

## DOCUMENTING AND PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF THE BRACERO PROGRAM

*By Stephen Velasquez*

In March 2004, two months after President George W. Bush proposed a new amnesty and temporary work program for illegal workers in the United States, Smithsonian curators and academic scholars met to discuss a World War II guest worker program. The discussion focused on how to better understand contemporary guest worker programs and controversies about cross-border migration. To put current issues of migration in historical and national context, the National Museum of American History initiated a multi-institutional effort to document and preserve the history of a 1942–1964 guest worker experience called the Bracero Program (after “brazo,” arm). This initiative became the Bracero Oral History Project.

The Bracero Oral History Project has presented challenges and opportunities to Smithsonian curators. Debates about a new guest worker program make it important to understand this little-known but important shared chapter of U.S. and Mexican history. As public historians in a federal institution, we face several challenges when documenting guest worker stories. These challenges include framing controversial guest worker and migration issues for a contemporary audience. Curators were also faced with limited



*NMAH curator collects information from a former bracero at a town hall collection meeting in San Jose, CA., 2005. Photo by UTEP.*

resources. And, given the Smithsonian’s recent commitment to engage Latino communities in a public history project, to think about how best to involve this community in the undertaking. The success of a well-planned, well-executed project and the opportunity to recover, present, and preserve marginalized voices in American history far outweighs the challenges.

### THE BRACERO PROGRAM

To understand the challenges of the Bracero Oral History Project, it is first important to understand the program itself. In 1942, the United States government, on behalf of agricul-

“...*tenían que salir para poder mantener a su familia.*”      “...*you had to leave so you could support your family.*”

*Jesús Aranda Morales, ex-bracero*

*See “Bracero Program” continued on page 3*

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## PRESIDENT'S MESSAGE

by Mike Reis

Recently, I spotted an intriguing feature on the Web. The American Institute of Aeronautics and Astronautics (AIAA) asked its members "When Did You Know?" you'd become an aeronautical or astronautical professional. Inspired scientists recalled pivotal childhood moments: a grandfather pointing to a far-off jet or teenaged envy at not being at Mission Control when the *Eagle* landed and those engineers stopped turning blue.

As federal history professionals, we too have in common more than just a set of pay grades: we share a passion, perhaps born when we were young, that history can make a difference. As a kid, I for one devoured those big hand-me-down history tomes by the likes of Hayes or Commager, the heavier the better. I also regaled neighbors with recitations of all the Presidents' names, with unrequested sidelights on "Old Rough and Ready" or "The Wizard of Kinderhook."

But there's more to our commitment to *federal* history than just an early romance with bygone eras. We believe that there's *unexpected and rich* value in the federal past—and we regularly prove it. The wonderful presenters at our own spring conference offered telling stories witnessing to our vocation along with our profession. Writing an agency history uncovers resonant events, debates, and personalities echoing into present and future. Curating an exhibit brings WWII solemnity into human focus as former House pages recount impressions of Speaker Sam. Preparing a finding aid outlines forgotten records, and a door swings open into vivid experiences from a century ago.

Such moments confirm we made the right professional choice even when the going gets tough. We also honor that choice—and that passion—by becoming involved in SHFG, the Society for History in the Federal Government. I want to let you know that in your officers, committee heads, and publication editors you have a truly superb team ready to listen and learn from your concerns and your commitment. I too pledge to broaden the appeal of your varied work in federal history. Here's some of the good news we covered at our recent Planning Brunch:

- Treasurer Pete Kraemer reports that SHFG is doing well financially but we need to continue to spread the word and find ways to attract new recruits.
- Our web site, ably shaped by Webmaster Jennifer Lévasseur, will benefit from two enthusiastic volunteers recruited by Kathy Franz. We also formed a Web committee to steer us towards both short- and long-term needs. Thanks go to Kathy as well as to Jenn, who will be transitioning Web duties in the fall.
- Kudos also to Matt Wasniewski for organizing a "Federal History Careers: Inside and Outside the Beltway" workshop at the upcoming January 2010 AHA Convention in San Diego.
- We plan another memorable Hewlett Lecture this fall and discussed possible speakers and topics—stay tuned in the SHFG Bulletin for more on this front—ideas and suggestions are welcome for this and any other events including our upcoming annual conference where our 30th anniversary celebration (from our 1979–1980 seedtime to 2009–2010) will resume!

In sum, my own personal best will come from building on Lee Ann Potter's signal accomplishments, including the popular "Pearls of Wisdom" professional development series, which we'll continue apace this coming year. We wish Lee Ann all success in her roving scholar adventures at SHFG's "Oslo office"!

### THE FEDERALIST (ISSN 0736-8151)

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The Society is a national professional organization open to all who are interested in federal history programs. Annual membership fee is \$35 and includes a subscription to *The Federalist* and other periodic publications. Contributors are encouraged to submit articles, news listings, and photographs to the editors. Issues one-year-old and older (Second Series) are available, along with an index to articles, on the Society's web site at [www.shfg.org](http://www.shfg.org).

Opinions expressed in articles are those of the authors and do not necessarily reflect the positions of *The Federalist*, the SHFG, or the agencies or organizations where the authors are employed.

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*Bracero Program, continued from page 1*

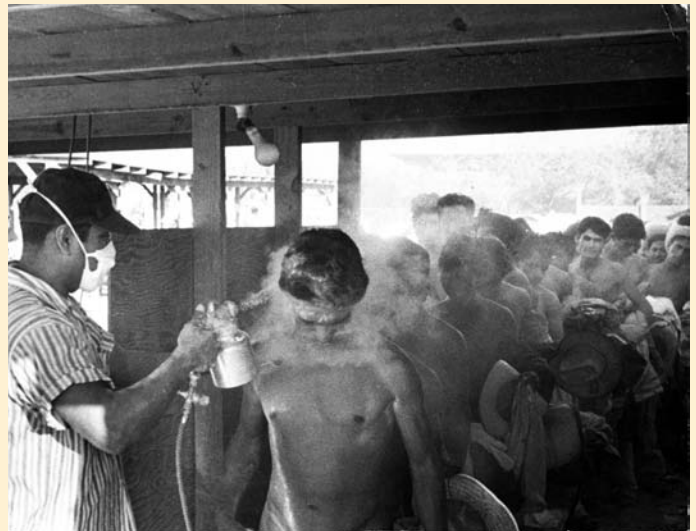
tural interests and railroad companies, initiated a series of labor programs with the Mexican government to recruit Mexican men to work in U.S. fields and railroads. These series of agreements, called the Emergency Farm Labor Program or Mexican Agricultural Labor Program, became known as the Bracero Program. Between 1942 and the end of the program in 1964, an estimated two million men came to the United States on short-term labor contracts, making it the largest guest worker program in U.S. history. The Bracero Program can teach us a great deal about our legacy of immigration and labor policies as well as migration and settlement patterns in the U.S.

**THE BRACERO ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

In addition to documenting the bracero experience, the project has two related goals: to involve the Latino community in public history institutions and to make evident to contemporary audiences that Latino community history is an important part of U.S. history. We accomplished the first goal by involving former braceros and their families in the project. Through collaborations with like-minded institutions, our project records oral histories of surviving ex-braceros and family members, growers, merchants, nurses, and others involved in the original program. In addition, we collect artifacts, such as photographs, letters, and contracts that the interviewees are willing to donate and share. From these interviews and artifacts, we have created a centralized web site of bracero history material and an online digital archive at [www.braceroarchive.org](http://www.braceroarchive.org). A traveling exhibition titled “Bittersweet Harvest: the Bracero Program, 1942–1964,” will soon travel around the United States.

**CONSORTIUM**

The National Museum of American History has not undertaken a large-scale and sustained initiative to interact with the Latino community for over 10 years. As a result, we initially had few contacts in the bracero community but were able to collaborate with institutions close to the community that could locate many ex-braceros. Collaborations included hosting and outreach for town hall community meetings and long-term work such as conducting their own oral histories. Roles, responsibilities, and resources were distributed between collaborators. University of Texas at El Paso’s Institute for Oral History organized transcription and training. Brown University’s Department of American Civilization, Ethnic Studies and History provided scholarly advice and supplied student interviewers. George Mason University’s Center for History and New Media provided technical support. Local partners found volunteers, and the local universities incorporated the Bracero Project into their curriculum.



