

## WASHINGTON ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM DOCUMENTS OUTSTANDING WOMEN JOURNALISTS

The Washington Press Club Foundation Oral History Project, directed by Fern Ingersoll, is entering its second phase of interviewing prominent women in journalism.

The WPCF Oral History Project, begun in 1988, conducts biographical interviews with women who have made significant contributions to the profession of journalism during the last seven decades. Chosen to reflect the geographical and racial diversity in American journalism, those selected to be interviewed also represent a range of professional experience—from foreign correspondents to women who have transformed "women's pages" from traditional "society" coverage to a hard-news format.

The interviews completed thus far range between seven and fifteen hours each, with an additional two-hour video session accompanying most interviews. Tapes and transcripts are being deposited as completed with the National Press Club, the Schlesinger Library at Radcliffe College, the National Women and Media Collection at the University of Missouri, and the Oral History Research Office at Columbia University, which receives the original products.

The project recently launched its second phase with grants from the Gannett Foundation, the Knight Foundation, Capital Cities/ABC Foundation and the Kiplinger Foundation. The second phase will focus on women who began work in the period beginning with World War II including those who persevered after men reclaimed many jobs following the war.

The first phase, now nearing completion, concentrated on women who began their careers before 1942. Initially directed by Margot Knight, former OHMAR president now with the Idaho Arts Commission, the project was funded by a startup allocation of \$38,000 from the WPCF and an additional \$223,000 from ten media foundations to undertake the first 20 interviews and a two-hour video history of four women who covered the Eleanor Roosevelt news conferences. Fundraising is now under way to raise the estimated \$240,000 needed for the next 20 interviews

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**OHMAR AFFILIATES WITH OHA**

**Perry Blatz**  
**Duquesne University**

OHMAR has recently joined with five other state and regional organizations in accepting the Oral History Association's program of affiliate status. One of the prime goals of the OHA's State and Regional Committee, since its inception in February, 1986, has been to strengthen the relationship between OHA and state and regional groups. After extensive discussion, most notably at the state and regional roundtable at the 1988 joint meeting of OHA and OHMAR in Baltimore, the OHA Council adopted a program of affiliate status at its 1989 mid-winter Council meeting.

Other affiliated state and regional groups currently include the Montana Oral History Association (MOHA), Oral History Association of Minnesota (OHAM), Oral History in Ohio (OHIO), Southwest Oral History Association (SOHA), and Texas Oral History Association (TOHA).

The OHA program of affiliate status includes a number of benefits, which may be expanded in the future. Affiliated state and regional organizations

may request the president of OHA or designee to speak at their meetings, with travel expenses paid by OHA. Also, affiliated groups may request all or a portion of OHA's mailing list at cost. Finally, all affiliated organizations are recognized as such in the annual meeting program and the membership directory. Affiliates are encouraged to note their OHA affiliation in their own publications.

State and regional groups that accept affiliate status are asked to suggest nominees for the State and Regional Committee, one of whom is appointed by the OHA president. Perry K. Blatz serves as OHMAR's representative on this committee, whose other members include Donna DeBlasio (OHIO), Ava Kahn (SOHA), Lois E. Myers (TOHA), Margaret Robertson (OHAM) and John Terreo (MOHA). Richard Voelkel, currently active in SOHA and previously a longtime OHMAR member, currently serves as committee chair.

The committee is considering additional ways in which affiliate status can serve both the state and regional organizations and OHA. Please address questions, comments and suggestions to Perry K. Blatz, Department of History, Duquesne University, Pittsburgh, PA 15282 (412/434-6470). 🍏

(Please print)

**OHMAR MEMBERSHIP FORM**

Last Name: \_\_\_\_\_ First \_\_\_\_\_ Month \_\_\_\_\_ Year \_\_\_\_\_

(Preferred mailing address: \_\_ Home; \_\_ Office)

Home: \_\_\_\_\_ Office: \_\_\_\_\_

City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_ City: \_\_\_\_\_ State: \_\_\_\_\_

Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_ Zip: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: ( ) \_\_\_\_\_

Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Occupation(s):

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Anthro/sociologist | <input type="checkbox"/> Archivist          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Educator           | <input type="checkbox"/> Folklorist         |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Genealogist        | <input type="checkbox"/> Historian          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Journalist         | <input type="checkbox"/> Librarian          |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Public Historian   | <input type="checkbox"/> Transcriber/editor |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other              |   |

DUES:

- \$ 8.00 Individual  new  renew
- \$50.00 Life Membership
- \$15.00 Institution  new  renew
- \$ 5.00 Student/Retiree  new  renew
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Contribution
- \$ \_\_\_\_\_ Total

BETTY KEY HONORED

Betty McKeever Key has been honored as a 1990 Outstanding Alumna of her Alma Mater, the College of St. Catherine, St. Paul, MN. She was recognized in ceremonies at the college on Saturday, June 23, for her work for the Alumnae Association, the International Federation of Catholic Alumnae, the Hospitality and Information Service for diplomatic personnel and for her professional contributions as an oral historian.

A founding member of OHMAR and the 1980 recipient of the Forrest C. Pogue Award, Ms. Key was first involved with oral history as Director of the Oral History Division, Eugene McCarthy Primary Historical Project. She served in this position from 1968 to 1972. The McCarthy Primary Project has been deposited in the Lauringer Library, Georgetown University, Washington, DC, and is available there for scholarly inquiry and research.

In 1971, Ms. Key established the Oral History Office at the Maryland Historical Society, Baltimore, MD, and served as its director until the office was closed in 1983. She directed the McKeldin-Jackson Civil Rights Collection and contributed to the Baltimore Neighborhood Historical Project.

From 1977 to 1981 she taught oral history in the School of Library Science, The Catholic University of America, Washington, DC. She taught oral history at the University of Maryland/Baltimore County in 1974-1975 and advised the Gifted and Talented Program, Baltimore County Public Schools.

She has served OHMAR as chair of its Commit-

tee on the Constitution and By-laws and as author of *The Annual Conference of Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region: A Handbook for the Conference Staff*, published in 1985. In 1977, she chaired the first OHMAR conference, held at the Community College of Baltimore, and obtained a planning grant from the Maryland Bicentennial Commission to cover its initial expenses.

She was elected to the Oral History Association Council in 1977 and chaired the first committee to explore the relationship between state and regional oral history organizations and OHA. This effort has since resulted in the establishment of a standing committee to address these concerns, with formal affiliate status now available to state and regional associations. (See article on page 3.)

She directed the Tape and Transcript Task Force at the 1979 Wingspread Conference that produced OHA's first Evaluation Guidelines. Ms. Key has been a frequent speaker and panelist at OHA national conferences and has been widely recognized as an authority on oral history, with numerous articles, lectures and consultations to her credit.

Her OHMAR friends congratulate her on this honor and recognition. 🍏

A limited number of copies of the May 1990 *Directory of OHMAR Members* will be available to members in good standing at the fall conference October 19 in Reston, VA. Check the mailing label on this newsletter to verify your membership status.

**SHOPES MOVES TO PENNSYLVANIA**

Linda Shopes has accepted the position of historian in the Division of History of the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission in Harrisburg, PA, the position previously held by Carl Oblinger and Matthew Magda.

Shopes, who served as OHMAR President in 1984-1985, has held positions in the American Studies Department, University of Maryland Baltimore County while working on her doctorate at the University of Maryland College Park. Since 1987, she and Michael Frisch have co-edited the annual Oral History Section of the Journal of American History. In the 1980s she was Book Review Editor of the *OHMAR Newsletter*, a position she currently holds for the *Oral History Review*. 🍏

