

SOUND BITES from TOHA Board of Directors

Spring - Summer 2006

Texas Oral History Association One Bear Place #97271 Waco TX 76798-7271



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TOHA Visits the Natural State

Next fall, when the sweetgum, blackgum, red maple, sugarberry, sassafras, and paw-paw trees burn red, gold, and orange in the hills above the Arkansas River, join TOHA friends in Little Rock at the annual meeting of the Oral History Association. The conference will be October 25-29 at the famous Peabody Hotel, located in downtown Little Rock just blocks from the new William J. Clinton Presidential Center.

TOHA is a co-sponsor of the meeting and is planning several ways for you and your colleagues to benefit from this important national conference.

Workshops: TOHA will sponsor a full-day practical workshop to provide participants the most vital information needed to get started with oral history interviewing. Topics addressed will include project design, legal and ethical considerations, equipment choices, and interview preparation. Interactive learning will focus special attention on interviewing techniques that facilitate memory recall through insightful questions. Participants will also learn creative ways to preserve and share oral histories. Leaders for the workshop are Lois E. Myers and Rebecca Wright.

Meet-and-Greet. The TOHA board is planning a special gathering for our members and guests.

Sessions: TOHA will be represented in paper sessions of the conference. TOHA cofounder Rebecca Sharpless is this year's OHA president.

Hotel information and an application for a scholarship to attend the meeting—offered to students, community historians, and minority persons—is accessible now from the OHA Web site at http://www.dickinson.edu/oha/org_am_rock.html. Watch this same site for the full program schedule, which will be published during the summer months.

Check It Out!

TOHA's Web site now includes a calendar of events of special interest to oral historians. Look for "TOHA Calendar" on the top menu bar at <http://www.baylor.edu/toha>. Please send items to add to our calendar to TOHA, One Bear Place #97271, Waco TX 76798-7271 or e-mail lois_myers@baylor.edu.

President's Report: From Rebecca Wright



Jennifer Ross-Nazzal, Susie Kelly Flatau, Kathleen Hudson, Rebecca Wright

TOHA's Annual Program, 2006

The Texas Oral History Association provided a well-received session during the recent Texas State Historical Association annual meeting held in Austin. Titled *A Program Devoted Entirely to Texas Women*, the session featured three oral historians who told about contributions from women of Texas ranging from music and the arts to space exploration.

Starting the program was Austin-based **Susie Kelly Flatau**, who told the audience about three Texas women writers whose publications honor Texas women, their work, and their worth. Next was **Jennifer Ross-Nazzal**, the historian for the NASA Johnson Space Center, who talked about the first U.S. female astronauts, chosen in 1978, who set a new course for the many who followed as they journeyed past earth's boundaries as part of human spaceflight. Closing out the session was Schreiner University's **Kathleen Hudson**, who provided commentary on the TOHA session and shared insights from her interviews with Texas female songwriters and musicians.

Following the program, TOHA paid tribute to Secretary-Treasurer Lois Myers. (see related story below)

TOHA has already submitted its proposal to TSHA for next year's meeting, scheduled to be held in San Antonio. The organization looks forward to continuing this partnership with TSHA that has lasted more than 20 years.



A Tribute and a Treat

Lois Myers, TOHA secretary-treasurer, was honored during the recent TOHA-TSHA program. At the end of the session described above, TOHA President Rebecca Wright surprised Myers by introducing her as "yet one more remarkable Texas woman" and thanked her for the tremendous support she has given the statewide organization through the years.

A TOHA member since 1986, Lois has continually served for almost two decades as the organization's secretary-treasurer. Wright shared with the audience: "The title doesn't cover it at all. She is the constant, the resource, the catalyst, and just an overall great person to work with. No matter if you are a longtime member or brand new member, it is quickly apparent that the foundation of this association is Lois."

Wright added that Myers manages to keep the organization moving alongside her full-time job as the associate director of the Institute for Oral History at Baylor University, in Waco, where she is also field interviewer and publication author/editor. Most recently, she was the lead interviewer and author for *Rock beneath the Sand: Country Churches in Texas* from A&M Press and lead editor of the *Handbook of Oral History*, now available from AltaMira Press. Additionally, Myers serves as the primary editor of the Institute's Web site, teaches workshops all over Texas, and is a board member of the Heart of Texas Regional History Fair.

