INTERVIEWER TRAINING COURSEPACK

DC Oral History Collaborative

Dear Current and Aspiring Community Oral Historian,

The Coursepack document presented to you here was first created in 2017 to guide participants in the DC Oral History Collaborative's training program. While it will continue to serve that purpose, we hope that it will also begin to reach a wider audience including those who have not yet made it to one of our workshops. It has been revised and improved every year and is presented here in its final form as a comprehensive resource for anyone interested in starting oral history interviewing with their families or communities. Many of the readings found in this document were drafted by oral historians Benji de la Piedra, Dr. Anna F. Kaplan, and Maggie Lemere, all of whom helped shape the Collaborative in its early years and continue to facilitate its training opportunities.

The Collaborative is a partnership between HumanitiesDC and the DC Public Library, and this Coursepack reflects the constant support and feedback from our colleagues at DCPL. Special thanks to Lisa Warwick, Robert LaRose, Laura Farley, Richard Reyes-Gavilan, Tiffany Alston, Maryann James-Daley, Miya Upshur-Williams, Kerrie Cotten-Williams, and Kim Zablud. In its first few years, the Collaborative also benefited from a partnership with the DC History Center and the Coursepack reflects the invaluable contributions of its longtime curator and editor of Washington History magazine, Jane Freundel Levey.

I also want to acknowledge the contributions of the Collaborative's funders including the DC Public Library, the DC Commission on the Arts and Humanities, and the National Endowment for the Humanities. Many thanks as well to KETTLER who contributed in-kind design services. Finally, I would like to express my gratitude to Joy Ford Austin and former DC Councilmember David Grosso for their wisdom and vision in working together to establish a city-wide oral history program for Washington, DC.

Sincerely,

Jasper Collier, HumanitiesDC
DC Oral History Collaborative Senior Manager

For more information on this program visit www.humanitiesdc.org

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INTRODUCTION

The DC Oral History Collaborative (The Collaborative) documents, preserves, and celebrates the lived experiences of all Washington, DC, residents and communities through oral history. The Collaborative accomplishes this by providing training, mentorship, resources, programs, and funding to current and aspiring oral historians.

The Collaborative began in 2017 with the goals of encouraging Washingtonians to record oral histories with their neighbors and families and of promoting public engagement with existing DC-focused oral history collections. The project was championed by the DC City Council as well as the founding organizations—HumanitiesDC, the DC Public Library, and the DC History Center—as a way to encourage healing, community-building dialogue between the city's residents. In that first year, the Collaborative awarded its first 10 grants, trained its first cohorts of community oral historians, and surveyed 30 DC oral history collections.

By recruiting prospective Collaborative members from diverse communities across the city, The Collaborative is developing more inclusive archives than it would if decisions on topics and scope were made solely by large institutions. The DC Oral History Collaborative has collected hundreds of interviews which can be found in the People's Archive at the DC Public Library.

WHAT IS ORAL HISTORY?

"For many indigenous communities, oral history is inextricably connected to identity. It is a collective enterprise essential to cultural survival, naming the world, asserting power and belonging, and narrating relationships across time and space to land, sea, sky, and each other." – Nēpia Mahuika (Ngāti Porou, a Māori tribal community from Aotearoa New Zealand), *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition: An Indigenous Perspective*

"Oral history refers to both the interview process and the products that result from a recorded spoken or signed interview (whether audio, video, or other formats). In order to gather and preserve meaningful information about the past, oral historians might record interviews focused on narrators' life histories or topical interviews in which narrators are selected for their knowledge of a particular historical subject or event. The value of oral history lies largely in the way it helps to place people's experiences within a larger social and historical context. The interview becomes a record useful for documenting past events, individual or collective experiences, and understandings of the ways that history is constructed. Because it relies on memory, oral history captures recollections about the past filtered through the lens of a changing personal and social context. The hallmark of an oral history interview is a dynamic, collaborative relationship between the interviewer and the narrator. While interviewers pose questions based on research and careful preparation, narrators shape the interview based on what they deem to be relevant, meaningful, or appropriate to share." – Oral History Association (2018)

INTERVIEWER TRAINING OVERVIEW

This course will introduce the best practices of oral history, to empower you with the basic tools for developing your own style and approach to realizing the Collaborative's overall aim: preserving DC's rich past through oral history interviews with a wide range of its residents.

