After the Interview in Community Oral History

5

Nancy MacKay
with Mary Kay Quinlan
and Barbara W. Sommer

Community Oral History Toolkit

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COMMUNITY ORAL HISTORY TOOLKIT

Nancy MacKay • Mary Kay Quinlan • Barbara W. Sommer

This five-volume boxed set is the definitive guide to all aspects of successfully conducting community projects that conform to best practices in the field of oral history. What are the fundamental principles that make one oral history project fly and another falter? The existing oral history methodology literature has traditionally focused on conducting academic research. In contrast, the *Toolkit* is specifically geared toward helping people develop and implement oral history projects in schools, service agencies, historical societies, community centers, churches, and other community settings. The five concise volumes, authored by leaders in the oral history field, offer down-to-earth advice on every step of the project, provide numerous examples of successful projects, and include forms that you can adapt to your specific needs. Together, these volumes are your "consultant in a box," offering the tools you need to successfully launch and complete your community oral history project.

Volume 1: *Introduction to Community Oral History*, by Mary Kay Quinlan with Nancy MacKay and Barbara W. Sommer

Volume 2: *Planning a Community Oral History Project*, by Barbara W. Sommer with Nancy MacKay and Mary Kay Quinlan

Volume 3: *Managing a Community Oral History Project*, by Barbara W. Sommer with Nancy MacKay and Mary Kay Quinlan

Volume 4: *Interviewing in Community Oral History*, by Mary Kay Quinlan with Nancy MacKay and Barbara W. Sommer

Volume 5: *After the Interview in Community Oral History*, by Nancy MacKay with Mary Kay Quinlan and Barbara W. Sommer

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VOLUME 5

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Author's Preface

Like many creative works, the idea for the *Community Oral History Toolkit* was born over coffee. Left Coast publisher Mitch Allen and I met in an outdoor café at the 2007 Oral History Association conference. We chatted about the interesting work presented at the conference and where a new book might fill a gap. We noted the increase in conference participants from outside academia. Filmmakers, educators, community activists, and museum professionals—those without an oral history background—came to learn about the field and to apply it to their own work. Their enthusiasm and questions confirmed my own hunch about the untapped wealth of cultural history at the local level and the enthusiasm of community historians, matched only by the absence of guidelines to help them plan, implement, and archive an oral history project. As I thought out loud, Mitch's eyes lit up. He already had the concept: a "toolkit" for community oral historians.

At this moment public historian and Left Coast author Barbara Sommer walked by and joined us at the table. Barbara has spent her professional life in public history as a consultant, project director, grant writer, educator, and interviewer. Her experience is a natural balance to my academic and archiving experience. When we told Barbara about our idea of a "toolkit" for community oral historians, she loved the idea and immediately agreed to join the project.

That very evening we found our third author. Barbara's long-time collaborator and Oral History Association *Newsletter* editor Mary Kay Quinlan jumped right on to the project when she heard about it. Mary Kay's fieldwork, her teaching, and her thoughtful writing about interviewing and about legal and ethical issues rounded out the expertise needed for this project.

So within 24 hours back in 2007 the idea for this work was born, the team was formed, and we set off on the adventure that resulted in the book you hold in your hands.

As we explored ideas for what a toolkit might cover, we noticed the material fell logically into content areas organized around potential readers—an introductory volume for oral history novices, a volume for planners and administrators, one for project directors, one for interviewers, and finally, a volume for those who attend to all the tasks required once an interview is complete. Since these content areas fall neatly within our own areas of expertise, we decided to each take on the writing of one or two volumes as primary author, and to collaborate on the many details that overlap. As the dice fell, I ended up with the responsibility for only this volume, while co-authors Barbara and Mark Kay each had double the responsibility with two volumes.

The material in the *Toolkit* is the result of several levels of informal research. We started by asking ourselves what we wished we had known when we were beginning our own professional lives in community oral history. Then we reached out to our own networks to determine the most pressing questions in community oral history today. After identifying the "big questions," Barbara developed a two-tiered survey and sent out questionnaires to collect information from community oral history projects around the United States, in order to get real answers from real life projects in the present. The survey and the list of survey respondents appear in *Toolkit* **Volume 2, Appendix A,** and **Volume 3, Appendix**. Much of the material in this volume is based on the experience of community oral historians who answered Barbara's questionnaires and on my own work in the community.

About Volume 5

This volume discusses the important stages in an oral history life cycle that occur after the interview is complete: processing, transcribing, preservation, access, and use. It will guide you through the decisions and actions required for each stage as they apply to community oral history.

Chapter 1. Getting Started outlines the transition from the interviewing to the processing stage. It suggests a plan for mid-project assessment and for changing gears from planning and interviewing to the detailed work of processing.

Chapter 2. Processing is devoted to *doing* the processing. It identifies steps involved, suggests a record keeping system, offers templates for organizing tasks, and a step-by-step guide for completing them.

Chapter 3. Transcribing provides the tools for making decisions about transcribing, the steps required to transcribe, and some alternatives to creating a full transcript.

Chapter 4. Cataloging demystifies the cataloging process, explains what community oral historians need to know about cataloging, and offers templates for getting the job done according the goals of the project.

Chapter 5. Preservation and Access makes a case for the two cardinal principles of archiving: principles of preservation and access. It explains these principles and what community oral historians need to know.

Chapter 6. *Winding Up*. This chapter will guide you through all the steps required to bring an oral history project to conclusion.

Chapter 7. Using Oral Histories cites examples of creative ways oral histories have been used in performance, exhibits, educational tools, and interactive computer maps.

Final Words shares final thoughts about the impact of oral history on everyone touched by it.

Acknowledgements

After the Interview in Community Oral History is the product of many minds, all of which have made it richer and more varied. Deep thanks to the community oral historians around the country with whom I communicated or visited. Each of you have contributed directly to the success of this volume, and I thank you for your time and your hospitality.

I did much of my writing away from home and its accompanying distractions. I wrote the first draft in the desert heat of Green Valley, Arizona, thanks to the generosity of my cousin, Ellen Cox, who offered me the use of her home. I wrote the next draft in my beloved Taos, New Mexico, and if a place can be a muse, then Taos is mine. The added advantage of writing away from home is the opportunity to visit community oral history projects in far off places. Conversations with community oral historians and archivists at the Tubac Historical Society in southern Arizona, the Frank Lloyd Wright Foundation in Scottsdale, Arizona, the Bradbury Museum in Los Alamos, New Mexico, and the Lama Foundation, in Questa, New Mexico expanded my ideas about the historical value of oral history at the community level and left me inspired by the dedication of community oral historians and their ability to turn straw into gold.

People all over the country and the world have shared their time and experience, and each one has made a mark on this result. In particular thanks to Roy Chan and Carol Ahlgren who took the time to read the entire five-

volume manuscript. Special thanks to our Left Coast team, Mitch Allen, Stefania Van Dyke, Louise Bell, and Lisa Devenish, for steering us through muddy waters, motivating us with both the carrot and the stick (and knowing when to use which), and especially for never giving up hope. Final and most heartfelt thanks go to co-authors Barbara Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan, who have made this work the very best it can be through praise, penetrating questions, and their own perspective. Thanks to everyone for keeping project fun—for injecting laughter, irony, and a glass of good wine at just the right moment.

Nancy MacKay

Series Introduction

Every community has them. The people who remember

- what happened when the church burned to the ground on Christmas Eve—how the congregation grieved, and then set aside its grief, got to work, and celebrated in a new sanctuary the next year;
- how strangers with pickup trucks took tornado victims to the nearest hospital when a record-breaking storm devastated the community;
- what it was like to bring a neighborhood together to fight the city's plans for a freeway; or
- how children, teachers, and community members felt the first day black and white youngsters shared the same classrooms in the aftermath of all the lawsuits attempting to block school integration.

Old newspaper clippings tell part of the story. So do public records that document the storm, the cost of neighborhood redevelopment, or the text of the court's decision. But what's often missing from the record is the *human* side of the issues, events, and ideas that we call history. And if you're reading the *Community Oral History Toolkit,* there's a good chance you already are thinking like an oral historian. You understand that it's important to add to the historical record first person information that can flesh out or reshape our understanding of past events.

Collectively, we three *Toolkit* authors have spent more than half a century working with community oral history projects, observing along the way how some succeed and others languish. You can readily find an excellent body of literature on oral history methodology, but it is designed for academic research and often does not translate well for unaffiliated community groups. So we've attempted in this five-volume *Toolkit* to identify some fundamental

principles that lead to successful community oral history projects and to present practical tools and guidelines that we hope will be useful in a variety of community settings.

Defining Oral History

We define *community* broadly, using the definition found in the Oral History Association's pamphlet *Using Oral History in Community History Projects* (2010). The pamphlet defines community as any group of individuals bound together by a sense of shared identity. For the purposes of this *Toolkit*, we consider community oral history as that being undertaken by any group unaffiliated with an academic institution. Such groups could be neighborhood associations, historical societies, museums, libraries, professional associations, clubs, or any of the myriad ways people organize themselves to accomplish particular ends. Because we consider *community* in its broadest sense, we've included examples of community oral history projects that are diverse in size, topic of study, sponsoring organization, geographic location, and project goals. As you move through your own oral history project, and through the five *Toolkit* volumes, we encourage you to define your own community in the way that works best for you.

Community oral history projects differ in many ways from those originating in an academic setting. They usually

- lack institutional support for planning, managing, or funding;
- are organized around an exhibition, festival, performance, or publication;
- are driven by grant cycles and deadlines, sometimes with a specific goal determined by the funder;
- are carried out by volunteers or by a single paid staff member supervising volunteers;
- barter with local businesses or agencies for office space, technology expertise, and supplies;
- lack infrastructure, such as office space, storage, and computer equipment; and
- almost always have limited funds.

This *Toolkit* recognizes the special challenges community oral historians face and suggests ways to deal with them. It is predicated on the notion that a well-funded institutional setting is not a prerequisite to create solid oral history projects that will endure over time. What is required, however, is a fundamental

understanding of oral history as a process that begins long before you ask the first interview question and ends long after you turn off the recorder.

For starters, here's how oral history is defined throughout these five volumes.

Oral history is primary source material collected in an interview setting with a witness to or a participant in an event or a way of life and is grounded in the context of time and place to give it meaning. It is recorded for the purpose of preserving the information and making it available to others. The term refers to both the process and the final product.

What You'll Find in the *Community Oral History Toolkit*

The *Community Oral History Toolkit* consists of five individual volumes. Each volume covers a particular aspect of doing oral history. Although each volume stands alone, the *Toolkit* is best seen as an integrated reference set, in much the same way that any particular aspect of doing oral history is dependent on decisions made at other stages of the process. The *Toolkit* is tightly organized, with subheadings, cross references within the text, and a comprehensive index for ready reference. You'll also find various visual elements, including hot spots (concise tips), definitions, sidebars (case studies and extended discussions), checklists, and figures that illustrate, elaborate, or draw attention to specific points. While all three of us have collaborated throughout the project, we divided the writing duties for the five volumes. Barbara Sommer is the lead author of Volumes 2 and 3; Mary Kay Quinlan is the lead author of Volumes 1 and 4; and Nancy MacKay is the lead author of Volume 5 and overall project coordinator, spearheading the research phase, marshaling the final details and keeping us all on task.

Volume 1. Introduction to Community Oral History. This volume sets the stage for your oral history project. It introduces the field to newcomers, with a discussion of the historical process, the evolution of oral history as an interdisciplinary research methodology, the nature of community and the nature of memory, and the legal and ethical underpinnings of oral history. And as such, Volume 1 importantly lays the theoretical groundwork for the practical application steps spelled out in detail in the subsequent volumes. It also introduces recording technology issues and options for oral history preservation, access, and use. Last, this volume elaborates on our Best Practices for Community Oral History Projects and presents a detailed overview of the remaining *Toolkit* volumes.

BEST PRACTICES
for Community Oral History Projects

1. **Familiarize yourself with the Oral History Association's guidelines.** First developed in 1968 and revised and updated regularly since then, these guidelines are the benchmark for the practice of ethical oral history and form the foundation on which solid oral history projects are built. Becoming familiar with them will help your project get off to a strong start.
2. **Focus on oral history as a process.** Keep in mind that, using standard historical research methods, you are setting out to explore a historical question through recorded interviews, giving it context and preserving it in the public record—in addition to whatever short-term goals your project may have such as using interview excerpts to create an exhibit or celebrate an anniversary.
3. **Cast a wide net to include community.** Make sure all appropriate community members are involved in your project and have an opportunity to make a contribution. Community members know and care the most about the project at hand, and the more closely they are involved in every aspect of it, the more successful it will be.
4. **Understand the ethical and legal ramifications of oral history.** Oral historians record deeply personal stories that become available in an archive for access both in the present and the future. So oral historians have ethical and legal responsibilities to abide by copyright laws and respect interviewees' wishes while also being true to the purposes of oral history.

Volume 2. Planning a Community Oral History Project. This volume walks you through all the planning steps needed to travel from an idea to a completed collection of oral history interviews. It will help you get started on firm ground, so you don't end up mired in quicksand halfway through your project or trapped in a maze of seemingly unsolvable problems.

Volume 3. Managing a Community Oral History Project. This volume takes the planning steps and puts them into action. It provides the practical details for turning your plans into reality and establishes the basis for guiding your project through the interviews and to a successful conclusion.

Volume 4. Interviewing in Community Oral History. The interview is the anchor of an oral history project. This volume guides the interviewer through all the steps from interview preparation to the follow-up. It includes tips on

5. **Make a plan.** At the outset, define your purpose, set goals, evaluate your progress, and establish record-keeping systems so details don't get out of control.
6. **Choose appropriate technology with an eye toward present and future needs.** Technology is necessary for recording interviews, preserving them in an archive, and providing access and using them for public displays. Make wise decisions about the technology you use.
7. **Train interviewers and other project participants to assure consistent quality.** Oral history interviews differ from some other interview-based research methods in the amount of background research and preparation required. Make sure interviewers and other personnel are thoroughly trained in oral history principles, interviewing techniques, recording technology, and ethics. The *Community Oral History Toolki*t covers all these topics.
8. **Conduct interviews that will stand the test of time.** This is the heart of the oral history process, but its success depends on laying solid groundwork.
9. **Process and archive all interview materials to preserve them for future use.** Oral history interviews and related materials should be preserved, cataloged, and made available for others to use in a suitable repository, such as a library, archive, or historical society.
10. **Take pride in your contribution to the historical record.** Share with the community what you've learned, and celebrate your success.

selecting interviewees, training interviewers, using recording equipment, and assessing ethical issues concerning the interviewer-interviewee relationship.

Volume 5. After the Interview in Community Oral History. Community projects often falter after the interviews are completed. This volume explains the importance of processing and archiving oral histories and takes readers through all the steps required for good archiving and for concluding an oral history project. It finishes with examples of creative ways community projects have used oral histories.

Finally, sample forms, checklists, and examples from the experiences of other community projects are provided that will help guide your project planning and a selected bibliography that will lead you to additional in-depth information on the various topics covered in the *Toolkit.*

We hope you will keep these volumes close at hand as you work step by step through your oral history project. Remember that the effort you put into doing the project right will pay off in unexpected ways far into the future. Many years from now you may well remember the exact words, tone of voice, or facial expression of an interviewee in answering questions only you thought to ask. And you may take satisfaction in knowing that your effort has preserved an important story—a piece of history that gives meaning to all our lives, both now and in the future.

Nancy MacKay, Mary Kay Quinlan, and Barbara W. Sommer

Toolkit Contents

CHAPTER 1

Getting Started

BEST PRACTICE NO. 2

Focus on oral history as a process.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 5

Make a plan.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 9

Process and archive all interview materials to preserve them for future use.

You have just completed the last interviews, the project team feels the magic of the interview experience, and it's time to celebrate the project completion, right? Well, not quite. It's time to celebrate the end of one stage—the collection of important historical material through the oral history interviews. Now steps must be taken to ensure each recorded interview is made ready to be used and enjoyed by a broad audience now and far into the future.

Processing is detailed work that is essential for proper archiving, but not necessarily exciting. Community oral history projects often falter at this stage. As the focus shifts from the intensely personal activity of conducting interviews to the detailed administrative tasks of turning them into historical documents, the group energy also shifts.

Here are some questions often asked by oral historians at the beginning of this stage.

1. *We enjoyed doing the interviews and did a good job. Why is it so important to take all these extra steps after the interviews are complete?*

   If you did a good job on the interviews, it is all the more important to prepare them for safekeeping, and make them available to a wide audience far into the future. The processing steps will ensure that the interviews you worked so hard on will find their rightful place in the historical record.

2. *What is processing?*

   Processing refers to all the steps that transform the interview from a recorded conversation into an oral history. Steps can include keeping records, managing recording media, transcribing, cataloging, and preparing interviews for a repository and the Internet.

3. *Does the interview need to be transcribed?*

   No. An interview does not have to be transcribed to be an oral history, but there are many good reasons for doing so. We recommend transcription in most circumstances. Chapter 3 of this volume describes transcribing in detail.

4. *What is a repository?*

   A repository is a physical space with a long-term preservation plan for materials that go into the historical record. Libraries, archives, historical societies, museums, and digital repositories are examples.

5. *Does every oral history belong in a repository?*

   We believe it does, and recommend that you design a project so that the interviews will be useful and available to researchers far into the future. However, if for some reason a permanent home isn't appropriate for your project, don't let that stop you from proceeding.

6. *Interviews will be posted on our website. Isn't that a sufficient repository?*

   No. Websites are points of access; they do not necessarily meet the conditions of a repository. A repository must provide permanent storage, proper environmental conditions, and ongoing management. A digital repository is the electronic equivalent of a physical repository and must meet the same requirements for access and long term preservation. A website can be a window to a digital repository, but is not a repository in itself.

7. *Why do I need a repository if I'm publishing a book or curating an exhibit using the oral histories?*

Using oral histories and archiving them are two important, but entirely different processes. Whereas using oral histories emphasizes the close-up—a local setting with a current or short timeframe—archiving emphasizes a long view and broad access—the preservation of a primary historical document in its original form for a broad audience for many years to come.

8. *Who needs to be involved in processing?*
   The skills and knowledge of many team members may be involved: the project director for keeping things moving; the interviewer for checking back with the interviewee to verify facts, dates, and place names; the transcriber if interviews are transcribed; the technical expert for copying and managing digital formats; and the curator who will receive the final oral histories into the repository.

9. *What is a reasonable timeframe for processing?*
   Generally, allow one third of the project timeline for processing. For example, if the project timeline is nine months, then interviews should be completed by the end of the sixth month. This timeframe allows time for the inevitable delays that crop up.

10. *Why does processing take so much time?*
    The multiple steps in processing are time consuming and require the coordination of various team members. Copying recordings, transcribing and audit-editing transcripts, getting the interviewee's approval, and reviewing the legal documents are some of the time consuming steps. In addition to the actual work involved, real life intervenes with trips, illness, and missed appointments. When one task is left hanging, it delays the chain of subsequent tasks and thus the entire process.

Assessment

Rarely do oral history projects unfold exactly as planned. One thing is for sure: you know more now than you did when you began. Interviewees may have backed out and new ones emerged, a new historical topic may be uncovered in one of the interviews, expenses may be higher or lower than planned, or perhaps a new donor or source of income has turned up. Think about what has changed, and whether adjustments should be made to the original project plan.

This is a good time to gather the project team together to mark the transition to the next stage. Organize a meeting to get feedback from the entire team. Give each team member a chance to voice satisfactions and frustrations and to offer suggestions from the field. Review original goals and make adjustments. Ask these questions: Are we satisfied with the number of interviews? With the choice of interviewees? With the quality of recording? Do expenditures match the funds allocated? Are we on target with deadlines?

Check in with team members about their role in the project. Interviewers may think they have completed their job, but in fact, they are important players in the next stage because of their close relationship to the interviewees. Are they prepared to take on a different role in the project? Are some members burned out or ready to move on? Do team skills match the needs of processing tasks? Is it necessary to recruit new team members? Would additional training be beneficial?

Refer back to your planning document. Hopefully you completed a Project Design Statement, the form recommended in **Volume 2, *Planning a Community Oral History Project,*** which you can also find online at www.LCoastPress.com (go to the *Community Oral History Toolkit* page). See Appendices A, B and C for completed samples of this form. Decide if the project needs to get back on track or if the original goals should to be revised in light of reality. Then put your decisions in writing and share with the project team.

The Project Design Statement should reflect the reality of the project rather than hopes and dreams.

This is also a good time to account for the loose ends that are part of every oral history project. Perhaps an interview was missed because of scheduling problems, a Legal Release Agreement was not signed, or an interviewee has reservations about making the interview public. Make a list of every detail that needs attention and a plan for how it will be resolved. Don't hedge on this—unresolved issues are bound to come back and haunt you.

The assessment meeting should invigorate the team, and it will set the tone for the next phase of the project. The project director can then compile the results into a document that serves as a roadmap for the next stage.

How One Project Acted on Lessons Learned

The Oakland Chinatown Oral History Project (OCOHP) team realized towards the end of the interviewing stage that existing funds would not cover transcription and other processing costs. But it was clear that the ten interviews of Oakland Chinatown's leaders, activists, and lifelong residents had significant historical value and should be made available for future historians. Like many community groups, the sponsoring agency, Oakland Asian Cultural Center, had not anticipated the enthusiasm that would be generated by the project within the community. Rather than cut corners on the interviews, they completed them as originally planned. Then they raised funds for a "stage II" for the post-interview processing. At that time, all ten interviews were transcribed and prepared for donation to local libraries. OCOHP has continued to record Oakland Chinatown history through related projects that build on the success of the original oral history project.

Planning the Next Stage

Now that you have met with the team, received feedback, and reviewed the plan for the next phase, it's time to get started. Answer the following questions to guide your work.

1. *Is there a distinct break between the interviewing stage and the processing stage or are interviews conducted throughout the project?*

   Many community oral history projects have a rigid timeline defined by a grant deadline or scheduled event. In this case it is wise to schedule interviews within a specific timeframe, and begin the processing stage after interviews are concluded. This is less important if the project has a long window or is ongoing. Though the quality of the project will not be affected by the way interviews and processing are scheduled, your work plan will be.

2. *Has the project team changed, with new members on board or old members assuming new roles?*

   As you move into the next phase, the project focus will shift and the skills required will be different. Compared to the expansive, people-oriented interviewing phase, the processing phase is detail oriented—keeping records, copying and labeling, verifying dates and spellings for names, and similar technical tasks. These tasks will appeal to people who love to dig into an intellectual task and apply their passion for detail. Make sure that team members are well-trained for their assigned tasks, that their interests and skills are well matched to the tasks at hand, and that they are sufficiently rewarded for their work. Many projects use this time for a mid-project training workshop or retreat.

3. *Have appropriate Legal Release Agreements been secured for each interview?*

   Sometimes a date goes missing on the forms, or an interviewer forgets to get the form signed. Now is the time to make sure a properly signed Legal Release Agreement accompanies each interview (See Appendix D). It is unwise to continue processing interview material until a signed copy of this form is obtained.

4. *Will interviews be transcribed?*

   Transcribing is a skilled job that requires six to eight hours for each recorded hour. Even more time is required for reviewing the transcript, getting the interviewee's approval, and verifying the spelling of names and places. If you have decided to have interviews transcribed—and we recommend you do—be sure to allow adequate resources for managing the transcription process. Chapter 3 is devoted to transcription.

5. *Have you confirmed arrangements with a repository to accept oral histories?*

   Now is the time to get back in touch with the repository that will be the permanent home for the oral histories. If you have not yet found a repository, this should be at the top of your list of tasks for this stage. Contact the repository and confirm the arrangements you made at the beginning of the project. Make sure the repository is still committed to archiving your oral histories, and has the resources to do so in a timely way. If you have not obtained an agreement in writing, now is the time to do so. Identify a contact person at the repository and arrange a site visit and a face to face meeting. You will both learn a great deal from each other's perspectives. Discussion of the relationship between the oral history project and the repository can be found in **Volume 2** and **Volume 3** of the *Toolkit* and chapter 5 of this volume.

6. *How will the finished oral history be packaged*?
   A finished oral history may consist simply of the recorded interview, and that is fine. Some oral history projects create an "interview package" to include contextual materials to aid users. Contextual materials can include photos, transcript, a timeline, or a historical essay. Check with your designated repository, since they often have their own requirements.
7. *Will the oral history project have an online presence?*
   Most oral history projects make use of the best access tool in the world, the Internet, for making interviews available to a broad audience. Even a simple website requires a certain amount of planning, time, and expertise, not only to design but also to maintain. If you are considering a website, it is a good idea to form a committee specifically for this task and to get outside expertise. Chapter 5 discusses oral histories on the Internet.

An oral history is not a summary, a paraphrase, or an edited version of the interview.

Oral History Presentations Online

Online presentations of oral histories fall roughly into two categories—archival and interpretive—corresponding to their physical counterparts. Oral histories in a digital repository (archive) consist of the original, unedited audio, video, or transcript of the interview, just as in a physical repository. Interpretive websites use excerpts from the interview, visual materials, and links to related material to interpret a theme, just as they would in a brick and mortar interpretive exhibit. Chapter 7 describes two projects that use the Internet as an interpretive presentation.

About the Interviewee

When the interviews are over and the project team is concentrating on processing steps, it is easy to overlook the significance of the interviewee and the feelings the interview experience can evoke. The interviewee is the heart and

soul of the oral history project. He is offering a unique and sometimes very personal story to the world. Keep in mind the value of this gift and the spirit in which he made it.

