

# HISTORY ALIVE

Newsletter of The Rutgers Living History Society

Summer 2022

## President's Corner

Currently, the nation cries out for "responsible citizens." As members and supporters of ROHA and RLHS, based on your past accomplishments, you clearly meet this description. Now, more than ever, you must continue to earn this designation through your actions to meet the nation's crises of today, at every level, from school board to Congress and the presidency. You must become informed, involved, attend meetings, and, most importantly, vote. At no time in our history have we needed more "responsible citizens" such as you to step forward and act. Recognizing responsible citizens in service to their nation and communities has been, and remains, an objective of ROHA, with the support of RLHS. We need your help; volunteer to work with us and lend your financial support, as many of you have in the past. Help us "Keep Our History Alive." As the COVID-19 emergency recedes and the Rutgers community reopens, we look forward to seeing you at our future events, including our Ambrose Award and Annual Meeting on October 21, 2022.

Stuart Freedman  
RC '62



*The works of Nobel Laureate Svetlana Alexievich have been translated into fifty-two languages and published in fifty-five nations.*

*(Image courtesy of Galina Dursthoff)*

## Commemoration of 80th Anniversary of Attack on Pearl Harbor Held on Voorhees Mall

On December 7, 2021, the Rutgers Oral History Archives (ROHA) and Rutgers Living History Society (RLHS) hosted a ceremony to commemorate the 80th anniversary of the December 7, 1941 Japanese attacks on American forces at Pearl Harbor and throughout the Pacific. The ceremony took place at the Class of 1942 World War II Memorial Plaza, which consists of granite monuments and is surrounded by plaques memorializing members of Rutgers communities who served during World War II and made the ultimate sacrifice.

With fifty community members in attendance, the event began with a joint Army-Navy ROTC Color Guard squad posting the colors. William F. Mead, a Rutgers alumnus and Marine Corps veteran, sang the National Anthem. Stuart Freedman, President of the RLHS, welcomed the crowd, recognizing in particular the presence of Stuart Brandow, a veteran of World War II and the Battle of the Bulge.

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## Svetlana Alexievich Will Receive Ambrose Oral History Award

The Rutgers Living History Society (RLHS) will award the 2022 Stephen E. Ambrose Oral History Award to Svetlana Alexievich, a Nobel Prize-winning journalist, oral historian and author. The award ceremony will take place during the 19th Annual Meeting of the RLHS on October 21, 2022. As part of Rutgers Homecoming Weekend, the Annual Meeting will also feature the induction of new members of the RLHS, who have participated in interviews with the Rutgers Oral History Archives (ROHA) over the past year. Alexievich will not attend the event in person and instead will deliver her acceptance speech via video.

Born in 1948 in Ukraine to a Belarusian father and Ukrainian mother, Alexievich grew up in Belarus, where her parents were teachers. She attended Belarusian State University, graduating in 1972. During her career, she has worked as a journalist, teacher, oral historian and author of short stories and nonfiction.

Alexievich, who writes in Russian, won the Nobel Prize in Literature in 2015 "for her polyphonic writings, a monument to suffering and courage in our time," becoming the first non-fiction writer to win the award in over half a century. She is the first writer from Belarus--and the fourteenth woman--to win the prize. In fact, she is the first person to win the Nobel Prize for works based entirely on interviews.

Drawing inspiration from the stories she heard growing up from local women who lived through World War II, Alexievich decided to undertake a study of the role of Russian women in the Red Army during the war. In the late 1970s, she traveled around the Soviet Union with a recorder and collected the oral histories of women who served as nurses, doctors, soldiers, sharpshooters and pilots. Alexievich went into the interviews pursuing emotion. "I wanted to know how a woman feels,"

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## History Alive

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Web Address of the Rutgers  
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[oralhistory.rutgers.edu](http://oralhistory.rutgers.edu)



## Anna Richey Presents John W. Chambers II Fellowship Lecture

On April 13, 2022, Anna Richey presented the fourth annual John W. Chambers II Oral History Graduate Fellowship lecture. Her virtual talk, entitled "Fighting Back: How Anti-Rape Activists Fostered Feminism on Campus," focuses on anti-rape activism at Columbia University, Barnard College and Ohio State University. More broadly, in her dissertation, Richey is exploring how women students organized to prevent sexual violence on college campuses from 1950 to 1990 and effected university programming involving Title IX and gender equality.

