

## *Dan K. Utley: A Lifetime Achiever in Oral History*

The Texas Oral History Association is pleased to announce Dan K. Utley as the eighth recipient of the Thomas L. Charlton Lifetime Achievement Award.



A native of Lufkin who spent his formative years in Woodville, Dan received his BA in history from the University of Texas at Austin, teacher certification from Lamar University, and the MA in history from Sam Houston State University. As he worked toward his own education, he participated in the education of young people through his teaching in Woodville and Cypress-Fairbanks schools and through his executive position with the Alamo Area Council of Boy Scouts of America in San Antonio. In later years, Dan taught or lectured at Austin Community College and Baylor University. He is currently an adjunct faculty member in the public history program at Texas State University–San Marcos, where he teaches graduate courses in oral history theory and practice.

In 1979, Dan began a long-term relationship with the Texas Historical Commission, where he served several roles that placed him at the center of action for historic site preservation in the state. He served as assistant director of research from 1979 to 1983, with the primary responsibility for drafting and editing inscriptions for the informative markers that dot the Texas landscape with reminders of the significance of places, people, and events in the state's past. From 1983 to 1985, Dan was director of research, a position which included oversight for the state historical marker program, but also carried him on visits and public speaking occasions through the entire state. As THC's liaison with state agencies, legislative committees, preservation groups, and county historical commissions, he came to know people from all walks of life across Texas, and they came to know Dan as

their partner in making the past live for future generations.

Dan enjoyed being out and about the state, so in 1985 he left THC to become a contract historian/cultural resources manager, work he continues to the present. Contracting principally with the University of Texas at Austin, Lower Colorado River Authority, and the Texas Parks and Wildlife Department, he researches and writes state and federal cultural resource management reports for projects in all regions of Texas, always utilizing oral history where he can. He has conducted architectural and historical surveys and prepared nominations for the National Register of Historic Places and Recorded Texas Landmark designation. Along with projects contributing to cemetery preservation and historical archeology, he consults with Texans doing oral history.

From 1991 to 1993, Dan was Oral Historian/Editor and Lecturer for the Baylor University Institute for Oral History. During those years and subsequently, he has contributed 102 interviews to Baylor's oral history collection. He initiated the Historic Preservation in Texas project for Baylor by conducting interviews with innovators, practitioners, and advocates (*continued on page 7*)

# TOHA Board of Directors News

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## Two TOHA Programs Planned for Early 2011

Join your fellow Texas oral historians for two program meetings early next year. In February, TOHA will sponsor a session during the spring meeting of the East Texas Historical Association (ETHA), to be held February 18-19, 2011, in Waco. Then, in early March, TOHA will host its traditional joint session with the Texas State Historical Association (TSHA) in El Paso.

### **East Texas Historical Association, February 18-19, 2011, Waco:**

#### ***Re-examining the Texas Sanctuary Movement in a New Anti-immigrant Era***

The ETHA spring meeting will be at the Hilton Hotel in Waco on February 18-19, 2011. TOHA is pleased to sponsor a panel as part of the program. Based on a Baylor University Institute for Oral History (BUIOH) project conducted in the 1980s, the panel will re-examine the attitudes and concerns of some of the original interviewees involved in the American Sanctuary Movement (ASM), a movement launched by some U.S. churches to provide refuge for Central Americans fleeing repressive governments and civil wars in their own countries. In light of new anti-immigration laws around the country and the general anti-immigration mood of the nation in 2010, former Sanctuary workers were asked to reflect on their original motivations for helping Central American refugees in the 1980s and to consider how those feelings have changed over time. The panel's speakers will be Dr. Jaclyn L. Jeffrey, Associate Professor of Anthropology at Texas A&M International University in Laredo, Texas, and Dr. David B. Stricklin, Head of the Butler Center for Arkansas Studies in Little Rock and an adjunct history professor at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock, who were the principal BUIOH researchers in the original ASM interview project. Commenting on the presentations will be Dr. James M. SoRelle, Professor and Director of Undergraduate Studies in the Department of History at Baylor. Get more program details and registration information at <http://www.easttexashistorical.org/v3/events/springmeeting.htm>.

