



Spring 2006 Newsletter

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OHMAR TO CELEBRATE 30TH ANNIVERSARY AT SPRING CONFERENCE MARCH 23-24, 2006

This year, the annual OHMAR spring conference, to be held on Thursday, March 23 and Friday, March 24 at Baltimore's Reginald F. Lewis Museum for Maryland African American History and Culture, will mark the 30th anniversary of the organization with an ambitious schedule of events. On Thursday afternoon, a beginners' workshop will be offered, followed by a welcoming presentation, reception and dinner. The following full-day's program will include a plenary session, "OHMAR at 30 — Reflections," followed by concurrent sessions, "Baltimore Voices" and "Minorities Serving Their Country;" after lunch in Baltimore's Little Italy, registrants will return for the presentation of the Forrest Pogue Award, which this year goes to Charles "Stu" Kennedy for his work with the Association for Diplomatic Studies oral history collection, and a closing plenary session during which participants will contemplate the future of oral history in the Mid-Atlantic region.

As this newsletter goes to print, the program committee is finalizing its list of panelists. The complete program will be e-mailed to OHMAR members at the end of February and will also be posted on OHMAR's website: www.ohmar.org.

Many of OHMAR's past presidents will be in attendance. The conference will offer registrants an excellent opportunity to visit with old friends and perhaps make a few new ones.

The preliminary schedule for Friday's events is detailed on the registration form in this newsletter. We hope you will join us in Baltimore. Lisa Crawley, the Reginald F. Lewis Museum's resource center manager, is a member of OHMAR who takes pride in the museum's use of oral history in its program and exhibition, and looks forward to welcoming you at her museum. We'll have a great program and a reason to celebrate, too. We look forward to seeing you there!

NEWS FROM THE REGION

NEW JERSEY

"Witnesses to War: Voices from the Rutgers Oral History Archives," opened on September 14, 2005 and continued on view through December 31, 2005. Part of a university-wide series of events marking the 60th anniversary of the end of World War II, the exhibition featured the personal stories of Rutgers University men and women who served abroad or on the home front during the war, as revealed through letters, diaries, photographs and other artifacts. All those included in the exhibition were interviewed by the Rutgers Oral History Archives, which in 2005 celebrated its tenth anniversary.

(CONTINUED ON PAGE 3)

OHMAR Board Members

PRESIDENT

David F. Winkler

Naval Historical Foundation
1306 Dahlgren Avenue, SE
Washington Navy Yard, DC
20374-5055
dwickler@navyhhistory.org
winkler58@msn.com

PAST PRESIDENT

Roger Horowitz

Hagley Museum and Library
P.O. Box 3630
Wilmington, DE 19807-0630
rh@udel.edu

VICE PRESIDENT

John C. Lonquest

Office of History
U.S. Army Corps of Engineers
7701 Telegraph Road
Alexandria, VA 22315-3865
lonquestj@hq02.usace.army.mil

SECRETARY

Renee Braden

National Geographic Society
1145 17th Street, NW
Washington, DC 20036
rbraden@ngs.org

TREASURER

Vacant

ASST. TREASURER, MEMBERSHIP

Constance Strickland

1331 South Eads St., Apt. 603
Arlington, VA 22202
cstrickland@navyhhistory.org

AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBER (2003-06), AND WEBMASTER

Fred Stielow

Special Collections
National Agricultural Library
1235 Boucher Avenue
Annapolis, MD 21403
stielowf@netscape.net

AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBER (2004-07) AND NEWSLETTER EDITOR

Sharon Zane

484 West 43 Street, #25D
New York, New York 10036
sharonzane@earthlink.net

AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBER (2005-08)

Laura Kamoie

Department of History
U.S. Naval Academy
Annapolis, MD 21401
kamoie@usna.edu

AT-LARGE BOARD MEMBER (2005-08)

Jeanne Nutter

Bloomfield College
467 Franklin Street
Bloomfield, NJ 07003
jeanne_nutter@bloomfield.edu

LETTER FROM THE PRESIDENT

This spring, OHMAR will celebrate its 30th anniversary! For three decades, OHMAR has hosted workshops and conferences to service a growing number of oral history practitioners and enthusiasts in the Mid-Atlantic region. Perhaps more significantly, in the process OHMAR has fostered a community of individuals from diverse backgrounds and life experiences who appreciate the importance to our region of capturing on tape the human experience in all its many faces.

