

## **ABOUT INTERNATIONAL ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION (IOHA)**

The International Oral History Association (IOHA) is a professional association of oral history practitioners and exists to:

- Provide a forum for oral historians around the world, and a means for cooperation among those concerned with the documentation of human experience
- Stimulate and publish the results of research in the techniques of oral history
- Promote the development of standards and principles for individuals, institutions and agencies (both public and private) with responsibilities for the collection and preservation of historical information gathered through the techniques of oral history, in all forms
- Encourage and organise international conferences and meetings
- Foster a better understanding of the nature and value of oral history
- Participate in international projects, or devise such projects, and to work with those organising such projects
- Support and develop national oral history organisations

The IOHA was formally constituted in June 1996 at the IXth International Oral History Conference in Gothenburg, Sweden.

## **ABOUT IOHA CONFERENCE**

The IOHA Conference is the biennial conference of the IOHA. The conference is the premier conference for practitioners and enthusiasts of oral history around the world.

The conference predates the establishment of the IOHA, with the inaugural International Oral History Conference held in Bologna, Italy in 1976.

## **ABOUT NATIONAL ARCHIVES OF SINGAPORE (NAS)**

The National Archives of Singapore (NAS) is the keeper of records of national or historical significance. The records acquired by NAS come from both public agencies and private sources. Records in various mediums and formats are safeguarded and preserved.

The immensely rich collection continues to grow as NAS fulfils its mission to actively acquire records that will serve as the corporate memory of the Government and the social memory of our people. This memory allows current and future generations of Singaporeans to understand our different cultures, explore our common heritage and appreciate who we are and how we became a nation.

## **OUR MANDATE**

The NAS is an institution of the National Library Board (NLB). NAS is guided by the National Library Act to:

- Advise public agencies on recordkeeping standard practices, take custody of records transferred from public agencies and act as the Official Keeper
- Acquire, through deposit, audio visual recordings that have been broadcasted or made public in Singapore
- Collect oral history interviews on the history of Singapore
- Acquire, by purchase, bequest, donations or otherwise, any document, book or other material which is or is likely to be of national or historical significance
- Make known information concerning archives by any means, including publications, exhibitions and heritage promotional activities.

## **ABOUT ORAL HISTORY CENTRE (OHC)**

The Oral History Centre (OHC) was set up in 1979 and is today a department of the NAS. Using life stories and eye witness accounts of individuals across the spectrum of society, we record, document, preserve and disseminate oral history interviews of national and historical significance. We also acquire oral history interviews from other institutions or individuals, preserving and disseminating them for the benefit of our patrons. These recordings serve as valuable research resources on Singapore.

Our projects are both broad and deep in scope, covering aspects of the social, economic and political history of Singapore.

Visit Oral History Interviews @ Archives Online to listen to our collection:

[https://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/oral\\_history\\_interviews/](https://www.nas.gov.sg/archivesonline/oral_history_interviews/)

## **CODE OF CONDUCT**

The IOHA Conference is organised in the spirit of free inquiry and collective engagement. Disrespectful behaviour of any kind, at odds with these principles, will thus not be tolerated.

The policy outlined below is a reminder to all participants, including attendees, presenters, vendors, and staff, of the professional ethics and norms that should be upheld during all stages of the event.

## **EXPECTED BEHAVIOUR**

All participants are expected to:

- Always abide by this code of conduct in every setting, including official and unofficial social gatherings
- Be respectful of the personal boundaries of other participants
- Be respectful of differing perspectives and experiences
- Look out for each other, and to alert the conference organisers should any offending action be witnessed

## **UNACCEPTABLE BEHAVIOUR**

Offending actions include, but are not limited to:

- Invasion of privacy, including the taking of screenshots and recordings of people, events, or conversations without express permission; and the posting of personal details of other participants without their consent
- Harassment, including persistent and unwelcome solicitation of intimacy; deliberate intimidation or cyberstalking; and the sustained use of professionally inappropriate comments
- Discriminatory behaviour, including insulting actions, comments, or jokes related to age, socioeconomic status, ability, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity, nationality, religion, or politics
- Sustained disruption of programme
- Real or implied threat of physical harm

## **REPORTING PROCEDURES**

If you are the victim or witness of any of the above, please contact the conference organisers at [NLB\\_IOHA2020@nlb.gov.sg](mailto:NLB_IOHA2020@nlb.gov.sg).

Thank you for making this IOHA Conference a positive experience for everyone!

## CONFERENCE THEME

The National Archives of Singapore, an institution of the National Library Board, are your hosts for the XXI International Oral History Association (IOHA) Conference in 2021.

The theme of the conference is **Harmony & Disharmony: Bringing Together Many Voices**.

At the core of oral history is a desire for a more complex and nuanced understanding of the world around us. While we value each oral account as unique, personal and subjective, bringing together many voices – whether in agreement or disagreement – allows greater meaning to be gleaned, refined and accumulated. Oral history teaches us to be considerate and empathetic to different voices and perspectives. What does this mean in the context of oral history taking root in more places and different cultures around the world? Where it is used in more and different contexts and disciplines? Aided and even led by changing technologies? Presented in different forms and bearing multiple uses? This conference invites papers which shed light on the growing diversity, multidimensionality and interdisciplinary applications of oral history.

As the IOHA conference enters Southeast Asia for the first time, the theme is also an invitation for reflection by the international oral history community to consider how we can help and support one another through friendships, networks and alliances.

The views and opinions expressed in the conference papers, posters, screenings, speeches and discussions do not represent the official policy or position of the National Library Board.



## IOHA CONFERENCE 2021 PROGRAMME

All timings stated below are in UTC +8

K - Keynotes	<i>please see pp.6–9</i>
S - Screenings	<i>please see pp.56–59</i>
P - Paper Sessions	<i>please see pp.16–55</i>
POS - Posters	<i>please see pp.59–63</i>
W - Workshops (*Requires pre-registration)	<i>please see pp.10–15</i>

All recorded content on the virtual conference platform will be available to registered participants until 22 September 2021.

## CONFERENCE OVERVIEW

	<b>Mon, 23 Aug</b>	<b>Tue, 24 Aug</b>	<b>Wed, 25 Aug</b>	<b>Thu, 26 Aug</b>	<b>Fri, 27 Aug</b>
<b>9-11am</b>	W1, W2	P1	P3	K3	P6
<b>5-7pm</b>	W3, W4, W5	P2	K2	P4	Closing Ceremony
<b>8-11pm</b>	Opening Ceremony & K1	COVID-19 Panel	IOHA General Meeting	P5	

## KEYNOTES

### **K1 – Memory and Remembering in the Digital Age by Kwa Chong Guan**

**23 August 2021 8.00pm–11.00pm (UTC +8)**

The foundation of any oral history interview is what the interviewee can recall of his or her memories and readiness to share and reflect on them. An earlier generation of interviewees would have referred to diaries or photographs and other textual or visual evidences to refresh their memories prior to the interview. But today, the internet and social media shape the oral narratives of those growing up in the digital age. Online social platforms such as Facebook, Twitter and Instagram are means of memory creation that involve the process and speed of acquiring, storing and retrieving information for future use. In the near future, it is likely the narrator may rely on Facebook as a source to recollect what he remembers about himself by browsing through the photographs and stories that he has posted. There lies the question how is Facebook or Twitter memory a reliable source of information in helping us understand the historical past? This presentation will examine the nature of how memories are encoded on the social online platform. First, to what extent does our online persona represent who we are as a person? Second, how does one choose to remember about himself? Does the number of likes he has elicited determine what he wants to remember about himself? Do we discard or even dispose a memory that has harnessed many dislikes? Third, how does digital technology affect the speed in the formation of our memories? Postings on social media form instant memory, leaving little room for reflection. Last, to whom are we penning down our digital memory and for what purpose? Who were our digital audience then and for whom are we retrieving our stored information now? Hence, the challenge for the oral historian in examining the reliability of the formation of memories is even greater today, in the digital age as evidence of the history past.

#### **About the Speaker**

Kwa Chong Guan is Senior Fellow at the S Rajaratnam School of International Studies (RSIS) at the Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He is also an Honorary Adjunct Associate Professor of the History Department at the Faculty of Arts and Social Sciences at the National University of Singapore. With a strong and keen interest in Southeast Asia studies, he works on the intersections of history, security studies and international relations of Southeast Asia. He is also a Visiting Fellow at the Archaeological Unit of the Nalanda-Sriwijaya Centre at the Institute of Southeast Asian Studies.



He started his career working on policy analysis in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and then the Ministry of Defence before being assigned to reorganize the Oral History Department in the National Archives and concurrently, the old National Museum which he led through a strategic planning process to transform it into the current three museums under the National Heritage Board. As former Chairman of National Library Advisory Committee, Mr Kwa provided strategic direction to position the National Library as the research hub for Singapore and Southeast Asia materials through building a strong collection and relevant services.

## **K2 – Learning from the “Keepers of Memory”: Imagining a Different Genealogy for Oral History in the Asian Context by Indira Chowdhury**

**25 August 2021 5.00pm–7.00pm (UTC +8)**

What would the genealogy of oral history look like if we contextualised our practice within diverse cultures of orality? Would cultures that are often non-literate and primarily oral offer us new insights into the nature of our practice as oral historians? My talk is based in the context of my practice in India but much of what I say might be relevant for other parts of Asia, most of Africa and South America, and in other regions where oral traditions though increasingly marginalised, still form part of everyday life. I begin with an exploration of ‘oral histories’ that were created prior to audio recording technologies; such oral reminiscences were listened to and transcribed by the listener and checked by the speaker to create a record of lived experience from the past. One such example initiated by Rabindranath Tagore in 1941 was transcribed reminiscences of his nephew, the artist Abanindranath Tagore which offer us a glimpse of Tagore’s childhood and the times he grew up in. But while encouraging his nephew, the artist Abanindranath Tagore, to speak about his life and times and he also asked the writer Rani Chanda to transcribe these memories. Abanindranath called Rani Chandra – the *srutidhari* – the keeper of memory. Tagore or his nephew were not inventing something new. The “keeper of memory” plays a significant role in transcribing and recording traditional epics, songs and performances in India. Unlike the USA or UK, oral historians in India cannot argue about a founding parent. I argue that there is no single origin for oral history in India or more generally, within cultures of orality. Tracing the role played by “keepers of memory” in a few traditional oral repositories I suggest a different approach to understanding the uses of memory within oral history in such contexts. Such an approach enables us to understand the dynamic relationship between what is spoken, what is remembered and the complex negotiations that intertwine past, present and mythical time within local contexts. I shall end my talk with an analyses of my interview with Ranjit Chitrakar, a traditional scroll painter about his Covid scroll and his understanding of the pandemic. The role played by the “keeper of memory” within the interview helps us to gain a nuanced perspective of the intertwined nature of what is spoken about and what is listened to and pushes us to recognize the unacknowledged presence of the mythical within the historical thus deepening our understanding of memory and history and inviting us to transform our oral history practice.

## About the Speaker

Indira Chowdhury is Founder-Director of the Centre for Public History at the Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design, and Technology, Bengaluru. Formerly professor of English at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, she is also the founder of Archival Resources for Contemporary History (ARCH), Bengaluru, now known as ARCH@Srishti. A PhD in history from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, her book, *The Frail Hero and Virile History* (Delhi, OUP, 1998) won the Tagore prize in 2001. She was awarded the New India Fellowship to work on the manuscript of her recently published book titled *Growing the Tree of Science: Homi Bhabha and the*



*Tata Institute of Fundamental Research* (OUP: 2016). Interested in a number of fields he has translated novels from Bengali to English, compiled the Supplement of Indian English words in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (1996) and also created Archival books that bring archival material to the public. She researched and directed a book project on Asia's oldest museum entitled *The Lives of Objects: Stories from the Indian Museum* (2017). Indira is a founding member of the Oral History Association of India. She was President of the Oral History Association of India (2013–2016) and President of the International Oral History Association (2014–2016). She blogs about oral history at <http://theoralhistorian.com>.

## K3 – Accelerating Innovation: Discovery, Engagement, and Risk by Douglas Boyd

**26 August 2021 9.00am–11.00am (UTC +8)**

Oral history, both the practice and the field, is growing very quickly around the world. Digital technologies are generating exciting opportunities for discovery and engagement, making connections, and creating access points for archived oral histories that once were unimaginable. Free and open source technologies empower researchers to connect a textual search of online oral history collections to the corresponding moments in the recorded audio or video interviews. Recent innovation has generated revolutionary possibilities and the potential for a single oral history interview or project to significantly impact the global historical record. However, automated workflows and innovative access to oral history also raise significant questions about individual privacy and the ethics of access. Doug Boyd will reflect on the impact of emerging and innovative technologies on the practice and purpose of oral history. Additionally, Boyd will reflect on accelerating changes involving automatic speech recognition and artificial intelligence, as well as on the changing roles of the oral history archive.

## About the Speaker

Douglas Boyd, PhD is director of the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Libraries. Boyd envisioned, designed, and implemented the open-source and free Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS), which synchronizes text with audio and video online. Boyd is the co-editor of the book *Oral History and Digital Humanities: Voice, Access, and Engagement* published by Palgrave MacMillan in 2014, and he is the author of the book *Crawfish Bottom: Recovering a Lost Kentucky Community* published in August 2011 by the University Press of Kentucky. Boyd served as president of the Oral History Association in the United States in 2016–2017 and conducted research in Australia as a Fulbright Scholar in 2019. Boyd manages the Oral History in the Digital Age initiative, authors the blog Digital Omnium, is the producer and host of The Wisdom Project podcast, and has authored numerous articles pertaining to oral history, archives, and digital technologies.



## COVID-19 PANEL

### COVID-19 as a Catalyst for Change: Rethinking Concepts of Memory and Oral History

**24 August 2021 8.00pm–11.00pm (UTC +8)**

Our lives and communities have changed in fundamental ways due to the effects of COVID-19. Oral historians are working in creative and innovative ways across the globe to document the pandemic through rapid-response collecting initiatives. This panel will consider the deeper implications of COVID-19 for oral history and the extent to which it has been a catalyst for change for the discipline. We will take particular notice of the ways in which the imperative to capture the crisis as it continues to unfold is reframing our concepts of memory and oral history.

Questions to be considered will include:

- How are we engaging with shifting temporal experiences and the notion of historical consciousness?
- How can oral history be used with social purpose and what are the responsibilities of practitioners in pandemic times?
- What is unique about oral history's contribution to documenting and remembering the pandemic?

## Chair

Mary Marshall Clark, Director of Columbia University Center for Oral History Research, in INCITE (Center for Interdisciplinary Theory and Empirics), Columbia University, USA

## Panelists

Ana Carolina de Moura Delfim Maciel, Professor, State University of Campinas, Coordination of Interdisciplinary Research Centers and Nuclei – COCEN, UNICAMP, Brazil

Andréa Casa Nova Maia, Professor of History, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil

Mark Cave, Senior Curator, The Historic New Orleans Collection, USA

Riki Van Boeschoten, Emeritus Professor of Social Anthropology and Oral History, University of Thessaly, Greece

Stephanie Snow, Professor of Health, History and Policy, University of Manchester, UK

## WORKSHOPS

### **W1 – Many Voices Versus Sounds of Silence – How Agreements (Can) Make a Difference by Eric Chin**

**23 August 2021 9.00am–11.00am (UTC +8)**

To consider the building blocks of legal release forms and other agreements used in relation to oral history. This will be grounded on the sharing from participants who will be encouraged to tell their stories of real life problems faced. The workshop will discuss the use of practical legal provisions that can help to resolve the issues raised with a focus on what will allow for greater use and access to oral history.

### **Target Audience**

Oral historians and managers at institutions that create, commission or collect and keep oral history.

### **About the Trainer**



Eric Chin is General Counsel at the National Library Board where his daily work includes advising the Oral History Centre of the National Archives of Singapore. His journey to this role started in 2010 when he acted on long-standing personal interest and completed a Master of Science in Information Studies at the Nanyang Technological University, learning about library and archival sciences. This helped to open the door to the honour of being Director, National Archives of Singapore, from 2012 to 2017. A very happy memory in that



period was working with enthused and dedicated colleagues at the Oral History Centre to put a large part of Singapore's oral history collection online.

## **W2 – Speaking the Same Language: How Data About Our Interviews Can Help Us at Every Stage of Our Projects and Make it Possible for Users to Discover Around the World by Lauren Kata and Natalie Milbrodt**

**23 August 2021 9.00am-11.00am (UTC +8)**

Presenters from the Oral History Association's Metadata Task Force will paint a picture of oral history practice in the United States by sharing results gathered during focus group sessions and online surveys over the past few years. They will also debut, at the international level, a comprehensive "What's Important to Know" set of metadata elements, followed by a facilitated discussion with workshop participants. The primary aim: to assess the universal utility of these (North American) metadata elements as critical to creating, preserving and making oral histories accessible to researchers. This is an opportunity for peer learning; discovering contrasts and similarities in oral history practices across cultural contexts. Presenters will also share a demo of their interactive online tool, currently in development, designed to assist practitioners in metadata decision-making, and how to map oral history metadata to various standards. Lastly, participants will engage in a hands-on exercise with the online tool to begin thinking about their own metadata practices. Group work will centre on the question of improving metadata practices to make oral history collections more accessible and easier to administer in the future. This workshop offers a holistic way of thinking about metadata that moves away from technical lingo and toward a shared understanding of what is useful to know about oral histories!

Note: No technical expertise required for participation.

### **Target Audience**

Anyone responsible for creating, preserving or making oral histories accessible to researchers.

### **About the Trainers**



Lauren Kata, Academic Librarian, Archives and Special Collections, NYU Abu Dhabi, Abu Dhabi, UAE

[lak12@nyu.edu](mailto:lak12@nyu.edu)

Lauren Kata has engaged in oral history at all stages of the lifecycle within academia, government, community, institutional and professional contexts. She is an active member of the Oral History Association's Metadata Task Force, the Society of American Archivists, and serves as co-editor of IOHA's *Words and Silences/Palabras y Silencios*.

Natalie Milbrodt, Coordinator, Metadata Services and Director, Queens Memory Project, Queens Public Library, New York City, NY USA

[natalie.milbrodt@queenslibrary.org](mailto:natalie.milbrodt@queenslibrary.org)

Natalie Milbrodt leads the Queens Public Library's Metadata Services Division, responsible for the library's oral history and community archiving program, digitization, and cataloguing. She serves on the Oral History Association's Metadata Task Force and as an advisory board member for Global Grand Central, the New York State Archives and Wikitongues.



### **W3 – Developing Untold Community Oral History Collections by Hanis Diyana Kamarudin**

**23 August 2021 5.00pm-7.00pm (UTC +8)**

Oral history is not only applied in the field of history. Oral history technique has been connected to various areas such as education, health, welfare, anthropology, sociology and psychology. Oral history balances written history and acts as a crucial contribution to memory itself. There is an increasing need to capture valuable stories from women, minorities and people who have been overlooked and kept silent. Community members can design a structure that supports doing, preserving, and maintaining access to oral history collections and to protect the valuable stories for many generations to come. This workshop is open to all interested in the practice of conducting oral histories in order to preserve precious collective memories and unwritten past.

The objectives of this workshop:

- i. Advocates the importance of practicing oral history technique to enrich community oral history;
- ii. Provides guidelines to develop and manage community oral history collections
- iii. Helps community members identify and prioritise oral history programmes for recording.

The half-day workshop introduces participants to seven aspects in the development and management of oral history collections by oral history practitioners:

- i. Co-creation
- ii. Subject identification
- iii. Interviewees
- iv. Evidence
- v. Encoding systems
- vi. Legal and ethical issues
- vii. Engagement

Interested participants are encouraged to bring their ideas to the workshop.