This course is structured to follow the full cycle of an oral history interview, from conception to processing. We will discuss practical and theoretical considerations of doing oral history in order to demonstrate the distinctive, interdisciplinary mindsets of oral historians. Because oral history is best learned "on the job," you will be asked to discuss your experiences and thoughts about the readings, examples, and interactive activities we will explore along the way.

The Oral History 101+ Training Workshop is meant for interviewers of varying skill levels who want to broaden their knowledge, gain new perspectives, benefit from the experiences of others, and, ultimately, to help narrators tell their stories through oral history interviews. While one of the Collaborative's motivations in offering these sessions is to encourage the collection of stories about life in Washington, DC, we hope you will take what you gain from the workshop and apply it to any oral history work you do.

Upon completion of the training, you will become a member of the Collaborative—a growing network of community oral historians in Washington, DC. As a member, you will be able to borrow recording equipment from the Collaborative for your own projects and will have access to the group's collective advice, guidance, and experience.

Workshop participants may also wish to learn more about the grant programs offered through the Collaborative. These funding opportunities provide financial support for DC-focused community oral history projects and lead to the funded oral histories long-term preservation in the DC Public Library's People's Archive. No matter what direction a participant takes following the training, they are always welcome and encouraged to stay in contact with the Collaborative and their fellow members.

COURSE EXPECTATIONS

The heart of this course is the wide range of interests and experiences you, DC community interviewers, bring to the table. Come prepared to listen and talk with one another about your experiences. Be supportive, get to know each other, offer your ideas and questions to each other.

Although 6 hours seems like a lot, there is a lot of material to cover. It's important that everyone arrive on time and be fully prepared to discuss the assigned readings. Many of the discussions and interactive elements of the course will assume that all participants have read the required content in the Coursepack.

Please contact HumanitiesDC (programs@humanitiesdc.org) with any questions or issues.

INTRODUCTION + PROJECT PLANNING

SESSION 1

OBJECTIVES

- Understand and discuss oral history's archival impulse, democratic impulse, biographical approach, and co-creational ethics
- Reflect on the values and intentions that will guide our oral history work
- Practice inviting potential narrators
- Plan for the entire oral history process
- Get to know your neighbors in the DC Oral History Collaborative

READINGS

Required

- 1.1 Essential Definitions
- 1.2 Guiding Principles and Best Practices for Oral History
- 1.3 What We're Interested In
- 1.4 Project and Preservation Planning
- 1.5 Selecting a Narrator

Optional

- Interview Tracking Spreadsheet Sample Categories
- Considerations for In-Person vs. Remote Interviewing

HOMEWORK

- Read Session 2 readings.
- Draft a script for how you would invite someone to an interview (this could be an email, a phone call, or a letter depending on what is most appropriate).

1.1 ESSENTIAL DEFINITIONS

ORAL HISTORY IS

- A way that **culture and values are shared** to strengthen community and inform new generations over time; a crucial part of individual and community identities
- An interdisciplinary, **interview-based method** of producing historical documents, for future generations to better understand the **lived experience of history**, and the **many meanings** that people make of these experiences
- A chance to deepen and complicate the written record of history
- A means of understanding the experiences that produce perspectives different from one's own
- Open to digressions, surprises, and **unforeseen pathways** in the conversation
- An **art** of relationships
- Easy to learn, but difficult to master

ORAL HISTORY IS NOT

- Brief
- A scripted questionnaire
- Closed-minded

NARRATOR

- The person being interviewed

LEGAL RELEASE

- A signed document by which the narrator **donates** their interview to an entity named in the document, and **states any restrictions** that s/he wishes to place on public access to any part of the interview.
- Different institutions take different approaches to the legal release form. Some may use a deed of gift, copyright transfer, consent form, etc.

INTERVIEW GUIDE

- A document the interviewer prepares in advance of the interview to help articulate their agenda for the interview. The interview guide is **not a script**. It provides an outline of **possible pathways** for the interview encounter. Good research and pre-interview meetings with narrators are essential steps to writing interview guides.
- In this course you will hear reference to two types of interview guides:
    - **A project-wide interview blueprint** serves as a template for someone who seeks to conduct a series of interviews with a group of individuals who all share some common experience, personal or historical narrative, social space, or marker of identity. This type of guide—a table of research questions and corresponding interview questions—will help the interviewer ensure that **certain common themes are developed in each of the interviews**, thus making the individuality of each narrator, as well as the relationships between narrators, more apparent.
    - **An individual interview guide** is tailored to a particular narrator, and focuses more specifically on the stages of the individual's life journey, as they relate to the broader social and historical themes that are of interest to the interviewer.

