

Save the Date

- **April 24 - May 3:** Fifth Avenue Arts Festival
- **July 12:** Mississippi Freedom Project trip
 - Check the SPOHP Website for upcoming updates.



Donate!

The Samuel Proctor Oral History Program relies on the guidance and support of our growing network of sustainers. If you are an alumni or you have a story that you want to share, please let us know! Whatever the case, thank you for being a member of the SPOHP community. We look forward to continuing to provide you with exciting updates about our students' research!

The Samuel Proctor
 Oral History Program
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The Samuel Proctor Oral History Program

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A Message from the Director

Dear Friend of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program,

This has been the most challenging year in the history of the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program (SPOHP). Our program transitioned to a completely new way of learning. We not only began doing our interviews via online programs and phone; we cleared out our offices and began working remotely to keep everyone as safe as possible during the Global Pandemic. Anchored by the organizational energies of Tamarra Jenkins and Deborah Hendrix, we've held countless staff and community meetings via Zoom. The phrase "You are still on mute, Dr. Ortiz!" has entered the folklore of our storied program. Back when Dr. Samuel Proctor founded UF Oral History, he probably did not foresee the kind of challenges we would face in 2021. On the other hand, he built a program designed to survive crisis. Consider that Dr. Proctor came of age during the Great Depression. He was a World War II veteran. As a pioneering Jewish American faculty member, Samuel Proctor saw the Holocaust up close in the experiences and traumas of family and friends; as a result, many of SPOHP's finest interviews are with Holocaust survivors, refugees, and people grappling with oppression. We are honored to keep Dr. Proctor's legacy alive! I hope that you find this newsletter to be a beacon of storytelling inspiration. As we slowly and safely return to face-to-face fieldwork, please let us hear from you. We want to hear your story!

Sincerely Yours,

Paul Ortiz

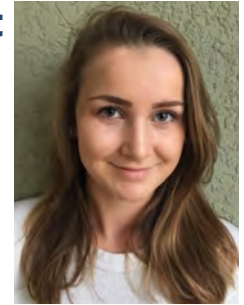
For more information please visit: <https://oral.history.ufl.edu>

Follow us on social media @SPOHP



Abby Lovett

Abby Lovett is a third-year history major who will graduate from the University of Florida this spring. She plans to continue her work with SPOHP next year while she applies to graduate school for history.



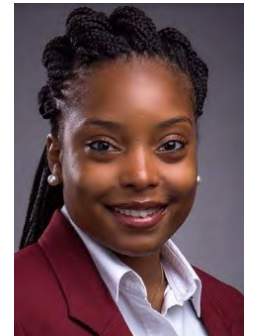
Marianne Quijano

Marianne is a Ph.D. student specializing in modern Latin American History. For her doctoral research, Marianne plans to research histories of health and radical politics in Central America.



Dr. Raja Rahim

Dr. Rahim recently successfully defended her dissertation, and will be receiving her PhD from UF this Spring. She has accepted a teaching position at Appalachian State University.



Adolfho Romero

Adolfho is graduating with a Master in Latin American Studies with a specialization in Latinx Studies, Migration & Transnational Studies. He will pursue a Ph.D in the upcoming year.



Omar Sanchez

Omar is graduating with a major in English. He plans to pursue a PhD. possibly in Education Policy, in a few years.



Madison Worth

Madison is graduating with a masters in Secondary Social Studies Education. She plans to teach in or around Alachua County for a few years, while traveling and reading as much as she can.



SPOHP Grads

..... Ange Asanzi

Ange has just completed a Master in Sustainable Development Practice (MDP) from the University of Florida. Her MDP field practicum research focused on poverty and racial violence in Alachua County.



..... Maria Espinoza

Maria is graduating with a major in Criminology and Law. She plans to work for the Hispanic Caucus this upcoming year, and apply for law school next fall.



..... Alana Gomez

Alana is graduating with a double major in History and English. Alana plans to intern at the Matheson Museum this summer working on a Black Thursday exhibit that will open in the fall.



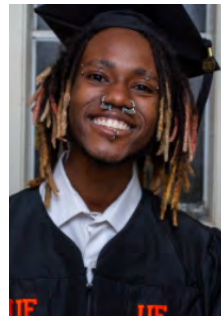
..... Rachel Hujsa

Rachel is graduating with a double major in Music and History and a minor in Anthropology. Next fall, she will be pursuing her J.D. at the University of Pennsylvania Carey Law School.