Above all, respect the wishes of the interviewee.

Confidentiality

The interview content and any biographical information about the interviewee must remain confidential until he gives final approval to release it. Though the signed Legal Release Agreement officially gives the project control of the interview, oral historians customarily give the interviewee the opportunity to withdraw all or part of an interview until it is made public. Usually the interviewee gives final approval after reviewing the transcript. Though it happens rarely, the interviewee could decide to withdraw the interview from the project. If this happens his wish should be honored.

Restrictions

Sometimes interviewees ask that certain parts of the interview be deleted or that names be excised. Other times they request that an interview be restricted from public access for a certain time period or till their own death or the death of someone mentioned in the interview. Though the interviewee's request is entirely reasonable from his point of view, interviews containing restrictions are an administrative nightmare for archivists, and many repositories will not accept them. Worse yet, sometimes requests for restrictions fall through the cracks once the interview is in a repository, and information intended to be confidential is made available to researchers. Managing restrictions will become increasingly difficult in a digital environment where data is managed in batches without a human eye to check for exceptions.

Though there will always be occasions where an interviewee will justifiably place restrictions on all or part of an interview, every effort should be made to avoid this situation. Interviewers can discuss this in the pre-interview meeting and structure the interview so that all questions and answers are "on the record." But when it does happen, the oral history project should put in writing exactly what is being restricted and for how long. Of the repositories that accept documents with restrictions, most stipulate that the restrictions cover a time period (for example, 20 years from the date of the interview) rather than an event (for example, till my great uncle dies). The project

director should consult with the repository and a legal advisor if an interview is restricted in all or part. The sample Legal Release Agreement (Restrictions) in Appendix E illustrates how to stipulate restrictions in writing.

About Repositories

A repository is a physical or digital space where documents and artifacts are preserved for the historical record. Libraries, archives, historical societies, museums, and digital servers are examples of repositories. A suitable repository for a community oral history project must have:

- institutional stability to ensure materials can be preserved into the future;
- a mission compatible with the topic covered by the oral history project;
- space to properly store oral histories, with the environmental conditions to keep them safe, and the staff to process and catalog them in a timely manner;
- reasonable access to materials; and
- a long term preservation management plan for the storage medium used (paper transcript, disc, or digital file).

Selecting the appropriate repository is one of the most important and often the most difficult steps in an oral history project. Curators are well meaning in their wish to build collections of local history, but their institutions—libraries, archives, historical societies, museums, and cultural centers—have limitations in their collecting scope and in their ability to process and manage donated oral histories.

Matching an oral history project with a repository is a two way process. Community groups need to make sure their donations will be properly cataloged and cared for; repositories need to make sure interview materials are delivered according to the repository's guidelines, with proper consent form, labels, and cataloging information. Don't underestimate the importance of this relationship and the ongoing conversations leading up to the transfer of the documents. The repository is the project's partner for this final stage of the project and will be the public face for the oral histories for the indefinite future.

We recommend you create a written document specifying the responsibilities of the oral history project and the repository, along with a timeline for delivery and completion, similar to the sample Letter of Agreement for Repository in Figure 1.1. This document is especially useful when staff at the repository changes or if the relationship extends over a period of time.

LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR REPOSITORY

This letter summarizes the responsibilities of the Atlanta Public Library (repository) and the Jazz Atlanta Oral History Project (oral history project). In addition to this document, a Legal Release Agreement form signed by each interviewer and interviewee will accompany each oral history.

The Jazz Atlanta oral history project is responsible for the following tasks and for the costs incurred:

- Prepare audio- or video-recorded interviews in formats and quality determined by repository
- Transcribe oral history interviews according to style guidelines provided by repository
- Deliver signed Legal Release Agreement for each interview
- Deliver transcript and discs in format agreed upon.

The Atlanta Public Library repository is responsible for the following tasks and for the costs incurred:

- Advise in selection and training of interviewers
- Advise in development of project plan
- Catalog oral histories for local catalog and WorldCat
- Format, copy, and bind oral history materials
- Make copies available for use according to repository's access policy.

Number of interviews 8–10

Timeframe for delivery 2–2.5 years

Number of copies of each interview 3

REPOSITORY	ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
Name (print) *(insert name)*	**Name (print)** Andrea Schmidt
Signature *(sign here)*	**Signature** *(sign here)*
Title Library Director	**Title** Project Director
Date *(insert date)*	**Date** *(insert date)*

Figure 1.1. Sample—Letter of Agreement for Repository

Curators, as referred to in the *Toolkit*, are the archivists, librarians, catalogers, and other professionals who care for collections in repositories. They are trained to evaluate, organize, describe, preserve, and provide access to the repository's collections.

In spite of their expertise, curators cannot be expected to be knowledgeable about oral history, the subject matter of the interviews, or the special needs of your own project; nor can they be expected to listen, watch, or read the interviews in order to catalog them. You are the expert in oral history and in the subject matter of the interviews; curators depend on you to supply this information.

The project is responsible for the content of the oral histories; the repository is responsible for their preservation and access.

Communication between the oral history project and the repository is best achieved by using standard forms that contain information about the project and about each interview. Sample forms are included in **Volume 1, *Introduction to Community Oral History***, online at www.LCoastPress.com, and throughout the *Toolkit*. This volume includes examples of filled-out forms that are important for this stage of the project.

Important Forms for Processing

These are the forms that will be most important to the post-interview stage.

- *Project Design Statement* This is the planning document and the roadmap for the entire project. See Appendices A, B, and C.
- *Legal Release Agreement* This is the signed agreement that formalizes the interviewee's consent to be interviewed and to other specified conditions. This form must accompany every interview before processing begins. See Appendices D and E.
- *Letter of Agreement for Repository* This is a statement signed by the oral history project and the repository that spells out the responsibilities of each institution and the target date for delivering the interviews. See Figure 1.1.

- *Interview Summary* This form provides details of each interview: the names of the interviewer and interviewee, interview date, recording format, and notes about sound quality. See Figure 2.2.
- *Cataloging Work Sheet* This form contains information about the interview in a format organized for ease in cataloging: proper names spelled correctly, a summary of the content, a biographical summary, and keywords highlighting the content. See Figure 4.7.

About Processing

Processing is the umbrella term both curators and oral historians use to describe all the steps, or "processes," that turn a recorded interview into a finished oral history. At this stage the emphasis will be on two goals of many oral history projects—the immediate goal of giving back to the community through a public event, performance, or exhibit and the long term goal of contributing to history by placing oral histories in a repository.

The steps in processing vary a great deal from one oral history project to another. They also vary a great deal in allocation of responsibilities. For example, if a school and an oral history project collaborate on a performance piece, the oral history project may conduct the interviews and the students transcribe them and develop the script, with the school library receiving a copy of the filmed performance as well as the transcribed interviews. Or, if oral histories are to be conducted for a public library, the project may be responsible for conducting and transcribing the interviews, with the library taking over from there for cataloging, preservation, and access.

Determining responsibilities for processing tasks is negotiable but, once decided, they should be spelled out in writing.

COMMON INTERVIEW PROCESSING STEPS

✓ Begin a "log" for each interview as soon as it is completed.

✓ Copy the recording and label all copies of recording media. Store the copies safely.

- ✓ Transcribe each interview according to project guidelines.
- ✓ Prepare the oral history for the repository.
- ✓ Prepare the oral history for website.
- ✓ Send official thank-you notes to the interviewees on behalf of the project.
- ✓ Record the successful completion of the oral histories and file all master documents.

Now that the team has celebrated, assessed, organized, and energized for the next phase, you are ready to get started with processing. Here are some specific skills needed for the processing stage. Consider which of these skills are covered with your existing team, and which ones will require outside help.

- transcribing experience
- legal expertise to review consent forms and relationship with repository
- technical expertise for digital copying, formatting and storage
- technical expertise for designing and maintaining a website

Now you are ready to go!

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CHAPTER 2

Processing

BEST PRACTICE NO. 4

Understand the ethical and legal ramifications of oral history.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 6

Choose appropriate technology
with an eye toward present and future needs.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 9

Process and archive all interview materials
to preserve them for future use.

Quick transcription needed, interviewee left on a cruise without approving transcript, recording equipment broken, consent form missing…. And so it goes. Even the seasoned project director can be overwhelmed by the details required to track a community oral history project. Turning a raw interview into a repository-ready oral history deserves the same kind of attention as preparing a book for publication or a film for release. Multiply this by the number of interviews in the project, and you quickly realize the importance of a clear procedure for processing tasks that is appropriate to the goals and resources of the project.

See also **Volume 3** of the *Toolkit*, for more information on this material.

What is Processing?

> Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner offer a simple explanation for this fuzzy concept called processing: "A collection is **processed** when it can be used productively for research."[1]

This definition emphasizes the goal of access, leaving the process to be determined, step by step, by the needs of the oral history collection itself and the resources on hand. It represents a shift in thinking among curators towards an emphasis on access, and the possibility of eliminating processing steps that don't meet the goal of access or the preservation needed to achieve this goal. This access-based definition also serves as a reminder to community oral historians that the reason we do oral history is to make the results of our work—the oral histories themselves—as widely available as possible.

Keep in mind the goal of all oral history: to contribute a unique voice or perspective to the historical record.

The work plan for processing oral histories varies greatly among community oral history projects, depending on the project's short term goal, resources, and timeframe, and its relationship with the repository. Nevertheless, there are certain tasks that must be accomplished and certain records that must be kept for an oral history project to be successful. Your answers to the following questions will help when developing a work plan appropriate for your own project.

1. *What is the short-term project goal?*
   Exhibition, publication, interactive website, or not quite sure yet? Start thinking about the needs for this goal and work backwards. For example, a publication demands special attention to the transcript and procedures for editing. An exhibit requires coordinating photographs and historical materials for a meaningful visual presentation, along with high quality audio or video. If you don't have an immediate goal, then process interviews for the repository and they will be ready for any kind of use in the future.

2. *Will interviews be transcribed?*

   As mentioned throughout the *Toolkit*, transcribing is one of the most labor intensive steps in an oral history project and requires its own set of management tasks. Chapter 3 is devoted to transcribing. As mentioned in Chapter 1, we strongly recommend that you have interviews transcribed. Be sure to allocate adequate time to complete this step, and for the related tasks such as finding a transcriber, sending her the recording and making sure it comes back, spell checking and fact checking the transcript, and getting the interviewee's approval.

3. *How will you keep track of the processing steps*?

   Oral history project team members must be meticulous about keeping records. Most projects use a combination of paper forms and a computerized tracking system. The forms in this chapter and throughout the *Toolkit* illustrate the kind of information that needs to be tracked in most oral history projects. Forms can be used exactly as presented here, or adapted for your own project. Decide which steps to track on paper and which on a computer, and then plan your own record-keeping system accordingly.

4. *What is the arrangement with the repository that will care for your oral histories?*

   Will the repository assume copyright and the responsibilities of rights management?[2] What information does the repository require for cataloging? If interviews are transcribed, how will the repository handle the transcripts?

SUCCESSFUL PROCESSING MANAGEMENT

- ✓ One person should oversee processing.
- ✓ Make sure the project's physical space is secure, environmentally friendly, and available for the duration of the project.
- ✓ Keep all records up to date.
- ✓ Save the most important documents in both paper and electronic formats.
- ✓ Document the project. Create a project manual, blog, or wiki to record procedures and communicate them to the team.

Setting Up for Processing

Physical Space

Ideal space for an oral history project would include an office, storage space, recording studio, and reading/viewing/listening room for researchers. Rarely is a community oral history project lucky enough to have all this space. But community groups excel at making do, and they conduct very successful oral history projects in makeshift spaces.

If possible, every item in the project office should be dedicated to the project. **Volume 3, *Managing a Community Oral History Project,*** covers the management of work space and equipment in detail, including the following items.

COMMUNICATIONS

- ✓ email account
- ✓ telephone number (preferably cell phone)
- ✓ mailing address
- ✓ Internet connection
- ✓ business cards and letterhead with project logo
- ✓ calendar

EQUIPMENT

- ✓ computer (preferably laptop)
- ✓ external hard drive
- ✓ CD/DVD drive and burner (may come with computer)
- ✓ scanner
- ✓ color printer
- ✓ listening/viewing equipment

PHYSICAL SPACE

- ✓ locked filing cabinet
- ✓ desk
- ✓ book shelf
- ✓ meeting space
- ✓ locked storage space for recording equipment

Record Keeping

An oral history project needs to keep track of people, processes, and the status of every interview as it moves through processing. The best system is one that is as simple and straightforward as possible, yet tracks all the necessary information. It does not need to be high tech. Table 2.1 summarizes the pros and cons of each kind of record-keeping system. Note that *computer management systems* are distinguished from *paper-only management systems;* however, both are records management systems.

Key to successful record keeping is keeping the records up to date, not how sophisticated the system is.

Record Keeping Systems		
	PROS	***CONS***
Paper *(notebook or card file)*	• Easy • Inexpensive • Not machine dependent	• Becomes cumbersome for larger projects • Linear organization (cannot search or sort by multiple access points)
Spreadsheet	• Easy to read • Learning curve is moderate • Flexible • Can sort, export, and otherwise manipulate data • Data can be moved to a database if the project grows	• Need a computer and spreadsheet program • If more than one person enters data, clear instructions are necessary • Hard to print reports
Database *(homegrown)*	• Most flexible of all • Easy to export and share data • Easy to move to the Internet	• Steep learning curve • Must set up a report to view information • May need technical expertise with set-up
Collection Management System	• Database already set up —you just enter data • Easy to use • Data easy to export	• Not as flexible as homegrown database • Costs money • Restricted to out of-the-box

Table 2.1. Record Keeping Systems—Pros and Cons

Computer applications such as Microsoft Outlook, GoogleDocs, blogs, and wikis make it easy for team members to exchange ideas and share information from their own homes. Such applications can be valuable in facilitating record keeping. Most of them have tiered levels of permissions for editing or viewing, so the project director can control how and by whom data is entered.

COAT refers to the four cardinal principles for good record keeping: consistency, objectivity, accuracy, and timeliness. These simple principles apply to every stage in processing oral history.

- **C** *Consistency* Create local "rules" for entering names, dates, keywords, and all other information, in order that information can be retrieved and reused consistently. Be sure to include these rules in project documentation.
- **O** *Objectivity* Use neutral, objective language in record keeping, cataloging, and outreach materials.
- **A** *Accuracy* Be meticulous in recording all information. A misspelled name or incorrect date will repeat itself over and over as the oral history is used by researchers.
- **T** *Timeliness* Every day that record keeping is postponed makes it more likely the information will be forgotten or neglected. Discipline yourself and the team to keep all records up to date.

What to Keep Track Of

Every oral history project must keep track of four kinds of information: master documents, physical media, people, and interviews. The *Toolkit* uses a series of forms to illustrate how this information can be tracked. The content of these forms can easily be adapted to a computerized system.

Master Documents

Regardless of the size, duration, or organizational structure of your community oral history project, there are certain documents that must always be kept safely—some for the duration of the project, others indefinitely into the future. These documents include signed Legal Release Agreements and any other

signed documents associated with the interview,[3] written agreements with all partnering organizations, tax forms, and documents concerning grants and funding. It is wise to save these important documents in both paper and electronic formats and/or to place originals in offsite storage for safekeeping.

Physical Media

Complete and accurate labeling of every physical item is essential to good record keeping. Though some curators believe that writing on or attaching a label to the face of a disc might corrupt the data, the consequences of unlabeled media are even greater—discs with unknown contents are as good as lost.

Many oral history projects use a labeling template to print disc labels; other projects use a permanent marker to write information directly on the disc. If you are worried about damaging the top of the disc with a label, write on the tiny inner core that surrounds the center hole. Each media carrier should be labeled consistently with the following information.

- interview ID
- project name
- interviewee name
- interview date
- number (if more than one disc in series, label "disc 2 of 2")
- version (master, service copy, user copy)

About the Interview ID

Every interview should have a unique number associated with it that will identify it throughout its life. The repository may assign an accession number that you can use, but most likely you'll develop a system that has meaning to your own project. Here are some examples.

- 2010WON-1 [year of interview + first three letters of interviewees name + first interview]
- FNS-MITCHELL [acronym for oral history project name + interviewee's name]
- 49-2 [sequential number + interview number in a series]

Figure 2.1. Sample Disc Label

Figure 2.1 shows a sample disc label created using a template from the Microsoft Office suite. This label includes all of the information needed to identify the interview.

People

The people involved in a community oral history project are its lifeblood. The project needs to have current contact information close at hand, not only for current interviewees but also for potential and past interviewees, interviewers, transcribers, technical experts, donors, and advisors.

Master Contact List

People often serve more than one role in a community oral history project, so a single master list noting multiple roles makes the most sense. Table 2.2 illustrates a tracking system that includes personal information, role(s) within the project, and activities or actions. The rows and columns have been reversed from the traditional spreadsheet setup for easy readability on the printed page.

Name	Charles Pierce	Samantha Chang	Jennifer Jackson	Jerome Sanchez
Date Entered	6/30/2006	1/12/2009	9/15/2009	6/2/2010
City	Portola Valley	Mountain View	San Jose	Palo Alto
Email	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
Phone	xxx	xxx	xxx	xxx
Interests, Skills	did many interviews for dissertation, strong network among Silicon Valley entrepreneurs, experienced researcher	fluent in Mandarin, Spanish, and English; skilled in video recording and editing		V.P. SiliconValley-Collects.com, small local history website
Notes		MLIS student at San Jose State, interested in oral history	EdPsych student at Stanford, studying families of entrepreneurs	Recommended as interviewee for Silicon Valley Project
Role 1	Interviewer	Video specialist	Processing coordinator	Interviewee
Role 2	Researcher			
Role 3				
Action 1	Researcher for Silicon Valley Project, 7/2008	Student intern for Silicon Valley project	Student intern for Silicon Valley Project	Interviewed 9/2010 by Charles Pierce
Action 2	Interviewer training 2010	Interviewer training 2010	Processing coordinator and research assistant for Silicon Valley Project, 2009-2010	Interview transcript approved 12/14/2010
Action 3				

Table 2.2. Master Contact List

Contacts can be tracked using a spreadsheet, electronic text document, or paper form. Note the space for multiple roles and multiple actions for each name.

Interviewee Biographical Profile

A spreadsheet is not sufficient for all records relating to people. Biographical information about each interviewee (and potential interviewee) should be more detailed. The example here is the Interviewee Biographical Profile, which can be filled out in preparation for the interview. This form can also be used in matching interviewees to interviewers, and later on in cataloging, publicity, and outreach. Many projects keep paper forms like this in a notebook or in the interviewee master file; other projects transfer the information to electronic formats. Use whatever approach works best for your project.

INTERVIEWEE BIOGRAPHICAL PROFILE

PROJECT NAME Jazz Atlanta Oral History Project	
NAME Joseph A. Browne	**CONTACT** Atlanta Jazz Festival 246 Peach Street Atlanta, Georgia 30310 404-555-2222, x. 1 jb@aol.com
OTHER NAMES KNOWN BY Joey Browne	**DATE/PLACE OF BIRTH** New York, New York April 17, 1955
PLACE OF RESIDENCE 123 Elm Street Atlanta, Georgia 30301 404-555-111	**YEARS IN THE COMMUNITY** Mr. Browne has lived in Atlanta since moving to the city to work for the Atlanta Jazz Festival in 1997.
OCCUPATION Jazz musician, arts administrator	**EDUCATION** Mr. Browne graduated from the New York School of the Performing Arts in 1973 and from the Tisch School of the Arts at New York University (NYU) in 1978. He received his MFA (Master of Fine Arts) from NYU in 1983. He is a jazz percussionist and has studied with Forestorn "Chico" Hamilton.

(*Continued on following page)*

Figure 2.2. Sample—Interviewee Biographical Profile

Figure 2.2. Sample—Interviewee Biological Profile *(continued)*

RELEVANCE TO THE PROJECT

Mr. Browne is a jazz musician and the director of the Atlanta Jazz Festival. In addition to his administrative duties, he regularly performs in Atlanta and New Orleans jazz clubs.

RELEVANT BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION (AS IT RELATES TO THE GOALS OF THE PROJECT)

FAMILY (full name, date of birth, relationship to interviewee)

Jane Winter, wife
Date of birth: August 10, 1960
Jane Winter met the interviewee at NYU; they married 1983. She originally was from Atlanta, but had lived in New York City while attending the university. Ms. Winter is a professor of history at Georgia State University.

FRIENDS AND ASSOCIATES (full name, date of birth, relationship to interviewee)

Mr. Browne knows most of the jazz musicians in the American South; many serve or have served on the Atlanta Jazz Festival Board of Directors.

PLACES TRAVELED OR LIVED

Mr. Browne regularly travels to New Orleans to perform as well as to New York City several times a year when his schedule allows to perform at Jazz at Lincoln Center.

COMMUNITY ACTIVITIES (Include activity, date, and significance to the project)

Mr. Browne is very involved with the jazz community in Atlanta and in jazz communities throughout the American South. He teaches one class a year at University of Georgia and is in demand as a performer.

INTERESTS

In addition to performing and arts administration, Mr. Browne is interested in the history of jazz in the American South.

INFLUENCES

Mr. Browne's musical influences are his teachers and mentors, especially Forestorn "Chico" Hamilton. His administrative influences are his Atlanta Jazz Festival Board of Directors.

LIFE MILESTONES

In 2009, Mr. Browne was given a state arts award by the Georgia State Arts Council.

Completed by	**Date**
Lane Smith, Interviewer	*(insert date)*

Interviews

The final record-keeping category concerns the interviews themselves. Ideally, every step for every interview should be tracked, along with who accomplished it and the date. As the project increases in size, duration, or complexity, so does the value of using a computerized system for managing these tasks.[4] For illustration purposes we use two paper forms to track interview information: the Interview Summary and the Interview Tracking Form. The structure and content of these forms can be transferred easily to a spreadsheet or database.

The Interview Summary form (see Figure 2.3) should be completed by the interviewer immediately after the interview, when the experience is fresh in her mind. It contains details about the recording, information about the interview environment that only the interviewer can relate, and notes on the content of the interview such as keywords, proper names that need the spelling verified, and dates that might need verification. The information on this form will be used by the oral history project for cataloging, preservation, and general project documentation.

INTERVIEW SUMMARY	
PROJECT NAME Jazz Atlanta Oral History Project	**INTERVIEW ID#** *(insert interview ID number)*
INTERVIEWEE	**INTERVIEWER**
NAME (as it will appear in the public record) Joseph A. Browne 123 Elm Street Atlanta, Georgia 30301	**NAME** Lane Smith 890 Oak Street Atlanta, Georgia 30305
CONTACT 404-555-1111 (home) 404-555-2222 x. 1 (work) jb@aol.com	**CONTACT** 404-666-1111 ls@aol.com
OTHER NAMES KNOWN BY Joey Browne	
INTERVIEW DATE *(insert)*	**INTERVIEW LENGTH** 90 minutes
RECORDING MEDIUM X digital audio _ digital video	

(*Continued on following page*)

Figure 2.3. Sample—Interview Summary

Figure 2.3. Sample—Interview Summary *(continued)*

DELIVERY MEDIUM _X_ sound file _X_ sound card __ CD __ DVD

TECHNICAL NOTES (make/model of recorder, format recorded, microphone notes)

The interview was recorded on a Marantz PMD 620 with SD Flash Media using lavaliere microphones.

INTERVIEW NOTES (physical environment, interviewee's mood, people or animals in the room, interruptions)

The interview was recorded in the Atlanta Jazz Festival director's office. Mr. Browne was interested in doing the interview and was prepared for it. He had a number of questions before the interview began and said the topical outline sent to him prior to the interview was very helpful in organizing his thoughts. He was comfortable with the questions asked and added information pertinent to the project at the end of the interview.

DATE LEGAL RELEASE AGREEMENT SIGNED _____

(date signed/should match the interview date)

PROPER NAMES AND KEYWORDS
(personal and place names with proper spelling, dates, and keywords)

See the attached list of proper and place names the interviewer jotted down during the interview. Mr. Browne checked the spelling of the names at the end of the interview.

SUMMARY OF INTERVIEW CONTENT

During the interview, Mr. Browne discussed:

- His background, education, and early interest in jazz
- His choice of instrument and his musical education
- His description of southern musical traditions
- His musical influences, the roots of some of these influences in musical traditions in the American South, and his thoughts about the influences
- His decision to take a position with the Atlanta Jazz Festival
- The role of the Atlanta Jazz Festival in Atlanta, in Georgia, and in the American South
- Stories of jazz greats who have participated in the festival
- Thoughts about the future of the festival
- Thoughts about the future of jazz traditions in the American South

COMPLETED BY	**DATE**
Lane Smith	*(insert date)*

The Interview Tracking Form (see Figure 2.4) documents the processing steps required to complete an interview.[5] Use one form for each interview. If you prefer, a table or spreadsheet can be used to track interview processing steps, along with the date and initials of the person who completed it. The tasks for your project may differ from the ones in this form, but they all should be included in your own work plan.