*Braceros were fumigated with DDT as part of the entry process into the United States, in Hidalgo, Texas, 1956. Photo by Leonard Nadel, National Museum of American History.*

*“In the yard outside, there were about twelve or thirteen thousand aspiring braceros.”*

Juan Sánchez Abasta, ex-bracero

**COLLECTION DAYS**

With a small internal grant from the Smithsonian Latino Initiative Pool, we held a series of town hall meetings and collection days in cities across the nation at partner institutions. We made an overview presentation on the history of the Bracero Program and invited the community to participate in our collecting project. Through these forums, we generated interest in the project, enabling us to collect important artifacts and create a more complete record of a Mexican and Mexican American experience within a museum context.

**PRESERVATION AND ORAL HISTORIES**

We invited former braceros to sign up for recorded interviews and contribute photos and objects to the collection. Our aim was to represent the experiences and histories of this Latino community and encourage Latino audiences to attend museums. More importantly, our objective is to preserve the experiences and stories these men and families experienced in the United States as part of a government-sponsored guest worker program. It is a dramatic, collective story of sacrifice and hardship. Often braceros labored long hours in harsh conditions, were crowded in barracks, provided with poor meals, and paid little.

**WEB SITE**

As public historians, our objective is to make the collection transparent and accessible to the general public. The bilingual web site [www.braceroarchive.org](http://www.braceroarchive.org) links the

participating institutions and shares the information collected. Our intent is to make the web site a useful tool for scholars, students, and teachers and have it function as a central reference point for bracero history. We hope to also make it a visible and useful forum for the Mexican and Mexican American communities as a place to share family stories and to preserve community memory by submitting stories about the Bracero Program.

Currently we have over 1,700 images online relating to the bracero experience that were taken by Leonard Nadel. Our project has collected over 600 interviews. Hundreds of additional images and documents are available for research, making it one of the largest Spanish-language oral history collections in the United States.

#### EXHIBITION

Our portable, bi-lingual traveling exhibition, “Bittersweet Harvest: The Bracero History Program, 1942–1964,” will open at the National Museum of American History in September 2009 and will start a national tour in February 2010. The exhibition will build upon the Smithsonian collections and be enriched by photos from other archives and from our interviews. The portable traveling exhibition can travel to small venues in communities and nontraditional museum settings such as community centers or libraries. The

traveling show uses the history of the Bracero Program to explore ongoing issues of race relations, migration, work, agriculture, family, gender, the border, politics, and identity in the United States.

#### CONCLUSION

As curators in the National Museum of American History, we are grateful for the opportunity to participate in and contribute to such a valuable public history project. Working with a relatively small budget, and spreading resources and responsibilities among the partners, we created a lasting network of institutions dedicated to collecting Latino history. This exhibition and oral history project is important because it will inform the public about the Bracero Program, a forgotten and little-known period in American history. Additionally, it will provide a foundation for the Mexican American community to look into their past and realize their contribution to American history. It will give them a voice and a space within in a national museum. Finally, our work will encourage visitors to reflect on the contributions made by Mexicans and Mexican Americans to the history of U.S. labor, economy, and culture.

*Stephen Velasquez is an associate curator at the Division of Home and Community Life, National Museum of American History, Washington, DC.*

### EXCERPTS FROM BRACERO INTERVIEWS

*“Los traían en, algunos en camiones y algunos en los trenes y no trenes de pasajero, trenes de carga...como borregos, hasta El Paso.”*

*“They brought them in trucks and some in trains, and not passenger trains but cargo trains...like sheep, up to El Paso.”*

*Cecilio Santillano, ex-bracero*

*“En el centro de repartición, ahí lo ponían a uno, lo paraban a uno por la pared y llegaban los contratistas como a ir a comprar ganado.”*

*“In the center they put you up against the wall, and the contractors came like they were coming to buy livestock.”*

*Isidoro Ramírez, ex-bracero*

*“Allí fue donde conocimos el, precisamente el cortito que le nombran o el azadón. Y yo por cierto que, allí, allí lloré mis lágrimas.”*

*“That’s where we encountered el cortito, or what’s called the short-handled hoe. And for sure, that is where I shed my tears.”*

*José Natividad Alva Medina, ex-bracero*

*“En una barraca vivíamos novecientos....Yo estuve como una semana....¿Quién va a dormir con todo ese gentío?”*

*“900 of us lived in one barracks....I was there a week....Who is*

*going to sleep with all those people?”*

*Guadalupe Mena Arezmeñdi, ex-bracero*

*“Pagaban que a veinte centavos la caja, tenía que matarse para ganar diez dólares.”*

*“They paid twenty cents a box. You had to kill yourself to make ten dollars.”*

*Isidoro Ramírez, ex-bracero*

*“Era una alegría....Música por ahí, música por acá. Mariachis allá ya así. Bueno era un gusto.... Cantinas americanas, unos se metían ahí también. Estaba bien.”*

*“It was a good time....Music over there, music over here. Mariachis and the like. Well, it was great.... American bars, some went in there, too. It was good.”*

*Isaías Sánchez, ex-bracero*

*“Yo estuve en un lugar lejos del pueblo que no tenías ni a donde ir ni nada....Se compraban un radiecito y a oír, a escuchar el radio. Eso era todo, no había más qué hacer.”*

*“I was in a place far from town with nothing to do and no place to go....You bought a radio to listen to music. That was it. There was nothing else to do.”*

*Pedro del Real Pérez, ex-bracero*

# FORENSIC HISTORY IN SUPERFUND COUNTERCLAIMS

## The CERCLA Counterclaim at the Juncture of History and Environmental Law

By Andrew Sorokowski

As the historical research and information specialist in the Environmental Defense Section of the U.S. Department of Justice, I compile critical documentation relating to counterclaims under the Comprehensive Environmental Response, Compensation, and Liability Act (CERCLA). By applying historical methodologies to legal disputes involving multimillion-dollar apportionments of environmental clean-up liability, I often do not merely study a course of events, but have an opportunity to affect the judicial outcome.

In 1980, CERCLA (42 USC sec. 9601-9675) was enacted. As its name implies, CERCLA provides for the clean-up of toxic spills, for compensation to the parties that undertook it, and for apportionment of liability among those responsible for the damage.

In 1986, the Superfund Amendment and Reauthorization Act (SARA) introduced the CERCLA counterclaim.

Under CERCLA, the party held liable for the clean-up of hazardous substances need not be the party that actually released them. It can be the current owner and operator of a facility where the release occurred, the owner or operator at the time of disposal, one who arranged for disposal or treatment of the hazardous substances, or one who transported them. If one of these potentially responsible parties (PRPs) has been the object of an enforcement action by the United States, it may sue other PRPs—including the U.S. government—for contribution to the costs of cleanup. This is called a CERCLA counterclaim, under Section 113(f)(1). In deciding what portion of the clean-up costs each PRP is to pay, the court may use “such equitable factors as the court determines are appropriate.”

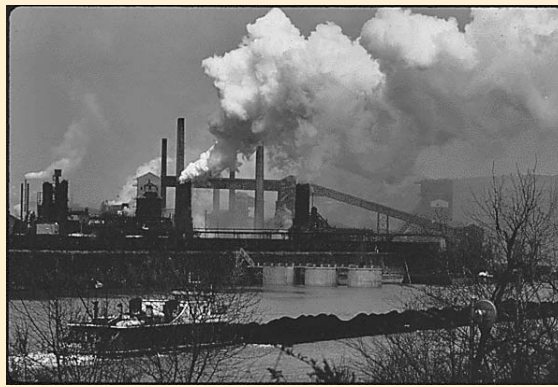
The historian’s participation in CERCLA counterclaim litigation most often involves World War II-era cases. Starting about 1940, and especially after the United States entered the war in December 1941, the federal government managed large sectors of the economy in order to mobilize for war as well as to aid our allies. The Reconstruction Finance Corporation (RFC) financed expansion or construction of industrial plants for war production. Typically,

the government bought them and leased them back to the companies, which were obligated to produce material for the armed forces. These government-owned, company-operated plants (GOCOs) were held by the Defense Plant Corporation (DPC) under arrangements known as “plant-cors.”

