

# SOUND BITES

Winter 2006



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2006-2007

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## Looking Back, Looking Forward: President's Report

Congratulations and appreciation to Tom Charlton, Maria Flores, Sandra Johnson, Elinor Mazé, Charles Morrissey, J. Todd Moye, Lois Myers, Kristine Navarro, Gene Preuss, Rebecca Sharpless, Vernon L. Williams, Rebecca Wright, and any other TOHA members who participated in the October Oral History Association [OHA] annual meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas. The TOHA-sponsored workshop was a resounding success, and the sessions and roundtables were informative and interesting; none could have been accomplished without your contributions. Thank you!

Membership continues to increase both due to TOHA's exposure at OHA in Little Rock and to my letter-writing campaign to organizations of which I am a member, to friends and to relatives with an interest in oral history as a tool for preserving historical and/or genealogical information.

The 2006 Mary Faye Barnes Awards for Excellence in Community History Projects were presented to two very worthy oral history projects. In August, Vernon Williams presented Dr. Gary Caleb's award in Abilene. In September, in Nacogdoches, I presented the award to Maye Ham, president of the Nacogdoches African American History Project, nominated by Jere Jackson, director of the SFA Center for East Texas Studies. Board members Bobby Johnson and Beverly Rowe also attended the presentation ceremony in Nacogdoches. A nomination is being prepared for the Charlton Lifetime Achievement Award to be presented in 2007.

Exciting joint sessions with several organizations are pending. See the newsletter calendar section for information on the TOHA session upcoming at the West Texas Historical Association meeting, March 30-31, 2007, in Abilene. Contact Beverly Rowe concerning participation in the spring 2007 East Texas Historical Association and 2008 Texas Community College Teachers Association sessions. Contact Vernon Williams regarding the Southwest Social Sciences Association and Texas State Historical Association 2008 sessions.

TOHA continues to be dynamic and effective thanks to the ongoing efforts of our Board members. My sincerest thanks to each of you!

Best wishes to all TOHA members for a joyful 2006 holiday season and a healthy, happy, peaceful, and prosperous New Year.

JoAnn Pospisil, Certified Archivist  
Baylor College of Medicine, Houston



## Keeping in Touch: Member News

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### TOHANs Receive Awards

Congratulations to **Thad Sitton** and **James H. Conrad**, whose book *Freedom Colonies: Independent Black Texans in the Time of Jim Crow* (University of Texas Press, 2005) won the Award for the Book Making the Most Significant Contribution to Knowledge from the Texas Institute of Letters in April 2006. Thad and Jim are both former TOHA board members and recipients of the Thomas L. Charlton Lifetime Achievement Award.

At the 2006 Oral History Association annual awards banquet, **Todd Moyer** received the 2006 Elizabeth B. Mason Project Award for his work on the National Park Service's Tuskegee Airmen Oral History Project. The biannual award recognizes projects that entail a research design that addresses significance, objectives, manner of selecting interviewees and interviewers, outline of major topics of inquiry, schedule of questions, plan of work, quality controls, staff, budget, user access, and use. Winning projects also possess noteworthy scholarly and social value and advance both the understanding of an important historical subject, issue, or theme, and also the disciplined practice of oral history. Congratulations to Todd for his outstanding achievement!

### TOHA Workshop: From Planning to Preservation

Three TOHA members facilitated an oral history workshop during the recent Oral History Association annual meeting in Little Rock, Arkansas. **Lois Myers**, **Sandra Johnson**, and **Rebecca Wright** collaborated in presenting, "Introduction to Oral History Interviewing: From Planning to Preservation" to a group of nineteen participants from fifteen different states, including five from Texas. Among the Texans in the workshop were TOHA members **Helen Garrison**, **Heather Wooten**, and **Charles Olson**. Potential projects among the group included both community history and scholarly-based projects, and **Charles Olson** was preparing for a project that would take him to the Middle East to conduct an oral history project for the sultanate of Oman.

The all-day workshop featured a diverse range of information, including the history of oral history, unique aspects and benefits, details of an oral history process and project design, interviewing techniques, and guidelines covering the legal and ethical issues involving oral history. A segment focused on recording equipment and formats; preservation and archiving; and potential outcomes and accessibility. To emphasize the importance of recording with external microphones, Sandra Johnson presented "Sounds of Oral History," excerpts from oral history interviews demonstrating some of the unanticipated noises that can disrupt interviews in various settings. Participants took part in interviewing exercises that allowed them to ask, listen, and tell—three vital skills for oral historians.