INTERVIEW TRACKING FORM		
PROJECT NAME Jazz Atlanta Oral History Project		**INTERVIEW ID#** *(insert interview ID number)*
INTERVIEWEE		**INTERVIEWER**
NAME Joseph A. Browne		**NAME** Lane Smith
CONTACT 404-555-1111 (home) 404-555-2222 x. 1 (work) jb@aol.com		**CONTACT** 404-666-1111 ls@aol.com
INTERVIEW DATE *(insert interview date)*		
DATE COMPLETED	**TASK**	**NOTES**
	Log interview recording and assign an interview ID#	Project volunteer *(name)* working with library cataloger *(name)*; interview is 90 minutes long, data file is saved on sound card, project computer, and external hard drive housed off-site
	Log *Legal Release Agreement*	Project volunteer *(name) working* with library cataloger *(name)*
	Log *Interview Summary*	Project volunteer *(name)* working with library cataloger *(name)*
	Copy recording	City IT personnel *(name)*; follow LOCKSS process
	Label recording media	IT personnel *(name)*

(*Continued on following page)*

Figure 2.4. Sample—Interview Tracking Form

Figure 2.4. Sample—Interview Tracking Form *(continued)*

DATE COMPLETED	TASK	NOTES
	Transcribe interview	Judi Smith, transcriber
	Audit-check transcript	Judi Smith, transcriber
	Check facts and verify spelling of proper names	Judi Smith, transcriber and Lane Smith, interviewer
	Get interviewee's approval of transcript	Lane Smith, interviewer
	Complete *Cataloging Work Sheet*	Project volunteer *(name)* working with library cataloger *(name)*
	Assemble materials for repository	Andrea Schmidt, project director
	Deliver completed oral history to repository	Andrea Schmidt, project director
	Prepare oral history for website	Library cataloger *(name)*
	Thank interviewee	Andrea Schmidt, project director, and Lane Smith, interviewer
	Archive master files	Library cataloger *(name)*

Processing Step by Step

Chapter 1 ended with a list of processing steps that encompass the following categories: Record Keeping, Media Management, Transcription, Repository, Internet, and Acknowledgement. This section describes the individual steps within each of these categories to help you develop your own processing work plan.

What	*When*	*Who*
Record Keeping	ASAP after Interview	Project Director, Interviewer

Once the recorder is turned off, the interview stage ends. The interviewer should allocate time immediately after the interview to reflect on the experience and to make notes about the interview circumstances, the content of the interview, and any issues that require follow-up. These notes, the recorded interview, the Interview Summary form and the signed Legal Release Agreement should then be delivered to the project office as soon as possible after the interview is completed. Until these items are delivered and in safekeeping, the interview is especially vulnerable to loss or damage.

Processing begins directly after these materials are delivered. Record keeping comes first and involves the following steps.

- Review the recording medium (CD, DVD, flash drive, etc.) and both project forms to verify everything is in order.
- Assign an Interview ID to the interview. Enter this identification number into the computer management system, the Interview Summary form, and on every recording medium. The Interview ID will follow the interview in its various manifestations throughout its life.
- Create a record for the interview using the Interview Tracking Form or similar record in a computerized management system.
- Log the recording, the signed Legal Release Agreement (see Appendix D) and the Interview Summary form (see Figure 2.3) to acknowledge receipt of the interview.

What	*When*	*Who*
Media Management	When recorded interview is received by project	Project Director, Interviewer

The steps in this category protect your project against the loss of interview content. The original recording is the most valuable part of the oral history and, in a digital environment, the most vulnerable. The precious interview can be lost either by poor labeling or by mismanagement of the media itself.

- Copy recording as soon as possible after the interview. The first copy, called the preservation master, will be used for all subsequent copies; the original should be archived and stored safely. Copies can be made in a lower resolution, which requires less digital space. At least one copy should be burned to a CD or DVD.
- Label recording media according to the guidelines suggested earlier in this chapter.

Label every physical item with the interview ID.

Sample Instructions for Processing Video Interviews

Here is the work plan the Maria Rogers Oral History Program in Boulder, CO, uses for processing video interviews, plus explanatory notes.

1. *Transfer interview from mini-dv tape to DVD for preservation and public viewing.* We use a multi-purpose DVD recorder (the JVC SR-DVM70) with a mini-dv drive, a DVD drive/burner, and a hard drive. Other useful programs are iMovie for Macs and Microsoft Moviemaker PCs, for video transfer and editing.
2. *Create copies of the DVD.* We make a preservation copy on Mitsui-Gold DVD stock and two copies on DVDs that have our program logo, program contact, and copyright information silk-screened on the disks. One copy is for library use and the other is a gift to the interviewee.
3. *Separate the audio from the video file by playing the DVD on a computer and capturing the audio with an audio editing program.* Options for editing software include Audacity (free, open-source), Sony's Sound Forge Audio Studio (moderately priced), and Adobe Audition (more expensive). We do light editing such as removing background hum or hiss, or increase the decibel level if recordings are too soft. We save the resulting audio as (uncompressed) .wav files for preservation and (compressed) .mp3 files for faster Internet streaming. We create/and save our audio files using CD-quality settings of 16-bit for bit depth and 44.1kHz for sample rate, which are the minimum settings currently recommended. Better quality settings are 24-bit, 96kHz, but these settings result in much larger files.
4. *Transcribe the audio file using audio playback software.* We use Express Scribe, which can handle both .wav and .mp3 files (as well as many other audio and some video formats. The program can receive commands (such as start, stop, slow down, back up) either via a foot pedal, which must be purchased, or through hot keys programmed in the transcriber's computer.

Source: Maria Rogers Oral History Program, courtesy of Susan Becker

What	*When*	*Who*
Transcription	After recording is copied and interview logged	Transcriber, Project Director, Interviewer

Transcription involves the following steps.

- Deliver the recording to transcriber, along with the Letter of Agreement for Transcriber, project's style guide, deadline for turnaround, instructions for transcript delivery, notes about the specific interview, and list of proper names and places. These materials can be delivered electronically, in person, or through the postal service.
- Transcribe the interview according to the project guidelines.
- Receive an electronic copy of the completed transcript and save it in the project master file.
- Audit-check the transcript by proofreading it while listening to the recording.
- Fact check and spell check the transcript.
- Allow the interviewee to review the transcript, and then verify the spelling of personal names and places, clear up ambiguous statements, and give final approval.
- Format and print copies for the project master files, the repository, and the interviewee. If the interview will be posted on the Internet, prepare electronic text according to the webmaster's specifications.

What	*When*	*Who*
Repository	When transcript is complete and all documents are in order	Project Director

Once the preceding steps are complete, it is time to assemble interview materials for the repository. Be sure to communicate with the repository staff to make sure there are no changes in the original agreement and they are prepared to receive the interviews.

INTERVIEW MATERIALS FOR REPOSITORY

- ✓ completed Interview Summary form
- ✓ signed Legal Release Agreement
- ✓ Cataloging Work Sheet
- ✓ transcript
- ✓ interview recordings—follow the instructions from the repository as to format, delivery medium, and number of copies

The Oral History "Package"

Some repositories have specific requirements for packaging oral histories, whereas others prefer to do the packaging themselves. But most of the time, repositories rely on the project to come up with an attractive and convenient way of presenting the oral histories to the public. Here are some common ways oral histories are packaged for repository use.

- bound transcript with CD or DVD inserted in an envelope inside back cover, with or without contextual materials. Contextual materials may include a biographical profile, photographs and newspaper clippings, historical timeline or essay, and a statement about the oral history project.
- CD or DVD packaged in standard container with title and interviewee's photo on the cover
- transcripts of related interviews bound together in a single volume

What	*When*	*Who*
Internet	When all materials for the repository are assembled	Project Director or Website Coordinator

If the interviews will be posted on the Internet, content and clear instructions for posting must be delivered to the website coordinators. In some cases, protocols for delivering materials are predetermined by the website coordinators; in other cases, oral history projects develop their own website and are responsible for the design. In either case, designing a website is a complicated task that requires expertise and careful planning.

What	*When*	*Who*
Acknowledgement	After processing is complete and oral history is available in repository and/or on website	Project Director

Though the interviewer thanked the interviewee at the time of the interview, a personal thank you from the project director on behalf of the project and the community is in order. In addition to a letter or phone call, many oral history projects honor interviewees with a public reception, a newspaper article, or a copy of the interview.

What	*When*	*Who*
Record keeping	When process is complete and documents are in order	Project Director

Once all these processing steps are completed for an interview, the project director should close the books. In a paper system, the folder or sheet can now be moved to an inactive file; in a computerized system, an entry should be made to mark the item "complete." This notation will move this particular oral history into the project director's physical or virtual "done" folder, and she can move on to the next project.

This completes the steps of interview processing. Remember, the secret to success in processing is neither money nor technology. Success depends on the old fashioned COAT principles, which apply to project management at any level: **C**onsistency, **O**bjectivity, **A**ccuracy, and **T**imeliness. If you design a processing work plan appropriate to your needs and apply these principles, you are bound to bring your project to a successful completion.

CHAPTER 3

Transcribing

BEST PRACTICE NO. 2

Focus on oral history as a process.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 4

Understand the ethical and legal ramifications of oral history.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 9

Process and archive all interview materials to preserve them for future use.

With the new methods of access available through twenty-first century technology, oral historians are actively debating the value of a transcript. It is one of the most expensive and time consuming steps in doing oral history, interviewees are sometimes alarmed to see their vibrant conversations flattened to ink on paper, and when all is said and done, oral historians agree that a transcript is a flawed representation of the recorded interview. Still, in spite of these negatives, most oral historians favor transcribing interviews.

Transcripts are especially useful in community oral history. Here's why.

- *Transcripts are not machine dependent.* A transcript does not need a computer, projector, CD player or any other machine to read it. You can take a printed transcript to the beach or read it when the power goes out. It cannot be assumed that community groups or small organizations will have a variety of viewing/listening equipment, but they almost always have shelf space for a bound transcript.

- *Transcripts can be easily shared.* A transcript can be passed around the table at a community meeting, shared at a family gathering, or copied for a community discussion group. Though audio and video recordings have a stronger emotional effect, print is most user-friendly.
- *Transcription is a rewarding job for volunteers within the community.* Transcribing can offer volunteers the satisfaction of the hearing a human voice relating a life story. This is a satisfying task for volunteers who prefer behind the scenes work.

You probably made the decision about transcribing when you were planning the project. If you didn't, it's not too late. You can make a decision, or revise a previous decision in your project plan, at any time. Either way, this chapter will help you create a transcribing work plan for your own project.

Why Transcribe?

In April 2009, Charissa Reid, the oral historian at Yellowstone National Park, posed two questions on the H-Oralhist online discussion board.

> *It seems to me that transcripts were paramount during the age when very fragile cassette tapes were the only storage source for recorded interviews and the transcript was the permanent record of the conversation and the preferred method of ensuring conservation. … Now digital recordings are available, and there are many affordable options for storage of interviews and protection of their contents. Is a new kind of written record (i.e., index with key words, selected quotes, and a timeline with digital markers for discussions topics) an acceptable, more affordable, and less labor intensive option to the transcript? Is it better to spend money collecting more digital interviews and creating a new written record of their contents, or to collect fewer interviews and continue to turn out traditional transcripts?*[6]

Charissa's question elicited many responses, most in favor of transcribing. Here is a summary of those comments, introduced by the issues they address.

- *Benefit to the interviewee.* Transcribing gives the interviewer and the interviewee an opportunity to clarify information from the interview and to discuss the material before it "hits" the public. This respondent reported that interviewees felt a sense of ownership over the material when they read it in a transcript.

- *Better access.* Not everyone has sophisticated playback media, but practically everyone can read or be read to. In addition, although speech patterns, dialects, and accents have to some degree moved toward a homogeneous style, they are still too diverse to assume that almost every listener will be able to understand every speaker, regardless of age, class, or geographic area.
- *Verification of spellings of names and places.* Transcripts provide a consistent record for the spellings of names and places.
- *Preservation format.* Paper is a proven preservation medium that can preserve the interview content for centuries.
- *Research tool.*
  - Transcripts are the key to making an interview intellectually accessible. A good researcher may go back and actually listen to a key point in an interview, but very few have the funding, patience, or ability to sit and listen to hundreds of hours of recordings.
  - Transcribing also gives the end user the added benefit of reading the transcript along with the sound/video recording. Reading along prevents misunderstandings, misspellings, and in general, misinformation from making its way into the historical record.
  - It does not take nearly as long to read a transcript as it does to listen to a recording. It is easier to flip back and forth across pages than to switch back and forth between parts of a CD or other electronic reproduction, especially when trying to compare content between one section and another or between one source and another.
- *Tool in using oral histories (repurposing).* Transcripts can be used for subtitling and captioning, which can be a big help for exhibiting the interviews online or in classrooms where students may have a hearing disability or may speak English as a second language.

There is no question that the transcript plays a different role for access now that so many other options are available. But at the time of this writing, my coauthors and I believe that the balance is in favor of creating a transcript, especially for community oral history projects.

Transcription Basics

A **transcript** is a verbatim version of the spoken word, analogous to a translation from one language to another. It is often considered an index to the recording.

What is a transcript?

In reality, an exact reproduction of the spoken word is impossible. Judgments about punctuation, sentences, and paragraphs must be made when a conversation is transferred to print. Often contextual tools such as a table of contents, chapter headings, or indexes are included, as well as photographs, maps, historical, and biographical materials.

A transcript is not a summary, an abstract, or a reorganization of the spoken conversation.

Who Transcribes

Transcribing is an art and a craft that requires skill, judgment, and a certain knowledge of the subjects discussed in the interview. It can be done by the interviewer, another team member, or a professional transcriber.

Qualities of a Good Transcriber

- accurate typing
- attention to detail
- subject background
- accurate speller
- access to transcribing equipment
- expert with word processing programs
- sensitive to cultural differences that may impact the transfer of voice to print

There are pros and cons about who is the best person to transcribe, but most of the time it boils down to who is available (see Table 3.1). Whether this task is performed in-house or outsourced, the transcriber can only do as good a job as allowed by the materials he receives. It is the project director's responsibility to make sure the transcriber receives a clear and complete recording and all the supporting documentation to interpret the interview.

The transcriber needs a quality recording and clear instructions in order to create a good transcript.

Transcriber Roles

	PROS	*CONS*
Inhouse—Interviewer	• No out of pocket costs • More control over the project • Can rely on memory of the interview setting • Familiar with interviewee's speech patterns	• May not be interested • May need training in transcription • May find transcription a letdown after the interview • May need a computer and transcription software
Inhouse—Another volunteer	• No out of pocket costs • More control over the project • Has genuine interest and involvement in the project • Has subject expertise in interview topic (such as names and places discussed)	• May need training in transcription • May need a computer and transcription software • As volunteer, may not understand importance of deadlines
Outsource	• Professional level transcription • Rapid turnaround time • No overhead costs in equipment, space, training	• Costs money • Doesn't have community level interest • Must provide specific instructions

Table 3.1 Transcriber Roles—Pros and Cons

TRANSCRIPTION PROTOCOL		
PROJECT NAME Jazz Atlanta Oral History Project		
PROJECT CONTACT	**Name** Andrea Schmidt, Project Director	**Contact** XXXX
TRANSCRIBER CONTACT	**Name** Charles Pierce (volunteer) Serena Valdez (volunteer)	**Contact** XXXX
RESOURCES		
Funds needed	Transcription pro bono. Estimated $50 per interview for copying, binding and associated costs.	
Equipment needed	No special equipment. Transcribers to use their own computers.	
Software needed	MS Word for creation transcripts, Audacity for copying and sending and receiving audio files.	
PROCEDURE		
Number of interviews/hours	Estimate 15 interviewees, 3 one hour interviews, for 45 recorded hours.	
Delivery formats	Project to deliver audio files as .mp3, volunteers to deliver transcript in MS Word 2010.	
Delivery method	Project to deliver audio file to media server determined by project director. Transcribers deliver finished transcript as email attachment.	
Timeframe	Project to send audio files as received. Transcribers to deliver within 5 days of receipt, unless otherwise agreed upon.	

(*Continued on following page*)

Figure 3.1. Sample—Transcription Protocol

Figure 3.1. Sample—Transcription Protocol *(continued)*

TRANSCRIBER RESPONSIBILITIES	_X_ **Audit–check** ___ **Summary** _X_ **Verify spelling of proper names—**Reasonable amount of research for spelling verification of proper names ___ **Chapter/section headings** ___ **Index** ___ **Contents** ___ **Other (Specify)**
STYLE GUIDE	Use style guide provided. Contact interviewer with specific questions.
Project contact – Sign and date	**Transcriber contact – Sign and date**

Transcription Protocol

Creating a work plan for transcription can be complicated, especially if the number of interviews is large, the project spans a large timeframe, or recording formats are varied. In addition to these possible logistical issues, it may be necessary to coordinate with the repository concerning their requirements, deal with special issues such as translations, or conform to specifications with a transcribing agency. As the list of variables increases, the importance of developing clear written guidelines quickly becomes evident. To this end we suggest that community oral history projects use the Transcription Protocol shown in Figure 3.1 or an adaptation of this form.

Although transcription is occasionally handled by a parent oral history program or a repository, your oral history project itself may be responsible for this task. If this is the case, you may need to adapt your project work plan to accommodate the step. Remember, some projects do interviews and transcription concurrently, while others do these steps sequentially. Whichever approach you use, be sure to stay on top of the transcription process and keep careful records.

Transcribe interviews as soon as possible after they are completed.

Record Keeping

In addition to the information recorded in the Transcription Protocol, it is important to track each transcribing step. A spreadsheet works well for this, since a single keystroke can record the date that each step is completed and shading can be used to highlight stages or categories, something like the following table.

Interviewee	Interview Date	Copied	Sent to Transcriber	Transcript Returned	Audit Checked	Interviewee Approved
Jonathan Whelan	11/4/2010	11/6/2010	11/6/2010	11/15/2010	12/3/2010	
Leticia Chavez	3/6/2011	3/6/2011	3/6/2011	3/30/2011	4/2/2011	5/30/2011

Transcription Step-by-Step

MANAGEMENT TASKS FOR CREATING A TRANSCRIPT

- ✓ Copy recordings.
- ✓ Deliver recording to a transcriber.
- ✓ Audit-check transcript against recording.
- ✓ Deliver transcript to interviewee for final review and approval.
- ✓ Proofread and format.
- ✓ Save, print, and bind.

1. *Copy recordings.* Always transcribe from copies, not original recordings. Copying a sound file is fairly simple using software found on most computers. What if the interview is recorded on video? Though some transcribers prefer to transcribe from video because of the visual clues, most transcription is done from an audio file. The audio track can easily be extracted from the video file and played separately for the transcription process.

2. *Deliver recording to transcriber*. Sound or video files are too large to send as email attachments, so another option must be used. Some projects burn the recording onto a CD or DVD; other projects go media-free and use a file sharing application such as YouSendIt or MediaFire for sharing the sound or video file. The transcriber can download the file or transcribe directly from the server.
3. *Audit-check transcript against recording*. Listen to the recording while reading the transcript. Audit checking is a form of proofreading to make sure that all the words were correctly interpreted and that the transcript matches the recording. This step is usually done by the transcriber, though an audit check by the interviewer may be even more effective since that person is best acquainted with the interviewee and his speaking patterns.
4. *Deliver transcript to interviewee for final review and approval.* Theoretically, the signed Legal Release Agreement makes this step unnecessary, but oral historians customarily offer the interviewee an opportunity to review the transcript. Not only is this a courtesy, but it is also an opportunity to clarify or correct the spelling of names, places, and events. It's a good idea, when sending the transcript to the interviewee, to include a list of questionable areas: proper names that need spellings verified, inaudible words, and other problems. The interviewee then can easily make corrections on the list without searching through the transcript.
5. *Proofread and format.* After the audit-checking and spelling corrections are made, a careful proofreading should catch small errors and will ensure the final document will be in good shape. Then, format the document according to the project's specifications. A title page with the project's name and logo will give the final product a professional look.
6. *Save, print and bind.* When the transcript is exactly as you want it to appear to readers, (a) save an electronic copy in permanent computer files, (b) print one or more copies, and (c) bind the copies. Attractive and inexpensive binding options are available at copy stores.

Give the transcript the same professional attention you would give a manuscript prepared for publication.

Editing the Transcript

Some oral historians shudder at the thought of editing a transcript, claiming that any edits tamper with the voice and intentions of the interviewee. Others concede that light editing for readability is actually an asset. But all oral historians agree that changing or rearranging the words of the speaker is not acceptable. Think of the transcript as a "translation" of the recording; any editing must ensure that the words and meaning are followed as closely as possible.

Transcriber's Packet

A packet is a handy way to compile all the documents a transcriber needs. Assembling these documents in an attractive paper folder or .pdf file for electronic delivery not only is a good organizational practice but also adds a professional look to the project.

SAMPLE TRANSCRIBER'S PACKET CONTENTS

- ✓ a letter of introduction on project letterhead
- ✓ copy of the recording on disc or instructions on how to access it remotely
- ✓ Letter of Agreement for Transcriber form (see Figure 3.2)
- ✓ Transcribing Guide (see page 66)
- ✓ a sample transcript excerpt (see Appendix F)
- ✓ Interview Summary form (see Figure 2.3 in Chapter 2)

Remember that the interview content is confidential until its final release. To emphasize this important principle, the project director should integrate the confidentiality rule into all training materials.

LETTER OF AGREEMENT FOR TRANSCRIBER

I, Judi Smith (transcriber) agree to the following.

- Create a verbatim transcript according to style guide provided
- Clearly indicate the interviewee, interviewer, and place and date of the interview at the head of the transcript according to the style guide provided
- Deliver electronic copy in Microsoft Word 2010 or later
- Timeframe for delivery *(insert description of timeframe)*

The transcription process will include (check all that apply):

_X_ Audit-checking the transcript

_X_ A reasonable amount of research for correct spelling of proper names

___ Creating chapter headings

___ Creating a Table of Contents

_X_ Creating an index

___ Other (Specify) _____

The oral history project will provide a list of proper and place names wherever possible to facilitate accurate transcribing.

As transcriber, I understand that all information contained in the transcript is confidential. I agree not to disclose any information contained in the transcript, nor will I allow anyone access to the recording or the electronic files while they are in my possession. I agree to delete electronic files and destroy discs at the instruction of the oral history project or at the conclusion of the assignment.

TRANSCRIBER	ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
Name (print) Judi Smith	Name (print) Andrea Schmidt
Signature *(sign form)*	Signature *(sign form)*
Title Transcriber	Title Project Director
Date *(insert date)*	Date *(insert date)*

Figure 3.2. Sample—Letter of Agreement for Transcriber

Sample Transcribing Guide

The following transcribing guide illustrates the kinds of instructions a transcriber needs from the project. Use or adapt it to meet your needs.

Introduction

Interview transcripts provide an accurate rendering of the *intellectual content* of the interview, and serve as the ultimate preservation format. Transcripts are not a substitute for the audio interview, but rather a tool to help users quickly find relevant sections of the recording and a back-up to verify hard-to-hear sections and the spelling of names. With this in mind, please transcribe every meaningful word, but not necessarily "uhms," false starts, repetitions and other extraneous sounds.

Reminder: All interview content is confidential until approved by the interviewee.

General

The project director will introduce you to the interviewer via email so you can communicate directly when questions come up about the recording. Clearing up problems as you go can save a lot of time in the future. The project director will also send you a list of proper names and foreign words, with proper spellings.

Document Layout

- Word processing program: Most recent version of MS Word
- Font: Times New Roman
- Size: 11 pt. for text, 14 pt. for title
- Spacing: 1.5 spacing throughout text. Add one blank line between speakers.
- Interviewer's voice: Use *italics*
- Margins: Use default margins
- Indent: Set Special to "Hanging"
- Header and footer:
  - Header should include the full name of the interviewee in upper case at the left, and the words "INTERVIEW [date of interview]" at the right.

  - Footer should have the words “transcribed by [your name]” at the left, the page number in the middle and the date of transcription at the right.
- Title: The Title should be 14 pt., aligned center, and read as follows:

JAZZ ATLANTA ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

JOSEPH A. BROWNE INTERVIEW

- Begin the transcript with the full names of the interviewee and interviewer, as follows:

LANE: Lane Smith, interviewer

JOSEPH: Joseph A. Browne, interviewee

For the remainder, use first names in upper case, followed by a colon.

Style Guide

- Transcribe every word, but use judgment regarding pauses, repetitions, false starts.
- Indicate interruptions to the interview, if they are relevant, by a bracketed phrase: e.g., [telephone rings and Mr. Browne answers it, interview resumes], [Mr. Browne’s spouse enters the room and joins the interview.]
- Keep paragraphs short. Begin a new paragraph for every new thought.
- Type inaudible passages, foreign words, words with questionable spellings in red, to alert the interviewer to correct. In the following example, “inaudible” would be in red: “My mother was born in [inaudible] West Virginia.”
- Use judgment with punctuation; attempt to capture the interviewee’s intent, but keep the transcript readable.
- Consult most recent editions of the following reference sources for further guidelines:

— Style Guide, Baylor University Institute for Oral History, http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php?id=14142

— Chicago Manual of Style

— Merriam-Webster's Collegiate Dictionary

When You Are Finished

- Audit-check the transcript by proofreading it while listening to the recording.
- Review the transcript for spelling, punctuation and format. Make sure you have highlighted in red any problem areas.
- Send an electronic copy of the transcript as an email attachment to the interviewer and the project director.
- Save the document on your computer until you are notified by the project director to delete it. Then delete the transcript and the sound file.
- Submit the invoice to the project director.

Thank you very much!