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TOHA Awards

Texas History Day, 2006

On April 29, TOHA representatives viewed exciting documentary projects based on interviews and produced by junior and senior high student contestants in Texas History Day, headquartered this year at the Bob Bullock Museum in Austin. TOHA judges **Bruce Ashcroft, Robert Hines, Peter Myers, and Lois Myers** looked for the best use and understanding of interview materials in documentaries focusing on the 2006 National History Day theme, Taking a Stand in History.



Chosen for TOHA's award in the junior high division was Christina Phan, of Holub Middle School, Houston, for her documentary titled "America as Good as Its Promise." Miss Phan also placed second in the general contest and will represent Texas at National History Day, June 12-16, in College Park, Maryland. This is her second year to win the TOHA award.

Winning TOHA's award in the senior high division, also for the second year, was John Laue, of Brazos Area Home Schoolers in College Station, for his production, "When Tears Are Not Enough: POW-MIA Wives Take a Stand." Mr. Laue's documentary also won second place in the general contest, so he will be taking his project to the national contest.

Barnes Community History Awards, 2006

The TOHA Board of Directors is pleased to announce the recognition of two outstanding community history projects. These projects met or exceeded the criteria for the Mary Faye Barnes Award for Excellence in Community History Projects (for details, visit <http://www.baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=29362>).

Nacogdoches African American Heritage Project. A joint venture between Stephen F. Austin State University's Department of History and Center for East Texas Studies and the Black Heritage Association of Nacogdoches. Nominated by Jere L. Jackson, Professor of History, SFAU.

Choosing only one winner for the TOHA award among many outstanding projects can be difficult, so TOHA also awards honorable mention certificates to deserving projects.

Chosen for honorable mention awards this year among the junior high entries were Nichole Nerf, Baytown Junior High, Baytown, for "Making Things Right: Eunice Kennedy Shriver," and Shruti Varadharajan, of Sartartia Middle School, Sugar Land, for "Removing the Shadow of the Crippler: Jonas Salk's Stand to End Polio."

Earning honorable mention recognition in the senior high division were two entries: William Trotty, of Houston's Carver High School for Applied Technology, Engineering, and Arts, for "From Pulpit to Protest: Reverend Jemison and the Baton Rouge Bus Boycott" (Mr. Trotty placed first in the senior individual documentary category and will represent Texas at National History Day); and a group documentary titled "Has America Achieved True Democracy? Gordon Hirabayashi's Struggle for Constitutional Equality," produced by Gabriel Moreno, John Lara, Jesse Mora, David Schumacher, and Olivia Silva, from Jay High School in San Antonio.

Congratulations to these well-deserving students, their teachers, schools, and parents!

Dr. Gary McCaleb, Vice President of Abilene Christian University, for his Oral History Centennial Project, documenting the memories of lifelong Abileneans, deposited at The Grace Museum. Nominated by Stewart Caffey.

Other community projects have been nominated and are under consideration by the awards committee.

To learn how to submit your project for a TOHA community history award, visit the TOHA Web pages at: <http://www.baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=29342>.

Keeping in Touch: Member News

Jason P. Theriot and **Joe Pratt** helped lead an oral history workshop at the University of Houston (UH) in February. TOHA's former president and former journal editor Lesley Brunet was the key speaker for the workshop, which was attended by twenty-two people. The workshop was sponsored by the UH Veteran's Services Office and its director, Allen Grundy, who in conjunction with the UH public history department and the U.S. Library of Congress is recruiting interviewers to record and preserve veterans' stories through oral history interviews. A second workshop was planned for April 9 to focus on POWs.

In addition to leading workshops, **Jason P. Theriot** lectured at the National D-Day Museum in New Orleans on May 13 on "Cajun Espionage: The Untold Story of the French-Speaking OSS Agents in France, 1944."

Charles A. Rodenberger reports that Cross Plains Public Library is receiving oral history assistance to document the wild fire of December 27, 2005, that destroyed much of the town. Tumbleweed Smith's oral history students from the University of Texas-Permian Basin recorded audio and video accounts of the disaster which will be made available to the Cross Plains Public Library.

Last December **Susie Kelly Flatau** met with three Uzbekistan journalists to discuss the role of Texas writers whose work profiles stories about Texas individuals. The journalists were visitors invited to the U.S. under auspices of the Department of State's International Visitor Leadership Program.

