



Fall 2007 Newsletter

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

PAGE 2

ELAINE EFF RECEIVES 2007
POGUE AWARD

PAGE 3

PRE-CONFERENCE
ICE-BREAKERS

PAGE 6

FALL 2007 WORKSHOP

PAGE 7

PRESENTER'S BIOS

PAGE 8

CALL FOR PAPERS AND
PERFORMANCES

PAGE 12

OHMAR HOLDS FALL WORKSHOPS IN BALTIMORE

OHMAR will be holding its Fall workshops at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture on **Friday, November 2, 2007**. The museum, which opened its doors in June 2005, is located in Baltimore's bustling inner harbor and is the largest such institution on the East Coast.



Reginald Lewis Museum in Baltimore, MD.

The day-long program will offer participants a choice of two sessions in the morning—either a workshop on adding video to an oral history program, or a class on ways to integrate oral history into the classroom. In the afternoon registrants can choose between a beginners "how to" workshop on doing oral history, or a session on the presentation and manipulation of digital recordings for the web and other uses.

These workshops offer oral historians an opportunity to learn new skills, hone their existing talents, and interact with others in their field.

PLEASE NOTE: Pre-Registration for the workshops is required. Payment **MUST** accompany your registration form in order to be assured a seat. Registration forms and presenters' biographies begin on page 8 of this newsletter.

For directions to the museum, as well as parking information, see the Reginald F. Lewis Museum web site at http://www.africanamericanculture.org/museum_geninfo.html.

NEWS FROM THE MID-ATLANTIC REGION

DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

African-American National Oral History Project Launched

On February 7, 2007 in the Nation's capital, members of the Congressional Black Caucus joined Pat Harrison, President of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting (CPB), Dave Isay, the founder of StoryCorps, Lonnie Bunch, the Founding Director of the Smithsonian National Museum of African American History and Culture, and Marian Wright Edelman of the

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 4)

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LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

One of OHMAR's many virtues has been the strength of its executive leadership, and I've been fortunate to follow in the footsteps of Dave Winkler. After two years as president, Dave stepped down in March 2007. Under Dave's guidance the organization grew and prospered, and just to prove that no good deed goes unpunished, as past president he has been kicked upstairs to become the chair of OHMAR's nominating committee. Moreover, Dave has also agreed to become editor of our newsletter, filling a vacancy left by the departure of Sharon Zane. At the March meeting we also said farewell to Roger Horowitz. Roger has truly been a mainstay of OHMAR for the last ten years. Serving in a long succession of offices, Roger helped OHMAR enhance its planning process and solidify its finances. Roger will be sorely missed.

Our March 2007 conference in Chestertown, Maryland, was a tremendous success. Co-sponsored by Washington College, the conference, "Voices of the Chesapeake," brought together sixty oral historians from across the Chesapeake Bay region. The wide ranging sessions included panels on watermen, oral history resources, African American schools during the segregation era, and a look at the Chesapeake Bay region through the photographs and video. At the conference luncheon, Elaine Eff of the Maryland Historical Trust received the Forrest C. Pogue award for her many contributions to oral history. One hundred and forty conference attendees and guests watched Elaine receive the award and listened to her remarks afterward. Extracts of Roger Horowitz's interview with Elaine are in this issue of the newsletter, and the full text of the interview will be posted on the OHMAR web site.

The Chestertown conference also saw the election new OHMAR officers and board members. Renee Braden was elected to be vice president, and Amy Starecheski and Sean Illingworth were elected to serve as at-large board members. Amy is the chief interviewer and director of research for the Atlantic Philanthropies oral history project at the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University. Sean Illingworth is the assistant director of the Rutgers University Oral History Archives and has conducted numerous interviews with Rutgers graduates who served in World War II, Korea, and Vietnam. Brien Williams, and independent oral historian and a past OHMAR president, was elected to the nominating committee.

Looking ahead, OHMAR will be holding its annual fall workshops at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture in Baltimore, Maryland on Friday, November 2, 2007. The additional offerings are being planned and the full program will be placed on the OHMAR web site as soon as it is finalized. Still further ahead, Amy Starecheski and Renee Braden are hard at work making arrangements for the spring 2008 conference on oral history and performance to be held in New York City. Scheduled for March 14-15, 2008, the conference is being co-sponsored by the Columbia University Oral History Research Office and the New York Public Library for the Performing Arts. A call for papers has been released and distributed.

As always, OHMAR's strength lies in its talented members and oral history community it serves. We welcome your suggests and invite you to actively participate in OHMAR's many activities.

Best,

John Lonquest
OHMAR president

2007 POGUE AWARD GOES TO ELAINE EFF

These are excerpts from an interview with Pogue Award Recipient Elaine Eff, conducted by Roger Horowitz at her home in Catonsville, Maryland, on June 27th, (*Discussion of her family, life growing up in Baltimore, her college education at [Case] Western Reserve University, studies abroad in Spain and earning a BA in International Affairs and Spanish from George Washington University, her initial employment experiences in New York and Boston are detailed on her full slightly edited transcript that can be found online at www.ohmar.org.)*

OHMAR: What do you enjoy the most about what you do?