Richey is a doctoral fellow in the Department of History focusing on 20th century American women's history. She earned a Bachelor of Arts from Ohio State University in History and Women's Studies.

In the lecture, Richey examines the changing definition of rape and sexual violence over time, the relationship between sexual violence, race, gender and space, and the interaction between anti-rape activists and their institutions of higher education.

Richey's analysis draws from archival interviews, as well as oral history interviews that she conducted of activists. Oral histories play a central role in Richey's research by centering the voices of survivors and activists, as they redefined public discourse on gendered violence. She contends, "Oral histories have been the most instrumental source material for my research." Because university archives often exclude sexual violence from records in order to preserve their legacies, Richey says, "The voices of participants provide information that would otherwise be unattainable."

The recording of the lecture is available on the [YouTube Channel](#) of the Rutgers Oral History Archives (ROHA). The Chambers Fellowship Lecture is co-sponsored by ROHA, Rutgers Living History Society, Department of History and Office of the Executive Dean of the School of Arts and Sciences. The Chambers Fellowship is funded by the generosity of The Cobb Foundation, The Ware Foundation and John Whiteclay Chambers II, Professor Emeritus of History. The previous fellowship recipients are Pamela Walker, Caitlin Wiesner and Carie Rael.

## ROHA Interviews Used as Primary Sources in Books, Articles, Online Exhibits and Podcasts

Interviews in the Rutgers Oral History Archives (ROHA) continue to be valuable primary sources used by scholars, authors and students in a variety of publications, ranging from books and articles to online exhibits and podcasts.

[Scarlet and Black](#) is a three-volume exploration of the experiences of African Americans and Native Americans at Rutgers University. Published in May 2021, *Scarlet and Black, Volume III: Making Black Lives Matter at Rutgers, 1945-2020* draws from archival holdings of ROHA. Additionally, ROHA Directors Shaun Illingworth and Kate Rizzi worked with graduate student researchers to conduct original interviews of Rutgers alumni, faculty and staff.

Among the [ROHA interviews](#) used in *Scarlet and Black, Volume III* are: Cheryl Clarke, GSNB '74, GSSW '80, GSNB '00; M. Wilma Harris, DC '66; Alice Jennings Archibald, GSE '38; Simeon Moss, ED '41; William Neal Brown, RU Faculty; Donald Harris, RC '63; Patricia Graham, LC '72; Betty Davis, DC '66; Barbara Morrison-Rodriguez, DC '71; and Rosalind Carmichael, DC '72. ROHA continues to partner with Dr. Jesse Bayker, curator of the [Scarlet and Black Digital Archives](#), and Dr. Kendra Boyd, Assistant Professor of History at Rutgers-

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To make a gift in honor of the Chambers Oral History Fellowship, please send your donation to:

Allison Sachs Klein  
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New Brunswick, NJ  
08901

For checks, please specify that your gift is to support the John W. Chambers II Oral History Graduate Student Fellowship. To make a gift by credit card, please call Allison at (848) 932-6455.



## 80th Pearl Harbor Day Ceremony Held at World War II Memorial

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"The events of December 7, 1941 will be forever seared into the memories of the men and women who lived through that day, whether they witnessed the attack unfold before their eyes or heard about it while crowding around a radio," noted Shaun Illingworth, ROHA Director, in his remarks. Reading from oral histories in ROHA's collection, Illingworth spoke about the impact of the "Day of Infamy" on Americans as individuals and on the nation as a whole.