### **Texas State Historical Association, March 3-5, 2011, El Paso:**

#### ***Expanding the Borders through Oral History***

TOHA will meet in joint session with the TSHA at the Camino Real Hotel in El Paso on March 3-5, 2011. The TOHA program, planned and moderated by Beverly J. Rowe, current TOHA president, will feature three papers under the theme, "Expanding the Borders through Oral History." Anais Acosta, business manager of the UTEP Institute of Oral History, will present "The Institute of Oral History: The Goldmine in West Texas." Vernon Williams of Abilene, TOHA board member and former president, will present "The Air War, Collaterals, and World War II Texas, 1941-1945." Kay Mizell, of Collin County Community College, will present "Across History, Across Borders: The Kurdish Diaspora in North Texas." Specific information on the day and time for the TOHA session will be announced by TSHA in January. Learn more about the TSHA meeting and find links to online registration at <http://www.tshaonline.org/annual-meeting>.

## New officers serve TOHA

In its October 1, 2010, conference call meeting, the TOHA board of directors elected Beverly J. Rowe of Texarkana as president, 2010-2011. Elected to serve with Dr. Rowe as vice-president was Kyle Wilkison of Plano. We appreciate the leadership of all our directors and officers.

## Looking for a few good Texans

Come June 2011, TOHA will hold its next election for directors. TOHA's nine directors serve for two years per term and are eligible to serve three terms in a row. Special circumstances back in 2005 created a unique situation for TOHA in 2011: six directors will complete their three terms of service and rotate off the board in 2011. We are seeking nominations for six new directors to join the three returning directors on the June ballot. Directors must be current members of the association, able to take part in board meetings, and willing to serve a term as vice-president and president should they be elected by their fellow board members. To nominate yourself or someone else, please contact Dr. Patrick Hughes, [phughes5@austin.rr.com](mailto:phughes5@austin.rr.com).



## TOHA Board of Directors 2009-2011

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## TOHA presenters to lead workshop and showcase for Organization of American Historians

A special daylong introductory workshop and showcase, *Viva Voce: Researching the Past with Oral History*, presented by TOHA members will highlight the Organization of American Historians annual meeting at the Hilton-Americas Hotel in Houston, March 17-20, 2011. Led by Stephen Sloan and Elinor Mazé of the Baylor University Institute for Oral History, the morning workshop provides an overview of oral history methodology and explores the practical matters of creating, designing, and executing effective oral history research projects. The impact of the digital age on all facets of the oral historian's craft will be a vital feature of the workshop. The afternoon showcase features Todd Moye, director of the University of North Texas Oral History Program, speaking on "Next Steps: Publishing Oral History"; Rebecca Wright and Sandra Johnson, of the Johnson Space Center Oral History Project, speaking on "The Digital Frontier: Capturing and Sharing Oral History"; and Stephen Sloan, speaking along with Louis Kyriakoudes, director of the Center for Oral History and Cultural Heritage at the University of Southern Mississippi, on "Oral History on the Edge: Documenting Crisis and Disaster." Learn more about the OAH program and how to register for the workshop and showcase at [http://www.oah.org/meetings/annual\\_meeting/program/](http://www.oah.org/meetings/annual_meeting/program/).

## New Years Resolution: Send an article to the TOHA Journal

Heard any good stories lately? Many TOHA members hear great stories all the time from people they interview for their various oral history projects. Make it a priority to get those stories out to people who will appreciate them—the readers of TOHA's journal, *Sound Historian*. In about twenty pages, tell us about your project, your interviewees, their stories, what you learned from the stories, and what you learned about the art of doing oral history as you collected those stories. Visit the journal Web page to learn more at <http://www.baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=29344>. To ask questions about your article, contact the editor, Dr. Ken Hendrickson, at [ken.hendrickson@mwsu.edu](mailto:ken.hendrickson@mwsu.edu) or 940-397-4150.

## Renew your TOHA membership today

The new TOHA year begins January 1, 2011. Renew your membership now by completing the form available online at <http://www.baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=29341>. You may join online with a credit card or print and mail the form to TOHA. Invite your friends and family to join TOHA!

Volume 13 of *Sound Historian* is in progress.  
Watch your mailbox in early 2011 for this special issue!

# Project highlights

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TOHA members and friends carried news and assessments of their oral history projects to an international audience during the annual program meeting of the Oral History Association in Atlanta, Georgia, October 27-31, 2010. The theme for this year's conference was "Times of Crisis, Times of Change: Human Stories on the Edge of Transformation." Here are abstracts of some of the papers and panels contributed by Texans.



