

Greetings from the President by Summer Cherland



Dear friends and scholars in and of the Southwest,

I hope this newsletter finds you well and embracing the joys of summertime. Some of us are not on an academic calendar, so summertime is just a hotter extension of real life. For others, the relaxed pace of a three month break is needed, while still others pack their days with research, writing, and interviewing. This summer, I am trying to do a little bit of relaxing mixed with lots of productivity. I thought I would share with you some highlights from my summer to-do list.

Research on Wheels

The selfie was taken on day one of my summertime research project, in front of the Booker T. Washington Grammar School in downtown Phoenix. In May, I started a self-imposed research project, and imposing it will likely be! I will be driving every major street of South Phoenix from East to West and North to South over the course of the next several months, stopping in at long-standing businesses, restaurants, schools, churches, and other establishments to conduct brief interviews, collect photographs, and meet potential narrators. Take a look at my "Forensic Files"- level research bulletin board on page 3. What can I say? Once an RA, always an RA.

Continued on page 3

Podcast Features Interviews with Descendants of 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion by Alva Stevenson

My mother, Lydia Thornton Moore, served in the 6888th Central Postal Directory Battalion during World War Two. These 855 women were the only all-African American Womens Army Corps unit deployed to Europe in that war. The Six Triple Eight was charged with clearing a two-year backlog of mail to the soldiers from their families. In less than two years the women processed 17 million pieces of mail in Birmingham, England and the cities of Rouen and Paris, France. The NextUs818 Podcast features interviews with 6888th descendants.

The host is descendant Dr. Carmen A. Jordan-Cox. The NextUs818 Podcast airs the 1st and 3rd Wednesdays of the month at 7 p.m. ET and is available on Amazon Music, Apple Podcasts, Anchor, Audible, Google Podcast and Spotify.

The episode below features my sister Rosenda Moore and myself:

Episode 15: Interview with Descendants of Lydia Esther Thornton Moore: Alva Stevenson and Rosenda Moore:

Link:

<https://open.spotify.com/episode/2WPIEFmLEnQzt8oYNsxURa93F?si=5ZXfuwJiRfYm5x5v4HIKLA>



6888th Central Postal Directory
Battalion Monument, Fort
Leavenworth, Kansas

Veterans' Voices: We're Listening by Barbara Tabach

Veterans' Voices: We're Listening [VWL] marked its first anniversary this month. Over thirty Veterans have been interviewed so far and the list of eager participants continues to grow. With each interview, we learn about the important ways Veterans have served our country— from peacetime to combat eras.



VVWL Participant
Henry Robinson (front
center) at Fort Knox,
1944

Among the benchmarks in the project are the words of World War II Veterans. Well into their 90s and some even over 100 years old, their recollections can be mesmerizing. "I shared tears with one Veteran when he recalled being among the soldiers repatriating the prisoners from Dachau concentration camp," Barbara Tabach, Director explains. "Was it possible that Holocaust survivors I interviewed several years ago were among the survivors that this man helped?"

We are excited that VWL has been awarded continued funding from the Eleanor Kagi Foundation for the coming year. As Angela Moor, Project Manager, explains, "Our goal is to establish a sustainable path for this valued oral history project saving the stories of our Veterans."

VWL is an oral history collaborative working with two highly regarded UNLV entities: the *Women's Research Institute of Nevada* and UNLV's *Military & Veteran Services Center*. We have begun taking steps to archive the collection in UNLV University Libraries Special Collections and Archives for access by researchers.

SAVE THE DATE!

The next SOHA conference will be held in Riverside, California at the University of California, Riverside. The dates will be June 1-3, 2023.

AAPI Veteran Oral Histories in Southern California by Katie Singer

I came across a great project celebrating Asian-American & Pacific Islander Heritage Month by collecting stories of AAPI veterans. The Chinese Family History Group (CFHG) collaborated with the Library of Congress on the Veterans History Project. This event took place in Santa Monica and Alhambra, California.