## Target Audience

This workshop is beneficial for policymakers, academics, researchers, advanced-level students and development practitioners, as it will help them to identify opportunities and strategies to encourage greater active public participation in oral history collections' development.

## About the Trainer



Dr Hanis Diyana Kamarudin teaches oral history as part of a Records Management Programme at the Faculty of Information Management, Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia. She obtained her PhD from Monash University, Melbourne, Australia. She served as Deputy Secretary of the Malaysian Oral History Association from 2013 until 2015 and was elected as an Executive Committee in 2020. She is delighted to be part of the Malaysian Oral History Association, bringing academic researchers and industry partners together to record, share, and archive oral history.

## W4 – Oral History for College and University Educators by James Karmel

**23 August 2021 5.00pm-7.00pm (UTC +8)**

This workshop will enable college/university educators to design and implement effective oral history projects with undergraduate students. The presenter will be facilitating conversations and small groups, leading with content surrounding effective practices for real world undergraduate engagement in oral history during the two-hour interactive workshop. The workshop will be in six stages, as follows:

1. Introduction: workshop participants will introduce each other to the group and develop basic goal statements about what they hope to accomplish in the coming year as educators. @15 min.
2. Preparing for the Interview: workshop participants will learn about and discuss strategies for their students to engage narrators before interviews. These strategies are geared towards enabling undergraduates to have successful interactions with narrators to maximize chances for good interviews. @15 min.
3. Conducting the Interview: participants will engage in a workshop experience on strategies to enable students to successfully conduct oral history interviews. @30 min. (10 min. break)
4. Interpreting Oral History: participants will receive instruction and discuss methods of interpreting interviews conducted for class projects and from existing collections accessible online. @15 min.

5. Student Reflections: participants will learn about the importance of student reflections on the oral history process. What did they learn and how was the experience meaningful for them? @15 min.
6. Student Projects: in this phase, participants will share ideas related to effective oral history projects for implementation with their students. @30 min.

### **Target Audience**

College and university educators who teach undergraduates.

### **About the Trainer**



Dr. James Karmel is a Professor of History at Harford Community College in Maryland, USA. He has mentored many undergraduate oral history projects in his career as an educator and presented regularly at IOHA conferences from 2004 to 2016. He is a recent recipient of a National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) grant for a three-year project involving student oral history entitled “Active Learning and Student Engagement: Understanding the Civil Rights Era in Harford County, Maryland.”

## **W5 – Tell Me Your Story! Use of Adaptive Oral History in Reminiscence Work amongst the Elderly by Patricia Lee**

**23 August 2021 5.00-7.00pm (UTC +8)**

This hands-on workshop provides a theoretical and practical frame on the value and use of adaptive oral history methodology in reminiscence work to improve the well-being of the elderly. Participants will learn the skills of connecting and communicating with persons with dementia through interviewing and recording their life stories. Participants will also learn the skills of constructing and asking appropriate questions with the aid of the elderly’s personal belongings such as photographs, documents and objects. At the end of this workshop, participants will appreciate the value of reviewing the oral narratives together with the elderly and help them restructure their negative life events while affirming their positive experiences leading to the discovery of self-worth towards the end stage of their lives.

### **Target Audience**

This workshop is targeted at family carers, volunteers and professionals who are interested in the use of reminiscence through adaptive oral history methodology in bridging and deepening relationships with the elderly, especially persons living with dementia.

### **About the Trainer**

Patricia Lee is a Senior Oral History Specialist with the National Archives of Singapore. She has conducted interviews with more than 200 people from all walks in life. She

also designs and conducts customised oral history training workshops for public institutions on documenting corporate memories.

She champions the use of oral narratives to give meaning to one's identity. As a trained accredited Facilitator of Reminiscence Arts in Dementia Care by the European Reminiscence Network (ERN), her current research interest involves the use of adaptive oral history methodology in reminiscence work among the growing population of elderly in Singapore.



### **About the Guest Speaker**



A/P Carol Ma is the Head of Gerontology Programmes (Master & PhD) at the Singapore University of Social Sciences (SUSS). She is a strong advocate for and an active and passionate practitioner in service-learning and ageing. She takes the lead in curriculum development, community engagement and research in Gerontology and promotes transdisciplinary education to address ageing issues. She has led various ageing and service-learning projects such as elder learning development project, age-friendly cities project (accredited by WHO) and intergenerational project on health & wellbeing. Currently, she is working on a project on Reminiscence in Dementia Care with the National Archives of Singapore and the Alzheimer's Disease Association (ADA), Singapore.

## PAPER SESSIONS

### PAPER SESSION 1

**Tuesday 24 August 2021 9.00–11.00am (UTC +8)**

#### **P1.1 – Concepts and Practices in Oral History**

**Anthonimuthu Selvam (India)** Oral History, Ethics and the Law

The definition of Oral History, Ethics and Legality are intertwined as one sets to precedent to other and influences each other for the well documentation of oral history interview. Ethics are based on moral principles to identify series of well thought out planning of oral history with flexible norms of either structured or semi-structured or non-structured interview to bear the fruit of expected and established facts for further rediscovery of the past.

As far as legality of the oral history interview is concerned, this is in relation to three components which are inseparable in documentation of oral history as a primary source material and its uses. They are Interviewer or the research institution to which Interviewer is associated, Interviewee one who donate the source material in the form of the transcript of the oral history interview and the last is the scholar one who uses it in pursuing his or her research work. Those legal aspects which would enable and facilitate for smooth functioning or methodology of conducting oral history interview as well as facilitating scholars utilizing the final product of the oral history transcript as primary sources. The Interviewer or research institution to which Interviewer is attached should be conversant with legal features associated with the Interviewee, who is the contributor, and the Scholar who is going to use the transcript of the oral history interview.

Therefore, the paper delves upon the Oral History which comes under the ambits of ethics and legality in relation to oral history as it flows from moral principles of eliciting information with conscious mind without any ambiguity as for as Interviewee is concerned in creating primary source material through oral history with conditional operatives of legality which enshrined in respective country's set of principles governing the laws.

**Anthonimuthu Selvam**, former Research Officer, Oral History Project, Nehru Memorial Museum and Library, New Delhi, India, started in 1966, and he functioned in various capacities as Senior Research Assistant, Assistant Research Officer and as Research Officer from 1981 to 2014; Co-Ordinator of NMML (2017-20); Member, IOHA (2019-23).

**Keywords:** audio editing software; bios; breaks of recordings; embargo of information; ethics; file management; first-hand information; laws; legal heirs; oneness; online access; oral history; preservation; primary source; publications; transcription; uniqueness of oral history; witness in court proceedings

**Hanis Diyana Kamarudin (Malaysia)** Developing Oral History Collections: The Importance of Trust

Oral history is one of the essential techniques to capture the past history, where it often captures perspectives and experiences not recorded elsewhere. Anyone involved in an oral history programme needs to be suitably sensitive to the community's needs, and have an emphasis on being honest and open. The erosion of trust occurs when there is no mutual understanding between the interviewers and interviewees involved. Discussions with the potential community are required to ensure a smooth transmission; which indirectly maintains an ethical relationship. Clear and perceivable guidelines for approaching a community are needed as it is crucial to assess the community's preferences and rights. This paper will discuss ethical considerations in recording oral history based on the experience of expert informants, oral history practitioners

and cultural institutions' professionals. Finally, this paper will highlight the possible strategies to overcome the 'trust' issues in developing community oral history collections.

**Hanis Diyana Kamarudin** teaches oral history as part of Records Management Programme at the Universiti Teknologi MARA, Malaysia. She served as Deputy Secretary of the Malaysian Oral History Association from 2013 until 2015. She is delighted to be part of the Malaysian Oral History Association, which brings academic researchers and industry partners together to record, share and archive oral history. She obtained her PhD from Monash University, Melbourne, Australia.

**Keywords:** community; ethics; interview; local contents; oral history; trust

### **Andrew Sturt & Kathleen M. Ryan (USA)** Revisiting 'Homefront Heroines': The Tension Inherent in States of 'Doneness' in Mediated Oral History Projects

When is a project done? It's a provocative question frequently part of oral history discussions; at recent Oral History Association meetings, mini-workshops were held asking "what does done look like"?

We interrogate this question through the web-based documentary *Homefront Heroines: The WAVES of World War II*. Here, "done" was tied to a specific temporal event: the 75th anniversary of the end of the war. The project was initially completed in 2013, but revised, expanded, and relaunched in 2020. It uses oral histories to tell the story of women who served in the United States Navy and Coast Guard.

The revision not only includes adding new multimedia content (digitized historical film, edited videos, expert interviews, photographs, etc.) but also newly edited oral histories features as well as a fully searchable OHMS database of full transcripts/audio/video of the 51 interviews that made up the project. It allows the authors to take advantage of new technology and innovations which can make the online documentary itself more complete.

Instead of a tightly prescribed narrative, the project will allow visitors to explore at their own pace, doing deep dives into information where desired. Thus the project has the potential to truly exhibit both the "shared authority" demanded of feminist oral history (Chase and Bell, 1994), as well as the agency for former audience members to co-create of meaning and content via interactive documentary platforms (Ashton, Guadenzi, and Rose, 2017). Through a self-reflexive analysis of the harmony and disharmony found within the revision process, the paper offers oral historians insights into the practicality of the concept of "doneness."

**Andrew Sturt** is a PhD candidate in Journalism Studies at the University of Colorado Boulder. He holds a Master of Science degree from Temple University in sport business with an emphasis on marketing. Additionally, he holds a Bachelor of Art in communication from University of Colorado Denver. Sturt's research merges autoethnography with oral history interviews and literary journalism as an alternative art-practice based approach of inquiry in journalism studies.

**Kathleen M. Ryan** is a documentary filmmaker and Associate Professor of Journalism at the University of Colorado Boulder. Her hybrid work focuses on transformations in storytelling and oral history due to shifting media technologies. Specifically, she explores the intersection of theory and praxis within evolving media forms such as the interactive documentary. Her projects deal with issues of gender, self-identity, visibility and user/ participant agency. She holds a PhD in communication and society from the University of Oregon, an MA in broadcast journalism from the University of Southern California, and a BA in political science from the University of California, Santa Barbara.

**Keywords:** feminism; interactive documentary; shared authority; technology; World War II

## **Sumallya Mukhopadhyay (India)** '[A]ll time is eternally present': Conceptualising Time in Oral History Narratives

Oral history provides a framework to reread, reinterpret and reconstruct history, focusing on individuals who have witnessed an event of enduring socio-political significance (Perks, 1998). The proposed paper pursues one such event, namely, the 1947 Bengal Partition. Leaning on fieldwork experience, it studies seven oral history narratives of individuals from different class, caste and gender background who were rendered homeless when they migrated under situational duress from East Pakistan to Bengal, India. By doing so, it looks at time to bring together these individuated narratives in a harmonious frame to perspectivize a communitarian understanding of refugee experience in Bengal. Since the interview is conducted almost seventy years after the event, it obviously means that the narratives pertain to time past. However, in the interview space shared between the narrator and the interviewer, time gets negotiated in various forms. Chronological displacement, what Portelli terms "horizontal shift" in narration, depicts how time gets overlapped as narrators often intertwine one episode with another (1990: 41). Oral narratives do not follow a straightforward mode of recollection; they move back and forth, underscoring that time present remains suspended during the interview. These narratives are co-created between the narrator and the interviewer (Sheftel & Zembrzycki, 2013), and reminiscence of ancestral homeland punctuates the narrative with nostalgia and time gets fixated in 1947. Often family members remember some episodes; it suggests that time remains in a continuum where narratives of displacement get percolated from one generation to another. Intergenerational re-telling makes these narratives timeless, creating a community of shared memory and history, echoing T.S. Eliot that "all time is eternally present." The paper intends to establish that the blending of multiple voices and their perspectives through the framework of oral history can help in conceptualising time past and time present, memory and history which is always present.

**Sumallya Mukhopadhyay** is doing his PhD from Indian Institute of Technology, Delhi. His area of interest includes, among other things, the politics of dispossession in narratives related to the Bengal Partition (1947-1970). He is a "student member" of International Oral History Association. He can be reached at [mukhopadhyay.sumallya@gmail.com](mailto:mukhopadhyay.sumallya@gmail.com).

**Keywords:** community; interview; memory; narration; oral history; partition; refugee; time

## **Samir Ketf & Saeideh Mahrami (Iran)** Smart Interview, Technology, and Solving the Challenges in an Interview

Humans confront different sweet and bitter events during their lives. Talking about past bitter events is difficult in oral history interviews about wars. The interviewers' trouble is reviewing and reminding all the memories of wars, fluent and without spiritual challenges for the interviewee.

Iran's nation experienced two great political, cultural and social changes during a short period of time: Islamic revolution and the eight-year war with Iraq. Each single event can be a reason to make "shock and spiritual challenge" in people.

It is proved that destructive effects of war remain in the human's mind more than other events. The anxiety caused by reminding the past bitter events is called PTSD and interviewing with the people who suffer from PTSD (Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder) or the people who have bitter memories is not an easy case because they resist reminding memories unconsciously.

In this article, after studying the effects of war on Iranian fighters and injured people's lives, we introduce a new method of interviewing which is called "smart interview". Using this method, the oral historian can make a better verbal communication with the narrator.

In this method with recognizing oral history, psychology, electronic, the performance of mental frequencies, the five senses and their effect on memory, we have tried to reduce the effect of

bitter memories especially in the field of war without blemishing interview principles of oral history and put the narrator in the best and the most relaxing possible condition to have more fluent and more reliable interviews about war facts and related events.

**Samir Ketf** is an electrical engineer, while **Saeideh Mahrami** holds an MA in English language teaching. Saeideh is the representative for Asia in IOHA. Both of them have published an oral history book titled *The Sun of Hesar*, and have participated in oral history conferences (with article presentations) in Iran (2012), India (IOHA 2016), and Finland (IOHA 2018).

**Keywords:** effects of war; interview; methodology; mental frequencies; oral history; PTSD; smart; technology

## **P1.2 – Oral History and Archives**

### **Yang Qiumeng (China)** Oral History on Safeguarding Intangible Cultural Heritage: Case Study on Intangible Cultural Heritage Bearers Documenting Project of China

The purpose of this paper is to introduce the methodology and application of oral history in safeguarding intangible cultural heritage (hereinafter referred to as ICH). According to *the Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage of UNESCO*, documentation and preservation are the significant measures at ensuring the viability of the intangible cultural heritage (hereinafter referred to as ICH). From 2015, the Intangible Cultural Heritage Bearers Documenting Project was launched national wide in China. It is believed that the object of ICH preservation is the knowledge, memory, technique, creativity, cultural relationship/function of those bearers. Therefore, the best way to document the memory of bearers is combining the oral history interviews with visual anthropology documenting methods. After recording more than 1,300 up national-level representative bearers, the oral history methods primely enriched the original documents and literature resources, broadly expands the research field of ICH preservation, and successfully brings the ICH elements to the general public. Although some problems such as discrepant operation standard, unspecialized interviewers, insufficient access and promotion are found in the practices, there is no denying that the interdisciplinary collaboration of oral history and ICH has brought immeasurable benefits in safeguarding ICH, and has a positive effect on the development of oral history in China.

**Yang Qiumeng**, Master of Social Science, graduated from Hong Kong Baptist University in 2013. Since 2014, she has been working at China Memory Project Center, National Library of China. She was involved in ICH Bearers Documenting Project for six years. Her fields of interests comprise oral history, visual anthropology, and ICH Documenting. She may be contacted at [yangqiumeng1018@163.com](mailto:yangqiumeng1018@163.com).

**Keywords:** documentation; intangible cultural heritage; oral history; safeguarding

### **Lorna Chisholm (Canada)** Collaborative Approaches to Preserving Oral Histories in Canada's Private Archives

Oral expressions help pass on culture and social values and play a “crucial part in keeping cultures alive.” (UNESCO, 2017). For Indigenous communities, recordings of their oral expressions can represent centuries of knowledge passed on through generations and woven into Indigenous cultures (Trimble et al., 2008). Archives acquire and preserve Indigenous oral histories, but while doing so can increase access to the material, it can also be seen as perpetuating colonial practices of knowledge organization. (Canadian Federation of Library Associations, 2017)

As a national memory institution, Library and Archives Canada is the custodian of Canada's history, including material from First Nations, Inuit and Métis Nation cultures. We also have an



oral history tradition of interviewing archivists and donors to add contextual information to our material. From these experiences, we are developing new approaches to working with Indigenous oral histories –approaches based on openness and collaboration – that challenge us to question and decolonize our institutional practices and assumptions.

This session will describe Library and Archives Canada's donor oral history activities, before presenting our Indigenous oral histories initiative, Listen, Hear Our Voices, an initiative that supports the preservation of Indigenous culture and language recordings across Canada. The program was designed with feedback from an Indigenous Advisory Circle and is supported by seven Indigenous archivists working in traditional territories across Canada. Listen, Hear Our Voices does not acquire material but rather recognizes the need for Indigenous communities to control their collections. The program can serve as a case study for other memory institutions to show how being guided by Indigenous knowledge and perspectives can help us better support the preservation of Indigenous oral history recordings.

**Lorna Chisholm** is the lead archivist for the Listen, Hear Our Voices initiative at Library and Archives Canada. Prior to her current position, she was an archivist responsible for literary records in the private archives branch. She has a Master of Arts in Public History from Carleton University, Canada.

**Keywords:** archiving; indigenous; preservation

### **Imogen Smith, Sasha Mackay & Helen Klæbe (Australia)** The Digital Story Bank: Archiving, Organising, and Accessing Oral Histories

Communities and organisations, whether corporate, community-centred or volunteer-driven, hold rich histories and often keep important collections, yet the recording and archiving of this history and historical ephemera can be overlooked. When archiving is carried out, the stories of communities may be removed from their context and transferred to a central location. This raises ethical considerations about supporting communities' ownership of the stories they have created. This article demonstrates how a new tool – the 'Digital Story Bank' – allows communities and organisations to manage and archive their own stories and historical material. This article subsequently proposes that by making use of the tool, communities' and organisations' ability to manage their own history could open up further potential to allow stories to remain in the places they were made – where they are most meaningful. This presentation discusses how the Digital Story Bank, created by researchers at Queensland University of Technology (QUT), was designed and piloted, and explores the potential for the tool to support place-based narratives, particularly in remote communities where issues of place and story are particularly powerful.

**Dr Sasha Mackay's** research explores the practices and impacts of self-representational storytelling and participatory arts for under-served communities. Currently, Sasha is the Research Project Manager of the Australian Research Council Linkage Project 'The Role of the Creative Arts in Regional Australia: A Social Impact Model' (LP180100477) led by Queensland University of Technology.

**Professor Helen Klæbe** has for two decades led research in participatory public history and social engagement using multi art form storytelling strategies to engage communities. Currently, Helen is Chief Investigator on the Australian Research Council Linkage Project 'The Role of the Creative Arts in Regional Australia: A Social Impact Model' (LP180100477).

**Keywords:** archiving; community history; digital storytelling; organisational history; placemaking



## **Zou Kunyi (Thailand) Oral History, Liu Kang, and the Making of Nanyang Art History in Singapore**

While in other countries oral histories are usually employed to balance state power and are initiated by non-governmental organizations, oral history in Singapore originates from and is strongly supported by its government, and is an indispensable part of Singapore's history. As a rather new nation comprised of various ethnicities, including Chinese, Malay, Indian, and Eurasian, nation building is always at the centre of concern for the state. The use and archiving of Singapore's Oral History Project thus plays a significant role in its nation building process, particularly in the construction of its national art history.

