

Welcome

Welcome to Seattle for the one-hundred-second meeting of the Organization of American Historians. If you have never visited Seattle, it's a city with stunning scenery, a colorful history, and a remarkable civil consciousness, best expressed in the range of its museums and other public institutions.

Despite all of the good things I had heard about Seattle over the years, my first visit in 1990 was changing planes on my way to Hanford to collect a control panel from one of the first nuclear reactors for the National Museum of American History's "Science in American Life" exhibit. It was only last year that I returned to Seattle to meet with the Program Committee and had the opportunity to explore the city.

Since I had co-curated the exhibit "Rock 'n' Soul: Social Crossroads" in Memphis, I was curious to explore the Experience Music Project at Seattle Center, and excited by the fascinating exhibits, awesome technology, and opportunities for school children to have fun with music. At sunset I took a ferry across the bay to the nearest island and returned watching the city lights come up. There are numerous ferry routes including one to Vancouver that I hope to take advantage of after the convention. One rainy evening I browsed at the Elliott Bay Book Company and bought a cap to ward off the rain. Dining in Seattle is fantastic. Just walking through Pike Place Market along the waterfront with its incredible displays of fish, food, sweets, and merchandise, is a treat. And there is coffee. I enjoyed walking through the city, visiting the public library, exploring galleries, pretending to shop, and watching the flow of people.

The Program Committee, cochaired by Donald Ritchie and Leslie Brown, worked diligently to build a program around the theme "History without Boundaries," and the Local Resource Committee, cochaired by Shirley Yee and Wilson O'Donnell, has created a tempting array of offsite sessions and events.

Since I joined the OAH in 1967, I have watched it become more inclusive. It now is home to academic historians, public historians, K-12 teachers, international scholars, and anyone interested in U.S. history. This year's program offers history without boundaries, and the sessions will keep many historians off the streets. So plan to come early and stay late and enjoy both the convention and the city.

—Pete Daniel, OAH President



Join OAH President Pete Daniel in welcoming you to Seattle for our one-hundred-second annual meeting. This year's program reflects the diverse areas of interest among American historians and will appeal widely to all who engage in our craft. Not only does the OAH meeting offer a singular venue for us to meet and exchange ideas with colleagues from all over the country, but we also grow from the cross-fertilization that happens when historians who practice in universities meet with public historians, community college historians, and precollegiate teachers.

Our first evening in Seattle features an opening reception at the Seattle Sheraton Hotel at 5 p.m. after which we will stroll to the nearby Seattle Town Hall for our plenary session on the 2008 election. A stellar panel will reflect on various dimensions of this truly historic election. On Friday afternoon you will not want to miss the much acclaimed one-man performance of *From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks*, a recreation of labor leader Harry Bridges's life and times. Of special note Saturday is an

OAH-sponsored roundtable, "One Hundred Years of Struggle: Histories of the NAACP," a unique look at and centennial celebration of the NAACP's rich history.

In addition to the meeting's vibrant sessions, panels, and tours, take time to venture into Seattle for fascinating offsite sessions held in seven unique settings. We are pleased to host the fourth annual Teaching American History workshop as well as workshops for community college historians and those interested in oral history.

We have packed over three and a half days of events into three full days, concluding with the presidential reception on Saturday evening. We have made these adjustments to encourage travelers to fly Sunday and arrive home at a reasonable hour. So come to Seattle for great history, great coffee, and a great experience!

—Lee W. Formwalt, OAH Executive Director



Plenary Sessions

The 2008 Election as History

Thursday, March 26, 7:00 p.m.

Chair: Harry Rubenstein, Smithsonian Institution

Race and Politics

Clayborne Carson, Stanford University

*Blogging from the Center as a Historian
During a Contested Campaign: Politically
Anomalous and Academically Tenuous?*

Gil Troy, McGill University

The Gallup Poll, Public Opinion, and the Presidency

Fred L. Israel, City College of New York

Gender and Politics

Blanche Wiesen Cook, John Jay College, City University of New York

The election of 2008 is barely over, but historians no longer wait for the last ballot to be counted before beginning their analysis. Issues of race and gender have recast the American political landscape, calling for a greater understanding of the long paths leading to this election. The shifting definitions of liberalism and conservatism, and the candidates' search for a political center are also deeply rooted in the past. Historical perspective not only added a fuller appreciation of developing events but could be disseminated more widely through historians' blogs, offering timely commentary. Throughout the election, historians also worked in tandem with pollsters to weigh the data as it was collected. The historians on this plenary panel will measure the 2008 election from the viewpoint of history, along with assessing the evolving significance of historians in the electoral process.