The breakneck pace of war production resulted in heavy environmental pollution, often with highly toxic substances. In some cases, the deleterious health effects only became apparent decades later. It was in the 1960s and 1970s that, partly in response to the discovery of these effects, a series of environmental laws was enacted. Among them was CERCLA, also known as the Superfund law.

CERCLA counterclaims are commonly brought against the United States as a potentially responsible party on the basis of the alleged involvement of civilian and military agencies with the wartime defense industry. This involvement usually took the form of U.S. ownership or operation of an industrial facility at the time of release of the hazardous substances, or arrangement for their disposal. It is the historian’s task to verify and document these facts with correspondence, contracts, reports, and other material found in the records collections of U.S. civilian and military agencies in public and private repositories.

In CERCLA counterclaims, past government ownership of a company-operated facility generally results in 100 percent U.S. liability for the costs of clean-up of the hazardous substances released during the ownership period. Government ownership is usually easy to document. But in the case of a company-owned plant, the U.S. may still be held liable if it was the “operator” of the facility. How does one determine this? In *U.S. v. Bestfoods* (1998) 524 U.S. 51, which involved pollution by chemical companies in Michigan, the U.S. Supreme Court defined operation narrowly, holding that “an operator must manage, direct, or conduct operations specifically related to pollution, that is, operations having to do with the leakage or disposal of hazardous waste, or decisions about compli-



ance with environmental regulations” (at 66-67). Here the historian’s task is to determine whether the facts support government “operation” thus defined.

In *East Bay MUD v. U.S. Department of Commerce*, 142 F.3rd 479 (DC Cir. 1998), the plaintiff argued that the United States was liable for toxic pollution from a zinc mine during World War II. Applying the “actual control” test for operator liability, the DC Circuit Court held for the United States. Although it was shown that the government had restricted zinc prices, regulated labor mobility and hours, backed the mine financially, entered into an output contract with the company, retained the right to inspect the mine, and even possessed a contingent authority to seize it, the court concluded that the federal government did not actually operate the mine or control the company. Consequently, it was not liable for clean-up costs (at 485, 486).

The United States may also be liable under CERCLA as an “arranger” for disposal of hazardous waste. In *U.S. v. Shell Oil Co.*, 294 F.3rd 1045 (9th Cir. 2002), World War II producers of high-octane aviation gasoline (“avgas”) for the Army Air Forces had successfully counterclaimed against the United States for contribution to clean-up costs. The Ninth Circuit Court of Appeals reversed the district court’s finding of 100 percent U.S. liability, concluding that the government was not liable because “no official or employee of the United States ever exercised actual control over any of the waste disposal at issue.” The government never specifically ordered or approved of the dumping of spent acid and acid sludge by the oil companies. Nor was there any evidence that the United States was aware of the disposal contracts between the oil companies and the individual who actually dumped the waste (at 1051).

Even where U.S. ownership is admitted—e.g., with regard to government-owned, government-operated facilities such as air bases, arsenals, and shipyards—the plaintiff’s failure to show a causal connection between U.S. activity and the toxic pollution may result in no government liability for clean-up costs. Thus, in recent cases where the toxic chemical trichloroethylene (TCE), used in metal degreasing, had been found on sites occupied by the Army Air Forces during World War II but subsequently occupied by private firms, the United States was held not liable because there was no evidence that the military had actually used TCE at those facilities.

The preparation of CERCLA cases sometimes reveals the different approaches, understandings, and even mentalities of the historian and the lawyer. Their conceptions of facts may differ: the lawyer tends to see them as concrete and definable, while the historian is more likely to find them elusive. The lawyer requires certainty; the historian can be content with probability. They may also differ in their understanding of causality. The lawyer tries to quantify it in percentages of liability; the historian typically considers it speculative. The lawyer (and, indeed, the court) wants the historian to exhaust the sources; the latter may protest that one can never be certain of having done so.

The historian may wonder whether the U.S. should be held 100 percent liable for the toxic effluents of government-owned plants where company management remained in charge and was more likely to determine the industrial practices that caused them. A court’s conclusion that the United States “controlled” a privately owned company or plant, an industry, or even the entire war economy, may seem simplistic. In comparative perspective, the United States never experienced the kind of wartime nationalization of industry that took place in some European countries. Indeed, a historian might argue that U.S. private corporations exerted considerable influence on the government. On the other hand, the fact that the war effort benefited the nation as a whole militates against assigning responsibility for its toxic effects solely to industry. Rather, the general public—that is, the taxpayers—arguably should bear the costs by way of government liability.

Whether working with lawyers for the government or for private industry, the forensic historian engaged in research on CERCLA counterclaims can contribute to a just allocation of responsibility for environmental harm. Whether the final result is a court-approved settlement or a judicial decision after a full trial, the historian’s role in achieving justice can be significant.

*Andrew Sorokowski is the historical research and information specialist with the Environment and Natural Resources Division, Environmental Defense Section, in the U.S. Department of Justice, Washington, DC. The views expressed in this article are the author’s, and not necessarily those of the U.S. Department of Justice.*

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## AN INTERVIEW WITH RICHARD BAKER

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**R**ichard Allan Baker, a former president of the SHFG, is retiring after 34 years as Senate Historian. In 1975, he was chosen to establish the Senate Historical Office with the mission of promoting the history of the Senate. He assembled a staff and charted the course of the office, creating a variety of archival, oral history, editing, photography, and reference services. Dick Baker championed openness in government, drafting in 1980 the Senate's first rules of access for its records at the National Archives, which opened most Senate records after 20 years. He has worked closely with the Center for Legislative Archives, and helped establish the Advisory Committee on the Records of Congress, which has overseen the development of records programs in both the Senate and House. He was involved in all phases of planning the exhibit hall in the new Capitol Visitor Center. His role as historian involved him in the planning of joint sessions of Congress, presidential inaugurations, and state funerals. He was active in preparing for the National Bicentennial of 1976 and the Bicentennial of the Constitution in 1987, and he labored prodigiously on designing the Bicentennial of Congress in 1989. He has made regular appearances on C-SPAN, and spoken about Senate history to countless groups in and around the Capitol. In all this, Dick Baker also found time to write or edit a number of books, including *Conservation Politics: The Senate Career of Clinton P. Anderson* (1985); and *200 Notable Days: Senate Stories 1789–2002* (2006). In this brief interview he provides some insights into his remarkable career.

— Don Ritchie



*Senate Historian Richard A. Baker*

work on what soon became a 1,000-item general reading list, published as a Senate Document under the title *The United States Senate: A Historical Bibliography*. Relying on available staff and seasonal interns, we dug into the National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections and surveyed research libraries throughout the nation to determine what had become of former senators' office files and personal papers. Using 3- by 5-inch slips, we ransacked the card catalog at the Library of Congress for writings by and about former senators. We also set out to collect visual images of those members. Today, the results of this intense labor are readily available online at <http://bioguide.congress.gov>.

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INTERVIEW BY BENJAMIN GUTERMAN

**Starting the Historical Office in 1975 must have been both daunting and exciting. What were your earliest plans and priorities for the new program? What specific Office programs and procedures did you establish first and how?**

My first priority was to make our office known throughout the Senate and the federal governmental history communities. Next, I recruited staff likely to flourish within this institution's unique culture. The Senate had been without a historical program for the past 186 years, so we had a good deal of catching-up to do. One of the principal motivating forces for the creation of the office was general concern over the management of Senate committee records and members' papers. We drafted, and the Senate soon adopted, regulations that opened most previously closed committee records at the National Archives 20 years after their creation. We began

**Early on, who were your mentors and role models?**

We established an advisory committee of distinguished historians to keep us from an unnecessary car wreck. Among our earliest guiding spirits were Richard Hewlett, Walter Rundell, Forrest Pogue, William Leuchtenburg, and Harold Hyman. Directors of historical offices within the departments of State, Labor, and Defense—as well as leaders of major national historical and archival associations—responded to our innocent questions with courtesy and sympathy.