**MARYLAND AWARD RECOGNIZES SCHULTZ**

The first annual Maryland Maritime History Essay Contest has been won by Charles Schultz, archivist of Texas A & M University and former head of the oral history program there. Schultz, a longtime OHA member and Washington area visitor, was recognized for his essay "Ship Andalusia: Queen of the Baltimore Gold Rush Fleet." The competition was sponsored by the Maritime Committee of the Maryland Historical Society and the University of Baltimore Educational Foundation. 🍏

**CHESTER LEWIS DIES**

Chester Lewis, retired archivist and chief librarian for *The New York Times*, succumbed in May to throat cancer. A longtime member of OHMAR and OHA, Lewis introduced microfilming of back issues of the *Times* and was a director of Microfilming Corporation of America. In 1955 and 1956 he served as president of the Special Libraries Association. 🍏

**SEAMAN, COX HONEYMOON IN FRANCE**

David Seaman and Barbara Cox celebrated their May 19 wedding with a business-and-pleasure summer sojourn in Paris and the South of France. Seaman, OHMAR's immediate past president, used a research grant to advance his continuing study of the avant-garde with interviews of French *Lettriste* poets. Now chairing the Foreign Language Department at the University of Evansville in Indiana, Seaman expects to interview New York concrete poets as well as part of this study. He was pleased to find the *Lettriste* poets still active, with two exhibits running in Paris during his visit. According to Seaman, Isidore Isou, the movement's founder, is again active and holds monthly meetings in a Paris café where members gather to report on their activities.

Barbara Cox, Seaman's bride, has moved from her native West Virginia to join David in Indiana where both characterize themselves as "Hoosiers." Following their stay in Paris, they rented a house in Provence, near a village in the Var, which served as their *piéd-à-terre* for visits to Monte Carlo, Aix-en-Provence, Grasse, Arles and St. Tropez. Their extensive knowledge of French culture and civilization was updated by a systematic and dedicated sampling of current trends in wine and seafood. They claim the most noticeable recent French innovations are the giant supermarkets and malls as well as the increasing availability of *cuisine légère*, minimalist food for weight watchers, who no doubt have just previously been overindulging in samplings of wine and seafood.

One constant, according to Seaman: the abysmal quality of French television, "except for the risqué advertising." *Ah, mon vieux, c'est la vie!* 🍏

**Bearss (continued)**

• After a long day in the hot, dry climate of the Jornada de la Muerta, do not sit in an Alamogordo bistro and drink three margaritas before eating a late supper.

The next two oral history projects to come my way were those keyed to the Eisenhower National Historic Site (authorized 1967) and then the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historic Site (authorized 1969). Both of these projects, unlike the Trinity expedition, were programmed and funded as part of the NPS program to support interpretation and cultural resource management of these two new high-profile areas.

Because of the direct involvement of three dynamic and history conscious people—President and Mrs. Lyndon B. Johnson and NPS Director George B. Hartzog—in adding the LBJ Ranch unit to the park and their appreciation of the importance of oral history, the Johnson oral history was given high priority by the Service. It was inaugurated in the autumn of 1972, but the untimely death of former President Johnson, in January 1973, cut short his direct participation after one taping session in the program. His legacy lives on in the LBJ Ranch Oral History Project because of the support of Mrs. Johnson, NPS Director Ron Walker, Southwest Regional Director Frank Kowski, and Park Superintendent Alec Gould. The project was continued, refined, and expanded and became a model program with which I was associated from 1972 through 1981.

In March 1973, following President Johnson's death, Blair Hubbard of Harpers Ferry Center and I spent one week in the Texas Hill country taping interviews with key LBJ Ranch employees and longtime Blanco and Gillespie County friends and associates of the Johnson family. Cautioned by my Trinity experience and schooled by Blair Hubbard to make use of this exciting media to the best advantage, we worked well to-

gether. I conducted the interviews and Blair operated the recorder and monitored the audio impulses. In this way, the emotions and feelings of the person being interviewed would be of such quality that they add drama and feeling to the tape to be used in the park's audio interpretive stations. Before conducting the interviews, my practice was to first get to know the person we were to visit and learn something about his/her background and association with President Johnson or the area. This enabled me to build up a rapport with the interviewee. To illustrate the importance of this step, I will note that President Johnson at his first meeting with Ron Walker, who in early January 1873 replaced George B. Hartzog as Director, remarked that "Bearss knows more about Grandfather and Grandmother Johnson and my ancestors than I do." The tapes of the interviews were carried back to Harpers Ferry by Blair Hubbard, master copies made for retention by the Center, and a copy returned to the park. Superintendent Gould assumed responsibility for securing from the persons interviewed releases for the Service to either use or restrict information found on the tapes.

