

TOHA News

May 2016



BOARD OF DIRECTORS NEWS

TOHA's Fifth Annual Conference, held April 23 in Waco, was a great success. During the conference luncheon, the board presented Lois Myers a framed historic map of Texas in recognition of her 29 years of service as TOHA's secretary/treasurer. Myers will retire from Baylor University on July 31 after 30 years with the Institute for Oral History. Pictured here around Lois and the map, left to right, are conference program chair Jessica Roseberry and TOHA Board members Adrienne Cain, Kay Mizell, Steven Sielaff, Scott White, Lynn Burlbaw, Hayley Hasik, and Perky

Beisel. Watch for an announcement soon about the board's appointment of our next secretary/treasurer.

Immediately after this year's conference, the board met and began planning the Sixth Conference, which will be hosted in spring 2017 by the National Ranching Heritage Center at Texas Tech University in Lubbock. Scott White is making local arrangements and Perky Beisel is already busy planning the program. Look for the announcement of the date soon and for the Call for Papers in early fall. Begin now to think about submitting a panel or paper presentation highlighting your own oral history experience.

In other business, the board elected officers for the coming year. Lynn Burlbaw will serve as vice president and Perky Beisel as president. Next year, several current directors will rotate off the board, having served faithfully for six years. If you are interested in serving on the TOHA Board, please let us know. Send your message to toha@baylor.edu.



2016 CONFERENCE

TOHA's Fifth Annual Conference convened on April 23 on the campus of Baylor University in Waco. About eighty people attended the conference throughout the day. Jessica Roseberry, who served as both program and local arrangements chair, organized a full day's agenda, with panels and papers covering eleven breakout sessions on topics as diverse as oral history and social media, historic black colleges, Texas-Mexico border music, East Austin gentrification, racial injustices, and the Baylor bear mascot program. Oral history methodology sessions drew interest, as well as sessions highlighting the oral history research of undergraduate and graduate students.

For the first time, TOHA offered a plenary session. Planned and arranged by Steven Sielaff, the plenary featured Dr. Yolanda Chavez Leyva from the University of Texas at El Paso, whose presentation on oral history, cultural competency, and community challenged, "Don't Give Voice to the Voiceless—Learn Instead to Listen Well." Sponsors for the conference were the Baylor University Institute for Oral History and the Baylor Department of History.

View the program schedule: www.baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=925785.
See dozens more pictures: www.facebook.com/TexasOralHistoryAssociation.

2016 AWARD PRESENTATIONS



THOMAS L. CHARLTON LIFETIME ACHIEVEMENT AWARD *Dr. Rebecca Sharpless*

On Thursday afternoon, April 14, in Fort Worth, the Texas Oral History Association (TOHA) honored Rebecca Sharpless (left in photo) for her substantial contributions to the field of oral history. TOHA president Steven Sielaff (right in photo) presented Rebecca an engraved crystal vase and lifetime membership certificate during a reception attended by colleagues, friends, and students in Reed Hall, the home of the history department at Texas Christian University, where Rebecca teaches.

In 1982, Rebecca worked closely with Tom Charlton to write the TOHA articles of incorporation and bylaws. She served as TOHA's first secretary-treasurer (1982-1987) and has remained a faithful sponsoring member. She rose from student worker to director in Baylor's Institute for Oral History and contributed 470 separate interviews to the Baylor oral history collection in addition to hundreds of transcripts she transcribed, edited, and indexed for deposit in the collection.

As the youngest recipient of the TOHA lifetime achievement award to date, Dr. Sharpless will certainly continue to heap up accolades for her research, writing, and teaching far into the future.

Read more: www.baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=930242.

See more pictures: www.facebook.com/TexasOralHistoryAssociation.



KEN HENDRICKSON BEST ARTICLE AWARD *Dr. Jessica Brannon-Wranosky*

TOHA recognized the best article in the latest issue of *Sound Historian* during the annual conference luncheon on Saturday, April 23, in Waco. Honorees receive an engraved plaque and a cash award.

Recipient of the award for Volume 17 (2015) was Dr. Jessica Brannon-Wranosky (left in photo), history professor at Texas A&M University-Commerce, for her article titled "*History, Memory and Perspective: Christia V. Daniels Adair's 1977 Interview with the Black Women Oral History Project.*"

Board member Adrienne Cain (right in photo) presented the award on behalf of the journal editor and editorial board.

Learn more: www.baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=92360.

W. STEWART CAFFEY AWARD FOR EXCELLENCE IN PRECOLLEGIATE TEACHING *Justin C. Willis, New Summerfield, Texas*

Justin C. Willis, who teaches US history and coaches baseball in New Summerfield, near Jacksonville in Cherokee County, was nominated for the Caffey Teaching Award by a fellow teacher, who wrote, "The reason I am nominating Mr. Willis is because he has successfully implemented oral history methodologies in the classroom and he is very kind, considerate, connected to his students, always available for advice or help."

