simmons and Vice President Jim Cameron presented a workshop at the Historical Society of Michigan's Upper Peninsula conference in Manistique the next day.

Oral history and technology is the focus of a day-long workshop Aug. 15 for the National Endowment for the Humanities-funded New Media Classroom seminar at Mott Community College in Flint.

In September, Cameron will bring together young oral history students from each of the peninsulas in a presentation for the Historical Society of Michigan's annual meeting at Sault Ste. Marie.

The education team will present oral history as a part of the "uses of history" theme of the Great Lakes History Conference in Grand Rapids on Oct. 6. And MOHA members who attend the annual OHA meeting expect to return invigorated for Nov. 4 and 18 workshops offered in Novi and the Henry Ford Museum in Dearborn.

President Simmons, Virginia Parker, Ann Rock and Glenn Ruggles also presented to the summer oral history class taught by Philip P. Mason at Wayne State University in Detroit.

Geneva Kebler Wiskemann and Ruggles co-chair the education committee. Ann Rock and Katherine Mutch recently joined the MOHA board.

SOHA Members Meet In Long Beach

**By Karen Harper
Southwest Oral History Association**

The Southwest Oral History Association had its annual three-day conference the last weekend in April at the WestCoast Hotel in Long Beach, Calif. The site across the bay from downtown Long Beach provided great outdoor waterfront areas for continued discussions. We were pleased that 116 people attended.

Highlights included a closing plenary session organized by Sherna Gluck titled "Where Did We Start, Where Are We Headed? Four Generations of Oral Historians Reflect on the Past, Present and Future of Oral History."

Just in the introductions, Enid Douglas talked about the founding of the Oral History Association, Art Hansen recalled that a student nudged him into exploring oral history, Valerie Matsumoto discovered oral history in an early women's studies class taught by Mary Rothchild at Arizona State University and Maylie Blackwell recalled that her first interviews with radical Chicanas included helping them do their chores.

The SOHA James Mink Award for outstanding contribution to the field of oral history in the Southwest region went to Indira Berndston, an oral historian and archivist at the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation.

Del Mar Historical Society volunteers ran our most successful raffle and silent auction, bringing in \$1,425 for our grants and scholarships program.

Our next annual conference will be in Tempe, Ariz., at the Fiesta Inn, May 4-6, 2001.

Bellingham Site Of NOHA Meeting

**By Troy Reeves
Northwest Oral History Association**

The Northwest Oral History Association met with the Northwest Archivists, Inc., in Bellingham, Wash., May 4-6. NOHA sponsored a workshop on using oral history materials in museum exhibits. Featured speakers were: Ron Chew of the Wing Luke Museum, Larry Johnson, an independent filmmaker and Melissa Parr of the Washington State Historical Society. NOHA members Jodie Ann Foley of the Montana Historical Society and Troy Reeves from the Idaho Oral History Center also presented a session on the fundamentals of oral history.

In other NOHA news, Alan H. Stein, former program chair of the Chicago Oral History Roundtable, who now lives in Sacramento, is the new NOHA newsletter editor.

Bay Area Historians Talk About Editing

**By Elizabeth A. Wright
Bay Area Oral Historians**

Bay Area Oral Historians held a June 10 workshop on editing oral histories for publication. Presenters included: Gaby Morris of the Bancroft Library in Berkeley, Kathy Nasstrom of the University of San Francisco, Nancy MacKay of Mills College and labor historian Harvey Schwartz.

Also in June, the Association of Personal Historians held a Northern California regional meeting at the Naval Museum in Vallejo, Calif. About 15 members attended.

*Volume 5 of the Texas Oral History Association's journal, **Sound Historian**, is now available. For details, see the Web site at: www.baylor.edu/~TOHA*

Call for Papers "Bearing Public Witness: Documenting Memories of Struggle and Resistance"

Oral History Association Annual Meeting

The Regal Riverfront Hotel
St. Louis, Mo.
Oct. 16-21, 2001

The Oral History Association recognizes that documenting historical and cultural memory brings with it questions, debates and responsibilities regarding process, standards and ethics. In focusing on these themes, the association welcomes presentations that consider the challenges of collecting and documenting memories and histories that reflect trauma, genocide, violence or social/political disorder.

