

OHMAR *Newsletter*

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OHMAR SUPPORTS OHA BALTIMORE CONFERENCE

OHMAR and its members are offering significant support to Local Arrangements for the 1988 Oral History Association National Conference, scheduled for Baltimore this fall. The conference will take place October 13 - 16 at the Belvedere Hotel in downtown Baltimore. A number of innovative features will mark this year's conference, and volunteers are still needed

Barry Lanman, of Catonsville Community College, is heading up the local arrangements efforts. John Schuchman, Gallaudat University, will handle registration. Michael Everman, American Alliance for Health, Physical Education, Recreation and Dance, is developing the exhibits area.

Pam Henson, Smithsonian Archives, and David Mould, Ohio University, will coordinate technology sessions. Don Borman, National Library of Medicine, and Mary Kay Quinlan, Gannett Publications, will handle publicity. Brien Williams, independent film producer and consultant, is arranging media equipment and presentations. Martha Ross will produce program participant biographies for registration folders.

Linda Shopes, University of Baltimore/Baltimore County, is in charge of Saturday afternoon tours, which will offer a choice of visits to Baltimore museums, the Smithsonian Institution in Washington and a walking tour of Fells Point. Barry Lanman is handling relations with the Belvedere Hotel.

On Thursday morning from 10 to 11:30, OHMAR will sponsor the Newcomers' Coffee, welcoming those attending their first OHA conference.

OHMAR's annual Forrest C. Pogue Award, which recognizes "distinguished, unique, and continuing contributions to oral history in the Mid-Atlantic region," will be presented at a Friday afternoon session, from 4:30 to 6:30. A short business meeting will follow the presentation.

Innovations for this conference include provision for child care at the Belvedere throughout the sessions. Care, provided by UMBC students, must be reserved by September 1, with the cost assumed by parents.

Local musicians, from jazz bands to a quartet from Peabody Institute, will enliven the New Members' Reception as well as cash bar cocktail hours.

In the OHMAR tradition, planners are paying special attention to mealtime opportunities. At Friday evening's dinner, participants can choose from such ethnic restaurants as Greek, Italian, soul, Korean, Vietnamese, and Chinese in addition to Maryland seafood. For those who have any capacity remaining, Friday p. m.'s "At the Movies" will feature popcorn.

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BOOK REVIEWS

The three late afternoon concurrent sessions consisted of an oral history preservation panel, two sessions which dealt with the educational applications of oral history in the public and college classrooms, and strategies and tactics in oral history research. In this last session, presided over by Perry Blatz, of Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, speakers Martha Ross, Susan Falb, and Stephen Everett presented successful techniques they had employed in conducting oral history research.

At the business meeting, plans for the next conference were discussed and President Allen praised everyone who had worked long and hard to make the conference a very successful one. She reserved special words of praise for the program chair, John Vernon, and various staff of the National Archives who volunteered their services.

*George Chalou
Interagency Liaison
National Archives and Records Administration*

FROM THE PRESIDENT

My perspective on oral history is that of an archivist. I have more company these days than I used to have. Now there are oral history sessions at regional and national archival meetings, even workshops on interviewing and transcribing techniques. More of my colleagues are discovering what I discovered a decade ago, that oral history interviews can be a significant and valuable supplement to other types of primary source material. I began organizing and conducting oral history interviews under somewhat atypical circumstances, while I was serving as the White House Liaison Officer for the National Archives' Presidential Libraries Office during the Carter Administration. I think there are cur-

rent trends in the archival profession that would lead a thoughtful archivist seriously to consider oral history as a valuable part of any archival program. My remarks in this column will be directed to those archival trends.

At the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), we are coming of age. Established only 50 years ago, the agency has had to catch up with 150 years of backlog and the paperwork explosion of the twentieth century. When I first came to the institution 20 years ago, some of my colleagues could still remember the harried atmosphere of the agency in the mid-1940s, when the expanding volume of war records forced agencies finally to turn over their older records to NARA. Trucks waiting to unload were double-parked circling the National Archives Building, as laborers scrambled to unload and archivists struggled to establish preliminary forms of control. The 21 tiers of stack levels quickly filled up, and the quest for space led outward to the development of the record center system and an emphasis on better records management by records creators. The new agency struggled to create national archival standards, experimenting with subject classification systems before turning to European models for the record group concept and the principle of provenance.