Alternatives to Transcribing

Not all oral historians favor transcribing interviews. Some experts make a case against transcribing, using both practical and theoretical arguments. Historian Michael Frisch is one of these. He reflects on the importance of the voice and body language that is lost in transcription: "Meaning inheres in context and setting, in gesture, in tone, in body language, in expression, in pauses, in performed skills and movements. To the extent we are restricted to text and transcription, we will never locate such moments and meaning, much less have the chance to study, reflect on, learn from and share them."[7]

Public historian Mark Tebeau makes a practical argument against transcribing. He weighs the cost benefit of a transcript in the digital age against the ease of user tagging and other forms of text access. Tebeau concludes, "Transcription has many benefits, and we know why it has long been at the center of oral history process, but the process itself is resource intensive and thus prohibitive for smaller organizations. Also, much meaning is lost with

transcript, in terms of orality and aurality. How is a verbatim transcript an improvement over other forms of text-based access, such as … [user generated] tags?"[8]

New Zealand architecture historian Michael Dudding observes that "the transcript is *so* convenient that researchers often ignore the recording, which is the primary document and which contains the essence of the speaker." Dudding recommends instead using an abstract (which the *Toolkit* refers to as a summary), because "unlike a transcript, the abstract does not attempt to translate the interview. Instead it acts as a key into the primary document—the actual recording—like the contents of a book."[9]

If your project chooses not to transcribe interviews, you are not alone. Here are some alternative methods of access that can be used in addition to or in place of a transcript.

- *Interview summaries.* A summary is essentially an outline of the interview content, highlighting portions especially relevant to the subject emphasis of the project. A summary can vary in length from a paragraph to several pages.
- *Keyword and proper name tags.* Names—of people, places, events, and institutions—and dates are the most specific ways to access the content of a document, and as such can serve as an invaluable research tool, serving either a substitute or a supplement to a transcript. If indexed, these terms can take the researcher directly to the topics of interest.
- *Time-coded indexes.* One of the wonders of digital sound files is the way one can index the content and mark tracks. Sound editors can insert track marks with annotations or can actually link the sound to a corresponding section of the transcript. Fans of the time-coded index consider this tool a substitute for the transcript, since it will take the user directly to the desired section of the interview. It offers enormous opportunities for both the creators and users of oral histories, and is attracting increasing use as oral histories are posted online.

It is clear that the question related to transcription will be actively debated among oral historians as the cost/benefit ratio varies from time to time and from project to project. As you plan your community oral history project, the transcription question will surely be on your agenda. Consider the goals of the project as well as the resources and make a thoughtful decision at the time of planning.

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CHAPTER 4

Cataloging

BEST PRACTICE NO. 9

Process and archive all interview materials to preserve them for future use.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 10

Take pride in your contribution to the historical record.

Here's a joke that catalogers like to tell. Question: What is the difference between the trunk in Grandma's attic and a library? Answer: A catalog, of course. This simple joke illustrates for non-catalogers that it isn't enough to own the stuff; it must be well organized in order to find things.

The value of an organizational plan is obvious, but if you examine the catalog/trunk argument more carefully, you might find flaws. Is it all that easy to find what you want in a library catalog? And if you do, the catalog only tells you that the library owns the item. You still have to look for it on the shelf, and often you'll find it missing. On the other hand, when you go to grandma's trunk, at least you can sort through the contents for the item you want. If the trunk is nearly empty it's easier to just look inside than to start with a catalog, but then again, you have to be physically in the same room as the trunk.

Information professionals are grappling with the dilemma of direct access (Grandma's trunk) versus indirect access (catalog) in their efforts to get a handle on the data explosion of the information age. The goal is always to connect the user to the exact information she wants. The method that works

most effectively depends on the size and complexity of the collection, the intended user group, and the system of organization.

Oral histories present many cataloging problems. Multiple formats, confusion about exactly what gets cataloged, and even the definition of oral history contribute to the confusion. As a result oral histories all too often are placed on the cataloger's problem shelf and forgotten. I believe it doesn't have to be that way, and that clear standards and guidelines along with templates for recording cataloging information can make oral histories as easy as any other material to catalog.

What do oral historians need to know about cataloging? Most cataloging is done by the repository and so oral historians usually need only to know how to prepare oral histories to deliver to the repository. However, some oral history projects perform some level of cataloging instead of, or in addition to, the repository's cataloging.

Generally speaking, the larger and more complex the collection, the more important it is to have a structured cataloging system. If your community is clearly defined and the oral history project is small and self-contained, then it is not necessary to invest time and resources in a complicated cataloging system.

Choose a system that is appropriate for your needs, and apply the COAT Principles: Consistency, Objectivity, Accuracy, Timeliness.

Cataloging Overview

Before the computer age, organizations that commonly keep oral histories—libraries, archives, historical societies, museums, and cultural organizations—developed cataloging systems that worked for their particular organizational goals. But now, in the twenty-first century, those lines are blurred, and it is no longer possible to say that libraries catalog one way, archives another way, and historical societies yet another way. These institutions have borrowed best practices from each other and actually share catalogs. At the time of this writing, there are no cataloging standards specifically for oral histories.

Why Catalog?

- *Organizes materials.* Cataloging provides an overall organizational structure and a system for keeping track of all important information.
- *Links related items.* Cataloging can connect related items such as a particular place or event mentioned in multiple interviews, photographs within the repository relating to the interview, or other interviews within the same oral history project.
- *Links cataloging to physical item.* A call number or accession number will connect the catalog record to the physical materials in the repository.
- *Describes physical content.* A catalog record can list all of the items associated with the oral history: the number of discs, number of pages in a transcript, size of a sound file.
- *Describes intellectual content.* An interview summary, a biographical summary of the interviewee, subject headings, and keywords all contribute to a rich description of the oral history. The more detailed the content description is, the more valuable the catalog record is to the user.
- *Provides multiple access points.* Access points are indexed fields, and are available to help facilitate retrieval. Indexing rules are generally determined by the catalog design, and out of the hands of the catalogers. Multiple access points, such as interviewee's name, interviewer's name, topics discussed in the interview, and name of the oral history project all increase the possibility of the user finding the item.
- *Records administrative data.* The catalog record serves a purpose for staff as well as users. Information about physical condition, permission to use, and availability of materials can be included.
- *Shares information across institutions.* Computerized cataloging can be shared from one institution to another. Theoretically, this ability makes it easy to gather clusters of related catalog records.

Library Model

Librarians have been cataloging for many centuries, perfecting protocols to connect books with interested users. The library model is based on a catalog record for a single published item, traditionally a book. Currently, most libraries catalog their holdings in a database using MARC format, a metadata standard which allows for sharing cataloging across institutions. Generally, the catalog record is displayed in the library's online catalog and can be shared with other management systems. Figure 4.1 illustrates a catalog record using the library method—an entry for a single interview.

If you choose a public or academic library as a repository, it is likely that your oral history project will be cataloged this way.

AUTHOR (100)	Spencer, Dee,1954-, interviewee
TITLE (245)	Oral history interview with Dee Spencer, [electronic resource] /interviewed by Martha Dick and filmed by Don Dick, [2011].
NOTE (500)	This interview is one of a series about the Fourmile Canyon Fire of September 2010.
CONTENTS (505)	Fourmile Canyon Fire (houses burned, community response, evacuation, people who did not evacuate, return to burned area, aftermath of fire, housing during and after the fire, filing insurance claims, rebuilding after fire). Sunshine Canyon. Sunshine schoolhouse. Reflections on the meaning of home.
SUMMARY (520)	Dee Spencer, longtime resident of Sunshine Canyon, discusses the Fourmile Fire and the effects that it provoked, ranging from very personal to effects on the broader community. At the time of the fire, which consumed her house, she and her husband, Steve, were preparing to host their son's rehearsal dinner party for his wedding, which was to (and did) take place a little over a week after the fire. Spencer describes the morning of the fire, the surreal feeling of the experience, and its aftermath. She recalls the objects that she chose to take, those that others rescued for her, those that survived, and those that perished. Recounting the journey, she considers the concept of home, the importance of community and music in the healing process, as well as the transformative opportunity that can arrive even in the wake of such devastation.
TERMS OF USE (540)	Copyright restrictions applying to the use or reproduction of oral history interviews are available from the Carnegie Branch Library for Local History/Boulder Public Library.
LOCAL NOTE (599)	OH 1706. Audio file and time-indexed transcript available on-line. View DVD and time-indexed transcript at Carnegie Branch Library.

SUBJECT (600, 650, 651)	Spencer, Dee, 1954- Fourmile Canyon Fire – 2010. Wildfires – Colorado – Boulder County. Wildfires – Social aspects – Colorado – Boulder County. Sunshine (CO) Sunshine (CO) – History – Biography
GENRE (655)	Oral histories. Internet resources.
CREATOR (700)	Dick, Martha. Interviewer. Dick, Don. Videographer.
HOST COLLECTION (773)	Maria Rogers oral history collection.

Figure 4.1. Sample—Library Catalog Record

Note that this record describes a single oral history. The numbers in the left hand column refer to MARC fields catalogers use for organizing data. Source: Online Public Access Catalog, Boulder Public Library

Archives Model

Archival practice has developed parallel to, but until recently separately from, library practice. While librarians generally catalog *single items* of *published* materials, archives emphasize *collections* of *unpublished* materials. Archivists have traditionally described their collections through *finding aids*.

> A **finding aid** is a detailed description of a collection of related items, such as the interviews and associated documents comprising an oral history project.

Using this model, a group of related interviews such as those comprising an oral history project would be cataloged as a single entity. A good finding aid will contain all the essential information for the oral history project, a summary of the topics discussed, a list of interviewees' names, and other pertinent matter. Figure 4.2 illustrates a finding aid for a collection of oral histories.

AUTHOR (110)	Lama Foundation Oral History Project.
TITLE (245)	Oral history interviews of the Lama Foundation Oral History Project, 1970-2009, bulk 2005-2009.
DESCRIPT (300)	2 boxes (1.3 cu.ft)
DESCRIPT (351)	The collection is organized alphabetically by the interviewee's last name. In some cases the interviewee only went by a first name.
NOTE (520)	This collection contains oral history interviews documenting the history of the Lama Foundation. The collection's value lies in Lama being one of a few collectives from the 1960s still in operation today.
NOTE (524)	Cite as: Oral history interviews of the Lama Foundation Oral History Project, Center for Southwest Research, University Libraries, University of New Mexico.
NOTE (540)	Limited duplication of print and manuscript material allowed for research purposes. User is responsible for copyright compliance.
NOTE (545)	In 1967, Steve Durkee (who goes by Sh. Nooruddeen), Barbara Durkee (who goes by Asha Greer) and Jonathan Altman founded the Lama Foundation. They established a spiritual community "dedicated to the awakening of consciousness, spiritual practice with respect for all traditions, service, and stewardship of the land." At the time of its foundation, Lama was one of approximately thirty communes in Northern New Mexico. What makes Lama unique is its openness to multiple spiritual paths including Hinduism, Sufism, Christianity, Native American spirituality and Judaism. Rather than having a resident spiritual leader, a group of "residents" run the day-to-day operations as well as guide the spiritual attunement of the community. While all the other collectives and communes in northern New Mexico, and all but a very few in other U.S. locations, disbanded years ago, Lama endures. Its dedication to consensus decision-making, respect for the land and ecology, and spirituality, continues to invite and inspire new generations. Lama even endured after the Hondo Fire in 1996, which destroyed 20 out of 23 buildings and some of the surrounding Carson National Forest. The Lama Foundation decided to rebuild and thes efforts continue into the present. Lama remains a viable spiritual community.
NOTE (555)	Inventory available at the Center for Southwest Research and WWW folder level control.
SUBJECT (610)	Lama Foundation – History – Sources.
SUBJECT (650)	Spiritual retreat centers – New Mexico – History – Sources.
SUBJECT (650)	Communal living – New Mexico – History – Sources.
GENRE (655)	Sound recordings
GENRE (655)	Oral histories.
GENRE (655)	Interview.

Figure 4.2. Sample—Archives Finding Aid
Note that this record describes an entire collection of oral histories. Numbers on the left refer to MARC fields catalogers use for organizing data. Source: LIBROS Catalog, Center for Southwest Research, University of New Mexico, Albuquerque

Cataloging Terms

Catalog A container, usually a database, for catalog records that are related in some way, such as in a library, a digital archive, or a subject database. Records in the catalog can be searched and retrieved.

Catalog record The unit within a catalog that describes an item in a collection. In oral history, a catalog record usually defines a single oral history, that is, any number of interviews about a single person.

Cataloging system A system for managing collections of related works. The *Toolkit* uses this term to describe any system for cataloging oral histories—a paper or card file, spreadsheet, custom database, or commercial software package.

Finding aid The descriptive tool used by archivists to describe a collection of related archival materials. Finding aids generally have a hierarchical design, beginning with a description of a collection, followed by a series within the collection, and ending with item level descriptions within each series.

Information unit A term agreed upon to define an entity for the purposes of cataloging. In oral history an information unit could be an individual interview, a series of interviews of one person, or a collection of interviews.

Metadata Data about data. The sum total of information describing a resource, such as descriptive metadata entered by a cataloger; technical metadata generated by the computer; or administrative metadata concerning location of resource, access, and use privileges, entered by a curator. All the metadata is packaged in an "envelope" that travels with the digital resource throughout its life.

Metadata scheme A standardized set of database field definitions agreed upon by a professional or scholarly community, sometimes called a data dictionary. Metadata schema commonly used by catalogers are MARC, Dublin Core, and EAD. Currently, there is no metadata scheme for oral histories.

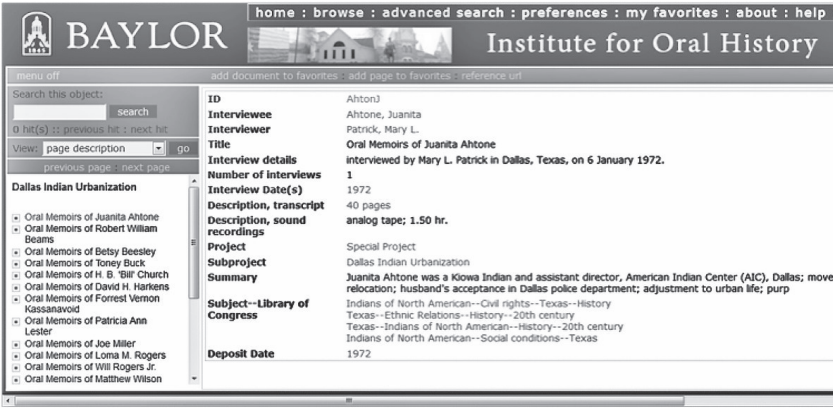

Figure 4.3. Sample—Catalog Record on the Internet
Source: Baylor Institute for Oral History, Digital Library Collections

Internet Model

Though the Internet is not a management system, it serves the purpose of connecting information to interested users. Advantages of an Internet cataloging system include global access, benefits of a universal search engine, multimedia possibilities, and hyperlinks to related information. In fact, the online catalog is probably the most common method of public access to oral history materials.

Many repositories make use of collection management software to present their oral history collections on the Internet. Figure 4.3 illustrates a catalog record using ContentDM (digital collection management software). This method has the advantage over the traditional online public access catalog (OPAC) in that it can easily integrate links to the resource itself and related materials. Note the list of related interviews displayed at the left, as well as hyperlinks to names and subjects within the record itself. Though there are many ways to provide access to oral histories on the Internet, this example most closely accomplishes the goals of a catalog record. Chapters 5 and 7 discuss other ways of using the Internet for presenting oral history.

The Cataloging System

Figure 4.4 illustrates the processes that lead to successful cataloging, whether it is done in a library, in an archive, or on the Internet. These processes interact to optimize the ability of the user to retrieve desired information.

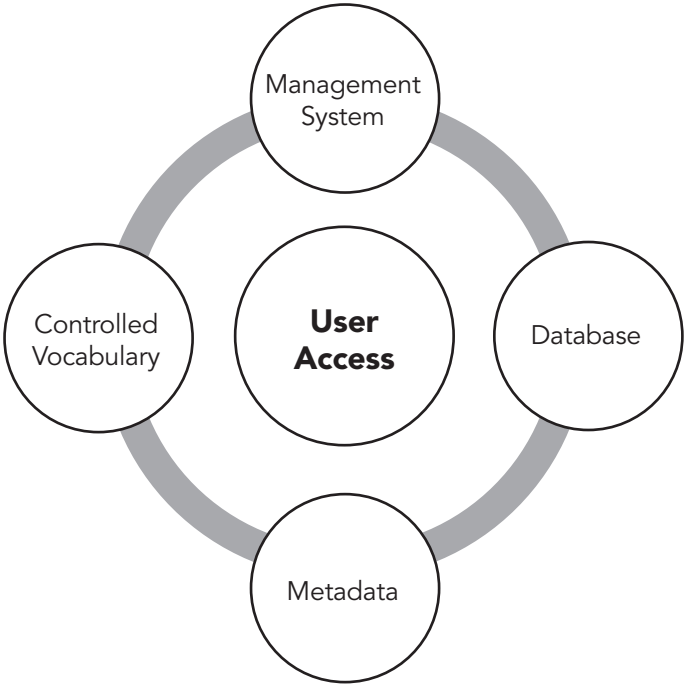

Figure 4.4. Cataloging System Components

Cataloging Management System

Cataloging begins with a management system for organizing all the information associated with the oral history project. Though a management system can be as simple as a loose-leaf note notebook or a drawer of 3" x 5" index cards, we usually think of a catalog as a computerized database with pre-defined rules, standards, and procedures for entering information. The *Toolkit* uses the term to describe any system for cataloging, whether paper or computerized.

Choose or design a cataloging management system that fits the needs, resources, and goals of your project. The three fictitious oral history projects used throughout the *Toolkit* vary in size and complexity (for details, see Appendices A, B and C) and therefore are useful for illustrating how different cataloging systems are suited to different types of projects.

Three Fictitious Community Oral History Projects

- *Project One—Volunteer* is a small, relatively informal neighborhood oral history project involving three to five interviews and depends mostly on volunteers.
- *Project Two—City* is a community oral history project done in partnership with a city. As a result, it receives assistance in personnel and resources from the city.
- *Project Three—Historical Society* is a pilot project used by a historical society to launch an oral history program, which in all likelihood will be ongoing for many years.

Card Cataloging Management System

This is the easiest system to implement and is not machine dependent. A card cataloging management system consists of a collection of 3" x 5" index cards. Information about each interview is recorded on one card, and the cards are then organized in alphabetical order by interviewee's name, though they can be re-sorted in any order. Each interview is assigned an interview ID number that is written on the card, the transcript, and the recording label, connecting all three related items for easy access. This system works best if the project is small and self-contained like Carmel-by-the-Sea (CA) Voices Oral History Project, which is our example for fictitious *Project One—Volunteer*. A card cataloging system will keep interviews organized until a repository is found and make it easy to add more interviews. Because of its simplicity volunteers can concentrate on doing oral history instead of learning a complex catalog management system.

Stand Alone Collection Management System

It Takes a Village to Make a City: Duluth (MN) Residents Speak Out is our example for fictitious *Project Three—Historical Society*. This project could make good use of a stand-alone collection management system such as PastPerfect or Archivist's Toolkit. A stand-alone system is a good fit for a historical society, because it is easy to use and volunteers can learn the system quickly and spend their time more productively doing oral history. Stand-alone cataloging systems have data structures compatible with larger integrated systems, so cataloging can easily be exported to another catalog-

ing system in the future. For a pilot project such as the Duluth project, this stand-alone solution will facilitate future export of cataloging to a state or regional digital repository and, if that doesn't happen, the stand alone system will serve project well.

Library Management System

Jazz Atlanta Oral History Project, our example for fictitious *Project Two—City*, is partnering with the local public library for the cataloging and archiving of their materials. In this case the library will use their existing library management system, relieving the oral history project from any involvement or decisions in this regard. All cataloging is done by the library and the oral history project is responsible only for preparing accurate information about each oral history using the Cataloging Work Sheet discussed later in this chapter. This solution works because the community oral history project and the public library share the common goal of supporting community.

Content Management System

A content management system (CMS) is a newer kind of system, basically a computerized database to organize information for online presentation and retrieval. A major advantage is that information describing an oral history can be selected and shared from one database to another. This solution requires a high level of information technology infrastructure and expertise but offers a lot of flexibility for sharing data. The project expertise in this situation would be concentrated at the administration level—in negotiating terms with repositories, developing specifications for metadata, and undertaking rights management.

Database

A database is an organizational tool that structures bits of information so each bit can be defined, indexed, edited, displayed, sorted, or exported, based on how the system is designed. Complex information systems operate through multiple databases working together, called *relational databases*.

A database is a "container" for *records* and *fields*. These are structured entities that can be individually manipulated. A record constitutes the *information unit*, as determined by the database designer or cataloging agency. For example, in an oral history database each oral history would be described in a single record. Similarly, in a library database information about each book would make up a record.

Each database record consists of fields. A field is a logical bit of information defined by the database designer. For example, in designing a database for

oral histories, fields might be defined for interviewer, interviewee, interview date, name of oral history project, and topic(s) discussed in the interview. Each field can be assigned certain rules such as how (or whether) it will be indexed, whether it will be displayed, whether it is required, or whether it can have multiple values. Usually, the database used for cataloging oral histories is predetermined, and neither the oral historian nor the cataloger is involved in its design. Figure 4.5 shows the structure of a database and the relationships among the components.

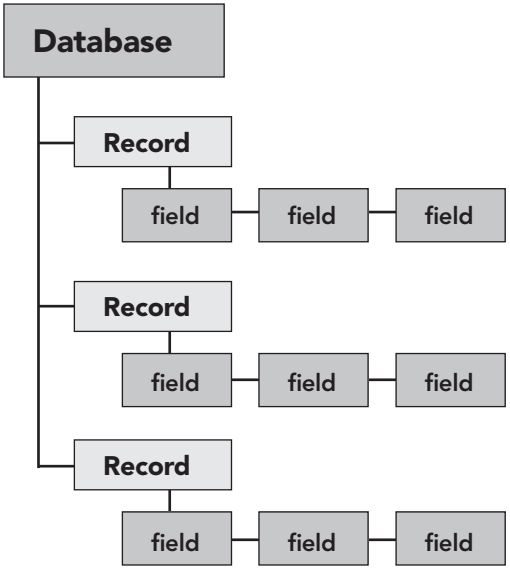

Figure 4.5. Database Components
Source: University of Idaho, Information Literacy portal
See http://www.webs.uidaho.edu/info_literacy/modules/module3/3_4.htm

Metadata

Metadata is a loose concept used to describe "information about information." Sets of field definitions designed and accepted by a user community are called metadata schema. MARC (designed for representing bibliographic material), Dublin Core (designed for describing digital resources), and EAD (designed for describing archival materials) are metadata schema commonly adapted for cataloging oral histories. One advantage of using a predetermined metadata scheme is that information can be easily exchanged from one system to another. Currently, there is no metadata scheme designed specifically for cataloging oral histories.

The oral history project is responsible for providing complete and accurate information for the catalog record.

Controlled Vocabulary

One of the wonders of being human is the ability to express complex thoughts through language. Humans naturally make sense of nuances in meaning, regional language variants, and irony. We mentally correct slight spelling errors when we read. We understand that Venice and Venedig refer to the same city, that when the words "French" and "fries" occur next to each other they take on a different meaning, that Samuel Clemens and Mark Twain refer to the same person. We know outright that St. Paul, MN, and Saint Paul, Minnesota, refer to the same city.

Not so with computers. Computers compare text literally, character by character. If you type "St. Paul, MN" into a search box and the term stored in the database is "Saint Paul, Minnesota" you will not get results.[10] This is where controlled vocabulary comes in.

Controlled vocabulary is a way to compensate for natural variants in language (or multiple languages) by defining one preferred term and linking it to variants.

Computers manage this internally, so that when a controlled vocabulary is in place, you can type "St. Paul, MN" in a search box and retrieve results based on any of the spelling variants.

A controlled vocabulary can be as simple as the list of terms we coauthors kept at our desks so that the three of us were consistent in the language we used in the *Toolkit*. Or it can be a sophisticated database of terms with synonyms, spelling variants, language variants, and related terms.

Why do oral historians need to know about controlled vocabulary?

Much of community oral history deals with undocumented areas of life: villages and neighborhoods that may not appear on maps, festivals or family customs that occur inside the home, and individuals who are not public figures. The local names—of people, places, organizations, and events—are important access points and research tools. Though interviewees don't always speak consistently—they may refer to Uncle Luke at one point and to Lucas Jarvis later on—controlled vocabulary within the cataloging record (not the transcript) can clarify the connection.

Variants	Standard
Personal Names	
Uncle John; John the banker; John Addams, Sr.; John Henry Addams	John Henry Addams, b. 1898-
Duckie Randall (high school nickname); D.H. Randall	Donald Henry Randall
Cecilia Chavez (birth name); Cecilia Chavez y Garcia (married name); Dr. Cecilia	Cecilia Chavez y Garcia, M.D.
Places	
Seattle Chinatown; Seattle International dist.; Chinatown and Asian district in Seattle	Chinatown-International District (Seattle, WA)
Rio Grande; Rio Grande River	Rio Grande
Saint Louis, Missouri; St. Louis	Saint Louis, MO
Dimond Dist.; Dimond District in Oakland; Dimond, Oakland	Dimond District (Oakland, CA)
Events	
Olympics in Squaw Valley; Olympics in the 1960s; Squaw Valley Olympics; Olympic Games, 1960	Olympic Games, 1960, (Squaw Valley, CA)
Berkeley Kite Festival; Kite Festival at the Marina; International Kite Festival; Berkeley Kite Fest	Berkeley Kite Festival

Table 4.1. Sample—Local Controlled Vocabulary

But remember, though language should be standardized in the cataloging and other printed materials, the speaker's words should not be changed in the transcript. Footnotes or a controlled vocabulary list accompanying the transcript can clear up ambiguities for the reader.

