



NEWSLETTER

Oral History Interviews Lead to Libel Suit

By John A. Neuenschwander
Carthage College

The range of legal issues that concern most oral historians is relatively small and generally not too troubling. Questions about whether legal release agreements are legally binding may crop up from time to time. Some oral historians worry about copyright issues, but they seem to be a minority. The one legal issue most oral historians do seem to worry about is the possibility that something an interviewee says about another person may some day prompt a libel suit. The case that will be examined here, Levin v. McPhee,

199 F.3d 189 (2d Cir.1997), underscores both the reality of this concern while also providing a measure of reassurance.

One of the important issues I address in **Oral History and the Law** is how to protect against the possibility of a libel suit. The section entitled "Defamation" contains a fairly lengthy discussion of what libel is. Words and phrases that have often been found to be libelous in state and federal cases are set out to help oral historians red flag possible libelous statements in their interviews. While such lists may be of some help, direct examination of libel cases arising from published oral histories would be of far greater

assistance. Until now, however, such cases have either not arisen or have been settled long before trial. The decision in Levin v. McPhee offers some helpful insights into what is and is not libelous speech.

The Book

The case arose from a book written by John McPhee entitled "The Ransom of Russian Art," published in 1994 by Farrar, Straus & Giroux. McPhee is the author of 23 books, many of which have been nominated for or awarded literary prizes. The book examines the unique art collecting efforts of Norton Dodge, a wealthy University of Maryland

(Continued on page 4)

Editor's Note

By Mary Kay Quinlan

Copy deadline for the next issue of the **Newsletter** is July 1. This is a good chance to share information about state and regional meetings that occurred too late in April or May for inclusion in this issue. Any other announcements, notices of fall meetings or news and photos about projects are also welcome.

Send to: 7524 S. 35th St.,
Lincoln, NE 68516. Phone: 402-420-1473. Fax: 402-420-1770. E-mail: OHAEditor@aol.com.

Plans Brewing For Durham Meet

By Alicia J. Rouverol
OHA Program Co-Chair

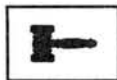
"At the Crossroads: Transforming Community Locally and Globally," scheduled for Oct. 11-15 in Durham, N.C., will be the theme for the Oral History Association's 2000 meeting.

The city of Durham is itself a kind of crossroads, where the rural has historically met the urban through tobacco, textiles and music. With the migration of high-tech research and development companies and more

recently an influx of Latino immigrants, the community again has emerged as a crossroads.

Some of the country's earliest sociology and regional studies research grew out of this area. The home of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill and Duke University, Chapel Hill-Durham today offers rich programs in oral history, folklore and documentary expression, including the UNC Southern Oral History Program, the Duke Center for Documentary Studies and the UNC Curriculum in Folklore. As such, Durham serves as an ideal host for this year's conference.

Conference topics include: the
(Continued on page 3)



From Your President

By Laurie Mercier
OHA President

The Oral History Association recently co-sponsored with the National Council on Public History (NCPH) a reception at the Organization of American Historians annual meeting in St. Louis. The social hour provided an opportunity for more than 100 oral historians and public historians to meet informally and share ideas, views and news about topics of mutual interest.

Many OHA members are also members of NCPH. It makes sense to foster closer relations between the two organizations that both work to inform public projects with sound scholarly approaches and often involve communities in the creation, preservation and presentation of those historical projects.

Public historians and oral historians also share an interest in the new technologies that have transformed and challenged the practice of their crafts in recent years. Three years ago, when I began supervising a U.S. Department of Education-funded Web site project about Columbia Basin communities, students and I found few fully developed Web sites that offered extensive oral history transcripts and other full text primary documents.

Now the World Wide Web is full of digitized exhibitions, archives and libraries that make available to teachers, students and the general public a wide array of print, visual and aural sources. The technology provides a relatively inexpensive way for groups and institutions to make collections more widely accessible, stimulate their use and critical thinking about history-making and explore complex topics more deeply.

For many oral historians, the new technologies have offered creative tools to present the spoken word. Charles Hardy's and Alessandro Portelli's compelling aural project, "I Can Almost See the Lights of Home:

A Field Trip to Harlan County, Kentucky," received the 1999 OHA award for exemplary use of oral history in a nonprint medium. A version of the project, a Harlan County "essay in sound," can be found in the Journal of Multi-Media History 2 (www.albany.edu/jmmh). Recent issues of the OHA **Newsletter**, state humanities councils' newsletters and numerous scholarly listservs frequently profile Web sites and projects that feature innovative uses of oral recordings.

Electronic discussion lists have opened up debates among the disciplines and connected individuals with shared interests from around the world. In 1998, the OHA affiliated with H-Net to create the scholarly electronic listserv, H-Oralhist. Building on the original OHA discussion list initiated in 1993 by Terry Birdwhistell at the University of Kentucky, Jeff Charnley at Michigan State University and his team of oral historian editors have expanded the list to include more than 1,100 members.

H-Oralhist is a lively forum where experienced oral historians such as Ron Grele and Dale Treleven and a host of newcomers to the field from a variety of disciplines and communities exchange views about methodology, resources and projects. At its mid-year meeting in April, as this **Newsletter** goes to press, the OHA Council will discuss ways of formalizing and strengthening its relationship with H-Oralhist.

The new technologies have presented methodological and ethical challenges as well as educational opportunities. In 1998, the OHA Ad Hoc Committee on New Technologies reviewed and made recommendations for revising the OHA standards and evaluation guidelines to address the implications of technology regarding technical standards and ethical concerns.