**How is the Senate historian's work unique? What are the special opportunities of the position, and the restrictions of being an institutional historian?**

Senators, congressional staffs, the news media, scholars, and the general public expect us to know a great deal about the 1,900 individuals—many of them now deservedly obscure—who have served in the Senate since 1789. We are

also called upon to be conversant with the Senate's institutional development over the past 220 years. Because the Senate reveres precedent and tradition, we often need to walk only a short distance to observe contemporary practices rooted in the 18th and 19th centuries. Few academics have the time, funding, or inclination to pursue projects such as a nuts-and-bolts administrative history of the Senate. We do. Our only restrictions in responding to questions are self-imposed: We do not provide information on currently serving senators, no matter how long they have been around. We also try not to get out in front of the Senate's party leaders on controversial procedural matters, no matter how deep their historical antecedents. Journalists are surprisingly quick to understand those restrictions and are happy to take our referrals to qualified outside scholars.

**What are your one or two most memorable experiences in your Senate career?**

I particularly enjoyed planning a series of commemorative activities associated with the 200th anniversary of Congress in 1989. Among them were special sessions of Congress in Washington and Philadelphia, and collaboration with Senator Robert C. Byrd on his four-volume bicentennial history of the Senate. We also spent seven years in preparing educational content for the recently opened Capitol Visitor Center. Our efforts included establishing the six chronological time periods into which the main exhibit is divided, drafting major display text, and contributing to the general orientation films. I have given lots of talks in 34 years, but my best audiences have been newly elected freshmen senators on the first evening of their orientation program and, at the request of the Senate Foreign Relations Committee chairman in 2000, the United Nations Security Council.

**For many years, you have opened the weekly Democratic conference meeting with a "historical minute." Can you share some of the highlights of that experience? In what ways has that experience shaped your role as Senate historian?**

For the past 12 years, I have greatly enjoyed observing senators in this informal closed-door setting. That experience has offered unsurpassable insights into the Senate's culture and has helped me to establish a close professional association with some current members. One recently told me that these historical vignettes about key personalities and events from the Senate's past remind him and his colleagues "that we are not the first ones to serve here and that today's issues are not as novel as we think they are."

**Do you see any additional opportunities or needs for historical work for the Office in the future, new directions**

**or types of documentary projects perhaps?**

The office began with a staff of four and has since grown to nine. Countless projects lie ahead. We have an active oral history program, with several dozen individual series available online, others that will open within the coming decade, and always a few currently underway. The proliferation of Senate permanent records in electronic format poses no end of new challenges. We offer through [www.senate.gov](http://www.senate.gov) a continuing online documentary history series on Senate election, expulsion, censure, and impeachment cases. We are considering detailed written histories of major committees, perhaps beginning with Finance and Appropriations.

**Recalling your term as SHFG president in 1985–87, what were your leadership goals or priorities for the Society, and what were some of the issues the Society faced?**

During my time as SHFG president—when the term of office was two years—I had some first-rate support from the Society's officers and council members. They included David Allison, Bill Nolte, Martin Gordon, Arnita Jones, Sherry Wells, and Charlene Bickford. Jim Cameron and then Wendy Wolff edited *The Federalist*. We tried to improve the Society's communications with current and prospective members. Roger Trask and his Publications Committee devoted considerable time to shaping *The Federalist*, to compiling an updated membership directory, and to framing an attractive brochure. We considered that brochure an integral part of our campaign—as the federal government's 200th anniversary neared—to get every cabinet department, and the White House, to establish formal historical programs. *The New York Times*, on July 8, 1985, ran a generally favorable feature article on the work of federal historians. Under the headline "Collecting the Lessons of History," it quoted USDA historian Wayne Rasmussen, Bill Slany of the State Department, and me. Unfortunately, the piece appeared at a time of Reagan-era budget cutting. Noting a universe of 450 government historians, it created severe heartburn within the Air Force history program with the misleading statistic that the program employed "234 historical researchers." The Society's two annual dinners attracted more than 120 members to hear former Secretary of Health, Education, and Welfare Wilbur Cohen (whom President Kennedy once dubbed "Mr. Social Security") and Wayne Rasmussen deliver Richard Hewlett Addresses. The Society conducted a well-attended September 1985 special conference at the Library of Congress on "Federal Information Management: Setting the Agenda." Five days later, Society representatives testified before Chief Justice Warren Burger's Commission on the Bicentennial of the United States Constitution at the Supreme Court. Perhaps the most significant "reform" of my two-year tenure was a by-law change providing that all future presidents serve just a single year.



## REDISCOVERING 1934 AND THE PWAP

By Ann Prentice Wagner

Necessity, inspiration, and an ironic twist of history have combined to create a compelling exhibition titled “1934: A New Deal for Artists,” which will be on view at the Smithsonian American Art Museum until January 2010 before touring the United States. This exhibition, drawn from the museum’s own holdings, was necessitated by the financial pinch that is causing American museums to concentrate on their permanent collections rather than hosting expensive traveling exhibitions. Deputy Chief Curator George Gurney was inspired with the concept when he realized that 2009 marked the 75th anniversary of the first New Deal art program, the Public Works of Art Project (PWAP). Gurney knew that the American Art Museum had a collection from which a matchless exhibition could be created to mark this anniversary. Ironically, at the very moment of this commemoration, economic troubles are leading historians, and the public, to investigate how America survived the Great Depression 75 years ago.

The museum asked me to write entries about the 56 paintings in this exhibition for a book and for exhibition labels. My assignment was to write entries that would encourage viewers to engage directly with the paintings. I knew I would have to answer the questions people would ask when they saw paintings of people, places, and activities that are no longer as recognizable as they were 75 years ago. Once viewers know more about the subjects they are seeing, they have tools that will enable them to learn from and enjoy the paintings.

The PWAP was part of the Civil Works Administration, a New Deal agency that employed over 4 million Americans in public works projects during the winter of 1933–34. The PWAP paid weekly wages to some 3,700 artists all over America who created over 15,000 works in varied medium to ornament such public buildings as schools, libraries, post offices, courthouses, and government offices. Sixteen regional committees chose artists for both the quality of their art and the severity of their economic condition. The PWAP

urged the artists to portray “the American scene,” but left them free to interpret that phrase.

I began my research with the final report of the Public Works of Art Project, which includes a list of the project’s artists. I also used the catalogue of a 1934 exhibition of about 500 PWAP works at the Corcoran Gallery of Art, which included many of the paintings in the current exhibition. The final report’s list of artists’ addresses, and the titles of the paintings given on PWAP labels that had been affixed to the backs of the works, helped me to identify the subjects shown. It quickly became clear how vital a role place played in this project. Most of the artists proudly portrayed the landscapes, architecture, people, and activities of their home areas. I turned to the WPA writer’s project state guides to find insights into what was going on in these places during the Depression. For instance, the WPA guide to New York State discusses the paper mill that Douglass Crockwell showed in his painting *Paper Workers*.

Original records from the national and regional headquarters of the PWAP are retained by the National Archives. I utilized these records through the microfilm copies in the Archives of American Art’s Washington, DC, office. Unfortunately, many local records from regions



In the Barbershop, by Ilya Bolotowsky

other than New York no longer exist. But New York, home to a large concentration of artists, provided a high percentage of artists for the program. The New York regional records include forms giving artists' citizenship, employment status, training, and experience. Other forms describe the works artists undertook for the PWAP, specifying when they expected to finish them. Some forms are dry factual recitations, while others are research gold mines. New York artist Ilya Bolotowsky's form describes how he approached his painting *In the Barbershop*: "After a preliminary oil sketch and several attempts on the picture itself, I succeeded in indicating a decorative color scheme that is at the same time true to the character of a barbershop." He continued: "All four people in this picture were very carefully selected and are especially fitted for it; the barber, a handsome Italian, the customer a Greek, the next one a nervous slim Irishman, the last one a heavy tough Irishman sitting clumsily on a dainty chair." Bolotowsky's papers and interviews in the *Archives of American Art*, and publications about the artist, gave me the facts I needed to put his PWAP records in meaningful context. Like his models, the Russian-born Bolotowsky emigrated to New York. While his work for the PWAP was representational, by 1934 he was beginning to explore the geometric abstractions for which he is best known.