Table 4.1 illustrates how an oral history project may keep a running controlled vocabulary list that can be added to and edited by interviewers and transcribers. The left hand column, labeled "Variants," lists all the ways the term was used in interviews; the right hand column notes the agreed upon representation of the term in cataloging and other printed materials.

You will see how this works in the Cataloging Work Sheet, which is discussed in the following section. The top section is reserved for controlled fields. These entries, taken from the project's local Controlled Vocabulary (Table 4.1), can be verified by the cataloger and synced with a widely used vocabulary such as the Library of Congress Authorities.

Getting Started

Now that you understand cataloging basics, you can use the sample forms that follow to apply cataloging principles to your own project.

To identify the tasks applicable to your situation, begin with the Cataloging Planning Chart (see Table 4.2). The three columns at the right correspond to the cataloging solution that applies to your project. The Outside Repository scenario is most common for community oral history projects. In this case, we presume that professional catalogers will catalog oral histories for a library catalog, and the oral history project must simply prepare materials for cataloging. The In-House Repository scenario applies when the oral history project and the repository have the same parent organization. This is most common when an oral history project is conducted within a public library or historical society. The Self-Catalog scenario applies to oral history projects that do their own cataloging, for example, an independent project with short term goals, or a project that is cataloging as a temporary step before turning everything over to a larger repository.

Cataloging Step	Outside Repository	In-House Repository	Self-Catalog
1 Determine if cataloging will be computerized or paper. If paper, skip to step 6.			X
2 Determine type of management system (paper system, spreadsheet, database, or software package)			X
3 Set up organizational structure for management system (define fields)			X
4 Contact cataloger to explain project	X	X	
5 Complete the Cataloging Protocol with cataloger	X	X	
6 Begin the Local Controlled Vocabulary	X	X	X
7 Adapt the Cataloging Work Sheet to your needs	X	X	X

(*Continued on following page*)

Table 4.2. Cataloging Planning Chart

Table 4.2. Cataloging Planning Chart *(continued)*

Cataloging Step	Outside Repository	In-House Repository	Self-Catalog
8 For each interview complete: • Cataloging Work Sheet • Local Controlled Vocabulary	X	X	X
9 Deliver oral history materials to cataloger. Suggested package: • copy of the recording, labeled • signed Legal Release Agreement • transcript • Local Controlled Vocabulary • Cataloging Work Sheet	X	X	

Cataloging Protocol

Throughout the *Toolkit*, we emphasize the importance of communicating with partners, coming to an agreement, and getting that agreement in writing. This is especially important when developing new partnerships or when the goals are unclear at the outset. With this in mind, we suggest representatives of the cataloging agency and the oral history project meet in person to develop a cataloging protocol. The act of sitting down together and discussing the needs of each party will bring clarity and understanding to the project. Completing the Cataloging Protocol form together is a good way to begin the discussion.

Figure 4.6 illustrates the most common information included in such an agreement. Use or adapt this form to the needs of your oral history project and the repository responsible for the cataloging.

CATALOGING PROTOCOL		
PROJECT NAME Jazz Atlanta Oral History Project		
PROJECT CONTACT	**Name** Andrea Schmidt, Project Director, Jazz Atlanta	**Contact** XXXX
TRANSCRIBER CONTACT	**Name** Charles McIntyre, Special Collections Librarian, Atlanta Public Library	**Contact** XXXX

(*Continued on following page)*

Figure 4.6. Sample—Cataloging Protocol

Figure 4.6. Sample—Cataloging Protocol *(continued)*

ADMINISTRATIVE		
Organization Sponsoring Oral History Project City of Atlanta, Atlanta Public Library, Atlanta Jazz Festival		
# interviews 14	**Audio recordings?** yes **Video recordings?** no	**Transcripts?** yes **Format:** Transcripts delivered in paper and electronic format, 3 copies of each recorded interview delivered on DVDs.
Restrictions or special notes on access? Specify None		
Note: Signed legal release agreements for each interview must be approved by repository administrator before cataloging begins.		
CATALOG DETAILS		
Destinations for catalog records (include all catalogs, including website): Atlanta Public Library OPAC, Jazz Atlanta website, WorldCat. Project sponsors will seek additional repositories and work with catalogers on specifications for sharing catalog records.		
Expected completion date: Mid-March 2013		
Encoding format and standards: MARC, with mapping to Dublin Core. Will conform to Atlanta Public Library cataloging procedures.		
Information unit (interview or collection)? Item level cataloging. Each oral history (all interviews of a single person) constitutes an item.		
Controlled vocabulary instructions: Library standards for controlling headings, based on local vocabulary list provided by project.		
Constant data: Oral history project name: Jazz Atlanta Oral History Project. Genre heading: Oral histories.		
Special Instructions: None		
Completed by: **Name/Institution** Andrea Schmidt, Jazz Atlanta		**Date** XXXX
Name/Institution Charles McIntyre, Special Collections Librarian, Atlanta Public Library		**Date** XXXX

Cataloging Work Sheet

Use this form to record the information for each interview (see Figure 4.7). As mentioned earlier, the data fields are separated into "controlled fields" and "uncontrolled fields," meaning whether or not they are subject to a controlled vocabulary. This method of organization aids the cataloger, as she must treat these categories differently. Note the column in the upper right for the cataloger's checkmark indicating she has verified the controlled field entries against the repository's controlled vocabulary. You may notice that some of the information is repeated from other forms suggested in the *Toolkit*, but this work sheet is organized so that the cataloger can create a catalog record directly from the data as entered, without listening to the interview or reading the transcript.

CATALOGING WORK SHEET	
CONTROLLED FIELDS	VERIFIED
Interviewee's name (100) Harvey Mitchell	
Interviewer's name (700) Jason M. Stuart	
Sponsoring institution (710) Jazz Atlanta	
Subject – Personal names (600) Harvey Mitchell; Miles Davis; Duke Ellington; George Sheridan; Arlene Mitchell (mother); Gena Davis; Shoshona Mitchell (daughter – vocalist); Trevor Mitchell (son – percussionist)	
Subject – Corporate names (610) Jazz Atlanta; United States Air Force; Jazz at Lincoln Center, Vanguard Records	
Subject – Geographic names (651) Atlanta, GA; Biloxi, MI; Berlin, Germany; New York, NY; Los Angeles, CA	
Subject – Topics (650) Jazz; traditional jazz; church music; sharecropping families; family values, cancer patients; trumpeters; African Americans; African American jazz musicians	
Genre (655) Oral histories	

(*Continued on following page*)

Figure 4.7. Sample—Cataloging Work Sheet

Figure 4.7. Sample—Cataloging Work Sheet *(continued)*

UNCONTROLLED FIELDS	
Interview title (245)	Harvey Mitchell oral history
Physical description (300)	2 DVDs, each with a 60 minute audio interview. Transcripts included for both interviews.
Date and place of interview (518)	June 29, 2012, interviewee's home in Atlanta, GA.
Project title (740)	Jazz Atlanta Oral History Project
Project description (520)	The project is designed to tell the story of jazz in Atlanta through oral history. In addition to contributing video histories and transcripts to Atlanta Public Library, interview excerpts will be made available to local jazz clubs as a way of educating a jazz loving audience.
Interview summary (520)	Mr. Mitchell talked about his childhood in Mississippi in a sharecropping family, early musical influences within his family and church, his musical career, his marriage and family (4 children), the care of his elderly parents, his battle with lung cancer, and the lifelong conflict between his passion for music and his family responsibilities.
Biographical summary (545)	Mr. Mitchell was born in Biloxi, MI to a sharecropping family. His musical life centered around the church, where vocal music was predominant. He spent time in Germany in the Air Force, where he received his first trumpet. After the Air Force he married, settled in Atlanta, and worked as an electrician to support his growing family. He has played in Atlanta jazz clubs for over 50 years.
Keywords (653)	Café 290, Churchill Grounds, Studio 281
Prepared by XXX	Date XXX

The oral historian supplies the content of the catalog record; the cataloger provides the structure.

Cataloging is not high on the agenda when community members gather to plan an oral history project; in fact for many, it is not on the agenda at all. That is understandable, because in most cases the project team does not need to know more than the basics of cataloging; the real work is done by another agency.

Though project members don't need to know how to catalog, they should understand enough to make informed decisions about cataloging that will maximize access to oral histories now and far into the future. Be sure to put "arrange for cataloging" prominently on the project plan, and set up a procedure to record accurately and completely the information for cataloging. Your efforts to create protocols for quality cataloging will reward you in broad access to oral histories and satisfied researchers far into the future.

CHAPTER 5

Preservation and Access

BEST PRACTICE NO. 4

Understand the ethical and legal ramifications of oral history.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 9

Process and archive all interview materials to preserve them for future use.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 10

Take pride in your contribution to the historical record.

Oral historians need to recognize that doing the interviews is not the end but the beginning of the process.[11]

Does this statement catch your attention? I hope so. Oral historian Don Ritchie's observation may seem extreme to community oral historians, but in fact it is a wake-up call to start thinking like an oral historian. The statement is a reminder that your interviews are historical documents important enough to share with a wide audience both now and in the future. This chapter explains the process of preserving and providing access to your oral histories in repositories, and the part the oral historian plays. In other words, this chapter is about oral history as history.

Preservation, for oral history management purposes, refers to actions taken to stabilize and protect the oral histories and the interview information they contain.

Access means the ability of repositories to make the interview information available and to locate it through finding aids, catalogs, or websites.

Most preservation and access takes place at the institutional level, that is, by repositories whose purpose is to do just that. One of the most important tasks for a community oral history project is to find an appropriate repository and develop a close partnership. However, many community oral history projects practice preservation and access closer to home. We discuss local practices for preservation and access at the end of this chapter, but let's begin with some background on why oral histories belong in repositories and how these repositories work.

Overview

Oral History as History

Oral historians conduct interviews to record a snapshot of a given time and place in the present, a perspective on an event, or memories of a time gone by. One day our present will fade into the past. Historians of the future will study the documents they find in repositories that represent a particular time, place, event, or perspective to make sense of their present through the lens of the past. These documents will find new meaning over time and offer a new reference point in a time or place of the past. Hopefully, your oral histories will be among those available for these future historians.

Oral history is vitally important to the historical record. Here are some topics recently documented through oral history. Imagine how the meaning and value of interviews will increase over time, as a window into life at a certain time, place, and perspective.

- memories of traditional weaving techniques and patterns among the Hispanic and Native populations in northern New Mexico
- stories of displacement of a Chinese speaking community during an urban redevelopment project
- observations of climate change in a northern Alaskan community
- eyewitness accounts of the collapse of the World Trade Center in 2001
- interviews of campaign workers during the 2008 presidential election

Don't underestimate the contribution community oral historians make to the historical record. Oral history projects that originate and are conducted within a community, by community members, have the benefit of a perspec-

tive that could never be obtained from an outsider, and if the topic is carefully researched and the interviewers are well trained, these documents have equal research value to any other document in our libraries and archives.

About Repositories

A repository is a space with the equipment and environmental conditions appropriate for preserving materials that go into the historical record. Though a repository does not necessarily take on the task of access, most of the repositories that community groups encounter will do so.[12]

Chapter 1 lists the attributes to look for when selecting a repository for your oral histories. This chapter emphasizes the preservation and access qualities from that list, namely:

- space to properly store oral histories, the environmental conditions to keep them safe, and the staff to process and catalog them in a timely manner;
- reasonable access to materials; and
- long-term preservation management for the storage medium (paper transcript, disc, or digital file).

Traditionally, libraries and archives were the most common type of repository, but today museums, historical societies, and cultural centers join them in this role. As computer technology expands opportunities for information management and sharing resources, the distinctions among their institutional goals are blurring, and partnerships and resource sharing among them are increasingly common.

In the analog world, the tools and resources needed for *preservation* were quite different from those required for *access*, and institutions emphasized one or the other. Traditionally, libraries have emphasized access and archives have emphasized preservation. However, cross pollination of ideas and practices among institutions along with advances in computer technology have created an environment where both wide access and long term preservation can be achieved together.

One of the qualities that makes oral histories unusual from a curation standpoint is that they are created *intentionally* for a repository. This is quite different from the letters, diaries, and scrapbooks—personal items that were intended for only an intimate audience—that come to a repository purely by chance or from published books that are mass produced for broad distribution. This attribute is one of the reasons oral histories fall into a category of their own, with special needs for preservation and access.

What is the Difference Between a Library and an Archive?

Both libraries and archives are ancient institutions that, until recently, evolved in a separate but parallel manner. Both kinds of institutions share the dual purpose of preservation and access, though libraries emphasize access whereas archives emphasize preservation.

Libraries traditionally are repositories for *published books*, and their mission is to make their collections available to a wide audience. In most libraries, it's easy to walk in, browse the shelves, check something out, and take it home. This is because the items in library collections—books, CDs, and DVDs—are commercially produced, and if an item is lost, in theory it can be replaced. Libraries are organized at the *item level*, meaning that each title on the shelf is cataloged as a separate unit.

Archives traditionally collect *unpublished* works—one-of-a-kind documents and artifacts where the value lies in the uniqueness of the work. If a one-of-a-kind document is lost or damaged, it cannot be replaced, and for this reason access is often limited. Archives are generally organized around *collections of related documents*, rather than individual items. Managing archives is labor intensive, since every physical item must be accessioned, labeled, shelved, and cataloged, and every collection requires a certain amount of individual management.

Digital Repositories

Another wonder of the twenty-first century is the ability to provide both preservation and access electronically. A digital repository is a highly managed, sustainable network of servers that stores electronic files, with a search interface for accessing the content, and a plan for data management and refreshment. A true digital repository has the same responsibility to care for content as any other repository and should meet the same requirements. It often is accessed through a website, though websites and digital repositories are not the same thing.

A website is a point of access; a digital repository is a system for long term digital storage and must meet the same requirements for preservation as any other repository.

Digital repositories are likely to become a standard preferred repository for community organizations to contribute content, either as a supplement or a substitute for a physical repository. Currently, digital repositories operate as management systems for larger institutions and are not set up for direct contributions from community groups.

Voice Preserve. However, there is an exciting new initiative on the horizon that will allow community oral history projects to contribute directly to a digital repository. The Colorado Voice Preserve is a joint initiative of the Colorado State Library, History Colorado, and Colorado Humanities. It will serve as a digital repository for personal narratives. The website (http://voicepreserve.org/) describes how Voice Preserve will benefit community oral historians.

> *Imagine … a library that consists entirely of oral histories: interviews, first-hand recollections, personal narratives. Every interview is treated like a book—described and cataloged—and the recordings can be "checked out" online. Best of all, the intellectual content is linked to other resources that are held by other repositories statewide.*[13]

In this vision, masterminded by Colorado archivist Cyns Nelson, individuals and communities can contribute oral histories directly to the Voice Preserve repository following simple guidelines, thus eliminating the institutional middle-man. Though still in the planning stages, Voice Preserve will offer communities the opportunity not only to contribute oral histories directly to the repository but also to have them linked to related content.

Formats

Oral histories are collected, preserved, and accessed as audio, video, paper (transcript), digital files, or some combination of these. Each format has qualities that create challenges and benefits to the preservation and access of the content, and each format presents different challenges to repositories. Here are some considerations about the qualities of each.

Audio

Audio is the traditional format for recording interviews—the format that best captures the interviewee's spoken testimony. Digital audio formats are well understood in terms of preservation, and open file formats are widely available, as is software for recording, editing, and playback. Sound files are of reasonable size for modern computers and can be stored on CDs (though not permanently), flash drives, servers, or a combination of these. In addition, audio files can easily be streamed over the Internet, which makes for great access. The downside for audio as a preservation format is that it is machine dependent.

Video

Video is increasingly popular for recording and viewing oral history interviews. Obviously, video gives the viewer a much fuller impression of the interviewee through facial expressions, body language, and even the environment where the interview takes place. The pros and cons of using video are discussed in **Volume 2, *Planning a Community Oral History Project***, and the nuts of bolts of video recording interviews are discussed in **Volume 4, *Interviewing in Community Oral History***.

About Media-free Digital Files

Many of us are unaccustomed to working with materials we can't see or feel. It is possible to completely process born digital interview recordings without ever transferring them to a disc or any object we can hold in our hand. Project planners should discuss their comfort level with media-free processing and make recommendations accordingly about delivery of the digital file containing the interview. Many projects instruct the interviewer to burn the digital file onto a CD or DVD to deliver it to the project, just because it is easier to work with physical media. Other projects are comfortable working media-free.

In any case, planners should develop clear, specific instructions so the interview doesn't get destroyed. One of the dangers of working with digital files is that a recorded interview can be inadvertently deleted in a single keystroke. Digital recordings are especially vulnerable until copies have been made.

Geoff Froh, Deputy Director at Densho, the Japanese American Legacy Project, lists three reasons why video is difficult to manage: (a) video files are huge and require an expensive, complicated infrastructure to manage; (b) a video file is a complex object, containing (at the least) both audio and video tracks that need to be managed; and (c) the video industry is immature and formats are in flux. Standards are lacking for formats, media, and equipment, so information managers must stay abreast of fluctuations in standards and adapt procedures to conform to the industry.[14]

That is not to discourage you from recording interviews in video, but rather to encourage you to plan carefully if you do. If you manage video content within your project (as opposed to directly turning interviews over to a repository), then allocate resources for sufficient server space, multiple copies, and regular data refreshment, along with someone with the technical expertise to manage it.

About YouTube. YouTube is one of the best access tools in the world. Many oral history projects post interview excerpts on YouTube to publicize their projects and bring viewers to the project website. These short videos are an excellent way to engage viewers by inviting them to consider the topic of the interview. However, we encourage you to think of YouTube as a *means* to interest users, rather than an *end* in itself. Bring viewers to your website with a YouTube teaser, and then invite them to engage in a richer experience by reading/listening/viewing the full interview content and associated historical context you provide on the website. YouTube is not a preservation tool, and short excerpts do not serve history in the way complete interviews do.

Digital Files Are Fragile

We all love digital audio and video formats for their ease and flexibility in capturing, editing, sharing, reformatting, transferring, and playing back. But if you are new to working with digital files, be aware that a file—an entire interview—can be wiped out by a single unintentional keystroke. Managing digital files requires a different mindset from managing analog materials. Multiple back-ups and careful labeling are essential to guard against disaster.

Paper

Paper wins hands down as the favored format for both preservation and access. Over and over anecdotal evidence confirms researchers' preference for a printed transcript over a recording. Why? It is quicker to scan, material is arranged in a linear sequence, hard-to-hear portions of the recording are clarified, and proper names are spelled. This chapter discusses the value of a paper transcript from a preservation and access perspective.

Currently, paper is the most reliable preservation format for the small scale management needs of most community groups. Ink on paper has been proven to be stable over hundreds of years, with very little preservation intervention.[15] In addition, paper is not machine dependent, and is the obvious preservation choice where computers or electricity are not available.

Finally, paper is a physical, tangible material that we can see and feel. Most of us are more comfortable working with materials that we can hold on to. We can write notes on them arrange them in folders, copy them, or hand them to a colleague—all right before our eyes. For community projects of any size, we recommend you consider keeping paper copies of all transcripts, as well any important documents.

Remember the ultimate preservation principle: Make lots of copies and keep them in different locations.

Metadata

Metadata is a term used to describe all the information associated with a digital file such as an oral history interview. Chapter 4 discussed metadata in a cataloging context. Catalog information is called descriptive metadata and is used to describe the content and circumstances of the interview.

But other kinds of metadata are also attached to a digital file containing an interview, for example, computer generated data about formats and file size, preservation events when the file is reformatted or refreshed, and rights management information to note restrictions or special instructions on use of the interview. Metadata is generated from a variety of sources, both human and computer, and is packaged into an "envelope" that accompanies the interview digital file throughout its life cycle.

Community oral historians need to understand that metadata is information about the interview that travels with the interview digital file to provide the people and the computers using the file with the descriptive, administrative, preservation, and rights-management information relating to that particular file.

Preservation and Access Terms

Access The ability to make a resource available to an intended audience.

Historical record Any published work, document, or artifact that is historically significant and made available to the public.

LOCKSS Lots of Copies Keeps Stuff Safe A fundamental principle in preservation and access management based on the principle that creating multiple copies optimizes the likelihood that the content will be safe even if one copy is destroyed.

Machine dependent Any resource in a format that requires a machine to be accessed. Interview recordings are machine dependent, though paper transcripts are not.

Metadata Data about data, that is, any information about an information resource.

Open file format File formats that are freely exchanged and easily readable by all computers.

Preservation The steps required to care for physical and digital resources far into the future.

Repository A space for physical items or computer servers with the environmental conditions and management plan for preserving these materials far into the future.

What Community Oral Historians Need to Know

What about preservation and access close to home? Community groups can do a great deal to utilize their own resources to create access tools and a preservation plan that meets their needs.

Practice LOCKSS

LOCKSS is an acronym for Lots of Copies Keeps Stuff Safe.[16] This principle goes back to Thomas Jefferson, who wisely noted, "Let us save what remains not by vaults and locks which fence them from the public eye and use … but by such a multiplication of copies, as shall place them beyond the reach of accident."[17] Indeed, it makes sense, both for access and preservation, to create many copies in many formats for a variety of users. This principle is straightforward

and easy for small communities to follow. It is inexpensive, easy to understand, easy to implement, and better yet, it fulfills the goals of *both* preservation and access. Making copies of interviews and other major documents will ensure that, if one copy is lost, others will be there to take its place. The following three steps take this principle even further to stave off possibilities of loss.

- *Make copies in different formats*. Making copies in different digital formats, for example, in .mp3, .wav, .ogg, will guard against obsolescence, or the possible licensing restrictions that accompany proprietary formats.
- *Make copies on different media*. We used to have faith in CDs as a preservation medium, but now we know better. Nobody is sure about DVDs. And what about zip drives, floppy discs, mini-discs, and all the other media carriers that cannot be used for one reason or another? Though the industry is maturing, digital media has not been proven by the test of time. Therefore it pays to create copies on a variety of best-trusted media.
- *Save copies in different physical locations*. We can make lots of copies and keep digital files on servers or media, and have paper copies to boot, but if all are kept in the same room and there is a theft, flood, fire, or other disaster, all will be lost. It only makes sense to keep copies in separate locations. By offering oral histories to multiple repositories you are practicing both preservation and access.

Access within the Community

Most community groups will find their most important audience right at home. This audience—your own community and neighboring ones—will appreciate a welcoming environment for using the oral history materials. Here are some ideas.

- *User copies*. Make attractively packaged user copies of the transcript, audio CD, or video DVD. Allow for checkout and return, or make copies by request.
- *Reading/Viewing/Listening room*. Does the community have a suitable physical space? If so, turn part of it into a reading/viewing/listening area that is comfortable, quiet, and welcoming. Invite community members and the general public to make use of this space.
- *Outreach*. Organize programs with senior centers or schools to introduce oral history and share interviews through readings, informal theater, or better yet, engage the audience in an interactive program using interviews.

- *Special needs*. If the community is multi-lingual, include publicity materials in multiple languages. Consider adaptive devices for visually or hearing-impaired community members. Better yet, ask students or interns to translate transcripts or create sub-titles to interviews, create closed captions on video recordings, or read transcripts directly to interested users.
- *Education*. Use interviews as the basis for an ongoing community dialogue. Set up a forum where interviewees can talk about their experience and the audience can respond. Such discussions may lead to a new oral history project or another program that will engage the community. Chapter 7 has ideas for setting up a community archive.

Community Oral History and the Internet

It's no secret that the Internet is the best tool in the world for reaching a broad audience. Not only can a website make oral histories available to anyone with Internet access, but the power of search engines, social media, and linked data will increase the ability of your website to attract viewers over time. Most oral history projects today have some presence on the Internet, but the kind of presentation varies widely, depending on the project's goals, resources, partnerships, and interest in attracting a wide audience. Here are some ideas for using the Internet for access.

- *Facebook page*. This is surely the easiest and quickest way to establish an Internet presence, and when used effectively, will get the most benefit for your effort. Be proactive in inviting people to join the page, and ask them to share on their own wall. The network will grow organically, bringing people to your project through friends of friends of friends. A Facebook page works best in conjunction with a blog or website, so you can post a pointer to more detailed content.
- *Blog*. A blog, short for "web log," is an inexpensive and easy way to create and maintain an attractive website. The learning curve for creating blogs is short and community projects often find a member interested in maintaining it. Though blogging software provides for static content, multimedia, and links to related content, its primary benefit is to develop community through regular blog entries and comments.
- *Piggybacking onto an existing website*. Does your community group already have a website? If so, then why not ask to create a section for your oral history project directly from this website? Everyone benefits—the group, because it can display the great new project it is associated with, and the oral history project, because it avoids the

time, expense, and technical demands of finding a web host server and designing a website from scratch.

- *Static website*. Perhaps you want a simple website that describes the project, provides historical background, explains how to access the oral histories in a physical space, and provides contact information. A static website presents information that doesn't change often. You can design it and leave it alone. To create a static website you need a host server, a domain name, and an initial design, but it doesn't have to be actively maintained. This website could be created by a community member or a student.
- *Dynamic or interactive website*. This kind of website includes the full range of Internet capabilities that would be useful to an oral history project—streaming audio or video, possibly synced to transcripts; search and browse features to explore the collection; links to related data within the site; user comments; and many more features. This high-end website model is expensive and technically sophisticated, usually beyond the means of a community oral history project. However, it something to keep in mind, if the chance should come along, as it is surely the gold standard for access.