Therefore, it is my great pleasure to announce that, for its annual spring meeting, OHMAR will be returning to Baltimore, the city which hosted its very first conference, to explore the timely theme: Oral History at the Crossroads. Happily, OHMAR has found a fantastic and appropriate venue for the conference:

the new Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture, located adjacent to Little Italy near Baltimore's famed Inner Harbor. Opened in June 2005, the museum makes wonderful use of oral history to tell its vibrant story and is committed to pursuing its oral history efforts in the future.

We are indeed grateful to the Reginald F. Lewis Museum for offering to host our up-coming event, which in recognition of our 30th anniversary we have expanded a bit to include some special events on Thursday, March 23. These will include a 5 p.m. presentation of "Life Stories/Life Lessons," a project of Baltimore's Ivy Family Support Center Eating Together Program, followed by a special reception and formal dinner in celebration of the anniversary. On Friday, March 24, two plenary sessions — one involving past leaders of the organization and one involving individuals who prepare future oral history practitioners — will open and close the conference, during which several concurrent sessions will be offered. Details and a registration form can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.

Advance kudos go to OHMAR member Lisa Crawley and to Cori Ramos, both with the Reginald F. Lewis Museum, who are helping us with the logistics of the conference. I look forward to publicly thanking them and others, including our hard-working board of directors, for making the conference a most worthwhile event.

On another topic, it should be noted that OHMAR now has a new address. Doug Wilson, who handled our finances and membership rolls for three years, has moved on, and we thank him for his good work. Constance Strickland has assumed the role of OHMAR's assistant treasurer and membership coordinator.

See you in Baltimore!

Faithfully yours,
Dave Winkler



OHMAR President Dave Winkler.

POGUE AWARD TO BE PRESENTED IN BALTIMORE ON MARCH 24 — CHARLES “STU” KENNEDY TO BE THE RECIPIENT

OHMAR's 2006 Forrest C. Pogue Award will be presented to Charles “Stu” Kennedy on Friday, March 24, at the organization's spring meeting in Baltimore. For two decades, Kennedy has provided a valuable service to his country through his management of the Association for Diplomatic Studies Oral History Collection, which he established in 1986 to enhance the training of foreign affairs personnel and instill in the public a greater appreciation for our diplomatic history. With the help of volunteers who conduct and transcribe the interviews, Kennedy's organization, the Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training — a non-profit, tax-exempt organization — has built an impressive oral history collection that deals with the experiences of foreign service personnel and their families.

One of the most valuable features of Kennedy's work is the creation of “Country Readers,” which incorporate location-specific oral history material into documents that are made available to foreign service personnel who transfer from embassy to embassy. These readers

offer them important information, historical perspectives and varying viewpoints that provide a leg up when taking on a new assignment. The association's oral history program has served as a model for similar efforts.

Completed transcripts are housed in the Department of State's Foreign Service Institute's library, the Lauinger Library of Georgetown University. Kennedy is currently working with the Library of Congress to put the entire collection on its website, “American Voices.” The collection, comprised of memoirs from a number of projects, includes interviews conducted under the auspices of the Foreign Affairs History Center of George Washington University, which was amalgamated into the Foreign Affairs History Program, the Foreign Service Family Project, the Women Ambassadors' Project, the United States Information Agency Alumni Association Project, the Senior Officers' Project, and others.

Kennedy will offer remarks to OHMAR conference participants on March 24. An interview with him will be featured in the Fall 2006 newsletter. ■

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.

NEWS FROM THE REGION *CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1*

WASHINGTON, D.C.

On September 12, 2005, The National Press Club Oral History Committee hosted a program titled “World War II: They were There,” at the National Press Club. Former ABC News Director and Armed Forces Radio Chief Jack Pulwers moderated the panel that included WWII newsman Ed Essertier, Marine Corps Combat Correspondent Sam Stavisky, Signal Corps veteran Bob McAllister, Navy World War II reporter John Cosgrove and Marine Corps Cinematographer Norm Hatch. Each told his story and fielded questions from the audience, which numbered over one hundred attendees.

* * *

Forever a Soldier: Unforgettable Stories of Wartime Service, first published in November 2004 by National Geographic Books in association

with the Library of Congress as a 336-page hardcover book, is now available in paperback. The second in a series of collected oral histories from the Library of Congress' Veterans History Project, *Forever a Soldier* presents unforgettable eyewitness accounts of wartime service from veterans of World War I through the current conflict in Iraq.