EFF: Going from an idea to a finished product. That is what I absolutely love the most, hearing someone's idea and emerging months or years later with a tangible product, whether it's an entire museum, an exhibit, a book, a film, or a tour. I love seeing the tangible.

I had a great experience the other day. I was at the opening of the Gibson Island Museum where I was a consultant. I gave them my thoughts on how it would be a more effective tool for everyone in the community. Two and a half years later, I got the invitation that the opening was on June 22nd. I just planted seeds. I had said to them, "You've got to determine what stories you want to tell. What are the stories? People want to find themselves in this museum and this space. They don't want to just look at pictures of boats and houses and look at awards. They want to see themselves." They organized this entire museum around stories.

OHMAR: Discuss the Deerfield Landscape Basket?

EFF: I did this project for the Radcliffe [College] Institute on a very, very obscure basket type that came out of Deerfield, Massachusetts, called the Deerfield Landscape Basket. No one had ever looked at it since they were made in the early 1900s, a women's craft movement of the 1900s.

I had actually [re]discovered a forgotten form that had gotten lost over time and commingled with Indian baskets. I was finding baskets on the auction block that they were calling "Indian baskets" and got them for historic Deerfield, a museum of decorative arts and colonial homes. That was probably my first real experience connecting an object to people.

OHMAR: You had this great experience but you still stayed outside the field for a few years as you served as a consumer advocate. What finally pushed you into this new profession:



Past President Roger Horowitz presents the 2007 Forrest C. Pogue Award to Elaine Eff.

EFF: A newsletter came to me from [my alma mater] George Washington University one day and it announced that there was a three-week seminar in American Folklore to be held in northern Virginia — very intensive: traditional arts, music, story, spoken word, sung word, you name it. I said, "This is the stuff I do, what I love, what I'm enjoying." I signed up.

Every great folklorist in America came in. John Burrison, the authority on southern pottery; Terry Zug, the authority on southern pottery; Alan Jabbour, who became the head of the American Folklife Center, a world class fiddler.

I got to meet all these people. Both Henry Glassie and Kenny Goldstein, who were very instrumental in programs, one at Indiana and the other at Penn [University of Pennsylvania] said, "You've got to get a Ph.D. You're a folklorist." I said, "Ph.D.? No." I was now six years out of GW. They said, "You need to go to Cooperstown."

OHMAR: Tell us about Cooperstown?

EFF: Cooperstown was a master's degree program in museum studies and folk art. So I go up to interview and they say things to me like, "Well, Baltimore — you must know the painted screens."

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 8)

The **Forrest C. Pogue Award** is named for the military historian Dr. Forrest C. Pogue (1912-1996) who pioneered the use of oral history interviews to compile battlefield histories. Pogue taught for several years before joining the historical section of the United States Army during World War II. He later was appointed director of the George C. Marshall Research Center and then directed the Marshall Library and Marshall Research Foundation. In 1974, he was named director of the newly established Eisenhower Institute for Military Research at the Smithsonian and continued in that position until his retirement in 1986.



Deerfield landscape basket

NEWS FROM THE MID-ATLANTIC REGION *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

Children's Defense Fund to kickoff the national tour of the StoryCorps Griot, a year-long initiative to gather and preserve the personal histories of African Americans

The Griot StoryBooth—a mobile recording studio—then departed from the press conference and make stops of up to six weeks in nine cities across the country: Atlanta; Newark; Detroit; Chicago; Oakland; Clarksdale, Miss; Memphis; Selma and Montgomery. StoryCorps Griot will partner with public radio stations, historically black colleges and universities and other cultural institutions and membership organizations to record and distribute the voices, experiences and life stories of everyday African Americans.

The Griot Initiative, the largest undertaking of its kind in American History, will be carried out in association with the National Museum of African American History and Culture (NMAAHC) scheduled to open in 2013 as the 19th division of the Smithsonian Institution.

MARYLAND

Volunteers Sought!

The Union Retirees Club at the National Labor College (a.k.a. the AFL-CIO George Meany Center for Labor Studies, Silver Spring, MD.) desires to continue a long tradition of collecting oral histories from their many distinguished members.

Individuals seeking an opportunity to participate in this worthy project should contact Club president Stan Gordon ncaurc@aol.com. Stan is very flexible about this pro bono matter, and he will work out the details with you.

East Side – West Side Oral History Theatre Project

Baltimore City seniors from Baltimore City's East and West Sides will experience a creative and interdisciplinary oral history theatre project based on their own life stories culminating in public performances as well as a video documentary of the process and productions. OHMAR board member Harriet Lynn is the designer and facilitator of this program sponsored by the Baltimore City Department of Recreation and Parks. The seniors coming from various ethnic and diverse communities and who do not nec-

essarily intersect will have the opportunity to come together in a series of workshops to share and shape their stories in this creative endeavor. They will present to targeted intergenerational audiences during Fall 2007 and Spring 2008 at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, the Baltimore Museum of Industry, the Creative Alliance, the Enoch Pratt Free Library and selected senior/recreation center sites.