Navigating through oral records of a specific group of Chinese Singaporeans termed "pioneer Nanyang/Singapore artists," this article reveals a brief history of the Oral History Project and related institutions in Singapore, its political implications, and connection to national building, specifically in the case of the interview with Liu Kang, a renowned pioneer Nanyang artist. The classification of oral records influences the way researchers use them, particularly with regard to Nanyang artists. Furthermore, the changing classification of Nanyang artists' oral history materials, particularly those of Liu Kang, clearly intertwine with Singapore's changing direction, focusing more on art and culture in creating a national identity.

**Zou Kunyi** is currently a lecturer at Department of History, Chiang Mai University, Thailand. She received her PhD in History from National University of Singapore in the year 2017. Her present research interests lie in the history of Chinese overseas in Singapore and Thailand, and history of veterinary.

**Keywords:** Liu Kang; Nanyang artists; Singapore nation building; Singapore oral history project

## **PAPER SESSION 2**

**Tuesday 24 August 2021 5.00pm–7.00pm (UTC +8)**

### **P2.1 – Exhibiting Oral History**

**Esther Johnson (UK)** *SHIPS in the SKY: Connecting People to People, and People to Place through Untold Social Histories*

This paper looks at the research methodology and findings of *SHIPS in the SKY* by Sheffield Hallam University Professor of Film and Media Arts Esther Johnson.

Inspired by Alan Boyson's (1930–2018) 66x64ft *Three Ships* mural (the UK's largest mosaic), this project uncovers alternative histories of an iconic Hull landmark. The post-war mural floats above the entrance to the former Hull & East Riding Co-operative Society department store, later a British Home Stores. Two further Boyson murals rediscovered inside the building are *FISH*, and a 'sponge-print' mural. These murals are emblematic of Britain's post-war rebuilding, and of the rich seam of Hull's maritime heritage. The building has had many lives – market, dance hall, music venue and nightclubs. Following closure in 2016, the building is boarded-up ahead of demolition and redevelopment. *Three Ships* has since been Grade II Listed, leading to further debate as to the value of the building to the local and wider community.

The heart of *SHIPS in the SKY* is about connecting people to people, and people to place.

By creating a memory mosaic of lived experiences this research explores the role of public art and civic identity. Through oral testimonies and film, the research evokes peoples' navigation and memories of the public realm to connect residents with the unique built environment of Hull, stimulating new perspectives of the familiar. As an extension of this, audiences are encouraged to look at and discover new aspects of their own surroundings that may have otherwise remained hidden or ignored.

Activities have centred on the capturing of 100+ oral histories of memories of the building from staff, shoppers and night-clubbers, and individuals with an interest in local/national history, post-war public art, architecture and modernism. A series of public awareness events and exhibitions have taken place challenging participants to recognise their personal significance in making history and has encouraged decision makers to consider the power of the collective voice. Through the 2020 COVID-19 lockdowns, a successful charity initiative raised funds for UK food banks. Ongoing plans include larger-scale events, production of an artist film, community mosaic and poetry workshops, and final exhibition.

This presentation will include audio/film clips to discuss:

- Engagement activities for uncovering and recording hidden social histories giving prominence to stories that may otherwise be lost
- Utilising archive and memorabilia to prompt fresh readings of history
- The testing of novel methodologies to create an extended understanding of social histories

**Esther Johnson** (MA, Royal College of Art) works at the intersection of artist film and documentary. Her poetic portraits focus on alternative social histories and the relationship between archival material, memory and storytelling. She is particularly interested in neglected and marginal stories that may otherwise remain hidden or ignored. Recurring themes include heritage, tradition, folklore, regeneration, and exploration of architectural vernaculars and the inhabited environment. Work has broadcast on television and radio, and exhibited internationally in 40+ countries including at BFI London Film Festival; CPH:Dox, Copenhagen; ICA, London; NASA, California; International Documentary Film Festival Amsterdam; Istanbul Biennial; SXSW, and Tate galleries. Esther is a former recipient of the prestigious Philip Leverhulme Research Prize in Performing & Visual Arts and is Professor of Film and Media Arts at Sheffield Hallam University, UK. Her current feature film *DUST & METAL* is in production in Vietnam and supported by the British Council. Her Twitter handle is @BlanchePictures, while her Instagram handle is @Blanche\_Pictures.

**Keywords:** archive; architecture; artist moving image; cooperative movement; documentary; nightclubs; oral testimonies; public art; social history

### **Kanako Sasaki (Japan)** Revitalizing and Reconstructing the Town of Namie by Archiving Memories: Introducing the Digital Calendar NAMIE HOURS

Fukushima evacuees from the nuclear explosion in 2011 have been oppressing their own voice to speak about their lives, because of the stigmatization of being an evacuee. Many of their stories and voices are stored away and forgotten. This artistic project aims to provide a place where they can feel at home and are securely able to express their own voice, as well as to hand over local stories permanently to the next generation by introducing artistic expression.

This project is designed around a web calendar that can upload a photograph with Namie memories each day. The team conducted photography workshops with the evacuees from town of Namie, Fukushima and analysed their photographic pieces. Visual media such as photographs can express emotion and inspire other related stories.

We organised a photography workshop to create photographic work. We conducted four sessions: introducing art in photography, poetics in photography and building personal stories. At the last session, we exchanged works and stories. This project shows how oral history can be shown in visual media, which can communicate deeply and can be more inspirational.

**Kanako Sasaki** is an assistant professor at Tohoku University, Japan. Currently archiving memories of Namie in various media, she has been involved in the community since 2011. The project may be found at <https://namiehours.net>.

**Keywords:** archive system; artistic expression; Fukushima; photographs; stories

## **Lu Wenshi (Singapore) The Times of Unrest: Bridging the Gaps**

This presentation covers the importance of oral history in engaging audience in historical sites associated with the times of unrest. Drawing examples from significant sites of Southeast Asia, the session would highlight the role of oral history as a primary source to bridge the gaps in the curation process, as well as how it enhances audience experience during their visit to the sites. The case studies covered in this presentation would be beneficial to oral history practitioners and heritage professionals who intend to curate an exhibition or a trail that weaves in oral history accounts.

**Lu Wenshi** is the Manager/Archives Services at the National Archives of Singapore (NAS). Formerly an Oral History Specialist with the NAS' Oral History Centre, and being the project manager for the revamp of the Former Ford Factory exhibition "Surviving the Japanese Occupation: War and its Legacies", she sees the importance of oral history not just in filling in gaps in historical information, but also to engage audience by appealing to their hearts through oral history interviews.

Wenshi is a traveller by passion, who has a keen interest in Indochina. Having been to the sites of turbulent histories in Cambodia and Vietnam, and hearing first-hand accounts of war veterans, she believes in the importance of oral history when it comes to the curation of exhibitions and stories.

**Keywords:** curate; exhibition; trail; war

## **P2.2 – Folklore and the Forgotten**

### **Lynn Wong (Singapore) Singapore's Forgotten Seven Sisters' Festival**

The Seven Sisters' Festival, also known as Qixi, Qiqiaojie or the Chinese Valentine's Day, takes place on the 7th day of the 7th lunar month, with celebrations starting from the 6th day evening. It was once an important traditional Chinese festival celebrated in Singapore up till the 1960s, comparable to other festivals such as the Chinese New Year.

This festival has its origins in the mythical love story between a cowherd and a weaving lady who was one of the seven fairy sisters, though there are different variations of the legend. Religious worship of the seven fairy sisters, generally by unmarried female devotees, was one of the key features of the celebration.

The annual Seven Sisters' Festival used to be a much-anticipated elaborate affair especially in the Cantonese-populated Chinatown areas. Worship altars filled with offerings and the display of exquisite handicrafts would attract throngs of curious visitors till late into the night.

However, within a span of a generation, this time-honoured festival has since disappeared.

With little known material trace of this festival except for scant photographic and newspaper documentation as well as a small collection of oral history interviews, prior attempts at reconstructing the festival have been limited. This is coupled with the fact that many of the past oral history interviews conducted were not with stakeholders directly involved in the festival, but mere onlookers.

The current research fills this dearth in knowledge by amassing the social memories of stakeholders involved in different aspects of the Seven Sisters' Festival, such as social practices, rituals, traditional craftsmanship, food heritage, and performing arts. In examining the factors that contributed to the disappearance of this once important traditional festival, the research provides important lessons for how Singapore can safeguard (and possibly revive) its intangible cultural heritage.

**Lynn Wong** is an independent heritage consultant. Her research interests include the Chinese diaspora as well as disappearing cultures in Singapore. She is the inaugural Outstanding Youth Award recipient conferred by the Singapore Federation of Chinese Clan Associations in recognition of her dedication and innovative efforts to revive clan associations. More information of her works at [www.lynnwong.online](http://www.lynnwong.online).

**Keywords:** Chinese Valentine's Day; disappearing festival; festival; intangible cultural heritage; oral history; Seven Sisters' Festival; social memories

### **Matti Bakor War (India) Spoken Word and Stories: Folk Narratives and their Continuing Relevance in Present-Day Khasi Society**

Stories have played a pivotal role in shaping the worldview and consciousness of individuals and communities by and large. For the Khasi community, their worldview has primarily shaped by the oral narratives which have been passed down from generation to generation, and which remain relevant despite the interventions of a new faith, the introduction of the Khasi script and fast-paced globalisation bringing about a shift in societal dynamics. The written script still has to contend with the spoken word.

Khasi tales and narratives have a dominant influence upon the customs and way of life of the Khasi community. Right from when the Khasi man lost the script bestowed upon him by God, fables, parables and other oratory devices have served as a means of imparting wisdom upon the community. Each recounted tale carries weight and relevance and often has multi-dimensional facets to the lessons it imparts to the willing listener. Thus, we have a milieu of stories to derive lessons from, be it the tragic tale of a man being unable to provide for his close friend to the legend of how greed reared its ugly head again after being nearly vanquished and many more. The Khasi knowledge system and the oral narratives it harbours have shown resilience in being an essential source of wisdom and guidance for its people. This paper seeks to present to the reader a glimpse into the Khasi worldview through such oral repositories and how they mould a community in a way that makes it distinguishable from the multitude of other communities it thrives alongside.

**Matti Bakor War** is a research scholar currently pursuing her PhD in the Centre for English Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University. She is studying folk literature and cultural studies and hopes to excel in her field of interest in the future.

**Keywords:** community; culture; ethics; orality; worldview

### **Wang Shuqin Sandy (Singapore) History, Orality, and the Construction of the German Girl Shrine Legend**

The German Girl Shrine legend is a legend narrative that explains the origin of a shrine at Pulau Ubin (an offshore-island of Singapore) dedicated to an anonymous German girl, who has presumably met her demise during her escape from British internment of enemy subjects in Singapore during WWI. This legend narrative was constructed primarily from oral history accounts, and it was transmitted through word-of-mouth and repeated narration from the local residents of the island. With increased interest in the shrine's history in the early 2000s, however, there was also a proliferation of written accounts based on the pool of oral accounts. As with other contemporary legend narratives, this legend narrative of the origin of the German Girl Shrine was also subjected to distortion through transmission, be it written or oral. Many who promulgated the legend narrative have also erroneously presented it as the history of the shrine, often interweaving actual historical events with the legend narrative. Over time, the legend narrative became conflated with, and was presented as the irrefutable history of the shrine. In this context, this paper examines how the German Girl Shrine legend narrative came to be presented and perceived as the historical truth over time, and how this phenomenon in

turn shaped the structure of the legend narrative. How the legend narrative became conflated with the history of the shrine also illustrates some fundamental insights on the Singapore public's approach to history, reflecting their understanding of what are "history" and "legend". By comparing the legend narrative with a critically reconstructed history of the shrine (using a range of print and oral sources available), this paper also highlights the incongruencies between the legend narrative and the historical origin of the shrine, and through doing so, addresses broader methodological issues on the (mis)use of oral accounts.

**Wang Shuqin Sandy** graduated from the National University of Singapore with a Bachelor of Arts in History in 2016 and a Master of Arts in History in 2020. Her research areas include the history of Singapore, civil-military relations in garrison towns, and the history of decolonisation in Singapore and Malaya.

**Keywords:** legend narrative; orality; Singapore history

### **Honjem Konyak (India) Oral Narratives and Archaeology: A Case Study of the Ancestral Sites of Chohzu Village in Nagaland**

Nagaland, comprising of about sixteen different ethnic communities is a small state in the north-eastern part of India. Archaeologically, the entire northeast has often been remarked as a "terra incognita" region. However, recent interdisciplinary approaches have not only tended to shift away from earlier held assumptions, but have also presented possibilities to tap into the rich oral repertoire, accentuated largely by the absence of "written" or "tangible" material evidence. As such, the paper is an attempt to look into oral narratives with regard to origin and migration of the descendants of today's Choknyu village.

**Honjem Konyak** is currently a doctoral candidate at the Centre for Historical Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. His ongoing PhD thesis is on the material culture study of the Konyak 'Baan' (a social and educational institution, often loosely defined simply as "men's hall" or "dormitory"). His area of interest includes studies in oral history, archaeology, material culture, linguistic and anthropology. Overall, he is interested in an interdisciplinary approach studies.

**Keywords:** ancestral sites; archaeology; interdisciplinary; oral narratives

## **P2.3 – Voices and Texts**

### **Simona Sarma (India) Dissonance in Oral History: Is There an Authentic Past?**

Oral history teaches us that the past is constantly in flux. Through the medium of art forms, especially folk forms like folk music, folk dances and folk art, one can gauge at the politics of "orality" in detail. The very fact of it being oral makes it a form that can change with people's perceptions such that one can locate the diverse ways people make sense of history itself. In this paper, by looking at Goalpariya folk music of Assam, India, and its various facets, I have tried to critically analyse how there is both a 'political' as well as an 'aesthetic' construction of the past through the folk form. This construction of the past deconstructs the conventional notion of "folk" as a neutral, static, historically continuous, and an unproblematic concept. The criticality with regards to folk music has been largely derived from the persistent discussions on the "authenticity question" that surfaced during my fieldwork. Basing my research on the methodological framework of ethnomusicology, my focus is both on the songs as well as the context from which the songs have originated (along with the myriad discussions surrounding the folk). Through in-depth interviews with several stakeholders associated with the folk form, I have made an attempt to draw the interconnections and linkages of folk music with the themes of identity assertion, tradition, authenticity, dissonance in oral history, and overall dynamism inherent within the concept of folk. Especially with the changing global cultural economy, the

call for a “pure folk,” points towards an inherent politics that surrounds folk music. What is defined as “traditional” is therefore constantly in flux. The multiple positionalities that get constituted through oral history brings forth the politics of authenticity with respect to *how*, *what*, and *who* of the folk form.

**Simona Sarma** is a Ph.D. Research Scholar at the Advanced Centre for Women’s Studies under the School of Development Studies in Tata Institute of Social Sciences, Mumbai. She has completed her post-graduation in Sociology from the Delhi School of Economics, University of Delhi. She works in the area of performance studies, popular culture, folklore studies, and cultures in Northeast India. She has published papers in distinguished journals like *Folklore* (Routledge) and *Economic and Political Weekly*. In her free time, she likes to sing and cook!

**Keywords:** Assam; folk music; globalisation; pastness; politics of authenticity

### **Sukrity Gogoi (India)** Spoken Word Poetry Performances: Narratives from the Stage and Cyber Space

Tracing the history of spoken word poetry culture, this paper will explore how ‘popular’ cultural art forms resonate with existing oral traditions in India – its shifts and continuities. From its emergence in the working class revolution in the American context, spoken word poetry has metamorphosed into ‘open mic’ live events and curated shows in Indian city spaces. This paper is based on an ethnographic study undertaken in Mumbai whereby in-depth interviews were conducted with performance poets of spoken word poetry. Drawing from the personal trajectories of the spoken word artists, it will throw light upon the “hybridity” of spoken word as an art form. With its ever-growing presence through ‘open mic’ events and performance poetry videos on the cyber space, it has formed a niche of its own. Moreover, the experiences of male and female poets (and curators) are very different in the digital platforms with regard to audience reception.

This paper will also explore the question of representation, identity and language on the performance stage. From being a “close-knit” community of poets to its present form of commercialization, where brand collaborations take place, it becomes imperative to delve deeper and question how the community building practices have evolved. In its contemporary format, the poet performer engages with a live audience while performing one’s poetry. This art of uninhibited story-telling is an act of resistance which has created a ‘carnavalesque space’ to express. Yet, it also leads to inclusions and exclusions of certain voices. It becomes imperative then to study this cultural phenomenon to understand and debunk the hierarchies within the poetry community.

**Sukrity Gogoi** is a PhD Research Scholar at the Advanced Centre for Women’s Studies, Tata Institute of Social Sciences (TISS), Mumbai. She completed her M.Phil. from TISS, Mumbai and her Master’s degree in English Literature from University of Delhi. Her research interests are in performance and theatre, gender studies, art and culture.

**Keywords:** cyberspace; gender; performance art; spoken word poetry; urban culture

### **Stephanie Anderson, Momoko Mandere, Zainab Farooqui, & Tess Redman (China)** Student Researchers and *Spies in the Audience*

*Spies in the Audience* is a collection of interviews with women who were actively engaged with small-press publishing between the 1950s and 1980s. It comes from a desire not only to preserve these accounts but also to draw attention to the vital role of women editors and publishers in the mimeograph revolution and beyond. Recent writings and curatorial work have underscored the importance of small press publications in these decades, but women are still often underrepresented in these accounts. This research further illuminates the formative work

done by women in partnership with male editors and on their own. The women editors and publishers in this project contributed to and stretched the perceived boundaries of schools and movements, including geographically disparate scenes from New York to Mexico City to Vancouver, whether focused on poetry or feminist collectivity. During these years “poems were bouncing off the sidewalk,” as Maureen Owen says. *Spies in the Audience* is a timely and urgent documentation of literary and social history.

This presentation gives a brief overview of the genesis and editing of *Spies in the Audience*, an interview project now spanning ten years. Then Dr. Anderson’s summer research students at Duke Kunshan University, who are involved in curating archival components of the project and designing a digital humanities website (“An Archive of Spies in the Audience”), will present key aspects of their research, including the sociality of the poetry scenes, their own interview work, website design challenges, and so forth.

**Stephanie Anderson (pronouns she/her)** is the author of three books of poetry and assistant professor of American Literature at Duke Kunshan University. Her scholarly articles have appeared or are forthcoming in LIT: Literature Interpretation Theory, nonsite.org, and The Life and Work of Larry Eigner. Her book of interviews with women in small press publishing, *Spies in the Audience*, is forthcoming.

**Momoko Mandere (pronouns she/her)** is a rising senior at Duke Kunshan University majoring in Media and Arts. Her interests include children’s media, literature, and cultural development. In the past she has worked at the Kunshan Digital Archive, a Digital Humanities project focused on curating works that document the history and contemporary life of the city of Kunshan.

**Zainab Farooqui (pronouns she/her)** is from Lahore, Pakistan. She is a rising junior and a Global Cultural Studies Major at Duke Kunshan University. In the past, she has written a literary article for a team based research project on Clarice Lispector’s “The Hour of the Star,” which is in press at a major Portuguese literature magazine. She is currently researching on Stephanie Anderson’s Project “An Archive of Spies in the Audience,” where she is focusing on project components regarding the elements of the publishing process and the necessity of community in producing a physical magazine.

**Tess Redman (pronouns she/her)** is a rising sophomore at Duke Kunshan University, major undeclared. Her research experience consists of independent research project on islet transplantation as a method of treating or potentially curing Type 1 Diabetes. “An Archive of Spies in the Audience” is her first foray into team-based humanities research. Her personal academic interest aligns with the “Self-Publishing: Then & Now” section of the project: how the sharing of poetry and literature has evolved since the mid-20th century.