..... Kasamba Koyaki

Kasamba graduated with his Bachelor in Science in Photojournalism. This fall he will be in New York pursuing a career in entertainment media.



Announcements

SPOHP Volunteer Program

The Samuel Proctor Oral History Program at the University of Florida is dedicated to providing public history support as a research center for students, faculty, and community members. SPOHP is a resource base for volunteers interacting with history materials in a variety of different ways, including transcribing, audio logging, and conducting oral history interviews for local and national archives. We focus on local community initiatives and social justice in Gainesville and the Southeast. For additional information contact SPOHP, call the offices at (352) 392-7168, and connect with us via email today: tamarraj@ufl.edu.



Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars

The SPOHP Spring 2021 internship course focused on the challenges of educational equity in higher education. Interns worked in collaboration with the Machen Florida Opportunity Scholars (MFOS) program. MFOS mentors first-generation college students at UF and provides them with critical support services. We interviewed initial founders and key early supporters like former Florida Governor Jeb Bush and UF President Emeritus Bernie Machen. Our interns interviewed recent students and alumni of MFOS. On April 20th, we held a community celebration of our research-in-progress. This project will culminate with the release of a documentary film on MFOS that UF will premiere on National First-Gen College Day on November 8. — “ —

"I learned so much from this cohort of interns, especially from their engagement with the course materials and how they applied their learning to the art of interviewing. It was so inspiring to see how they valued the chance to speak with MFOS narrators, how each contributed to the group, and took ownership of the goals of the course." — “ —

-Marcus Chatfield, PhD student, US History.

Projects

The Joel Buchanan Archive of African American History

The Joel Buchanan Archive of African American History features more than 1000 oral history interviews in places like Gainesville, Florida, Bogalusa, Louisiana, and McComb, Mississippi. During the summer of 2015, the Lincolnville Museum and Cultural Center in St. Augustine, Florida supervised UF students Raja Rahim and Annemarie Nichols, supervised SPOHP graduate students who conducted interviews with African American elders in the Ancient City, St. Augustine. Our students parlay their field work experiences into careers. For example, Annemarie is now the oral historian for the Southern Foodways Alliance based at the University of Mississippi and Raja will start working as an assistant professor of history at Appalachian State University this August. The Joel Buchanan Archive team has been working hard to finish transcribing our St. Augustine and Pensacola interviews so that we can share these with the sponsoring museums in those cities.



Members of the JBA team at a soil collection ceremony in Newberry, Florida.



Curriculum Project

With the goals of integrating oral histories into public education and providing educators accessible oral history resources, SPOHP team members have begun constructing lesson plans that incorporate interviews, transcripts, and other media from our archives. Thus far, the team has completed a template for oral-history-based lesson plans. In the coming academic year, they will compose a lesson plan pertaining to the Ocoee Massacre, which was recently added to the required Florida Standards for public education.

Student Activities

McCarty Woods Activism

The Save McCarty Woods Campaign was a student-led effort to save the McCarty Woods conservation area. McCarty woods is a biologically and culturally significant part of UF. The woods are home to just under a thousand different species and utilized by classes and students for leisure and learning. UF's 2020-2030 campus master plan attempted to revoke the woods of its conservation area status and designate it as a site for future development. Hearing about the plans through a story on a local news station, students and faculty quickly took up a call for action. A petition generated just under 15,000 signatures and the campaign was featured on various local news outlets. Several protests were held and cumulatively manifested into a march from Lake Alice to Tigert Hall, where leaders of the campaign voiced their opposition. Ultimately UF decided to remove the woods from its current master plan. The Save McCarty Woods Campaign provides insight into the effectiveness of local collective action and the power of student groups to promote and uphold environmental change.



“Through my work at SPOHP, I have had the privilege to be one of the organizers of the Save McCarty Woods campaign and acquired important research skills during my involvement in the Ottoman Greeks of the United States, Nature of the Big Bend, and Florida Water Management projects.”

—Vasilios Kosmakos, Sustainability Studies Major

Podcast Highlights

Search SPOHP podcast in Apple Podcasts or Spotify, or go to the sources listed below. Be sure to subscribe to the SPOHP Podcast on Spotify or Apple Podcasts and receive all new podcast releases.

