

The Memories Matter:

Oral History, Hope, and Community

The Southwest Oral History Association (SOHA) will host its annual conference with the theme, “The Memories Matter: Oral History, Hope, and Community” from April 1-3, 2022, at the Lied Library on the campus of the University of Nevada, Las Vegas (UNLV). We will offer in-person and hybrid elements to encourage face to face *and* remote virtual participation.



Oral history is a personal field. Oral historians are invested in the stories we record, the narrators who share their stories, and the communities they are part of. Traditionally, oral history presupposes sitting or walking together and talking--an intimate interpersonal process. The COVID19 pandemic has changed this approach to our work and the interactions we once took for granted. In the midst of this pandemic, we have also seen important work by historians and activists to explore the influence of traumatic legacies on our current social climate, particularly by Black, Indigenous, and other activists and scholars of color. These recent years have been marked by challenges and trauma, but also renewed and transcendent hope, and a refusal to let injustice define what is possible.

And so our theme, **The Memories Matter: Oral History, Hope, and Community**, reflects our hopes for the future, and the concerns many of us acknowledge and share. Oral history neither shrinks from the challenges we must confront, nor dismisses the celebrations that come from commemoration and memory. Our unique field is one of hope, sharing, and ideas. In 2022, let's renew our love of the work we do and the people we work with.

As you prepare your proposal we invite you consider these questions that relate to our theme:

- What do you think of when you read, “memories matter?”
- What is the function of memory in oral history, local history, and recent history?
- What relationships exist among our concepts of memory, life, and mattering, particularly as they are explored through social justice and media movements (e.g. #BlackLivesMatter and #SayHerName)?
- Why should we commemorate events and people? What makes anniversaries meaningful, and what role does/should oral history play?
- How can oral history give us hope and help us to meet challenges for the future?

This conference marks the 40th anniversary of SOHA, and will be our first in-person event since 2019. As we gather to celebrate four decades of SOHA, we will be reflecting on where we began and where we've been, and looking ahead to the future. Where do we want to be in ten years, as an organization and as oral historians?

We invite all oral historians, scholars, students, teachers, community members, and others to submit proposals for presentations, papers, full panels, and roundtables to be considered for the program. Proposals should include clear evidence of oral history research and/or offer innovative insights on methodologies and practices. Both full session and individual proposals are welcome, and all proposals will be reviewed. SOHA's main constituency is oral historians in the U.S. Southwest, as well as oral historians whose work addresses the Southwest, but we also welcome proposals from emerging scholars of any region.

Please submit your proposal through the following [Google form](https://forms.gle/Jemhdv84ZZ6Cb5MS8) link: <https://forms.gle/Jemhdv84ZZ6Cb5MS8>. We are accepting individual paper proposals as well as full panel proposals. The Google form will ask for names, affiliations, bios, and brief contact information, along with titles and abstracts for each panel or paper. Please see the Google form for the complete list of required information.

We encourage you to submit your proposals as early as you are able. We will review and accept proposals on a rolling basis, with official notice of acceptances beginning as early as December 17th, 2021. The final deadline to submit for consideration will be January 15, 2022.

Participation in the conference requires that attendees register and [become members of SOHA](#); we regret that we cannot offer honoraria or travel support for presenters.

Direct all additional inquiries to soha@unlv.edu. Thank you, and we look forward to your submissions!

The Southwest Oral History Association (SOHA) was founded in 1981 to serve practitioners of oral history throughout the Southwestern United States and contiguous regions. Through publications, meetings, workshops and special events, SOHA supports and promotes oral history as a method for exploring and recording history, culture, and current experiences in the Southwest.