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[WWW.OHMAR.ORG](http://WWW.OHMAR.ORG)

## STAGING THE ZEITGEIST: OHMAR'S ORAL HISTORY AND PERFORMANCE CONFERENCE DEBUTS MARCH 2008

*By Jeffrey Friedman*

Performance art in Wales? Martial arts in Columbia? Showgirls on the New York stage?

If you want to know about these topics and more, OHMAR presents their annual conference at Columbia University from Thursday through Saturday, March 13th-15th, 2008. Focusing on a general theme of oral history and performance, over eighty presenters from throughout the United States, Canada and Europe will convene to learn, discuss, and perform scholarly and artistic work pertaining to the conference theme.

From the tremendous richness of response to the program committee's call for papers, it seems we've tapped into a current trend of scholarly interest and burgeoning practice in oral history and performance. The committee and OHMAR's board are pleased that their selected theme has drawn such breadth and depth of interest from OHMAR members, as well as oral historians, artists and community activists from local, regional, national and international locations. From the initial call for papers, we received a diverse response proposing scholarly papers, but also presentations that include performance, and staged performance events.

*(continued on page 6)*

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## RYAN CLAYCOMB TO DELIVER PLENARY ADDRESS

Ryan Claycomb, an Assistant Professor of Literature at West Virginia University, has accepted an invitation to give the plenary session talk Friday morning at the 2008 OHMAR Spring Conference at Columbia University. His talk has a tentative title of "Voices from No-Place: Place, Space, and the Utopian Impulse of Oral History Performance."

At West Virginia University, Claycomb teaches courses on modern drama, gender studies and contemporary literature. He has published several articles on the intersection of life narratives and performance in such journals as *Journal of Narrative Theory*, *Modern Drama* and *Journal of Dramatic Theory and Criticism*. He is currently at work on a book on life writing and contemporary feminist drama and editing a collection on writing and anti-disciplinarity. ■

## FRIEDMAN TO RECEIVE POGUE AWARD

The Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region (OHMAR) committee of past presidents is pleased to announce the 2008 Forrest C. Pogue Award will be presented to Jeffrey Friedman. The award given in recognition for high standards in the field of oral history, honors Forrest C. Pogue who pioneered the use of oral history in combat during World War II and also served as an early president of the Oral History Association.

Friedman, a faculty member at Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts in New Jersey, publishes nationally and internationally on performance-based oral history, including book chapters for Routledge and Altamira Presses, and journal articles in Britain, Spain, and New Zealand, where he was visiting lecturer at the University of Auckland in 2006. Lectures, workshops, and performances of Friedman's oral history-based solo dance work **Muscle Memory** include audiences from the American Folkdance Federation, San Francisco Unified School district teachers, local historical societies, and universities including Stanford, Berkeley, Duke, Cornell, Ohio State, University of Calgary, University of Bournemouth (UK), Victoria University (NZ), and the Oral History Centre at New Zealand's National Library.

What impressed the award selection committee was Friedman's work at the Legacy Oral History Program at the San Francisco Performing Arts Library & Museum. Founded by Friedman in 1988, the program celebrates 20 years of documenting, preserving, and making accessible to the public the life histories of important Bay Area performing artists.

Recognized nationally and internationally as a model dance documentation program using oral history methods, Legacy ([sfpalm.org/programs/legacy/collectionslist.html](http://sfpalm.org/programs/legacy/collectionslist.html)) recently expanded beyond its founding mission to document not only dance but all performing arts genres, including music, theater, and interdisciplinary artforms for which the Bay Area is known.

Now Legacy is going beyond bound volumes to produce oral histories in electronic formats. For example, violist and long-time San Francisco Opera Orchestra manager Thomas Heimberg's oral history was completed as a standard bound transcript, but is also available on-line as a multimedia audiovisual experience, complete with still photos, music, and audio excerpts from the original interviews. Even more experimental, Legacy recently completed a pilot oral history project with Joseph Harris, dresser to the stars of the San Francisco Opera for over 40 years.

By the end of 2008, Legacy's collection will total nearly 100 oral histories, the largest comprehensive oral history project for performing arts outside of New York City.