The session ended with a time for exchanging information, networking, and brainstorming about projects and oral history related issues. The majority of the attendees chose to stay beyond the time allowed for the session to continue the discussion and conversation with their new colleagues.

Students departed the workshop with a collection of printed materials and resource information to assist them with their projects as their ideas draw closer to implementation.

When not presenting introduction to oral history workshops, Lois E. Myers serves as the interim director at the Baylor University Institute for Oral History in Waco. Rebecca Wright and Sandra Johnson work in the history office at the NASA Johnson Space Center History Office in Houston, where Rebecca is the history coordinator and Sandra is production coordinator.



Reported by JoAnn Pospisil, Committee Chair

## Nacogdoches African American History Project

Nacogdoches, Texas, September 21, 2006 – Opening day of the East Texas Historical Association fall meeting.

TOHA Board members Bobby Johnson, JoAnn Pospisil and Beverly Rowe attended the ceremony at Stephen F. Austin State University [SFA] when the Barnes Award was presented to the Nacogdoches African American History Project, SFA Department of History, and Center for East Texas Studies. With SFA's promotion of the event, about seventy-five project participants from the community, administrators, faculty, staff, and students watched as host Jere Jackson, director of the Center for East Texas Studies, introduced the TOHA Board members, project leaders, and local dignitaries.

TOHA President JoAnn Pospisil presented the plaque to Maye Ham, president of the Nacogdoches African American History Project. The project is a cooperative effort among SFA's Department of History and Center for East Texas Studies/East Texas Research Center and the Nacogdoches African American History Project. The recorded histories concern black churches and schools throughout Nacogdoches County and supported the restoration of Zion Hill Church as an example of black church architecture in Texas. Other oral histories focused on the Shawnee Street neighborhood and the former all-black E. J. Campbell High School.

Two large quilts were exhibited at the award presentation. One was a paint-on-canvas representation of Shawnee Street with paintings of the businesses and establishments along that community hub. The other quilt was comprised of blocks on which were embroidered the signatures of E. J. Campbell High School alumni. The blocks of various sizes were sold to alumni, pieced into a quilt top, quilted, and the quilt was then raffled off as a fund raiser for the project.

Video clips from project oral histories, collections of photographs gathered through the project, and posters gave attendees an excellent overview of all that this group has achieved.

TOHA's sincerest congratulations to this group for a job well done, and for continued successes as the program continues to expand into neighboring counties.

## Nominations Due February 1

TOHA is seeking nominations by February 1 for the 2007 Mary Faye Barnes Award for Excellence in Community History Projects. This award was established in 1999 to bring recognition to oral history projects exemplifying distinguished preservation of community history. The award is named for longtime community historian and twice TOHA president Mary Faye Willms-Barnes of Lockhart, Texas. For the purpose of this award, community history is broadly defined to include the history of a village, town, or urban neighborhood, but also includes the history of a business, school, hospital, social or religious organization, or other public or private institution.

Award criteria:

- ☞ the successful display of innovative applications of oral history research or utilization of standard oral history practice to preserve the story of a community by enhancing understanding among community members or bringing to light previously undocumented aspects of the community's history
- ☞ the production of oral history recordings, and possibly transcripts, and providing for the preservation and availability for research of these recordings and/or transcripts in an appropriate archive or library
- ☞ following ethical and legal guidelines of the national Oral History Association, including provision for interview agreement forms or donation forms
- ☞ project is a model for the use of oral history in community settings
- ☞ project includes an educational component and/or outreach plans to share the outcomes with the community

Learn more about the TOHA community award at <http://www.baylor.edu/TOHA/index.php?id=29362>.



## Announcements

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### Calling All Boy Scouts

In anticipation of the Boy Scouts of America's 100th birthday (2010) the National Scouting Museum, in Irving, Texas, has begun an oral history project.

Assistant Curator Amanda Durst writes, "We are looking to gather the memories of anyone who has been involved in scouting, past or present, whether scout, professional, volunteer, or den mother. If they were active for one year or fifty, we want to know about their time in scouting. We are off to a great start and are eager to find more possible participants! Please help us to preserve this valuable piece of scouting history."

Please call or e-mail Amanda Durst at the NSM at 972-580-2426 or e-mail [amgoss@netbsa.org](mailto:amgoss@netbsa.org), with any suggestions. Learn more about the National Scouting Museum at <http://www.bsamuseum.org>

### Writers' League of Texas Oral Storytelling Contest

Have your interviewees shared with some tall tales or uniquely interesting life histories? Are there ghost stories and legends in your community's history? Are you skilled at telling these and other stories? If so, you will want to know that the Writers' League of Texas is looking for stories and storytellers to compete in an Oral Storytelling Contest, with a grand prize of \$500 plus an appearance on the *Writing Across Texas* television program. *Writing Across Texas* is a local access cable television program focusing on the art and craft of writing and storytelling.