For more information about the Heritage Theater Artists' Consortium e-mail: hlynn@umbc.edu or visit the website: <http://www.h-tac.com>.

NEW JERSEY

Rutgers Oral History Program Update

During its thirteen years of existence, the Rutgers Oral History Archives (ROHA) program has achieved an impressive record of success with over 600 individuals interviewed to date. Every year, the staff conducts oral histories with fifty to sixty-five additional individuals.

The ROHA program features a robust undergraduate education component. Each semester, Professor John W. Chambers of the Rutgers History Department and Chair of the Academic Advisory Board, in conjunction with the program staff, offers an advanced oral history seminar entitled "Oral History of the American Experience in World War II." Over thirty undergraduates aid in conducting oral histories and processing the interview transcripts every year.

The Public History Internship Program allows two to three History majors the opportunity to participate in the administration of the program as staff members for a semester. These undergraduates delve into the broader aspects of the program, including oral history techniques, archival management and event planning.

The Rutgers Oral History Archives, one of the first oral history programs on the World Wide Web, has offered its digital holdings to patrons around the globe since 1996. The site (<http://oralhistory.rutgers.edu>) currently features 400 oral history transcripts and a collection of digitized and/or transcribed diaries, letters, memoirs and photographs. In their 2003 book, *World War II on the Web: A Guide to the Very Best Sites*, historians J.

Douglas Smith and Richard Jensen gave the website five out of five stars for content. They remarked that, "The interviews are superb, by far the best available on the web, and contain a wealth of information that places the war within its broader historical context."

NEW YORK

Columbia University Summer Institute Update

The Columbia University Oral History Research Office held its annual two-week international Summer Institute in Oral History from June 11 to June 22, 2007. The theme of this year's Institute was "Telling the World: Oral History, Struggles for Justice and Human Rights Dialogues" and featured faculty and fellows from around the world.

"Oral historians can play a very significant role within human rights movements, and before and after Truth Commissions, through capturing the realities of human rights violations as they are experienced emotionally, physically, politically and historically," said Mary Marshall Clark, director of the Oral History Research Office. "As we discovered in this year's Institute, oral history can both measure the cost of suffering individually and document the long-term impact of atrocity globally. The goal of "telling the world" in this way is to encourage corrective action."

Presentation topics by Institute faculty included "The Fosse Ardeatine: History, Memory and Meaning in of a Nazi Massacre in Rome" by oral historian Alessandro Portelli; "Documenting and Disseminating Oral History Stories," by award-winning audio documentarian Steve Rowland; and "Facing Death in Cambodia: Documenting the Consequences of Genocide," a lecture and workshop on the challenges of documenting genocide, by author Peter Maguire. Carlos Ivan Degregori of Peru and Graeme Simpson of South Africa offered presentations on the legacies of truth commissions in their countries, reflecting in the intersections of justice and dialogue.

Recent projects by fellows in this year's Institute included Elana Haviv's "Telling History; Understanding the Past to Create the Future," a project that teaches high school students about universal human

rights through the lens of recent and current world events in Bosnia, Rwanda, and Darfur; "Exploring the Narrative of Truth: A Feminist Critique of the South African Truth and Reconciliation Commission," by Rina Kashyap; and, as part of the Dominican Oral History Project, a series of oral histories of Dominican immigrants who have moved to the New York area, focusing on the immigrants' educational and labor histories by Nelson Reynoso and Sharon Utakis of Bronx Community College. The Institute also included human rights fellows from Cambodia and Liberia.

The Institute provided instruction in interviewing, designing community history projects, integrating oral history sources into academic research and writing, and developing human rights oral history programs. Fellows had opportunities to learn digital recording techniques in audio recording, and to explore the uses of oral testimony in audio documentaries.

Faculty for the 2007 Summer Institute included: Paige Arthur, Deputy Director of Research for the International Center for Transitional Justice; Peter Bearman, director of the Institute for Social and Economic Research and Policy and the Lazarsfeld Center for the Social Sciences, professor of Sociology, and co-director of the Health & Society Scholars Program at Columbia University; Louis Bickford, Director of Networks and Capacity Building Unit for the International Center for Transitional Justice (ICTJ); Mary Marshall Clark, director of the Oral History Research Office at Columbia; Ann Cvetkovich, professor of English at the University of Texas, Austin; Carlos Ivan Degregori, former Director of the Colombia Program of the ICTJ and former Commissioner of the Peru Truth and Reconciliation Commission; Ronald J. Grele, director emeritus of Columbia's Oral History Research Office; Peter Maguire author and one of America's leading authorities on the Nuremberg trials and the laws of war; J. Paul Martin, Executive Director of Center for the Study of Human Rights, and Director, Human Rights and Humanitarian Affairs Program, both at Columbia University and an Adjunct Professor at Teachers College; Vasuki Nesiah, Senior Associate with the International Center for Transitional Justice and head of the ICTJ's programs on Ghana, Philippines, South Africa, Sri Lanka and Gender; Roxsana Patel,

South African scholar and activist with a background in Clinical, Child and Family Psychology; Alessandro Portelli, pioneering oral historian and professor of American Literature at the University of Rome; Caitlin Reiger, Senior Associate and Head of the Cambodia program for the International Center for Transitional Justice; Steve Rowland, president and founder of CultureWorks, Ltd., a non-profit documentary production company; Linda Shopes, historian with the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission; Graeme Simpson, County Programs Unit Director for the International Center for Transitional Justice and Adjunct Professor at Columbia; and OHMAR board member Amy Starecheski, interviewer and educator for the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University, and co-director of this year's Summer Institute.