**Peter J. Myers:**

## **'Ordinary People' Do Extraordinary Things**

*Dr. Myers is associate professor of history at Palo Alto College in San Antonio.*

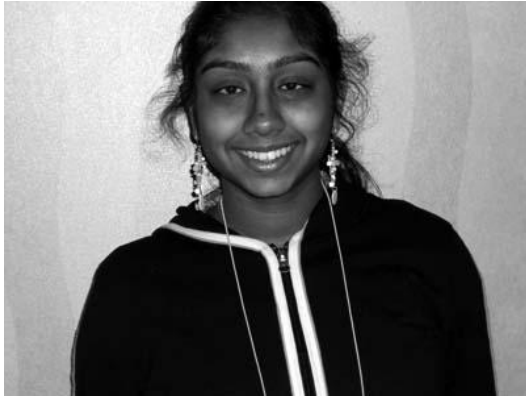
How have people struggled and survived in times of crisis? How do people create change and bear witness to it? How do they construct their stories of these moments? I challenge my undergraduate students to consider such questions when they do their oral history projects. Most discover that their interviewees have lived through times of crisis and times of change, and have often been active in transforming theirs and others' lives. Students select an individual over the age of fifty and focus on a particular historical theme for their project. Popular themes include immigration, migratory labor, and the Vietnam War. The presentation focused on the lives of three extraordinary Mexican-American women who made a difference by telling their stories to their loved ones. Peter used these three human stories to encourage audience participants, particularly teachers, to understand that the

best way for students to learn about the recent past is to record the stories of those who lived in it.

Lydia Nevarez was interviewed by her daughter Melida Nevarez in the spring of 2003. Lydia showed Melida a scrapbook compiled during her teen years. In that scrapbook were mimeographed sheets and newspaper articles about an event that transformed Lydia's life. In October of 1969, eighteen-year-old Lydia Nevarez helped organize the Crystal City High School Walkout. She and her fellow Chicano students had had enough of the discrimination that Mexican-Americans faced in the high school. Anglo students were favored in being cheerleaders and homecoming king and queen. (The school administration told students that the homecoming selection was made by Hollywood stars, including Tab Hunter and Glen Campbell.) Melida captured her mother's story and recognized that change does not happen through passivity but through action.

Patricia Lopez wondered why her mother Margarita Garza's health has suffered over the years. In 1953, at the age of seven, Margarita immigrated to the United States with her family from Mexico. The following year Margarita was forced to drop out of school, so she could help out her family financially doing migratory labor. Margarita worked the fields in Michigan and Ohio, often on her hands and knees. While doing such back-breaking work, the fields would be sprayed with pesticides. Her family was assured that it would do them no harm. Although Margarita lived a tough life, she made sure her children's lives would be better. Patricia is now an honor student at Palo Alto College and makes her mother proud.

Connie Torres's story defines perseverance. Her granddaughter-in-law, Elizabeth Vasquez, learned about how one mother of a wounded Vietnam soldier was determined to see her injured son. After receiving a Western Union Telegram stating that her son, Angel, had been wounded in February of 1968, Connie Torres made contact with the Red Cross in order to see him. The only trouble was that her son was relocated to Japan for medical treatment, while Connie was in Dallas, Texas. As fast as she could expedite it, Connie got to Japan to be with Angel, who eventually recovered. Connie's story shows the lengths an individual will go to get a "job" done.



## **Shruti Varadharajan**

### **Franklin Delano Roosevelt: A Transformational Leader in Paralyzing Times**

*Shruti Varadharajan is a senior at Anty International School in Houston.*

In the early twentieth century, outbreaks of poliomyelitis triggered immense fear in America. Thousands would die and many more would be crippled for the rest of their lives. Franklin Delano Roosevelt contracted polio in 1921, leaving him permanently paralyzed from the waist down and confined to braces and a wheel chair. After several treatment procedures, in 1924 Roosevelt visited a thermal spa in Warm Springs, Georgia, hoping to find a cure. For the first time in three years, he was able to move his right leg. He discovered the healing benefits of the spring water and devoted himself to developing a unique rehabilitation center for other polio patients. Later, with his unique leadership skills, he mobilized the whole nation to fight this disease through charity campaigns like March of Dimes.

Roosevelt's unprecedented efforts in combating polio led to the invention of the vaccine, and today the disease is close to being eradicated from the world. Many historians believe Roosevelt's creative leadership in building the rehabilitation center at Warm Springs was critical to his emergence as a political leader without peer in the twentieth century. FDR himself also claimed that his observations in the Warm Springs area inspired certain New Deal programs. FDR played an important role in changing the history of polio in America and the entire world. His extraordinary skills permitted him to spearhead the polio crusade. Furthermore, the whole approach has set a prototype for prevention and cure of other deadly diseases. This truly is Roosevelt's supreme legacy. In her video documentary, Shruti highlighted a collection of interviews from people who were with FDR at the rehabilitation center and those who are preserving his legacy today at Warm Springs. The documentary offers a dramatic testimony of FDR's stand to fight polio, the oppositions he faced, and the ultimate triumph over the disease.