The Writers' League of Texas, originally the Austin Writers' League, was founded in 1981 to promote literacy and elevate the art of writing. A non-profit corporation, the League is funded in part by the Texas Commission on the Arts and by the City of Austin through the Cultural Arts Division. Learn more at <http://www.writersleague.org>.

This contest gives storytellers residing in Texas the opportunity to become a part of the *Writing Across Texas* DVD series and to have their storytelling talents broadcast. The winner of the oral storytelling competition will be interviewed for a special episode of *Writing Across Texas* and will perform his or her winning story as part of that episode.

Winners also receive five DVD copies of their featured episode. Four runners-up (two in each category) will compete for an Audience Choice Award during a competition to be held in Austin in March.

Categories: Fiction (tall tales, ghost stories, fantasy, etc.) and Non-Fiction (historical, autobiography, fact-based, etc.)

Guidelines: Entrants must submit an original story, meaning one that has not been previously published or performed. Submit the story in audio format—not video or film. Acceptable formats include standard cassette tape, mini-cassette, CD, DVD, or MP3. The performance should be no more than 15 minutes in length. Submissions will be used for judging purposes only and will not be used for any other purpose without the written consent of the entrant. The winner will be filmed for the television episode.

Contestants must be Texas residents, but they do not have to be members of the Writers' League of Texas. Board and staff members of the Writers' League of Texas and members of their households are ineligible to enter.

Entry Fee: \$20.00

Deadline: January 26, 2007 (postmark)

Send entries with fee to

Oral Storytelling Contest

Writers' League of Texas

1501 West Fifth Street, Suite E-2

Austin TX 78703

For more information, contact [wlt@writersleague.org](mailto:wlt@writersleague.org) or phone 512-499-8914.

### Hurricane Digital Memory Bank

The University of New Orleans and the Center for History and New Media at George Mason University are partnering together to support an open-access, online database project to collect, preserve, and present photographs, stories, oral history audio and video files, transcriptions, and other information related to Hurricanes Rita, Katrina, and Wilma.

The database includes the submissions of individuals as well as collections from various organizations. The archive welcomes contributions from survivors, first responders, relief workers, family, friends, and anyone with reflections on the hurricanes and their aftermath. The database is searchable by keyword and a map browser. Visit the

Hurricane Digital Memory Bank at  
<http://www.hurricanearchive.org>.

If you do not have access to the Internet but wish to contribute to the database, call 504-208-3883 and leave messages as long as ten minutes. Likewise, handwritten work and artwork are accepted and scanned into the database. Contributors retain ownership of their materials and people may choose to remain anonymous.

For additional information, contact Michael Mizell-Nelson, History Department, University of New Orleans, [mmizelln@uno.edu](mailto:mmizelln@uno.edu); 501-280-6611.

## Recollections of Texas in World War II

To honor and preserve the contributions of Texas and Texans during World War II, the Texas Historical Commission in 2005 initiated several strategies. In addition to new war-related state historical markers and heritage tourism programs, THC began a series of regional oral history training workshops. The grant-driven workshops are provided free of charge. In 2006, workshops were held in Austin, Uvalde, Bonham, Georgetown, and Palacios. THC encourages communities and organizations to contact them about hosting a workshop to train local interviewers to gather memories about the war years from people in their families and communities. For information about attending or hosting a workshop, contact William McWhorter, THC's military history sites coordinator, at [william.mcwhorter@thc.state.tx.us](mailto:william.mcwhorter@thc.state.tx.us) or call him at 512-463-5833.

Did you know that THC maintains a list of World War II oral history projects in the state? Visit <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/militarysites/Word/WWII/oralhistory.doc>.

## Orange Grove Area Museum Seeks Help

To our Compatriots at the Texas Oral History Association:

We are a very large small museum in Orange Grove, Texas. We have archives of families who have lived in this area [Jim Wells County] for generations. Our family records and stories are good enough to

attract students who are working on doctorate degrees. We have begun recording some of the family sagas by having members of the families, especially those who have lived through much of the experience, read the written records. We even have a few of these readings on DVD with a visual record of the people who lived these journals.

Help!! What we need is some help from experts in the field who can tell us how to produce these archives of sight and sound professionally. We have the readers, we have the material, we have the volunteers and we have the history. We do not have the expertise to ensure these records will last for future generations.