The 2007 Summer Institute was co-sponsored by the Oral History Research Office and the International Center for Transition Justice, an international human rights/tribunals advocacy organization.

The Columbia University Oral History Research Office is the oldest and largest organized university-based oral history program open to the public in the world. Founded in 1948 by Pulitzer Prize winning historian Allan Nevins, the oral history collection now contains 17,000 hours of taped memoirs, and 1,000,000 pages of transcript. The program is also a center for teaching and research, offering opportunities for students, visiting scholars and fellows. For additional information about the 2007 Summer Institute or for general information about the Oral History Research Office, please see: <http://www.columbia.edu/cu/lweb/indiv/oral/>. The 2008 Summer Institute will again be held in late June. For more info contact the Oral History Research Office next February at oralhist@libraries.cul.columbia.edu or check the above website for updates.

PENNSYLVANIA

La Salle University in Philadelphia, PA has begun to collect oral history narratives of faculty, staff, and alumni. The collection currently has recorded interviews of about twenty individuals and expects to add about twenty-five more interviews by this summer. They are preserved in the university's archive. If anyone would like to consult these interviews, he or she may contact Brother Joseph Grabenstein, the University

Archivist. Questions about the collection may be addressed to Prof. Barbara Allen, in the History Department, tel. (215)951-1179 or e-mail: allenb@lasalle.edu.

Independence Seaport Museum Processes SubVet Collection

This summer the Independence Seaport Museum intended to hire a contractor to process a collection that consists of approximately 40 oral history interviews (recordings and transcripts) of World War II and Cold War era submarine veterans conducted by high school students. If all went well, the project should have been completed by July 20, 2007 in order to fulfill grant funding terms.

For those interested in the genesis of the project please contact Megan Fraser, Archives & Library Director, Independence Seaport Museum, 211 S. Columbus Blvd. Philadelphia, PA 19106 fax: (215) 925-6713. e-mail: mfraser@phillyseaport.org.

For more information about Independence Seaport Museum's collections and services, please see www.phillyseaport.org.

VIRGINIA

Bland County Historical Archives to focus on Veterans

Located in rural Virginia, Bland County has conducted a ambitious oral history program capturing the stories of local residents since 1993. This year the focus of the program is to capture stories of those residents who served in the armed forces.

Most of the histories have been collected by students at Rocky Gap High School through their Oral History and Technology Project. It is grounded past, present, and future in this place, Bland County, Virginia. The history, the culture, the technology, the writing skills, and the organizational and managerial lessons are all rooted in this place, in these mountains.

The project is a unique blend of tradition and technology. Technology is the lure to bring students to their community history through the stories of its citizens. However it is these stories that give content for the technology to organize, manipulate, and publish. The process gives a student sense of place and thus of himself.

The <http://www.bland.k12.va.us/bland/rocky/gap.html> website is well constructed

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)

NEWS FROM THE MID-ATLANTIC REGION *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 5*

and informative—with extensive links to other programs. Check it out!

Virginia Tech Principal Project Continues On

The Oral History of the Public School Principalship is an ongoing project designed to interview retired elementary, middle, and high school principals for their views, reminiscences, and accumulated wisdom. Most of the interviewees are from the Southeast (mainly Virginia, North Carolina, Maryland, District of Columbia, and West Virginia), with representative materials from Ohio, Colorado, Pennsylvania, and Wisconsin.

The project director is Dr. Patrick W. Carlton, Associate Professor of Education at Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Currently, the materials consist of cassette tapes and transcripts of over 300 interviews. The first donation of the audio-

cassettes and transcribed interviews was made by Dr. Carlton in 1989, with donations done every year from 1989 to the present,

For more information contact Patrick W. Carlton, Ph.D. email carltonp@vt.edu (540) 231-9728 or visit: http://scholar.lib.vt.edu/faculty_archives/principalship/principalship.html.

WEST VIRGINIA

The Oral History of Appalachia Program

The Oral History of Appalachia Program (OHAP) documents the history of Appalachia and specifically, West Virginia, through the spoken memories of those who participated in that history.

OHAP trains and assists interviewers, who may be professors, graduate students, undergraduates, or other interested members of the community, in conduct-

ing tape-recorded interviews with individuals who have participated in significant events, institutions or historical periods. Frequently, these are individuals whose life experiences would not otherwise be documented and preserved in the formal historical record. They include, for example, such groups as coal miners, black community leaders, farm women and small business owners.

Information about the oral history collection may be accessed through the online catalog maintained by the Marshall University library. This information is available to individuals throughout West Virginia via WVNET the network used by most public libraries and institutions of higher education in the state.