**Keywords:** archive; interview; poetry; publishing

## PAPER SESSION 3

**Wednesday 25 August 2021 9.00am–11.00am (UTC +8)**

### **P3.1 – Recording Community Experiences**

**Benjamin Ho (Singapore)** Collecting Oral History with the Community; from the Community

Singapore is a multi-ethnic society. Most residents are of Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian descent. In 2017, Oral History Centre (OHC) embarked on an initiative to partner members from the Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian communities to collect their respective community-specific oral histories.

OHC implemented a strategy of partnering key members of the communities in the form of Chinese, Malay, Indian and Eurasian Community Oral History Committees. These committees,

working closely with OHC, ensure that the gaps in community-specific oral history are filled and the contents representative of Singapore's ethnic diversity.

A sizable number of interviews of more than a hundred were conducted. The topics discussed are broad-ranging and many include the interviewees' involvement in their community-specific institutions. Interviewees come from diverse fields such as the arts, business, education, sports, and media.

This presentation aims to share the learning points in the journey of partnering with the community in collecting oral history. OHC's roles in this journey involve consultancy work, training, logistical and administrative support. This is of interest to oral history practitioners who are currently managing or intending to start community-based oral history projects.

**Benjamin Ho** is a Specialist at the Oral History Centre, National Archives of Singapore (NAS). He has conducted oral history interviews on the political history of Singapore, the public service, education and urban planning. He conducts training in oral history methodology and partners the community in collecting oral history. Prior to joining NAS, he taught history for several years. He firmly believes in making oral history accessible to everyone.

**Keywords:** community; oral history; partnerships

### **Anitha Devi Pillai (Singapore)** Autobiographic Narratives of the Malayalee Community in Singapore

This talk describes a research study on the Malayalee community in Singapore using autobiographic narrative as a primary methodological framework. Malayalees are South Indians from the state of Kerala and speak Malayalam. In Singapore, they are the second largest Indian sub-community after the Tamils

The aim of the study was to identify literacy and cultural practices as well as document migration experiences of the Malayalee community. The talk will include key findings of the research study focusing on the community's culture and literacy practices.

As this was a maiden venture into documenting the Malayalee community in Singapore, autobiographic narrative was selected as the primary medium of data collection. "Oral history often focuses on just one theme, or one phase in a life" (Thompson, 2017, p.8), but oral history interviews that are conducted over an extended period of time, also serve as life stories or autobiographic narratives, which "allow (greater) insights into a person's private world, making them both unique and appealing" (Pauwels, 2016, p. 78).

In this study, interviews were conducted with 130 Malayalees from the ages of 21 to 82 between 2014 to 2016. The interviewees' narratives were documented, their ancestors'/parents' migration patterns to Singapore from Kerala were described and the community's oral and literacy practices were analyzed. These interviews were supported by two other types of data, namely cultural artifacts (newspaper articles, documents and memorabilia collected from the community) and participant observations. Bearing in mind that written autobiographic narratives are powerful artefacts of people's memories and life experiences, these interviews were then written up as mini biographies and published as a book, titled *From Kerala to Singapore: Voices from the Singapore Malayalee Community* (2017).

The talk also examines the challenges and the benefits of using autobiographic narrative as a methodological framework.

**Dr Anitha Devi Pillai** is an applied linguist and a teacher-educator at National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University (Singapore). She was the Principal Investigator of the 'Singapore Malayalee Story' which was supported by National Heritage Board (Singapore). The findings have been disseminated via a book, journal articles, chapters and



keynote addresses. Currently, she is a committee member of the Indian Community Oral History Committee (ICOHC).

**Keywords:** autobiographic narrative; community; oral history; Malayalee

**Arlete Assumpção Monteiro (Brazil)** Encajeras y oralidad: Playa del Sambaqui, Santa Catarina, Brasil *[in Spanish]*

El litoral atlántico del Estado de Santa Catarina, Brasil, fue poblado por portugueses continentales y de las Islas del Archipiélago de los Azores. En 1739, la Corona portuguesa creó la Capitanía de Santa Catarina, la separó de São Paulo. De 1747 a 1753 embarcaron cerca de 6 mil hombres, mujeres y niños de la Isla Tercera y otras del archipiélago con destino al sur de Brasil. Las familias fueron distribuidas en la Isla de Santa Catarina y en la parte continental do litoral catarinense. En 22 de enero de 1808, la Corte Portuguesa transfirió su sed para Brasil. Don João VI, preocupado con las fronteras brasileñas envió una expedición al sur de Brasil, con la misión de elegir un local para que se fundara una colonia de pescadores, según aquellas existentes en Portugal. La Enseada de las Garoupas fue este local elegido para la fundación de dicha Colonia. En 1818, la Galera Conde de Peniche aportó en Rio de Janeiro con varias familias portuguesas, acompañadas de un cura, un boticario y un calafate que fueron llevados a la Enseada, para la Fundación de la Colonia de Nova Ericeira, hoy Porto Belo, Bombiñas, Camboriú y otros municipios. La presente investigación está centrada en las mujeres que tejen hilos, pinchan alfileres, puntean bilros y transforman los hilos en rentas, en el distrito de Santo Antonio de Lisboa, en el Barrio y Playa del Sambaqui, en la Isla de Santa Catarina, litoral atlántico sur brasileño. La metodología utilizada privilegió los testimonios orales. Las encajeras hoy son guardianas de la cultura local, pues participan de la danza del Palo de Cinta, de la cantoría del Buey de Mamão, de la danza de la Peneira. En Portugal, hacer rentas de bilros es una tradición mantenida en el Distrito de Peniche, localizado en el litoral portugués y próximo de la Ericeira. El saber de las encajeras de la Playa del Sambaqui y comunidades próximas, tuvo su origen en la región de Peniche, Portugal, tradición que se transformó en verdadera herencia social.

**Profa. Dra. Arlete Assumpção Monteiro.** Dra em História pela Universidade de São Paulo. Docente Titular na Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo. Pesquisadora e membro da diretoria do CERU-Centro de Estudos Rurais e Urbanos - Universidade de São Paulo. Membro do NEHSC - Núcleo de Estudos de História Social das Cidades, Pontifícia Universidade Católica de São Paulo. Email: [arlete.as@gmail.com](mailto:arlete.as@gmail.com).

**Palabras clave:** herencia cultural; rentas y encajeras; testigos orales; tradiciones

**Sridevi Menon (USA)** Telling their Stories: A Micro-History of Expatriate Life in a Borneo Oil Town

In the wake of the Japanese Occupation of Borneo during World War II, the British Malayan Petroleum Company recruited hundreds of Indians to rehabilitate the oilfield and staff their offices in Seria, Brunei. Many of these Indians spent several decades in Brunei, forging a visible expatriate community that was shaped by the oil town's protocols of race and class. While Seria occupies a central place in the national imaginary, the role of Indians in the oil town has gone unacknowledged and unrecorded in Brunei's narratives of nationhood. Between 2003-2016, I collected the stories of over 50 Indians who had lived in Seria during the 1940s-1970. In the absence of a public record of Indian workers contribution to building and staffing the oil town, these oral histories provide a rare glimpse of the lived experiences of Indians. This paper examines the value of oral histories in recording the stories of communities rendered invisible in the metanarratives of nationhood. These stories reveal the ethnic and racial textures of community, diasporic and expatriate cultural production, and point to other stories within these oral histories that have eluded the public record. Thus, in the oral histories that I recorded, ghost

stories and gossip embed other histories that have hitherto gone unacknowledged. In pointing to the value of oral history, I also explore how subjective reminiscences forge narratives of community and culture. The oral histories of Indians in Brunei, I argue, therefore serves to elucidate the ways in which oral histories often are the only means of delineating micro-histories of work and life in the monitored spaces of intrinsically diverse expatriate sites such as company towns.

**Sridevi Menon** is an Associate Professor of Ethnic Studies at Bowling Green State University. Her research interests focus on the racial politics and welfare capitalism of company towns; global economies of expatriate labor; ethnographic mediations of memory and history; and transnational sites of ethnic and historical remembering.

**Keywords:** expatriate communities; memory; microhistory; oral memoir

### **Bernardo Buarque de Hollanda & Raphael Rajão Ribeiro (Brazil)** Oral History and Football Practice in Brazil: From an Emerging Methodology and Field of Study to the Critical Review of the 'Country of Football' (1970s-2010s)

This paper presents the process of non-professional players and clubs claiming urban spaces for the practice of "várzea football", an amateur mode existing in different cities, including the state capital of Minas Gerais, Belo Horizonte. From this case study we aim to show new facets of the Brazilian sports universe as orally narrated by their anonymous actors and their respective associative entities, which were capable of proposing less common approaches to community dimensions when compared to the international image of the "country of football". This demonstration uses sources and methods based on Oral History, whose history of development in Brazil is contextualized in this paper. With the same intent, this presentation offers an overview of the introduction of football studies in the country from the 1970s, a moment when the theme was not recognized within academia, to contemporaneity, a period when research on the topic grows with significant qualitative and quantitative range.

**Bernardo Buarque de Hollanda.** Professor of the School of Social Sciences, Fundação Getúlio Vargas-CPDOC, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Email: [bernardobuarque@gmail.com](mailto:bernardobuarque@gmail.com).

Ph.D (2008) in Social History of Culture from the Pontifícia Universidade Católica (PUC-Rio). Post-doctoral degree from the Maison des sciences de l'homme de Paris (Bourse Hermès-2009) and from the University of Birmingham (Rutherford Fellowship – 2018).

**Raphael Rajão Ribeiro.** Ph.D candidate in History at the School of Social Sciences, Fundação Getúlio Vargas-CPDOC, Rio de Janeiro, Brazil. Email: [raprajao@gmail.com](mailto:raprajao@gmail.com).

Master (2007) in History from the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG), and Ph.D student in History, Politics and Cultural Goods from the School of Social Sciences of CPDOC-FGV. Higher Education Technician – Cultural Heritage of the Municipal Foundation of Culture of Belo Horizonte, works at Abílio Barreto Historic Museum.

**Keywords:** Brazilian football; identity and conflict; oral history in Brazil; sports practices; territory

## **P3.2 – Migration and Refuge**

### **Zeila de Brito Fabri Demartini (Brazil)** Children and Youth Between East and West: Japanese in São Paulo and Dekasseguis in Japan

We focus on the specificities experienced by the Japanese in two moments: when they came to São Paulo in the first decades of the twentieth century and when thousands of families began to migrate to work back to Japan since 1980. We privilege the oral narratives produced by

immigrant subjects and their families that we obtained through interviews aimed to know the field. In the first decades of the last century, the pressure of these families for the schooling of their children was big, since they already had in Japan more structured school networks than in São Paulo, they invested primarily in the schooling of their children. Since 1908 they started an intense process of creating schools: in 1932 there were already a large number of schools (185) in the state of São Paulo and also teachers of Japanese (211) in the capital and inland. However, there was a reversal of the Japanese group in the late twentieth and early twenty-first decades, when many children and young people headed to Japan with their family, in a reverse process from earlier twentieth-century flows. From the 1980s onwards more than 200,000 Brazilian *dekasseguis* arrived in Japan annually. The problems of schooling of children are numerous and young people end up choosing to work, interrupting their studies and compromising a school path that would be "normal" if they had stayed in São Paulo. The priority in this flow is work and financial gain, not the educational process as a means of social ascension. In this displacement the previous social ties break and the difficulty of establishing new ones makes it difficult for children and young people to integrate both in Japan and in Brazil when they return. This back-and-forth involves life projects, cultural conflicts, family breakdowns in a continuous process of repetitive migration.

**Zeila de Brito Fabri Demartini.** Ph.D. in Sociology (University of São Paulo). Research Director of the Centro de Estudos Rurais e Urbanos (CERU/USP); Research of the National Council for the Scientific and Technological Development (CNPq); Collaborator Professor of the State University of Campinas (UNICAMP). Research interests: methodology; oral history; social history: education, childhood and culture; educational sociology; immigration.

**Keywords:** between East and West; children and youth; *dekasseguis* in Japan; Japanese in São Paulo

### **Eve Wicks-Puodžiūnaitė (Australia)** From Silence to Voice: Writing Compelling History through Recuperating the Exile's Voice, Historical Photographs and Photographic Image-Making

Thousands of Lithuanians fled to Australia in the aftermath of World War Two. Their history has been silenced, unrecognised and unrecorded. This project corrects this omission through a combination of oral history and multimodal creative writing. The project focussed on the spaces of darkness that emerged in response to the twin trauma of Australia's assimilationist policies and of the Soviet Union's long occupation of their homes. The project emerges from decades of deep engagement with the community, involving extended oral history interviews, photography, a museum exhibition and community-based activities, as well as archival research. The result was a compelling research-led creative practice that created a multimodal book. This book interweaves oral histories and authorial expressive prose, with historical photographs and contemporary photography of people, places and items of value. Authorial prose communicates interviewees' embodied performance. Oral history voices are brought forth in the text through design and referencing features in text essays and presentation as poetic fragments. Voices in poems and songs, reflecting oral tradition and community practice conceptually historically and culturally enhance the narrative and conjure more shades of meaning and significance for readers through the poetic form. Texts embedded in linen imagery infuse a Lithuanian aesthetic and create chambers for quiet reflection. The result is a recuperation of historical and contemporary voices for a community whose experience has otherwise been traumatically erased from the public consciousness. It has created an innovative, permanent, accessible archive, preserving the memories of a first-generation Lithuanian community at its close.

**Dr Eve Wicks-Puodžiūnaitė**, was born in Brisbane to Lithuanian parents who fled to Australia from Soviet-occupied Lithuania in 1940. Wicks' earliest studies and careers were in medical laboratory science and lecturing at Queensland Institute of Technology (QIT) and afterwards, in post-graduate Educational studies at the University of Queensland (UQ) and counselling

university students at the Queensland University of Technology (QUT). Creative research projects with Lithuanians in Queensland include a major storyboard exhibition at the Queensland Museum, South Bank, Brisbane, while undertaking community history study at UQ and a MAVA degree at the Queensland College of Art, Griffith University. The book, *Saulėje ir šešėlyje: In Sunshine and Shadow*, is the creative outcome of Wicks' Doctoral Dissertation awarded in creative writing as a cross-disciplinary scholar in History and Visual Arts – photography. Together with photographic images, it was selected as an art object and displayed in an exhibition of works of Lithuanian heritage artists in the world diaspora, in Vilnius, 1–11 July 2018 – part of Lithuania's '100 years since independence declared in 1918' celebrations. Wicks participated in the Brisbane Writers Festival, 8 September 2019, on two panels: 'The Eye Word', about 'how art and words can intersect to tell powerful stories'; and 'Voices Written Out of History', concerning 'stories that history has forgotten' and 'why'.

**Keywords:** community history; creative writing; photography; refugee; trauma

### **Md. Pervejur Rahaman (USA) Noakhali Riots 1946: A Historical Memory**

The partition of India in 1947 caused one of the greatest migrations in human history. In 1947, the British colonial power partitioned India on the basis of Hindu and Muslim majority. Pakistan was pieced together combining two far-apart wings of India: East Pakistan and West Pakistan. Within a short space of a few months, around twelve million people moved to newly created Pakistan and India. The wave of the partition displaced people and forced them to exchange their homes at a rapid pace. Across the India subcontinent, neighbors and communities who lived together for generations with relative love and affection for each other were caught up in unimaginable riots; the mutual respect turned into a mutual genocide.

The memories of the partition are still recalled privately and in family contexts in India, Pakistan, and Bangladesh (East Pakistan became Bangladesh in 1971). This paper examines two family memories – one Hindu and one Muslim in Bangladesh, then known as East Bengal – and focuses on what type of problems the Hindu family faced during the time of riots. The Hindu interviewee shared with me that they heard girls were raped and tortured and then murdered in other places. Gandhi's "peace-mission" gave them great relief; he came to reconcile the communities. My interviewee also pointed out that not all of the Muslim people were accomplices in riots. There were cordial relations and peaceful coexistence between Hindu and Muslim people. The Muslim rioters targeted Hindu upper class landowners who exploited their Muslim tenants. And yet, there were also Hindu landowners who were more friendly with their Muslim subjects.

I also interviewed a Muslim, Abul Kalam, who now lives in a house previously owned by a Hindu family. He discussed how Bengali Hindus left their houses when their house burnt into ashes. As a friendly Muslim neighbor to Hindu, his perspective provides an outside observation of how the Hindus were treated during the riots. Due to the riots, all Bengali Hindu teachers also left the schools, since mostly teachers were from Hindu community. The Hindu concentrated areas slowly withered away after the riots because they could not trust Muslims anymore. This paper will give attention to micro history of riots which has not been yet discussed. Thus, the oral history would give a new narrative of Noakhali riots and the partition. Though oral history is a heavily contested area in historical discourse, I am hugely touched by how the narrator's recollection of memories revealed both descriptive and emotional dimensions of the event of partition at a community level. In order to fully understand the impact of the riots on both Hindu-Muslim communities, it is important to gather first-hand testimonies.

**Md. Pervejur Rahaman** is a second-year PhD student in the Middle Tennessee State University Public History Program, Murfreesboro, Tennessee. I maintain an outstanding GPA with giving concentration on Oral History under the direction of Dr. Martha Norkunas. I have completed a series of professional quality oral history interviews for the seminar of Oral History Theory and Methodology.

**Keywords:** Hindu-Muslim; India; Pakistan; riots

### **P3.3 – Institutional Perspectives**

#### **Kevin Khoo (Singapore) 'Are Oral History Professionals Needed?': Operating an Oral History Centre in Singapore 2021**

This presentation explores some of the contemporary challenges of running an oral history centre staffed by professionals in Singapore. What is the place of an OHC in a modern global city like Singapore that is exposed to rapid technological advancements in digitisation and AI driven automation? How does the presence of a highly educated and articulate population in Singapore, and sophisticated media industry impact or change the role of the OHC?

Can volunteers be used in place of professional oral historians? Can in-depth media interviews and podcasts substitute for oral history? Why does a country need oral history professionals, what differentiated value do they bring?

**Kevin Khoo** is currently Senior Manager (Documentation) at Singapore's Oral History Centre. He has been an archivist and historical researcher for about 15 years. He was involved in developing heritage exhibitions and publications at the National Archives of Singapore and has also served in corporate planning. He has been an oral interviewer for several years.

**Keywords:** future of work; evolving role of oral history professional

#### **Ellen Forsyth (Australia) Counting on Oral History**

The proposal is about two projects related to oral history in public libraries in New South Wales, Australia which I am coordinating. The first project is about portable local studies, and is inspired by the Archivist in a backpack program from Southern Historical Collection at the University of North Carolina. In 2019 we provided 11 oral history collection kits to public libraries. These kits contain items to assist public library staff record oral history interviews. Training has also been provided. Priority collecting areas are Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander people, and multicultural communities. This presentation includes preliminary information about how this project is helping people collect oral history in NSW as well as some information about the impact on the pandemic of this project. 34.5% of the people in New South Wales were born overseas, and 54.6% of the people in that state have one or both parents who were born overseas. 2.9% of the New South Wales people are Aboriginal or Torres Strait Islander people.

The second project is an audit of NSW public library local studies or community history collections including oral history recordings. This presentation provides some early results of this audit with a particular focus on the oral history collections in NSW public libraries. This audit will provide information which will assist with planning of future development work for public libraries.

Both of these projects have a focus in contemporary collecting, so that recent information is included in local studies collections in public libraries. This contemporary collecting will help bring together many voices whose stories may otherwise have not been collected, and will help record the diversity in communities, deepening community understanding of different voices and perspectives.

**Ellen Forsyth** is a Consultant, Public Library Services at the State Library of New South Wales in Sydney, Australia. Ellen provides advice to public libraries. Ellen is interested in how public libraries manage collecting current materials for local studies and has experience with collaborative projects.

**Keywords:** collaboration; public libraries; training

**Anni Turnbull (Australia)** The Power of the Authentic Voice: Oral Histories in the Galleries, Libraries, Archives and Museum (GLAM) Sector

This paper will showcase the changing attitudes to oral histories and their use in exhibitions, web stories and podcasts in Sydney's GLAM sector.