I conducted additional historical research to elucidate the stories of works like Saul Berman's painting *River Front*. This image shows workers clearing snow around buildings on the Brooklyn waterfront. But why didn't the artist show the workers building ships? The dry docks stand empty. The blue eagle sign in a window identifies a lumberyard that conducted business according to the wage, hour, and price rules set by the National Recovery Administration (NRA). Newspapers from 1933 and 1934 report how New York dockyard workers had gone on strike in late 1933 to urge the NRA to set their wages and hours at reasonable levels. By early 1934 the strikes were over, but so little work came to the Brooklyn Navy Yard that workers wrote President Roosevelt pleading for ships to build or renovate.

Herman Maril's painting *Old Baltimore Waterfront* posed a different kind of research problem because it shows a scene with a schooner docked alongside warehouses like none left in Baltimore in the 1930s. My research in the archives and books of the Maryland Room at the University of Maryland library proved that Maril had made the unique decision to show the American scene of the past rather than his own time. A domed building in the background of the painting suggests the customhouse that was razed in 1901, while the warehouses Maril depicted had burned down in 1904, before the artist's birth. The artist's widow recalled that her husband had loved walking along the waterfront with his father, and talking about his

home city's past. By showing a time before his own, Maril actually provided a stronger representation of his personal understanding of the American scene.

My research uncovered far more than the specifics of the artist's subjects. Documents like Harry Gottlieb's letter from the Woodstock, New York, artist's colony to Edward Bruce, head of the PWAP, speak of the artists' passionate commitment to this program that acknowledged them as American workers whose products were as important to their nation as were ships, coal, or crops:

*Every artist I have spoken to and whose project I am aware of is so keyed up to the importance of the situation, amounting, practically to a revolution for him, that he is without exception, putting every ounce of his energy and creative ability into his work as never before.*

*It is with amazement that I see the electric charge that has come over the artist here.*

*I assure you it is not a question of relief here, as some of the Artists who are not eligible are rightfully envious of this great opportunity.*

Gottlieb spoke for many artists who wrote to express their determination to do their best work for their country. PWAP artists painted the places, the people, and the ways of life that they knew the best. In 1934, their art captured in rich detail much about the local realities of the Great Depression experience; now it speaks for a time from which modern Americans can learn a great deal. The exhibit catalog, *1934: A New Deal for Artists*, is now available at the Smithsonian American Art Museum's book store and at <http://americanart.si.edu/visit/stores/online/books/title/>. The online exhibit is at: <http://americanart.si.edu/exhibitions/archive/2009/1934/>.

## SOURCES

Primary sources for this project included *Public Works of Art Project Report of the Assistant Secretary of the Treasury to Federal Emergency Relief Administrator, GPO, 1934*; *National Exhibition of Art by the Public Works of Art Project, The Corcoran Gallery of Art, 1934*; *New York: A Guide to the Empire State, Compiled by Workers of the Writers' Program of the Work Projects Administration in the State of New York* (Oxford University Press, 1940); *Herman Maril: An Artist's Two Worlds* (Provincetown, MA: The Provincetown Art Association and Museum, 2008); and PWAP records in RG 121, correspondence with artists of Region II and Central Records of the Public Works of Art Project, National Archives, Wash., DC, microfilm at Archives of American Art, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC.

*Ann Prentice Wagner is an independent curator.*

*Image: Smithsonian American Art Museum.*



### THE CENSUS BUREAU HISTORY STAFF

With its current membership of four full-time historians (including the chief)—we hope to increase this number to seven in the relative near term—the Census Bureau’s History Staff’s scope is varied and far-reaching. We respond to questions from Census Bureau staff and the public at large about census matters arcane and high-profile; review speeches by senior Census Bureau officials when relevant to our mission; make presentations to visiting firemen and new Census Bureau employees; prepare oral histories of key census employees; prepare publications about Census Bureau operations for general consumption, such as *Measuring America: the Decennial Censuses from 1790 to 2000*; and organize special projects such as the 2004 symposium that featured speakers from across the nation and was co-hosted by the Woodrow Wilson Center.

In addition to the above activities we have four major responsibilities: the preparation and publication of the histories of the 2010 Decennial Census, the American Community Survey, the 2012 Economic Census, and the regular updating and maintenance of the History Staff web site ([www.census.gov/history](http://www.census.gov/history)). The histories were begun as procedural documentation of the various censuses—a sort of nuts-and-bolts how-to, intended as guidance to be used in the succeeding censuses—but recently they have become increasingly scholarly, more a settings of the scene and assessments of the processes. The web site is our newest major project; it was officially launched in March 2008. With it the History Staff is trying to broaden its appeal to audiences by providing easy access to historical census data, related publications, and sights and sounds.

In sum, we’ve got a lot going on and are always interested in hearing from historians working in other venues.

George Washington. The two men concluded that the figure represented an undercount of about 5 percent.

Errors continued to affect the count over the years, but with a few exceptions—for example the 1870 count, which resulted in significant complaints from New York, and Philadelphia, among a number of places—an exact count of the number of people living in the United States was not a matter of great concern to most Americans. And, so long as the House of Representatives continued to grow with the country’s population, the census count lay outside the concern of most members of Congress. But in 1910 Congress determined that the number of representatives did matter and capped membership of the House at 435. So, assuming that the country’s population would continue to expand unevenly, each census would require recalculating the number of representatives in each state—some would gain members, some would lose, some would stay the same. The dreaded word “reapportionment” would soon become a part of every national politician’s lexicon, as it had already for most state politicians.

The 1920 census—the one following the “Great War” that had the doughboys singing “How ya gonna keep ’em down on the farm after they’ve seen Poree?”—showed that the urban population had grown at the expense of that in the rural areas. Reapportionment would result in increased urban representation at the expense of rural. After mulling this conclusion over for some time, the House of Representatives opted to punt. It left apportionment as it had been before the census. But the House could not hold back the tide, and the Census Act of 1929 that authorized the 1930 census required reapportionment based on counts from that enumeration. Advocates of rural power within the legislature inserted a clause in the law that did away with the long-standing rule that congressional districts should be “compact, contiguous and equally sized within the states.” This in effect created a system of “rotten boroughs” that retained rural strength within individual states, if not within the country as a whole.

Inconsistent numbers from the 1940 census and the draft mandated by the Selective Service Act, which was signed into law the same year, were to reveal an increasingly political and specific kind of undercount, the “differential” undercount. Though not an official Census Bureau statistic, the “differential” undercount is broadly employed by a range of census users. Simply put, it represents the undercount of a given minority cohort, blacks for example, in comparison to the undercount of the majority population, whites for example. Analysis of figures from the census and draft registration records done in the late 1940s suggested that the census undercounted black men to the tune of about 13 percent.

The 1950 decennial census supported the differential undercount findings from the early 1940s. The undercount of blacks gained currency particularly in the minority press, but remained below the general public's attention horizon until the early 1960s, when litigants in cases ranging from equality in electoral districts representation, to allocation of federal funds, to civil rights issues, began using the inconsistencies in census data in a range of court cases. The accuracy of census counts became a key issue leading up to the 1970 census. A study by the National Academy of Science aimed at finding a solution to the undercount issue concluded that increased mobility and continually changing living patterns made finding it unlikely.

The differential undercount for blacks remained a vexing problem for the Census Bureau throughout 20th century, and

reducing it remains a goal. The Census Bureau refers to endemically undercounted cohorts as being the "hard to count" and spends ever-increasing amounts on reducing their numbers. But with possible statistical remedies that affect apportionment legally barred even if they were developed, and with the current economic maelstrom's rising effect on the number of the hard to count as well as on the types and number of alternative living arrangements, not to mention the rising cost of conducting the census, reducing the undercount in Census 2010, all the while holding the line on cost as much as possible, continues to pose significant challenges to the agency charged with conducting that operation.