A Child of Farmworkers

This podcast was created by James Thompson for the 2013 SPOHP Summer internship class. Mireya Ledesma is one of eight children born to her farm laborer parents. In this podcast, she describes being looked down upon by other children for her parents' occupations and the strange mix of shame and pride she felt in reaction. She speaks of the responsibility she felt as the oldest daughter to help raise her younger siblings, and the ways in which farmworkers' poor education and the lack of informational outreach sometimes make it difficult for them to link health issues to pesticide exposure.



Scan this QR code to listen to *A Child of Farmworkers*.



Scan this QR code to listen to *Community Action and Radio*.



Community Action and Radio

This podcast was created by Virginia Hamrick for the 2015 SPOHP Spring internship class. David Barsamian created Alternative Radio to cover important stories neglected by mainstream media. In this podcast, he explains why he first pursued broadcasting, and how journalism can continue to be a source of social change. Topics include Alternative Radio, broadcasting, the Armenian genocide, and using journalism to hold the government accountable.

"I have had the pleasure of being able to see JBA's transcription efforts progress at an exponential rate in all my years here at SPOHP. With our team, despite the limitations placed on us by the pandemic, we are near finishing the St. Augustine and Pensacola collections which makes me extremely proud!"

-Sandra Romero, Classical Studies '16



Students and staff on a Mississippi Freedom Project Trip with Civil Rights leader Patricia Stephens Due

Mississippi Freedom Project

As vaccinations become more accessible, SPOHP is exploring the possibility of resuming in-person fieldwork during the late summer and/or conducting oral history interviews remotely with our community partners at the Elaine Legacy Center located in the Arkansas Delta. Our Mississippi Freedom Project (MFP) alumni such as Justin Dunnivant (now an Anthropology Professor at UCLA) and Nicole Yapp (Harvard Law School) have described the MFP field work trips as life-changing opportunities to learn about the civil rights struggle from movement elders. If you are interested in learning more about the status of MFP, please contact SPOHP and follow us on social media to receive updates.

Native American History Project

SPOHP has conducted over 1,000 oral history interviews with Indigenous peoples in the South including Catawba, Cherokee, Choctaw, Creek, Lumbee, Seminole, and Pamunkey since 1967. Transcripts of these interviews are available in the University of Florida Digital Collections. This past year, we organized a special panel at the Oral History Association Annual Meeting with our counterparts at the Poarch Band of Creek Indians to celebrate 50 years of collaboration with that nation. The panel featured SPOHP alumni including Grace Chun, Diana Dombrowski, and Professor Patrick Daglaris from Oklahoma State University.



Chief Calvin McGhee, leader of the Poarch Creek Band of Indians and interviewee in the Poarch Creek Project.



Scan this QR code for access to our NAHP archive.

Doris Duke Grant

Founded in 1967, SPOHP humbly began with only a typewriter, a four-drawer filing cabinet, and one student assistant, housed in an office at Library West. Through an initial grant from the Doris Duke Foundation, the Program began collecting interviews with Indigenous Peoples throughout the Southeastern US. Today, SPOHP has grown into a community-based research hub with projects spanning across the United States. SPOHP maintains an archive of over 9000 interviews and over 150,000 pages of transcribed content in the UF Digital Collections. On the 50th anniversary of the originally funded project, SPOHP and the George Smathers Library received a grant from the Doris Duke Foundation to revitalize and digitally repatriate the interviews to the originating communities.



Florida Queer History Project

The Florida Queer History project (FQH), founded in June 2016, is a growing archive of oral histories dedicated to highlighting the queer experience throughout the last century. The project aims to provide a means for queer-identified individuals to express and document how their sexual orientations and gender identities have shaped their lives. FQH also seeks to document the contemporary LGBTQ+ movement through a variety of fieldwork initiatives. We currently seek volunteers who would like to learn how to transcribe interviews, conduct oral history interviews, and develop digital humanities projects utilizing archival material (e.g. video production, podcasting, zine publication). The FQH project welcomes partnership with other departments that wish to collaborate and increase visibility for the queer community. Those interested are encouraged to contact SPOHP: tamarraj@ufl.edu



Awards

Volunteer of the Quarter



We are proud to announce that our volunteer of the quarter is George Topalidis. George is assisting in various ways that seek to promote and expand SPOHP's mission. He coordinated and developed the Ottoman Greeks of the United States project (OGUS) into one of SPOHP's premier projects. In the past George coordinated SPOHP's Florida Judges project; now he is preparing to coordinate the UF Black Faculty Retention project. Thank you, George!