After 50 years as a national archives, we have gained valuable experience in the missions confronting us and the tools of our trade. Newly independent, we are free of the restraints imposed by the former organizational position within the General Services Administration. We are no longer reacting largely to the traffic jam around the building. Increasingly, archivists are aggressively seeking to control and improve their situation--through investigating new technology, through developing programs for public outreach and education, through providing national leadership in resolving archival issues, through tracking the "life cycle" of records, through instituting new records management strategies, and more.

The archival profession in the United States is also maturing. One of the major expressions of this maturity is an interest in gaining a broader perspective on our missions. More than a decade ago, Wisconsin archivist Gerry Ham urged his colleagues to explore opportunities at the archival edge, designing their collections to "hold up a mirror to mankind," rather than reacting passively as receivers and custodians of what is no longer wanted by others.

ers emphasized that only in this way can the true character of the participants be part of the record--as a liberal, disciplined force, not to be confused with the New Left or the hippies of the same period.

Ideas were exchanged for adding to the interview collection, now numbering in the hundreds, by new and return interviews from the 20-year vantage point. Plans are being made to further publicize the collection.

For further information, contact Joseph E. Jeffs, University Library, Georgetown University (202/687-7425).

*Betty Key
Kensington, MD*

Next OHMAR newsletter deadline August 15

ITEMS (PERSONAL?)

Terri Schorzman, Program manager for the Smithsonian Videohistory Program, and **Pamela Henson**, Historian for the Smithsonian Archives Oral History Project, presented a session on "Videotaping Oral History: Notes from the Field," at the Southwest Oral History Association annual spring conference in Solvang, CA, on April 23. Schorzman dis-

cussed setting up and managing a videohistory program. Henson covered the methods historians use to record and use visual information to supplement traditional historical resources. **Richard Voelkel**, transcontinental OHMAR member, is currently president of SOHA.

OHMAR was well represented at the annual oral history breakfast, held in Reno on March 26 in conjunction with the annual conference of the Organization of American Historians. **Ron Grele**, Columbia University, current president of the Oral History Association, presided. **Susan Armitage**, Washington State University, attracted a large audience of women historians as well as oral historians with her presentation on "Feminism and Oral History."

Ben Frank, founding member and first president of OHMAR, recently received the Department of the Navy Superior Civilian Service Medal for "his outstanding contributions in the research and writing of a history of Marine operations in Lebanon, while serving as Head of the Oral History Section, Historical Branch, History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U. S. Marine Corps. Frank conducted field interviews in Lebanon, Grenada, and Camp Lejeune with principal officers of Marine Amphibious Units deployed as peace-keeping forces. His achievements reflect great credit upon himself and are in keeping with the highest traditions of the U. S. Marine Corps.

(For a review of Frank's award-winning book, see p. 13.)

Oral History at the OAH

The recent meeting of the Organization of American Historians (OAH) included a workshop on Oral History. On Friday, March 25, past OAH president Donald Ritchie and OHMAR member Holly Cowan Shulman took part in a discussion of Oral History and interviews, along with Arthur Singer, of the Alfred P. Sloan Foundation, and Stanley I. Kutler, E. Gordon Fox Professor of American Institutions of the University of Wisconsin-Madison.

The purpose of the session was to question how the historical profession should treat interviews conducted as research for a book or article, rather than as part of an institu-

FROM THE EDITORS

Your editors are appreciative of the many positive comments on the new format of the *OHMAR Newsletter* and its timely appearance. Our goal is to produce a publication that is meaningful and interesting, one that reflects as comprehensively as possible the scope and diversity of oral history activity in OHMAR's region.

We can best meet this goal with the cooperation of and contributions from OHMAR's members. We solicit news of the activities and accomplishments of your programs as well as personal notes of your achievements. We also welcome more reflective essays addressing issues currently facing oral history practitioners.