*William Maury is Chief of the History Staff at the U.S. Census Bureau in Washington, DC.*

## AN INTERAGENCY HISTORY OFFICE?

James Jay Carafano, an Assistant Director at the Heritage Foundation, has written a paper urging the creation of an interagency history office that researches and documents the history of federal interagency work, as, for example, the response to Hurricane Katrina. He states that such an office "should work independently of any single federal agency and be charged with writing the official history of interagency operations as well as producing cutting-edge analysis and case studies that inform the thinking and development of a corps of interagency professionals." The office would be based in the White House. He argues that cooperative, interagency programs are becoming more of a reality in governance and in our national

experience and that such phenomenon are not being documented and analyzed except unsystematically by nonfederal historians. Examples of such work are in the areas of health care, law enforcement, immigration, and trade. The military branches have over the decades learned the benefits of cooperation through joint development programs and other initiatives. We face the danger, he writes, of not being able to learn from our mistakes and improving our "whole-of-government operations." He calls on Congress to create such an office both for the lessons that can be learned and from its service to future policymakers. See the paper at <http://www.heritage.org/Research/HomelandSecurity/wm2530.cfm>.

### ONLINE AT *WWW.SHFG.ORG*

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## THE TREASURY HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION: PRESERVING U.S. TREASURY HISTORY

*By Franklin Noll*

The United States Department of the Treasury has been in the news quite a bit recently, and no doubt there is much activity going on in the building at 15th Street and Pennsylvania Avenue. However, we rarely think of the Treasury as a hotbed of historical activity. Unknown to many is the Treasury Library with its wide range of holdings; the Office of the Curator, overseeing the preservation of the historic building and its large collection of historical objects; and the Treasury Historical Association (THA), which engages in a wide range of projects of interest to historians of the Federal Government.

The THA is an all-volunteer, nonprofit organization established in 1973 to foster education on the history of the Treasury and preservation of historic Treasury properties, especially the Treasury Building, which is a National Historic Landmark. For the THA this means looking at the broader economic history of the nation and promoting an appreciation for the Treasury's great variety of past responsibilities and accomplishments, including its current and past bureaus. The THA is managed by a Board of Directors consisting of current, former, and retired Treasury officials, senior executives, and managers. The current president is David J. Monroe, Director of the Office of Fiscal Operations, and chairing the board is Thomas P. O'Malley, retired from the Treasury's Management Programs Directorate.

Over the past 36 years, the THA has given a large number of items to the Treasury Department. The THA provided portraits of two secretaries of the Treasury to the Department's collection for public display and a great number of historic photographic images of the Treasury Building for the Department's archives, many of which have assisted the Treasury in its restoration research. Most recently, the THA purchased a rare 19th-century portrait of President Abraham Lincoln that it donated to the Department. The THA has donated significant books on economics, history, and taxes to the Treasury Library. Often, the objects given to the Department are intended to restore the Treasury Building to its original, 19th-century appearance. The THA has donated original late-19th-century antique chandeliers in the Secretary's Conference Room and the Diplomatic Reception Room, as well as replicas of period-style chandeliers to install throughout the public corridors of the building.

Such gifts reflect the organization's deep involvement in the ongoing restoration and preservation of the Treasury Building. The THA funded the restoration of the gilding of the eagles and keys in the Treasury building's North Wing



*Deputy Treasury Secretary Robert Kimmitt (left) looks on as Treasury Historical Association President David Monroe unveils the Lincoln portrait that THA has donated to the Department of the Treasury.*

column capitals. It has also assisted the Department by providing funds for the *trompe l'oeil* corridor paint research in the South Wing of the building. In 2002, the Treasury benefited from THA's efforts of raising private contributions to finance the restoration of gilding in the ceilings of the Cash Room and the Northeast staircase dome. Further, the THA funded the restoration of plasterwork in the triple-dome area above the twin spiral staircases of the West Wing of the Treasury building. Currently, the THA is in the second year of its Capital Development Campaign, a multiyear effort to raise private funding to assist the Treasury in 12 high-priority preservation and restoration projects in and around the Treasury building as well as replacing furnishings and digitizing documents in its historical collection. As part of this campaign, the THA recently donated \$100,000 to support the Treasury's collection of fine art and furnishings.

The THA's history initiatives include commissioning a book on the architectural history of the Treasury Building and presenting a lecture series. The book, tentatively titled *Fortress of Finance: Building the United States Treasury*, explores the buildings used by the Department of the Treasury since 1800 and surveys the history of its bureaus and agencies. Release of the book is scheduled for late 2009 or early 2010. Another of the THA's historical activities is its noontime lecture program. These lectures are offered inside the Treasury Building periodically for THA members, with occasional invitations for members to bring guests. Recent

lecturers were Burrus M. Carnahan, who discussed his book, *Lincoln's Emancipation Proclamation and the Law of War*, and Franklin Noll, who presented the history of the war bond of World War II.

It is evident that the staid façade of the Treasury Building belies all the activity behind it to preserve, restore, and promote its past. The Treasury Historical Association is a major player in this effort, providing objects, financial resources,

and historical expertise. To learn more about the Treasury Historical Association and its activities, visit its web site at [www.treasuryhistoricalassn.org](http://www.treasuryhistoricalassn.org).

*Franklin Noll is president of Noll Historical Consulting, LLC, Greenbelt, Maryland, and historical consultant to the U.S. Bureau of Engraving and Printing.*

## INTERNSHIPS IN FEDERAL HISTORY

Internship opportunities in federal history offices are diverse and extensive. Interns can make valuable contributions to a program, and often these opportunities lead to permanent positions. This column highlights a different history internship program in each issue. You can send information on your office program for future inclusion to [benjamin.guterman@nara.gov](mailto:benjamin.guterman@nara.gov).

### NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

**Program goal:** To expose students to Federal history as a potential career option by providing a rich learning opportunity in historical and archival work, publishing, and web site development. Interns provide valuable assistance to the staff, enabling them to be more productive as well.

**Intern duties:** Duties include work as reference/research historians, historical writers' assistants, and archival work. Interns support an active publishing program, do original research and writing, help maintain a very large public web site, assist with public conference planning and logistics, handle archival tasks, and answer information requests.

Interns should have strong research, writing, and editing skills. Social science majors who are interested in natural science might be best, although we would be glad to talk to any interested student. Computer knowledge is also valuable.

**Work location:** NASA Headquarters, 300 E St. SW, Washington, DC, near Federal Center SW Metro stop)

**Application requirements:** Submit a resume, writing sample (a recent research paper from a history or other social science class is fine), and the name and contact information of at least two personal references (one academic and one work) to Steve Garber, [stephen.j.garber@nasa.gov](mailto:stephen.j.garber@nasa.gov), 202-358-2866 fax. Include a cover letter indicating your available work schedule.

**Web site:** for information and application, if applicable <http://history.nasa.gov/interncall.htm>

**Contact:** Steve Garber, [stephen.j.garber@nasa.gov](mailto:stephen.j.garber@nasa.gov)



*Henry Fingerhut is a senior at Georgetown University. He is currently participating in the NASA Academy program at the Goddard Space Flight Center and will continue his work with the History Division in the fall.*

#### HENRY FINGERHUT

Working as an intern for the NASA History Division has been a particularly enlightening experience for me. I am a senior at Georgetown University pursuing a B.S. degree in Physics with Mathematics and Economics minors. The History Division has engaged my curiosity in space science, the space program and its history, and the work I have done with the History Division has provided an opportunity to strengthen my writing and analytical abilities in history, through editing and design projects for upcoming publications, as well as an original research paper on space policy under President Clinton. The History Division has also afforded me a unique context with which to approach my studies and research in physics. This summer, I am taking part in the NASA Academy program at Goddard Space Flight Center, where I am conducting research in quantum chemistry, and I will be working again as an intern with the History Division in the fall.

## FROM THE ARCHIVES

*Charles Downs, SHFG Archivist*

The Society's early years are not well documented photographically, especially in comparison with the period from 1990 on. A notable exception to this unfortunate fact is a set of color snapshots of the 1983 Annual Meeting taken by Mark D. Mandeles, a USAF Dissertation Fellow.