It will have examples from collections and interpretations using historic and contemporary oral histories across areas such as sport, migration, history and innovation. It will also look at the shifting attitudes to collecting oral histories and their place in GLAM collections.

**Anni Turnbull** is a social history curator and oral historian at Sydney's Powerhouse Museum. She has curated exhibitions on history, photography and social change at the Museum of Applied Arts and Sciences and at the NSW State Library. Her work has been concerned with recording people's stories and making them accessible through oral and video histories, exhibitions, web stories and podcasts.

**Keywords:** collections; exhibitions; interpretation; podcasts; social history; web stories

## **PAPER SESSION 4**

**Thursday 26 August 2021 5.00pm–7.00pm (UTC +8)**

### **P4.1 – Margins in the Spotlight**

**Anna Fernandez (Singapore)** The Value of Marginalised Voices in Oral History

The value behind oral history accounts goes far beyond its significance for preservation and commemorative purposes. Increasingly, as oral history becomes more prominently considered as an academic discipline, its ability to capture potentially latent or often undisclosed nuances of the historical record through the collection of once-silenced or marginalised voices has been brought to the forefront.

Delving beyond the veneer of historical narratives that have become common knowledge and putting the spotlight instead on first-person eyewitness accounts which may have been previously silenced offers unfiltered experiences to see the light of day and provide for a more holistic interpretation and understanding of events, experiences, decisions and actions.

Apart from shining the light on unheard voices for the benefit of ideal representation, oral history also empowers marginalised individuals, giving them a sense of ownership of their life experiences, some of which invalidated or even removed in their entirety in previous historical records.

Furthermore, the collection of alternative oral histories, or those of oppressed and suppressed communities, will eventually serve the function of documenting the progress and change of mindsets, societal norms, policies and ways of life. By realising how the past, present and future interrelate, one is presented with a view of society in its totality.

Using specific oral history projects and examples from around the world, this paper will discuss the abovementioned means in which the value of oral history serves to provide for a more democratic record of the past.

**Anna Fernandez** is an Oral History Specialist at the National Archives of Singapore, where she focuses on editing, content curation and multimedia marketing. She has been a lifestyle writer for the past 5 years, covering topics spanning travel and F&B to politics, finance and education.

**Keywords:** first-person eyewitness accounts; historical narratives; marginalised communities; oral history; unheard voices

**Monica Mereu (Italy)** Giving Voice to the Others: the Iranian Jewish Community of Tehran from an Inside Female Perspective

The aim of this paper is to show the role of oral history applied to my specific PhD research project, which intends to reconstruct the history of the female component of the Jewish community of Tehran that used to live in Oudlājān, the Jewish quarter of the Iranian capital, and then moved out during the 1950s. The first sources of this research are autobiographical interviews. All the research is, indeed, based on a collection of stories and memories composed through different interviews with women who lived in the Oudlājān neighbourhood or have memories of their families living there during the first half of the twentieth century. During the interviews, testimonies of some men who have emotionally talked about their mothers, grandmothers and their life in the quarter were also collected.

Oral history is essential above all to bridge the gap of the traditional historiography on the analysis of the reality of the Jewish community in the complexity of Iran's history, and with regard to its social and cultural developments. It is also a valid alternative to traditional history to recount the experience of those who are not, by tradition, central characters of the Iranian historical memory, among which women and minorities stand out, especially in the contemporary common narrative about Iran. Indubitably, this method, used to explore the link between individual lives and wider public events, is fundamental when dealing with minorities, since the question of identity and the issues of a cross-cultural perspective are even more complex. The use of oral history, in my project, leads also to a re-evaluation of the female role in the Jewish-Iranian cultural context: women becoming narrators are able to remember, evaluate and change the traditional male perspective. Thanks to this methodology, which is accomplished to stimulate also a self-reflective approach, Iranian Jewish women are capable of choosing and freely expressing their experiences, after a long history of silence. In my project, I have selected families with different cultural, family and economic backgrounds. I have given voice to those people who keep memories of the changes that occurred in Oudlājān through different visions and perspectives, given their ability to provide us with an intense and multiform insight of their life in and outside the quarter.

**Monica Mereu** is a Ph.D. candidate at the University of Cagliari, undertaking a doctoral program specializing in Persian Studies. In 2018, after numerous international university experiences, she received her master's degree in History and Society magna cum laude. During this time, she studied Persian Language at University of Cagliari. For a semester she studied history and Persian language at the University of Tehran.

**Keywords:** gender; identity; Iran; Iranian revolution; minorities; women

**Leena Sharma (India)** Kinnars and Kothis: Workplace Ruckus amongst 'Trans' Gendered Community in Rajasthan

Case Studies investigating various personal narratives of Kinnars (eunuchs/also called Hijra) associated /de-associated with Hijra Gharanas bring to light that these Gharanas since ages have had been impacted on by the socio-political scenario of Rajasthan State. The occupational identity of Hijras is associated here with 'Bazaar-Basti Maangna' (asking alms from the market and township to survive) in areas that were bestowed upon them by the kings, prior to dissolution of their rule. The interface between history, memory and identity of Kinnar community is thus being manifested in their working lives. Kothis(transsexuals), Bhaand-Behrapiyas(transvestites) or other Kinnars, who indulge in collecting alms from the self-same areas assigned to a particular Gharana, thus create ruckus amongst the society, repeatedly hindering the workplace solidarity amongst the 'Trans' gender community of which Kinnar

(Hijra), Kothi and transvestite men are all a part. The 'relationship status' between various groups of 'Trans' gendered individuals, based on the mode of earning has been studied in the paper through working in the field with these people.

The paper, through the personal narratives of arising conflict amongst the transgender community, examines how working lives and experience of work has changed. The study is based on personal narratives from Kinnars (associated/de-associated with Gharanas) and with uneducated transvestite men who cross dress to earn in earning areas assigned to the Gharanas; bringing to light the urgency of settling these cases legally as governing bodies settles in with by-way regulations in order to set peace amongst the Transgender community of Rajasthan.

**Leena Sharma** is a PhD researcher at the Centre for Comparative Literature and Translation Studies, School for Language, Literature and Comparative Studies, Central University of Gujarat.

**Keywords:** conflict; gender; hijra; identity; oral personal narratives; occupational identity; transgender

### **Kogielam Keerthi Archary (South Africa)** A South African Oral-Literate Perspective: Exploring Oral History, COVID-19, and Community Culture focusing on the Descendants of Indian Indentured Labourers

During the period 1860 (commencement) to 1911 (discontinuation), under the political system of indenture, over 152 000 Indian nationals arrived in the Colony of Natal, South Africa. They had the opportunity to return to India after the initial period of indenture, however, many chose to remain behind. Preservation and transmission of aspects of their heritage culture has in the main taken place through oral history. During the time of Covid-19, Indians in South Africa have explored the possibility of using aspects of their heritage in the fight against the global pandemic. However, it must be clearly articulated that complementary, alternative and integrative medicine were secondary to conventional medication in the treatment of Covid-19. Conventional medication was the first port of call to regain health once the virus was detected. This being stipulated, Indians in South Africa, however, did engage aspects of culture and heritage which was transported to South Africa 160 years ago. This article adds to the body of South African Indian history that already exists and partially satisfies the prevalent gaps. A dual research methodology approach - the qualitative method and the case study method – was used. In this article, the qualitative research methodology focussed on the oral history interview where the respondent - an oral-literate organic intellectual - shared both, his reflective memories and current experiences considering the pandemic. The case study methodology was chosen as it generates a greater understanding of aspects of cultural issues and describes a specific community culture. In this instance, the focus is the Indian community who experience the harmony - disharmony overlap, yet succeed in bringing together many voices and simultaneously ensuring harmony as a value-add of the community is well placed during a time of global disharmony.

**Dr Kogielam Archary** commenced her teaching career in 1988 and has since progressed to higher education and research. Her academic interests include the South African Indian community. Her Master's degree was in Orality-Literacy Studies (1992). She holds the portfolio of International and Partnerships of the Oral History Association of South Africa.

**Keywords:** community; COVID-19; culture; South African Indian

### **David Beorlegui (Spain)** Investigación Colaborativa y Desarrollo Comunitario: El proyecto Memorias del Futuro-Voces de Portobelo [Collaborative Research and Community Development: the project Memorias del Futuro-Voces de Portobelo] *[in Spanish]*



El objetivo de esta comunicación es abordar la construcción de un Archivo Digital de Memoria de Afrodescendientes en Portobelo, Panamá. El archivo forma parte de un proyecto más amplio denominado “Memorias del Futuro: Voces de Portobelo”, que tiene como principales objetivos el reconocimiento, empoderamiento y visibilidad de las personas afropanameñas y la inclusión de su experiencia histórica en el currículo escolar del país. El texto se detiene a analizar los principales hitos del proyecto y el modo de afrontar las tensiones inherentes a la realización de entrevistas, poniendo un énfasis especial en la buena práctica de la historia oral y los aprendizajes que se derivan de ella.

The aim of this paper is to address the construction of a Digital Archive of Memory of People of African Descent in Portobelo, Panama. The archive is part of a larger project called “Memorias del Futuro.: Voces de Portobelo”, whose main objectives are the recognition, empowerment and visibility of Afro-Panamanian people and the inclusion of their historical experience in the country's school curriculum. The paper stops to analyze the main milestones of the project and how to deal with the tensions inherent in conducting interviews, placing special emphasis on the good practice of oral history and the lessons learned from it.

**David Beorlegui** is a post-doctoral researcher at the University of the Basque Country. He teaches oral history at postgraduate and graduate level. He has published three books and different articles in scientific journals. At the moment, he is the representative of the European Region in IOHA Council and also the co-editor of the bilingual electronic journal *Words and Silences-Palabras y Silencios*.

**Keywords:** Afro-Panamanian; archive; interview

## **P4.2 – Space and Place**

**Hamish Sewell (Australia)** Location-Based Oral Histories: The New Transgressive Storied Spaces

For thousands of years there has been a long, complex and deeply interconnected relationship between places and stories/voices. If stories afford places a deeper meaning and connection, the act of standing on any given site and listening can provide us a more intimate and embodied experience by far. If this place-based listening is most often associated with the oral traditions of indigenous peoples or modern folklore, digital media is now unlocking a suite of new approaches to the embodied storied experience. Building on nine years work in the field of geo locative audio, and his work with indigenous and non-indigenous communities in regional Australia, sound producer and oral historian, Hamish Sewell, explores a number storied sites now publicly available via the cultural tourism app, Soundtrails: From the Myall Creek Massacre site—arguably Australia's most famous frontier war, massacre memorial; to the family voices in the Goonoowigall 'Aboriginal Fringe Camp' to the intimate reflections of the first park ranger in the up-and-coming Bald Rock national park. Determined in part by the nature of one's oral histories, the connection with the community that underwrites this collection, the affordances of the app platform and the skills of the audio producer, location based oral histories are now quite literally coming alive in our ever-increasingly mobile-augmented world and drawing us into a 'slower' and embodied approach to the art of listening.

**Hamish Sewell** is an international award winning radio producer, an oral historian and the founder of the geo-locative audio app, Soundtrails. He lives in Queensland Australia and is a PhD candidate studying locative audio.

**Keywords:** audio; augmented reality; embodied; location; stories

**Kiang-Koh Lai Lin (Singapore)** Documenting a River's History through Oral History

The exhibition and publication on “Our Home by the Kallang River, Singapore: Past, Present and Future” were produced by the Kolam Ayer Citizens’ Consultative Committee in conjunction the Singapore Bicentennial in 2019. The National Heritage Board, the People’s Association, the National Library Board and the National Archives of Singapore jointly supported this project. The exhibition and publication was launched at 8 June 2019 at the National Library Building.

This paper describes how the project team using oral history methodology to select the interviewees, weaving their stories and memories into the eight chapters of the book and 24 exhibition panels. The team conducted oral history interviews with more than 50 elderly residents who reside at the Kallang River areas as well as historians and researchers, to create content of the exhibition and publication.

These eight chapters were Riveting River: The Story of the Singapore’s Longest River; Remembering the Beginning; Raffles: A turning Point in Singapore’s History; Reclamation: Paving the Way for Singapore’s Future; Republic: River of Independence; Repair & Recreation: Breathing New Life into the River; Residents: Hope Dreams and Memories; Rejuvenation: Making Waves for Years to Come.

The content of the oral history interviews brings us on a journey to discover how the river has helped shape Singapore over the centuries until today. This project exposed Singaporeans to not only the history of Kallang River, more importantly the way of life back then in the 1940s to 1970s and the rich cultural heritage activities of the Kallang River and Singapore history. It also offered a glimpse into the future. How the continued rejuvenation of the river will further beautify and enliven its surroundings, bringing more facilities, activities and waterfront homes to the community.

It helped to engage residents via sharing of the rich cultural history of Kallang River. In a bigger picture, to reflect on the value of openness, multiculturalism and self-determination that have evolved with us throughout the history of Singapore.

**Kiang-Koh Lai Lin** is a Consultant at the Oral History Centre, NAS. She has interviewed more than 160 people for more than 600 hours. She specialises in themes such as grassroots, community histories, Chinese clan associations, economic development, education, literary scene and visual arts. She has conducted talks and workshops on oral history methodology for students and volunteers and has participated in the Georgetown World Heritage Incorporated’s “Cherita Lebuh Chulia” and “Cherita Georgetown” oral history projects.

**Keywords:** Kallang River; oral history methodology; Residents: Hope, Dreams, and Memories; Riveting River: Repair & Recreation: Breathing New Life; Singapore bicentennial

## **Lai Chee Kien (Singapore) Concentric Entanglements: Merdeka Architecture and Cold-War Malaysia**

I conducted a series of 17 oral interviews with architects, engineers and artists who contributed to the landscape of Kuala Lumpur at the time of Malaya’s Independence in 1957. These interviews conducted between 2001 and 2007 discussed ten projects that endowed the capital city with key structures for a functioning nation, and created affect for citizenship in Malaysia.

The projects were constructed at a time when Malaya (and then Malaysia) was entangled not only with the project of nation building, but also regional and global events resulting from concentric range of politics. The era after World War II was not an easy time to be an architect or engineer, or more specifically, to be involved in government projects. The period of 1948 to 1962 was known as the Emergency in Malaya, but it was really a battle between the Communists and nationalists for sovereignty and political legitimacy. Following that, Indonesia declared a period for Konfrontasi against Malaysia from 1962 to 1966. The construction projects were directly or indirectly affected by these regional and global events. I argue in this

paper that oral history of these architectural works should be attendant to concentric regional and international contexts and issues.

**Lai Chee Kien** is an architectural and urban historian, and a registered architect in Singapore. He graduated with a PhD in History of Architecture & Urban Design from the University of California, Berkeley (2005). His publications include *Building Merdeka: Independence Architecture in Kuala Lumpur* (2007), and *The Merdeka Interviews* (2018).

**Keywords:** architecture of Independence, the Emergency, and Cold War; engineering prowess; Kuala Lumpur; material scarcity; Merdeka

### **Madhulagna Halder (India/Canada) “Jail as Our University”: Remembering and Reimagining the Prison as a Site of ‘Affective Learning’**

The paper is situated between the years of 1967-1977 in West Bengal and re-imagines the prison as a site of learning. In arguing for the “jail as University”, it uses the memories of everyday life of Naxal prisoners (political prisoners), who through new modalities of exchange (such as cooking, singing and addas) with Non Naxal prisoners that subsequently altered the space of the prison from that of a site of repression to a site of learning and affect. It uses oral interviews and autobiographical writings to corroborate and contrast the oral with written memory. The interviewees in their recall repeatedly mentioned the phrase, Jail amader biswavidyalay (Jail as our University), which then provides for a re-imagination of the prison. They also choose to gloss over their experiences of violence with an overbearing “narrative of love”, which helps us understand the silences and distortion of individual memory.

The paper at firstly will illustrate the social and political contexts in which such an imagination proliferated, that is the CPI(ML) movement and its politics of rejecting higher education, which was later in a way supplemented in prison, through “affective learning”. Simultaneously, it will also narrate the ‘prison experience’, as recalled by the interviewees that, proved to be transformative, and introduced them to ‘new ideas and realities’, that their early life or even their political activism had failed to provide. The picture of the prison as a punitive space is challenged by these narratives of human endurance and also humanizing experiences. The prison was for some prisoners a new social space of learning that transcended the more repressive segregation to achieve new solidarities. In a sense, this provides a space for a re-conceptualisation of the prison set up, through the focus on the subjectivities of prisoners.

**Madhulagna Halder** is currently a PhD candidate in History and Classical Studies at McGill University, Canada. With an M.Phil. and M.A (Modern History) from JNU, she is interested in the history of gender and memory studies. She is a recipient of the Professor Papiya Ghosh Memorial Prize for her contribution at the Indian History Congress in 2018.

**Keywords:** CPI(ML) politics; love; Naxal prisoners; revolution; university

## **P4.3 – The Military and Experiences of War**

### **Lee Geok Boi (Singapore) Oral History and Conflict**

Conflict situations – war, riots, communal clashes – by their very nature often lack coherence or even a formal structure. Oral history is the best way to document such conflict situations. At the same time, it must also be recognised that oral history is a fragile record. Memories can fade, fail or change over time. Capturing this fragile history before participants’ memories start to fail is key to getting a fuller picture of significant if chaotic events. Oral history presents micro pictures of conflict which is invariably set in a bigger picture. The macro view of conflict situations is embedded in geopolitics, communal politics, government and economics. Actions and words of leaders have consequences and such words and actions are documented on

paper be they newspapers, official documents, law or policies. Today, some of this documentation come in the form of digital media but which, sadly, is more open to manipulation than hard copy. Digital media, too, has a more potent reach than traditional hard copy. Nevertheless, documentation is critical to embedding oral history accounts in a formal structure and authenticating a conflict and its causes. The macro view of history benefits greatly from the inclusion of the micro views as represented by oral history. Such micro views reflect the consequences of formal words and policies. Oral history personalises conflict situations. It brings drama, even melodrama, heroism, cowardice, kindness, evil and the whole gamut of other human traits to the fore in conflict situations in a way that cannot be so clearly seen in the more formal structure. Oral history when applied to conflict situations leads to the kind of human drama that makes great movies and books but most importantly, makes for a better understanding of these conflict situations and a better grasp of the human toll of conflict.

**Lee Geok Boi** is a writer whose *Syonan: Singapore Under the Japanese 1942-1945* published in 1992 was the first book in Singapore publishing history to make use of the oral history materials on the Japanese Occupation collected by the Oral History Centre of Singapore. She uses oral history extensively in her writing. She has an MA in Philosophy from the University of Singapore (now National University of Singapore), is an ex-journalist and practising oral historian, peace-loving but with a long-standing interest in conflict situations.

**Keywords:** conflict; geopolitics; human drama; riots; war

### **Jonathan Ritchie (Australia)** Voices from the War: the Papua New Guinea in World War Two Oral History Project

World War Two came to Papua New Guinea (PNG) in January 1942, and it continued until the Japanese surrender in 1945. It broke like a thunderstorm over the swampy coastal plains, precipitous mountain valleys and idyllic tropical atolls of PNG: a tempest that lasted for nearly four years.

The War had a profound impact on PNG, and on Papua New Guineans. This was especially in those parts that suffered from destructive bombing and shelling, but also in places which found themselves in the way of the battlefield as it moved through the islands.

Its impact extended further than the battlefield. Food was commandeered, boys and young men were recruited as carriers, warplanes crisscrossed the skies, dropping bombs seemingly at random, and whole populations were made to move away from their villages to places of relative safety.