The Library of Congress Veterans History Project provided Southern California veterans an opportunity to share their memories and stories, with the mission of contributing to the preservation of American history.

There was no cost to participate, and all veterans who shared their stories will receive a copy of the project for personal use. AAPI veterans were especially encouraged to participate, but the event was open to all US vets.

I contacted Andrew Huber, the Liaison Specialist for the Veterans History Project. He explained:

“This was a 3-day event taking place in Santa Monica and Alhambra. The first two days were 5/19 and 5/20 at the Santa Monica Public Library, where we collected 16 veteran oral histories including those of two WWII vets. The third day was at the Alhambra Civic Center Library where we collected 18 oral histories and 1 photo collection including two WWII vets. The vast majority of participants were AAPI veterans, and the event was organized in partnership with the Chinese Family History Group, the Chinese American Museum LA, the Chinese American Citizen’s Alliance, the aforementioned libraries, and the offices of Rep. Ted Lieu and Judy Chu. We trained over 30 volunteers from the community in oral history techniques and best practices, and they acted as the interviewers and note takers.”

Andrew included a link to an article about the Alhambra event from the *LA Daily News*: <https://www.dailynews.com/2023/05/22/asi-an-american-veterans-share-stories-legacy-at-alhambra-library-oral-history-event/>



SOHA’s Arizona National History Day Award by Esteban Pierrend, Summit Hallur, and Michael Makhoul



Left to Right: Sarah Moorhead (presenter for SOHA), Esteban Pierrend, Sunmith Hallur, Michael Makhoul

When we heard the name Ella Baker mentioned in the Civil Rights Movement, we were confused. To us, Civil Rights seemed to unquestionably entail Martin Luther King Jr, so we were curious. Our research showed us a woman who was deeply integrated within the movement, rallying students, organizing boycotts, and much more. However, she was hardly talked about, so we decided to make our documentary about her.

As one of the founders of the Student Nonviolent Coordinating Committee (SNCC), Ella Baker worked primarily with students towards the end of her life. Because she worked with so many young activists during her time, we started wondering if some of those activists were still alive. Certainly, someone who knew her would still be alive. After some research, we found Dr. Clayborne Carson, who personally knew Ella Baker, so we decided to interview him about Baker.

When we found out we had secured an interview, we immediately began to draft questions. This interview could only be useful if we put the effort to ask thoughtful questions; otherwise, we would not glean any meaningful information. After sitting together for a while, we finally made a final list of questions, which we were certain would give us good insight about Baker. Indeed, Dr. Carson revealed many things about Baker’s life, telling us about the tenacity with which she approached all the challenges in her life and her vision of grassroots movements in the Civil Rights movement - a revolutionary vision at the time. Dr Carson’s thorough explanations solidified our understanding of Baker’s methods and how exactly they were different from the methods of other civil rights leaders at the time.

Ultimately, the oral history gave us an invaluable perspective on who Baker was. Dr. Carson was certainly an expert on the matter, addressed all our questions thoroughly.

[See column 3 for remainder of article]

Mesa, City of International Peace by Sarah Moorhead and Dr. Ruth Lim

Mesa, Arizona became the 362th member of the International Cities of Peace on August 2, 2022. One of the two people instrumental in Mesa’s joining this group was Dr. Ruth Lim.



Dr. Riuth Lim

Dr. Lim has been active in various organizations in Mesa, as well as being a philanthropist in the city for a number of years. She practices integrative medicine (conventional medicine, homeopathy and botanical medicine) for children and families despite being well past retirement age. Here is Mesa’s ICP from her oral history.