Sherna Berger Gluck, chair of the committee, presented recommendations in the Fall 1998 **Newsletter** and at an open forum at the annual meeting in Buffalo. Following detailed discussion and some minor changes, OHA members approved the revisions

at the business meeting. Featured in the Winter 1999 **Newsletter**, the revisions will be incorporated into the **OHA Evaluation Guidelines**, to be reprinted in time for the annual meeting in Durham. They are currently posted on the OHA Web site (www.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha).

Today, the OHA faces another technological challenge and opportunity, the question of electronic publication of the **Oral History Review**. Several leading learned societies are pursuing online publishing. The Organization of American Historians, which publishes the Journal of American History, and the American Historical Association, which publishes the American Historical Review, have recently joined forces in the History Cooperative to provide members full text electronic versions of the journals and a searchable database. See: www.historycooperative.org

But such a move, while opening possibilities for expanding outreach and research and adding extra material (such as audio clips and illustrations), has its costs. OHR Editor Andy Dunar, University of California Press circulation manager Tom White and past OHA president Linda Shopes have done some preliminary investigations and report that while electronic publishing offers many advantages, it generates content, revenue and copyright issues that need to be addressed.

Dunar is organizing a session at the October Durham conference to explore these issues. In the meantime, I would like to hear from OHA members who have thought about or studied the issue of electronic publishing who may have expertise to share.

For this, or any other matter of interest to the Association, please contact me at Washington State University Vancouver, 14204 Salmon Creek Ave., Vancouver, WA 98686, 360-546-9646, or by e-mail at: mercier@vancouver.wsu.edu.

Durham in 2000!

OHA to Examine Communities at Crossroads at 2000 Meeting

(Continued from page 1)
effects of globalization on communities and cultures; transnational communities; community history; biography and activism; ethnic and gender identity; "queering" American history; Latina feminist testimonies; trauma and interviewing; education and desegregation; ethics and the Internet; electronic publishing; editing narrative for radio, video and multimedia formats and the role of community scholars in oral history research.

Plenary speakers will include:

+ Carol Stack, author of "Call to Home: African Americans Reclaim the Rural South,"

+ John Kuo Wei Tchen, director of the Asian/Pacific/American Studies Program and Institute at New York University, and

+ The Kitchen Sisters, Davia Nelson and Nikki Silva, the Peabody Award-winning producers of National Public Radio's "Lost and Found Sound."

Plenary roundtable sessions will feature historians, activists and economists addressing shifts in global economies and the impact on workers both in the United States and abroad. A stream of panels will follow, exploring topics ranging from globalization and the environment to dislocation of workers and the homeless.

Other featured activities include:

+ an oral history-based performance by StreetSigns Center for Literature and Performance, a national performing arts and educational center based in Chapel Hill;

+ a film series organized by Hayti Heritage Center, an African-American cultural center based in Durham, and

+ a presentation featuring Piedmont musicians and dancers whose history and cultural traditions continue to permeate the region.

The following half- and full-day tours also will be available:

+ the African-American experience in Durham, with visits to the Hayti Heritage Center, among other sites;



Brightleaf Square in downtown Durham, N.C., five blocks from the OHA conference site, is a turn-of-the-century, neo-Romanesque tobacco warehouse renovated as a unique shopping, dining and entertainment district.

Photo by the Durham Convention and Visitors Bureau

+ the traditional potteries of Seagrove, a region known for its hand-thrown pottery;

+ a hike on the West Point on the Eno River, exploring North Carolina's natural environment.

Conference participants may also visit regional oral history/documentary programs.

Workshops will include an oral history "how-to;" an advanced workshop exploring a cultural studies approach to oral history; cultural diversity training; training in multimedia presentation; a radio workshop; a community history workshop and a workshop for teachers exploring the use of oral history in the classroom. Workshops will be scheduled on Wednesday, Oct. 11, and on several additional conference days as well.

Conference registration materials and information about hotel accommodations in Durham will be sent to all OHA members this summer.

The OHA Endowment Fund thanks Art and Debra Hansen, the Stephenson Family Trust and an anonymous donor for their recent contributions.

Silent Auction Donations Needed for Durham

**By Linda Sellars
University of North Carolina-
Chapel Hill**

The Oral History Association silent auction will be held in conjunction with the OHA annual meeting in Durham, N.C., Oct. 11-15. The auction raises money for the OHA Endowment Fund. Auction items will be displayed in the conference exhibit area. Bids will be taken throughout the meeting, and items will be distributed to the highest bidders on Saturday evening.

Please consider donating an item to the silent auction. Especially appreciated are items that can be shipped or packed easily--cassettes or CDs of regional music, books, crafts, T-shirts, mugs or notecards. You may also donate services, such as transcribing, consulting or tape duplication.

If you have questions or would like to contribute, please contact: Linda Sellars, Manuscripts Dept., Wilson Library, CB#3926, UNC-CH, Chapel Hill, NC 27514-8890. Phone: 919-962-1345 or sellars@email.unc.edu.

Oral History Interviews on Russian Artist Lead to Libel Suit



(Continued from page 1)
professor. Although deemed by the court to be a work of nonfiction, the slim volume does not contain any endnotes, a bibliography or discussion of sources consulted.

During the 1950s, Professor Dodge began collecting dissident art in the Soviet Union. For the next 30 years, from Stalin to Glasnost, he made frequent visits to the Soviet Union and managed to take out more than 10,000 pieces of anti-Soviet art. Some of these anti-Soviet works are now on exhibit at the Zimmerli Art Museum at Rutgers University.