Mr. Willis taught oral history lessons using appropriate standards and including instruction on transcribing and preserving recordings. He started an oral history club at his high school to engage students with their community. "Listening and responding to first-hand stories can literally bring history to life for sometimes disinterested or special needs students,"

says Willis. Using transcripts and other materials, the students write papers or create exhibits on local topics, including their school, sports, local businesses, and veterans' experiences. Arrangements have been made to archive the recordings at the Baylor University Institute for Oral History.

The award presentation recognized Mr. Willis at his school on May 25, with Dr. Perky Beisel and Dr. Eric Gruver representing the TOHA board and members. Congratulations, Mr. Willis, on your success in motivating students to engage with members of their community and preserve their stories through oral history.

TEXAS HISTORY DAY STUDENT ORAL HISTORY AWARD

On April 30, 2016, in Austin, TOHA recognized the successful use of oral history research by five students in the creation of historical documentaries highlighting the annual National History Day theme, Exploration, Encounter, Exchange in History. Serving as judges for the TOHA award were Jessica Roseberry and Adrienne Cain.

In the junior division, first place was earned by Norah Rami, a student in the Sartartia Middle School, Sugar Land, for her documentary "Annie Jump Cotton: The Woman Who Reached for the Stars." Norah conducted oral history interviews to research ways astronomer Annie Jump Cotton's exploration of the universe continued to be exchanged among astronomers and astrophysicists decades after her death. Second place in the junior division was earned by Jasmine Vital, a new TOHA member and student at Teague Middle School in Humble, for her documentary "Exploration in Medicine: The Salk Polio Vaccine." To learn about Salk, Jasmine interviewed the author of a biography of Salk, a polio survivor, and Peter Salk, the son of Jonas Salk and one of the first children to be tested with the vaccine.

In the senior division, first place was earned by Aditya Palacharla for the documentary "Apollo 13: An Exploration of Trust and Teamwork," which relied heavily on interviews with five former members of the Apollo mission control team. Aditya is a student at Plano East High School, in Plano. Zakary Piwetz, from Rockport-Fulton High School, in Rockport, earned second place in the TOHA senior award. Zakary is familiar to TOHA, having placed first in the oral history award in 2014 and 2015. This year's documentary, "From Typeset to Television: The Media's Changing Impact on War," featured interviews with six veterans who took part in many of the major wars of the last seven decades. Earning a third place TOHA award in the senior division was Brent Vela, a student at Nimitz High School in Houston. Brent's entry, "The Fever of War," told the story of the 1918 Spanish influenza epidemic through the voices of eyewitnesses preserved in oral history collections in Oklahoma, Alabama, Louisiana, and Texas.

2017 TSHA-TOHA JOINT PROGRAM MEETING

Save the dates of March 2-4, 2017, to be in Downtown Houston at the Hyatt Regency Hotel for the Texas State Historical Association annual meeting and TOHA's program session. The exact day and time of the TOHA session will be announced when TSHA releases the program schedule in December.

Planned and chaired by Dr. Perky Beisel, history professor at Stephen F. Austin State University (SFA), the program features a panel of five presenters under the title "Using Oral History to Document Rural Dispersed Communities." Presenting "Voices from Small Places—The Murvaul Creek Communities" will be Linda Reynolds, certified archivist at SFA's East Texas Research Center; Dr. Kelley Snowden, professor at University of Texas–Tyler; and Kurt Terry, a SFA graduate student in history. Presenting on the "South Texas Hispanic Farm Labor Communities Oral History Project" will be Dr. Christine Reiser Robbins, professor at Texas A&M University-Kingsville, and Dr. Mark Robbins, professor at Del Mar College in Corpus Christi.

TSHA will make program and registration information available before the end of the year at tshasecurepay.com/annual-meeting/.

SOUND HISTORIAN EDITORS SEEK REVIEWERS & AUTHORS

Sound Historian features articles on multidisciplinary topics that apply oral history in any appropriate subject, as well as articles on the practice, theory, or application of oral history.

Book Review Editor Nancy K. Berlage would like to hear from TOHA folks who will commit to reading and reviewing books on oral history topics for the journal. Contact Dr. Berlage at nkb11@txstate.edu.

Editor Dan K. Utley invites your manuscript submissions for future issues of the journal. Article submissions are welcomed from students as well as veteran scholars. Manuscripts should be 15-20 pages, double-spaced throughout, including quotations, footnotes, and works cited. In matters of style, refer to *The Chicago Manual of Style*, 16th Edition.

Submit the original manuscript in a Microsoft Word version as an e-mail attachment and send it to dkutley@txstate.edu. The journal editor and members of the editorial board, all experienced Texas oral historians, will then review your manuscript and determine if it is eligible for publication or if it needs additional work. Once the article is

accepted for publication, the editor will provide instructions concerning electronic submission of the revised manuscript. For the present, the editorial board requests articles on topics other than the military, wars, or veterans history.