Friedman will discuss this project and other aspects of his work in a lecture that will follow his receipt of the award on March 15th, 2008 at the OHMAR Spring Conference to be held at Columbia University in New York City. Given the theme of this year's conference, Friedman's well-deserved recognition is timely. Although the work he is most noted for occurred on the West Coast, Friedman's roots are in the Mid-Atlantic. Born in Baltimore and raised in Bucks County PA, Friedman attended Cornell University's School of Architecture from 1974-1977. He then performed throughout the Northeast and in New York City before completing his Bachelor of Architecture degree at the University of Oregon in 1979. Based in San Francisco from 1979 until 1997, Friedman performed for the Oberlin Dance Collective from 1980-1989, was guest artist for the San Francisco, Santa Fe and Los Angeles Opera companies, and toured as LOCUS Solo Dance. He taught at Sonoma State University's Theatre Arts Department before entering the Ph.D. program in Dance History and Theory at the University of California, Riverside as a Jacob K. Javits Department of Education fellow. Friedman completed his doctoral research on embodied oral history in 2003. ■

### The FOREST C. POGUE Award:

In its continuing efforts to recognize and promote high standards in the field of oral history, OHMAR created an annual award for outstanding and continuing contributions to oral history. The award honors Forrest C. Pogue. Pogue pioneered the use of oral history in combat during World War II and also served as an early president of the Oral History Association.



Jeffrey Friedman

# REGISTRATION FORM

ORAL HISTORY IN THE MID-ATLANTIC REGION'S (OHMAR) ORAL HISTORY AND PERFORMANCE CONFERENCE  
MARCH 13-15, 2008, IN NEW YORK CITY

The workshops and conference events will be held at **Columbia University and New York Public Library for the Performing Arts**. For program updates and full location information, please refer to the online program at [www.ohmar.org](http://www.ohmar.org)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Affiliation as you want it to appear on name tag: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_

Please check off if you will be attending these events. Note that all events with limited space will be filled on a first-come first-serve basis.

## THURSDAY, MARCH 13 9:00 AM – 12:00 PM

### BEGINNERS ORAL HISTORY WORKSHOP,

Cost: \$40 OHMAR members/\$50 non-OHMAR members

SPACE LIMITED to 20, REGISTER NOW \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## THURSDAY, MARCH 13 1:00 – 4:00 PM

### ORAL HISTORY AND PERFORMANCE WORKSHOP,

Cost: \$40 OHMAR members/\$50 non-OHMAR members

SPACE LIMITED to 12, REGISTER NOW \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### BASIC CONFERENCE REGISTRATION

Includes the plenary session, parallel sessions on Friday and Saturday, and the reception Friday evening

Cost: (\$40 student/\$60 member/\$75 non-member) \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## FRIDAY, MARCH 14 5:00-7:00 PM

### PERFORMANCE IN BLACK BOX THEATER,

Cost: \$10, SPACE LIMITED, REGISTER NOW \$ \_\_\_\_\_

## FRIDAY, MARCH 14 7:30 PM – 8:30 PM

### RECEPTION

Free with registration \_\_\_\_\_

## SATURDAY, MARCH 15 1:00 – 2:30 PM

### POGUE AWARD LUNCHEON

Cost: \$20

SPACE LIMITED, REGISTER NOW \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### OHMAR MEMBERSHIP

Individual \$25, student, \$10, Institutional \$75 \$ \_\_\_\_\_

For additional membership information including the membership form, go to [www.OHMAR.org](http://www.OHMAR.org).

TOTAL PAYMENT \$ \_\_\_\_\_

### PLEASE MAKE CHECKS PAYABLE TO OHMAR

Mail to: OHMAR, c/o Constance Beninghove, 642 East Capital St. NE #1, Washington DC 20003

You will receive a receipt and conference packet at the registration desk when you arrive at the conference.

Please note again that conference registration will be first-come first serve, and space will be limited. We suggest that you register as soon as possible. The deadline to register and send payment is February 22, 2008 (postmarked).

There is no official conference lodging. We recommend participants use the Columbia University lodging listing, available online at <http://www.studentaffairs.columbia.edu/admissions/visiting/accom.php>

For any questions about the program, please contact the program committee at [oralhistoryandperformance@gmail.com](mailto:oralhistoryandperformance@gmail.com), or call Amy Starecheski, committee chair, at 212-854-8008 or [aas39@columbia.edu](mailto:aas39@columbia.edu).

For any questions about registration, please contact OHMAR's secretary Constance Beninghove at [cbeninghove@navyhistory.org](mailto:cbeninghove@navyhistory.org).

reception on campus. Saturday's events include multiple simultaneous presentations in the morning, followed by the Forrest C. Pogue Award luncheon, and afternoon sessions complete the conference. Please note that both the staged performance and the award luncheon have limited seating.