Specifically, what are the philosophical and practical strategies for documenting individual and collective memories, especially those that are in danger of being ignored, erased or forgotten because of silence or denial?

How might we document stories of action and reaction, survival and loss, perseverance and endurance, dislocation and migration, advocacy and justice, perpetrators and victims? Can public discourse and personal experience be transformed by the collective memory of struggle, once made visible? What role should oral historians play in these processes?

The rapidly changing worlds of media and technology bring another set of questions for historians.

Do historians face new or different sets of ethical issues in new environments when confronting stories and memories of trauma, violence or disorder? How might oral history and oral historians participate in setting standards for the collection and dissemination of narratives of trauma, oppression and genocide in digital environments? What kinds of distinctions should be drawn between public and private narratives? What is the role of visual oral history, including still and moving photography, in performing documentary work in the 21st century?

Finally, how should oral historians respond to the new challenges of accessibility, collection and cataloguing brought by a digital age? How will dissemination be affected by understanding the users and their needs? How will the uses of oral history change with new forms of dissemination?

To facilitate a broad discussion of these important issues, the OHA encourages students and faculty from the arts, the humanities and the social sciences--along with independent scholars, activists, museum professionals, filmmakers, radio documentarians, photographers and journalists--to submit

proposals for panels, plenaries, workshops, roundtables and media- and performance-oriented sessions.

We encourage participants to focus on ethical and methodological issues in collecting, producing, disseminating and using this genre of work. We particularly encourage presentations and panels that cross disciplines, cultures, nationalities and institutions. We welcome proposals from other professional organizations, particularly those dealing with the themes of the meeting.

Please submit five copies of proposals. For full sessions, submit an abstract of no more than two pages and a one-page vitae for each participant. For individual proposals, submit a one-page abstract and a one-page resume of the presenter. In all cases, please include the full name, mailing address, institutional affiliation, phone number and e-mail address for each session participant.

For queries, contact one of the program co-chairs. Send proposals to Leslie Brown by Dec. 15, 2000.

Leslie Brown, Professor
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Jessica Wiederhorn
Survivors of the Shoah Visual History Foundation
Phone: 818-777-6312
E-mail: jwieder@vhf.org

Proposal deadline: Dec. 15, 2000

More OHA Members Pay Tribute to Lila Johnson Goff

By **Barbara Sommer**
BWS Associates

Oral history in Minnesota benefitted greatly from the leadership of Lila Goff. With Jim Fogerty, she provided guidance and direction to oral historians across the state through the founding of the Oral History Association of Minnesota (OHAM).

Planning for OHAM began in 1985 when Lila and Jim drew seven people together from across the state for a discussion about a statewide organization. The goal, described by Lila, was to provide a "key link between oral historians across the state."

Our work paid off with the first OHAM annual meeting in March 1986. Lila was elected president. As Jim wrote in the 10th anniversary newsletter, "Lila Goff's proposal and determination" helped launch OHAM.

The first major order of business, after getting ourselves organized, was a bid for the 1987 Oral History Association meeting. It was accepted with Lila as program chair. The resulting meeting was one of the highlights of everyone's involvement with OHAM and oral history in Minnesota.

OHAM continues to grow and to provide the "key link" among oral historians envisioned by Lila. The annual meeting brings together people from across the state and highlights the work in Minnesota. To provide an ongoing forum for discussion, OHAM also sponsors mini-series programs throughout the year at various locations.

The Oral History Association of Minnesota is only a part of Lila Goff's legacy. The rewards to oral history in Minnesota, however, serve as a continuing reminder of the importance of her leadership and of the strength of her "proposal and determination."