Contact information maybe obtained by writing the *Oral History of Appalachia Project*, Huntington, WV 25755 or calling (304) 696-6799. ■

CALL FOR PAPERS AND PERFORMANCES *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 12*

- A *performative paper* entails giving a text presentation performatively, i.e., someone writes a short play script that is their argument, or they sing/dance their argument somehow. Performative papers or performance events may be allotted a 30 minute presentation slot within a maximum 3 person-panel, totaling 2 hours total.
- A *performance event* is primarily focused on performance and introduces the theoretical/methodological/thematic issues briefly and may comment after; but the main event is performance and may have a larger number of participants and some technical requirements. These will be programmed on a case by case basis. Thirty minutes is the maximum time limit for such events.

Single proposals of any sort may be programmed with other kinds of events if the programming committee deems them thematically related. **Please note:** any single or multiple combination of the above genres of performance is appropriate for a single proposal.

Panel proposals may also offer a 3 person panel event of any mix of possible presentation formats. Please be specific in your proposal as to how themes are related among your three event panel. Indicate specifically if you want a 1.5 or 2 hours panel slot.

TECHNICAL SUPPORT

Please indicate your need for technical support (audio/visual/digital). Be specific so we can best evaluate supporting your full work and also program it for the specific spaces we have available. Please note that there will be limitations in terms of having all

technical equipment available in all rooms, and also limited performance space (one black box theater with a basic lighting and sound and a 15' by 30' stage). Other rooms for events may have limited floor space or audio/visual capacity. We suggest that you limit your technical requirements to what is necessary and consider bringing technical support with you for complex needs.

PROPOSAL FORMAT

If submitting in hard copy, submit five copies of the proposal. For individual proposals, submit a one-page abstract, a one-page vita or resume, and a short (100 words or less) bio of the presenter. If proposing a three person panel event, submit a title, a session abstract of not more than two pages, a one-page vita or resume and bio for each participant. We suggest that performance event proposals include a sample performance excerpt up to 10 minutes maximum, if relevant, in either VHS or DVD format or posted online. Each submission must be accompanied by a cover sheet, which can be found below.

Proposals should be postmarked or emailed by November 1, 2007. We prefer that proposals be sent by email. Email the cover sheet and proposal in electronic form as **one** complete document in Microsoft Word format to oralhistoryandperformance@gmail.com. Should you not receive email confirmation by November 15th, please contact oralhistoryandperformance@gmail.com or Renee Braden, program committee chair, at 202-828-6697. Applicants will be notified whether their proposals have been accepted by **Dec. 15, 2007**.

Please contact the conference program committee at oralhistoryandperformance@gmail.com with any questions. ■

OHMAR FALL 2007 WORKSHOP REGISTRATION

FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2007

**REGINALD F. LEWIS MUSEUM OF AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE
830 E. PRATT STREET, BALTIMORE, MD 21202**

**8:30 AM – 9:00 AM
REGISTRATION AND COFFEE**

**9:00 AM – 9:10 AM
WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

**9:10 AM – 12:00 NOON
CONCURRENT MORNING SESSIONS**

(CHOOSE ONE)

ORAL HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM

___ **GLENN WHITMAN**'s session will focus on ways to integrate oral history into the grade through graduate school classroom. The class will encompass an overview of oral history as an educational methodology and will examine the growing body of material available to all levels of educators. In addition, the session will evaluate successful classroom oral history projects currently being conducted. The class will provide a detailed discussion of the oral history project process and the products it produces, and address how oral history projects enable students to meet national and state standards of learning.

OR

ADDING VIDEO TO AN ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

___ **BRIEN WILLIAMS** will lead a half-day workshop designed to discuss and demonstrate the technical, aesthetic, and other issues encountered when incorporating video in

oral history projects. While equipment will be on hand, participants with their own (camera and tripod at a minimum) are encouraged to bring it for evaluation and discussion. The workshop is designed for those already experienced in doing oral history who are adding video to their repertoire or considering doing so.

**12:00 NOON – 1:15 PM
LUNCH ON YOUR OWN IN LITTLE ITALY**

**1:15 PM – 4:00 PM
CONCURRENT AFTERNOON SESSIONS**

(CHOOSE ONE)

BEGINNING ORAL HISTORY

___ **LAURA KAMOIE** will lead the half-day workshop on the basics of oral history interviewing. The wide-ranging workshop will address topics such as preparing for the interview, developing questions, conducting the interview, editing the transcript, and arranging and storing the audio files and transcripts.

OR

GOING SOUND ON THE WEB

___ **FRED STIELOW** will lead a workshop on the presentation and manipulation of digital recordings for the Web and other uses. The workshop will offer an overview of the programmatic and technological factors involved with putting oral history and sound collections on the Web.