MARYLAND

“Life Stories/Life Lessons,” an oral history presentation featuring African American senior adults from Baltimore City's Ivy Family Support Center, is now available on DVD and VHS. Taped in the new Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture, “Life Stories/Life Lessons” captures powerful stories from individuals who came from the South and/or grew up and lived in Balti-

more during the Depression, World War II, and the tumultuous 1960s. “Life Stories/Life Lessons” is also available as a live performance program, and is available for bookings. For further information, contact Harriet Lynn of the Heritage Theatre Artists' Consortium at hlynn@h-t-a-c.com, or at 410-235-4457.

VIRGINIA

The Scripps Library at the Miller Center of Public Affairs, University of Virginia — which has more than one thousand individual oral history interviews available online — recently added the Lyndon Baines Johnson oral history, which is part of the collection of the LBJ Library in Austin, Texas, to its roster. The LBJ memoir, and others, can be accessed at: <http://www.millercenter.virginia.edu/scripps/diglibrary/oralhistory/index.html>. ■

BALTIMORE'S REGINALD F. LEWIS MUSEUM OF MARYLAND AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY

The museum's primary mission is to protect and interpret Maryland's African American history and culture by recalling past struggles and celebrating the many achievements, both historical and current, of the state's African American population.

The brand-new Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture, the largest such institution on the East Coast and Baltimore's newest addition to that city's bustling Inner Harbor, opened its doors on June 25, 2005. Ten years in the making, the museum's primary mission is to protect and interpret Maryland's African American history and culture by recalling past struggles and celebrating the many achievements, both historical and current, of the state's African American population.

Central to the five-story museum at the corner of East Pratt and President Streets is its permanent exhibition, which consists of three galleries: "Building Maryland, Building America" documents the contributions of black labor to the state's agriculture, maritime and public service industries; "Things Hold Lines Connect" celebrates the legacy of Maryland's historic black communities, including Highland Beach and Dorsey Station and includes tales from the state's famed underground railroad; and "The Strength of the Mind" presents the contributions of past and present artists, including Frances E.W. Harper, a 19th-century poet and writer, Joshua Johnson, an 18th-century Baltimore artist, and Chick Webb, a prominent jazz drummer.

The permanent exhibition draws upon oral history interviews of contemporary Marylanders, whose tes-

timonies, broadcast on flat screen monitors, illuminate the thematic material presented in each of the three galleries. For instance, Azinith Williams shares memories of her father, Albert C. Bell, who organized the Seafood Workers Union Local #453 on Maryland's Eastern Shore, and historian Bianca Floyd talks about John W. Greene, Jr., who in 1944 established the Columbia Air Center in Prince George's County.

David Taft Terry, Ph.D., the Museum's Director of Exhibits, and Lisa Crawley, Resource Center Manager, are in charge of the Museum's active, on-going oral history efforts. The collection now includes over 100 recordings, conducted both in the field and in the Museum's own oral history recording studio, and is growing as additional interviews are undertaken with African American elders from across the state. These will be employed in upcoming exhibitions, including "Distant Echoes," which will document the plight of modern African American farmers. In the future, the Museum plans to make its oral history collection accessible to the visiting public.

The museum is named for the late Reginald F. Lewis, the Baltimore-born African American lawyer, entrepreneur and philanthropist whose family foundation provided a \$5 million gift to the museum's endowment campaign. ■

DIRECTIONS TO THE REGINALD F. LEWIS MUSEUM

DRIVING DIRECTIONS FROM:

From New York/Philadelphia and Points North (I-95):

Follow I-95 south through the Ft. McHenry Tunnel to exit 53/I-395 to Pratt Street. Follow Pratt Street to President Street. Museum is located on the corner of Pratt and President Streets.

From Harrisburg/York and Points Northwest (I-83):

Follow I-83 south (Jones Falls Expressway) to end (turns into Fallsway, Fallsway turns into President Street). Make left onto Pratt Street. Museum will be directly to your left.

From Washington, D.C. and Points South (I-95):

Follow I-95 north to I-395 to Pratt Street. Turn right onto Pratt Street. Proceed on Pratt Street until you get to President Street. Museum is located on the left.

TRANSPORTATION OPTIONS:

Parking: Parking for museum visitors is located directly across the street on the corner of Pratt and President Streets. Metered parking is also available along Albermarle Street and throughout Harbor East and Little Italy neighborhoods.