Over 7,500 Rutgers men and women served in the war, and 243 Rutgers alumni were killed during World War II. Franklin Joseph Holden, Rutgers College Class of 1939, joined the Marine Corps and became a pilot. He was stationed on Wake Island when Japanese forces struck on December 8 local time. While running on the ground to help a fellow pilot, Holden was strafed and killed, becoming the first Rutgers alumnus to die during the war.

Following the tribute, ROTC cadets placed two wreaths in front of the memorial. Veteran Ronald Lawrence marked the solemnity of the commemoration with a stirring rendition of "Taps" played on the bugle.

ROHA also released an online exhibit called "[Voices of Veterans](#)," which showcases passages from oral history interviews of men and women, including many Rutgers alumni, who served in World War II and in conflicts in Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf, Iraq, and Afghanistan. The "[Some Gave All](#)" exhibit on the ROHA website commemorates Rutgers alumni who were killed during World War II.

## Follow ROHA on Social Media @RUOralHistory

Stay up-to-date with the latest news, events and [podcasts](#) by following ROHA @RUOralHistory on [Facebook](#), [Twitter](#), [Soundcloud](#) and [Apple Podcasts](#).

Subscribe to the [ROHA Channel on YouTube](#) and view the video of the Annual Meeting 2021 and the Rutgers Living History Society Memorial Video 2021.

Visit the [ROHA website here](#).



*The joint Army-Navy ROTC Color Guard posts the colors at the 80th anniversary commemoration of Pearl Harbor Day at Rutgers University.*

(Image courtesy of Donald Koger)

## TAPS

*We have learned of the passing of the following members:*

**Thelma Borodkin**  
**Frank Brennan Jr., RC '51**  
**Daniel Csontos**  
**Dr. Paul Jennings, RC '45**  
**Burton Krevsky, RC '45**  
**Peter J. Logerfo**  
**Chester Obryk**  
**Francisco Roca**  
**Richard Snethen, RC '43**

This issue is dedicated to their memory.

*These listings may be incomplete. If this copy of History Alive was addressed to a recently deceased RLHS member, please let us know about their passing so that we can honor them in an upcoming issue ([illingwo@history.rutgers.edu](mailto:illingwo@history.rutgers.edu)).*

## Shaun's Soapbox

I am happy to report that ROHA continued its march toward normalcy this spring. For the first time since March 2020, I was able to offer my "Introduction to Oral History" class in person.

The capstone assignment, conducting an oral history interview, resonated with all of the students. Several helped interview Rutgers College Class of 1976 alumnae; others interviewed veterans, people involved in the COVID-19 response, and the first women to earn tenure-track positions on the Rutgers faculty. Most memorable for me were the interviews students conducted of family members, including one student who interviewed his grandmother about their family's flight from Ukraine during World War II. Interviewing her against the backdrop of Russia's current invasion of Ukraine (where she still has family) presented in stark terms how the past and present continue to affect the people we interview. Our interns, Elijah Hanebury, SAS '23, and Christopher Wolfe, a School of Information graduate student, helped with interviews and processing transcripts, while learning about oral history. Elijah updated our NJ History Index and Chris worked with us to interview alumni of the University Glee Club, which just celebrated its 150th anniversary. I cannot wait to tell you more at our next RLHS Annual Meeting in October!

Shaun Illingworth  
 ROHA Director

# ROHA

**RUTGERS ORAL HISTORY  
 ARCHIVES PODCAST**



**RUTGERS**  
 School of Arts and Sciences

## Svetlana Alexievich Will Receive Stephen Ambrose Oral History Award

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she explains. Alexievich interviewed some narrators as many as twenty times.

When she wrote *The Unwomanly Face of War: An Oral History of Women in World War II* (1983), she broke from tradition in several ways. The work is a testimonial novel that features the verbatim oral histories of the women Alexievich interviewed, which was not a Soviet-era literary or journalistic practice. Furthermore, the first-hand accounts contradict the Soviet mythology of World War II. "I chose a genre where human voices speak for themselves," describes Alexievich. By doing so, her work challenged dominant Soviet narratives that were carefully crafted through state control to reflect positively on the "motherland." Initially, the book was denounced, its publication suppressed. However, after the liberal reforms of perestroika, a censored version of *The Unwomanly Face of War* was published. It sold two million copies in Russian. The uncensored edition came out following the dissolution of the Soviet Union. After she won the Nobel, Penguin Random House republished the book.

