

Texas Oral History Association

SOUND BITES

Since 1983

Winter 2009



“Using Oral History to Document Civil Rights Movements in Texas”

Join TOHA in Dallas for a timely oral history session in joint session with the Texas State Historical Association’s annual meeting, March 4–6, 2010, at the Marriott Quorum Hotel. The program, organized by Michelle Mears, archivist at the University of North Texas (UNT) and chaired by Todd Moye, director of the UNT Oral History Program, will stimulate understanding on the topic of African American and Mexican American civil rights in Texas. Dr. Moye intends to organize the session in a roundtable format to maximize discussion among the presenters and the audience.

Robert Edison, Dallas ISD director of social studies, will present “Oral Histories of African American Educators from the Era of Segregation.” As the title suggests, this presentation stems from Edison’s many oral history interviews with black educators from the segregation era and documents an important chapter in the early history of civil rights organizing in Dallas.

Martha Norkunas, professor in the public history program at Middle Tennessee State University, will present “The Development of Racial Consciousness: Austin African Americans Narrate the Emergence of a Racial Sensibility.” This paper highlights history gleaned from the University of Texas African American Texans Oral History Project, a collection of more than four hundred hours of recordings with Texans of African descent. The paper highlights key moments of racial awareness in the narrators’ lives.

Kristine Navarro, director of the Institute of Oral History at the University of Texas–El Paso, will share stories from “The Bracero Oral History Project,” a collection of more than four hundred interviews with Bracero participants from both sides of the US-Mexican border. The Bracero program, a federal guest worker program initially intended to address labor shortages during World War II, brought more than two million Mexicans to the US to work.

Details of the program—specific day, time, place—will be announced in early January. In the meantime, mark your calendars for this special event and plan to join us in Dallas early next spring. Information on other events at the TSHA annual meeting and instructions for making reservations at the host hotel are available at <http://www.tshaonline.org/about/meeting/index.html>.

“Moving Beyond the Interview” in Louisville

TOHA traces its origin to the 1982 annual meeting of the Oral History Association, and since that time TOHA members have been visibly active in the national organization's conferences and workshops. Last fall, in Louisville, TOHA members Peter J. Myers, of San Antonio, and Susan Burneson, of Austin, took part in their first OHA meeting. Below are Susan's comments on her initial impressions of OHA. Susan applied for and received an OHA scholarship to cover her registration costs and help with additional expenses. Plan to attend the national meeting in Atlanta, Georgia, next fall to discover for yourself what you can learn from interacting with oral historians from across the nation and around the globe.

The Oral History Association's forty-third annual meeting, held October 14–18, 2009, in Louisville, Kentucky, presented a wide spectrum of oral history projects from around the world, including the creative, in-depth work being done in Kentucky. The expanding role of technology in oral history was featured in many sessions, including “Building a Better Oral History Web Site,” with Baylor University's Elinor Mazé as one of three panelists.

In addition to panel discussions, offerings included plenary sessions, film, music, performance, and exhibits. The Presidential Reception held on Thursday evening featured the Community Commons Kentucky Showcase. Information on more than a dozen programs and projects based in Kentucky were presented in separate exhibits, and the informal setting encouraged lively discussion. One program, Kentucky's Community Scholars, provides training to individuals and better prepares them to document and promote community culture, folklife, and traditional arts. It is administered by the Kentucky Folklife Program of the Kentucky Arts Council and the Kentucky Historical Society, in partnership with the Folk Studies Graduate Program of Western Kentucky University and communities across the state. Other offerings at the showcase were equally as impressive.

The awards ceremony on Saturday evening featured a presentation by artists with Kentucky-based Appalshop, which for forty years has created innovative media, arts, and education projects using oral history resources. Based in the heart of Appalachia, Appalshop produces an awe-inspiring array of films, video, theater, music and spoken-word recordings, radio, photograph, multimedia, and books. In addition, Appalshop offers education and training programs which

support local communities in finding their own solutions to challenges they face.

My husband and I are new members of OHA and were first-time participants at the meeting. In addition to all we learned during sessions, for us the conference also was an opportunity to meet and talk with many other oral historians. We shared information about our own ongoing community history project here in Austin called Voices of the Violet Crown. We came home with new ideas for moving forward with our project, inspired by films, audio tours, books, exhibits, and other resources we learned about at the meeting. And, most important, we made new contacts with oral historians who encouraged us and offered to share their expertise with us even after the meeting.

The Oral History Association's 2010 annual meeting, with the theme “Times of Crisis, Times of Change: Human Stories on the Edge of Transformation,” is scheduled for October 27–31 in Atlanta, Georgia. Deadline for proposals is January 15, 2010. More information about the meeting is available on the OHA Web site: <http://www.oralhistory.org/annual-meeting/>.

– Susan Burneson, Austin, Texas

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TOHA Member News



community history film, “A Community Mosaic.”