## **Meredith Akins:**

### **Negotiating Narrators: Stories of Revival and Retreat in Small-town Texas**

## **Alisha Hash**

### **“Accentuate the Positive”: The Interviewee as Advocate of a Sanguine Past**

*Meredith Akins and Alisha Hash were part of Dr. Stephen Sloan's oral history seminar graduate class at Baylor University in the fall of 2009.*

Oral historians have long been drawn to studies of local communities facing particular obstacles or transitions. As part of their oral history graduate seminar at Baylor University, Meredith Akins and Alisha Hash conducted an oral history project about the community of Marlin, Texas. Although once a booming hub of industry, technology, and entertainment, Marlin has faced increasingly difficult problems, such as racial and generational divides, a lagging economy, poor town leadership, and an (*continued*)

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impoverished infrastructure. Today Marlin is often considered by those in surrounding areas as a “dying” town. After researching the town’s history, the student group set out to find out why the decline was happening and what actions were being taken to rectify the situation. They interviewed a variety of people, from local businessmen and politicians to high school students, and were rewarded with a wide range of responses

Meredith Akins discussed the specific changes happening in the Marlin community presently and the perception by the narrators of how this change is affecting their town. Although most of her narrators acknowledged that the community did have challenges to overcome, many expressed optimism that these obstacles were being addressed through the work of different individuals and programs. Many narrators expressed a sense of pride in Marlin and were eager to communicate the changes they believed were happening through involvement in long-running community organizations, community government, or through the creation of new programs within the town. Many members of the project expressed both optimism and hope that their community was changing for the better.

Alisha Hash likewise experienced optimistic outlooks from her narrators, and her paper discussed the potential of the insider versus outsider dichotomy as an explanation. Alisha found that interviewees were eager to emphasize what was good about Marlin rather than explore what had gone wrong and why the city is faltering. Other members of the student group had the advantage of being insiders in Marlin to one degree or another but Alisha was an outsider in every way. She analyzed the situation of an oral historian as either an outsider or insider, identifying the advantages and liabilities of both positions.



## **David Todd**

### **Economic Crisis, Environmental Challenge and Sustainable Future in Texas**

*David Todd is director of The Conservation History Association of Texas*

For his presentation, David Todd drew from the book, *The Texas Legacy Project: Stories of Courage and Conservation* (Texas A&M Press, 2010), and the online archive at [www.texaslegacy.org](http://www.texaslegacy.org), containing over 225 oral histories from Texas conservationists, collected from 1997 through 2008 in more than sixty communities across the state. Interviewer for the oral histories and co-editor of the book, Todd related stories of environmental damage told by individuals who confronted entrenched industries and long-lived traditions in Texas. These were challenges that were often seen at the time as major economic crises for the status quo.

Examples of these challenges included flooding and urban development, radioactive waste and military installations, habitat protection and the timber industry, game laws and subsistence hunting, and bird kills and the oil business. In these five examples oral histories show how dominant industries and cultures collide with environmental problems. Beyond the picture of these large-scale, society-wide collisions of tradition and change, of private industries and public interests, oral histories also give us intimate views of how the individual narrators faced personal turmoil and social exile when they spoke truth to power. Finally, the interviewees’ words have a prophetic value in seeing beyond today’s collisions and challenges into a more sustainable future and in understanding how these conflicts can be resolved with solutions that lead to safer, less wasteful, and more sustainable resource use.

Learn more about *The Texas Legacy Project: Stories of Courage and Conservation*, edited by David Todd and David Weisman and featuring excerpts from more than sixty narrators at <http://www.texaslegacy.org/bb/book.html>.



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### Lifetime Achievement Award *(continued from page 1)*

of the historic preservation movement in the state, and also spearheaded a series on cotton farming in the Burton area of Washington County. Additionally, while at Baylor, Dan conducted oral history workshops across the state.

In 1997, Dan returned to the Texas Historical Commission, this time as Special Projects Coordinator, supervising site-based programs associated with historic courthouses and Texas military history. In 1999, he became administrator of the Texas Historic Courthouse Preservation Program, a multimillion dollar matching grant initiative. In 2001, Dan moved to the History Programs Division, first as assistant director, a job that well utilized his experience. He coordinated the Official Texas Historical Marker Program and supervised programs related to cemetery preservation, a World War II initiative, the oral history program, and the military sites program. In 2004, he became THC's chief historian. Through that position, he participated in a wide range of projects related to heritage tourism, museums, agency archives, historic sites, diversity efforts, research, workshops, and publications. Again he served as liaison to county historical commissions, nonprofit preservation groups, and state agencies.