The painters and sculptors from whom he obtained these works were of necessity clandestine figures. They lived shadowy lives around the edges of official Soviet society. One of the nonconforming artists particularly well known to Dodge was Evgeny Rukhin. Not only was he one of the leading dissident artists, he frequently traveled with Dodge to help him contact other artists.

The Interviews

In 1974 Rukhin and Ludmila Boblyak, the wife of a fellow artist named Evgeny Esaulenko, perished in Rukhin's Leningrad apartment as a result of a fire of undetermined origin. One of McPhee's chapters focuses on Rukhin's death. In this nine-page chapter he presents the views of five people he interviewed who were closely acquainted with the artist. Because Rukhin lived a bohemian lifestyle and seemed to have no fear of the KGB, the five interviewees did not

see his death as accidental. As the court noted, only three of the versions made any direct accusation against Ilya Levin, the plaintiff:

1) Sarah Burke, a former lover, offered three possible causes: an accident, his wife or the KGB. Regarding the third theory, she said: "The KGB were following his movements pretty carefully. Some people think that Ilya Levin did it for them, that he was politically inspired. It's a possibility."

2) Another artist, identified only as Kuzminsky, provided the most elaborate account. His version had the KGB bursting into the apartment and discovering Rukhin having sex with Ludmila. Due to their prudishness, the KGB beat them unconscious and then started the fire. Kuzminsky goes on to label Levin and another artist who was present in the apartment "selfish cowards. They never will protect nobody."

3) Rukhin's wife, Galena, does not mention Levin, but by claiming her husband was actually murdered before the fire, naming fellow artist Esaulenko as the murderer and referring to the "murderers," she by implication attributes some responsibility to Levin, who was present in Rukhin's apartment before the fire.

Based on the collective accounts of these five people with the specific reference to the three noted above, Levin complained that he had been libeled because the accounts: falsely implicate him in Rukhin's death, state or imply that he was working with the hated KGB and accuse him of cowardice. After the complaint was dismissed by the District Court for the Southern District of New York, *Levin v. McPhee*, 917 F. Supp. 230 (1996), he appealed to the Second District Court of Appeals.

The Issue on Appeal: Fact or Opinion?

The central issue on appeal was whether under New York law McPhee could be held libel for reporting conflicting versions of Evgeny

Rukhin's mysterious death that assigned varying degrees of responsibility to Ilya Levin. As the court noted, libel law provides redress for injuries to a person's reputation caused by statements that "tend to expose a person to hatred, contempt or aversion, or to induce an evil or unsavory opinion of him in the minds of a substantial number in the community." The court further noted that although McPhee merely presented the accounts of what five friends or associates of Rukhin believed happened, "one who republishes the statements made by others is as liable as if he had made the statements himself."

Clearly, accusing someone of cowardice, consorting with a dreaded secret police agency and being a murderer are the sorts of statements that would expose Ilya Levin to "hatred, contempt or aversion" and damage his reputation. Since he was a friend of Rukhin at the time and a fellow dissident, the possibility that such accusations could lead people in the community to have an "evil or unsavory opinion of him" would be greatly heightened.

But although these statements were clearly libelous if proven to be untrue, the case did not turn on the issue of truth but rather on whether the offending statements were fact or opinion. For libel law recognizes that individuals are not liable if derogatory words or statements about another person are mere expressions of opinion. The problem, however, as the court noted, is trying to distinguish between fact and opinion. It is perhaps the most confusing and murkiest area of libel law.

The Decision

The Court of Appeals relied upon a three-stage inquiry to determine what the three interviewees had told McPhee and whether what he had reprinted qualified as fact or opinion:

- 1) Whether the specific language used has a precise and readily understood meaning?
- 2) Whether the statements are

susceptible of being proven false?

3) Whether the context of the statements signals to readers that what is being conveyed is likely to be opinion rather than fact?

In applying the three parts of the test to the statements at issue, the court noted that "The Ransom of Russian Art" was a work of nonfiction that presented factual and historical account of real events. In presenting the five accounts, McPhee gave readers a number of clear signals that the five different versions of Rukhin's death were "nothing more than conjecture and speculation."

First off, McPhee tells the reader that the studio fire is still shrouded in mystery. He presents the differing accounts as "versions" and the significant disagreement among them only reinforces the continuing mystery theme. Finally, two of the versions (Kuzminsky's and Dodge's) are labeled "imagined." These factors led the court to conclude that the allegations as to Levin's cowardice, involvement with the KGB and actual perpetration of the murder could only be interpreted by the reasonable reader as "nothing more than conjecture and rumor."

Conclusion

The outcome of the case is instructive on several levels. If there was any doubt that tale bearers (oral historians) do not face the same potential liability in libel lawsuits as tale makers (interviewees), this case serves to lay this notion to rest. The relative difficulty in getting the court in this case to grant the opinion defense to the author and his publisher points out how unwise it is for any oral historian to dismiss seemingly libelous statements by interviewees as "protected opinion."

It also should be noted that under New York law, the opinion defense is more readily available to defendants than in many other states, which adhere to the U.S. Supreme Court's guidelines as set out in Milkovich v. Lorain Journal, 497 U.S. 1, 111 L.Ed. 2d 1, 110 S. Ct. 2695 (1990), which make the opinion defense more difficult to rely on. Also, this defense, if granted, only comes into play at

trial, after the lawsuit has been commenced and considerable publicity and expense may have been incurred.

One last point concerns the element of publication. Here, the allegedly libelous statements were published in a book written by a well-known author. Portions of the book were also published in the New Yorker magazine. The potential number of readers was therefore very large.