Look in the next issue of *Sound Historian* for **Ken Hendrickson's** article "World Neighbors Operations in Honduras." Ken's latest book publication is the three-volume work, *The Life and Presidency of Franklin Delano Roosevelt: An Annotated Bibliography*, published by Scarecrow Press in 2005.

Stewart Caffey has received special recognition from the Abilene Cultural Affairs Council for his contributions in leading the Abilene Writers Guild to become one of the largest and most prestigious writers' groups in the state. As president of the Guild, Stewart fulfilled his passion of "promoting the power of writing in a free society."

Jo Ann Stiles and Ellen Rienstra have conducted more than sixty-five interviews for their continuing project on the Stark Family and Osage, Texas. Jo Ann is also doing interviews among Comfort, Texas, residents, and admits she is "getting more and more interested in that town." Jo Ann further reports that Dr. Mary Kelly, of Lamar University, Beaumont, and her historical research class conducted interviews relating to Hurricane Rita for the Lamar University oral history archive. Sessions on the hurricane are being planned for presentation at the February 2007 spring meeting of the East Texas Historical Association, which will meet in Beaumont.

TOHA congratulates charter member **William L. Pitts**, professor of religion at Baylor University, upon his receipt of the 2006 Distinguished Service Award for Outstanding Contributions to Baptist History from the Baptist History and Heritage Society. The award recognizes and pays tribute to individuals who have exhibited rare and unusual dedication to the cause of Baptist history through writing, teaching, denominational service, archival and library development, historical center and society work on national and state levels, communicating Baptist heritage, and interpreting the history of Baptists.

Kathleen Hudson, of Kerrville, keeps busy sharing stories from her oral history research. She writes monthly columns titled "On the Road" for Hill Country Happenings and the online tourism site Hill Country Visitor. She is a speaker for Humanities Texas and gives presentations on women and Texas music, Jimmie Rodgers, and Texas songwriters. Other programs she presents include The Power of Stories and Past Is Prologue, which is based on an 10,000-year-old oral history called The Walking People. In addition to teaching creative writing workshops, she is working on a book manuscript of her own for University of Texas Press based upon her collection of interviews with women in Texas music. Her oral history project in Texas music, housed at the Southwest Collection at Texas Tech University, contains more than 300 interviews.

Jo Ann Pospisil has been elected to the board of directors for the West Texas Historical Association. For the silent auction held during this spring's WTHA meeting in Lubbock, TOHA donated a full run of *Sound Historian* (ten issues, Volumes 1-9).

Carson County Historical Commission Records Veterans Interviews

From Panhandle, Texas, comes news that the Carson County Square House Museum and the **Carson County Historical Commission** (CCHC) have initiated a program to interview World War II veterans. Their experience in planning and fulfilling their interviewing goals, reported to TOHA by CCHC Chairman Mogie R. McCray, provides a model for other historical societies to follow.

The two groups had been discussing the program for several years. Originally, they planned to videotape the interviews. In May 2005, Monte Monroe and Dr. Phil Carson of Texas Tech University visited Panhandle and recommended the use of audio tape rather than video, and suddenly the project seemed more feasible. In July, Dr. David Marshall, field historian of Tech's Southwest Collection, spoke to interested parties on interviewing methods. His suggestion that the group use digital recorders sparked interest, and in August a committee met and began planning the project, including creating interview forms and questions.

In September, the groups hosted a program marking the sixtieth anniversary of the end of World War II and extended special invitations to area veterans. Thirteen veterans were among fifty people attending the program in the Conway Community Church on the museum grounds, and a list of thirty potential interviewees emerged from that program. By the end of 2005, eleven veterans had been interviewed by eight to ten trained volunteers. As new names surfaced, the list grew and interviews continued. For instance, twelve local club women, aged 65 to 85 years, shared their memories of the home front. Publicity in county and area news media invited others to participate.

The interviews are recorded on digital voice recorders, transferred to computer discs, and abstracted. They will be stored at both the Square House Museum and the Southwest Collection.

Tarlton Law Library Announces New Oral History Publication

Michael Widener, Head of Special Collections and Joseph D. Jamail Fellow in Law Librarianship for the Tarlton Law Library, School of Law, University of Texas at Austin, announces the library's publication of "Harry M. Reasoner: An Oral History Interview" (2005). In the interview, conducted by Sheree Scarborough, Reasoner discusses his undergraduate and law education, as well as many highlights from his legal career. A Distinguished Alumnus and former professor of the UT School of Law, Reasoner has practiced for Vinson & Elkins since 1963. To learn more, visit <http://www.utexas.edu/law/depts/alumni/trustees/reasoner.html>.