During the ensuing years, Superintendent Gould and his park historian John Tift continued to give priority to and to expand the Site's oral history program. Creatively employing both National Park Service monies and grants from Southwestern Monuments Association, they hired Konrad Kelley, a colorful anthropologist, Episcopal padre and folklorist, to continue and broaden the scope of the oral history project to cover three generations of the Johnsons and their Hill county years. It was my pleasure to return to Texas a number of times and work with the Reverend Kelley and Historian Tift to document, through oral history, the cultural resources and interpretive history at the park, which in 1980 was redesignated the Lyndon B. Johnson National Historical Park.

Mrs. Johnson, Johnson friends, employees, and ➔

**Bearss** (continued)

their focus is on Eisenhower's and LBJ's public careers and not their Gettysburg and Hill country years.

After I became the Service's Chief Historian on November 1, 1981, I assumed my direct participation in major oral history projects was over, but fortunately I was mistaken. On May 1, 1985, William Penn Mott, Jr., became the Service's 11th Director. A former 1930s National Park Service employee and the head of the California State Parks during then-Governor Ronald Reagan's administration (1969-1977), Bill Mott was a dynamic, hands-on Director, with a deep appreciation of the value of interpretation and oral history in promoting the parks and building constituencies. Because of Director Mott's interest, his unconventional but innovative approach to the perceived role and function of the Washington staff, and my experience, I found myself, much to my delight, again thrust into project-related oral history.

When the House Subcommittee on Parks and Public Lands in May of 1985 was conducting its hearing on Representative Richard B. Ray's bill to establish a Jimmy Carter National Historic Site, Director Mott, after listening to the testimony and remarks of the proponents of the site, decided to send me to Plains, Georgia, to inaugurate an oral history project with President and Mrs. Carter and their long-time friends and neighbors.

In mid-December 1985, I traveled to Plains. Superintendent John Ticker of Andersonville National Historic Site, key members of his staff—Chief of Interpretation and Visitor Services Fred Sanchez and Historian Jim Small—and the good people of Plains went out of their way to make this a productive and exciting week. A large number of oral histories were recorded and important bridges to the community built, which, in 1988, following the establishment of the Jimmy Carter National Historic Site in December 1987, led to what I

consider to be the most exciting, successful, and sophisticated oral history project yet undertaken by the Service. This broad statement is based on these reasons:

- President and Mrs. Carter were co-participants, and the interface and dynamics between them added an exciting dimension. There are times that their memories of the past and sequences of dates vary and this makes for excellent interchanges. Two media were employed—Fred Sanchez videotaped the session and Jim Small manned an audio recorder.
- The Carter oral histories, besides providing the grist for the Park's interpretive and cultural resource management programs, provided invaluable insight into how President and Mrs. Carter view park resources, both tangible and intangible. A visit to Jimmy Carter's Boyhood Home in Archery documented on film the President's deep attachment to this home and its significance. Before then, NPS plans had given it a lower profile.

For a better appreciation of the planning and work that insured the success of the Carter oral history project, I call your attention to my colleague Jim Small's article.

It is through the efforts of the troops in the front lines—outstanding professional people such as Superintendent Tucker, Chief Ranger Sanchez and Historian Small, and those with whom I worked at the Johnson and Eisenhower sites—that we owe the success of these efforts, and because of them the Service has achieved its long-held reputation as the most admired Federal agency.