Only a small percentage of oral history interviews ever receive widespread publication in book or multimedia form. Most interviews, if accessed at all, are visited by researchers and family members. While showing or sharing allegedly libelous statements to a third party is all that is required to constitute publication for purposes of a libel suit, practically speaking, the information usually has to be aired more widely to justify this type of action.

*Editor's note: John A. Neuenschwander, a past OHA president, teaches history at Carthage College and is a municipal judge in Kenosha, Wis. He is a frequent contributor on legal topics and is the author of the OHA's pamphlet **Oral History and the Law**, to which he refers in this article. To obtain copies of the pamphlet, please use the order form on page 11 of this Newsletter.*

Call UCPress to Update Your Directory Listing

OHA Executive Secretary Madelyn Campbell reminds members to send corrections or additional data, such as phone, fax or e-mail numbers, for the 2000 **OHA Membership Directory** to: Journals Division, University of California Press, 2000 Center Street, Suite 303, Berkeley, CA 94704-1223. Members also can call UCPress at 510-643-7154.

Black Women Focus Of Saginaw Project

By Dawn Hinton
Saginaw Valley State University

Oral histories of black women in Saginaw, Mich., are providing new insights into the influences of the black church on the lives of the women and the community. More specifically we are interested in their perceptions of the changing role of the black church in the black community. Historically the black church has served as the social, political and cultural center of the black community.

Plans call for interviewing 20 women, ranging in age from 18 years to their late 70s. About half are between 18 and 35 years old, and the remainder are older than 35. The older women are expected to have different perspectives on the role of the black church than the younger women.

About 5 percent of the Saginaw County population is African American.

Columbia University Plans Summer Session On Oral History

The Columbia University Oral History Research Office Summer Institute in Oral History is scheduled for July 3-14. This year's topic is "History, Memory and Trauma."

Faculty scheduled for the 2000 summer institute are: Alessandro Portelli, Kim Lacy Rogers, Linda Shopes, Ann Cvetkovich, Mary Marshall Clark and Ronald Grele.

For complete details, schedule of events, fees and application forms, please see the Columbia Oral History Office Web page at:
<http://www.columbia.edu/cu/libraries/indiv/oral/>

The Endowment Fund needs you!!! Your tax-deductible gifts support OHA programs.

Interviews with Indigenous Peoples: A Mirror into Time

By Herbert O. Anungazuk
National Park Service

Editor's Note: Anungazuk, of Anchorage and Wales, Alaska, was one of four Alaska Natives who described oral history work with elders in Alaska Native communities on a panel at the 1999 OHA meeting. His paper, excerpted here, offers images of multicultural oral history experiences that enrich us all.

It is a meaningful experience to hear the voices of the elders portray the lives of their ancestors through their story. To sit with them is a unique experience, as you will see them open a portal into the past of our ancestors and help us journey with them through their voices. With their guidance you begin a journey into the past, and you begin to see the land and sea as living beings. Through their teaching and guidance you hear the voice of the land turn into song as the names sing their direction, warning or blessing. Through the elder you can learn many things of the land and the sea, and above all you will learn about your people and yourself. Their teachings do not always apply with the ways of the West, but the times are finally coming to the point of accepting them.

* * *

I have been present in interviews of numerous elders in several Bering Strait villages since I began helping a score of human studies researchers in 1991. The information gathered with the assistance of the elders has been monumental, and they deserve the highest praise and recognition for their tireless efforts.

To work with them has been indeed a nourishment to my soul, and with their able assistance I have enriched and enhanced my total standing. Unfortunately, in a short span of eight years, many of our elders have left us through death. Their passing leaves an irreplaceable dent in our societies, but we have learned over the ages that our survival rests on our

ability to share the knowledge we learned from them with our descendants.

The people I have sat with in their homes, who reflected about their ancient past as it was shown to them by their elders before them, are a mirror image of the ancestors they unselfishly represent, and their voices ring in an identical tune. The people
To work with them has been indeed a nourishment to my soul...

have entwined themselves into a very complex environment, and they have been a part of a natural circle since the first dawn. The elders, through what they learned from the elders before them, have been a part of this circle very well. The elders are very modest, but they will openly show praise and acknowledge the presence of anyone who pleases them....

The land and sea, so long untarnished in northern climes, have been marred in many, many ways by the ways and means of other societies. We have been seeing changes in our homeland that are difficult to describe or decipher, why the animals of the land and sea are showing signs never before known or seen. Some harvests of animals show signs of discoloration in livers, lungs or kidneys that the hunters have no course but to return them to the sea. No one has ever consumed any meat that may cause harm, yet the authorities requested an answer for our actions when it became known that some animals we harvested were returned to the sea because consuming the meat may cause harm.

In very recent years, environmental agencies and science have worked hand in hand with the Native community to find a part of the answer that is being asked silently by the animals of the land and the sea.

* * *

The period we have been on this earth is difficult to measure and the studies from others that attempt to

learn how long we have been on our land probes beyond recorded time. We are actual to the land, yet there are many unknown realities about us that continue to emerge in an attempt to learn more about us. Someone shall always say about us far in the future that we have always been indigenous to the land. Even if history loses the reality of who we are, something of us shall always be found.