Bus Lines: Bus #10 via President Street turns right on President.

Subway: Take the subway to the Shot Tower Station (East Baltimore). Follow Shot Tower exit area. At street level, walk two blocks south. Museum is located on the left.

Water Taxi: Take water taxi to Marriott Waterfront Hotel (Pier 6), walk three blocks north on President Street. Museum will be directly to your right across Pratt Street.

OHMAR 30TH CONFERENCE REGISTRATION AND MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FORM

**REGINALD F. LEWIS MUSEUM OF MARYLAND AFRICAN AMERICAN HISTORY AND CULTURE
BALTIMORE, MARYLAND**

CONFERENCE SCHEDULE

THURSDAY MARCH 23RD

12:30 PM – 1:00 PM & 4:30 PM – 7:00 PM
REGISTRATION, 1ST FLOOR

1:00 PM – 4:30 PM
**BEGINNING ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP (Additional Fee)
DISTANCE LEARNING CENTER, 4TH FLOOR (Limit 24)**

5:00 PM – 6:00 PM
**WELCOMING PRESENTATION "LIFE STORIES/LIFE LESSONS"
AUDITORIUM, 2ND FLOOR**

6:00 PM – 7:00 PM
**RECEPTION (Cash Bar)
CONFERENCE ROOM, 4TH FLOOR**

7:00 PM – 8:30 PM
**BUFFET DINNER (Additional Fee)
RECEPTION ROOM, 4TH FLOOR**

FRIDAY MARCH 24TH

8:00 AM – 9:00 AM
REGISTRATION/LUNCH RESERVATION SIGN UP, 1ST FLOOR

9:00 AM – 9:45 AM
**OPENING PLENARY "OHMAR AT 30 — REFLECTIONS"
AUDITORIUM, 2ND FLOOR**

10:00 AM – 11:45 AM
**CONCURRENT SESSIONS
"BALTIMORE VOICES" — AUDITORIUM, 2ND FLOOR
"MINORITIES SERVING THEIR COUNTRY" —
CONFERENCE ROOM, 4TH FLOOR**

11:50 AM – 1:10 PM
LUNCH IN LITTLE ITALY

1:15 PM – 1:30 PM
OHMAR BUSINESS MEETING

1:30 PM – 2:15 PM
FORREST POGUE AWARD PRESENTATION AND LECTURE

2:30 PM – 4:15 PM
**CLOSING PLENARY "OHMAR AT 30 —
PREPARING THE NEXT GENERATION"**

CHECK ONE

- I am or will be a 2006 Individual member
- Affiliated with an OHMAR Institutional Member
(Institution's name: _____)
- Non-Member

Registration Fees for Beginners Workshop March 23rd

\$25 OHMAR Member/Student \$35 Non-Member

CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

(INCLUDES THURSDAY'S PRESENTATION AND RECEPTION)

- \$40 OHMAR Member/Student \$60 Non-Member
- (Please check here if you anticipate joining us for the Thursday reception to assist us with catering coordination)

Thursday Evening's Dinner Buffet presented by Class Act Catering, Inc.

\$35 (vegetarian entries will also be offered)

2006 MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL

- I renewed/joined in late 2005 (we will verify)
- \$25 is added to my registration fee to cover 2006 individual membership
- \$75 is added to my registration for institutional membership.

In honor of OHMAR's 30th Anniversary I'd like to make an additional contribution of \$100; \$75; \$50; \$25; \$_____ to support future initiatives.

Total enclosed: \$_____

Please make checks payable to: **OHMAR**

Mail to: Constance Strickland, Assistant Treasurer
1331 South Eads St., Apt. 603
Arlington VA 22202

Contact Information:

Name: _____

Affiliation: _____

Address: _____

Email: _____

Phone: _____

Fax: _____

NOMINATING COMMITTEE TO PRESENT SLATE

The nominating committee has approved the following slate, to be voted upon during OHMAR's business meeting on March 24, 2006 at 1:15 p.m. at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum in Baltimore:

Treasurer:	Dr. Fred Stielow (two year term)
Secretary:	Renee Braden (two year term)
Board Member-at-Large:	Harriet Lynn (three year term)
Board Member-at-Large:	Lisa Crawley (three year term)
Nominating Committee:	Mary Marshall Clark (two year term)

Nominated for Treasurer (two year position)

Dr. Fred Stielow is Dean of Libraries for American Public University Systems. He has a long career in the library field, including a stint as director of the Walter P. Reuther Labor Archives at Wayne State University in Detroit. Currently an at-large member of OHMAR's board, Stielow also was an OHMAR board member in the 1980s. He lives in Annapolis, Maryland.