One of the photos was especially interesting. It shows then-SHFG President David Trask, Paul Schieps, Jack Holl, and Bill Dudley seated together at the same table. Each of these individuals played a significant role in the Society's founding and early years. Holl was the Society's first President, and his role in the Society's founding was vital. Holl was succeeded by David Trask, the Society's second President, who had been a driving force in organizing historians concerned with federal history. Paul Schieps, an active early member in the Society, was appointed its first Secretary (Phil Cantelon had held that position under the Steering Committee). As well as taking extensive notes on the Executive Council meetings, Schieps organized and preserved the Society's early records. The Society's first Treasurer, Bill Dudley drew on his experience in other organizations to put the Society on a firm financial footing. Also serving as Vice President, Secretary, and the Society's seventh President, Dudley is unique as the only person to have held all four of the Society's executive positions. With the support of numerous others, these four led the Society in its founding years, and set it off on its successful course.

The only one of the Society's original officers not in this photograph was the Society's first Vice President, Maeva Marcus, who also played a key role in the Society's founding. Although she was Vice President, she did not become President since the Society's by-laws were not amended until 1986 to allow the Vice President to automatically become the next year's President. As Vice President, Marcus organized and presided over the 1983 Annual Meeting, so we are able to include another photo taken by Mandeles in which she performed those duties. For more information on the SHFG archives, write to [cfdowns@earthlink.net](mailto:cfdowns@earthlink.net).



From left: *David Trask, Paul Schieps, Jack Holl, and Bill Dudley at the 1983 SHFG Annual Meeting.*



*Vice President Maeva Marcus.*



# MAKING HISTORY

## AMERICAN HISTORICAL ASSOCIATION

The Association's web site features the AHA Blog, which contains current news updates and information on such topics as the newly appointed head of the National Park Service, a new review of Social Studies-History Standards, and digitization of Freedmen's Bureau records for Virginia, which will be a great boon for research in that area. Visit <http://blog.historians.org>

## ARMY HISTORICAL FOUNDATION

The spring 2009 issue of the Foundation's journal, *On Point: The Journal of Army History*, features an update on design for the new Army national museum. Stakeholders met in New York City in February to look at three designs. The journal also features articles by Robert P. Wetteman, Jr., on the 12th Armoured Division's "Harvester Battalion," and by Mindy Rosewitz on "United States Army Communications-Electronics Museum, Fort Monmouth, New Jersey."

## FEDERAL BUREAU OF INVESTIGATION

The FBI's history web page celebrates the bureau's 100-year anniversary with new documents and features, including articles on FBI history. Visit <http://www.fbi.gov/fbihistory.htm> Research can be done at the FBI Reading Room on Pennsylvania Avenue by appointment or you can purchase a CD-Rom with the most popular documents for \$15. The site has links to all forms for FOIA requests.

## HISTORY ASSOCIATES INC.

On May 28, 2009, History Associates launched a new web site, [www.historyassociates.com](http://www.historyassociates.com). With revised content, easier navigation, and a new emphasis on service lines, the web site provides up-to-date information on the services and staff that make History Associates "The Best Company in History®." The web site is designed with a user-friendly format that facilitates easy access to information on the company's six service lines: Histories, Exhibits, Interpretive Planning, Historical Research, Archival Services, and Records Management. As users navigate each service page, they will find detailed descriptions of the expertise History Associates provides, case studies of prior project work, select client lists, and contact information for staff members leading each service area. The web site also features information about the company's own unique history, news about recent happenings, and a redesigned staff directory.

History Associates recently completed two documentary histories for the Department of Homeland Security History Office. The reference documents were authored by History Associates archivist Elizabeth C. Borja in

celebration of the Department of Homeland Security's fifth anniversary in March 2008. *A Brief Documentary History of the Department of Homeland Security: 2001–2008* tells the story of the creation of the department and its evolving organizational history through the founding documents, including legislation, executive orders, commission reports and recommendations, reorganization plans, presidential directives, speeches, and organization charts. *DHS Senior Leadership: The First Five Years: 2003–2008* features descriptions of senior leadership positions and past and current leaders and their tenure dates. Ms. Borja researched and wrote both reference documents at the DHS History Office archives, established and maintained by History Associates under contract with the DHS Office of Policy.

## HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES, OFFICE OF HISTORY AND PRESERVATION

The Office of the Clerk has revised its Weekly Historical Highlight page. Users may search for highlights by using dates and subject lists ([http://clerk.house.gov/art\\_history/index.html](http://clerk.house.gov/art_history/index.html)).

The House of Representatives unveiled a portrait honoring Shirley Anita Chisholm on March 3, 2009. The first African American woman in Congress, Chisholm represented her Brooklyn, NY, district from 1969 to 1982. Congresswoman Chisholm is shown as she appeared in the earlier years of her House service and her historic bid for the Democratic presidential nomination. The portrait was painted by California-based artist Kadir Nelson. A graduate of Pratt Institute in Brooklyn, Nelson is both a portrait artist and an award-winning book illustrator. The portrait is on view in the House connecting corridor on the first floor of the U.S. Capitol.

The first Jewish woman to serve in Congress, Florence Prag Kahn, was honored for her achievements on May 19, 2009, with the unveiling of a new portrait by Andre White. Kahn represented her San Francisco, CA, district from 1925 to 1937, winning her husband Julius Kahn's seat



after his death. Her long experience as an aide to her husband—along with her own remarkable wit and intelligence—led to a groundbreaking congressional career. The first woman member of the powerful Appropriations Committee and the Military Affairs Committee, Kahn was dedicated to developing local infrastructure and supporting the military. On the bay behind the figure, the USS *Hancock* sails towards the

Alameda Naval Depot, which Kahn worked to establish during her time in Congress. The artist, Andre White, is noted for his sensitive handling of both figure and landscape, characteristics that are well-represented in this portrait.

#### LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

The Library has a web page dedicated to its resources on American women at <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/awh-html/index.html>. It enables searches in such collections as the Law Library, Rare Book and Special Collections, Moving Images, Area Studies Collections, and Manuscripts.

#### MARINE CORPS HISTORY DIVISION

The History Division has reprinted *Marine Advisors With the Vietnamese Provincial Reconnaissance Units, 1966–1970*, by Col. Andrew R. Finlayson (Ret.), as part of its Occasional Papers series. The PRU units were comprised of Vietnamese special police led by American military and Central Intelligence Agency personnel, and they engaged in dangerous and secret missions against the Communist insurgency. The author was a PRU advisor in Tay Ninh Province, and reports firsthand on the successes and failures of his unit. The illustrated volume investigates the work of a small group of marines in that program, and is based in large part on interviews with key officers. It ends with a section on lessons learned, containing valuable insights for modern military operations.

Also new is a battle study titled “U.S. Marines in Battle: An-Najaf, 2004,” by Francis X. Kozlowski. It traces the battle there in August 2004 from the perspective of the marines, soldiers, and sailors who fought there. It had been a site of earlier conflict, “the location of Shi’a resistance to perceived political oppression and was a place of battle once more in 2004.” It contains maps and images of marines during the battle, and the text is based heavily on command chronologies and numerous interviews with participants. The study is intended as source for education and training for Marines.

#### NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION

Chief Historian Steven J. Dick has announced that he will retire after the Apollo 11 40th anniversary. In his last newsletter message (Vol. 26, no. 2) he points to several milestones during his tenure, including four successful conferences, many book projects, updates of standard reference works, a program on the History of Scientific Exploration of Earth and Space (HSEES), publication of the *Dictionary of the Space Age*, outreach to a broader public, and fellowship programs.

NASA celebrates the 40th anniversary of the Apollo program with a special web site containing images, audio, source documents, and interactive media. New materials will be added through 2012 on the anniversary of each mission.