More than seventy years after the War's end, memories of this time of trial are fading. The Papua New Guinean Voices from the War project is intended to help keep these memories alive. Lasting from 2014 to 2018, the project involved interviews with more than two hundred people across PNG, concerning their own, or their parents', experiences of war. Conducted in five separate but related exercises by teams of Papua New Guinean and Australian researchers, the project was coordinated by Deakin University in partnership with the PNG National Museum and Art Gallery and was supported by the Australian and PNG Governments.

My paper will report on the project's activities and outcomes, and what is being done to make the interviews that have been recorded accessible to all people in PNG.

**Jonathan Ritchie** is a historian of Papua New Guinea at Deakin University, in Melbourne, Australia. He has written and taught about PNG for more than twenty years and has participated in several major oral history research exercises including, most recently, the Voices from the War project.

**Keywords:** conflict; national identity; oral history; Papua New Guinea; World War II

### **Philippe Denis (South Africa) Use and Abuse of Religious Symbols during the Genocide against the Tutsi in Rwanda**

The genocide against the Tutsi, which claimed an estimated 800,000 people lives in a mere three months, also had a religious dimension. Rwanda was a predominantly Christian country and many people were shepherded into churches by the local authorities and the Hutu militia to be massacred there. Priests, pastors and nuns were among the victims but some of them practically or ideologically assisted the perpetrators. The religious authorities never condemned the genocide as such. The paper will examine, on the basis of oral history interviews conducted in Rwanda and a few other countries between 2015 and 2020, how the genocide survivors responded spiritually and theologically to the genocide. It will also analyse the use made by the perpetrators of religious symbols during the massacres. God, Jesus and Mary were invoked on both sides. This uncomfortable reality drew the attention of Jean Pierre Chrétien and other scholars as early as 1995 in a book entitled *Les média du génocide*. The paper will bring to the fore more material on the place of religion in the genocide and propose an interpretation on the complex and contradictory role of religious symbols in a context of mass violence.

**Philippe Denis** is Senior Professor of History of Christianity at the University of KwaZulu-Natal in Pietermaritzburg, South Africa. He is the founder and a former director of the Sinomlando Centre for Oral History and Memory Work in Africa. Email: [denis@ukzn.ac.za](mailto:denis@ukzn.ac.za).

**Keywords:** genocide; religion; Rwanda; symbols; Tutsi; violence

### **Jiří Hlaváček (Czech Republic) Two Lost Years in Battledress? Compulsory Military Service and its Meanings from the Oral History Perspective**

The paper focuses on the reflection of the phenomenon of compulsory military service in communist Czechoslovakia and democratic Czech Republic in the period 1968-2004. Through oral-historical interviews, the author observes narrative constructions and legitimizing strategies of acting in a closed military environment with emphasis on the (un)necessity of military service in five dimensions (functional, ideological, power, integration and cultural). The paper will present the main ideas and final results of the current grant project "Army as an instrument of socialization: Reflection of the phenomenon of military service in the Czech lands (1968-2004)".

**Jiří Hlaváček** is researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences, assistant professor at the Faculty of Humanities of the Charles University and current president of Czech Oral History Association. He is interested in military history, collective memory, digital humanities and methodology of qualitative research.

**Keywords:** collective memory; community; culture; military; oral history

### **Masato Fukuda (Japan) 'Tacit Farmers' in the US Military Bases in Okinawa**

In 2018, I visited Okinawa for 3 months, to see "tacit farming", staying at one of the tacit farmer's house. I have interviewed those people concerned with tacit farming. In this session, I would like to tell you what tacit farming is and who the tacit farmers are. Until today, tacit farming has not been researched as a topic of cultural science including anthropology. And in Japan, even in Okinawa, there are many people who don't know what tacit farming is.

Okinawa, a southern prefecture of Japan, has almost 70 percent of U.S. military bases in Japan today. It was occupied by the U.S. after the WWII until 1972. By the late 1950s, many Okinawan lands were expropriated by the U.S. forces to build military bases. They often used bulldozers and bayonets to force out the inhabitants. The land rent given to each person was as cheap as a bottle of coke. Shortage of farmland caused chronic scarcity of food. Then, not a few people

tacitly started farming in the land taken by the U.S. as military site, taking risk of being arrested. They made vegetables, fruits, and sugarcane, as they did in their own farmland.

Okinawans fought against the U.S. forces and they had made a compromise in 1959 that includes revision of land rent and permission to the tacit farming. Tacit farmers are usually thought that they are supporting the U.S. military forces to stay in Okinawa, because they are taking advantage of the military sites. Although this is partly true in some cases, but the situation is not so simple. Tacit farming is very dangerous and can be suspended whenever the U.S. forces decided to do. I will show you the classification of tacit farming and what the farmers and the people concerned thought about this problem.

**Masato Fukuda** is a PhD student majoring in Cultural Anthropology in Kyoto University. In MA course, Masato has done fieldwork in Okinawa (Japan), and now is planning to do a long fieldwork in Taiwan next year.

**Keywords:** farming; military base; Okinawa; US forces

#### **P4.4 – Women in Conflict**

**Christeen Schoepf (Australia)** One Object – Many Voices: How Oral Histories can offer New Perspectives to the Biographies of Five Hundred Women named on a World War One Roll of Honor

The unique Cheer-Up Roll of Honour was created in 1920 by local artisan Miss Blanche Francis and contains the names of five hundred women who worked regularly at the Cheer-Up Hut in Adelaide, South Australia, for the duration of WW1. A forthcoming publication reveals the collective story of this group of women through the lens of the biographies, genealogies, and social narratives of each woman. Oral histories, however, have given them a voice and made them real, no longer mere names on a board or a document. Through them we can hear patriotic sentiments, laughter, apprehension and inevitably sorrow. This is due to the seminal research of oral historian Beth Robertson who in 1979 recorded the memories of thirty-nine South Australian women for her South Australian Women's Responses to the First World War research project (SLSA OH 31). Several of them were workers at the Cheer-Up Hut while others had definitive opinions on those women who volunteered to work there. Like the women of the Cheer-Up Society, the women in Robertson's cohort were demographically diverse, ranging in age from girls as young as fourteen to older married women in their thirties. Robertson also interviewed women who were teachers, army nurses, clerks, secretaries, students, and housewives throughout the war making these oral histories significant as a comparative tool. This paper seeks to present just some of the additional layers the revisiting of Robertson's now thirty-five-year-old project has provided to the individual and collective narrative of the Cheer-Up Society and the women, a century after formation. This paper will further reveal how one object such as the Cheer-Up Roll of Honor can be the protagonist that brings together many previously silent voices relating stories of women's work during war.

**Christeen Schoepf** is a Historical Archaeologist and author who uses cross disciplinary methodologies including genealogy, biography, prosopography and oral history to reveal the stories of objects and the people who made, used and discarded them. She facilitates oral history and genealogy workshops, creates exhibitions, and speaks internationally on her work.

**Keywords:** objects; war; women

**Nermeen Al Nafra (Syria)** The War on Syrian Women

The role of Syrian women has been central in the fight against extremism. This study addresses women's narratives in their fight against extremist groups. The work presented in this study is

conducted by Wathiqat Wattan, which adopts an oral history approach in order to learn about women's suffering in their own words. This approach allows an authentic account about what happened, as we get to examine the various events through women's lenses and through their interpretations of what happened. In addition, this paper goes beyond providing an account about women's struggle during the Syrian fight against terrorism. In the second part, the paper draws on the implications of these events on women's lives socially, economically, and psychologically. As a consequence of the war, the ratio of women to men in Syria is really high and therefore women would have a central role in the process of rebuilding the shattered Syrian society. Women are critical agents in establishing and spreading social norms and ethics. This study offers insight into the most significant trends women have chosen to highlight in their narrative, and it contextualizes their experiences in order to provide constructive conclusions.

**Dr. Nermeen Al Nafra** is the director of the "Women in Wartime" research project at Wathiqat Wattan Organization/Syria. She has an MA and PhD in Translation Studies at the University of Birmingham/UK. She is currently a Vice-dean at the Higher Institute for Translation and Interpreting at Damascus University/Syria.

**Keywords:** extremism; narrative; oral history; Syria; women

### **Kevin Blackburn (Singapore)** The Missing Voices of the Comfort Women of Singapore in History and Memory

In 2002, Singapore became perhaps the first country in the world to conserve as heritage a former comfort station from the Japanese Occupation. Yet it is also the only country where comfort women were sexually enslaved by the Japanese military in World War II but there is no oral history testimony at all from any local women who were comfort women. Most oral history testimony about the comfort women of Singapore comes from accounts of local people who remember seeing them, not former comfort women themselves. While there is no known account by a local woman, there is scattered and brief testimony from Korean women who were brought to Singapore, such as Kim Bok-dong, who passed away in Seoul at the beginning of 2019 aged 92. Memories of the experiences of the comfort women in Singapore during the Japanese Occupation illustrate the contradictions in remembering women's experiences during war as transnational history. For some nation-states, remembering the abuses of the human rights of women in sexual enslavement during war does not easily fit into official national narratives. Often these abuses of the human rights of women tend to be transnational. They produce what appear to be contradictory responses from nation-states. What role have the comfort women played in history and memory in Singapore?

**Kevin Blackburn** is an Associate Professor in History at the National Institute of Education, Nanyang Technological University, Singapore. He has co-authored with Karl Hack, *Did Singapore Have to Fall?* (Routledge, 2004) and *War Memory and the Making of Modern Malaysia and Singapore* (NUS Press, 2012).

**Keywords:** comfort women; Japanese; Singapore; war

## **PAPER SESSION 5**

**Thursday 26 August 2021 9.00pm–11.00pm (UTC +8)**

### **P5.1 – Communal Identity and Political Memory**

**Alessandro Porrà (Italy)** The Jewish Community of Istanbul and the Neo-Ottoman and Republican Nostalgia

In the last two decades Turkey has witnessed a massive and unexpected wave of memory practices and discourses in relation to the Ottoman Empire which have generated a nostalgia for a "lost" Ottoman cosmopolitanism, seen as a sort of lost "Golden Age".

Considering that many historians also appraise the Ottoman Empire as a sort of "Golden Age" for the Turkish Jews, my research wants to verify if the Turkish Jews may share this "Neo-Ottoman Nostalgia" or, on the contrary, they may feel more connected to their Republic past, in particular to the building years of the Republic, years that deeply shaped the relationship between minorities and the Turkish state and society.

The conceptual framework of the research rests on the historical analysis of the "Pros" and the "Cons" of having been a Jew in the Ottoman Empire and in the Turkish Republic, on the comparison of the obtained data, on the understanding if the actors may feel nostalgia for one of those periods, or, in reverse, a rejection of it.

The method chosen for the research is "Oral History", because, as A. Portelli says, it is "a perfect tool to study how the past is read, interpreted and lived in the present". Indeed, Oral History focuses on personal testimonies, gathered through interviews of the actors involved in a given historical process and helps to understand how individuals and communities experienced the forces of history.

The collection of this information will take place through the use of semi-structured interviews, an approach that allows researchers to prepare questions ahead of time and grants informants the freedom to express their views in their own terms, and employing Fritz Schütze's autobiographical method.

Once the cycle of interviews will be completed, the collected data will be examined, studied, interpreted and placed in a precise historical context in order to formulate an interpretative method capable to assess whether the dynamics driving the Turkish society influence the Jewish identity of the interviewees, and what is their perception of the wave of nostalgia for Ottoman cosmopolitanism that currently runs through Turkish society.

**Alessandro Porrà** is a PhD student at the Department of Political and Social Science at University of Cagliari, Italy. His doctoral research focuses on the Jewish community of Istanbul after the foundation of the Turkish Republic in 1923.

**Keywords:** Istanbul; Levantine Jews; nostalgia; Ottoman Empire; Turkish Republic

### **Lenka Krátká (Czech Republic)** The Same, Yet Different: Memoirs of Czechoslovak Seafarers and Bargees about their Lives in the Socialist Times

The paper is embedded in a wider topic of business trips from Czechoslovakia abroad during the times of the communist regime – a period from the communist revolution in 1948 to the Velvet Revolution in 1989. Because of strictly guarded borders and limited travel opportunities in the people's democracy and later socialist Czechoslovakia, business trips brought a relatively exceptional opportunity to visit foreign countries, experience exceptional freedom or adventure, to earn foreign currency and use it for buying foreign goods, perceived as luxurious at that time.

Because of the inland position of former Czechoslovakia, two occupations were even more exceptional in this sense – seafarers and river bargees. Using more than three dozen of oral history interviews, the paper aims at various strategies of remembering the past by the men involved in the jobs. As an introduction, the author will bring a short description of those transport businesses running. Then, some specifics of the jobs (for example, a chance to emigrate, partner's and family life, financial issues, working skills, smuggling, loyalty towards the communist regime) will be followed with the main aim to interpret a different way of (re)construction of the past in these two groups of men working abroad. Finally, the author will concentrate on narrators' effort to preserve an idealized image of men working on



Czechoslovak ships and barges. At this point, significant differences in men's memoirs can be traced.

**Lenka Krátká** is a researcher at the Institute of Contemporary History of the Czech Academy of Sciences. Her main research interests cover economic and social history of Czechoslovakia after WWII, and corporate culture development. She also works as a part-time lecturer in oral history methodology at Charles University.

**Keywords:** bargee; Czechoslovakia; seafarer; socialism

### **Klara Kohoutová & Ondrej Ficeri (Slovakia)** Antagonizing Myths as a Source of a Permanent Ethnic Conflict: Slovaks Versus Roma

Roma population of 12 million people is the largest ethnic minority in Europe. Roma people are heavily stigmatized and spatially segregated in numerous rural and urban ghettos across the continent. The biggest Roma ghetto on the territory of Slovakia – Luník IX in the city of Košice is by the majority of Slovak populace believed to be built by the authorities in 1981 to upgrade the socioeconomic status of local Roma populace. However, the myth of the modern and green space housing estate altruistically “given” to “backward” Roma is challenged by the evidence of archival sources which reveal that in fact the authorities by constructing the racial space followed a deliberate plan how to remove Roma families from the city centre to the urban periphery. Thus, in mentalities of the majority Slovak population the myth of “the prominent district” functions as a discursive strategy to legitimate the developed status quo which ghettoises the Roma minority.

On the other hand, Roma inhabitants constructed the “contra-myth” about the development of the ghetto. Until 1990s, it was unusual to interview Roma and to consider memories of Roma as a relevant source of the knowledge production. The Roma histories are still being marginalized in the perception of non-Roma inhabitants. We challenge this approach and come to conclusion that Roma narrative was constructed as a reaction to “white-supremacy-regime of truth” and has an antagonising social function: to legitimate social status of Roma as being victims of racial policies executed by the dominant Slovak populace.

In our oral history research we aim to verify the discursive pillars of the myths in mentalities of both the majority Slovak as well as Roma populace, explore their sources and confront them with the archival sources. Last but not least, we attempt to analyse what political and cultural agenda they serve.

**Ondrej Ficeri, PhD.** is a historian at the Centre of Psychological and Social Sciences of the Slovak Academy of Sciences in Košice (Slovakia). In his research he deals with transcultural studies and interethnic relations with the focus on ethnically heterogeneous urban environments.

**Klara Kohoutová, PhD.** is a research fellow at Institute of Social Sciences CSPA SAS. She is scientifically focused on sites of memory in public space, a memory policy, issues of (self)identity and minorities. She has many years of experience presenting the results of her research by organizing discussions for the public and schools, working with the mass media.

**Keywords:** deconstruction of myths; ethnic conflict; Košice – Luník IX; oral history versus archival research; Romani people

### **Justin K.H. Tse (Singapore)** ‘A Lot of Lawsuits There’: Evangelical Recollections of *Chong v. Lee* among Vancouver’s Conservative Cantonese Protestants

In 1981, the Supreme Court of British Columbia case *Chong v. Lee* established the precedent that Canadian citizens could bring ‘internal doctrinal disputes’ into secular court. Most

notoriously cited in a 2009 lawsuit that divided the Anglican Church in Vancouver over the questions of same-sex blessings and the ownership of ecclesial property, *Chong* concerned a church in Vancouver's Chinatown that ostensibly could not agree on whether baptism should be conducted by sprinkling or full immersion and if these liturgical differences should result in the alteration of the property, such as by installing a baptismal pool near the pulpit.

In this paper, I deal with the memories of this lawsuit among Cantonese-speaking Protestants in Vancouver who described themselves as more 'conservative' and 'evangelical,' ciphers for their theological convictions that church space should be used strictly for private prayer, proselytism, and preaching instead of as an open Chinatown community gathering space for civic discussions in Chinatown. The case came up in veiled references in key informant interviews among Cantonese-speaking Protestant leaders as they discussed their engagements with secular civil society. They described the case vaguely as a point of trauma, one that had shattered a major Cantonese Protestant community and that had resulted in a diaspora of members through Vancouver's Cantonese-speaking churches. A strange consensus began to develop in which they attributed their ideology of church privatization to their experience of being sued.

The oral history of *Chong v. Lee*, I argue, has been used to construct a historical narrative of Cantonese Protestants justifying their understanding of church spaces as private property that is strictly the domain of its own members, not a community space for others. As this case is part of a larger project on Cantonese-speaking Protestants and secular civil society engagement on the Pacific Rim, I will contrast these oral history findings with archival sources detailing the backstory of why the Chinatown community attempted to resist this privatization of space through the courts, as well as how the narration of this 1981 incident contributes to more contemporary conceptualizations on the part of Cantonese Protestants in Vancouver of how they engage a world that they consider secular.

**Justin KH Tse** is Assistant Professor of Humanities (Education) at Singapore Management University. He served as lead editor of *Theological Reflections on the Hong Kong Umbrella Movement* (Palgrave, 2016) and is working on a book manuscript under review at University of Notre Dame Press titled *The Secular in a Sheet of Scattered Sand: Cantonese Protestants and Postsecular Publics on the Pacific Rim*.

**Keywords:** Chinatown; law; narrative; private; secular

## **P5.2 – Oral History and/as Resistance**

**Samuel Herley & Tawa Ducheneaux (USA)** Harmony and Disharmony: the Struggle for Freedom, Sovereignty, and Self-Determination among Native American Voices of Wounded Knee

In the winter and spring of 1973, elements of the American Indian Movement (AIM) converged along the historic grounds of Wounded Knee Creek on the Pine Ridge Indian Reservation in an effort to reclaim sovereignty for Native American peoples. The act sparked varied reactions, including a backlash from the Pine Ridge's Oglala Lakota tribal government, who in turn also claimed sovereignty on behalf of Native Americans. The episode was a prime example of how harmony and disharmony often have co-existed among Native American groups who have fought with and against each other while also within the United States for common goals: freedom and sovereignty. AIM and its allies saw the tribal government as a branch of a federal colonial power. The tribal government saw AIM as a lawless invader bent on violating legitimate tribal autonomy. Through a series of oral history recordings, transcript excerpts, and photographs, this presentation demonstrates the impassioned struggle to restore and defend the rights of Native American individuals and their communities. The lessons of the Wounded Knee Incident are as crucial as ever in the twenty-first century, as Native American communities persist in their endeavor to maintain identities, demand rights as sovereign nations, and strive

toward self-determination. The presentation will conclude with some words about the Doris Duke Foundation Native Oral History Revitalization Project and the ongoing efforts to improve preservation and access of the voices of Wounded Knee and other Native American oral histories.

**Sam Herley, Ph.D.**, is the curator of the South Dakota Oral History Center at the University of South Dakota. With more than 6,000 interviews and recordings (nearly half of them related to Native American studies), the SDOHC is one of the largest oral history archives in the United States.