In a future issue of the *Bulletin*, I plan to share with the readers the story of the two other oral history projects that Director Mott assigned to me, following his visits to Biscayne National Park and War in the Pacific National Historical Park. The latter featured interviews with Guanamians and Saipanese who experienced World War II in the Pacific in all its violence and frightfulness. 🍀

**Small (continued)**

Carter home in Plains, Georgia. The focus of this visit was to familiarize ourselves with the furnishings, physical layout of the furniture and available lighting, including the location of electrical outlets for our equipment.

Our strategy was to have a low NPS presence during the interviews and above average familiarity with the equipment that would be used. We wanted to capture the interview in as much a natural state as possible. The reel-to-reel tape recorder and operator would be placed out of view of the Carters. Microphone cables from both machines would be consolidated whenever possible. The video recording process would operate with minimum lighting using flood lights only when the light level prevents a clear image.

The results of our planning and execution were surprising. We achieved the visual and sound quality that we expected; however, the cultural data collected surpassed our expectations. Captured on the video tapes was the interaction between President and Mrs. Carter; facial expressions, gestures and a visual interactive inventory between the Carters and their household belongings.

The majority of the interviewing took place inside their home. It covered early politics, life in Plains, the military, and the post-Presidency period. Also, the Carters provided an architectural history of the only home that they have ever owned and personalized tour of the house. We also obtained information concerning the creator and donor of various objects and furnishings.

Though not fully appreciated now, in years to come this material will greatly assist those developing furnishings reports, documenting objects, and piecing together the daily routine of President and Mrs. Carter.

The interviews continued outdoors and involved a tour of

the grounds surrounding the house, a visit to the school that both President and Mrs. Carter attended, and his boyhood home. Chief Historian Bearss conducted a questioning sequence that took the Carters back in time. They vividly described the school and its staff, reinforcing the cultural importance that the school had on this rural community. However, the most enlightening portions of the interviews took place at the boyhood home.

We were unsure as to the level of importance that the boyhood home had on the development of President Carter's political and human rights ideologies. A review of the visual interview at the boyhood home quickly identified its importance. President Carter's eagerness to investigate the house and outbuildings, his clear recollections of daily life on the farm, and [his] remembrances of his parents were captured by the video camera and provided solid documentation that this site deserved a higher level of priority than first realized.

More than 15 hours of taped audio/visual recordings were made during those two appointments in 1988. The results were eight video tapes and 27 reel-to-reel tapes. The cultural resources material gained is abundant. The tapings have already been put to use in creating an audio driving tape tour of Plains and currently under production is a video tour of the Carter home for use in the visitor center. A team from the Historic American Buildings Survey has also used the recordings for visual references of the current home and boyhood home.

There have been drawbacks. All the planning we did for this assignment still left some areas incomplete. We tried to accomplish too much at one time. The Carters became fatigued and hurried toward the end of the process. We also shot still photographs during the interviews. The flash from the camera disturbed the image captured on the video. There are objects and furnishings that deserve closer examination ⇔

**OHMAR  
Treasurer's Report, 1990 (Interim)  
31 July 1990**

1. Starting balance, November 18, 1989: ..... \$1,597.19

2. Activity since last report:

Income received:

<u>Conference &amp; Membership</u>	<u>Interest</u>	<u>Contributions</u>
\$2,167	68.35	

Income subtotal: ..... \$2,235.35

Expenses:

<u>Conference*</u>	<u>Newsletter</u>	<u>Mail</u>	<u>Reimburse</u>	<u>Bank</u>
Pogue Award \$ 51.92	551.20	41.40	57.71	24.50 (returned check)
Luncheon (Fri) 498.80				
A/V 21.00				
MARAC mail 40.00				
Luncheon (Sat) <u>300.00</u>				
\$911.72	551.20	41.40	57.71	24.50

Expense subtotal ..... 1,586.53

3. Net change ..... 648.82

4. Current Balance, Columbia First ..... 2,246.01

\*Harrisonburg

Respectfully submitted,  
John S. Schuchman, Treasurer

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