We invite you to register early for this exciting conference bringing together a critical mass of artists and oral history scholars and practitioners from around the world to examine the intersection of oral history with performance. Check OHMAR's web site for frequent updates on registration and program information. ■

*Jeff Friedman is with the Mason Gross School of the Arts at Rutgers University, the Legacy Oral History Program of the San Francisco Museum of Performance and Design, and will be the recipient of the 2008 Forrest Pogue Award.*

## BALTIMORE WORKSHOPS WELL RECEIVED!

Kudos once again go to OHMAR board member Lisa Crawley and the staff of the Reginald F. Lewis Museum of Maryland African American History and Culture for hosting the 2007 OHMAR fall workshops. Some 60 individuals traveled to Baltimore to participate in the event. "I was very pleased with the turnout and I felt that we were offering the type of information that our audience was looking for" reflected OHMAR president John Lonquest.

Attendees had a choice of four workshops offered over the course of the day-long event. In the morning Glenn Whitman, a teacher at St. Andrews Episcopal School, led a lively session entitled "Using Oral History in the Classroom" that reflected his long experience using oral history in teaching high school students. In a parallel session Brien Williams, an independent oral historian and video producer, directed a workshop on "Adding Video to an Oral History Program." Brien came equipped with all of the tools of his trade—video camera, monitor, and tripod—and gave the participants an overview of video technology and then discussed the challenges of doing video interviews by showing examples of his own work.

After a long lunch in Little Italy, participants returned to the museum for two afternoon workshops. Laura Kamoie, a professor of history at the United States Naval Academy, led OHMAR's very popular beginners oral history workshop. Over the course of several hours Laura walked the participants through the basics of oral history: preparing for the interview, developing questions, conducting the interview, and editing the transcript. In the final afternoon session Fred Stielow, who is cur-

rently the director of Virtual Libraries at the American Military University, conducted an engaging workshop on the programmatic challenges and technological factors involved in putting oral history and sound collections on the Internet.

I was very pleased with the turnout and I felt that we were offering the type of information that our audience was looking for.

—John Lonquest.

Participants in the workshops who traveled to Baltimore from Pennsylvania, New Jersey, and Virginia were pleased with what they learned and the contacts they made at the event. OHMAR extends its sincere thanks to the workshop leaders who shared their expertise with the participants, as well as all those OHMAR members who assisted in planning and organizing the event. A very special acknowledgement goes to Lisa Crawley who made all of the arrangements with the museum and coordinated the myriad of other details, ranging from securing the necessary audio-visual support to working with museum's security staff, that made the fall workshops such an outstanding success. OHMAR also wants to thank Bradley Broadcast and Pro Audio for its sponsorship of the morning refreshments. Bradley Broadcast is a nationally recognized dealer in broadcast, professional audio, and audio-for-video products. Bradley representative Bob Eburg attended the workshops and was on hand throughout the day to answer participants' questions and demonstrate many of the products that Bradley carries. ■

nate, not only for history's sake, but, more important, for the lessons they hold for future American foreign- and defense-policy making. Luckily, not everyone wants to forget. Benis M. Frank, the head of the Marine Corps' oral history program, began taping interviews with scores of Marines while they were still in Beirut and continued after their departure. He has combined these interviews with the various reports and orders the Marine commanders in Beirut filed regularly to their headquarters in Washington to produce an extremely enlightening and useful history. . . . It is not only a valuable short history, but also a gold mine of raw material for anyone who might want to write about this misadventure." Friedman mined these resources himself, as reflected in the footnotes to Ben's interviews in his best-selling book, *From Beirut to Jerusalem*.

Military history may not appeal to everyone, but future historians who study the global role played by the United States during the twentieth century will need to grapple with the long list of American military actions from the Philippines to the Persian Gulf. They will be glad that oral historians like Ben Frank recorded so many first-hand impressions for them.

A big, bearded, bear of a man, his growl was worse than his bite, and his friends called him "Gentle Ben." Another side of Ben Frank was his avid participation in the Virginia Scottish Games Association. At the annual games, Ben's was the voice heard from the broadcast booth announcing winners and explaining the traditions associated with each event. Wearing a kilt, he marched in Scottish parades and danced with the Royal Scottish Dance Society. What made this curious was that Ben wasn't Scottish. He had been stationed in Korea near some Scots regiments and became so fascinated that he immersed himself in their culture.

On the day he retired, Ben went to the oral history office to look at the shelves of transcripts of all the oral histories he had conducted. "I felt proud," he said. "I had left a legacy to the Marine Corps." He had recorded on every type of analog equipment, and his successor, faced with a mountain of tape, received a grant from the Pentagon to digitize the entire collection for permanent preservation and easier access. So Ben's legacy will be a lasting one. ■

On the day he retired, Ben went to the oral history office to look at the shelves of transcripts of all the oral histories he had conducted. "I felt proud," he said. "I had left a legacy to the Marine Corps."