Preservation and access are not at the top of the agenda for most oral history projects. They seem far away from the task of conducting the interviews intended to achieve a specific outcome in the near future. But community oral historians learn a lot along the way, and most find the oral history process has a much greater impact on the participants than they had ever imagined. They realize that the oral histories deserve to go into the historical record, to live beyond the time and place in which they were created, and by the end they understand the importance of oral history as history. So, take the time to create a plan for preservation and access so that the interviews you have so carefully conducted can be shared widely, both in the present and the future.

CHAPTER 6

Winding Up

BEST PRACTICE NO. 2

Focus on oral history as a process.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 3

Cast a wide net to include community.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 10

Take pride in your contribution to the historical record.

Interviews are completed successfully, forms and records are filed away, and the entire oral history team is justifiably satisfied with a job well done. You have accomplished a great deal both for your community and for the sake of history. Maybe this is the end of an oral history project with a specific duration, maybe it is the end of one phase and you are energized to begin the next, or maybe the question of what's next is still hanging in the air.

Just as this volume began with a call for a mid-project assessment, so too at the end, when all—or almost all—steps are completed, is it time to come together, celebrate, evaluate, and reflect. The project director should take responsibility for tying up loose ends, creating a sense of closure for participants, finalizing the archiving of the oral histories, and publicizing the project.

Administrative Tasks

For most people, administrative details are a necessary evil, tasks to get out of the way in order to move on to something more interesting.

ADMINISTRATIVE TASKS ONCE PRESERVATION AND ACCESS ARE IN PLACE

- ✓ Outstanding issues with interviews
- ✓ Permanent contact
- ✓ Project infrastructure
- ✓ Master files
- ✓ Acknowledgement
- ✓ Announcements, publicity

Let's review these tasks to make sure all the loose ends for your project are resolved.

Outstanding issues with interviews

It is rare that every step is completed successfully for every interview by the target completion date. Perhaps one interviewer forgot to get the Legal Release Agreement signed, or perhaps a copy of the recording didn't come out well and has to be redone, or perhaps the interviewee left town without reviewing the transcript. These are common glitches in executing the work plan, but every detail should be attended to before the project is considered complete.

Review your records to determine that *all* processing steps have been completed for *all* interviews. If there is any step that isn't completed, make a note of the reason why and what action should be taken. Keep plugging away until every processing step for every interview is completed or otherwise noted.

Permanent contact

It is likely that people will become interested in your project long after it is completed. Designate one person from the project to handle inquiries into the future. Give this person's name and contact information to the repository, the parent organization, and any other source that may receive inquiries.

Project infrastructure

What will happen to the recording equipment and computers? What about the mailing address, email account, and phone numbers? Will the office space be retained? Sometimes the decisions relating to this sort of thing are simple and informal; other times they require discussion or negotiation. Make a list of these final tasks and check them off one by one; otherwise they will come back to haunt you.

Master files

Determine what will happen to *every* document. Some can be tossed when the project is complete, others kept for a limited number of years, while still others should be kept indefinitely. We recommend that projects keep copies of interview recordings, signed Legal Release Agreements, and transcripts for each interview, in addition to the administrative documents.

There is not always a clear answer to where and how master files should be stored. Repositories and parent organizations are reluctant to keep files of a project that has ended. Master files may be entrusted to a team member who can offer safe home storage or placed in commercial storage.

Acknowledgement

There is no limit to the gratitude owed to all participants in the project, especially the interviewees but also the donors, volunteers, and members of the community who have contributed time, money, and expertise. They all should be thanked informally by the team members they worked with and formally by the project director on behalf of the project.

Announcements, publicity

Once the project is complete it is time to announce it to the world. Use this opportunity to promote history as a way of giving back to the community where it originated. Create a catchy press release that can be adapted for a variety of media outlets. Direct people to your website, to the interviews in the repository, and to any public events relating to the project. Write articles in newsletters and newspapers.

Documentation

It may seem like overkill to write a manual for the oral history project once it is complete. Yet, there are many good reasons for doing this: you will have a concise record of the project's life, it can be a starting point for future oral history projects, it brings a sense of closure to the project, and it may help gain funding in the future.

The Oakland Chinatown Oral History Project (OCOHP) Project Manager Angela Zusman created a manual for the project after its completion. She reports, "An excellent way to document your own process for posterity is to create a manual for how you went about the project. This will not only help the next team pick up where you left off but also serves as a central organizing place for all the materials generated by the project, from forms to question lists, brochures to photographs."

Sample Project Manual Table of Contents

Introduction

1. Sponsoring Institution
2. Mission and Project Description
3. Project Relevance
4. Project Team

The Project

1. Preparation
2. Community Advisory Committee
3. Define Project Goals
4. Selecting Interviewees
5. Recruiting Youth Interviewers
6. Developing Interview Questions
7. Youth Interview Workshop
8. Create Interview Teams
9. Interview Process
10. Pre-Interview Meeting
11. Interview—Day of Preparation
12. Conducting Interview
13. Post-Interview
14. Field Trip
15. Interview Transcripts
16. Archives
17. Public Event
18. Exhibit
19. Community and Media Outreach
20. Youth Engagement
21. Wrap-Up
22. Learning Lessons

Appendices

1. Project Resource List—Books
2. Consent Form
3. Youth Recruitment Flyer
4. Youth Recruitment Presentation Materials
5. Interview Questions—General Template
6. Interview Questions—Customized List
7. Youth Interview Workshop Schedule
8. Youth Interview Workshop Handout
9. Post-Interview Questions
10. Public Event Schedule and Materials
11. Project Brochure
12. Suggestion Form
13. Agreement to Loan Form

14. Press Release
15. Public Service Announcement
16. Newspaper Articles About Project
17. Project Event Flyer (with event date)
18. Sample Thank You Letter
19. List of All Items in Project Collection[18]

Reflection

Everyone involved in an oral history project knows that the personal rewards go far beyond the production of interviews for the historical record, though that in itself is an ample reward. It is likely that deep friendships have formed; technology, interviewing, and project management skills have been developed; doors have been opened to new resources within the community; and perhaps sensitive topics not previously discussed are now out in the open.

This can be a time of mixed emotions for the team and a fertile period for new ideas based on reflections and lessons learned. It is a great time to gather team members together for a reflective and celebratory meeting while the experience is fresh in their minds. Include the *entire* team—present and past team members, volunteers, and interns. Everyone has an important perspective. Consider the following as the group reflects.

- *Community knowledge gained.* What did you learn about your community from the project? Were community events uncovered that take on new significance at this time? Did you discover individuals or sub-groups within the community that were previously unknown to the project? Did unexpected tension crop up between individuals? Did you find a new twist to a well-known event in the community's past? Suggest that team members follow up on new knowledge, either through oral history or other kinds of community documentation.
- *Lessons learned.* Surely every team member had moments when they realized, "Ah, if I had only known ahead of time….". Encourage everyone to come to the meeting with a list of lessons learned. Make a note of each comment and how it might be useful in designing a new oral history project; then include lessons learned in the project documentation.

- *Networks*. No doubt you have formed new contacts and partnerships with community organizations throughout the project. Whether it be a repository for archiving interviews, a historical society for background research, a community college for video expertise, a local newspaper for publicity, or the local copy center for copying transcripts, these organizations are now all part of your community network. Add them to your contact list, keep in touch, and be sure to send them an acknowledgement.
- *Acknowledgements*. Reflect with your group on the support the project has received from the community. Perhaps each team member can contribute names of people and organizations that supported him or her personally, and a single list can be developed at the meeting. This exercise will visually demonstrate the magnitude of the support system. Consider support in terms of training, participation by interviewees, technical support, financial donations, in-kind donations, and volunteers. Be sure to make the appropriate acknowledgements to each person or organization, and remember that including them in the project is a reward in itself.
- *What's next?* Maybe it is enough to bring the project to closure and for team members to move on, or maybe the project director sees an opportunity to build on the energy and enthusiasm to plan another project. Step back and consider the energy level of the group, the resources at hand, and the community's interest in oral history, and decide if now is the time to talk about what is next.

Inquiries from Researchers

Whether or not you donated oral histories to a repository, sooner or later interested people will want to seek out project participants directly and will find their way to the project's permanent contact person. Interest can come from sources as diverse as a local newspaper reporter in need of quote, a researcher from another country doing a comparative study, and another community group seeking advice about beginning an oral history project.

Most of the time oral history projects do not deal directly with research requests. If interviews have been donated to a repository and copyright has been transferred, research requests should be referred directly to the repository, where procedures for reading/listening/viewing and for quoting from the interviews are well established.

Nevertheless, every now and then community oral history projects will work with researchers, either formally or informally. This is a part of com-

munity outreach, and most community groups encourage this contact. Remember though, that legal permission to use parts of oral histories can only be given by the copyright holder, no matter who conducted the interviews. If the project has retained copyright, then permission to quote must be given in writing, and projects should keep files on what sections are so used.

Permission to quote from the interview must be obtained from the copyright holder.

Public Events

Most community oral history projects originate with the idea of a public event such as an anniversary celebration, a panel discussion, or simply a community party. It can be large or small, formal or informal. Whatever form it takes, it should (a) include the *entire community* and (b) pay special tribute to the interviewees and their contributions to the community's collective history.

Building Community through Oral History

By now you are likely convinced that it takes a village to conduct a community oral history project. Everyone involved contributes skills and perspective to make the project unique. Here are some ideas for using oral history to give back to the community after the project has concluded.

- *Honor the interviewees.* Keep in mind the impact the interview experience can have on the interviewees. This may be the first time someone has sat down with them and simply listened. Many interviewees begin the process believing they have nothing important to say, but end it with a deeper understanding of their place in history and pride to be part of it. Sometimes the interview can trigger a new direction in the interviewee's life. Sometimes a bond is formed between the interviewer and interviewee that adds a new dimension to each of their lives.
- *Get young people involved*. As time goes by, the oral histories themselves will become historical documents. Young generations will find the stories—details and anecdotes about their own community of a time gone by—both a curiosity and a connection to their own past. References to daily life, such as using a rotary phone or a fountain pen,

will provide youth with a point of reference for their own lives, not just through history textbooks but within their very own community. Teachers and youth leaders can be encouraged to use interviews as teaching tools. Interviewees might be neighbors or relatives of the students, and the interviews can open up dialogue within families and among neighbors, where a blank wall existed before.

- *Use interviews to strengthen community*. There is no reason for oral histories to sit in an archive and wait to be discovered. Interviews can be used in all kinds of creative ways over time to build community spirit, enhance understanding of community history, and build bridges among marginalized populations or between generations. Chapter 7 offers examples of creative uses of oral history interviews, ways to keep the spirit alive or revive it long after the interviews are complete.
- *Create a community archive*. Consider building a community archive around the oral history interviews. It could call attention to the project and give it a physical space. Community members could contribute photographs and other memorabilia. Not only would these donations build the archive, but they also would give community members a stake in the archive. This idea is especially useful if the community has a space where members gather regularly, such as a senior center or church.

  Here are some tips from a project manual for the Halls High View Park Archive Project in Arlington, VA.[19]

  — Establish a Friends Group to advise and guide the archive to fruition.

  — Secure a space for the archive and obtain bookshelves, viewing and listening equipment, and all the other physical materials necessary.

  — Assign the job of staffing it to a single person with the role of "community archivist."

  — Create written policies for using oral histories and be clear about following them. This can have legal implications.

  — Train community members in interview techniques and continue to collect interviews.

  — Build the archive through donations of photographs, books, videorecordings, and newspaper clippings related to the community oral history project.

Like any ending, the conclusion of an oral history project can be an emotional time for team members. They may feel relieved to have completed all those time consuming tasks, exhilarated for having done a great job on a project that will have lasting impact, or frustrated that not quite everything was accomplished that they had hoped.

As time passes the oral histories will take on a life of their own. Scholars, students, and artists from inside and outside the community will come across them and use them, either directly or as inspiration for their own creative works. Newspaper obituaries of interviewees are inevitable, but interviewers can think back to the interview, to the laughter and sadness expressed as that person told a story that is now shared in the historical record. As the years go by interviewers, administrators, transcribers, and technical experts will move on to other projects, and apply the skills and experience learned by doing oral history to do their own work. This is the gift of oral history that keeps on giving.

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CHAPTER 7

Using Oral Histories

BEST PRACTICE NO. 3

Cast a wide net to include community.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 4

Understand the ethical and legal ramifications of oral history.

BEST PRACTICE NO. 10

Take pride in your contribution to the historical record.

At this point the oral histories—the documents you worked so hard to create—should be deposited into repositories for safekeeping, cataloged so researchers can find them, and made available for public use in a physical repository and on the Internet. Now that they are safely archived, it's time to think about fun and creative ways to use them.

Keep in mind the important distinction that too often gets blurred in oral history work: the distinction between creating primary sources for the historical record (the unedited interviews that go into a repository) and creating secondary works based on the oral history interviews. These are two important, but entirely different, processes.

Most community oral history projects begin with an immediate goal such as marking an anniversary or documenting the history of an organization. Often the project culminates in a public event such as an exhibition, performance, or educational program. These are the outcomes where community projects excel, and they can serve to bring the community together and enhance understanding among generations or cultures.

The Distinction Between Primary Sources and Secondary Works

- Interviews are primary documents that should be preserved in their original form for the sake of history, without changes or editing.
- Exhibits, theater pieces, books, etc. are secondary works—spin offs that use excerpts from the interviews, interpret the content in artistic works, or simply derive inspiration from the interviews.

But once the project is complete, the interviews are archived, and the public event is over, the oral histories need not be forgotten. Interviews can take on a new life by using audio or video excerpts, sections from the transcript, or even ideas inspired by the content, in new and creative ways. Projects based on oral histories can instill enthusiasm and remind the community of their shared past long after the project is complete.

This chapter describes six ways that oral histories have been used to create interesting and informative secondary works (see Figure 7.1) and provides an example for each one. You will see that each example serves to galvanize community through shared experience, stronger identity, and community understanding.

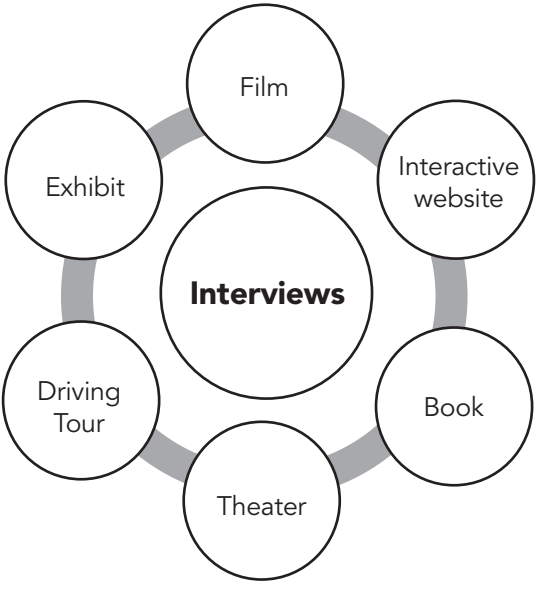

Figure 7.1. Using Oral Histories

Figure 7.2. Fourmile Canyon Fire. Photo credit: Sam Sussman

Film

Of our five senses, humans find that sight evokes the strongest and most lasting response. With this in mind, it is only natural that documentary filmmakers combine the visual power of film and emotional power of story to create successful documentaries using oral history. In recent years filmmakers have joined the ranks of oral historians, and both fields have benefitted from the cross pollination of techniques and perspectives. One of the best known films using interviews is Spike Lee's 2006 documentary on the aftermath of hurricane Katrina, *When the Levees Broke: a Requiem in Four Acts*.

The example that follows illustrates the power of oral history through the medium of film. On Labor Day weekend of 2010, the Fourmile Canyon Fire broke out in the mountain communities west of Boulder, CO, burning more than 6,000 acres and 169 structures, forcing residents to evacuate. This twenty-three-minute documentary conveys the impact of the fire on residents, as interviewees talk about what they decided to take with them when evacuating.

PACKED: A Film about People, Fire, and Possessions

PACKED grew out of an attempt to convey an emotional response to trauma. Filmmaker Angie Burnham recalls that the oral history component began even before the idea of a film emerged. "During the fire I was volunteering at a donations store for the evacuees and overheard folks talking about the items they needed to replace. With the words and images of the evacuees in my mind, I ran into a friend who is a writer, and suggested she write her next book about the fire and interview evacuees about what they took away with them. She turned to me and said, 'You do it!' I took her words to heart, and decided film was more my medium." Several weeks later Angie had assembled a team and the film project was born.

Collaborator Mary Ann Williamson reflects on the concept: "We didn't want to make a conventional documentary about the fire, but rather something that would tell the human story. We focused on how people decide what to take away when faced with an order to evacuate, thus the title of the film. We started shooting only six weeks after the fire, at a time when people really needed to talk about it, so we got much more material than we planned for."

Mary Ann's background in journalism and video production served her well for this project. When asked why film is a good medium to tell this particular story, Mary Ann replied, "Film is a 'close-up' medium resulting in an intimate and emotional way of communicating. We wanted to feature small stories about a big event, so it seemed logical to use this very personal medium to tell very personal stories." Thirty-five interviews were filmed using a state-of-the-art high-definition video camera, the camera microphone for ambient sound, and a lavalier microphone for each interviewee.

Mary Ann describes three distinct stages in filmmaking: pre-production, production, and post-production. In *pre-production*, the framework for the project is created. The project is researched, a script is written, schedules and budgets are created and approved, interviewees are selected, interview questions are prepared, funds are secured, the production crew is selected, and agreements and contracts are negotiated and signed. In the *production* stage, the actual visual and audio components are created. Interviews are conducted and filmed, music is selected, and graphics are created. In the *post-production* stage, the visual and audio elements are combined through editing to create the final film.

She cautions, "A community filmmaker almost always has to wear many different hats: producer, director, fund-raiser, editor, promoter, and publicist. In general, you need to be passionate enough about the subject of the film to see it through from concept through completion. It is also important to be able to balance a vision of the project with a willingness to go where the film leads you."

Though Angie had envisioned an oral history format from the beginning, she had not thought about archiving interviews. After the first round of filmed interviews, a chance phone call led her to the Maria Rogers Oral History Program in Boulder. Program Director Susan Becker was excited about the idea and a partnership was immediately formed. Susan helped with screening venues, developed a Legal release Agreement, and managed the transcription and archiving. As a result of this partnership, all the interviews from *PACKED* are preserved at the Boulder Public Library's Carnegie Branch for Local History. Transcripts are available online.

Angie is convinced of the importance of archiving the interviews collected for this film, so researchers can get the full story along with its context. She recalls, "When making a film the interviews are manipulated through the editing process to achieve the effect the filmmaker wants. Archiving the complete interview allows others to understand the narrator's [interviewee's] full memories and perceptions of past observed events which I believe is crucial for recording community history."

The local community embraced this effort more than the filmmakers could have imagined. Support included a grant from the City of Boulder, a partnership with the Maria Rogers Oral History Program, a screening venue and publicity from the Boulder Public Library, donations of skills and services from local musicians and videographers, and financial and emotional support from friends and strangers within the community. Mary Ann recalls, "The people of Boulder were stunned at the scope and ferocity of the fire, and were looking for a way to help out. Once the word got out, the film began to take on a life of its own."

The filmmakers share the following lessons learned for community oral historians considering a film.

- *Distribution*. Unless you work with a commercial distributor, independent filmmakers must arrange for screenings. Think broadly about screening opportunities, beginning with your own community.
- *Festivals*. Many films festivals require that films submitted are not currently being screened. If you plan to submit your film to a festival, hold off on distribution.
- *Music*. Don't underestimate the importance of music and sound effects. Begin searching for music within the community. Local musicians may be delighted with the opportunity to participate in a community film.
- *Publicity*. Promote your film shamelessly within your community. You'd be surprised how willing local media outlets are to promote and publicize a film about a local event, created by local residents.

Mary Ann was surprised by her own emotional response to making this film, "I think in bearing witness to what these people had been through, I began to not only understand it but to feel it. I wanted to know what had happened to them during the fire, and I wasn't prepared for the depth and breadth of the experience that the interviewees shared with me. It touched me in a very emotional way."

Interactive Website

The Internet is the world's greatest tool for sharing information and connecting people. It has forced us to revisit our ideas about community, as virtual communities are formed around shared (and often obscure) interests. The Internet offers three features that enhance the presentation of oral histories: ability to reach a wide audience, the ability to link related information, and multimedia capabilities.

The following example utilizes all three of these features to create an interactive website for presenting personal stories within a spatial context. The Chinatown Memory Map matches excerpts from oral histories to particular locations on a map of Oakland, CA, Chinatown, connecting a person to a place, within a point in time.

Chinatown Memory Map, a Secondary Outcome of the Oakland Chinatown Oral History Project.

In 2006 Anne Huang, then Executive Director of the Oakland Asian Cultural Center (OACC), observed a need to build bridges among the diverse sub-communities within Oakland's Chinatown. Youth and elders; new immigrants and second or third generation residents; Chinese, Korean, Japanese, Filipino, and Vietnamese groups all mingle at home, work, and school within this complex community. Anne felt that oral history would be a good tool to increase understanding through face-to-face conversations between elders and youth. The result was the Oakland Chinatown Oral History Project (OCOHP).

During the spring and summer of 2007, eleven high school students were trained as interviewers. They worked in pairs to conduct video interviews with ten elders who lived or worked in Oakland Chinatown throughout the 1940s to the 1970s. Interviewees included an artist, a journalist, an architect, a doctor, a teacher, a real estate developer, and the City of Oakland's vice mayor, representing the various ethnic groups within Oakland Chinatown.

The youth interviewers were greatly impressed by the elders' personal stories of early life in Chinatown. Likewise, the interviewees gained a greater

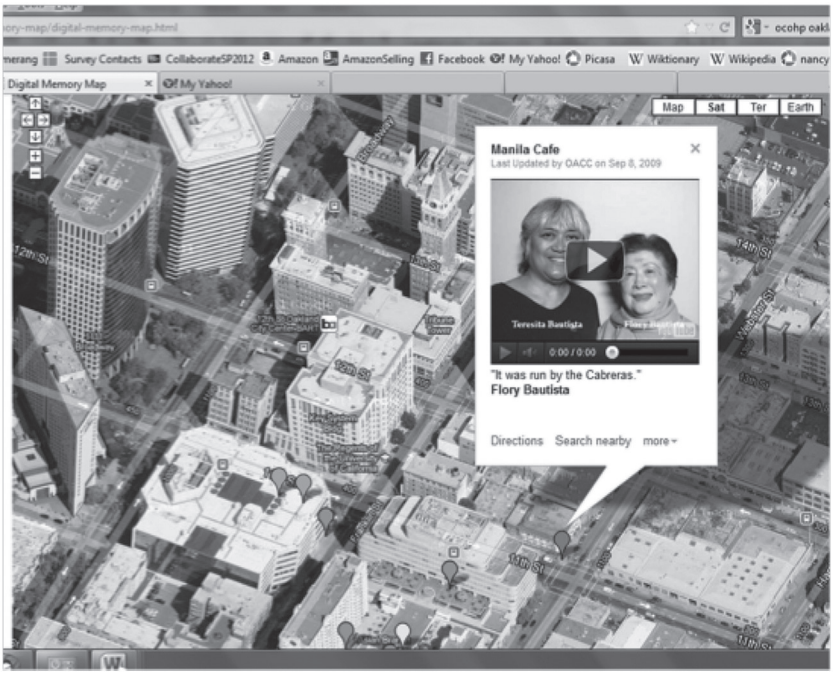

Figure 7.3. Oakland Chinatown Memory Map.
Source: http://memorymap.oacc.cc/memory-map/digital-memory-map.html

understanding and appreciation for the younger generation. One of the most unexpected and positive outcomes of the project is that doors to communication opened up between the generations in the participants' own families, as grandparents and grandchildren gained a new respect for each other.

After the interviews were processed and deposited in several local libraries, the OCOHP advisory team began brainstorming for a next phase to build upon the success and enthusiasm of the initial project. At this point Roy Chan joined the team. Roy has a degree in city planning and had previously developed a digital mapping project for New York City's Chinatown.

As the advisory team sat around a table, Roy laid out a printed enlargement of a Google map of Oakland Chinatown. He asked the group to think about their experience in Oakland Chinatown in regards to place. Where did you live? Where did you go to school? What park did you play in as a child? Where did your mother shop? Where was your first date?

With these memories in mind, Roy asked the group another question: From what decade is your memory? Then he handed out color coded dots—a different color for each decade—to place on the location where the mem-

ory occurred. A visual representation of a community of memory emerged with both chronological and spatial references, right there on the Google map. Thus, the Memory Map Project was born.

The advisory team loved the idea and Roy proceeded. He created an online memory map to connect excerpts from the original oral histories to real places in Chinatown, with color coded bubbles to indicate the decade of the memory. As Figure 7.3 illustrates, a click on a bubble will display a video clip of the interviewee talking about something that happened at a particular location. Viewers can add their own memories through an email submission page.

The project aims to reach not only a wide audience online but also the local Chinatown community who may not use the Internet. Roy created a physical counterpart to the Memory Map in the lobby of the Cultural Center. Similar to the online map, people can record memories on a slip of paper and insert them in a box next to the location, along with a color coded pin to mark the decade.

The Memory Map was created through widely available free software. Accessible through the OACC website, it resides on Google Maps technology as an interactive base map. Clips from the video interviews were made using iMovie and posted to YouTube. Photographs were uploaded into Picasa, and then linked to the site. Locations were marked on Google maps with interactive bubbles that linked to corresponding photo, video, or text about that place over time.