By **John Fox**
Oral History Research Associates

I have but a simple memory of Lila. She was the nicest person anyone could meet. She actually cared for all who she came into contact with, making them feel comfortable. When she talked with you (notice that I did not say "talk to you"), you were the most important person. When she moved on, you were left with the warm feeling that you had just conversed with a person who cared about you as

an individual. From my perspective, her greatest gift in life had nothing to do with oral history. It had to do with her personality and her humanity. She will be remembered for who she was as a person long after her professional accomplishments have faded into the past.

By **Elly Shodell**
Port Washington Public Library

Lila was one of the first long-standing OHA members who nurtured my beginnings as an oral historian about 20 years ago. Her subtle sense of humor, quiet but powerful presence and devotion to the OHA were energizing and inspiring.

The OHA Endowment Fund has established a special memorial to honor the late Lila Johnson Goff. Donors may send tax deductible memorial contributions to Madelyn Campbell, OHA Executive Secretary, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013.

*The OHA thanks **Cullom Davis, Tom Charlton and Rebecca Sharpless** for their recent contributions in Lila's memory.*

The Minnesota Historical Society also welcomes contributions in her honor.

OHA Pamphlet Order Form

Add to your professional reference library the Oral History Association's pamphlets. OHA members get a 10 percent discount for orders of 10 or more copies. Clip and mail this coupon, with your check made out to OHA, to: Oral History Assn., Dickinson College, Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013.

Name _____

Address _____

City _____

State _____ Zip _____

Country _____

All prices include shipping via domestic mail. Inquire for costs of Federal Express delivery. International shipping by surface mail at no extra charge; add 30 percent to your order if you prefer international airmail delivery.

Pamphlet	Price	Quantity
Oral History and the Law, 2nd ed., by John A. Neuenschwander, 1993	\$8.00	_____
Oral History in the Secondary School Classroom, by Barry A. Lanman and George L. Mehaffy, 1988	\$8.00	_____
Using Oral History in Community History Projects, by Laurie Mercier and Madeline Buckendorf, 1992	\$8.00	_____
Oral History Evaluation Guidelines, 2nd ed., 1991	\$5.00	_____

Order total: _____
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Reach OHA Online

The Oral History Association's home page on the World Wide Web can be found at:

<http://www.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha>.

The oral history electronic discussion list, H-ORALHIST, is one of the H-Net affiliated scholarly lists. There are no dues or fees of any kind to enroll. Subscribers only need an e-mail address on the Internet. To subscribe, send a message to: listserv@h-net.msu.edu with no subject and the following text:

SUBSCRIBE H-ORALHIST
firstname lastname, affiliation

Access the main H-ORALHIST Website at:

<http://www.h-net.msu.edu/~oralhist>

If you have questions or problems subscribing, contact H-Oralhist Editor Jeff Charnley at: charme2@pilot.msu.edu.

Check Out These Web Sites That Use Oral History

The Bancroft Library's Regional Oral History Office Web site includes fully searchable oral histories from its series on: suffragists, the Disabled People's Independence Movement, university history and health care, science and technology. Interviews are being added as interviewee permission is obtained and as time allows. Find the ROHO collection at: www.lib.berkeley.edu/BANC/ROHO/online.

An oral history project about the Omaha Stockyards grew into a city-wide history project at Omaha South High School. Check out what they learned at: www.ops.org/ooe.

Stories about growing up Croatian American are featured on the Slovenic Web Oral History Project at: www.slavonicweb.org/history/OralHistory/OralHistories.htm.

Goucher College students created a Web site documenting two Baltimore-area communities. Interview excerpts, including sound clips, show how the neighborhoods have changed over time. Visit North Harford Road and Woodring at: www.goucher.edu/harbel/intro.htm.

Pennsylvania Projects Worth Pursuing

The **Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission** invites applications for its 2001-2002 scholars in residence program and its new collaborative residency program. Both are open to anyone conducting research on Pennsylvania history. For details, see the PHMC Web site: www.phmc.state.pa.us. Deadline is Jan. 12, 2001.

The **Pennsylvania-German Society** invites book-length manuscripts on Pennsylvania-German history and culture. For more information, contact Simon J. Bronner, Penn State Harrisburg, sjb2@psu.edu.

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