Photo by Tech. Sgt. Dawn M. Price,
Department of Defense



Photo by Cpl. Pete Thibodeau,
Department of Defense

From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks

Friday, March 27, 3:45 p.m.

Sponsored by the Labor and Working-Class History Association, the Pacific Northwest Labor History Association, and The Harry Bridges Center for Labor Studies

This session features a live performance of Ian Ruskin's acclaimed one-man multi-media play *From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Docks*, a dramatic re-creation of the life and times of longshoremen's union leader Harry Bridges. Blending rare archival film footage, photographs, sound effects, and labor music, Ruskin takes audiences on a riveting personal and historical journey through the New Deal, World War II, and Cold War eras, with one of the twentieth century's most dynamic figures as their guide.

Bridges was an Australian-born seaman who went to work on the San Francisco waterfront in 1922 and played a leading role in the 1934 West Coast maritime and general strike. He withstood a twenty-year red-baiting and deportation campaign by shippers and the FBI, denounced the internment of Japanese-Americans, defied the law against interracial marriage, and guided his rank and file through the job-swallowing age of mechanization. A radical raconteur both vilified and celebrated in his own time, Bridges provides a sharp, spirited working-class perspective on issues that are as timely as ever given the growing gap between rich and poor, the global war on terror, and increasing governmental surveillance.



Harry Bridges (Image courtesy ILWU)



Ian Ruskin (Image by Veronica Puleo at verofoto.com)

Trained at the Royal Academy of Dramatic Art in London, Ruskin is a veteran of English repertory theater—London's West End—and has appeared in scores of films and television programs, including the movie version of *From Wharf Rats to Lords of the Dock*, directed by Academy Award-winner Haskell Wexler. This 65-minute performance will be followed by a discussion with Ruskin moderated by Baruch College history professor and former San Francisco labor journalist Vincent DiGirolamo.

A reception, sponsored by the Labor and Working-Class History Association, will follow the session.

▼ Friday, March 27

3:45 p.m.

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Ian Ruskin portrays Harry Bridges (Image courtesy Cathy Wild)

Moderator: VINCENT DIGIROLAMO, Baruch College

A reception, sponsored by the Labor and Working-Class History Association, will follow the plenary.

▼ Saturday, March 28

7:30 a.m.

College Board Breakfast

Scholars of recent American history have devoted considerable attention to the rise and influence of conservatism since the 1960s. Breakfast speaker Tim Thurber, Virginia Commonwealth University, will present, "Scholarly Trends in the History of Conservatism since the 1960s," and will explore trends in scholarship by surveying interpretations of grassroots conservatives as well as conservatives' influence on policy during and after the Reagan presidency.

Community College Historians Breakfast

Sponsored by Bedford/St. Martin's

Community college historians will gather for the second annual OAH breakfast. Meet OAH leaders and members of the OAH Committee on Community Colleges, and hear about upcoming workshops and professional development opportunities open to community college historians.

ALANA Breakfast

The ALANA (African American, Latino/a, Asian American, and Native American) Committee invites minority graduate students and first-year faculty to breakfast. Please join the committee in a discussion of life in the profession. The ALANA Committee also invites minority senior faculty to talk to minority graduate students and early faculty as a mentor at this breakfast meeting.

▼ Saturday, March 28

8:30 a.m.

"Integration must never mean the liquidation of black colleges"

Chair: Felix L. Armfield, Buffalo State College
Merline Pitre, Texas Southern University
Bettye Gardner, Coppin State College
Freddie Parker, North Carolina Central University
Ida Elizabeth Jones, Howard University

Rethinking Psychohistory

Chair: Bertram Wyatt-Brown, University of Florida

Rethinking Psychohistory: The Benefits and Challenges of a Mental Illness Framework in Writing History
Michael Fellman, Simon Fraser University

Finding Iris Chang: Challenges of Biography with the Bipolar Diagnosis
Paula Kamen, Northwestern University

Madness and Leadership
S. Nassir Ghaemi, Tufts Medical Center

Comment: Kim Nielsen, University of Wisconsin, Green Bay, and Bertram Wyatt-Brown