Index (example in Session 3)

- A summary of the different segments that make up the interview. Each segment is identified by the minute and second (the time-code) of the interview file at which it starts. The index is basically a table of contents for the interview, an invaluable tool for future users (archivists, researchers, students, etc.) to have a sense of the interview's contents without listening to the whole thing. It can also help you identify important concepts and themes that the interview explores.

Originally created by Benji de la Piedra

1.2 GUIDING PRINCIPLES AND BEST PRACTICES FOR ORAL HISTORY

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The oral history process, from the interview stage through preservation, use, and access, **must be guided by respect for narrators and the communities from which they come**. This means a commitment to an ethical process and to honoring diverse cultural values, ways of knowing, and perspectives.

The interview process must be **transparent, with ongoing participation, consent, and engagement** among all parties from the first encounter between interviewer and narrator to the creation of end products.

Oral history practitioners **must be sensitive to differences in power** between the interviewer and the narrator as well as divergent interests and expectations inherent in any social relationship. These dynamics shape all aspects of the oral history process, including the selection of people to interview, research questions, personal interactions during the interview, interpretations, decisions on preservation and access, and the various ways that the oral history might be used.

To the greatest extent possible, both the narrator and the interviewer **must be protected from harm**, particularly those who are vulnerable communities. This means that certain lines of inquiry or public access to completed interviews might be precluded. Any stipulations should be considered before the beginning of the oral history process with the understanding that they can be renegotiated as the project proceeds.

Whenever possible, an **oral history interview and its accompanying documentation should be preserved and made accessible** to other users. **Oral history practitioners must be clear** on the various ways the interview might be preserved, made available, and used. Likewise, **narrators must grant explicit permission to make their interview public**, and when possible, should be given an opportunity to establish parameters for preservation, access, and use.

While oral historians are bound by laws covering copyright, and in some institutions might be bound by regulations governing research involving living human subjects, their responsibilities also go beyond these official rules. They should conduct themselves ethically and thoughtfully and **be vigilant about the possible consequences to narrators and their communities** of both the interview process and the access/use of completed interviews.

BEST PRACTICES FOR ORAL HISTORY

Four key elements of oral history work are preparation, interviewing, preservation, and access. Oral historians should give careful consideration to each at the start of any oral history project, regardless of whether it consists of one or many interviews.

Preparation:

1. First-time interviewers and others involved in oral history projects should seek training, whether they are conducting individual research or developing a community or an institutional project.
2. During initial preparation, oral historians should locate an appropriate repository to house the project's finished oral histories and other documentation. Oral historians should take care to select a repository that aligns with the project's goals, has the capacity to preserve the oral histories, can enforce any signed agreements, and will make them accessible to the public.
3. Oral historians should outline an oral history process appropriate for their projects and their narrators. They should consult the complete suite of Oral History Association Principles & Best Practices documents for guidance, but whenever possible, the process should include the following: obtaining and documenting the informed consent of the narrator; when possible **providing the narrator an opportunity to approve the oral history prior to public release;** and sharing expectations about the overall project timeline. At this stage, the oral historian also should develop forms appropriate for documenting the process and related agreements.
4. Oral historians should choose potential narrators based on the relevance of their experiences to the subject at hand, while striving to identify and incorporate as many diverse voices as possible.
5. The process of engaging with potential narrators can be relatively simple and brief or involve multiple conversations. The process typically entails two facets: first, describing the project and process and securing the informed consent of the narrator and second, holding **a pre-interview discussion** to assist in the interviewer's preparation. These meetings, regardless of their formality, are important in establishing rapport between interviewer and narrator and allowing for clear communication of the following elements:

    a. The oral history's purposes in terms of topics to be covered and general research questions under study, and reasons for conducting the interview

    b. The full oral history procedure, including when and how the interview will be recorded, **a description of any review process,** the plans for preservation and access, the potential uses of the oral history, and the need for informed consent and other legal forms to be signed

    c. The narrator's expectations for the oral history—**what they want to get out of the process,** what topics are meaningful to them, and what questions they should be asked

    d. When an understanding on how to proceed is reached, a formal record of that agreement should be completed prior to the beginning of recording.