This volume joins seven others in the Tarlton Law Library Oral History series, for which eight other interviews are forthcoming. Already published are interviews with Page Keeton, Gus Hodges, Corwin Johnson, Joseph D. Jamail, and three chief justices of the Texas Supreme Court (Robert W. Calvert, Joe. R. Greenhill Sr., and Jack Pope). Soon to be added are interviews with Robert Dawson, Hans Baade, Russell Weintraub, Leon Lebowitz, Pat Hazel, Oscar Mauzy, James deAnda, and James W. McCartney.

Tarlton makes its interviews available for purchase for \$20 each. For more information, visit <http://tarlton.law.utexas.edu/rare/oralhistory.html>.

Conservation History Association of Texas Requests Advice

David Todd (512-416-0400 or dtodd@wt.org) announces that the Conservation History Association of Texas is embarking on an effort to derive curriculum and lesson plans for Texas grade school students from its archive of interviews with Texas leaders in natural resource and human health protection. David welcomes advice on how best to do this from others in the oral history community.



Send your news to
TOHA, One Baylor Place #97271, Waco TX 76798-7271,
or e-mail lois_myers@baylor.edu.

Upcoming Events

July 12-16, 2006 – International Oral History Conference – Sydney, Australia

Oral historians from around the world will gather “down under” to share their ideas and experiences in applying oral history in museums, films, heritage studies, land rights claims, political movements, archives, academic studies, performances, community projects, and much more.

Theme: “Dancing with Memory: Oral History & Its Audiences” For details, visit the Web site at <http://www.une.edu/ioha2006>.

September 29-30, 2006 – Texas Heritage Living History Weekend – Kerrville

The theme for this two-day event produced by the Texas Heritage Music Foundation and held on the campus of Schreiner University will be “Stories and Songs as Another Way of Learning.” The Texas Folklore Society is hosting a panel on Saturday. If you would like to present a paper or otherwise be part of this educational program, contact Kathleen Hudson at kat@maverickbbs.com.

Learn more at http://www.texasheritagemusic.org/LHD_current/LHD_main.htm.

October 25-29, 2006 – Oral History Association – Little Rock, Arkansas

The theme for this year’s OHA meeting is “Generational Links: Confronting the Past, Understanding the Present, Planning the Future.” In addition to workshops, paper sessions, plenary meetings, and keynote speakers, OHA will provide opportunities to tour historic sites in Little Rock, including the Old State House Museum, Central High School, and the William J. Clinton Presidential Center. It will be many years before OHA brings its annual meeting this close to Texas. Learn more at <http://www.dickinson.edu/oha>.

President’s Report (continued from page 2)

“We commend her for all the efforts she has given the organization, thank her for advocating the importance of oral history to the multitudes who have received her assistance, and hope for many years she’ll continue her work that positively impacts Texas history,” Wright said at the end of the presentation before Myers was presented with an engraved crystal bowl (filled with chocolates) as a gift of appreciation from the membership. In addition, several TOHA members sent cards expressing their personal appreciation to Myers for her years of service.

Postscript from Lois:

Your tribute came as a total surprise to me. Thank you, TOHA, for the privilege of serving you. I am convinced that oral historians are among the best people possible, and TOHA members are the best of the best! In addition to the spectacular crystal bowl filled with my favorite—chocolates!—and many thoughtful cards, a gift of \$60 was added to the Sound Historian account to support TOHA’s journal. Thank you, one and all!

TOHA Bylaws Revised

At its meeting on March 2, 2006, the TOHA Board of Directors voted unanimously to revise the association’s bylaws. Created in 1983 and revised significantly in 1991, the bylaws have not been amended since the additions of the sponsoring and lifetime membership and the *Sound Historian*. Lois E. Myers suggested the revisions to account for these developments and to bring the bylaws into compliance with actual practice.

A copy of the new bylaws is attached to this newsletter. Ratification by the members is required for the bylaws to take effect. Please return the attached postcard ballot with your vote on the new bylaws.

To ask questions, contact Lois at 254-710-6285 or lois_myers@baylor.edu, or Rebecca Wright, at 281-990-0007, or rebecca.a.wright1@jsc.nasa.gov.