REGISTRATION FEE

___ \$50 OHMAR Member/ Student/VHP Partner

___ \$65 Non-Member rate

2008 MEMBERSHIP:

___ \$25 is added to my registration fee to cover 2008 individual membership

___ \$75 is added to my registration fee for institutional membership

___ I am a Life Member of OHMAR

TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ _____

Name _____

Affiliation _____

Address _____

Phone: _____ E-mail: _____ Fax: _____

Please make checks payable to: **OHMAR**

Mail to:

Constance S. Beninghove, Assistant Treasurer, OHMAR, 642 East Capitol St., NE #1, Washington, DC 20003

Payment must be received by Monday, October 29, 2007. Thank you.

PRESENTERS' BIOS

BRIEN WILLIAMS

Dr. Williams is an independent oral historian and video producer. He holds a Ph.D. in radio, television, and film from Northwestern University, and has taught media production and produced documentary and oral history programming at George Washington, Indiana, American, and Gallaudet universities. Since 1985 he has produced, conducted audio and video oral history interviews for a wide range of clients including the Veterans History Project of the Library of Congress and the Smithsonian Institution. Brien has also produced, directed, and written video productions for a variety of government and educational organizations including the Smithsonian Institution and National Park Service. Between 1998-2005 Dr. Williams was the historian at the American Red Cross where he directed a national oral history program designed to capture, pre-

serve, and use the stories of Red Cross staff, volunteers, and clients.

LAURA KAMOIE

Dr. Kamoie is an Assistant Professor of History at the U.S. Naval Academy. She holds a Ph.D. in American history from The College of William and Mary. Though trained and published as an historian of Colonial America, Laura became involved with oral history through her public history work in Washington, D.C. She directed the Public History Program at American University for five years, which included teaching oral history, overseeing graduate students' oral history projects, and conducting community-based research projects in D.C. that frequently included oral history components.

GLENN WHITMAN

A teacher at St. Andrews Episcopal School, he has been conducting The American

Century Project (www.americancenturyproject.org) with his students for the last fourteen years. He is also the author of *Dialogue with the Past: Engaging Students and Meeting Standards Through Oral History*, published by American Association for State and Local History as well as numerous articles on the use of oral history as a historical and educational methodology. In 1997 Whitman's work was honored by his earning the Oral History Association's Pre-Collegiate Teaching Award.

FRED STIELOW

Dr. Stielow is currently the director of Virtual Libraries at the American Military University. He was previously the Dean of Libraries at the American Public University System and the director of the Walter P. Reuther Labor Archives at Wayne State University in Detroit. ■

2007 POGUE AWARD GOES TO ELAINE EFF *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 3*

I kind of looked at them cross-eyed and decided that this was really interesting. I could not get officially into the program because it had a rigorous application process that was long past. But if I was ready to come to Cooperstown, they would get me a job in the museum and I could take classes so long as I sat in the back of the class, which was cool.

I got a job in the collections at the New York State Historical Association, which has one of the premier American folk art collections.

I was working in the curatorial department and this was 1974 when it was the vogue among museum curators to separate paintings from their frames. We now know that the frame is part of the document. They were getting thrown away. While I was going through the frames, I'd pull out one and I said, "What are the window screens doing here with the paintings?" I picked it up and I looked in just the right way and I see this monochromatic image of a pastoral idyllic scene in black and white. It's a painted screen. I went to Baltimore. I started doing my research on the painted screens of Baltimore and that became my folk art paper.

Students gave their final presentations at the end of the semester in Cooperstown. I came up last and I give my paper on painted screens. It was completely unexpected. It was all field based, in other words, it wasn't based on documents or certain paintings, like others' had been. The presentation was over, and everybody looked at me and said, "Who are you? Where did you come from? The director of the folk art museum (now American Folk Art Museum in New York City) comes up to me and wants to publish my work.

I had applied to officially be accepted into the program. Since it was a dual program, I decided that I would complete the folklore

program one year and then the next year I would complete the museum studies.

During the summer between my first and second years I was placed with the Georgia State Arts Council to do field work for the first of what became the first state folk art exhibition. I was in on the ground floor and invited to do some survey work in southwest Georgia. I got to work with the likes of Bert Hemphill. Gil Ravenel, the head of design at the National Gallery of Art, was a consultant. Some of the people I discovered, their work is now selling for thousands of dollars.

My last year of Cooperstown, I did a thesis on trucker's culture. Driving from Baltimore to Cooperstown and back I'd always listen to the radio and I got into trucker songs on the country and western stations. I would stop at truck stops. The next thing I know, I convince the Smithsonian Institution's Festival of American Folklife to do a whole exhibit on truckers culture, and I'm organizing it. Of course, I was smart enough to know that that was my master's thesis.

OHMAR: You graduate from Cooperstown, finish your work on this truckers exhibit, then you start a new job at Winterthur.

EFF: Winterthur Museum had decided that it was going to do a folk art exhibition. This is one of the premier house museums in America, owned by Henry du Pont near Wilmington, Delaware.

It was the beginning of a career in "Great-Collections-of-American-Folk-Art-Go-Fish." That's what we did at Winterthur. It was an exhibition that was to be premiered at the Brandywine River Museum in Chad's Ford. It was the absolute chestnuts of the collection,

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 10)

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I lived in several different places in East Baltimore which were kind of the ground zero for painted screens. I had discovered dozens of painters, befriended many people, and did a census of the screens.