And we are always open to comments and suggestions about the format and appearance of the newsletter. You will note a number of changes in this issue, which we intend to make the text more readable and the newsletter more interesting visually. As we become more knowledgeable and experienced in the challenges and possibilities of desktop publishing, we hope the newsletter will continue to improve.

Most of all, we want the newsletter's content to reflect your activities, interests and concerns. We can succeed in this purpose only if you keep us informed. Let us hear from you.

**Ben Frank
Martha Ross
Co-editors**

CORRECTION

President Marie Allen, in her message in the previous issue of the newsletter, mistakenly attributed to Martha Ross the invitation to mid-Atlantic oral historians to stay after lunch at GWU and discuss the possible formation of a regional organization. While Ross initiated annual luncheon gatherings at the conclusion of her oral history seminar at GWU, it was her successor there, Mary Jo Deering, who in 1976 convened a symposium at GWU and asked those interested in a regional group to stay after its conclusion to discuss this possibility.

***Researching Child Labor in Pennsylvania: Challenges and Concerns* by *Barbara Knox Homrighaus* Historian/Researcher Gambier, Ohio**

Once when I needed to find a photograph of a certain rollercoaster, a friend gave me an old newspaper clipping, which not only had a picture of the rollercoaster but also identified the owner of that picture. I called the owner and found that he could help me with the project of documenting the rollercoaster with photographs for the Schuylkill County Council for the Arts.

He was an 83-year-old man who had worked from the age of 14, a man who had quit school in 1917 in order to go to work picking slate refuse out of anthracite coal in an industrial coal "breaker" building near his home. He did not do this because he was destitute: his father and older brothers and sister were working; his parents owned two homes. He wasn't a poor student; he completed two years' schoolwork in one. But he chose to work six days a week, eight hours a day, for \$1.01 a day, beginning the day after he turned 14, and it was legal for him to do so. This was my introduction to child labor,

mous and long-lived steamboats, set within the context of the rise and decline of this form of commercial navigation. Through the medium of the *Emma Giles*, Mr. Holly weaves a rich tapestry of steamboat facts and lore as he explores such topics as the origin of steam navigation on the Bay, the types of cargoes and passengers carried, and the relationship of the steamboats to the operation of other vessels.

Equally important, the author details with great insight the pivotal role that steamboats, such as the *Emma Giles*, played in the development of the region's economy. Without these steamboats, it would have been almost impossible to market efficiently the shellfish and agricultural products of the small port towns of the eastern and western shores of the Bay at the great entrepot of Baltimore. Mr. Holly also shows how the *Emma Giles* and other steamers provided a cultural link between these isolated communities and a wider world. These assertions are augmented by the inclusion of a series of well-illustrated maps and photographs which highlight both the routes of this water trade and its major ports.

A particular strength of Mr. Holly's work is his lengthy examination of the social structure of steamboat crews. He recounts in great detail the relationships between the various crew members, from the lordly captains to the black deckhands. Mr. Holly demonstrates that, although a rigid social hierarchy was maintained on board these vessels, the various crew members held each other in high regard based on a shared dependence on the proper operation of their vessel, and they would defend each other against any abuse from outsiders. However, Mr. Holly also chronicles the ugly reality of racial segregation, which had become a legal reality on board these steamers by 1910.

An especially interesting and informative feature of Mr. Holly's work is his technical analysis of the Chesapeake Bay steamboats and comparison of their structural and mechanical features to the better-known steamers of the Mississippi and its tributaries. Through detailed drawings and a clearly written text, Mr. Holly explains that the Chesapeake Bay steamboat's essentially conservative design resulted from its arena of operation--the sometimes stormy waters of an ocean estuary. Structural strength and mechanical reliability were the most desired features of the Chesapeake Bay steamboat, while Mississippi steamers were more lightly built for maximum carrying capacity and shorter life on the shallow river. Thus, the remarkable fact that the engine of the *Emma Giles* operated for almost eighty years in three different boats is placed in proper context.