6. In preparing to ask informed questions, interviewers should become familiar with the person, topic, and historical context by doing research in primary and secondary sources, as well as through social engagement with individuals and communities and informal one-on-one interactions.
7. Interviewers should create, when possible, a **high-quality recording** of the interview (audio or video format) to capture the narrator's interview accurately with consideration of future audiences and long-term preservation.
8. Interviewers should **prepare an open-ended guide or outline of the themes to be covered and general questions to be asked before conducting** the interview. Interviewers should educate themselves about different interviewing strategies with the goal of encouraging the narrator to provide the fullest responses to the questions possible.
9. Oral historians should recognize that their narrators are not just isolated individuals; they are members of communities, some of whom have historically complex relationships with researchers. When planning an oral history project, interviewers are advised to think about whether they want to engage with those communities in a formal, organized way. Oral historians may decide to develop a plan for community engagement that benefits both the project and the community. These plans for bringing communities into the oral history process might include the creation of a community advisory board, hosting events for sharing research findings, providing oral history training, and more.

Interviewing

1. The interview should be conducted, whenever possible, in a **quiet location with minimal background noises** and possible distractions, unless part of the oral history process includes gathering soundscapes or ambient sounds.
2. The interviewer should **record a lead-in at the beginning of each session**. It should consist of contextual information, such as:

    a. Names, or when appropriate, pseudonyms, of narrator and interviewer;
    b. Full date (day, month, year) of recording session;
    c. Location of the interview (being mindful to not list personal residence address, but rather generic "narrator's home"); and
    d. Proposed subject of the recording.

3. Both parties should agree in advance to the approximate length of each interview session. Given the unpredictability of the setting, however, the interviewer should be flexible and prepared for the session to be cut short, interrupted, or possibly to run long, if both parties agree.
4. Along with asking **open-ended questions and actively listening to the answers, interviewers should ask follow-up questions,** seeking additional clarification, elaboration, and reflection. When asking questions, the interviewer should keep the following in mind:

    a. Interviews should be conducted in accord with any prior agreements made with the narrator, and interviewers must respect the rights of interviewees to refuse to discuss certain subjects, to restrict access to the interview, or, under certain circumstances, to

choose a pseudonym. Interviewers should clearly explain these options and how they would be carried out to all narrators during the pre-interview.

b. Interviewers should work to achieve **a balance between the objectives of the project and the perspectives of their narrators.** Interviewers should provide challenging and perceptive inquiry, fully and respectfully exploring appropriate subjects, and not being satisfied with superficial responses. At the same time, they should encourage narrators to respond to questions in their own style and language and to address issues that reflect their concerns.

c. Interviewers should be prepared to **extend the inquiry beyond the specific focus of the project** to allow the narrator to freely define what is most relevant.

d. In recognition of not only the importance of oral history to an understanding of the past but also of the cost and effort involved, interviewers and narrators should mutually strive to record candid information of lasting value to future audiences.

5. The interviewer should secure a signed legal release form, ideally when the interview is completed. It is important to follow the guidelines of the partnering repository's policy on this, if relevant.

Preservation

1. Oral historians, sponsoring institutions, and archival repositories should understand that planning for appropriate care and storage of original recordings begins with project conception.
2. Whenever possible and/or practical, oral histories—either individual or many within a project—should be deposited in a repository such as a library or archive that has the capacity to ensure long-term and professionally managed preservation and access. Regardless of where the oral histories ultimately reside

    a. The recordings of the interviews should be stored, processed, refreshed, and accessed according to established archival standards designated for the media format used;

    b. Whenever possible, all efforts should be made to preserve electronic files in formats that are cross platform and nonproprietary;

    c. The obsolescence of all media formats should be assumed and planned for.

3. In the interim before deposit, oral historians should

    a. Transfer the original recording from whatever device was used, make an appropriate number of redundant digital copies, and store those in different physical locations, as soon as possible after any interview is completed;

    b. Document their preparation and methods, including the project's context and goals, for their own, the project's, and the repository's files;

    c. Organize and preserve related material for each interview—photographs, documents, or other records such as technical or descriptive metadata—in corresponding interview files.