The third edition of *Research in NASA History: A Guide to the NASA History Program*, compiled by Steven J. Dick,

Stephen J. Garber, and Jane Odom is now available. It catalogs history resources available in the Washington, DC, area and at the NASA Centers. Available free-of-charge or online at <http://history.nasa.gov/sp4543.pdf>

#### NATIONAL ARCHIVES AND RECORDS ADMINISTRATION

David S. Ferriero was nominated as 10th Archivist of the United States by President Obama on July 28. Mr. Ferriero is the Andrew W. Mellon Director of the New York Public Libraries (NYPL), one of the largest public library systems in the United States and one of the largest research library systems in the world. He oversees collection strategy; conservation; digital experience; reference and research services; and education, programming, and exhibitions. He previously served as the Chief Executive of NYPL’s Research Libraries for three years and as the University Librarian and Vice Provost for Library affairs at Duke University. The nomination now goes to the Senate, where it begins the confirmation process.

In June, the Archives displayed the original National Archives Act of June 19, 1934, that established the agency. The exhibit notes the importance of the institution as an archives rather than a hall of records, which many wanted. The former is open to all for research, while the latter would have allowed access only by government officials.

A new brochure by Trevor Plante titled “Finding Information on Personal Participation in The Civil War” is now available; call 202-357-4000 for a copy.

A new exhibit at the Kennedy Presidential Library titled “Moon Shot—JFK and Space Exploration” marks the 40th anniversary of the first Moon landing. Highlights of the exhibit include: President Kennedy’s 1-page memo to Vice President Lyndon Johnson on April 20, 1961, posing a question that led directly to the lunar mission; original pages of President Kennedy’s Special Message to Congress on May 25, 1961, in which he first called for a national goal of sending a man to the Moon; selected pages from President Kennedy’s September 12, 1962, speech at Rice University during which he famously announced “We choose to go to the moon;” a model of the Saturn 1 rocket, used during briefings to help explain how the rockets worked and later sent to President Kennedy’s son, John Jr.; and a Mercury space suit.

During the last year and a half, NW’s Special Access/FOIA Section (NWCTF) has worked to open FBI case files in file series Classifications 44 (Civil Rights) and 157 (Racial Matters/Civil Unrest) under the Freedom of Information Act. These files have been requested by two journalists who are investigating unresolved, race-motivated murders that occurred during the civil rights era in the American South. The FOIA requests proved difficult to fulfill because of FBI contention that these files may still be active. With further consultation, the FBI allowed the majority of the cases to be released. NARA reports that staff has

reviewed and processed for release approximately 16,000 pages in response to these FOIAs.

The original North Atlantic Treaty of 1949, NATO's founding document, was displayed at the NATO Summit Meeting in Strasbourg on April 4, 2009, marking the 60th anniversary of the treaty's signing and the transatlantic alliance. The treaty was viewed by most of the Heads of State and Government (HOSG), foreign ministers, defense ministers, and others attending the North Atlantic Council (NAC) meeting. Michael Kurtz (NW), conservator Terry Boone (NWTD), and Dave Adams (NASS), chief of security for Archives I, were there to handle and protect the treaty and answer questions. To make this possible, an extraordinary effort was required from a variety of individuals at NARA, the State Department (in Washington, Brussels, Paris, Strasbourg, and Frankfurt), NATO, and the French and German governments who hosted the meeting. In his opening remarks, NATO's Secretary General, Jaap de Hoop Scheffer, referred to the original treaty being present. Article 14 of the treaty specifies "This Treaty, of which the English and French texts are equally authentic, shall be deposited in the archives of the Government of the United States of America." Therefore, as the head of the depository country, it fell to President Obama to show the presidents of Albania and Croatia the original treaty and then give to them their presentation copies, which were handed to him by the strategically placed Dr. Kurtz.

Volunteer teams continue to digitize Civil War Pension Application Case Files at the National Archives Building in Washington, DC, as part of a pilot project. The digital images are made available online at Footnote.com by subscription. Access to the images is free at any NARA facility and at Family History Centers throughout the country. This project began in September 2007 as a pilot of 500,000 images, a goal that was reached on April 3, 2009. As of that date 503,480 pages had been scanned, with 179,811 images indexed and available online.



Left to Right: Michael Kurtz, NARA conservator Terry Boone, and security specialist Dave Adams with the original NATO treaty in Strasbourg on April 4, 2009.

The Nixon Presidential Library has opened approximately 154 hours of tape recordings from the Nixon White House recorded in January and February 1973 and consisting of approximately 994 conversations. The conversations cover topics such as the conclusion of a peace settlement between the United States and the Democratic Republic of Vietnam and the return of American POWs, President Nixon's second inauguration, the U.S. and Europe, the Supreme Court's *Roe v. Wade* decision, energy policy, the reorganization of the executive branch, the creation of a "New Majority" for a reinvigorated Republican Party, and the first Watergate trial.

The Chicago regional archives will hold its 12th Annual Civil War Symposium and Reenactment on October 3, 2009. It will feature speakers and Living History re-enactors. For information, call 773-948-9001 or visit [www.chicago.archives@nara.gov](http://www.chicago.archives@nara.gov)

#### NATIONAL MUSEUM OF AMERICAN HISTORY

The new presentation "Letters Home" allows visitors to experience the personal emotions, thoughts, hopes, fears and details of daily life of American soldiers through their letters to loved ones at home. This 20-minute presentation demonstrates the importance of letters in documenting the American wartime experience while providing a moving glimpse at the lives of soldiers from the American Revolution to present day.

#### U.S. DEPARTMENT OF STATE

The Office of the Historian has new web site at <http://history.state.gov>. It provides convenient links to historical documents, education resources, conference volumes, new releases in the Foreign Relations series, and a search engine for browsing the FRUS series by administration.

#### SOCIETY PATRONS

The Society recognizes and appreciates those members listed below who have contributed at the patron level of \$100.

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## FEDERALIST CALENDAR

**Aug. 11–16, 2009. Society of American Archivists (SAA), Joint Annual Meeting with Council of State Archivists (CoSA).** Austin, TX. Visit [www.archivists.org/conference/](http://www.archivists.org/conference/)

**Aug. 26–29, 2009. American Association for State and Local History (AASLH), Annual Conference.** Indianapolis, IN. “Making History a 21st-Century Enterprise.” Visit <http://www.aaslh.org/2009-annual-meeting.htm>.

**Sept. 10–12, 2009. Naval History Symposium.** Annapolis, MD. Visit [www.usna.edu/history/symposium](http://www.usna.edu/history/symposium).

**Oct. 7–10, 2009. Western History Association (WHA), Annual Conference.** Denver, CO. “Wired West.” Visit <http://www.umsl.edu/%7Ewha/conf/2009/index.html>.

**Oct. 14–18, 2009. Oral History Association (OHA), Annual Meeting, “Moving Beyond the Interview.”** Louisville KY. Visit [www.oralhistory.org/annual-meeting/](http://www.oralhistory.org/annual-meeting/)

**Oct. 15–16, 2009. Cryptologic History Symposium, “Global Perspectives on Cryptology.”** Johns Hopkins Applied Physics Laboratory, Kossiakoff Conference Center, Laurel,

MD. Visit “Cryptologic History News” under “Center for Cryptologic History” at [www.nsa.gov](http://www.nsa.gov) or call 301-688-2336.

**Oct. 29–31, 2009. Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC), Meeting.** Jersey City, NJ. Visit [www.lib.umd.edu/MARAC/conferences/conferences.html](http://www.lib.umd.edu/MARAC/conferences/conferences.html).


**Jan. 7–10, 2010. American Historical Association (AHA), Meeting.** San Diego, CA. Visit <http://www.historians.org/annual/2010/index.cfm>.

**Mar. 10–14, 2010. National Council on Public History (NCPH), Annual Meeting, “Currents of Change.”** Portland, OR. Visit [www.ncph.org/](http://www.ncph.org/).

**Apr. 7–10, 2010. Organization of American Historians (OAH), Annual Conference, “American Culture, American Democracy.”** Hilton Washington, Washington, DC. Visit <http://www.oah.org/meetings/2010/>

**May 20–23, 2010. Society for Military History (SMH), 77th Annual Meeting.** “Causes Lost and Won.” Lexington, VA. Visit <http://www.smh-hq.org/conference.html>.

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The logo for the Society for History in the Federal Government (SHFHG) features the acronym 'SHFHG' in a stylized, outlined font. To the right of the acronym is a graphic of a classical building facade with columns and a pediment.

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