The language is a song as it is related to us in our oral history. Ruth Milligrock of Little Diomedé tells us that the land is getting old and as an old woman, she is changing. Alice Soolook and Peter Oscar Ahkinga, also of Little Diomedé, relate time past as "great, great long time ago." Patrick Ongtowsruk, a youngish elder from Wales [Alaska], tells us that there were many spirits roaming the earth while the crust of the earth was thin. Ernest E. Oxereok, also from Wales, tells us that the health of the people comes from the land through the gifts of harvest of leaves, berries and roots. Yes, the land gives and sings to you, and you must condition yourself, spiritually, to hear its song and direction. This is much more profound to hear in the original language of the land.

Sitting with the elder will definitely open your eyes to something that you had not seen, nor previously heard.

You can feel the energy of a lifetime of toil as they relate their experiences...

You can feel the energy of a lifetime of toil as they relate their experiences as an Inupiat since the time they first became aware they are Inupiat. Remembering awareness was their first small step into reality. To *kogzhii* in Inupiat is to become aware. *Kogzhiamá* is a term a person uses to describe the period when they first became aware of who they are, and all indigenous groups have a term for awareness because this is a very memorable moment of their lives. It is not too far from this period that they realize they are a part of a very

complex society.

We each have our moment of reality, and we have it tucked away deep in our minds. This experience is so profound that it is indelible in our minds. Mine were the islands of the Bering Strait and the Siberian mainland. Fog prevails in the Bering Strait, and many times the islands are obscured. In my young mind, I used to believe that they left, as a ship, when the fog hid them from view. I did not realize that they were always there and were only hidden from eyes not yet prepared to sort values.

* * *

Our time with the elder must be measured. We must observe them as we work with them, as they can tire far quicker than you can. We must not be insistent because of time constraints; just hope that the weather shall hold you longer than you intended to stay. We must be patient, as their vision and hearing is no longer what it once was. Some will not remember a person's name, names of places or certain instances, but the memory does return and usually the elder will look for us to share with us their memories when the special memories return to them. Some researchers walk away when they sense excessive memory loss has taken over an elder without realizing that memory is a gift and that it does return.

We must accept what they offer to us. Sharing is a gift of humanness, and the tea, coffee and homemade bread fulfills the souls of everyone as the spirit of sharing overtakes them.

Among the many groups within the society of mankind, the elder is the least recognized, and among the indigenous community you are beginning to see him wasting away in places that provide the barest of living without any human support. Many people are rushing too fast to keep up with change, that some no longer have time or room for their elders.

The final act of respect reserved for the deceased was one that was faithfully followed by the living, and this act of respect contained very precise instructions that were followed very closely. This is one chapter in the lives of the descendants of the

ancestors that fortunately was never completely erased from the hearts and minds of the people. Special observances that direct the people are still vivid in the minds of the elders.... We are told that the ancestors, in their unseen spirit, greet our beloved as we approach the grave. They do not allow us to see them, but they are there en masse, and the box becomes noticeably heavy, and those who must carry the remains to the grave can feel that the box gets heavier as they approach the gravesite. Through the greeting, the deceased joins our ancestors and they do not complete the final trail of their last journey alone.

Someone who has never experienced this reality will ask, "Does the casket actually grow heavy?" And a quiet nod provides an answer that needs no further discussion. The human spirit is always there, and those we put away onto sacred ground are certainly not alone.

* * *

Science and indigenous values have not mixed very well since they began clashing together, but changes are happening where someone of authority is beginning to see that all things are connected on this earth. The power of the earth is intense, and the hunter learned to read some of the signs that are made available to us. It is this intensity that the ancient hunter has learned to work with over generations and generations of ancient hunters.

We are the new ancient hunter...

We are the new ancient hunter, and although many of the barriers we face today were never expected by our ancestors, we continue to progress very well in bringing home the whale, the walrus and the seal to fulfill the needs of our families.

We have learned that the content of the human heart differs vastly among people. The indigenous heart shows signs of being affected in this new age, but our gift of sharing, amongst ourselves and others, continues to flourish and grace our tradition. This is an ancient tradition that even

the new ways have not yet ground way from us and never shall.

The land and the sea give and have never sold to us; we only needed to toil. The sea and ocean have given us the meat of animals, birds and fish that meet profoundly the rigorous nutritional needs of the people. The rivers, the mountains, the forests or the plains provide many other life forms; even the animals share with us some of what they use. We can take from them, while we must replace what we have taken from them. That is the way which was decided for us by our forefathers. There are unknown realities never known or felt by Western society that are emerging as their willingness to work together with us increases.

* * *

We are a people of a certain place, a certain location or a certain site. We understand our realness to the land, therefore we call ourselves Inupiat, Yupiat, Gwitchin, Tlingit and many, many more names that tie us directly to the land, and we have defended these places in one unified body of people since dawn immemorial....

We have been on the land since the first dawn, and our ancestors have not left a dent on the land. Our mark upon the land is invisible, and even in time the remains of the first people appear to be absorbed by the land. Our mark is locked away in our oral history, but this story is coming out with the willingness to work with our elders and their willingness to work with us.

Oral history is very intense. It is fact borne on truth, and this truth is hard to contest when the people work together....

The voice of survival resides within the land. It resides in the names of places and it is fearsome that soon, few can hear the voice of the land, if any at all. Some of the language and some of the names of unique places that cared for us must be kept alive even if it may be only a select few who shall know them. The land cared for our ancestors for generations that cannot be counted, and still the land continues to care for us.