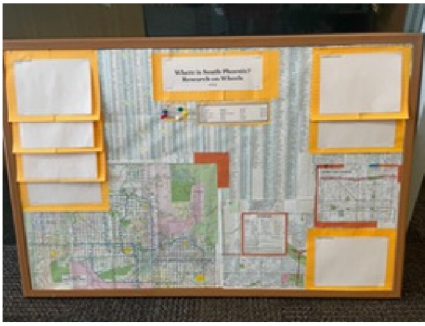
The impetus for Dr. Lim’s initiative to have Mesa join the ICP was her participation in Operation Desert Storm. When she first moved to Mesa, she did not know if practice would be a good fit. She joined the Army in the Active Reserves. In 1991 her medical unit was activated for 5 months which was life changing. When she returned from war, her desire to be an advocate for peace and non-violence encouraged her to set up the Children’s Benefit Foundation, a non-profit 501©3 . She joined Rotary as peace and conflict resolution is one of Rotary international’s areas of focus.

She formed the task force of community leaders from Mesa Sunrise Rotary, Mesa Police, Mesa Community College, and St . Matthew’s United Methodist Church which were instrumental for Mesa to be successful in the application to be a member of ICP . Every year the task force promotes the Week Without Violence, a community advocacy event for children and all to champion peace and nonviolence as a way of life. Children express their voice and ideas by making posters or writing poetry about peace. Their work is displayed on stage at Mesa Community College. Each child goes on stage to receive a ribbon and a certificate. Parents and family are all invited to attend and celebrate. Placing Peace Poles in the community is another activity of promoting peace.

National History Day continued

We left the interview satisfied with how it went, and we have been able to include the perspective of a historical expert into our documentary now. History might be the past, but that does not mean it is totally inaccessible. Because Dr. Carson’s interview helped to give us a better understanding of our research topic, oral history should be the cornerstone of any historical research, and we certainly recommend that others use it if they wish to conduct historical research.

Message from the President *continued from page 1*



I don't know why I chose to put my car through such torture during the hottest days of the summer, but wish me (and my A/C) luck! The project is in its infancy, but my goal is to further distinguish the boundaries of South Phoenix - the community that I study, and the neighborhoods from where my students hail. I have already had the distinct pleasure of meeting business owners, state representatives and city councilmembers, veterans, and neighbors who have a lot to say about South Phoenix history. The goals of the project are many, and include:

1. We are under contract with Arcadia Press to publish *Images Across America: South Phoenix*, featuring pictures of our beloved community.
2. We hope to recruit more narrators who will interview with our students.
3. SOHA member and Bootcamp graduate Ele Anedda is helping me research and write an article, "Where is South Phoenix: A Historical and Geographical Survey" for publication.

Here are a few of my recent discoveries (new to me, known well to the community!)



Images from Azteca Bridal on Washington and 11th Streets in Phoenix, Arizona. Founded in 1962.

Left: Torres family collage, reprinted with permission.

Right: The original structure on Washington Street in 1962, reprinted with permission



The historical origins of South Phoenix. Union Station on Lincoln Street, Railroad tracks to the South.

Image by author, reprinted with permission

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Season Three of the [South Phoenix Oral History Podcast](#) is coming out this Summer, if you're in need of two work buddies, this is the podcast for you!

Academic writing is not easy and it doesn't have a quick turnaround. You don't see the products of your work in a couple of weeks, but as long as you have to have a strong "why" you're good—although, it might also help to be in good company!

You're officially invited to join Summer and Ele as they research, write, and submit an article for academic publication. Each episode focuses on a different topic (brainstorming, mind-mapping, essay planning, editing, etc.) and besides sharing their progress with you, Summer and Ele will come up with a challenge, per episode, to keep you accountable.

Join your new virtual writing group, the first episode is already out!

Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Library and Archives Digital Archive by Midge Dillinger

I have exciting news about a two-and-a-half-year oral history and archival project. Funded by a \$100,000 community-based archives grant, awarded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, the Muscogee (Creek) Nation National Library and Archives newly created digital archive will soon provide a vital service to Muscogee and non-Muscogee people. Launched this summer, the digital archive makes accessible the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Oral History Collection and other archival materials significant to the people and history of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation. The digital archive will greatly assist Muscogee people and their research needs!