Please contact us here at the museum and let us know how we can help one another.

Sincerely,

Gar Bradshaw, Assistant Curator

Contact information: Orange Grove Area Museum

Location: 119 S. Eugenia Street, Orange Grove

Mailing Address: PO Box 594, Orange Grove,  
TX 78372

Phone: 361-384-1300; Fax: 361-384-0288

e-mail: [museumteacher@aol.com](mailto:museumteacher@aol.com)

## Job Announcement

The Cultural Resources Division of Geo-Marine, Inc., an environmental and engineering services firm headquartered in Plano, Texas, is seeking an architectural historian to augment its staff.

The primary duties of the successful candidate will include performing identification, documentation, and evaluation of historic resources; applying National Register of Historic Places criteria to determine the significance and integrity of historic resources; preparing survey reports, performing historical research, and report writing; preparing and designing public outreach products such as brochures, posters, displays, and exhibits.

This is a full-time position, with compensation commensurate with experience.

Learn more about the position and its criteria at <http://www.geo-marine.com/careers>.

## STUDENT MEMBERSHIPS NOW AVAILABLE

Recognizing the potential for developing future oral history leadership, the TOHA Board of Directors has approved a student membership category, available for \$5.00 a year.

Direct your favorite students to the Membership link on our Web site for a printable copy of the membership form: <http://www.baylor.edu/TOHA>. Students must include a teacher's signature with the membership form.



## TOHA CALENDAR OF EVENTS

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### February 16–17, 2007 – East Texas Historical Association, Beaumont

ETHA will convene at the MCM Elegante Hotel in Beaumont for its spring program meeting. TOHA members Jo Ann Stiles, Dan K. Utley, Joe Pratt, Kenneth E. Hendrickson Jr., Beverly J. Rowe will be leading sessions or presenting papers. The program highlights the history of East Texas, including sessions on the region's art, industry, religion, food and culture, from the points of view of its diverse populations and its famous and infamous characters. Learn more at <http://www.easttexashistorical.org/events/springmeeting.html>.

### March 8–10, 2007 – Texas State Historical Association, San Antonio

TSHA will convene at the Crowne Plaza Hotel, San Antonio Riverwalk, 111 Pecan Street East, in San Antonio on March 8-10, 2007. TOHA session: "Texas Traditions: Ranching, Restoration, and Repast," Jo Ann Pospisil, chair. Specific date and time will be announced in January. Information on making reservations at the Crowne Plaza is available at <http://www.tsha.utexas.edu/about/meeting/upcoming.html>.

### March 30–31, 2007 – West Texas Historical Association, Abilene

TOHA will provide a session in conjunction with the WTHA annual meeting March 30-31, 2007, in Abilene. The session titled "West Texas or East Texas: Universal Applications for Oral History" will be chaired by JoAnn Pospisil with presentations by Bobby Johnson, retired Regents Professor of History, Stephen F. Austin State University [SFA]; Linda Reynolds, Digital Projects Librarian, Ralph W. Steen Library, SFA; and by SFA graduate student, Curtis Odom. Learn more about WTHA and the upcoming meeting at <http://swco.ttu.edu/WestTexas/index.htm>.

### October 24– 28, 2007– Oral History Association, Oakland, California

The Marriott Oakland City Center will be the setting for the 2007 OHA annual meeting. In keeping with the theme "The Revolutionary Ideal: Transforming Community through Oral History," the meeting will focus on oral history's role in social and political change, community survival, and technological change. Learn more at [http://alpha.dickinson.edu/oha/org\\_cfp.html](http://alpha.dickinson.edu/oha/org_cfp.html).

### September 23–26, 2008 – International Oral History Association Conference, Guadalajara, Mexico

Plan ahead to participate in the 2008 IOHA meeting at the University of Guadalajara. Themes to be discussed include contributions of oral history to twentieth-century political history; teaching oral history; archiving memory; oral history theory and method; ecology and natural disasters; migrations; memories of violence; museums and oral history; gender identity; religion; and oral tradition. Learn more at <http://www.ioha.fgv.br/ioha/english/index.html>.

### **Check It Out!**

The editorial board of *Sound Historian: Journal of the Texas Oral History Association* welcomes your submissions of articles for potential publication.

For instructions and cumulative contents of the journal, visit the TOHA homepage at <http://www.baylor.edu/TOHA> or contact the editor, **Kenneth E. Hendrickson Jr.** at 940-397-4150 or e-mail [ken.hendrickson@mwsu.edu](mailto:ken.hendrickson@mwsu.edu).