Oral Historians Use Words, Pictures, Sound on Web Sites

Camden, N.J., Historical Society Features WW II Shipbuilding

"In Harm's Way: New York Shipbuilding in WWII" is a featured exhibit at the Camden, N.J. County Historical Society, marking the 100th anniversary of the shipyard where more than 35,000 men and women built more than 70 major combat vessels and countless merchant and transport ships from 1939-1945. Explore details of the lives of workers and their jobs and extensive information about the ships at: <http://members.aol.com/nyship/home.html>

"Brainerd, Kan.: Time, Place and Memory on the Prairie Plains"

The results of a graduate student's project for a joint American Studies-Architecture course at the University of Kansas, this Web site incorporates photos, maps, oral history interviews, letters, local records and an invitation to sign the Brainerd "guestbook" and offer comments and memories after learning about this tiny southeastern Kansas community (population about 50) that survived being passed over by the railroad in 1889 but endures today.

Beginning with interviews of the graduate student's grandmother, who once called Brainerd home, the site offers an intriguing new way to explore the role of memory and place in local history, particularly in Great Plains communities. Visit Brainerd at: <http://www.rootinaround.com/brainerd>

Australia's Oral Histories Online

"Australia's Oral History Collections: A National Directory" is now available online at: www.nla.gov.au/ohdir It allows users to search tens of thousands of hours of oral history recordings that document Australian life, customs, politics and traditions.

Do you have an oral history Web site to share? Let the editor know at: OHAEditor@aol.com

Minnesota Author Biographies Database Online

The Minnesota Historical Society, Metronet and the Minnesota Center for the Book have collaborated to create the Minneosta Author Biographies Project, a Web site providing biographical sketches of 36 past and present Minnesota authors.

Each entry in the pilot database includes a selected bibliography of significant works by the author and lists both print and Web-based sources for additional information. The database also includes links to online catalog records and author photographs.

Minnesota secondary school students can use the resource to meet a variety of history and technology requirements for graduation.

Learn about Minnesota authors at: www.metronet.lib.mn.us/biog/index/cfm

Omaha Indian Music on American Memory from Library of Congress

Newly added to the American Memory historical collections is a major collection documenting the music of the Omaha Indian tribe. The collection includes 44 recordings made by Francis La Flesche and Alice Cunningham Fletcher between 1895 and 1897, as well as recordings made by staff of the American Folklife Center at the 1983 Omaha harvest celebration pow-wow and the 1985 Hethu'shka Society concert held at the Library of Congress.

Also included with the collection are interviews with members of the Omaha tribe that provide background information about the songs performed, field notes and tape logs made by Center staff during the 1983 pow-wow and photographs and related publicity materials from the various performances.

The oldest recordings in the collection were made by Francis La Flesche, the second son of Omaha Chief Joseph La Flesche, and Alice Cunningham Fletcher, a student of Native-American life and a champion

of the emerging discipline of anthropology. They were the first to document Omaha music on the reservation. In 1985, the American Folklife Center published 44 of their recordings as an LP. The liner notes and other documents relating to this recording are included with the online collection.

Interviews with tribal elders, musicians and singers provide contextual information and translations of the songs.

Learn about Omaha Indians and their music at: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/omhhtml/>

Hawaiian Oral History Work Summarized on Web

The Center for Oral History of the University of Hawaii at Manoa's Social Science Research Institute has an extensive, illustrated summary of its 25-year collection at:

www2.soc.hawaii.edu/css/oral_hist

The center's current work includes interviews on tsunami in Hawaii and on Hawaiian Chinese restaurants.

OHA Personals

Jo Blatti, long-time OHA member and former OHA Council member, has been named executive director of Old Independence Regional Museum in Batesville, Ark. The museum serves a 12-county area of north central Arkansas.

Before moving to the hill country of the Ozarks, Blatti directed the Connecticut Cultural Heritage Project and headed the Harriet Beecher Stowe Center in Hartford, Conn.

Bruce M. Stave, former editor of the **Oral History Review**, has been named Board of Trustees Distinguished Professor of History at the University of Connecticut, where he directs the Center for Oral History.

He currently is working on an oral history project on South Africa's African National Congress and its struggle against apartheid.

OPPORTUNITIES, MEETINGS, ANNOUNCEMENTS

Fulbright Scholarships Available

Next year some 800 academics and professionals will go to 130 countries to lecture or do research as Fulbright scholars. Awards vary from two months to an academic year or longer. Foreign language skills are needed in some countries, but most lecturing assignments are in English.

Artists, journalists, lawyers and independent scholars, as well as academic faculty and administrators are welcome to apply.

Deadlines for the 2001-'02 grants are: Aug. 1 for lecturing and research grants worldwide and Nov. 1 for spring/summer seminars in Germany, Korea and Japan for international education and academic administrators.

Information and an application are available at: www.cies.org

Baylor Fellowship for Oral History

Baylor University's Institute for Oral History welcomes applications for a fellowship for the 2000-'01 academic year, open to individuals in any field who can benefit from the institute's holdings. The fellowship is designed to bring scholars to Waco, Texas, to work with oral history materials in The Texas Collection special library. The collection is strongest in the areas of Central Texas history and religion in the Southwest.

Applications must be postmarked by May 15. For details, see the fellowship Website: http://www.baylor.edu/~Oral_History

Southern Baptist Grants Available

The Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives in Nashville, Tenn., has a new program to encourage students and scholars in Baptist studies to use oral history interviews in their research. The new Oral History Grant program is an effort to help with expenses related to oral history interviews, including travel expense, transcription, tapes and related interview expenses, except the purchase of equipment.

The oral history interviews must

be related to Baptist studies and will usually include interviews of Baptists. The recordings and transcripts must be placed in the Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives.

Maximum grant award is \$2,000.