Nominated for Secretary (two year position)

Renee Braden is Manager of Archives at the National Geographic Society in Washington, DC. In addition to her institutional oral history activities, Braden conducted interviews for the Capital Hill History Project. She co-chaired the Local Arrangements Committee for the 2003 Oral History Association meeting in Washington and has served as OHMAR secretary since 2004.

Nominated for At-Large Board member (three year term, two positions to fill)

Harriet Lynn has a B.F.A. in Dance and Drama and an M.S. degree in Administration. She has an extensive career in the arts that includes the theater, film, radio and television. She has developed theatre programs at the Jewish Museum of Maryland, USS Constellation Museum, Maryland Science Museum, Walters Art Museum and others. She lives in Baltimore, and her most recent oral history and theater project is called "Life Stories/Life Lesson."

Lisa Crawley serves as the Resource Center Manager of the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture in Baltimore. As a Museum Studies student at Hampton University, she compiled the booklet "A Life In Newport News: An Oral History of Inettie Banks Edwards" for the Newsome House Museum and Cultural Center. She is coordinating local arrangements for OHMAR's Spring 2006 meeting at the Reginald F. Lewis Museum.

Nominated for the Nominating Committee (two year position)

Mary Marshall Clark is Director of the Columbia University Oral History Research Office. She has served as president of the Oral History Association and as a member of OHMAR's board. Among Clark's many activities, she has created the "September 11, 2001, Oral History Narrative and Memory Project."

UPCOMING CONFERENCES

DANCING WITH MEMORY: ORAL HISTORY AND ITS AUDIENCES SYDNEY, AUSTRALIA | JULY 12–16, 2006

The 14th International Oral History Conference will meet in dynamic Sydney, Australia. The conference has attracted over 400 proposals from throughout the world from practitioners who will share their ideas and experiences in applying oral history in museums, films, heritage studies, land rights claims, political movements, archives, academic studies, performances, community projects and much more. The meeting promises to be an exciting and lively oral history conference, particularly since many of the papers will address the conference theme and are focused on oral history and its use in different forms. The conference website at <http://www.une.edu.au/ioha2006> provides further details about the conference program, facilities for registration online, accommodation, and information about traveling to and in Australia. Email inquiries to: ioha2006@uts.edu.au.

Sydney and Australia offer a range of sites, cultural institutions, and places to visit and experience. The following websites provide a taste of Sydney, New South Wales, and Australia: Tourism Australia: <http://www.tourism.australia.com/>; Tourism NSW: <http://www.sydneyaustralia.com/> (a multilingual site); City of Sydney: <http://www.cityofsydney.nsw.gov.au/>.

SALVA REGINA UNIVERSITY CONFERENCE ON CULTURE AND HISTORIC PRESERVATION NEWPORT, RHODE ISLAND | SEPTEMBER 14–16, 2006

"Ritual Spaces and Places: Memory and Commemoration in 19th Century America," the 10th annual Salve Regina University Conference on Cultural and Historic Preservation conference will be held on September 14–16, 2006, in Newport, Rhode Island. Commemorative spaces and their accompanying rituals represent windows into 19th-century American culture. Religion, patriotism, and sentiment, integral components in the creation of national parks, battlefields and landscape cemeteries, also influence contemporary urban planning, interior design and architectural efforts. The conference will focus on the intersection of memory and place, and on the preservation of such places in the modern age. For further information, contact: Catherine.Zipf@salve.edu.

ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION | LITTLE ROCK, ARKANSAS | OCTOBER 25–29, 2006

The 40th annual meeting of the Oral History Association will take place October 25–29 in Little Rock, Arkansas. "Generational Links: Confronting the Past, Understanding the Present, Planning the Future," will focus special attention on oral history work with groups and individuals who risked their lives to confront injustice in its many forms, and oral history work within institutions and oral history projects that encourage a just and diverse future. Special emphasis will be on projects that illuminate intergenerational activities and actions. For further information and details, as they become available, consult the OHA website at www.dickinson.edu/oha.