“Through my involvement as a volunteer, SPOHP has given me the opportunity to cultivate my leadership skills. Pandemic or not, SPOHP provided me with the space to lead initiatives that translate on the academic labor market.” - Yiorgo (George) Topalides - Ph.D. Candidate, Sociology

Of the oral histories our volunteer coordinators, Don Obrist and Ray Eberling were able to collect this past year, one of the most interesting—and unique—was that of 99-year-old Maurice “Murray” Zolkower of Dunedin, Florida. Murray is a World War II Jewish war veteran originally from New York City, a retired pharmacist, and a long-time member of the Jewish War Veterans organization. As an Army medic, he was among the first of the Allied troops to liberate the Dachau concentration camp near Munich on April 29, 1945. A particularly poignant element of his recollections is that during the war Murray’s maternal grandparents, who lived in Austria, had themselves been victims of the Holocaust.



— “ —

"One of the biggest senses of satisfaction Don and I get from conducting oral histories with our war veterans is the knowledge that individuals' stories will not only be archived here at the University of Florida, but at the Library of Congress as well, where they can be easily accessed for generations to come by academics, schoolchildren, and others. Every veteran's story is compelling; every veteran's story is unique."

— ” —

-Ray Eberling, VHP Volunteer Co-Coordinator

Pandemic Oral History Project

In the week ending March 13, 2020, SPOHP began its Pandemic Oral History Project. Forced to abandon the face-to-face oral history method, SPOHP staff and volunteers used online digital interfaces to safely record interviews. By year's end, nearly 100 oral histories were collected that documented the ways that individuals were coping with life during the lockdown, exacerbated healthcare inequalities, businesses fighting to survive, and the impact of pandemic politics on Latinx community members.

We have learned a lot from operating during the lockdown this past year. SPOHP's virtual tools now allow recording across the hall, or across the country. While we still favor face-to-face interviewing, SPOHP empowers individuals to record their oral histories at a distance.



— “ —

"The onset of the coronavirus pandemic marked significant and difficult changes in all of our lives. Conducting virtual interviews for SPOHP allowed me to safely connect with community members while we all tried to make sense of the sudden changes we experienced in our daily lives. I am forever grateful for that opportunity."

— ” —

- Emma Donnelly, History Major



Michael Sean Comerford



Scan this QR code for the Story Cycle Pandemic Playlist.

Route 66 Covid Cross Country Cycling Project

The Route 66 Covid Cross country cycling project (RSSC) was established by author and journalist Michael Sean Comerford at the height of the pandemic. Mr. Comerford rode his 40-year old bicycle along the US Route 66 corridor through 2,500 miles of small towns and big cities. He captured people's perspectives on Covid-19, mask-wearing, and the vaccine. The most striking stories are from a tribal leader in Quapaw, Oklahoma, Cricket Rice, who lost 19 members of his family and a good part of tribal history, and Sam, whose initial dismissal of the severity of the pandemic later found him fighting for his life and coping with the loss of a close family member from Covid. SPOHP's aforementioned digital process provided fertile ground for the RSSC project' establishment and expansion.

— “ —

“Working on OGUS has helped me learn a lot about social science research and how to conduct research with interviews and qualitative data. Working on OGUS also has opened my eyes on the experiences that people face and how similar a lot of peoples experiences are. I've learned a lot in general and have had fun doing it.”

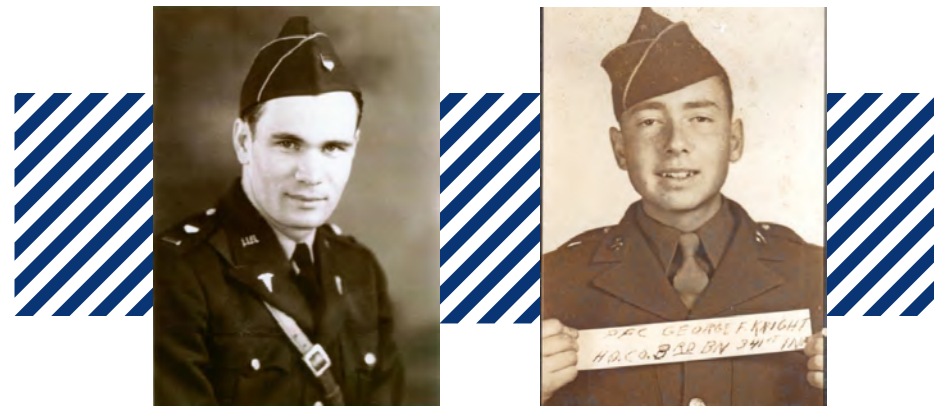
— ” —

-Aadil Rahman, Sociology Major

Veterans History Project



Despite the challenges of this past year, which limited our outreach to veterans' organizations and observances such as Memorial Day and Veterans' Day, SPOHP volunteers were able to conduct oral histories with veterans via Zoom for both the Library of Congress's Veterans History Project and UF's Digital Collections. These oral histories include interviews with veterans of World War II, the Korean War, the Vietnam War, and more recent military conflicts.