For information, contact: Bill Summers, Director and Archivist, Southern Baptist Historical Library and Archives, 901 Commerce St., #400, Nashville, TN 37203-3630. Phone: 615-244-0344. E-mail: bsummers@edge.net

Oral History in the Middle Ages

Sept. 1 is the application deadline to participate in an international workshop titled "Oral History of the Middle Ages: The Spoken Word in Context." The planned workshop is sponsored by the Department of Medieval Studies, Central European University in Budapest, Hungary. It is scheduled for Feb. 26-28, 2001.

For information, contact: Gerhard Jaritz, Department of Medieval Studies, Central European University, H-1051 Nador u.9, Budapest, Hungary. E-mail: jaritzg@ecu.hu

Singapore Site of International Sound Archives Conference

The National Archives of Singapore is hosting the first joint conference of the International Association of Sound and Audiovisual Archives and the Southeast Asia-Pacific Audio Visual Archives Association, July 3-7 at Singapore's Hotel Intercontinental.

The conference theme, "A Future for the Past: AV Archiving in the 3rd Millennium," embraces the idea that archivists must always project their thoughts in two directions--backwards and forwards--to ensure that the work of the past will remain intact for future generations. The conference will highlight current trends and major issues facing the profession.

For information and registration details, contact: Karen Chan at karen_chan@nhb.gov.sg

California Military Museum Seeks World War II Vets for Interviews

The California Military Museum in Sacramento, in conjunction with the University of California, Los Angeles and California State University, Los Angeles, has established the California Military History Educational Project to develop new curriculum materials for history instruction in elementary and secondary schools.

Part of the project involves creating a database of World War II veterans available for oral history interviews, which will be conducted as resources permit. The museum seeks information from veterans about their military service and volunteers interested in helping with the project.

For information, contact project officer Bill Davies, WWII Oral History Project, California Military Museum, 1119 Second St., Sacramento, CA 95814. Phone: 916-278-5452. E-mail: billdavies@csus.edu

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: charnle2@pilot.msu.edu.

STATE AND REGIONAL REPORT



OHMAR Meets Jointly With Other Groups

By John Schuchman
Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region

President Elaine Eff and the OHMAR board has made cooperation with other organizations the focus of OHMAR activities for the year 2000.

On April 7 and 8, OHMAR and the Mid-Atlantic Folklore Association (MAFA) met jointly on the Fairfax, Va., campus of George Mason University. William Ferris, chairman of the National Endowment for the Humanities, provided the keynote address.

In addition to a panel on methodology and theory, the conference offered "Products of Practice," which featured:

- + the Latino Community Center Project from the Adams-Morgan neighborhood of Washington, D.C.;
- + an opera, "The Children of Keweenaw," based on oral history interviews and

- + community radio and community stories from upstate New York.

After the conference the OHMAR and MAFA boards met for a networking breakfast.

In the fall, OHMAR will continue this effort to cooperate with other organizations as well as increase its contact with teachers of oral history.

OHMAR and the recently created Association of Oral History Educators (AOHE) will sponsor a conference titled "Educating the Next Generation of Oral Historians." It is set for Nov. 4 at Catonsville Community College in

Baltimore. A national teleconference for teachers and others interested in oral history in education will be part of the program. Former OHMAR president Barry Lanman, who is president and founder of AOHE, and OHMAR board member Glenn Whitman are coordinating the conference.

AOHE also is accepting applications of the Betty Key Oral History Educator Award. For specific information and award criteria, go to: www.geocities.com/AOHELLanman/

The award is named in honor of a founding member of OHMAR who was a long-time supporter of using oral history in the classroom.

At its fall 1999 meeting, OHMAR presented its annual Forrest C. Pogue Award to Elly Shodell for her oral history work as a librarian at the Port Washington, N.Y., Public Library on Long Island. Shodell is a long-time OHA member and recently chaired the OHA Publications Committee.

TOHA Announces Three New Awards

By Lois E. Myers
Texas Oral History Association

The Texas Oral History Association announces creation of three new awards: 1) W. Stewart Caffey Award for Excellence in Precollegiate Teaching, 2) Award for Excellence for Community History Projects and 3) Lifetime Achievement Award.

Criteria for nominations and descriptions of the selection process and the awards are available at the TOHA Web site, <http://www.baylor.edu/~TOHA> or from Lois E. Myers, TOHA Secretary-Treasurer, P.O. Box 97271, Waco, TX 76798-7271, phone: 254-710-6285.

TOHA held its annual program meeting in joint session with the Texas State Historical Association in Austin, Texas, on March 3. The program was

planned and moderated by TOHA President George R. Gause Jr., archivist in special collections at The University of Texas-Pan American, Edinburg, Texas.

Two papers were presented in the session titled "Lyndon Baines Johnson: An Oral History Perspective." Paul R. Henggeler, also from UT-Pan American, presented results of his research in the LBJ White House tapes in a paper titled "Discovering Lyndon Johnson through the Spoken Word." Linda M. Seelke of the Lyndon Baines Johnson Library in Austin described the unique historical contributions of the LBJ Library oral history collections in her paper "Lyndon Johnson as Seen Through Oral History."

TOHA will sponsor a second program meeting in the fall in joint session with the East Texas Historical Association meeting in Nacogdoches, Texas, Sept. 29-30. Planned by TOHA Vice President Shelly Henley Kelly of the Rosenberg Library in Galveston, the program will focus on oral histories among rural churches. Papers will be presented by Alice Pierce on the historic Valverde Baptist Church near Holland, Texas, and by Lois E. Myers of Baylor University on the significant relationship between African-American women and their rural churches.