Painted screen on the home of the folk

things that were world renowned, everything from kases (armoires) painted blanket chests, Pennsylvania German, rugs, pottery, metalwork, glassware — you name it — frakturs, all collected by Mr. du Pont mostly in (19)30s and 40s.

At the opening night, many of the people came from all over to see what Winterthur had done, to see their collection come out of the shadows, because 365 days a year these objects sit in room displays in the mansion. It was a bit of a blockbuster.

OHMAR: One would think this would get you some recognition?

EFF: On opening night, a woman comes up to me and says, "Would you like to get a Ph.D.? [A colleague] has recommended you for a Rockefeller Foundation fellowship to study folklore. Are you interested?" I selected the University of Pennsylvania. Penn was where all the great folklorists had come from and you would get a rigorous education. Also Henry Glassie had just moved there from Indiana.

So I started at Penn in '79 and no sooner do I get there than the Smithsonian knocks and says, "Would you do a show for us?" They wanted to do a show just like Winterthur. I said yes. I literally moved between Penn and Washington. It got to a point where I had to take a leave to focus on the exhibition.

While I was at the Renwick, the heir of the inventor of screen painters, Richard Octavek, dies of a heart attack. Gone. It was 1979 and I was working on the Renwick exhibition called "Celebration: A World of Art and Ritual." It was going to be a stellar show, but I realized that I had more important work to do.

When Octavek died, I contacted the Baltimore Museum of Art about an exhibition. They said, "Absolutely." They funded me to do research. The Celebration exhibit went on in other hands and opened a year later. I put my energy into the screens.

It was kind of one of the first times in my life that I realized what was important and acted on it. I discovered remarkable links of the screens to that one screen that I had found in the New York State Historical Association collection in Cooperstown. I had uncovered a hidden history of screens that went back to the 1700s, and it was time to get it all down.

We had something unfortunate happen, and the exhibit didn't happen, but the catalog was written. I asked them if they minded if I turned it into my dissertation. I finished up at Penn in '83-'84, came back to Baltimore when I finished my coursework to finish up the research.

OHMAR: Congratulations Dr. Eff. Now what?

EFF: I lived in several different places in East Baltimore which were kind of the ground zero for painted screens. I had discovered dozens of painters, befriended many people, and did a census of the screens.

So my life had been spent in that area in East Baltimore. It was one of Baltimore's most stable neighborhoods — 99.7 percent white ethnic comprised and primarily of elderly women, because they had all outlived their husbands.

I went to the groundbreaking for a new senior center, where a school that everyone had gone to had been torn down. I recommended that this should be a place where painted screens are showcased and I happened to get the ear of the mayor's first assistant and suggested, "What this city needs is a folklorist." In October of '85 I became the Baltimore City Folklorist.

OHMAR: Talk about your work in Baltimore.

EFF: We had some amazing projects doing oral histories and documentation projects on major thoroughfares, like North Avenue and major institutions, like the Lexington Market. It was a wonderful opportunity for people to realize that they were valued and to give back to the community through public programs and events. We worked on an ethnic guide to Baltimore and worked very closely with the Greek community and did a huge exhibit at the Baltimore Museum of Art on the Greek community.

OHMAR: In your online interview you discuss some filmmaking projects. So how long were you the Baltimore folklorist?

EFF: My gig lasted to '89 when Mayor Schaefer became governor and said, "Do what you've done in the city for the state."

So in '89 I actually created the same job at the Maryland Historical Trust, the state preservation agency. We really saw folklife documentation and living traditions as something much broader than the folk arts, which is why we called it "Cultural Conservation. The program was designed to be community based.

I'm no sooner on the job, I said, "I can't call myself a folklorist, a Maryland folklorist, if I haven't been to Smith Island." In May of '89 I went with a couple of folklorist friends from Washington to Smith Island. We stayed for two nights.

Twelve miles off the shore of Maryland, Smith Island is a completely isolated community with roots back to the 1720s. It was a watermen's island. We stayed for two days, went to church on Sunday, met people and ate incredible food. It was one of the seminal experiences of my life as a folklorist.

In July of 1989 [my first weeks on the job] I get called into a meeting at the Secretary of State's office — "Smith Island wants a museum." I was going to be the point person in interpretation. I walked out of the meeting, wrote a grant to NEA for a film and interpretive materials, and we got it. I returned to Smith Island to hear what they wanted. Of course, meeting people in Smith Island is unlike any other place. They have a distinct brogue.

We started our visit with a film from the American Century, a television show from the 1950s hosted by Walter Cronkite called "The Singing Oystermen." He went out on a skipjack in the winter oystering with these Smith Islanders who would sing. They would sing primarily gospel, religious songs.

Then we all talked about it. The question was, what do you want people to know about you if you're going to have a museum on your island? So what resulted was a museum, a Smith Island Center that opened in 1996. The showcase, the centerpiece, is a film called "Land and Water, People and Time: The Smith Island Story." It is 100 percent in the voice of the islanders. There is no narrator. Nobody needs to speak because it is their story and they can speak it.