OHMAR'S HOROWITZ ELECTED TO OHA COUNCIL



OHMAR past president Roger Horowitz has been elected to the Council of the Oral History Association for a three-year term. Roger, who works at the Hagley Museum and Library in Delaware and has been on OHMAR's board, serving in various capacities, since 1996, hopes to effect substantial growth of oral history from outside the academic world by recruiting a more diverse audience and presenters at OHA's annual conferences, and also to encourage preservation of two generations of oral history research in the digital age.

This column features articles of interest to the oral history community.

By **Robert J. Schneller, Jr.**
Naval Historian

While the vast majority of midshipmen were indifferent to his presence, a handful of racist upperclassmen tried to railroad him out of the Academy by filing false conduct reports in the hope that he would accumulate enough demerits to ensure his expulsion.

EMPLOYING ORAL HISTORY

DOCUMENTING THE LIFE OF WESLEY BROWN, FIRST AFRICAN AMERICAN GRADUATE OF THE U.S. NAVAL ACADEMY

In my recently published book, *Breaking the Color Barrier: The U.S. Navy Academy's First Black Midshipman and the Struggle for Racial Equality* (New York University Press, 2005), I have recounted the experiences of Wesley Brown — the Academy's first African American graduate — as well as the travails of his black predecessors. Although firmly grounded in documentary sources, the heart of the story comes from oral history, which I include to mean answers to questionnaires and personal correspondence in addition to traditional interviews. All are products of human memory.

Brown's experience is the part of the story to which oral history makes the greatest contribution. Brown graciously allowed me to interview him extensively, sitting in front of a tape recorder for more than twenty hours, over five sessions.

Many of Brown's classmates also shared their recollections. Because midshipmen were most vulnerable to hazing during their "plebe" or freshman year, I attempted to contact every surviving former midshipman who was in Brown's battalion during his first year (1945–46). I sent a list of questions to more than 300 of them, inviting their reply "in a letter... by email, by fax, or on an audio cassette tape, over the telephone or by any other format you find convenient." I received replies from a third of them, and managed to tape some forty interviews. In many cases, I sent follow-up questions and received replies to those as well. The highest proportion of respondents consisted of Wesley Brown's classmates, particularly those in his company.

The story that emerged from this material is fascinating. Brown, the sixth African American to enter the Academy, matriculated in June 1945. While the vast majority of midshipmen were indifferent to his presence, a handful of racist upperclassmen tried to railroad him out of the Academy by filing false conduct reports in the hope that he would accumulate enough demerits to ensure his expulsion.

During the 1940s, each plebe had a mentor in the senior class who helped him get through the year by

offering advice, and intervening if the plebe was having problems with other upperclassmen. This system functioned informally and on a voluntary basis. Two seniors became Brown's first classmen, Howard Allen Weiss and Joseph Patrick Flanagan, Jr. Both assumed Brown would run into trouble because of prejudice and wanted to help. Flanagan had another reason. The commandant of midshipmen asked Flanagan, the highest-ranking midshipmen at the Academy, to monitor Brown's progress with a view toward signaling the midshipmen that the leadership wanted Brown to receive fair treatment. Flanagan became Brown's first classman, in part, to carry out the commandant's wishes.

Interviews with Weiss and Flanagan provided many of the details about the demerit campaign against Brown. Correspondence generated by my questionnaire campaign corroborates the broad pattern of their recollections.

One particularly useful letter came from President Carter, who, like Weiss and Flanagan, was a senior when Brown was a plebe. Carter noted: "There were a few upperclassmen who tried to give Midshipman Brown undeserved demerits."

Carter played an interesting role in Brown's drama. Walter G. Moyle, Jr., a classmate of Carter, recalled that the perpetrators of the demerit campaign were largely Southerners. Moyle recalled that Carter "came under a fair amount of heat because he joined up with the north-Midwestern contingent who made it a point to take Brown under their wing... At first [Carter] was treated as if he was a traitor, because here he was from a small rural town in Georgia, and he was lined up with the others who were looking out for [Brown]."

Brown remembered Carter as being friendly and supportive. He recalled a particular incident: "one time when I was talking with Carter... he kind of put his arm around me and... said something encouraging. I've forgotten just what the situation was. I think I'd gone around to somebody's room and I'd done some pushups... Carter said something [encouraging], and he went on one way, and I went on another. And... I

heard this guy yell out, 'God damn nigger lover.'"

