

Volume XXIII Number 1

Spring 2002

A Publication of Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region, affiliated with Oral History Association

OHMAR at GW!

Friday April 5, 2002
Gelman Library
Special Collections
George Washington University
Washington, DC

Annual Business Meeting

&

Membership Meeting

To develop a 3-year plan for workshops

Beginning in the fall of 2002, OHMAR will sponsor an annual Workshop Conference—an array of professional development workshops for oral historians. The OHMAR Board of Directors invites OHMAR members to participate in developing a 3-year plan for these workshops. Participants in the discussion on April 5 will be asked to consider and provide ideas on the following questions:

- What kind of workshops should be offered? General? Technical?
- Who is our target audience? Is there more than one audience?
- Where should the workshops be held? In what cities? In what venues?
- When should the workshops be scheduled? A particular month or before OHA or after OHA?
- Should workshops be on a week day or a weekend? Should there be more than one workshop scheduled on a particular day?
- How can we advertise the workshops?
- Who will be asked to conduct the workshops? Should syllabi be required in advance?
- What is an appropriate fee for a workshop?
- How will we finance the workshops? Will any presenters be given an honorarium or expenses?

2001 Pogue
Award Winner
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The Program for April 5:

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| 9:00 - 9:30 a.m. | Registration and continental breakfast |
| 9:30 - 10:00 a.m. | Business meeting: annual reports and elections |
| 10:00 - 11:15 a.m. | Discussion of OHMAR Workshops
Facilitators: Pam Cassidy Whitenack and Robert Grathwol |
| 11:15 - 11:30 a.m. | Break |
| 11:30 - 12:30 p.m. | Summary of Recommendations and Wrap-Up. |



**PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED
FOR THIS MEETING
Registration form is on page 11**

was to do something that I just heard about called the 'oral history projects.' So I really didn't know much about it, so I went to the library. I got a couple of books. The history department had an old Sony cassette tape recorder in the closet that hadn't been used in a bunch of years, so one Wednesday morning I drove down to Our Lady of Mount Carmel, in the bottom of South Philadelphia, right before bingo, sat up on a stage behind the curtains, and interviewed some eighty-year-old former factory worker, and that was the beginning.

Getting to WHYY

Next step, 'okay, what am I going to do now?' I guess I had taken my comps and now it was either write the dissertation, and I had no idea what I would write it on or how I would do it. I was completely ill prepared. And it just so happened that at that time the University of Pennsylvania, the Center for Philadelphia Studies at Penn, had submitted a grant to CETA modeled off of the old Federal Writer's Project from the New Deal. And the objective, this is now 1979, was to take ABDs [all but dissertation] and to place them at different agencies around the city so that they could reschool, retool their skills to become productive members of society. There were three at the Center for Philadelphia Studies itself, which of course was one of the primary objectives anyway, to get free workers there, and there was one at WHYY. Bill Siemering had just arrived as station manager and was creating something called *91 Report* which was a half hour, evening radio news magazine modeled after *All Things Considered* which Bill had started back in the early 70s. [The program] was called *Humanists in Residents Program*. The only reason it was funded, because apparently CETA had had some war with Penn, was because they had come to it at the end of the fiscal year, they had a couple million dollars. It was spend it or lose it. So, what I heard was that they pulled the proposal out of the wastebasket and gave money to Penn for these basically highly educated yet unemployable people to do good things. So, WHYY liked me and I liked WHYY, and the idea was that I would assist the two hotshot print journalists to

run this program and the radio reporters that they hired by helping provide them historical context for current events. Well, you can imagine what the journalist thought about some young historian. They had no use for me whatsoever. But there were two people sitting in an office by themselves who were doing two hours a day primarily live on the air, a program called *Fresh Air*. This was Terry Gross and Danny Miller, and I sort of gravitated over there and they were in desperate need of whatever help they could get. So, I think within a week or two I was cutting tape and producing this canned feature called *The Cambridge Forum Series*, a wonderful series of speakers recorded at Harvard. So, I would audition those and, if they were good, tighten them so that they fit into a fifteen minute or half hour block. Within a month and a half, I was doing live on-air interviews and, within six months, I had my own weekly feature called, *Charles Hardy's Popular Culture Show*, and *the many splendid wonders of American popular culture*, which was interviews and recorded talks and produced pieces on everything from the industrialization of the hamburger to the Volkswagen beetle as a cultural artifact. It was fun stuff. When the Humanist for Residents grant was running out, Bill Siemering came to me and, asked if I was interested in doing an oral history based radio series. Or



maybe I went to him. I forget. But, in any case, I wrote a grant proposal, again to the State Humanities Council, and ended up producing a series called *I Remember When...Times Gone but Not Forgotten*, which was thirteen half hour programs on the history of the primarily ethnic working-class Philadelphians in the early decades of the 20th Century. [I] conducted well over a hundred interviews all over the city with people of all different backgrounds, and had programs on boss politics in the 1910s and 1920s, and other stuff. So for ten years I lived on soft money as an independent documentary producer and historical consultant, and a lot of the work was oral history based.

OHMAR Conference

Gelman Library, George Washington University

Friday April 5, 2002

9:00 a.m.

***PRE-REGISTRATION IS REQUIRED**

Meeting and Continental Breakfast

Please place a ✓ check in the box(es) provided

- \$15 Member
- \$10 Student
- \$25 OHMAR 2002 dues
- \$10 OHMAR-student 2002 dues



Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____

State: _____

Zip: _____

Telephone: _____

Email: _____

*Take this opportunity
to renew your
OHMAR dues*



Mail Registration and payment to:

OHMAR

c/o Kelly Feltault

415 E. Wayne Ave.

Silver Spring, MD 20901



Directions to the meeting:

The meeting will be held in Room 207, Special Collections Reading Room, Gelman Library, 2130 H Street NW, on the campus of The George Washington University, Washington, DC.

The nearest Metro stop is *Foggy Bottom* on the Blue and Orange Lines. From the Metro exit turn right, walk on 23rd Street to H, cross the street turn left on H. The library is in sight. There are also several parking garages in the area.

Check the website www.gwu.edu and look at Visit Our Campuses/Foggy Bottom.