According to Roy Chan, the Memory Map idea "represents the power of combining mapping, personal stories, and web-based technology to promote social awareness and change. The project is organic, ongoing, self-sustaining, and will generate a richer map as time goes on. It engages the community on an ongoing basis and also generates demographic data at a glance."

Book

The printed word is the traditional medium for recording and preserving the historical record. In fact, library interiors are designed specifically to store books arranged upright on library shelves. Early oral histories from the 1950s mimicked books in their presentation, as transcripts were bound in book form and recordings were destroyed. Despite the many choices of alternative media available in the twenty-first century, the printed book—the *codex* format—remains the most practical container for packaging intellectual content.

Oral histories are presented in a variety of ways in publications. Historian Linda Shopes suggests three genres for describing the range of oral history publications: a lengthy biographical narrative of a single individual,

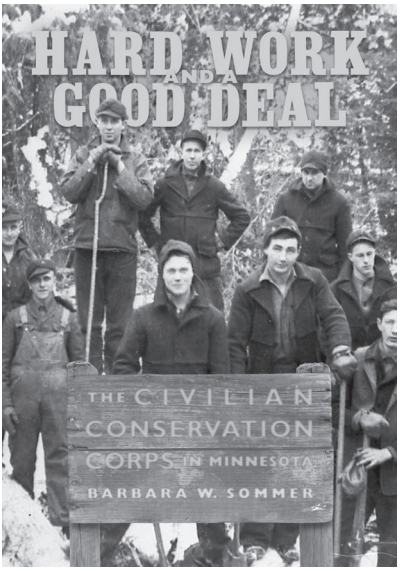

Figure 7.4. *Hard Work and a Good Deal*, by Barbara W. Sommer (Minnesota Historical Society Press)

a series of shorter interviews with several interviewees pivoting around a similar topic or theme, and an interpretative study that integrates interviews with multiple other sources.[20]

The example for this type of project spin-off falls between the second and the third genres. In *Hard Work and a Good Deal: the Civilian Conservation Corps in Minnesota,* author Barbara Sommer uses interview excerpts to portray a period of history through the words of those who lived it. The book defines community not around a location, but rather around the shared experience of serving in the Civilian Conservation Corps (CCC). It is clear that publication of this book instilled new energy into the community of CCC alums, many years after they had moved on in their lives. The publication generated new public interest and awareness of the CCC and its relevance to events of the early twenty-first century, as well as rekindling pride in the CCC participants.

Hard Work and a Good Deal: The Civilian Conservation Corps in Minnesota

The seed for this book was planted almost twenty-five years before its publication with a set of interviews conducted for the fiftieth anniversary of the founding of the CCC. In 1983, Ed Nelson, then the archivist of the Iron Range Research Center in Chisholm, MN, asked Barbara Sommer and three other Minnesota historians to conduct interviews with former CCC enrollees from northeastern

Minnesota, in anticipation of the anniversary. It was an auspicious time for the oral history project. The interviewees were reaching retirement age and eager to reflect on their time with the CCC through a lens of fifty years of life experience.

More than one hundred interviews were conducted and archived at the Iron Range Research Center and other Minnesota county historical societies, where they are available today. After the first round of interviewing and the anniversary celebration, Barbara supplemented the archive with interviews of African American CCC enrollees and American Indian CCC-Indian Division workers, along with enrollees who had been in southeastern Minnesota camps.

These interviews from the 1980s formed the foundation for her book. With the interviews safely archived and available for future research, Barbara wanted the voices of these young men who braved the Minnesota winters to be heard. She recalls, "I was not sure how to write a book, but I wanted the interviews to have more exposure. The Minnesota Historical Society was interested in the idea and encouraged me, so I plunged right in."

She relates the process: "There was so much material, my biggest challenge was to organize the content and select the best excerpts to form a cohesive narrative. Interviews had been indexed by subject, but only a third were transcribed. A colleague and I reviewed the subject index and picked out the most significant interviews. I transcribed those. Since this was before word processing, I marked up the transcripts with a highlighter and made notes all over them. This process was long and tedious. I went back and forth between the transcripts and my skeleton outline, until gradually a narrative thread emerged."

The book was published by the Minnesota Historical Society in 2008 to much acclaim, including a Minnesota Book Award in the Minnesota category and an Award of Merit from the American Association of State and Local History. However, Barbara finds a greater reward in the personal relationships she developed with the CCC alumni during the project and after the book's publication. She recalls, "With tears in their eyes, they cheered for me at the awards ceremony, and rarely does a week go by that I don't receive a letter with a 'thank you for making my voice heard,' often with a photo or letter to contribute to the Minnesota CCC archive. And an active CCC alum association in Northern Minnesota raised funds to donate this book to local libraries."

The publication continues to generate spin-off projects that create awareness about the CCC. For example, in 2010 the Conservation Corps of Minnesota and Iowa, working with AmeriCorps volunteers and the Forest History Center of the Minnesota Historical Society, developed a living history program where AmeriCorps youth volunteers play roles as CCC-era characters and work as historical interpreters at the Forest History Center.

Another project inspired by the book is a CCC curriculum for middle

school students developed by the Interactive Video Educational Program of the Minnesota Historical Society. This fifty-minute video program uses distance learning technology, PowerPoint, and live actors to create historically significant course material. The CCC curriculum course units meet national teaching standards and are available throughout the country.

The experience of the Great Depression and government programs such as the CCC are quickly fading from living memory, yet these narratives have many lessons for the world today. The original interviews and the book based on them provide an excellent way to keep the history alive and to give young people the opportunity to learn important life lessons from those who came before them.

Theater

Oral history interviews are a logical starting point for theater, as the dramatic elements of character, place, and plot are inherent in human stories. Dramatic works based on oral history can take many forms. Most simple is a transcript reading before an audience. A little more complex is a reader's theater piece, where transcripts are developed into a script and read by different readers, but without sets or costumes. Another approach is an interpretative monologue where one person will assume the character of a historical figure with the appropriate costume and speech patterns, as mentioned in the CCC interpretive project in the preceding section. The most expansive approach is a full-fledged play with a script based on oral history interviews. A well-known play based entirely on oral histories is the Laramie Project, developed by Moisés Kaufman and the Tectonic Theater Project, where interviews were conducted by the theater company around the 1988 murder of a gay student at the University of Wyoming, generally considered a hate crime.

Community groups can do effective theater at any level. Stories from the past can come alive in a new form, and young people or those new to the community can learn about the past by developing a character from oral history interviews. The following example illustrates how oral history interviews were developed into a script for a two-act play that has been performed throughout the Southwestern United States.

Lama Genesis/Lama Incarnations

The Lama Foundation is a spiritual community in the mountains of northern New Mexico. Founded in 1967 during the counter-culture movement of the 1960s, it now is the oldest continuously operating intentional community in the Southwestern United States. The fact that it has survived and thrived for more than forty-five years is in itself of historical significance.

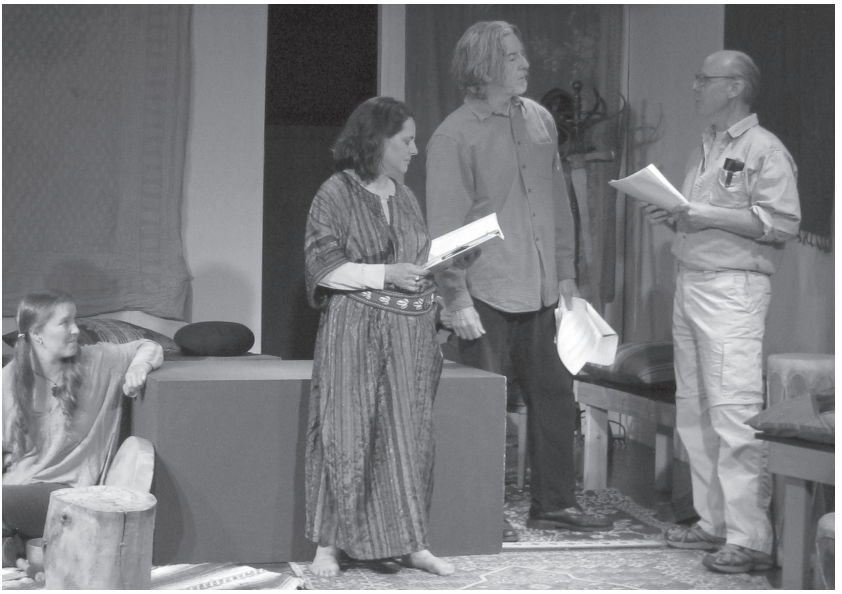

Figure 7.5. Lama Genesis/Lama Incarnations, by Ammi Kohn.
Photo credit: Carmin Teeple.

Why? Ammi Kohn, a Lama participant, has a few ideas: It has no guru, it does not condone drugs, it is not based on dogma, and members are required do their share of work.

After spending a number of summers at Lama, Ammi was struck by the historical significance of the Lama story, and with the community's approval he began conducting interviews. The result is the Lama Foundation Library of Oral History and Memory, consisting of more than one hundred hours of interviews with the founders, community coordinators, and former residents. Interviews cover the time from community's founding in the 1960s through the time of a devastating fire on the property in 1997. All interviews are transcribed and archived at the Southwest Research Center of the University of New Mexico, Albuquerque, and are available for public use.

Ammi did not start out with an idea for a dramatic piece; that came later, he recalls. "Conducting the interviews was a big job, and I was looking for a fun and creative way to bring the oral histories to life. I still want to write a book based on the interviews, but that will come later. A theatrical piece is easier and more fun."

That is not to say that creating a play is easy. He began by selecting significant events in Lama's history, such as constructing a community dome or the forest fire that ravaged the property in the 1990s, events that mark the

community's history and also have dramatic effect. Then he went through each transcript to identify sections relevant to each event, and organized interview excerpts into computer folders accordingly. By going back and forth between the transcript excerpts and the narrative, he slowly developed a script, using the exact words from the transcripts whenever possible. Ammi noted the most difficult part in developing the script is "the constant tension between creating a dramatically viable script and keeping the historical integrity of the interviews."

He recalls, "I knew nothing about drama and could never have created this play on my own. I got a lot of help from a professional playwright, who critiqued the dramatic structure, sequencing, and lines. I used two kinds of characters. The main characters are based on real people who are significant in the Lama history. I also created four generic characters who represent different times and points of view. To do this I combined the voices from many of the interviews. I started with a 180 page script and, with the help of the playwright, edited it down to a more reasonable 41 pages." The result is a two-act play of ninety minutes.

Ammi struggled with an issue common in close-knit communities, namely, that of gaining the trust and respect needed to portray a community's history to the outside world. It is only natural that, in a community where members live together over time and know each other only too well, they have varying ideas about how their experience should be presented to outsiders. Though most supported the project wholeheartedly, some felt the essence of the community—the spiritual practice—was missing from the play. Ammi's strategy for gaining buy-in is patience, persistence, and building trust. He emphasizes, "An outsider could not work with this community the way I did. Even so, it took a very long time to gain the respect and trust of the whole group."

What started as a fun way to use oral histories turned into a journey into script writing, a deeper relationship with the community, and the production of a play that is both entertaining and historically significant. Ammi's advice to community oral historians: Don't undertake a project like this unless you are willing to have fun with it. It is a lot of work!

Walking/Driving Tour

Oral history lends itself well to place-based history/interpretation. What better way to absorb the essence of the place you visit than to hear local people talk about their own experience on the very ground you are standing on! Whether walking through the streets of an old city or exploring back roads

of an old mining region, a driving or walking tour guided by local voices adds a personal dimension to a visitor's experience.

The following example is an interesting application of the idea, though project director Paula Brown-Williams notes a strong preference for the term "traveling companion," suggesting a broader interpretation of an audio sense of place.

Roadside Heritage, Eastern Sierra Institute for Collaborative Education

U.S. Highway 395 extends along the eastern edge of California's Sierra Nevada range, marking the contrast between the towering peaks to the west and the high desert plains to the east. The highway traverses some of the least populated and least traveled parts of California but some of the most dramatic landscapes.

The rich natural and local history of this corridor provides the subject matter for Roadside Heritage, an audio companion and learning tool for motorists. It consists of three series of short audio segments available on CD or on the Internet. Each segment is an interpretation of the landscape told by Native residents and research scientists in the area. Topics include Traditional Basket Weaving Arts, Ranchers that Mined the Miners, the Paiute Legend of the Hot Springs, Alpine Fauna, and Archaeology.

Paula Brown-Williams, the Executive Director of the Eastern Sierra Institute for Collaborative Education (ESICE), describes the concept behind Roadside Heritage. "The idea is that you listen to the segments in the car as you drive through the areas being described, giving the traveler a deeper understanding and appreciation of the landscape. That said, we try to go beyond having an expert lecturing the listener but rather have local Native people tell about their connections to the landscape and scientists describe their field research in a more conversational format."

The audio segments are based on oral history interviews conducted by local youth through an ESICE sponsored afterschool program. Youth were trained in oral history and audio recording techniques. Paula reports, "Having young people do the interviews brought us a lot of good will because everyone wanted to see the local history passed down the generations, and scientists wanted to inspire youth to pursue scientific research related careers." Interviewees were identified from ESICE connections to a local tribal education group and the scientific field stations in the area.

All the interviews were transcribed and marked with time codes to facilitate identifying segments for use in the sound clip. Scientific concepts and facts were checked though university connections. The resulting scripts were

Figure 7.6. Roadside Heritage website banner. http://www.roadsideheritage.org/

written by ESICE staff and approved by advisors and partners. After that, an audio production company in Portland, OR, edited the interview based on the script, added sound effects, and gave each segment a professional polish.

The concept for Roadside Heritage grew from a number of sources, as Paula explains. "ESICE is a non-profit that is tightly focused on place-based education. There has always been an academic connection to our work and those connections served well in developing Roadside Heritage. There is also a strong connection to local communities, and of course, to serving the needs of youth. Thinking through the expansion of another ESICE project led the planners to the National Science Foundation's Informal Science Education program. To participate in this program we knew we would have to think beyond our after school programs in our small county of 18,000. Our proposal would have to impact a reasonably large audience. That led us to the idea of targeting an audience of motorists traveling through the area. Finally, the advisory committee suggested that the stories should be told in large part by people who call the region home, in the case of the local Numu (Paiute) for at least 7,000 years and in the case of pioneer families, for generations. That dispelled a big piece of local resistance to the project. So all these pieces came together in the formation of Roadside Heritage."

Paula is quick to emphasize the importance of partnerships, which included such big players as National Park Service; the National Science Foundation; the University of California, Lawrence Hall of Science; and University of Nevada, Reno; as well as scientific field stations, land management agencies, the Bureau of Land Management, the California Department of Transportation, and local county government.

The project was publicized widely within channels for the intended audience of motorists traveling U.S. Highway 395. CDs were distributed free at various tourist points in the Eastern Sierra, tribal administration offices, and an exhibit at the National Scenic Byway Conference. Announcements with pointers to National Association of Interpretation website were placed in travel announcements, and links were made from related websites to Road-

side Heritage. The website contains all the audio files ready for download, as well as background information about the project. The impact of Roadside Heritage extended beyond staff expectations, as indicated by reports of the CD being used in curricula, and former travelers to the Eastern Sierra return often to the website to learn more. This innovative program won an award in 2008 from the National Association of Interpretation.

Exhibit

Museums focusing on the natural world, cultures and traditions, and local history are finding new and creative ways to integrate oral history into interpretative exhibits. They often partner with individuals or community groups who have the subject expertise and insider knowledge to collect interviews based on a theme defined by the museum. The array of interpretative programs that can result is limited only by resources and creativity.

One common way to use oral histories is to integrate spoken, eye-witness accounts of an event, such as Hurricane Katrina, to enrich an exhibit. A more unusual approach is the photograph/interview exhibit described in the following pages, which combines the power of image and words to portray life experiences and collectively provide a snapshot of a complex community.

They Changed the World: The People of Project Y at Los Alamos, 1943-1945, Bradbury Science Museum

Los Alamos, NM, is the home of the Los Alamos National Laboratory (LANL), formed in 1942 to coordinate the efforts of the Manhattan Project, which developed the atom bomb. Currently, the LANL is responsible for monitoring the safety and reliability of the United States nuclear stockpile, but its research mission goes far beyond defense. It is a center for broad scientific research, including space exploration, geophysics, renewable energy, supercomputing, medicine, and nanotechnology.

The Bradbury Science Museum is the public window into the LANL. Since a great deal of secrecy, controversy, and misunderstanding surrounds the Lab, the museum's mission is to interpret the LANL's history and current activities for the public. As a federal government institution, the Bradbury Museum is free and welcomes about 80,000 visitors a year from around the world, including Germany, Russia, Japan, China, South Korea, and Iraq. It consists of three galleries—history, defense, and research—as well as an uncurated public forum wall for community discussion.

Visitors to the history gallery are greeted by the exhibit titled "They Changed the World: The People of Project Y at Los Alamos, 1943–1945." Over-

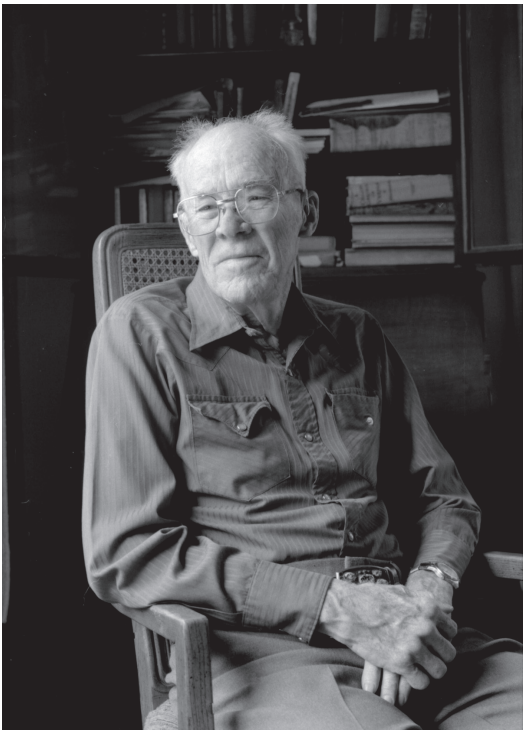

Figure 7.7. George Moulton, Chemist at Los Alamos National Laboratory, 1944-1977. Photo credit: aj Melnick

size panels line the wall with portraits and life histories of sixty participants in the Manhattan Project, not only scientists but also the technicians, housekeepers, wives, cooks, truck drivers, teachers, and students. They collectively tell the story of a singular community tucked away in a remote mountain region of New Mexico. It was a community like no other. On one hand, Los Alamos residents had to deny their very existence to the outside world; on the other hand, they lived their lives like anyone else—setting up housekeeping, raising families, working hard, playing hard, and generally getting on with their lives.

Santa Fe photographer and journalist aj Melnick was determined to capture this unique quality of the Manhattan Project community. She first envisioned the project as a photo-documentary, and the idea of accompanying interviews came later. But with a degree in journalism and experience as a reporter, aj was comfortable with interviewing and realized how well image and story work together. From the very beginning, her goal was to emphasize the untold human side of the of the Manhattan Project story. She recalls, "I sensed importance and immediacy to my work. These are stories from people who lived and worked on a project that changed the world more than half a century ago."

The exhibit opened in 2005 to commemorate the sixtieth anniversary of the Manhattan Project, and remains a popular permanent exhibit. The power of image and words is illustrated by memories such as this one of George Moulton, a chemist who worked at the Lab from 1944 to 1977.

> *I knew the atomic bomb was to be tested at the Trinity Site, but I was not asked to be an official spectator. So three friends and I piled into a car and headed for Trinity Site that July day in 1945 to spectate on our own. We parked in a gully, dodged the military police and ended up spending the night on a hill opposite the official viewing site. Searchlights came on at the site about 4:30 a.m. the next morning. When nothing happened by 5:30 we got ready to leave, assuming the test was called off or the bomb had not worked. Then … we saw the blast and could feel the heat from the explosion. What a sight it was. It worked!*

When asked about the development of the atomic bomb at Los Alamos and the subsequent bombs dropped on Japan, Mr. Moulton replied, "I thought it was necessary, and I have no regrets. It ended the war and that was good."[21]

Museum Director Linda Deck is excited to give oral history a larger role in the Bradbury Museum's programming plan. To achieve this, a StoryCorps-style recording booth and corresponding listening station have been installed in the museum to conduct oral histories on an ongoing basis. The first project will focus on community stories of the recent Cerro Grande and Las Conchas wildfires that ravaged the mountains surrounding Los Alamos.

Linda believes oral histories are a wonderful way to further the museum's mission as a learning environment rather than simply as a display or teaching environment. "We're here to inspire and facilitate learning. People always learn from other people, and in making an exhibit participatory, you encourage and validate their personal engagement. This goes hand-in-hand with engaging *users* rather than *visitors* or an *audience*."

These examples from real life are a sample of ways oral histories can be used to educate, entertain, challenge, and inspire an audience beyond the original goal. Most of the creators are not professional oral historians; they are community members with vision and energy who had an idea and ran with it. Through a combination of patience, preservation, partnerships, and good training they created works that can be used as models for other community historians.

Here are some additional ways to use oral histories creatively.

- Share interview highlights on community radio.
- Inspire performance works such as poetry, songs, and dance.
- Inspire quilts, murals and other visual artworks.
- Document historic sites.
- Contribute to natural resources management.
- Support family documentation.
- Preserve vanishing languages.
- Create a K–12 history curriculum.

Use these ideas or others to develop your own community project based on oral history. Your options are many, limited only by your vision, energy, and resources.

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FINAL WORDS

Most of us begin an oral history project casually, without a clear idea of where the experience will take us. Sometimes it arises from an observation that community members are getting older and their memories of the community will be lost. Other times it begins with the recognition that a way of life is fading and should be documented for the sake of future generations. Perhaps a high school class in a culturally diverse urban city interviews grandparents about food and cooking, or a village in Maine documents the rapidly disappearing lobster industry.

Still other times an oral history project is designed to build community or cultivate understanding among sub-communities. Perhaps an outreach coordinator in a public library learns that immigrants from more than fifty countries reside in the community. She develops an oral history project around a simple theme, such as how families spend Sunday afternoons. The possibilities for exploring cultural traditions, discovering similarities as well as differences, engaging youth as interviewers, and documenting a community's history are boundless.

Whatever urge inspires an oral history project, the process of implementing it almost always takes on a life of its own. In addition to accomplishing the stated objectives—oral history for its own sake, contributing to history, or community building—it usually has an unexpected but profound effect on all the participants as well as on the community itself.

An oral history interview—the simple act of being listened to without judgment or agenda—is a gift to the interviewee, in and of itself. Most people interviewed in community projects are not public figures. The oral history interview may be the first time anyone has sat down with them to simply listen, uninterrupted, to an account of their life experience in their own words. Often interviewees begin by thinking they have nothing important to say, and they have to be coaxed to participate. But when they find an interviewer is sincerely interested, they are only too eager to continue.

Interviewees are filled with pride when they discover that their interview will go into an archive or on the Internet to be shared with a larger public. I remember the retired professor who came into my library once or twice a week to just to see his oral history on the shelf and leaf through the pages of the transcript, proud to see his life story made publicly available at

the college he had devoted his life to. I also have witnessed a family reunited because of an oral history on the Internet. In this case, I interviewed a woman whose family had emigrated from Croatia to Canada in the early 1900s and had lost touch with relatives in the old country. Three generations later, these distant cousins discovered each other through the oral history posted online, and have become close friends.

In my twenty years as an oral historian, I have witnessed over and over the ways that oral history has touched people deeply. One interviewee, after telling me of her troubled relationship with her father, gained the courage to confront him directly. Another interviewee, a beautiful young Albanian refugee, spoke for the first time about how her parents airlifted her out of the country to avoid the human traffickers. A dancer, who had considered her career over, gained vital energy from the oral history process and began a new career as a coach and choreographer. In addition to transforming lives of the interviewees, these recorded interviews and the relationships that developed as a result, have deeply enriched my own life.

Stories of transformation are splendid by-products of oral history, but the ultimate goal is to produce thoughtful, well-researched interviews that contribute to the historical record. These interviews are valuable within your community and far beyond, and will inform history seekers in the present, the near future, and for generations not yet born.

Barbara Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan, my co-authors of the *Toolkit,* beautifully summarize the essence of community oral history in their *Oral History Manual*, 2nd ed. "Carefully documented archival oral histories can keep alive the firsthand experiences and knowledge of times and places that may otherwise fade from human memory. When those memories fade, the storehouse of human knowledge is likewise depleted. The steps detailed in the[se volumes] suggest an approach that not only makes it possible for you to create oral histories that you can use now, but that also will make it possible for students, scholars, and the just plain curious to open a window onto a time and place outside their realm of experience and come away enriched in ways you may not even be able to imagine. Your oral histories, in other words, are your gift to the future. And the stories you document today will forge a link between a soon forgotten past and generations yet unborn, enriching the lives of those who tell the stories today, as well as those who will hear them, learn from them, and perhaps, be inspired by them, in years to come."[22]

Now is the time to make the magic happen in your own community!

APPENDIX A

Fictitious Project Design Statement, Project One—Volunteer

PROJECT DESIGN STATEMENT
GENERAL
PROJECT NAME Carmel-by-the-Sea (CA) Voices Oral History Project
SPONSORING INSTITUTION None. This is an all-volunteer project with no institutional affiliation.
PRIMARY GOAL Team members will conduct 3-5 video interviews with Carmel residents for the city's centennial celebration. Using the interviews, they will produce a centennial celebration DVD.
MISSION STATEMENT Our community, Carmel-by-the-Sea, California, will celebrate its centennial in three years. This village on the Monterey Bay is known for its old-time charm and for being mostly untouched by the widespread California development of the last half of the 20th century. Through this oral history project, we will explore how and why the city has held out against widespread development. All work will be done to oral history standards.