Send e-mail submissions or inquiries to: SOUND HISTORIAN, Dan K. Utley, Editor, Department of History, Texas State University, dkutley@txstate.edu. For phone inquiries, call 512/940-0317.

REGISTRATION OPENS FOR OHA'S 50TH ANNIVERSARY MEETING

Visit www.oralhistory.org/annual-meeting/ for registration information for the Oral History Association's historic 50th Anniversary Meeting, being held October 12-16 at the Renaissance Long Beach Hotel in Long Beach, California. The annual meeting attracts a broad range of people and features the best work in the field. The meeting enables students and both emerging and established scholars to network and learn valuable skills. The theme this year is Oha@50: Traditions, Transitions And Technologies From The Field. The meeting offers an opportunity to reflect back on the evolution of this interdisciplinary field, gauge its current trends, and look ahead into the ever shifting oral history landscape of the future.

DON'T MISS OUT! RENEW NOW!

TOHA's dues remain a bargain and membership includes Volume 18 of *Sound Historian*. Renewal forms are available at www.baylor.edu/toha/index.php?id=29341 or let the office know you need one by e-mailing toha@baylor.edu or calling 254.710.6285.

LIKE TOHA ON FACEBOOK

Steven Sielaff keeps us all in touch through the TOHA Facebook page. To keep updated, share your news, and network through TOHA, visit www.facebook.com/TexasOralHistoryAssociation.

AND LOIS GIVES HERSELF THE LAST WORD . . .



Dear TOHA Friends:

As I close this issue of the TOHA News, I recall my introduction to TOHA thirty years ago. In the summer of 1985, as a graduate student in American studies at Baylor, I took TOHA founder Tom Charlton's oral history seminar, and in May 1986, Tom invited me to apply for the job of part-time staff transcriber in Baylor's Institute for Oral History (BUIOH), where he served as director. With a big gulp and encouragement from my husband and kids, I accepted the position, my first outside-the-home wage-earning job in sixteen years.

In August, I joined TOHA, most likely in response to Tom's enthusiastic recruitment, and in September, Tom and Rebecca Sharpless, then TOHA secretary-treasurer and BUIOH associate director, invited me to go to Nacogdoches with them for TOHA's joint session with the fall program meeting of the East Texas Historical Association. What I remember most is the unexpected bonus of Tom's guided tour of *every* state historical marker between Waco and Nacogdoches! It was a long drive, but I found myself becoming a Texas history devotee under Tom's influence. At the meeting, Tom and Becca introduced me to many of the Texas historians and TOHA leaders with whom I later was privileged to work.

Twelve months later, Becca was off to doctoral studies at Emory University. I stepped humbly into her shoes for both BUIOH and TOHA, and so began a journey that is just now winding down. I will retire from Baylor and TOHA on July 31. Someday I will enjoy talking about the people I've traveled with and all the major historical markers along TOHA's broad highway. For now, I will just say heartfelt, joyous thank-you's for the honor of being along for the ride all these years.

Thank you, Tom and Becca, TOHA originators and motivators. Thanks to all the board members who served sacrificially, giving of your time and resources. Thanks to all of you who took the helm as vice president and president. Thank you, all who inspired TOHA to publish a journal and recognize excellent oral history with awards. Thanks to our three journal editors across the years and everyone who has served on an award committee or judging panel. Thanks to all who planned and participated in TOHA program meetings, conferences, and workshops or served as newsletter editors. Thank you, sponsoring and lifetime members and all of you who donate over and above your membership dues. Thank you, Baylor University and BUIOH, for undergirding TOHA since its inception. Thanks, also, for the beautiful historic Texas map—just a perfect fit for my journey metaphor!

I leave TOHA in very capable hands with every confidence that oral history in Texas has a bright and exciting road ahead. Keep moving forward, TOHA, and enjoy the ride!

Gratefully, Lois

BOARD OF DIRECTORS, 2015-2017

- ★ Perky Beisel, Nacogdoches, President, pbeisel@sfasu.edu
- ★ Lynn M. Burlbaw, Bryan, Vice President burlbaw@tamu.edu
- ★ Adrienne Cain, Houston, adrienne.cain@houstontx.gov
- ★ Eric L. Gruver, Campbell, eric.gruver@unt.edu
- ★ Hayley Hasik, Commerce, hasikhm@jacks.sfasu.edu
- ★ Jaclyn L. Jeffrey, Waco, jacjefrey@hotmail.com
- ★ Kay Mizell, Greenville, kmizell@collin.edu
- ★ Steven Sielaff, Waco, steven_sielaff@baylor.edu
- ★ Scott White, Lubbock, scott.white@ttu.edu

Networking with other oral historians is a vital function of TOHA membership. Please send your oral history news and announcements to toha@baylor.edu