**Tawa Ducheneaux** is a citizen of the Cherokee Nation and was raised near Verdigris, Oklahoma. After moving to Pine Ridge in 2003 to raise her family, much of her work over the last 18 years at Oglala Lakota College has been in the archives and emphasizing understandings about indigenous collections management and community involvement in the preservation and access of knowledge. During her appointment as an archivist at Oglala Lakota College's Woksape Tipi Archives and Tribal Repository, she completed an MLIS in Management, Digitization, & Preservation of Cultural Heritage & Records from San Jose State University.

**Keywords:** 1973; Lakota; Native American; sovereignty; Wounded Knee

### **Uldis Neiburgs (Latvia)** Resistance Movement in Latvia during World War II: between Oral History, Social Memory, and Academic Research

During World War II while the territory of Latvia was in the hands of one occupiers –Nazi Germany – with the threat of yet another USSR occupation looming, the Latvian people's aspirations for self-determination and desire for the recovery of their national independence were represented by the national resistance movement.

In the context of Soviet totalitarianism, for decades, objective research on this subject in Central and Eastern Europe and the Baltic States was not possible, just as it was not possible to include it in the research discourse of the West nor in the shaping of public opinion about this time. As a result, the Latvian public's awareness of the national resistance movement during the occupation of Soviet and Nazi Germany has experienced repeated shifts, the nature of which has depended on the existing political equipment, but the details of the ideology and propaganda, education, science, culture and memory policies of the relevant period, and individual information provided by mass media and activities of individual social groups.

Based on the archival sources and oral history testimonies, demonstrating contradictions and seeking solutions between the discoveries of history science and the general understandings of social memory in nowadays, the paper will explore the activities of democratic underground organization – the Latvian Central Council and General Kurelis military group, who tried to achieve their political goal – the restoration of Latvia's national sovereignty – in an opportune moment between the retreat of the German Army and the invasion of the USSR troops into the territory of Latvia.

**Dr. hist. Uldis Neiburgs**, researcher at the Institute of Latvian History, University of Latvia; PhD in history – 2012, University of Latvia; author of 2 monographs and 2 popular-scientific books, editor of 4 volumes of essays, author of 80 scientific publications and reviews; research interests: history of World War II, resistance and collaboration, oral history, social memory.

**Keywords:** academic research; Latvia; Nazi German occupation; oral history; resistance movement

### **Viviane A. Blatter (Switzerland)** '...and this is why I'm fighting for inclusion': Using One's (Hi)story to Make a Case for Structural Change and Inclusion in Narrative Interviews

Spontaneous narration is particularly realistic in reconstructing past lived experiences, making narrative interviews an excellent tool for extracting people's life stories. Hence, we are using this methodology to elicit the experiences of people who were socialized in Swiss schools and institutions for children with physical disabilities in the second half of the 20th century.

In the narrative interviews, a pattern has emerged that goes beyond narration: After recounting particularly memorable anecdotes, interviewees - without being prompted to do so - interrupt their personal narrative to make their anecdote a case for structural change in the education system, particularly by talking about the need for more inclusive schools or a more intellectually demanding school curriculum. While the content and sternness of the suggestions differ between instances, the pattern is observable throughout different age and disability cohorts.

The topic of schooling for children and youth with disabilities is a highly politicized one: the UN convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities, in effect in Switzerland since 2014, states that "State Parties shall ensure an inclusive education system at all levels", which has not yet been achieved in Switzerland. Debates about inclusive schooling are ongoing in the media and politics.

In my paper I look at how affected persons connect their life experiences to take a political stand for more inclusion, linking the past to the present and incorporating demands for structural change into a retelling of their history.

**Viviane A. Blatter** graduated from the University of Basel with an MA in history. She is writing her dissertation about schooling and care for children with physical disabilities in Switzerland (1950-2010) using Oral History interviews and working on the project "Between Recognition and Disregard". For more information, see <http://www.nfp76.ch/en/projects/interventions-and-pathways-in-life/project-wolfisberg>.

**Keywords:** disability; inclusion; narrative; politics

### **P5.3 – Disaster and Trauma**

#### **Hasmik Grigoryan (USA)** The Mechanisms of Intergenerational Transmission of Memory: Remembering the Armenian Genocide through Oral Stories

The current research primarily looks at the mechanisms of intergenerational transmission of trauma in the context of the "official memory politics" of the Armenian Genocide. It presents how the memory of Genocide affects family and social life of the second and third generations, shapes their worldview and identity, the depth of its transmission and breadth of its manifestation in the "present". The research mainly covers current perceptions and interpretations amongst second and third generations of genocide survivors, who settled in Eastern Armenia.

The analysis of oral history interviews shows that the transfer of knowledge about the Armenian Genocide among the offspring of the Armenian Genocide survivors involves two complementary information channels: (a) social, through family and community by oral stories; and (b) institutional, through educational-cultural official discourse.

There are only a handful of research related to the intergenerational transmission of the Armenian Genocide memory and its impact on the second and third generations. Research articles and dissertations have been written and published mainly in Armenian Diaspora; however, the oral history methodology is very new in the Republic of Armenia and has its own unique characteristics.

**Hasmik Grigoryan** is a graduate student at Clark University, Strassler Center for Holocaust and Genocide Studies. She defended her first PhD in 2015. Hasmik Grigoryan is an author of the monograph *The Masses and Mass Violence: Participation of Muslim Population of the Ottoman Empire in the Armenian Genocide*.

**Keywords:** Armenia; memory; generation; genocide

### **Dace Bula (Latvia)** Narratives of Co-Habitation and Sudden Estrangement: Flooding Experience in the Lower Daugava Neighborhoods

The paper will deal with the memories and narratives of the Daugava delta residents reporting on two major flooding events that have occurred during the last half century: the storms of November 1969 and January 2005. Narrators of about 50 flood stories that constitute the empirical material for the paper come from four urban neighborhoods located in the delta of the Daugava River which splits Riga, the capital of Latvia, into two parts. The four research sites, although differing in several aspects, are united by the shared waterscape of the river and the abundance of topics related to water in local narrative repertoires. The paper will deal with the narratability of flood events as a common characteristic of natural disaster experience. Flood waters rapidly rise and rapidly recede yet they usually have lasting impact on the material world, and they live long lives in memory and narration. In the process of narrative meaning-making, the event of flooding becomes a fierce examination calling into question everything that constitutes a customary lived life. It is against the scene of chaos that normalcy, habitual and even mundane life-order acquires an unprecedented value.

**Dace Bula** is a narrative scholar who has studied oral narratives of a suburban fishing community since 1992. Currently, she is leading the project "Living Next to the Port: Eco-narratives, Local Histories and Environmental Activism in the Daugava Delta" (funded by the Latvian Council of Science).

**Keywords:** community narrative repertoires; disaster memories; oral history and environment

### **Felicitas Söhner (Germany)** Professional Expertise and its Perspective to Youth Welfare of the GDR – To Classify Settings and Motives

The concept "moral injury" is commonly associated with injury of the soul during combat experiences and is a relatively new concept in the field of social sciences. Analysis revealed that indeed, moral injury can be a valuable interpretive tool for oral historians and interviewees but that it must be treated with some degree of caution (Napoli 2019). Therefore, it seems almost surprising, that moral injury has received very limited attention in the social historical science literature (Dombo et al., 2013).

While historians typically have considered the perspective of the former residents of East German children's homes more recently this project questions of professional settings and social, political and individual motives are brought to the fore. This contribution analyses perspectives of medical, psychological and educational practice in so-called special children's homes of the GDR. Historical political and cultural backgrounds are illuminated as well as questions of the reflected handling of contemporary witness narratives against the background of the concept of "moral injury".

The analysis reveals some urgent but unanswered questions that are systematically addressed in the proposed contribution:

- Who actually testifies where, to whom, what exactly?
- Is the status of contemporary witnessing reserved for specific perspectives?
- Is it about concrete, everyday experiences or the general characterization of a system?
- How can the perspectivity and emotionality of contemporary witness narratives be used as opportunities for a controversial and critical analysis of GDR history?
- How can principles and concepts of political and historical education be put into practice?

It aims to gather and make available sources to enable to analyse the social, intellectual and cultural conditions that shaped the children's home system of the GDR. A key aim is to investigate the appropriateness of Oral History as a methodology for capturing memories, observations and insights that are rarely recorded in the scholarly literature of the field.

**Felicitas Söhner** attained her BA in the study of culture sciences and her MA in history and literature at the University of Hagen. She defended her dissertation "Oral History Project to Images of Self and Others in Silesia" in 2012. From 2012 to 2013, she was a scientific assistant at the Philosophical Institute, University of Passau, for an oral history project to build values in families. She then became a scientific assistant at the Institute of History, Theory and Ethics of Medicine, University of Ulm (2013-2015) and the University of Düsseldorf (since 2016). Her post-doctoral research work is an oral history project of the history of psychiatry in post-war Germany, 2015-2019.

**Keywords:** East German history; moral injury; social history; social welfare; trauma

### **Vinita Sinha (India)** Silent Stories in Art: An Extension of Oral Histories

The written word is a dominant tool to record experiences, impressions and aspirations of mankind. It circulates amongst the literate and gathers acclaim. However, there do exist simultaneously, scores of silent histories in the voices of individuals and the community.

This paper is concerned with the reflections of trauma and dealings with it in the unspoken form of visual art and in the oral tradition of songs. The exuberant, resilient and subversive female voices found in narrative traditions of rural India serve to enrich the oral ethnographic register. My study includes women's stories from the specific region of the State of Bihar in India.

Oral renditions with allegorical references to the experiences of oppression and expulsion have helped unearth silent histories and unravel stories of the forgotten 'little heroes'. Women's narratives comprising songs and poems that bear no authorial stamp often contribute to the formation of new alternative literatures. The power of the paintbrush, embroidered art and practice of songs from the cultural reservoir have enabled many slighted women to speak, subvert and win bitter battles of life.

The personal yet shared narratives that belong to the 'little tradition' help resurrect identities for the speaking voice. The personal stories of trauma that allow each member of the community to reference and negotiate with their own trauma and not look at it as an isolated and isolating experience become the site for analysis in this paper. It aims to focus on such personal narratives of trauma arising out of discrimination in private and personal lives of young and neglected women.

Such defeatist reveries and hopeful victories depicted on canvas or cloth, at times articulated in singing voices are the silent histories seeking attention of researchers to cognise them as oral history today.

**Dr. Vinita Sinha** teaches English at Indraprastha College for Women in the University of Delhi. Her areas of interest include Translation Studies and Oral Traditions. She is the Coordinator of the Translation Centre in her College. She has presented and published papers in the aforesaid areas at international levels.

**Keywords:** personal narratives; silent histories; subversive voices; trauma; visual art

### **Masaya Nemoto (Japan)** Balancing Two Cultures: Lives of Atomic Bomb Survivors in the United States

This paper examines the relationship between migration and belonging through the case of survivors of atomic bomb living in the United States. In 1945 atomic bombs dropped by the United States destroyed the cities of Hiroshima and Nagasaki in Japan. The survivors have suffered from scar, trauma, and radiation caused by the nuclear bombs until today. However, there are atomic bomb survivors who migrated to the United States from Japan after the World War II. Some moved to the United States for their career or marriage. Others were originally born in the United States as the second generation of Japanese-American but went to Japan before the war, and came back to the United States after the war. Those atomic bomb survivors in the United States built an organization to ask for medical support from the US government first and then Japanese national government because the United States rejected the support for its “enemy” in the past.

In this paper, I will explore the biographies of atomic bomb survivors living in the United States to consider their sense of belonging. First, I will briefly explain the background of atomic survivors living in the United States as well as the effects of atomic bomb. Second, I will describe survivors’ life stories while answering questions such as why they migrated from Japan to the United States and how they have lived in that country against which they “fought” in the past. Lastly, by drawing on the survivors’ life-stories and narratives, I will examine how they have changed their sense of belonging such as being a Japanese, an American, and/or a survivor from the atomic bombing by the United States.

**Masaya Nemoto** is currently a Japan Society for the Promotion of Science (JSPS) researcher at Ritsumeikan University, Kyoto, Japan (Ph.D., Hitotsubashi University, 2013). He has received several fellowships and grants including a JSPS Research Fellowship for Young Scientists (2017-present) and a research grant from the Toyota Foundation (2012-2014).

**Keywords:** migration; sense of belonging; survivors of nuclear bomb; war

## **PAPER SESSION 6**

**Friday 27 August 2021 9.00am–11.00am (UTC +8)**

### **P6.1 – Oral History and Education**

#### **Benjamin Ho & Kiang-Koh Lai Lin (Singapore) Oral History as an Educational Tool**

Oral History has a time-honoured tradition of passing historical knowledge from one generation to another. This session will share the application of oral history in the educational context, which comes in the form of imparting knowledge, skills and values through interviewing oral history of seniors by members of a younger generation. Find out how through learning and applying the craft of oral history interviewing can enable the younger generation to acquire life skills such as active listening, critical thinking and empathy. Such skills are of growing relevance to a modern and globalised city like Singapore that has a society of increasing diversity. The session will present a case study of students, teachers and parents from schools using oral history for a publication project done in collaboration with the National Archives of Singapore and Singapore Memory Project. The publication is on the history of the Kolam Ayer district in Singapore. It will conclude with practical tips for managing projects involving oral history with students and teachers.

**Benjamin Ho** is a Specialist at the Oral History Centre, National Archives of Singapore (NAS). He has conducted oral history interviews on the political history of Singapore, the public service, education and urban planning. He has conducted training in oral history methodology. Prior to joining NAS, he taught history for several years.

**Kiang-Koh Lai Lin** is a Consultant at the Oral History Centre, NAS. She has interviewed 140 people for more than 500 hours. She specialises in themes such as grassroots, community histories, Chinese clan associations, economic development, education, literary scene and

visual arts. She has conducted talks and workshops on oral history methodology for students and volunteers and has participated in the Georgetown World Heritage Incorporated's "Cherita Lebuh Chulia" and "Cherita Georgetown" oral history projects.

**Keywords:** education; school oral history project; student; teacher

**Diego Fernando Acevedo León & Nohora Elisabeth Alfonso Bernal (Colombia) Sentido de la Escuela en el Bachillerato Relatos de Vida de Estudiantes en una Institución Pública de Boyacá-Colombia [in Spanish]**

El presente trabajo surge en medio de la preocupación por los 1500-2000 estudiantes de educación básica-media que abandonan cada año la escuela en el departamento de Boyacá Colombia, se emplean relatos de vida de jóvenes (12-19 años), orales-escritas-digitalizadas, que muestran sus diferentes realidades sociales, culturales, articuladas en tres ejes que permiten comprender el sentido otorgado a la escuela por los estudiantes desde: su(s) experiencia (s), valoración (es), significado (s).

A. En cuanto a la experiencia (s):

1. Experiencias de la escuela desde trayectorias escolares, vivencias familiares y entornos sociales, propiciadas por interacciones y socialización escolar, que genera percepciones y sentimientos hacia la escuela.

B. Respecto a las valoraciones generadas por los estudiantes se destacan:

2. La forma en que se valora la escuela en perspectiva histórica-social en el presente y como futuro, como escenario de amistad-amor-odio, adquieren 6 matices: como se representa la escuela, sus finalidades, lo representativo del escenario escolar, como se conceptualiza la escuela, los sentimientos de aceptación-rechazo a la escolaridad, la visión formativa en valores humanos y cívicos propiciados por la escuela.

C. Desde el sentido concedido a la escuela en directa relación con el sentido concedido a la vida de los estudiantes.

3. Significado existencial: la escuela determinante-o no tanto en las trayectorias personales, familiares académicas y laborales.

**Resultados:**

**Experiencias:** Se identifican experiencias desde las *formas de relación*, (relaciones interpersonales-trabajo escolar-jóvenes de sectores rurales-urbanos); *formas de percepción*, (desde la estatura, la vida escolar desde hombres-mujeres- y el influjo de las nuevas tecnologías); los *sentimientos*, (relaciones afectivas, construcción identitaria-moda, escuela-normas).

**Valoraciones:** Se valora la escuela desde las Relaciones interpersonales-vivencias- acontecimientos vividos en la escuela, a partir de las Relaciones maestro-estudiantes-estudiantes, Representaciones o imaginarios entorno a la escuela como también desde motivaciones hacia la escuela.

**Significados:** situaciones de vida de los estudiantes en familia, barrio, comunidad –la vida laboral personal o desde el trabajo de los padres- fallecimientos de familiares-desafiliación escolar.

**Conclusiones:** La escuela pierde sentido en las experiencias y valoraciones escolares cuando las situaciones de pobreza se imponen a las posibilidades escolares, con situaciones de vicios, embarazos no deseados, reprobación, rupturas familiares, acoso, malas relaciones interpersonales, además la escuela pierde un sentido existencial por acontecimientos existenciales marcados, intimidación, pobreza extrema, desafiliación, la muerte, accidentes, desempleo, falta de oportunidades escolares.



**Diego Fernando Acevedo León-** Doctor en Ciencias de la Educación Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. Docente Secretaría Educación de Boyacá-Colombia. Magíster Educación y Licenciado en Teología de la Pontificia Universidad Javeriana-Colombia. Grupo de investigación Muisuata UPTC, Duitama. Email: [diego.acevedo01@uptc.edu.co](mailto:diego.acevedo01@uptc.edu.co).

**Nohora Elisabeth Alfonso Bernal-** Directora posgrados Universidad Pedagógica y Tecnológica de Colombia. (UPTC). Doctora en Ciencias de la Educación Universidad del Cauca. Magíster Universidad Pedagógica Nacional y Centro Internacional de Desarrollo Humano. Especialista en Recreación Educativa Universidad San Buenaventura. Administradora Turística y Hotelera UPTC. Directora Grupo de Investigación Muisuatá UPTC Duitama.

**Palabras clave:** experiencias escolares; sentido de la escuela; significado de la escuela; valoraciones de la escuela

### **Alex T. Primm (USA) Encouraging Oral History in Hebei, China**

In November 2018 I visited an old friend who had recently received an invitation to come in one month to Shijiazhuang, the 30th biggest city on the mainland, to teach American literature. "I can't do it, maybe you can," my friend said.

I have been teaching political science in a community college, conducting environmental oral histories for a variety of public agencies, studying Mandarin, assisting on video documentaries and recently finished a manuscript on my work. "Sure, I said, I'm ready to travel to northern China in December!"

Luckily my host at the Hebei University of Science and Technology decided that April 2019 would be a better time for oral history seminars. I met with a half-dozen different classes over three weeks.

This paper will explore what it was like for a freelance oral historian to present details on conducting in-depth interviews in rural America. Both the graduate and undergraduate students I met with had no experience with oral history. My goal was to encourage these students to explore what is still a new methodology in both China and the USA.

**Alex T. Primm** has been a freelance oral historian in Missouri for 30 years. Earning an MA in Political Science, St. Louis University, he has completed projects for the U.S. Army, the Geological Survey and the National Parks. He was the founding curator of the Ozark Agriculture Museum at Maramec Springs Park, St. James, and an adjunct instructor in Political Science at East Central Community College, Union. He has also carried out projects for the Missouri Arts Council and the Humanities Council. The documentary "Treehouse, an Ozark Story," now is available on YouTube. As a founding member of Vietnam Veterans Against the War, he has been involved in veterans' peace organizations to encourage international understanding. He has traveled to China and Taiwan six times in his career.