Most of the people who responded to my queries consider themselves supporters of Brown. Although some have admitted to deliberately ignoring him, none have admitted to trying to railroad him.

Some of the replies were not cordial. One respondent accused me of being on a "witch hunt." Another said sarcastically, "I am sure also that you, being a historian, will continue to produce publications on the first Chinese-American, the first Hispanic-American and the first Native American to graduate." It is possible that these letters came from individuals who tried to railroad Brown.

Even friendly responses highlight another obstacle to anyone tackling military-social history subjects. The obstacle is embodied in the credo, "Never bilge a shipmate." In Navy culture, officers are expected not to divulge to outsiders negative information on brother officers. Hence, many respondents discussed classmates' actions in general terms, but, as a rule, did not name names.

Although I didn't particularly care to name names, I did want to obtain general information on the kind of people who took action against Brown for racist reasons. Howard Weiss said they were all Southerners, while Joe Flanagan said that they were mostly Northerners.

These observations highlight another difficulty with oral history — differences in perception. A key aspect of the story that varies from one memory to the next is exactly how the demerit campaign against Brown ended. According to one version, the leadership stopped it by subtle means. Eugene Barham, one of Brown's battalion officers, recalled: "For instance, if [Mr. Brown] was reported for room in gross disorder, I would have the reporting midshipman accompany me and we would together inspect both Mr. Brown's room as well as that of the reporting midshipman." Barham always found Brown's room "in superior condition." In such cases, Barham discarded the report.

Barham believed the word spread "through the grapevine" that the leadership would tolerate no more spurious or frivolous conduct reports on Brown.

Other versions of the story have it that the leadership stopped the campaign against Brown in a big, dramatic way. Several class of '47 alumni recall that sometime during the fall semester, the commandant of midshipmen convened a special meeting of the seniors. The commandant said the Congressmen interested in seeing Brown treated fairly were monitoring the situation closely. If anyone did anything illegal or improper to Brown, the commandant warned, there would be serious repercussions. He advised the seniors not to put Brown on report, unless it was for a legitimate, clear-cut infraction. Other recollections fall in between these two extremes.

A document in Brown's midshipman personnel jacket indicates that he received 103 demerits during his first semester and five during his second, totaling 108 for plebe years. The numbers corroborate assertions in the oral histories that there was indeed a demerit campaign against Brown, and that the Academy's leadership stopped it cold.

Memory sources also indicate that Brown weathered the storm of demerits with help from fellow plebes, upperclassmen, the Naval Academy leadership, Secretary of the Navy James Forrestal, and Representative Adam Clayton Powell, Jr. (D-NY).

Oral history provides details not included in official records. Wesley Brown's official service record bears no indication that certain upperclassmen sought to ensure his failure, or that other upperclassmen, as well as the Academy's leadership, sought to prevent such efforts from succeeding. Without oral history, the full story of the U.S. Naval Academy's first African American graduate would never be known. ■

This article first appeared in "The Federalist" Newsletter of the Society for History in the Federal Government, Autumn 2005.

Oral history provides details not included in official records. Wesley Brown's official service record bears no indication that certain upperclassmen sought to ensure his failure, or that other upperclassmen, as well as the Academy's leadership, sought to prevent such efforts from succeeding. Without oral history, the full story of the U.S. Naval Academy's first African American graduate would never be known.

FALL WORKSHOPS A SUCCESS

In an experiment that proved successful, OHMAR sponsored not one but two fall workshop sessions during the Fall of 2005 — one in Philadelphia on October 28, the other in New York on November 19. Both were exceptionally well attended. Each venue offered a beginners' how-to session that was oversubscribed, indicating the growing interest in oral history as a technique for gathering and making sense of life experience.

In Philadelphia, thirty registrants attended OHMAR president David Winkler's morning workshop for beginners, for which he drew upon his ten years of experience conducting interviews for the Naval Historical Foundation and the United States Navy. Concurrently, former Red Cross historian Brien Williams and Bloomfield College professor Jean Nutter offered well-received presentations on incorporating oral history into documentaries. In

the afternoon, despite the sudden cancellation of Charles Hardy's planned presentation on audio frontiers, registrants were able to enjoy an illuminating session on archiving oral histories and sound collections, led by George Blood of Save Sound Archives, and Historical Society of Pennsylvania archivist R.A. Friedman. Those in attendance received a CD-Rom with audio, visual and textual information from their presentation, which included a mock question-and-answer session on the problems of audio preservation.