Alexievich continued to document major crises in Soviet history through oral history. She wrote *Last Witnesses: An Oral History of the Children of World War II* (1985), *Boys in Zinc: Soviet Voices from the Afghanistan War* (1992), named for the zinc coffins in which dead soldiers were shipped home, *Voices from Chernobyl: The Oral History of a Nuclear Disaster* (2006), and *Secondhand Time: The Last of the Soviets* (2016). Taken together, her five books are known as *Voices of Utopia*.

*Voices from Chernobyl* is her most well-known work in the West. The book chronicles the aftermath of the nuclear disaster at Chernobyl on April 26, 1986, when the radioactive fallout spread to Belarus, Eastern Europe and Scandinavia. Alexievich immediately began interviewing people: average Belarusians, local evacuees, engineers, government officials and firefighters. While conducting research for the book, which took ten years, Alexievich developed an immune deficiency. The prologue begins with recollections of Lyudmilla Ignatenko, wife of deceased fireman Vasily Ignatenko, "He was choking on his internal organs. I'd wrap my hand in a bandage and put it in his mouth, take out all that stuff. It's impossible to talk about. It's impossible to write about. And even to live through. It was all mine. My love. They couldn't get a single pair of shoes to fit him. They buried him barefoot." *Voices from Chernobyl* goes on to reveal how the Soviet government masked the urgency of the catastrophe.

Alexievich's criticism of the Soviet and then Belarusian regimes has forced her periodically to live in exile. In a 2013 interview with Ana Lucic, Alexievich describes her own work and the repercussions she has endured as a result: "I would say I'm an independent writer. I can't call myself a Soviet writer, or even a Russian writer. By 'Soviet,' I mean the territory of the former Soviet empire, naturally, the realm of the Soviet utopia. Neither do I consider myself a Belorussian writer. I would say I'm a writer of that epoch, the Soviet utopia, writing the history of that utopia in each of my books. I'm only temporarily in Paris; my stay here is connected with the political situation in Belorussia and my opposition to the current authorities. My books have been published in many countries, but not in Belorussia: in the past ten years of Lukashenko's rule, none of my books were published there. But I continue writing about the little man versus the great utopia. I describe the disappearance of this utopia and how it affects the common person." Alexander Lukashenko, the president of Belarus since 1994, held on to power in 2020 amidst massive protests surrounding his flawed reelection. An opponent of Lukashenko and a member of the Coordination Council to foster a democratic transfer of power, Alexievich left Belarus in September 2020. She also has been an outspoken critic of Vladimir Putin and has recently denounced Belarus' support for the Russian invasion of Ukraine. She currently resides in Berlin, Germany.

***Alexievich won the Nobel Prize in Literature "for her polyphonic writings, a monument to suffering and courage in our time."***

In addition to the Nobel Prize, Alexievich has won numerous literary awards, including the 2013 Peace Prize of the German Book Trade and the 2021 Sonning Prize of Denmark. *Voices from Chernobyl* won the National Book Critics Circle Award. *The Guardian* ranks *Secondhand Time* in the top "100 Best Books of the 21st century."

The Stephen E. Ambrose Oral History Award is awarded annually by the RLHS. The RLHS is an honor society affiliated with the Rutgers Oral History Archives, the oral history center in the Department of History in the School of Arts and Sciences at Rutgers-New Brunswick. Previous recipients of the Stephen E. Ambrose Oral History Award include Tom Brokaw, Steven Spielberg, Studs Terkel, Rick Atkinson, Ken Burns, David Isay, Elizabeth and Michael Norman, Isabel Wilkerson, Michael Beschloss, Peter Bergen, Jaqueline Dowd Hall, Ric Burns, John Whiteclay Chambers II, James Bradley, Deborah Gray White and Doug Stanton.