Upon his retirement from THC in 2007, in addition to spending more time with Debby, his childhood sweetheart and wife of 39 years, Dan continued his work as contract historian/cultural resource manager and public historian. He continues to consult on oral history projects and is also an author and editor. In addition to a long list of journal and magazine articles, scholarly papers, speeches, and talks, he is author, co-author, and/or editor of several books: *Sentimental Journey: A Guide to the Architectural Heritage of Georgetown, Texas* (1989); *Sacred Soil: Preserving Texas Military Sites of the Nineteenth Century* (1997); *From Can See to Can't: Texas Cotton Farmers on the Southern Prairies* (with Thad Sitton, 1997; recognized with the Best Book Award by the San Antonio Conservation Society in 1998); *Guided with a Steady Hand: The Cultural Landscape of a Rural Texas Park* (with James W. Steely, 1998); and *History Ahead: Stories beyond the Texas Roadside Markers* (with Cynthia J. Beeman, 2010). He is currently working on volume two of *History Ahead*, researching materials for a book on military sites in Texas, 1845-1945, and awaiting publication of a major book on the state's past historians for which he was a contributor.

The list of state boards and committees on which Dan has served is long, but dear to our hearts is his record of service for Texas Oral History Association. TOHA welcomed him as member in 1986 and immediately put him to work. From 1987 to 1992, he did his part as a member of the TOHA board of directors, taking on the offices of vice president (1990-1991) and president (1991-1992). He has also served since 1995 on the editorial board of the TOHA journal, *Sound Historian*. He has carried oral history best practices throughout the state as leader or co-leader of more than thirty workshops.

Dan's prolific work has been honored by the Texas State Historical Association, which named him Fellow in 2008, and by the East Texas Historical Association, with its Best of East Texas Award in 2008 and its Ralph W. Steen Award in 2009. It is fitting that the Texas Oral History Association now recognize Dan K. Utley's outstanding service to the Lone Star State through his career as historic preservationist and oral historian by bestowing on him the Thomas L. Charlton Lifetime Achievement Award.

# TOHA 2011 Calendar of Events

<b>JANUARY 1</b>	TOHA membership year begins	Renew at <a href="http://www.baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=29341">www.baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=29341</a> .
<b>JANUARY 17</b>	Paper proposals due to program committee for OHA 2011 in Denver	See call for papers at <a href="http://www.oralhistory.org/annual-meeting/2011-oha-annual-meeting-call-for-papers/">www.oralhistory.org/annual-meeting/2011-oha-annual-meeting-call-for-papers/</a> .
<b>FEBRUARY 17 – 19</b>	East Texas Historical Association Spring Meeting, Hilton Hotel, Waco	Learn more at <a href="http://www.easttexashistorical.org/v3/events/springmeeting.htm">www.easttexashistorical.org/v3/events/springmeeting.htm</a> .
<b>MARCH 3 – 5</b>	Texas State Historical Association, Camino Real Hotel, El Paso	Learn more at <a href="http://www.tshaonline.org/annual-meeting">www.tshaonline.org/annual-meeting</a> .
<b>MARCH 17 – 20</b>	Vive Voce workshop & showcase at Organization of American Historians meeting, Houston	Learn more and register at <a href="http://www.oah.org/meetings/annual_meeting/program/workshops/">www.oah.org/meetings/annual_meeting/program/workshops/</a> .
<b>MARCH 31 – APRIL 2</b>	West Texas Historical Association, Lubbock	Learn more at <a href="http://www.wtha.org">www.wtha.org</a> .
<b>APRIL</b>	Baylor Institute for Oral History E-Learning Workshop	Look for information at <a href="http://www.baylor.edu/oralhistory/index.php?id=64470">www.baylor.edu/oralhistory/index.php?id=64470</a> .
<b>MAY 6 – 7</b>	Texas History Day, Austin	Learn about the TOHA Award at <a href="http://www.baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=29364">www.baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=29364</a> .
<b>MAY – JUNE</b>	TOHA Board of Directors Election	Volunteer or nominate a respected colleague.
<b>OCTOBER 12 – 16</b>	Oral History Association annual meeting, Denver, Colorado	Plan to attend! <a href="http://www.oralhistory.org">www.oralhistory.org</a>

**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](mailto: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>.