

SPRING OHMAR CONFERENCE

The Wilmington Riots and the Challenge of Today

Hagley Museum & Library

Wilmington, Delaware

April 4, 1998

In 1968, at the time of the Martin Luther King, Jr. assassination, riots erupted in the city of Wilmington starting at Rodney Square and moving down Market Street. Although both the city and state police forces were called in to quell the riots, then-Governor Terry ordered the Delaware National Guard on duty to assist. Even after the city became quiet, the National Guard patrolled the streets. The Guard were kept in Wilmington for nine months, longer than in any other city.

An oral history project designed to find out what happened at that time and how it affected the citizens is the stimulus for this conference.



Reporter Charles Wilson takes it all in.
(Courtesy of *The News Journal*.)

- What were the reasons for the riots?
- How did the populace respond?
- Were the problems of the city resolved?
- What lessons were learned?

April 4 Program

8:30-9:30 a.m. Registration
at Hagley Museum Soda House
(enter museum from route 100
and Buck Road. Follow signs.)

9:30: **The Siege of Wilmington**
WHYY Video by Janine Biden

10:00: **Panel Discussion**
Jim Baker, Max Bell, Ned Davis,
Candida McBride, Matthew
Shipp and Skip Taylor

Noon: Lunch

1:00 p.m. **Keynote Speaker**
CHUCK STONE
Walter Spearman Professor
School of Journalism, University
of N. Carolina at Chapel Hill

2:30 - 4:00 p.m. **Charlie Hardy**
West Chester University
"The Latest in Oral History
Techniques & Technologies"

*Registration form at back of newsletter.
Deadline is March 27, 1998.*

The 1968 Wilmington riots was a turning point for race relations in Delaware. Even today, discussions about Wilmington's Market Street and development of the Christina River waterfront are haunted by the memories and legacies of the race riots. By drawing on the voices of Delawareans who lived through those tumultuous times, it is hoped to further the process of healing racial divisions and to live up to Dr. King's dream--expressed in his famous 1963 speech--that "we can transform the jangling discord of our nation into a beautiful symphony of brotherhood."

CHUCK STONE

In selecting Mr. Stone as keynote speaker, the planners recognize not only his journalistic acumen, but also his high place in the Philadelphia area during times of struggle, bitterness and conflict. He has an educator's respect... he has the malefactor's trust. He is a scholar-author and professor. A former White House correspondent during John F. Kennedy's administration, he has been the editor of several major African American newspapers. He is the author of three books and has written over fifty magazine articles. Stone is currently working on four new books.

A Wesleyan University graduate, he earned an M.A. in sociology from the University of Chicago. This background helped when, in his 19 years at the Philadelphia Daily News, 75 murder suspects wanted by the police turned themselves in to him to act as a go-between with the police department. He has also negotiated the release of hostages on five occasions.

It is hoped that Mr. Stone's address will provide the audience with some positive understanding of those difficult times and suggest a prescription for the future in light of past experience.

Padua Academy students, under the tutelage of Barbara Markham, in 1997, received an award for first place video in the State of Delaware for work on "The Wilmington Riots of 1968". Students interviewed at least 25 people and taped these interviews. With some assistance, they integrated five interviews into a story to conform with the topic of the National History day contest "Conflict and Resolution." The video placed ninth in the nation. The authors of this history project will show their video and share insights about their project.

Charlie Hardy of West Chester University, is well known to OHMAR members. He has agreed to bring us up to speed on recent technological innovations and their drawbacks. How effective are the most recent gadgets?

Optional Tour of the Hagley Museum. The domain of the duPont Powder works is most fascinating. The family mansion, the reconstructed powder works along the Brandywine River, archeological finds in the remains of the homes of the powder workers, a nineteenth century industrial museum, a library and museum constitute one of the finest museum in the State of Delaware.



(Hagley's logo)

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*Send articles, news, or books to be
reviewed to Deborah Haskell, Delaware
Heritage Commission, Carvel State
Office Building, 820 N. French Street,
Wilmington, DE 19801. (302)577-5044*

*Deadlines are January 31, July 31 and
November 15.*

Names and News
<p>Margaret Jerrido, OHMAR VicePresident, of the Temple University Urban Archives, has been appointed to the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission Black History Advisory Committee for a two-year term. The Urban Archives has been awarded two grants by the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission. The first grant will enable the Urban Archives to organize materials, purchase archival supplies, and produce finding aids for three organizational collections. The second grant will be used to conduct a survey and compile information about African American Collections housed in archival repositories in the Philadelphia area and surrounding regions.</p>

*For information about OHMAR, write to
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