That's what my life as a folklorist, and belatedly as an oral historian, has really been. When people would say, "We're going to hire somebody to be Jennings Evans and to tell his stories about what a skipjack captain does," it's like, "Why aren't you bringing the islanders? That person has a voice. There is a person in that community who speaks for him or herself and ultimately for the whole community in a larger sense." I am very opposed to

what the museums call "living history," what I call dead history. It's taking the words off of living people and putting them in the voice and the costume of an actor, when we know that there are people who are alive and well and can speak for themselves and tell their stories in a way that will never ever, ever be more impressive on an individual than anything else.

We were doing an architectural survey of all the lighthouses of the Chesapeake Bay. I said, "What about the people?" So we did oral histories of all the lighthouse keepers. They are gone, every one of them now.

Other projects came from all over. Ultimately we started a grant program. We gave non-capital grants. As much as \$50,000 went to [a single community] communities to research, capture, and tell their stories and to hire professional oral historians and to hire professional documentary photographers to make films, to do books, to do thoughtful tours and brochures that really reflect the peoples' voices.

In 2001 we created Maryland Traditions, which is the partnership with the Trust and the Maryland State Arts Council. We merged all expressive culture based on traditional culture in the landscape, both performance, the arts, occupation, living traditions, cultural community documentation of all kinds, under the same umbrella.

I'm happy to say that seven years later we are looking at an incredibly successful program that was built on small partnerships with institutions like the Chesapeake Bay Maritime Museum, St. Mary's College, the Ward Museum, Frostburg State University, the Baltimore City Heritage Area, and so on.

When we had our culminating event just a week ago in Baltimore, we literally filled the house all afternoon with people from the entire state. We gave an award for Achievement in Living Traditions in the Arts called the ALTA Award, named after Dr. Alta Schrock of who was the [unclear] folklorist out a in Western Maryland.

OHMAR: What's left for you to do?

EFF: I have one dream left to write the book, create the permanent document on the painted screens of Baltimore and their ancestors all over the world. A big surprise to everyone, I think, when they see how big the tradition is and where it comes from in the decorative arts worldwide and take it up to date on what has happened since the 80s when I did my dissertation. I just was in Las Vegas for the first time and I saw the world's largest painted screen on the entire façade of Bally's Hotel. It was a billboard for the show "The Producers," and I am so excited to have seen it and photographed it, and to know that what happened in Baltimore in 1913 is something that goes back so far and will keep coming forward into the future. ■

OHMAR

Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region

Established in 1976, OHMAR is a non-profit organization dedicated to the promotion and improvement of oral history in the Mid-Atlantic region, and serves both professional and amateur oral historians, librarians, archivists, teachers, folklorists and independent researchers in Delaware, District of Columbia, Maryland, New Jersey, New York, Pennsylvania, Virginia and West Virginia.

Each year, OHMAR sponsors two public forums — a fall workshop and spring conference — and produces two newsletters, one in the early fall, the other in the early spring. The deadlines for ads and submissions to its Spring 2008 newsletter is **January 15, 2008**. Send all information to the newsletter editor: dwinkler@navyhistory.org.

Membership is for the calendar year. Benefits include newsletters, advance notice of, and reduced fees to, OHMAR events. For more information about membership, contact Constance Strickland at cstrickland@navyhistory.org.

OHMAR

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For further information:
www.ohmar.org

CALL FOR PAPERS AND PERFORMANCES

Oral History and Performance Conference

DATES: March 14 and 15, 2008

LOCATION: Columbia University, New York City

SPONSORS:

Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region [OHMAR]

Columbia University Oral History Research Office

New York Public Library for the Performing Arts

As one of the great performing arts meccas of the world and a vital center for community-based and grassroots oral history research, New York City is an ideal place to explore the intersection of oral history and performance. The conference program committee hopes to bring together performing artists, oral historians, and other practitioners in a multi-disciplinary conference that will highlight the diversity of work centered around oral history and performance.

Where oral history and performance meet lies an important emerging field of endeavor, with rich cross-disciplinary resonances across anthropology, sociology, history, performance studies, art history, public history, arts-based education, community development and many other areas. Performances, in a variety of genres, are a powerful means for increasing access to oral history sources and engaging broad audiences with diverse historical materials. Proposals dealing with the methodological and theoretical issues around transforming interviews into performances are welcome.

This conference should also provide an opportunity to examine how stories are performed, in interviews and in other contexts.

The program committee welcomes proposals using multiple approaches, media, and theoretical frameworks, falling at various points along the wide continuum of paper and performance. Proposals may therefore include papers, performative papers, and performance events, as well as panels of mixed events. For a detailed definition of these terms, please see the proposal genres section below.

Possible topics include, but are not limited to:

- Performances that use oral history as an educational or organizing tool, in a variety of settings
- Oral history projects that document and explore the history of performers and performances
- Performances based on oral histories.
- The oral history interview as performance

Please note that oral history must be a significant source for all work submitted.

PROPOSAL GENRES

- A *paper* is primarily a text presentation which may include live or digital performance examples, probably solo. Papers should be limited to 20 minute presentations as part of a 3 person panel totaling 1.5 hours.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 6)



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