



March 2022 News from the OHC

Director's Column from Paul Burnett: The Power of Stories

In Paul Burnett's inaugural column as Interim Director of the OHC, he writes about the power of stories, reflecting on the war in Ukraine and oral history as a reaction to single, dominant narratives of historical truth. He looks back on the interviews he conducted pre-pandemic in which war was a theme, and how narrators pass the stories of loss and survival to others as a testament to their resilience and humanity. He writes, "Storytelling, in the face of dehumanization, can promise a rehumanization, of those who survived to tell the story, those who did not, those who hear the story, those who keep it, and those who pass it along."



Read Paul's column [here](#).

Applications Now on a Wait-List for the Advanced Summer Institute

The OHC is offering online versions of our educational programs again this year due to the ongoing COVID-19 crisis.

The **Advanced Summer Institute** will be held via Zoom from August 8 – 12, 2022.

Applications are now being accepted on a rolling basis. Though we are currently on a wait-list, you're welcome to still apply in case spots open up. **For more information, please visit our website.**



Please email Shanna Farrell (sfarrell@library.berkeley.edu) with any questions about the program.

On the Waterfront: Oral Histories from
Richmond, California

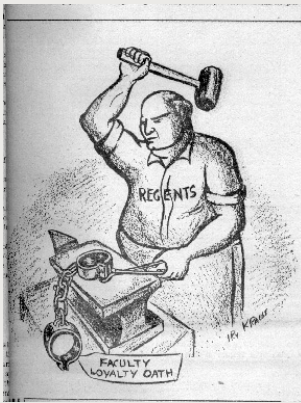


OHC student editor Shannon White explores our *On the Waterfront* oral history project, a collection of interviews from residents of Richmond, California conducted by the UC Berkeley Oral History Center in the 1980s. These oral histories span decades, offering an interesting glimpse into the history of the Bay Area in the early-to mid-twentieth century.

This collection features interviews from shipyard workers, cannery employees, fishermen, and early residents of Richmond, many of whom have resided in the area for decades and have witnessed firsthand the city's evolution over the better part of a century.

These interviews devote a great deal of time to talking about the development of the city as a result of World War II. Common themes throughout the *On the Waterfront* project as a whole include labor practices, race relations and discrimination, and industrial growth and urban development in the Bay Area.

[Read Shannon's article here.](#)



"I take this obligation freely:" Recalling UC Berkeley's Loyalty Oath Controversy

OHC student editor Shannon White, with research help from Adam Hagen, looks at the rise of loyalty oaths in the 1940s, particularly when tensions between the US and the Soviet Union and growing fears about a communist infiltration of the government prompted President Harry S. Truman to establish a loyalty program for federal employees. In March 1947, Truman signed Executive Order 9835,

which ensured that employees of the US government could be subject to investigation for potential involvement in "subversive" organizations.

In the wake of President Truman's Executive Order, the California state legislature began to introduce its own policies in opposition to potential communist activity in the government. Shannon explores how this impacted UC's faculty and employees after UC President Robert G. Sproul proposed his own loyalty oath on March 25, 1949.

[Read Shannon's piece here.](#)

Registration Now Open for "Assessing Race and Power in Oral History Theory and Practice" Symposium



On June 27, 28, and 29, 2022, oral historians from around the world will gather virtually for three days of discussion about the role of race and power in oral history theory and practice. Organized as a symposium, discussions will be based on pre-circulated papers posted on the

conference website and made available to all registrants. Presentations based on these papers, as well as discussants' comments, will be brief, allowing ample time for small, break-out group conversations. Each of the three days will include only two well-spaced two-hour sessions, giving attendees the opportunity for focused attention in the context of their everyday lives.

The symposium, organized by an ad hoc group of historians in collaboration with the Oral History Association and the Oral History Center of the University of California Berkeley, builds upon the group's well received panel "Is Oral History White?" presented at the 2020 Oral History Association annual meeting. The symposium aims to move beyond that question to interrogate broader structures and dynamics of race, racialized thinking, and institutional power in oral history. Our intent is to facilitate conversation among all symposium participants so that we may collectively reach a deeper understanding of how these structures and dynamics have shaped — and continue to shape — oral historians' work and to consider methods and approaches for overcoming them. We recognize that this conversation is part of broader discussions within both oral history and society at large and that authority lies in our collective wisdom.

Program

Sessions are being organized around the following topics:

- Renovating the Invisible Architectures of Institution-Community Relations
- New Approaches to Place-Based Collecting and Exhibits
- Language, Consciousness, and Race
- Getting Interpersonal
- Oral History and Reparations
- Where Do We Go from Here?

The full program will be posted in March 2022. Meanwhile, further information is available in the **Call for Papers**.

The symposium will also give presenters and participants opportunities to reflect personally upon the charged subject of race in oral history and apply these reflections towards the cultivation of more equitable oral history projects at every phase of the oral history process—from project design to interviewing to processing and curation to use. We anticipate that our symposium community will claim a range of racial identities and relationships and varying degrees of experience reflecting upon their positionality. We therefore plan to set shared expectations for constructive conversation rooted in mindful awareness, good faith engagement, and emotional maturity at the very beginning of the symposium and to create opportunities for small-group discussion and individually tailored self-reflection over the duration of the symposium.

Register here.

Want More?

Like what we're doing?

Stay connected with us on social media, listen to our podcast (and don't forget to rate us on iTunes!), or consider a donation to support our work.

See you next month!

Donate Now

Social Media

Like us on iTunes



The Oral History Center

<http://www.lib.berkeley.edu/libraries/bancroft-library/oral-history-center>

Connect with us