Cynthia Beeman (right), representing the TOHA Board of Directors, presented the 2009 Mary Faye Barnes Award for Excellence in Community History Projects to **Susan Burneson** (left) and Rob Burneson (middle) on Saturday, November 14, during the Violet Crown Fall Festival in Austin. A celebration of and for the Brentwood and Crestview communities, the festival included more than thirty art booths, local music, food, and drink, history and community displays, kids’ activities, and showings of the Burnesons’ award-winning



Lincoln King, longtime educator at Gary High School and creator and sponsor of the *Loblolly* project, and his wife, Mary Nell, recently donated their collection of *Loblolly* books and magazines to the M. P. Baker Library at Panola College in Carthage. The Kings gave the college seven books and sixty-five issues of the magazine, covering the entire range of *Loblolly* publications from 1973 to 2003. In addition, they donated an index of the first eighteen years of the magazine and additional materials related to the series, including a movie script about the *Loblolly* project. Featuring essays based on interviews and photographs gathered by Gary High School students, the *Loblolly* publications are valuable primary resource materials for researching East Texas history.

In 2002, TOHA honored King, one of the association’s charter members, with its W. Stewart Caffey Award for Excellence for Precollegiate Teaching. King invites TOHA members to visit the collection and see for themselves the rich historical treasures preserved by the students. King gained some useful shelf space by donating the *Loblolly* collection to Panola College, but he can visit the publications often—he and Mary Nell live just across the street from the library!



The **Baylor University Institute for Oral History** is wrapping up a two-year collaboration with the Texas Historical Commission’s Here and There: Texas in World War II initiative in which Institute faculty members, **Stephen Sloan**, **Elinor Mazé**, and **Lois Myers** conducted oral history workshops across the state. Twenty-two workshops are completed and two remain—in Galveston, in December, and in El Paso, in January. In addition to the workshops, Sloan and Myers interviewed people with experience in the World War II military or home front. Last summer, Dr. Sloan interviewed World War II veteran pilot Richard “Dick” Cole (pictured) of Comfort, Texas. Born in 1915, Lt. Col.

Cole amassed a distinguished and decorated service record stretching from 1941 to 1967. During World War II, he volunteered and took part in the Doolittle Raid on Tokyo, Japan, serving as Jimmy Doolittle’s co-pilot in aircraft #1. Later, he participated in the aerial invasion of Burma, flew missions in support of General Wingate and the commando ground forces, and was a test pilot at the Douglas Aircraft Plant in Tulsa, Oklahoma. After the war, he served in the Far East flying administrative and cargo missions. He became jet-qualified and rated as a Command Pilot during peacetime service in several states, as well as in Venezuela. Eyewitness stories like Dick Cole’s will be included in a future publication and Web site created by the Texas Historical Commission to provide public access to information about the state’s military sites and testimonies of wartime experience gathered during the Here and There initiative.

Correction: In Volume 12 of *Sound Historian* author Christina A. Wilbur’s name was misspelled. The editors appreciate Christina’s interesting story of organized crime in Jefferson County in the 1960s and regret the error.



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TOHA Calendar of Events

January – MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL TIME

February 1 – NOMINATIONS DUE FOR TOHA AWARDS

See details under Awards at <http://www.baylor.edu/toha>.

February 26–27, 2010 – Joint Meeting of EAST and WEST TEXAS HISTORICAL ASSOCIATIONS

Marriott DFW at Champion's Circle, Fort Worth

Learn more at <http://www.easttexashistorical.org>.

March 4–6, 2010 – TEXAS STATE HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

Marriott Quorum Hotel, Dallas, Texas

Details forthcoming at <http://www.tshaonline.org>

April 14 & 21, 2010 – ONLINE WORKSHOP

Presented by Baylor University Institute for Oral History

Learn more at http://www.baylor.edu/oral_history.

May 7–8, 2010 – TEXAS HISTORY DAY, Austin

Learn more at <http://www.baylor.edu/TOHA/index.php?id=29364>.

June 24–26, 2010 – KOREAN WAR CONFERENCE

Victoria College/University of Houston–Victoria, Victoria

Learn more at <http://vcuhvlibrary.uhv.edu/whatsnew/korea/home.htm>.

July 7–10, 2010 – XVI INTERNATIONAL ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION ANNUAL MEETING

Clarion Congress Hotel, Prague, Czech Republic

Learn more at <http://www.ioha2010prague.cz>.


October 27 – 31, 2010 – ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

Sheraton Hotel Downtown, Atlanta, Georgia

Call for papers opened until January 15, 2010.

Learn more at <http://www.oralhistory.org/annual-meeting>.

ANYTIME:

 **Send news of your oral history work to TOHA.** Send to lois_myers@baylor.edu or call (254) 710-6285.

 **Submit articles to *Sound Historian*.** Contact Ken Hendrickson, (940) 397-4150 or ken.hendrickson@mwsu.edu.

 **Recruit members for TOHA.** Point friends to our new online membership form at <http://www.baylor.edu/toha> or call Lois at (254) 710-6285 for brochures.

SOUND BITES is an occasional newsletter of the Texas Oral History Association Board of Directors for the benefit of TOHA members. For questions, submissions, or comments, or to volunteer as a newsletter reporter, please contact Lois E. Myers at lois_myers@baylor.edu or 254.710.6285. To access live links in the newsletter, view Sound Bites online at <http://www.baylor.edu/TOHA/index.php?id=29357>.