Fifty people from a wide range of New York organizations attended the New York City workshops, held at Empire State College in Lower Manhattan with the support of the Tamiment Institute and Robert L. Wagner Labor Archives at New York University. (A strike by N.Y.U. graduate students necessitated the relocation of the sessions

from that campus to Empire State College). In the morning, a packed house heard Rachel Bernstein present the basics of oral history methodology. Following lunch, 25 participants listened as Michael Nash, Tamiment Institute director, and Chris Lacinak of VidiPax, discussed the challenges of digitizing oral history collections. Participants received a crash course in the technical, financial, and organizational challenges of digitalization.

OHMAR wishes to thank J.J. Ahern at the American Philosophical Society and Michael Nash of the Tamiment Institute and Robert F. Wagner Labor Archives at New York University for hosting the fall workshops. The workshops' success prompted OHMAR's board to agree to consider two workshops — perhaps one in New York and one in Washington — for the fall of 2006. ■

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OHMAR FALL 2006 NEWSLETTER

**Deadline for material:
July 15, 2006**

OHMAR produces two newsletters per year, one in the early fall, the other in the early spring. Deadlines for ads and submissions to its newsletter are **July 15** and **January 15**.

ADVERTISING RATES

Business card	\$20
¼ page	\$30
½ page	\$60
Full Page	\$75

To place an ad in the Fall 2006 newsletter, please contact: sharonzane@earthink.net

CALL FOR PAPERS: ISSUES IN WRITING SPECIAL ISSUE ON WRITING INTERVIEWS AND ORAL HISTORIES

Because written transcripts of interviews straddle the border between speech and writing, they raise interesting questions for those who “write” or read them: Is the written text ever an exact transcript of what was said? How much license does the transcriber have to edit the text? How much power does the interviewer have on what the interviewee says or on the reader’s reception of the text? On a broader level, what role do oral histories and interviews play in various kinds of public or academic discourse?

The editors of *Issues in Writing*, an annual refereed journal devoted to the study of writing in the Arts and Humanities, Science and Technology, Government, Education, Business and Industry and the professions, wish to explore these and other related questions in a special issue due to come out in the Fall of 2006 or the Spring of 2007. Therefore, they are inviting submission of papers on all aspects of

the teaching and production of public writing, and will consider a broad variety of approaches, methodologies and styles.

Manuscripts should be thirty pages or less, double-spaced (including appendices and/or illustrations). Do not include your name and/or affiliation anywhere on the manuscript. Authors should use standard English and avoid jargon, or provide definitions when using specialized terms. Provide two clear copies.

Send manuscripts and correspondence to:

The Editors
Issues in Writing
Department of English
University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point
Stevens Point, WI 54481

Or: submit by email to: wmahon@uwsp.edu in rich text format or attach as MS Word document.

RESEARCHER’S QUERY

Leonie Rosenstiel, Ph.D., a musicologist, is researching the life and career of violinist Michael Rabin, who often performed in the Mid-Atlantic region. He was active with the Community Concert Series c. 1950–71, and on the roster of Columbia Artists Management. If anyone has archival material that deals with his recitals, or has personal reminiscences of his concerts, or knew him on the road, she would be interested in talking to them. Of particular interest would be ways in which he might have alienated his public. She can be contacted at rosensti@rosensti.cnc.net.

OHMAR MEMBERSHIP FORM

Membership is for one calendar year. Benefits include newsletters, advance notice of OHMAR events, and reduced fees to conferences and workshops. In addition, individual, student and life members may vote, hold office and serve on committees.

_____ Individual (\$25)	Name: _____
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Please make check payable to: OHMAR, and mail to **OHMAR**, c/o Constance Strickland, Assistant Treasurer 1331 South Eads St., Apt. 603, Arlington, VA 22202. Questions: cstrickland@navyhistory.org

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 Fall 2006 newsletter is **July 15**. Send all information to the newsletter editor: sharonzane@earthlink.net.

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

c/o Constance Strickland
Assistant Treasurer
1331 South Eads Street,
Apt. 603
Arlington, VA 22202

For further information:
www.ohmar.org

SAVE THE DATES!

OHMAR Spring Meeting

March 23–24, 2006

Baltimore, Maryland

IOHA

July 12–16, 2006

Sydney, Australia

OHA Conference

October 25–28, 2006

Little Rock, Arkansas



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