Finally, *Steamboat on the Chesapeake* contains a lengthy account of the rise and decline of the Baltimore steamboat excursion trade. In particular, it chronicles the story of Tolchester Beach, one of the earliest and finest of that region's amusement parks. In an evocative mood, Mr. Holly recounts the social conditions in Victorian and Edwardian Baltimore that made these excursions, which were so important in the development of steam navigation on the Bay, such special experiences for those individuals who took them. It is with genuine sadness that Mr. Holly records the ultimate decline of this passenger service and the demise of the vessels that carried it on.

In conclusion, *Steamboat on the Chesapeake* is a lively and technically accurate account of a now-vanished era of America's maritime history. It is also an insightful analysis of the rise of amusement parks and their impact upon urban society. It is a book that scholars as well as steamboat buffs can utilize and enjoy.

Lance E. Metz
Center for Canal History and Technology
Easton, Pennsylvania

Benis M. Frank. *U.S. Marines in Lebanon, 1982-1984.* Washington: History and Museums Division, Headquarters, U.S. Marine Corps, 1988. 196pp. Illustrations. Paper, \$10.00. Order from Government Printing Office; Superintendent of Documents; Washington, D.C.; 20402-9325.

I am very pleased that this story is now in print and available to all of us. It is a sturdy account of a much-publicized period in the life of the U.S. Marine Corps. It has the solid content that is characteristic of military reports: concise, cryptic at times, often technical. Yet it breathes a human touch that is conveyed in various ways by young Americans who endured months of rigorous trials and hardships in a far-off land among alien peoples, alien customs and languages, a place of internecine conflicts with deep roots in ages past. Such experiences were not readily understood by Americans even though the Marine Corps tried hard to provide them with background.

The overlay of human reactions is the fruit of Mr. Frank's expertise with the oral history technique. For the purpose of this book he conducted some 119 interviews in Lebanon and the United States, and in so doing he put flesh on the bones of official accounts. I say "Bravo!" to this. By way of illustration, I quote a simple example found in the remarks of a young Marine as he prepared to leave with his unit early in 1983 after the completion of a six-months tour of duty in Lebanon. His commanding officer had asked: "What do you think of Lebanon as you are about to depart?" and he replied:

Sir, it was an experience . . . it was a good one because I feel for this first time in my life I've done something that is positive. I feel that I contributed something to a country that wants to get on its feet.

Mr. Frank states clearly in his foreword that this is a history of the Marines in Lebanon and does not deal with high-level decisions that put and kept the Marines in that country. It is well to underscore this point. Too many remember still the political storms, the intense partisanship that spurted from our television sets after the disaster which beset our Marines on that fateful day, October 23, 1983. The explosive reactions, the reports that often lacked thoughtful analysis, the expressions of grief were everywhere. They were genuine, they were lastingly felt, but they were emotional beyond doubt and did not consider the facts that are now laid before us by the author. Now, with the passage of time, we have a considered account of a well-meaning attempt that failed, a well-meaning response that was made by our country. Let us not forget that it represented a well-meaning attempt by other nations as well: France, Italy, and Great Britain. They all responded with true humanitarian concern for the tragic state in which a small Middle Eastern nation found itself. Lebanon was, and is still today, a country beset on every side by warring factions, religious conflicts, and interference by neighboring states. The simple truth is that the president of that small country asked for help from the western powers to aid him in maintaining peace. These western democracies responded and so fulfilled a verified tradition under international law.

Such a mission to Lebanon was not a new experience for our Marines. In July 1958, Lebanon's president asked the United States and Great Britain for assistance because his country was beset by internal and external difficulties beyond his control. Mr. Frank, in this book, summarizes the various efforts at peacekeeping by the allied forces since that time. There were occasions when success was near. Marines sought to train units of Lebanese troops and also rendered humanitarian aid when inclement weather brought further disaster to that benighted land.

But all these efforts came to naught in October 1983 when an innocuous-appearing yellow Mercedes-Benz truck entered the parking lot of the Marines' compound. The sentry paid particular attention to the vehicle, but it moved quickly to the gate and out toward the airport terminal. Within an hour it had returned, and this time it sped over the wire barricade and into the lobby of the barracks where it detonated with the force of 12,000 pounds of TNT. When the final tally was com-