A second part of this grant project is an oral history project titled "A Twenty-First Century Pandemic in Indian Country: The Resilience of the Muscogee (Creek) Nation Against Covid-19." This oral history project shares the voices and memories of forty Mvskoke people and their experiences with the Covid-19 pandemic. Listeners will learn how Covid-19 has impacted the lives and communities of Muscogee people and how they have accomplished acts of resilience and survival. Missing from public narrative and memory regarding the Covid-19 pandemic, the voices of Muscogee people allow the Indigenous experience to be heard and remembered.

The archive can be found at:
www.mvskokenationallibraryarchive.org



"Reflections: The Las Vegas Asian American & Pacific Islander Oral History Project" by Paige Figanbaum



In April 2023, the Oral History Research Center (OHRC) at UNLV University Libraries received further support from the NV Energy Foundation for their three-year project titled, "Reflections: The Las Vegas Asian American & Pacific Islander Oral History Project." The Oral History Research Center focuses on documenting the history of Las Vegas and Southern Nevada by recording eyewitness accounts from members of the local community. The Reflections Project, specifically, aims to collect a minimum of 175 interviews from the Asian American & Pacific Islander communities, focusing on their experiences within Las Vegas.

The primary objective of this project is to collect and preserve oral histories that represent influential AAPI residents who have played significant roles in the growth of businesses, infrastructure, and politics within Southern Nevada. To achieve this, UNLV students have been recruited and trained to conduct in-depth interviews covering a wide range of topics such as immigration and settlement, aspirations and challenges, family life, employment and economic issues, religion and culture, gender, neighborhoods and businesses, politics, social and community events, discrimination, and activism.

The Reflections Project strives to collect and preserve the narratives of the AAPI community, which comprises over 10% of the total population of Clark County. By doing so, the project provides a valuable space for present and future generations to learn and study the achievements, aspirations, and experiences of their own community.

Additionally, the project welcomes people to nominate individuals to be interviewed and seeks further financial support to successfully complete this three-year endeavor. To learn more about the Oral History Research Center and the Reflections Project, visit UNLV's Library:
<https://www.library.unlv.edu/reflections>.

Stewart Indian School by Analiesa Delgado

Stewart Indian Boarding School opened in 1890, and operated for nearly 90 years. Stewart was the only non-reservation Indian school in Nevada and initially had the purpose of enrolling children from the Northern Paiute, Washoe, and Western Shoshone tribes. The school was purchased and operated by the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs. This school, now known as the Stewart Indian Cultural School and Museum, draws attention to the complicated history of the site. The importance of oral histories, especially when it comes to boarding school histories, cannot be stressed enough. Children attending boarding schools had varying degrees of experiences both across time periods and across schools. The Stewart Indian School utilizes oral histories to ensure that survivors of the school are at the forefront of its history. Between December 2016 and June 2017, Terri McBride, contracted by the Nevada Indian Commission, interviewed and collected the experiences of 15 individuals who either went to or worked at Stewart Indian School. This collection was donated to the University of Nevada, Reno Special Collections department on behalf of the Stewart Cultural Center in August 2017. The school also has a trail map that guides visitors through examples of the lives of students at Stewart. Most stops utilize an oral history from an alumnus, detailing a specific part of Stewart's history. This walking trail and Stewart Indian School are necessary stops when visiting Carson City, Nevada. Every June since 1990, community members continue to gather at Stewart Indian School to celebrate their tribal heritage, and be in community with others at the annual Father's Day Powwow. This year's Powwow was led by Jerry Bear (Southern Paiute/Goshute), Art Martinez (Chumash), and Host Drum: Red Hoop.



Stewart Indian School alumni, unknown date

Book Review by Brittany Romanello of *World of Our Mothers*

In a book recently released by the University of Arizona Press, 45 Mexican women share their immigration stories. The authors are Yvonne de la Torre Montiel and her partner, Miguel. Irasema Coronado of ASU's Transborder Studies Department writes the forward.