## ROHA Interviews Used as Primary Sources

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Camden, to interview alumni, faculty and staff in communities of color throughout Rutgers. Recently added to ROHA's collection is the two-part interview of [Roy L. Jones](#), CCAS '70, who led the Black Student Unity Movement to demand greater inclusivity and diversity at Rutgers-Camden. The interview details the life-long social and environmental justice initiatives pursued by Jones. ROHA Director Shaun Illingworth has furthered this collaboration by training Rutgers-Camden students in oral history methods and best practices in interviewing and preservation, as a part of the [Black Camden Oral History Project](#), led by Boyd and Bayker.

Oral histories from [ROHA's collection](#) are used in the online exhibit "[Jewish Agriculturalism in the Garden State](#)," created by Jonathan Dekel-Chen, Visiting Scholar from The Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The exhibit is hosted by the Rutgers Bildner Center for the Study of Jewish Life. This exhibit cites the ROHA interviews of Irvin Baker, AG '44; M. Leon Canick, RC '42; Dr. Hans Fisher, AG '50, RU Faculty; Annette Greenblatt, NJC '45; Dr. Max Horlick, RC '39; Edward Karpoff, RC '38; William Kahane, RC '67; Dorothy Salkin-Welles, NJC '41; and Jerry Shulman, AG '48.

Malcolm Gladwell's *Revisionist History* podcast features a four-part series on Air Force General Curtis LeMay and the development and use of incendiary bombs by the United States during World War II and the Korean War. The 1995 ROHA interview of [Robert Billian](#), RC '49, is featured in the fourth installment of this series, entitled "[Goodbye, Farewell and Amen.](#)" The episode explores the history and ethics of America's firebombing campaigns.

Other published works utilizing interviews in ROHA's collection include: *Good Outfit: The 803rd Engineer Battalion in the Defense of the Philippines*, by Paul Ropp; "In the Shadow of the Health-Care City: Historicizing Trans Latinx Immigrant Experiences during the Coronavirus Pandemic," in the *US Latino and Latina Oral History Journal*, by Leo Valdes; *Archaeologies of Violence and Privilege*, by Bradley D. Philippi; *Blood and Fears: How America's Bomber Boys of the 8th Air Force Saved World War II*, by Kevin Wilson; *Searching for Subversives: The Story of Italian Internment in Wartime America*, by Mary Elizabeth Basile Chopas; *The Girls Next Door: Bringing the Home Front to the Front Lines*, by Kara Dixon Vuic; and *A Day in the Life of an American Worker*, edited by Nancy Quam-Wickham and Ben Tyler Elliott.

ROHA received an operating support grant from the New Jersey Historical Commission, a division of the Department of State, in the 2021-2022 cycle.



(Photo top): World War II veteran Stuart Brandow salutes during the National Anthem at the Pearl Harbor Day commemoration.

(Photo middle): William Mead, Rutgers alum, sings the National Anthem in front of the Class of '42 World War II Memorial Plaza.

(Photo bottom): Rutgers alum and Vietnam veteran Jim Velcheck (on right in red) looks on as the ceremony begins on December 7, 2021 to memorialize those who gave their lives eighty years ago.

(Images courtesy of Donald Koger)

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**Securing the Future of the Rutgers Oral History Archives**

As a member of The Rutgers Living History Society, you understand the importance of preserving something meaningful and leaving a legacy for future generations. Your oral history contribution will have a lasting impact for decades, shaping the way others learn about the rich culture and deep history of our nation, the State of New Jersey and Rutgers.

Your support of the ROHA can be strengthened even further by including Rutgers in your estate plans. A bequest gift would help sustain the strong tradition of the Oral History program while simultaneously growing your legacy.

For more information on how to include Rutgers in your will, please contact the good people in the Office of Gift Planning by calling 848-932-8808 or emailing [giftplanningoffice@ruf.rutgers.edu](mailto:giftplanningoffice@ruf.rutgers.edu)

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