Ottoman Greeks of the United States



Exciting activities marked the Ottoman Greeks of the US Project's (OGUS) 2020-2021 academic year. Two UF student volunteers joined OGUS, Vasilios Kosmakos and Aadil Rahman. Vasilios is working on an interview with Mr. Bill Blimes Jr. pertaining to labor activism. Aadil is analyzing an interview with Ms. Althea Vitikos that discusses immigration-related trauma.



George Topalidis presented "An Introduction to the Ottoman Greeks of the United States Project" to UF's Center for European Studies, Hellenic-American Cultural Center & Museum of Oregon and SW Washington, and the International Greek Ancestry Conference. George also published two articles about the OGUS project with *The Pappas Post* and *WeaveTales*, as well as an op-ed for *The Pappas Post* titled, "An Anti-Racist View of Looting." Finally, he and Dr. Denise Mathews published an online series titled, *Seven Cities, Seven Stories: Community, Labor, Experience of Immigrants from the Former Ottoman Empire*. Many exciting ventures lie ahead for the coming academic year! Thank you for your continued support.



Latinx Diaspora in the Americas Project

The Latinx Diaspora in the Americas Project, founded in 2014, is a growing, award-winning archive of 100+ oral histories dedicated to creating space for Latinx individuals to share their historical experiences related to identity, immigration reform, labor conditions, education, and civil rights. Oral history interviews in the Latinx Diaspora in the Americas Project collection are currently undergoing processing, and interview audio is available to access through the Samuel Proctor Oral History Program offices. Please contact SPOHP for more information.



"New to SPOHP and the daughter of an immigrant, I was excited to get involved with LDAP. Collaborating with LPPI was a rewarding opportunity. I learned about the experiences of farmworkers, teachers, and healthcare workers throughout the pandemic within my own community."

- Heather Halak, owner of Third House Books, English & Linguistics graduate '15

UCLA Latino Policy and Politics Initiative Collaboration



Speakers Sonja Diaz, Reina Saco, Roni Bennett, Andrea Mercado, and Marquis Kenzie

After a year of close collaboration with UCLA's Latino Policy and Politics Initiative (LPPPI), SPOHP has had the pleasure of jointly interviewing community leaders during the pandemic and documenting its effects across many communities, especially in Florida. In February, we co-hosted an event spotlighting this pandemic collection. Florida was hit especially hard by COVID-19 in 2020, which gave way to political action and a series of seemingly contradictory events at the voting booth. While Florida went red in the presidential election, it also voted for a higher minimum wage. Many essential employees lost their lives, and those surviving felt forgotten and underpaid, all while being publicly praised. These issues are what led to an academic panel entitled, *The Florida Paradox: How Diverse Communities Are Transforming the Sunshine State*. The panel was held on February 21 and was a great success. Thank you to our wonderful speakers and moderators, and the support of both UF and UCLA. We look forward to another collaboration soon!

Asian American History Project

At SPOHP, we celebrate our diverse students, staff, and their histories. We stand in support of our Asian-American student and faculty community at the University of Florida. SPOHP recognizes the advocacy and activism against deep-rooted anti-Asian discrimination and the rich history of Asian-Americans in this county. From the Chinese Exclusion Act (1882-1943), the racially motivated murder of Vincent Chin (1982), to the recent tragedies in Atlanta, we understand it is imperative to record the oral histories of communities affected by White supremacy.



Scan this QR code to listen to a Project Talk about the Asian American History Project with SPOHP alum Othelia Jumapao

The Asian American History Project (ASAH) is an archive of Oral History interviews conducted with Asian Americans within the University of Florida and throughout the greater South. The collection aims to record the experiences of Asian Americans students at UF, as well as the broader Asian American community experience. If you are interested in being interviewed for this collection and contributing to our efforts in highlighting voices in the Asian American community, please email us at rachel.hujsa@ufl.edu.