As a result of the Mexican Revolution, women like de la Torre's ancestors immigrated to the United States in the early 1900s. In Arizona mining towns and barrios, they faced many challenges during a crucial and tension-filled time, including forced labor, hardships, and discrimination. Throughout the book, the interviewees share how they found strength and courage when faced with adversity in the U.S. Many women expressed how they persevered and worked hard to provide for their families and create a better future, especially since many were expected to be heads of households after losing their husbands or fathers. Featuring immigrant women's contributions to Arizona communities, this oral history project encourages readers to reflect on their own migrations, sacrifices, and perseverance.



Message from the President *continued from page 3*

Student Centered Oral History

Routledge will publish my teaching manual, *Student-Centered Oral History: An Ethical Guide* within the next several months. I hope it will be useful to any teachers of oral history - from the well-trained to the brand new! The book blends the teaching strategies of Culturally Relevant Pedagogy and Student-Centered Teaching with oral history methods to create a model for empowering students with oral history. The research I did with this book brought me in contact with hundreds of oral historians across the globe who teach with oral history. Many of their approaches are outlined in the book as “spotlights” on excellent teaching.

Archive Development- Community History Collection at South Mountain

Finally, I will be working with an outstanding team to prepare our local history archive for a Grand Opening this fall. In 2017, I inherited a massive collection of dusty boxes that were bound for the incinerator. If a sharp-eyed administrative assistant had not noticed them, we would have lost fifty years of institutional and local history, which were basically dropped in my lap. Together with high school and college students, graduate interns, faculty, and librarians, we have designed a new storage space for this archival material, collected more manuscript collections and papers, and begun indexing hundreds of newspaper clippings, images, and records for preservation and access. Believe me when I tell you, there is so much more to do! I never expected oral history would make me the *de facto* local history activist. Either way, if you are ever in the area, come check it out. I'd love to give you a tour and get your input!



South Phoenix History Room remodel, before and after, clockwise from top left: 2019: Decades of unorganized newspaper clippings, photographs, and documents were dropped off in an unused conference space in a beautiful meeting room of the library. 2019: Members of the marketing department and president's office assisted with initial inventory and cataloguing. 2022: New furniture is installed for preservation and access. 2023: Archive is still in process, but more organized, and available for public access by appointment. Chantel Freed searches for a 1970s image of the South Phoenix area. Images by author. Reprinted with permission.

I share all of these initiatives with you, just as I hope you share your work with us. SOHA thrives when we celebrate each other and our achievements as colleagues doing oral history. Whatever research or interviewing you do this summer, keep it in mind for our upcoming conference in June 2024. We want to know what you have been working on! What are you learning? What are you claiming? How is oral history shaping your worldview? I look forward to learning more.

Whether like me you are launching yourself into major projects, or you are more inclined to sit back with a glass of lemonade and spend the summer relaxing, I wish you well. I hope this summer brings you joy and fulfillment, however you may find it.

All my best,

Summer Cherland, PhD
SOHA President

NOTES TO SOHA MEMBERS

Visit our SOHA website at: <https://www.southwestoralhistory.org> to read more about SOHA, including past newsletters, information about the board, and information about the upcoming conference

If you are not a SOHA member or your membership has lapsed, we encourage you to join or renew. You can pay for your membership at <https://sworalhistory.square.site/>. You can also print out and mail a membership for from the SOHA website at <https://southwestoralhistory.org/mission.html>

Keep an eye on your email in late August for more information about SOHA Fall Board meeting. We would love to have you join us!

It is thanks to our generous donors that SOHA is able to remain in the oral history community. As an organization dedicated to the study and promotion of oral history as a method for exploring and recording history, culture, and current experiences in the Southwestern United States, we would not be able to continue without their help. If you would like to donate, please visit: <https://sworalhistory.square.site/>.



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