(*Continued on following page)*

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

This is an all-volunteer project run by a team of Carmel residents, one of whom will serve as project director and another as bookkeeper/files manager. Team members are interviewers; each will be paired with a high school student videographer who will be trained on and will use recording equipment from the high school media center. Interviewers will transcribe the interviews. A local attorney will help the team develop a Legal Release Agreement, a local videographer will donate time for a training workshop and for supervision of the students, and an oral history consultant will lead an interviewer/transcriber training workshop for team members and students before they begin recording the interviews.

PROJECT CONTENT

HISTORICAL FOCUS

Urban planning and historic preservation issues in Carmel, CA, during the last decades of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century.

SCOPE

Team members will spend 3 months planning the project and then will record and fully process 3-5 interviews with Carmel residents over a 6-month time period. With donated help from a local videographer, they will develop the project DVD after completing the interviews.

TOPICS

Architecture, historic preservation, environment, urban planning, and tourism in the last decades of the 20th century and the first decade of the 21st century.

SOURCES FOR BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Back copies of local newspapers, library files, photographs, city maps, publications about the city, city planning commission and historic preservation board files, California State Preservation Commission files. See the attached project bibliography for detailed information.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

DURATION

Team members will spend 3 months planning the project and 6 months recording and processing the interviews.

NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES

3-5 interviewees. The project will result in 3-5 fully processed video interviews, each 60-90 minutes in length.

(*Continued on following page)*

RECORDING PLAN

All interviews will be video recorded to capture not only the stories but also places in the city's historic district that, as visual elements, contribute to interview context. Audio back-up will be used to facilitate processing. Team members will work with a local videographer and high school student videographers to plan and record each interview, taking care to visually document the relationship between questions/interview content and visual elements.

PHYSICAL SPACE NEEDS

Team members are working with the local library to develop a plan for data file storage. A local videographer will donate a place, equipment, and expertise to help produce the project DVD.

EXPENSES

Team members and local videographer will volunteer their time. Donations from local businesses will be sought to cover out-of-pocket expenses such as recording media, printing and photocopying, and purchase of blank DVDs. See the attached project budget for detailed information.

RESOURCES

Team members will use equipment from the high school media center to record the interviews and production equipment from the local videographer for the project DVD. Local businesses will be contacted to help cover out-of-pocket costs and the local library is a possible project repository.

INTERVIEWEE RECRUITMENT

Project interviewees will be recruited by team members based on background research. Information about potential interviewees will be kept on Interviewee Recommendation Forms for team review and discussion before a final decision is made.

REPOSITORY PLAN

Team members are working with the director of the local library to develop a preservation and access plan for the master recordings. A copy of the recordings also may be deposited with the city and state planning commissions. If, for some reason, the library cannot care for the master recordings on a long-term basis, team members will approach the state preservation commission to discuss other long-term care options.

ONLINE ACCESS FOR INTERVIEWS

Library personnel will catalog the interviews and make information about the project accessible through worldwide cataloging networks.

(*Continued on following page)*

Submitted by	**Date**
Jean Culligan, Project Director	*(Insert date)*
Revised by	**Date**
This form will be revised when final equipment and repository arrangements are made.	*(Insert date)*

APPENDIX B

Fictitious Project Design Statement, Project Two—City

PROJECT DESIGN STATEMENT
GENERAL
PROJECT NAME Jazz Atlanta Oral History Project
SPONSORING INSTITUTION City of Atlanta, Georgia, with support from the Atlanta Public Library.
PRIMARY GOAL The primary project goal is to document Atlanta's jazz heritage in the context of Southern musical traditions by conducting historically significant oral history interviews and making them accessible. A secondary goal is to use the Jazz Atlanta Oral History Project as a replicable model for future oral history projects focusing on musical heritage in Southern United States.
MISSION STATEMENT Through this project, information about the generally undocumented history of jazz in Atlanta in the context of Southern U.S. musical traditions between 1975 and 2010 will be recorded. All interviews will be done to oral history standards.

(*Continued on following page)*

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The project will be administered by a .5 FTE (full time equivalent) project director assigned by the city. The project director will hire an oral history consultant to assist with training, Legal Release Agreement development, and cataloging needs. The city will provide work space and access to a telephone, photocopying, and other basic management needs. A project grant will support purchase of recording equipment, a project computer, and the consultant's salary. Volunteers will do the interviews, the transcribing, and basic preliminary cataloging steps. The library will supply a .1 FTE cataloger to the project; the project director may decide to recruit students in a local university library program or music program as interns to help with various project tasks.

PROJECT CONTENT

HISTORICAL FOCUS

Interviews will focus on jazz traditions in Atlanta, Georgia, in the context of southern U.S. musical traditions between 1975 and 2010. Interviewees will represent a broad perspective of backgrounds in terms of age, ethnicity, musical genre, and personal musical styles.

SCOPE

Project planning will take six months; the project will complete 8-10 fully processed interviews over a two-year period.

TOPICS

Southern jazz traditions, instrumentalists and vocalists working in a Southern jazz tradition and setting, roles of jazz club owners with regard to Southern jazz traditions, the Atlanta Jazz Festival.

SOURCES FOR BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Back copies of newspapers, topic-related files at the Atlanta Public Library and the Georgia Historical Society including historical photographs, personal scrapbooks and correspondence, interviewee biographies and websites, and recordings of interviewee performances. See a project bibliography for detailed information.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

DURATION

2.5 years including 6 months planning time and 2 years recording and processing interviews.

(*Continued on following page)*

NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES
8-10 interviewees; 8-10 fully processed audio interviews, each 60-90 minutes in length.
RECORDING PLAN
Project grant funds will be used to purchase high-grade prosumer audio recording equipment and accessories. Interviews will be recorded in .wav uncompressed format using a lavaliere microphone for each interview participant.
PHYSICAL SPACE NEEDS
The Atlanta Jazz Festival has offered a meeting space for use as a recording studio. The interviews will be conducted in this space or in an interviewee's office or studio. The project headquarters will be in an office in a city government building.
EXPENSES
Major project expenses will be covered by the project grant. Additional needs will be supplied by the city and, to a lesser extent, the city library and donations from local businesses. Volunteers will do the interviews, transcribe them, and do basic cataloging; interns may be recruited to help with transcribing and cataloging. See the project budget for full details.
RESOURCES
The project director will call on local jazz leaders to learn about possible project research materials not generally available to the public. Local businesses and jazz clubs will be contacted to ask for contributions or donations to supplement the project grant and in-kind donations from the city and library. Identification of previously unknown records collections may be an outcome of this project.
INTERVIEWEE RECRUITMENT
Names of possible interviewees will be identified through project research. Leaders in the Atlanta jazz community also will be asked to recommend interviewees. Information about potential interviewees will be recorded on Interviewee Recommendation Forms for use in team member discussion and decisions.
REPOSITORY PLAN
All data files of master recordings and transcripts, copies of transcripts printed on acid-free paper, and all project files will go to the Atlanta Public Library to become part of the library's special collections.

(*Continued on following page)*

ONLINE ACCESS FOR INTERVIEWS

The project director and oral history consultant will work with library personnel to catalog the oral histories and make them available through standard cataloging networks. By arrangement with the Digital Library of Georgia, team members will help make interviews and transcripts accessible through this online public resource.

Submitted by	**Date**
Andrea Schmidt, Project Director	*(insert date)*
Revised by	**Date**
One of the interviewees unexpectedly accepted a new position out of the country; the project director and team members will decide how to handle this situation and will update the form accordingly.	*(insert date)*

APPENDIX C

Fictitious Project Design Statement, Project Three—Historical Society

PROJECT DESIGN STATEMENT
GENERAL
PROJECT NAME It Takes a Village to Make a City: Duluth (MN) Residents Speak Out Oral History Project
SPONSORING INSTITUTION St. Louis County Historical Society, Duluth, MN
PRIMARY GOAL This is the first oral history project in the new St. Louis County Historical Society Oral History Program. The goal is to update St. Louis County Historical Society collections with materials that represent a realistic and balanced representation of the county's history. A secondary goal is to develop a replicable project that can be used as a template for future oral history projects in this program.
MISSION STATEMENT Through this program, interviewees representing subcultures and constituencies that have been excluded or underrepresented in written accounts of Duluth and St. Louis County history will be identified and interviewed. The first project will focus on the impact of changes on multi-generational family-owned businesses in Duluth. The interviews will be recorded in audio with video selectively complementing the audio. All interviews will be done to oral history standards.

(*Continued on following page)*

ADMINISTRATIVE REQUIREMENTS

The project will be staffed by volunteers under the direction of a .15 FTE historical society employee assigned to the project. Members of the historical society board of directors will serve as community liaisons and project advisors. The historical society will provide work space and project support including purchasing recording equipment. The society attorney will develop the Legal Release Agreement.

PROJECT CONTENT

HISTORICAL FOCUS

Overall program focus will include American Indians, businesses, artists, and commercial logging and fishing industries for the City of Duluth and St. Louis County. The first project will focus on the impact of changes on multi-generational, family-owned businesses in the City of Duluth.

SCOPE

6 months planning followed by a 2-2.5 year pilot project.

TOPICS

Duluth business climate, changes in business climate, development of Miller Hill Mall and its impact on multi-generational, family-owned businesses, other factors affecting multi-generational, family-owned businesses in the city, comments on the future of multi-generational, family-owned businesses.

SOURCES FOR BACKGROUND RESEARCH

City library special collections, Northeast Minnesota Historical Center (St. Louis County Historical Society archive) at the University of Minnesota, Duluth, state historical society, back issues of newspapers, historical photographs, maps, and city land use and planning records. See a project bibliography for a full list of sources.

PROJECT MANAGEMENT

DURATION

The project will have a 6-month planning period followed by a 2-2.5 year interviewing period.

NUMBER OF INTERVIEWEES

15 interviewees; 15 fully processed interviews, each 60-90 minutes in length.

(*Continued on following page)*

RECORDING PLAN

Interviews will be audio-recorded in .wav uncompressed format. Video recordings will be done using an HD recorder to complement audio as needed. Both recorders will be prosumer-quality and will be provided by the historical society oral history program.

PHYSICAL SPACE NEEDS

Work space and interviewing space will be provided by the St. Louis County Historical Society in The Historic Union Depot in Duluth. Some interviews may be done in interviewees' homes or businesses.

EXPENSES

Many expenses including those for work space, office supplies, and project director will be absorbed by the historical society. The historical society board of directors will help raise funds to meet additional costs identified in the project budget, including equipment purchase costs.

RESOURCES

The historical society board of directors will serve as liaison between the program and the community.

INTERVIEWEE RECRUITMENT

Interviewees will be identified through project research and information from community members including resource advisors at the historical center/county archive and public library special collections librarian. Information about prospective interviewees will be documented on the Interviewee Recommendation Form for team member discussion and decisions.

REPOSITORY PLAN

Data files containing master recordings of interviews and project transcripts will become part of the collections of the St. Louis County Historical Society at the Northeast Minnesota Historical Center, where they will be cataloged and made available to researchers through all major cataloging networks.

ONLINE ACCESS FOR INTERVIEWS

Information about the project and interview transcripts will be posted on the Northeast Minnesota Historical Center website; through an agreement with the Minnesota Digital Library, recordings and transcripts will be posted on its website.

(*Continued on following page)*

Submitted by Thomas Larsen-Johnes, Project Director	**Date** (insert date)
Revised by No revisions at this time.	**Date** (insert date)

APPENDIX D

Sample—Legal Release Agreement

SAMPLE—LEGAL RELEASE AGREEMENT

The mission of the Jazz Atlanta Oral History Project (oral history project) is to document the history of jazz in Atlanta in the context of Southern U.S. musical traditions between 1975 and 2010. The major part of this effort is the collection of oral history interviews with knowledgeable individuals.

Thank you for participating in our project. Please read and sign this gift agreement so your interview will be available for future use. Before doing so, you should read it carefully and ask any questions you may have regarding terms and conditions.

AGREEMENT

I, Joseph A. Browne, interviewee, donate and convey my oral history interview dated *(insert date)* to the Atlanta Public Library *(oral history project/repository name)*. In making this gift I understand that I am conveying all right, title, and interest in copyright to the oral history project/repository. I also grant the oral history project/repository the right to use my name and likeness in promotional materials for outreach and educational materials. In return, the oral history project/repository grants me a non-exclusive license to use my interview through my lifetime.

(*Continued on following page)*

I further understand that I will have the opportunity to review and approve my interview before it is placed in the repository and made available to the public. Once I have approved it, the oral history project/repository will make my interview available for research without restriction. Future uses may include quotation in printed materials or audio/video excerpts in any media, and availability on the Internet.

INTERVIEWEE

Name (print) Joseph A. Browne

Signature *(sign form)*

Date *(insert date)*

INTERVIEWER

Name *(print)* Lane Smith

Signature *(sign form)*

Date *(insert date)*

APPENDIX E

Sample—Legal Release Agreement (Restrictions)

SAMPLE—LEGAL RELEASE AGREEMENT (RESTRICTIONS)

The mission of the Jazz Atlanta Oral History Project *(oral history project)* is to document the history of jazz in Atlanta in the context of Southern U.S. musical traditions between 1975 and 2010. The major part of this effort is the collection of oral history interviews with knowledgeable individuals.

Thank you for participating in our project. Please read and sign this gift agreement so your interview will be available for future use. Before doing so, you should read it carefully and ask any questions you may have regarding terms and conditions.

AGREEMENT

I, Wesley A. Z. Jones, interviewee, donate and convey my oral history interview dated *(insert date)* to the Atlanta Public Library *(oral history project/repository name)*. In making this gift I understand that I am conveying all right, title, and interest in copyright to the oral history project/repository. I also grant the oral history project/repository the right to use my name and likeness in promotional materials for outreach and educational materials. In return, the oral history project/repository grants me a non-exclusive license to use my interview through my lifetime.

(*Continued on following page)*

I understand that I will have the opportunity to review and approve my interview before it is placed in the repository. My gift and the associated rights are subject to the following restrictions:

_____ May not be made available on the Internet

__X__ Public access may not be available until (date):
(insert restriction end date)

_____ Other *(specify)* _____

INTERVIEWEE	**INTERVIEWER**
Name (print) Wesley A. Z. Jones	Name (print) Charles Wilson
Signature *(sign form)*	Signature *(sign form)*
Date *(insert date)*	Date *(insert date)*

APPENDIX F

Sample Transcript Excerpt

ANNE HUANG ORAL HISTORY

March 14, 2007
Interview 1 of 1

ANNE: Anne Huang, Executive Director,
Oakland Asian Cultural Center, Interviewee

NANCY: Nancy MacKay, Interviewer

NANCY: *This is Nancy MacKay and I'm interviewing Anne Huang, the Executive Director of the Oakland Asian Cultural Center, here in Oakland, California. We are in her office at OACC. Today is Tuesday, March 14th, 2007, and time to get started. This interview marks the launching of the partnership between the Oakland Living History Program and OACC with an interview with the executive director.*
Let's begin with your early years. I'd like to hear where and when you were born, and start there.

ANNE: Yes, I was born in 1964 in Taiwan in a city called Chiá-yī.

NANCY: *And how long did you live there?*

ANNE: I lived there for twelve years, and I immigrated here in 1977 with my immediate family—my father and my mother and my brother, who was two years younger than me. We first moved to San Francisco. We basically moved around the Bay Area quite a bit—San Francisco, El Cerrito, ending up in Walnut Creek, and then I went to college in Stockton and graduate school in San Francisco—basically, the greater Bay Area of Northern California.

NANCY: *Yes, let's go back to Taiwan. To help us visualize—paint a picture of the city—the size of the city, your school, your home. I'd love to hear a real snapshot of your life there.*

ANNE: Yes. Chiá-yī is one of the larger cities in Taiwan. However—I say "however," because the size of the entire island of Taiwan is about one-tenth the size of California. So, when you say a major city is something that size is—you can't really use an American framework to judge a city.

I don't have specific statistics, as far as when I was living in Taiwan about the size and population of Chiá-yī. However, this is what I remember. Chiá-yī was a great combination of emerging Asian urban life, as well as traditional life.

Remember, this is from a child's eye, right? I remember the city being very crowded—some cars, lots of motorcycles, lots of bicycles, and not a whole lot of rural greenery, but just lots of city landscape—buildings, concrete—concrete streets.

But, when I say it also had a lot of components of traditional life, I mean that people did not move around a whole lot. Usually, you grow up in a house that your parents grew up in

and your grandparents grew up in. There was a lot of folk life around. So, I grew up with these folk-like characters—like the vegetable vendor that came in every day around mid-day.

NANCY: *You mean he came to your house?*

ANNE: Well, he passed by our house. So, imagine one of these typical Chinatown grocery stores around here, but on wheels—a mini-version on wheels. And every person had a specific call—and this vegetable lady would have a specific call. And there would be another person who came on a regular basis that sharpened scissors—and he was on wheels—on a tricycle. And then, around town there were various family business food vendors. And I remember very, very well. Most of them have disappeared by now.

So, there was a guy who specialized in—there's actually a Chinese dish called Stinky Tofu. It was very stinky and it was very good. You'll find it in a couple of restaurants around the Bay Area. So, it was like his family business. It was very stinky. And I had heard that Tamputini—the food vendor in Chiá-yī—had died, and then his business basically died. There was also a food stand that specialized in stir-fry oyster omelets, and I think that guy has already disappeared.

There was a lot of nightlife, and it was very safe to be on the street at night. So much of Asia still functions that way. There's a night market in these tropical countries, where throughout the day and throughout the evening—because the evening time is cooler—naturally a nicer time to be outside. What you would see is—you know the flea markets around here that only happened during the weekends? You would see that every day in certain sections of town. And I enjoyed that quite a bit.

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NOTES

1 Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner, "More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing," *American Archivist* 68 (Fall/Winter 2005) 208–63. Also available online at http://archivists.metapress.com/content/c741823776k65863/fulltext.pdf. This groundbreaking article presents results of the authors' research on the growing backlogs within archives, and proposes solutions for increasing efficiency by reducing processing steps. They make a case for a user-centered approach to processing, eliminating unnecessary steps in favor of a quicker processing/turnaround time.

2. Though not required, most oral history projects transfer copyright to the repository, so that the repository can administer requests for using interviews. This is especially important if the oral history project is of a limited duration.

3. Other signed documents associated with interviews might be stipulations for restricted sections, photo release agreements, or parental release forms for minors acting as interviewers.

4. The most important part in record keeping is actually keeping the records, not the kind of record keeping system. If team members are more inclined to fill out a paper form than to turn on the computer and key an entry into a database, then a paper system is best.

5. Multiple interviews of the same person should be tracked separately during processing. Thus, one oral history may have several completed copies of this form.

6. Charissa Reid. "How important are transcripts in the digital age?" In H-Oralhist, <http://www.h-net.org/~oralhist/>. 28 April 2009. H-Oralhist is the online discussion forum for the oral history community.

7. Michael Frisch. "Oral history and the digital revolution: toward a post documentary sensibility." In *The Oral History Reader*, 2nd ed. Robert Perks and Alistair Thomson, eds. (New York: Routledge, 2006).

8. Personal communication, June 8, 2010.

9. Michael Dudding. *Abstracting Oral Histories (a how-to guide)*. School of Architecture, Victoria University, Wellington, New Zealand, 2008. 1-2. In addition to making a case for abstracting, Dudding also presents step-by-step instructions for an oral history abstract, including software and hardware specifications, and a template for presentation. http://www.oralhistory.org.nz/documents/duddingabstractingguide2008.pdf.

10. This is true in theory, but only partially true in practice. Modern computer systems use a variety of index rules, tables, and algorithms to compensate for the variances in language, in addition to controlled vocabulary.
11. Donald A. Ritchie. *Doing Oral History: a Practical Guide*. 2nd ed. (New York: Oxford University Press, 2003), 163.
12. The *Glossary* of the Society of American Archivists does not include "access" in the definition of a repository, which is: "A place where things can be stored and maintained, that is, any type of organization that holds documents, including business, institutional, and government archives, manuscript collections, libraries, museums, and historical societies, and in any form, including manuscripts, photographs, moving image and sound materials, and their electronic equivalents." However, opinions are shifting, and the role of access is increasingly emphasized as an archival goal. www.archivists.org/glossary. Viewed December 21, 2011.
13. Colorado Voice Preserve, http://voicepreserve.org/. Viewed September 17, 2012.
14. Geoff Froh. "Digital Preservation and Video" (Powerpoint presentation), November 13, 2011. Unpublished.
15. This was not always so. In the mid-20th century most paper used for publications had a high acid content, which creates brittleness and deterioration. Today, most commercially produced paper has a low acid content and is considered stable for many hundreds of years. See ANSI Standard Z39.48-1992 (R2002). *Permanence of Paper for Publications and Documents in Libraries and Archives*, available online.
16. In fact, Stanford University has taken this idea to the next step by establishing an open source system for libraries to collect, preserve, and provide access to material published online. See http://www.lockss.org/lockss/Home.
17. Thomas Jefferson in correspondence to Ebenezer Hazard, Philadelphia, February 18, 1791. Available in numerous publications.
18. From Angela Zusman's book *Story Bridges: A Guide to Conducting Intergenerational Oral History Projects*. (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc., 2010).
19. Mary Lee Eckstein. *Pass It On: A Guide to Building Neighborhood Archives and Oral History Collections*. (Arlington, VA: Dept. of Parks, Recreation, and Cultural Resources, n.d.). Available for purchase from Arlington Arts, http://www.arlingtonarts.org/cultural-affairs/online-sales.aspx.
20. Linda Shopes. "Editing Oral History for Publication," *Oral History Forum d'histoire orale*. 31 (2011).
21. Paraphrased from the companion book to the exhibit, *They Changed the World: People of the Manhattan Project*, aj Melnick. (Santa Fe, NM: Sunstone Press, 2006), 92.
22. Barbara W. Sommer and Mary Kay Quinlan. *Oral History Manual*. 2nd ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2009), 81.

Top Ten

The *Toolkit* authors recommend these "Top Ten" for a well-rounded understanding of all the entire oral history process.

- Baylor University Institute for Oral History. *Style Guide: a Quick Reference for Editing Oral Memoirs*. Rev. 2005. *http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php?id=14142*. A popular resource among oral historians for transcribing and editing interviews.

- H-Oralhist (Online Community). *http://www.h-net.org/~oralhist/*. The best source for asking practical questions and keeping up to date on all aspects of oral history. All discussions are archived and searchable from this homepage.

- Neuenschwander, John A. *A Guide to Oral History and the Law*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009. The definitive guide to legal issues in oral history. Neuenschwander, a lawyer, judge, and oral historian, has been writing about oral history and the law for many years.

- Oral History in the Digital Age (OHDA) (Online Community). http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/. OHDA grew out of an IMLS funded project bringing together experts to re-examine the field in the digital age. The results of these discussions and their follow-up should inform the profession in the 21st century.

- Oral History Association (OHA). http://www.oralhistory.org/. The oral history professional association for the United States. Hosts an active website, newsletter, peer reviewed journal, *Oral History Review*, and an annual conference. In particular, note the *Principles and Best Practices*, the professional standards adopted by the organization in 2009.

- Ritchie, Donald A. *Doing Oral History*. 2nd ed. New York: Oxford University Press, 2003. A comprehensive overview of the field, written in question–and-answer format. Extensive resource list.

- Schneider, William. *So They Understand: Cultural Issues in Oral History*. Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2002. This text deals with the complex issues encountered when doing oral history within a specific cultural context.

- Sommer, Barbara W. and Mary Kay Quinlan. *The Oral History Manual*. 2nd ed. Lanham, MD: AltaMira Press, 2009. A step–by-step guide for doing oral history used as a college and university text as well as by historical organizations, public historians, and community oral historians.

- Yow, Valerie Raleigh. *Recording Oral History: a Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 2005. The author, a psychotherapist and oral historian, provides a balanced guide to the oral history process with an emphasis on the oral history interview.

- Zusman, Angela. *Story Bridges: a Guide to Conducting Intergenerational Oral History Projects*. Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast Press, Inc., 2010. A guide to planning and conducting an oral history project, with an emphasis on intergenerational oral history.

After the Interview

These resources support all the material in this volume, with an emphasis on technical and specialized tools for transcribing, cataloging, and preservation.

AMIA-L (Online forum). Useful resource for processing and cataloging video interviews. http://www.amianet.org/participate/listserv.php

ARSC (Association for Recorded Sound Collections) (Online forum). Network for sound preservationists, includes information useful to preservation of oral histories. http://www.arsc-audio.org/arsclist.html

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Preservation

Connecting to Collections Online Community. An online meeting spot for smaller museums, libraries, archives, and historical societies. Good for answers to collections care questions and preservation resources as well as general networking. http://www.connectingtocollections.org/

Conservation Online: Resources for Conservation Professionals (CoOL). Online portal for conservation and preservation, hosted by Stanford University. http://palimpsest.stanford.edu. The Field Audio Collection Evaluation Tool (FACET) is a points-based tool for ranking field collections for the level of deterioration they exhibit and the amount of risk they carry. This tool helps collection managers construct a prioritized list of collections by the level of risk they represent, enabling informed selection for preservation. Combining FACET with a process that assesses research value provides strong justification for preservation dollars. FACET was developed by Mike Casey at the Archives of Traditional Music, Indiana University.

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