## VETERANS HISTORY PROJECT GETS ITS OWN WEEK!

Last November 5th, the U.S. House of Representatives creating Veterans History Project Week to coincide with the annual Veterans Day commemoration. Text from House Resolution 770 expresses support for designation of a National Veterans History Project Week to encourage public participation in a nationwide project that collects and preserves the stories of the men and women who served our nation in times of war and conflict.

Resolution 770 was passed by a unanimous vote of the United States Congress to collect and preserve the wartime stories of American veterans. The resolution

charged the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress to continue with its Veterans History Project to engage the public in the creation of a collection of oral histories that would be a lasting tribute to individual veterans and an abundant resource for scholars.

Currently there are 17,000,000 wartime veterans in America whose stories can educate people of all ages about important moments and events in the history of the United States and the world. The Veterans History Project relies on a corps of volunteer interviewers, partner organizations, and an array of civic minded institutions

nationwide who interview these veterans according to the guidelines it provides.

Resolution 770 calls on the people of the United States to interview at least one veteran in their families or communities according to guidelines provided by the Veterans History Project; and encourages local, State, and national organizations along with Federal, State, city and county governmental institutions to participate in support of the effort to document, preserve, and honor the service of American wartime veterans.

For more information about the program go to <http://www.loc.gov/vets/>. ■

struggles between capital and labor. Battered by deindustrialization in the late 1900s, the city has undergone an urban renaissance and today offers rich concentration of museums, historic sites, universities and colleges, and an active arts scene. The Oral History Association is fortunate to be meeting in Pittsburgh during celebrations of the 250th anniversary of the city's founding.

Proposal format: submit four copies of the proposal. For full sessions, submit a title, a session abstract of not more than two pages, and a one-page vita or resume for each participant. For individual proposals, submit a one-page abstract and a one-page vita or resume of the presenter. Each sub-

mission must be accompanied by a cover sheet, which can be printed from the OHA Web site: [www.dickinson.edu/oha](http://www.dickinson.edu/oha). Proposals may be submitted by mail, or email, and should be postmarked or sent by January 15, 2008. Submit proposals directly to the OHA office at the address below.

E-mail attachments must include the "cover sheet" in electronic form and must be one complete document in Microsoft WORD format. Please do not send separate attachments. Attachments should be sent to [oha@dickinson.edu](mailto:oha@dickinson.edu). Should you not receive email confirmation by February 5th, please contact the OHA office to make sure your submission has been received. ■

## THE WORLD OF WORDS: FUTURE CONFERENCES AND MEETINGS – MEXICO

ORAL HISTORY—A DIALOGUE WITH OUR TIMES: Fifteenth Annual IOHA Conference  
23-26 September 2008, Guadalajara, Mexico

The University of Guadalajara and the Mexican Oral History Association invite all those interested in oral history, both academic and non-academic, to celebrate the Fifteenth International Congress of Oral History. The Congress will take place from the 23rd to the 26th of September 2008, in Guadalajara, Mexico.

The theme chosen for the Congress is "Oral History—A Dialogue with Our Times." Participants will contribute their reflections, based on their experience working through oral history methodology.

Twenty sub-themes have also been suggested, covering various aspects of oral history practice. They include oral history theory and method, memory and forgetting, space and time, archives, education and oral history, oral tradition, contemporary issues such as the environment and ecology, family, violence and war, health, genre, museums, in addition to considerations of legal and ethical questions in the practice of oral history.

The call for papers has seen a warm response: we have received eight-hundred proposals from sixty-one countries. These proposals represent the breadth and depth of work being done at the

international level, and will help the program topics achieve maximum diffusion across the globe. The Congress will highlight the important role that theory and methodology of oral history has played in broadening our understanding of social phenomena that define our contemporary world. Selection of sessions has been carried out by the organizing committee, and the choices have been difficult, but the responses from colleagues around the world have been encouraging. Previous meetings in Switzerland, Turkey, South Africa, Italy, and Australia have been important preambles to the upcoming conference in Guadalajara. We have learned from, and adopted many of these experiences, such as those in Sydney where master classes were offered and spaces were created for special interest discussions.

We are planning for an outstanding meeting that will provide an opportunity for sharing diverse postures and reflections on oral history. It will also enable participants to get to know a city with a historical legacy of more than five centuries, and that is the cradle of some of the identifying features of Mexico: the music of el mariachi, and tequila. ■

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## 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 Fall 2008 newsletter is **July 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 Beninghove at [cbeninghove@navyhistory.org](mailto:cbeninghove@navyhistory.org).

### OHMAR

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