**Keywords:** documentary; rural; seminar

## **P6.2 – A Life of Listening**

### **Martha Norkunas (USA) A Life of Listening to Stories of Struggle and Meaning**

Inspired by the American Council of Learned Society's annual lectures, "A Life of Learning" in which scholars present intellectual autobiographies, "A Life of Listening" presents two senior scholars' reflections on their lives as oral historians: Martha Norkunas and Indira Chowdhury. Each scholar will speak for twenty-five minutes so that they can create a meaningful life narrative about listening. Martha Norkunas's "A Life of Listening to Stories of Struggle and

Meaning” looks back on her deepening understanding of the expansiveness and limits of narrative to express profound ideas about the feelings, ideas and experiences that constitute a life history. She recounts several points of transformation in her life of listening, from her introduction to the history of daily life consciousness or *les mentalités* in France, to her listening to workers recount their struggles, to her decades long project to record the experiences of people of color in the U.S. Her interest in oral history began in France when she encountered it in the context of *les mentalités*. She returned to the U.S. to study folklore and narrative. Listening became a form of activism as she recorded the words of working class women who worked in the textile mills, and later furniture workers, looking for how they created meaning in their work, their union activities, and their communities and how they situated themselves in the great class divides and structural inequality they saw around them. Later she initiated oral history projects with African Americans as she and her students reflected on racial identity and structural racism. She began to think more about how best to teach students to listen to people who had radically different life experiences from their own and developed a series of listening exercises that profoundly changed her teaching and her practice of oral history.

**Martha Norkunas** is Professor of Oral and Public History at Middle Tennessee State University. She holds a Ph.D. in Folklore from Indiana University. Norkunas’s work examines how cultural memory is represented in narrative and on the landscape, and how those representations intersect with race, gender, class and power.

**Keywords:** autobiography; listening; oral history; personal narrative

### **Indira Chowdhury (India)** How Listening Shaped Me as an Oral Historian: Some Reflections

I grew up listening to countless stories told by members of my extended family about the places they could never easily return to after India was partitioned in 1947. If stories created an atmosphere of listening, so did the *kirtaniya*-singers who came regularly to sing about Chaitanya, the 16th century saint from Bengal. The musical gatherings with these humble folk singers was perhaps my grandmother’s attempt to re-create practices she was familiar with as a child. The streets in the town I grew up in were not noisy with sounds of automobiles; one heard a medley of human voices: the songs of beggars, the shouts of higglers and cobblers carrying their awls and announcing their availability for shoe repairs. I became an oral historian rather late in life, but these diverse voices shaped my life in listening. In this paper, I offer my understanding of what the oral historian coming from a culture orality sets out to record and what she listens to in the process. Through vignettes from my experience of doing oral history, I reflect on how I have listened differently at different phases of my life and how rhythms of music, everyday speech, story-telling and responses to my interview questions have woven together my understanding of memory and history.

**Indira Chowdhury** is Founder-Director of the Centre for Public History at the Srishti Manipal Institute of Art, Design, and Technology, Bengaluru. Formerly professor of English at Jadavpur University, Kolkata, she is also the founder of Archival Resources for Contemporary History (ARCH), Bengaluru, now known as ARCH@Srishti. A PhD in history from the School of Oriental and African Studies, London, her book, *The Frail Hero and Virile History* (Delhi, OUP, 1998) won the Tagore prize in 2001. She was awarded the New India Fellowship to work on the manuscript of her recently published book titled *Growing the Tree of Science: Homi Bhabha and the Tata Institute of Fundamental Research* (OUP: 2016). Interested in a number of fields she has translated novels from Bengali to English, compiled the Supplement of Indian English words in the *Oxford Advanced Learner’s Dictionary* (1996) and also created Archival books that bring archival material to the public. She researched and directed a book project on Asia’s oldest museum entitled *The Lives of Objects: Stories from the Indian Museum* (2017). Indira is a founding member of the Oral History Association of India. She was President of the Oral History Association of India (2013–2016) and President of the International Oral History Association (2014–2016). She blogs about oral history at <http://theoralhistorian.com>.

**Keywords:** autobiography; listening; oral history; personal narrative

## SCREENINGS

The XXII International Oral History Association (IOHA) Virtual Conference 2021 will feature on-demand screenings of an exciting selection of documentary videos, performance footage and cinematic productions based on the work of the international oral history community.

In addition, the Asian Film Archive (AFA), have contributed an omnibus film, *Fragment*, that will be available to registered participants for a 48-hour period only.

### S1 – *Fragment*

**Tuesday 24 August 2021 12.00nn - Thursday 26 August 2021 12.00nn (UTC +8)**

*Fragment* is an omnibus film celebrating the strength and diversity of South-East Asian independent cinema. Made up of a collage of ten stories, each story distinctively embraces the other's subjectivities through the collective sentiments of vulnerability and fortitude. With *Fragment*, a multi-perspective collage within the context of the region is presented, with the hopes of celebrating the courage, emotions and spirit of independent filmmaking.



#### Directors

Kan Lumé (Singapore), Lucky Kuswandi (Indonesia), Nawapol Thamrongrattanarit (Thailand), Phan Dang Di (Vietnam), Sherman Ong (Malaysia/Singapore), Tan Chui Mui (Malaysia), U-Wei Haji Saari (Malaysia), Wesley Leon Aroozoo (Singapore), Kavich Neang (Cambodia), Lavrente Indico Diaz (Lav Diaz) (The Philippines).

#### Commissioned by

The Asian Film Archive (AFA)

### S2 – *Chilocco Through the Years*



*Chilocco Through the Years* examines the legacy of the Chilocco Indian Agricultural School through the lens of thousands of students from over 127 federally-recognized tribes. Chilocco was the largest intertribal federal Native boarding school in the U.S. The school, located in north central Oklahoma, was in operation from 1884 to

1980. The documentary is just one component of the larger Chilocco History Project, a three-year collaborative effort between the Chilocco National Alumni Association and the OOHRP. Firethief Media produced the documentary in conjunction with the OSU Library's OOHRP and the Chilocco National Alumni Association. It was made possible with support from the Tom J. and Edna M. Carson Foundation and the OSU Library through the Puterbaugh Professorship for Library Service, the Clerico Family Chair for Library Excellence, and the Hyle Family Professorship.

### **Project Co-Director/Documentary Story Editor**

Sarah Milligan (USA)

### **S3 – *It's Not the Heat, It's the Humidity***

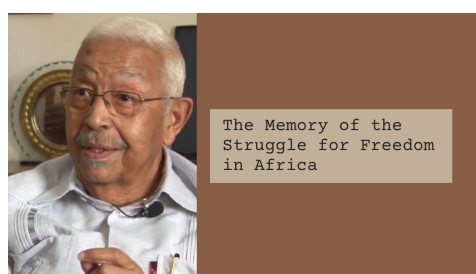
The performance is a journey into the dark. It is the creative practice component of Dr John Willsteed's PhD, and has been performed three times in Australia since 2016. In the spring of 1976, The Saints released "(I'm) Stranded" and the Brisbane music scene was never quite the same again. The spores of DIY culture spread and unfurled over the following years into a vibrant, colourful post-punk fungus. It flourished in the early 80s, still deep in the dark, fed by the heat and the repression. In a performance filled with voices both spoken and sung, using recent oral history footage with scene participants and substantial ephemeral material, renowned Brisbane musician and now academic John Willsteed will summon precious visions of a lost time, where faces and places and sounds long buried and forgotten, bloom and sway and speak again.



### **Director & Performer**

John Willsteed (Australia)

### **S4 – *The Memory of the Struggle for Freedom in Africa: An Interview with Comandante Pedro Pires***



Commander (Comandante) Pedro Pires, born in 1934, was one of the leading leaders in the struggle for the liberation of Guinea Bissau and Cape Verde from Portuguese colonial rule. After Cape Verde's independence, the Comandante became prime minister of the new country (1975-1991) and later its president (2001-2011). In a lengthy filmed interview of about 12 hours given

in June 2019, he talked at length about the fight against colonialism. However, in addition to the recollections of past war fighting, he emphasizes the importance of the

struggle over the events and its combatants in the present and in the future historical memory. That memory would be, in his view, threatened. From this theme, we have produced a documentary, which highlights the power of oral history in the construction of individual and collective political memories.

In Portuguese, with English subtitles.

### **Directors**

Celso Castro & Thais Blank (Brazil)

### **S5 – a *ROLE to PLAY***

Working with Freedom Community Project adult reading group members, food bank users and volunteers, *a ROLE to PLAY* illuminates experiences of contemporary working life in post-industrial Bolsover, a Derbyshire constituency where coal was once king.

The film experiments with methods of co-creation, radical documentary theatre and oral testimony, with project participants storytelling privileged over the questioning/answering scenario of traditional documentary. The title echoes the participatory film process, and also the roles everyone takes in their working and non-working lives.

Made in direct response to the increasing numbers of unemployment and zero hour contracts across the UK, the film explores the realities and struggles that some residents of Bolsover have encountered in gaining and sustaining employment amidst the town's post-mining legacy of deindustrialisation.



We hear the lived experiences and dreams of town residents including:

**Stephen Cotton** whose engagement with the Freedom Community Project began as a client of the food bank; going on to volunteer and then secure a job there.

**Adrian Drury** a freelance tattooist and zero-hour contract worker. He also plays electric

guitar and has been in several bands.

**Jeanette Haigh** a retired primary school teacher who runs Freedom Community Project's weekly Bolsover reading group.

**Serena Hammond** a performing arts student who has been a carer for her mother Linda, a member of Bolsover reading group, since she was a teenager.

**Dennis Skinner** trade unionist, ex-miner, and MP for Bolsover from 1970—2019.



Themes include positive/negative work experiences, volunteering, lack of work, zero-hours contracts, unemployment, and the barrier that low reading and writing skills can have on work.

Esther produced an accompanying newspaper, 'Class Work Tribune', featuring work by the reading group, material from the film, and a newly commissioned poem by Ian McMillan, 'Here are the Words in the Reading Bank'.

### **Director, Producer & Editor**

Esther Johnson (UK)

## **POSTERS**

### **POS1 – An Educator's Perspective to Presenting Oral History with Digital Artefacts by Kenneth Koh & Nurul Amirah Ghazali**

Oral history is a useful tool through which educators deepen historical understanding and develop greater empathy in learners. In Singapore schools, there has been an increasing trend amongst teachers in the adoption of oral history as a pedagogical tool, especially in support of inquiry-based investigations for the study of History.

This poster seeks to reflect on Catholic High School's incorporation of oral history in research tasks to develop and nurture our Humanities Ambassadors (HA) and students of the Humanities Talent Development Programme (HTDP). The poster seeks to share our beliefs in oral history for cultivating greater disciplinary consciousness and begins by providing an overview of the various programmes run by the HA and HTDP to equip and apply the relevant skills for oral history research. Beyond oral interviews and eliciting responses, this poster will also touch on how the team has created opportunities for students to curate digital artefacts to share their oral history findings. Through selecting and organising evidence across historical accounts, our students come together to weave their own historical interpretations of the past and communicate these narratives in meaningful ways to an authentic audience. In the process of doing so, they develop greater empathy for the topic of their exploration and in turn think of ways in which their digital artefacts can communicate and evoke the sentiments of their audiences.

**Kenneth Koh** is the Subject Head for History & Social Studies at Catholic High School. He leads a team of humanities educators in developing meaningful learning experiences that develops students' critical thinking skills while imbuing in them a sense of purpose as a global citizen and humanities scholar. He is also the recipient of the Outstanding Youth in Education Award (2021) in Singapore.

**Nurul Amirah Ghazali** is the Humanities Ambassador Coordinator at Catholic High School. She designs learning opportunities for students to encourage greater interest in the Humanities, with a pedagogical focus on oral history and learning journeys.

**Keywords:** curation; digital artefact; historical interpretations; talent development

## **POS2 – Iran Contemporary History Challenges by Saeideh Mahrami & Samir Ketf**

The internal quick changes in Iran have been seen by the world. This is the responsibility of oral-historians to cover them - the protests in which a lot of people were killed (Dec. 2017, Nov. 2019, and Jul. 2021) - but the government's pressure has stopped all the normal activities of oral historians to record the real stories of the people. Also the external problems were added to all above mentioned challenges. The conflict between Iran and the USA in Jan. 2020 caused a deadly mistake and Flight 752 of Ukraine Airlines aimed by war missiles.

Where is the real place of Iranian people in such situation? What's the main role of an oral-historian in this atmosphere?

**Samir Ketf** is an electrical engineer, while **Saeideh Mahrami** holds an MA in English language teaching. Saeideh is the representative for Asia in IOHA. Both of them have published an oral history book titled *The Sun of Hesar*, and have participated in oral history conferences (with article presentations) in Iran (2012), India (IOHA 2016), and Finland (IOHA 2018).

**Keywords:** Iran; oral history; people

## **POS3 – Latvian Emigrants in Sweden in the Latvian National Oral History Collection by Ginta Elksne & Māra Zirnīte**

The Latvian National Oral History (LNOH) research project at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology of the University of Latvia was aimed at documenting the living, unexplored experience of the nation's people in recent historical events. The beginning of the LNOH project dates back to 1992.

Sweden is among the most popular migration destinations from Latvia. Approximately 200,000 refugees fled from Latvia at the end of the Second World War. Among them more than 4,500 refugees fled to Sweden in boats. The other wave of emigration to Sweden began with the time that followed the restoration of independence of Latvia in 1991 and continues to this day. Latvians are one of the most mobile European nations (Hazans 2003). It was one of the countries hit hardest by the crisis (Mierina 2014), resulting in unprecedented rates of emigration from this small country.

The LNOH collection is an essential resource in migration studies. The collection consists of over 4,500 life story interviews, including interviews with expatriates emigrating to Sweden after the Second World War as well as with those emigrating after the restoration of independence in 1991. The poster provides an insight into life story research about two generations of migrants in Sweden, based on the interviews collected in the LNOH collection.

**Mg.sc.soc. Ginta Elksne.** Research Assistant at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia (Latvia). Doctoral student at the Rīga Stradiņš University (Sociology). Main scientific research interests are related to the analysis of oral history and biographical sources, focusing on social transformation processes in the society, migration and remigration.

**Mg.sc.hum. Māra Zirņīte**, Researcher at the Institute of Philosophy and Sociology, University of Latvia (Latvia). Chair of the NGO “Life Story” (“Dzīvesstāsts”), Latvian Oral History Researchers Association. Main scientific research interests are related to the oral history, especially about values in the life stories, as well as about individual, ethnic, cultural and regional identity in the life stories.

**Keywords:** emigration; Latvia; life stories; Sweden

#### **POS4 – Push-Pull Factors in Rural-Urban Migration Inflows to Saigon between 1945 and 1975: A Study Using Oral History Sources by Yuki Shibuya**

This poster presents the author’s attempt to map push-pull factors in rural-urban migration inflows to Saigon from 1945 to 1975, as gathered through 45 life story interviews from 2009. Interviews were conducted in Ho Chi Minh City by the author.

Saigon, former capital of the pro-French and pro-American regimes during the first and second Indochina wars, is located at the center of present-day Ho Chi Minh City. The population dynamics and social structure of Saigon are crucial for understanding the modern history of Vietnam.

In 1943, Saigon had a population of 498,100. By 1952, that number had grown to approximately 1,600,000 people—an increase of just over 300% in less than 10 years. After the Geneva Accords of 1954, Saigon’s population continued to increase, reaching 1,840,000 by 1972. During the first and second Indochina wars, the pro-American and pro-French administrations were based primarily in urban areas, while revolutionary forces remained strong in rural areas.

Therefore, while the population inflow into Saigon was undesirable in terms of law and order, as well as sanitation, the pro-American regime tacitly permitted, or even encouraged, migration towards Southern Vietnam, especially to Saigon and other cities in the area. Instead, after the reunification of Vietnam, the socialist government introduced a strict policy concerning population relocation. Understanding the political significance of similar population dynamics has long been a major focus of historical research on Saigon covering the period between 1945 and the 1980s. However, because of a lack of historical sources and statistical records, the push-pull factors in rural-urban migration have received relatively little research attention, and a detailed study of specific cases on the topic had hitherto been missing.

**Shibuya, Yuki** (Japan). Project Research Fellow, at Uehiro Project for the Asian Research Library, The University of Tokyo Library System. She received her Ph.D. in 2018 with a thesis on the history of Saigon City—which was located in the center of Ho Chi Minh City, Vietnam.

**Keywords:** Indochina wars; life story interviews; migration; Saigon

#### **POS5 – A Research Design: The Present Past. Descendants of Karelian WWII Evacuees Reviving Heritage in 2020’s Finland by Pirja Hyyryläinen**



In the 21st Century, the climate change, armed conflicts, and famine force people to migrate, and settle in different areas and live in cultural diaspora. In Finland, there were more than 410 000 people evacuated and relocated in 2nd World War 1939–1945 from Karelia, Salla and Petsamo areas. Approximately one fifth of the Finnish population are their descendants. However, the evacuees did not form a homogenous group, as is often claimed in national narrative. Amongst them were minorities, such as Karelian language speakers. My dissertation studies their descendants who are reviving the culture and language of their predecessors in local community colleges.

My research question is: how the forced migration is present in the aspirations of descendants of Karelian evacuees to revive the culture and language of past generations?

The expected research results will indicate how a migrated minority culture is remembered, constructed and maintained by descendant generations. In this poster I am introducing my research design: oral history and diaspora research theories, as well as “open notebook” approach. In my research I will conduct interviews with community college participants from different areas of Finland. In addition, I also analyze the material with oral history research and close reading methods. With the concept of “other knowledge”, I intend to equalize the descendants’ voices with the official institutional narrative. My research will add a multifaceted perspective to the national narrative about one diasporic minority of immigration background.

**Pirja Hyyryläinen**, PhD Researcher of Ethnology and Anthropology, is currently working on her dissertation at the University of Jyväskylä, Finland. Her research interests include oral history, silences and breaks in intergenerational heritage transfer, revitalisation, empowerment, and social media. In free time, she enjoys writing sci-fi and fantasy stories, doing handicrafts, and cooking.

**Keywords:** identity; Karelians; migration; national narrative; revitalization

## **POS6 – Surviving WWII and the Japanese Occupation in Malaysia by Cheryl Nicholas**

In “Recording Our ASEAN Heritage,” a 1992 colloquium, sponsored by the Association of Southeast Asian Nations (ASEAN), a call was made for regional projects on oral histories with focus on the Japanese occupation of WW II. This three-and-a-half-year period of Japanese-occupied Malaya (1941-1945) is argued to represent a significant transition in Malaysian history in general, and in the lives of Malaysians in particular (Kratoska, 1997). Since the 1992 colloquium, there has been some attention given to Malaysian WWII historical narratives (for instance, Lim & Wong, 2000 and Huen, et. al., 1998); however, most of the research has been to supplement historical texts. Until recently, there has been little or no work that focused solely on Malaysia WWII survivor stories, where the stories themselves are central to the project. WWII, stories about the Japanese occupation were usually relayed by word-of-mouth; but as survivors grew old and passed on, so too did their stories. The few exceptions have been prisoner of war (POW) accounts (e.g., Chapman, 2003; McCormack, 2005), or stories about war-heroes and spies (e.g., Sahid, 1995; Spearman, 1954).

In recent years, however, there has been a stronger effort to collect, conserve or make accessible as historical accounts, the stories of various WWII survivors (see RAGE-multimedia, Roots.sg). This project contributes to this small yet growing corpus of work. Twenty-five oral history interviews were conducted (audio-video) with 80- to 95-year-old Malaysian survivors of WWII. Participants of both genders represented diverse ethnicities. The interviews, conducted from 2013 to 2018, focused on everyday living during the Japanese occupation in Malaysia, from attending Japanese school and struggling with rations, to escaping mercenaries and dealing with executions and war-trauma. This presentation analyzes these overarching themes in the stories and considers ways to disseminate the stories to current generations in Malaysia.

**Cheryl L. Nicholas** is an Associate Professor of Communication Arts & Sciences and Global Studies at Penn State Berks, USA. Her research is based on how symbolic activity constitutes and is constituted by cultural worldviews. Theoretically, her work is grounded in language and social interaction, and critical perspectives.

**Keywords:** Malaysia; storytelling; WWII survivors

## TRADE SUPPORTER



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