

Fall 2007 Newsletter

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WWW.OHMAR.ORG

## OHMAR HOLDS FALL WORKSHOPS IN BALTIMORE

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



Reginald Lewis Museum in Baltimore, MD.

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

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

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

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

## NEWS FROM THE MID-ATLANTIC REGION

### DISTRICT OF COLUMBIA

#### African-American National Oral History Project Launched

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

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## 2007 POGUE AWARD GOES TO ELAINE EFF

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

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

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

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

### **OHMAR: Discuss the Deerfield Landscape Basket?**

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

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

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



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

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

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

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

### **OHMAR: Tell us about Cooperstown?**

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

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



Deerfield landscape basket

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

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

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

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

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

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

## PENNSYLVANIA

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

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

## Independence Seaport Museum Processes SubVet Collection

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

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

For more information about Independence Seaport Museum's collections and services, please see [www.phillyseaport.org](http://www.phillyseaport.org).

## VIRGINIA

### Bland County Historical Archives to focus on Veterans

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

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

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

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

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# OHMAR FALL 2007 WORKSHOP REGISTRATION

**FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 2, 2007**

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

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

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

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

(CHOOSE ONE)

**ORAL HISTORY IN THE CLASSROOM**

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

OR

**ADDING VIDEO TO AN ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

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

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

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

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

(CHOOSE ONE)

**BEGINNING ORAL HISTORY**

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

OR

**GOING SOUND ON THE WEB**

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

**REGISTRATION FEE**

\_\_\_ \$50 OHMAR Member/ Student/VHP Partner

\_\_\_ \$65 Non-Member rate

**2008 MEMBERSHIP:**

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

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

\_\_\_ I am a Life Member of OHMAR

**TOTAL ENCLOSED: \$ \_\_\_\_\_**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_ E-mail: \_\_\_\_\_ Fax: \_\_\_\_\_

Please make checks payable to: **OHMAR**

**Mail to:**

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

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

# LETTER PERFECT TRANSCRIPTION

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**PLEASE CALL BEN OR JOANNA AT 1-866-525-2126 WITH ANY QUESTIONS.**

**WE LOOK FORWARD TO WORKING WITH YOU.**

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

**OHMAR: What's left for you to do?**

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

## OHMAR

### Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region

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

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

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

### OHMAR

c/o Constance S. Beninghove  
Assistant Treasurer  
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**For further information:**  
[www.ohmar.org](http://www.ohmar.org)