TOHA encourages graduate students as well as veteran scholars to submit manuscripts for its journal, **Sound Historian**, now appearing in two issues per volume. While research on Texas topics is encouraged, all manuscripts utilizing accepted oral history practices and methodologies as primary components of the research will be considered.

Address inquiries or manuscripts to: Editor Kenneth E. Hendrickson Jr., Dept. of History, Midwestern State University, 3410 Taft Blvd., Wichita Falls, TX 76308-2099. For ordering information and cumulative contents of the journal, published since 1993, visit the TOHA Web site listed above.

OHAM Co-Sponsors Germans from Russia Film Screening

The Oral History Association of Minnesota (OHAM) in partnership with the Ramsey County Historical Society and the Minnesota North Star Chapter of Germans from Russia presented the award-winning documentary film, "The Germans from Russia: Children of the Steppe, Children of the Prairie," at the Landmark Center in downtown St. Paul.

The 110 moviegoers also previewed "Schmeckfest: Foodways of the Germans from Russia," the next film in the documentary series. Traditional German-Russian kuchen pastries were served after the films.

OHAM member Carol Just Halverson and her colleague Shona Dockter will present an interview-based 45-minute slide show about German-Russian women at the annual conference of the American Historical Society of Germans from Russia, scheduled for June in Lincoln, Neb. (Reprinted from the OHAM News, March 2000.)

NOHA Reports Varied Projects from States In Northwest Region

The Northwest Oral History Association reports a wide array of oral history projects underway in its region.

+ The University of Alaska Fairbanks oral history program has received interviews with: Eskimos who make caribou skin masks; the highest ranking woman Alaska State Trooper; a pilot who served with the Alaskan Scouts in World War II and flew everything from biplanes to modern jets.

+ The Idaho Oral History Center has made available a series of interviews with Italian Americans and is meeting with smokejumpers and other forest firefighters who worked from the McCall, Idaho, smokejumper base in the 1940s and '50s.

+ The Montana Historical Society is continuing its series of interviews with World War II conscientious objectors who served in Glacier National Park, Camp #55 at Belton. The historical society also is planning

interviews to document the experiences of Montana Korean War veterans, in cooperation with the Montana National Guard Museum and the State Coordinating Committee for the 50th Anniversary of the Korean War.

New Series Available At Bancroft Library

The Bancroft Library's Regional Oral History Office at the University of California, Berkeley announces new volumes in several of its on-going oral history series.

New volumes are available on:

+ Sierra Club leaders;

+ the medical and nursing

response to the AIDS epidemic in San Francisco;

+ key figures in the history of biosciences and biotechnology on the West Coast;

+ tropical disease research and public health programs in Saudi Arabia.

For information about obtaining copies of the interviews, contact the oral history office at: roho@library.berkeley.edu

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:		_____
Optional mailing charge:		_____
TOTAL ENCLOSED:		_____



2001 Slate Presented

By Ruth Hill and Marjorie McLellan, Co-Chairs, OHA Nominating Committee

The OHA Nominating Committee is pleased to present the following candidates for first vice president and two Council seats.

For first vice president: **Arthur Hansen**, California State University, Fullerton.

For one Council seat:

Rina Benmayer, California State University, Monterey Bay, or **James Morrison**, St. Mary's University, Halifax, Nova Scotia

For the second Council seat:

Bret Eynon, City University of New York, LaGuardia Campus, or **Linda Wood**, South Kingstown High School, R.I.

OHA members also will elect members to the Nominating Committee. Three two-year positions are to be filled. Members will vote for one person from each of three places. Place 1: **Dawn Hinton**, Saginaw Valley State University, or **Kathy Nasstrom**, University of San Francisco.

Place 2: **Michael Gordon**, University of Wisconsin, Milwaukee, or **Rebecca Sharpess**, Baylor University.

Place 3: **Rose Diaz**, University of New Mexico, or **Warren Nishimoto**, University of Hawaii at Manoa.

The OHA election will be by mail ballot sent this summer to each OHA member in good standing. Biographical information and statements from

each of the nominees will be included with the ballots.

The Nominating Committee and Council will accept additional nominations for officers, Council members and Nominating Committee members in the following manner (See OHA bylaws, section 9, paragraph 2, on page 49 in the 1999 Membership Directory):

A petition signed by 20 or more OHA members in good standing may be submitted for each nomination, stating the particular office for which the nomination is made.

A petition nominating a first vice president or Council member must be in the hands of the Nominating Committee by June 15. (Send to Marjorie McLellan, History & American Studies, Miami University Middletown, 4200 E. University Blvd., Middletown, OH 45042.)

A petition nominating a candidate for the Nominating Committee must be sent to the OHA Council by June 15. (Send to Laurie Mercier, Washington State University Vancouver, 14204 NE Salmon Creek Ave., Vancouver, WA 98686-9600.)

The Oral History Association Newsletter (ISSN:0474-3253) is published three times yearly by the Oral History Association for its members and subscribers. **Copy deadlines are: Dec. 1, April 1 and July 1.**

Address membership, change of address, subscription and delivery inquiries to: Oral History Association, P.O. Box 1773, Carlisle, PA 17013

Editor: Mary Kay Quinlan, 7524 S. 35th St., Lincoln, NE 68516.

Copyright 2000 Oral History Association, Incorporated

Oral History Association Newsletter
P.O. Box 1773
Carlisle, PA 17013

Nonprofit
U.S. Postage
PAID
Jefferson City, Mo.
PERMIT NO. 210