Access & Use

1. In order to enhance accessibility of the audio or audio/video files, an archive should provide, when possible, **written documentation such as transcripts, indexes** with time tags linking to the recording, detailed descriptions of interview content, or other guides to the contents.
2. Whatever type of repository is charged with the preservation and access of oral history interviews, it should

    a. Honor the stipulations of prior agreements made with the interviewers or sponsoring institutions, to the greatest extent possible, including restrictions on access and methods of distribution;

    b. Evaluate documentation, such as consent and/or release forms, and if they do not exist, make a good faith effort to obtain them;

    c. Take all steps practicable to abide by any restrictions set forth by the narrator, while also making clear that certain legal challenges—such as subpoenas or open-record requests—may make some restrictions unenforceable;

    d. Be prepared to provide timely access to material with considerations for expectations of narrators or project partners;

    e. When possible, consult project participants on how best to describe materials for public access and use.

3. All those who use oral history interviews after they are made accessible should strive for intellectual honesty and the best application of the skills of their discipline. This includes

    a. Avoiding stereotypes, misrepresentations, and manipulations of the narrator's words;

    b. Striving to **retain the integrity of the narrator's perspective;**

    c. Recognizing the subjectivity of the interview, including, when possible, verification of information presented as factual;

    d. Interpreting and contextualizing the narrative according to the professional standards of the applicable scholarly disciplines;

    e. Contextualizing oral history excerpts;

    f. Providing a citation to the location of the full oral history.

OHA Principles and Best Practices, adopted 2018," Oral History Association, https://oralhistory.org/principles-and-best-practices-revised-2018/.

1.3 WHAT WE'RE INTERESTED IN

Oral historians document the **personal memories** and cultural practices that make up historical narratives—especially those that don't get broadly publicized or recorded in writing. Oral historians principally achieve this aim through the craft of interviewing.

At the center of the oral history interview is the individual being interviewed. In oral history we call this person the narrator. As an oral historian, **your job will be to develop a meaningful connection with the narrator**, to frame them as a witness to and participant in the daily events that make up history.

Oral history focuses on **people who can speak to local history by recalling and analyzing their day-to-day lived experience**. By no means do the people that you choose to interview need to be celebrities. In fact, the best narrators are oftentimes those that have been mostly overlooked. Perhaps the narrator's fame extends no further than the block they live on, but on that block, everybody knows them. Or perhaps they are a longtime teacher at a local school, or a shopkeeper with decades in business. In the interview you will explore their memories in order to create **a rich portrayal of local history**.

This may sound like other genres of interviewing, such as journalistic or sociological inquiry. Oral history certainly borrows from these approaches. **But what sets the method of oral history apart is its commitment to taking a life history approach,** with an interdisciplinary toolkit, to topics and questions of broader historical significance.

In taking a life history approach, the oral historian seeks to **document the narrator's journey through life, from early childhood through the present moment.** The goal is to probe the ways in which the narrator's life story resounds with overtones and undertones of broader historical significance.

Therefore, **we typically begin at the beginning.** The standard opening question for an oral history interview is: "Could you please tell me your name, when and where you were born, and a little bit about your early life?"

But wait! Why start all the way back there? Why start so broadly? What if the narrator's childhood has nothing to do with the reason I am interested in interviewing this person?

A fair question. The simple answer is that oral historians believe that something like the narrator's childhood does have much to do with the central interest of the interview. Oral historians seek not only to document accounts of historical events, but also to develop a sense of the eyes, ears, and mind through which the person delivering those accounts perceived, remembers, and **makes meaning of those events.**

In this way, oral history is a method of interviewing that **embraces the narrator's subjectivity as an object of inquiry.** One of the oral historian's principal aims is to work with the narrator to develop their account of the experiences and social contexts that they consider formative. Within each of these contexts and experiences, one can think of particular types of relationships and individuals who may have influenced the way the narrator sees the world and interprets the events that make up history. These often include:

- Family: Parents, siblings, grandparents, non-relatives
- Neighborhoods and Communities: Shopkeepers, people who hung out on the sidewalk, neighbors, friends, friends' parents
- Schools: Teachers, principals, staff members
- Religious institutions: Pastors/Rabbis/Imams, congregants, other leadership such as Trustees or Board members
- Social organizations: Leaders and peers of the narrator
- Jobs and Professional experiences: Bosses, colleagues, customers/clients
- Cultural products: Books, television, music, food, holidays
- Political developments on both local and national scales: Political figures and the media that report on them, public places where such developments are discussed and debated (like bars, barbershops, bookstores, and beauty salons)

But that is so much! How will I ever get from the narrator's early life to the thing I am actually interested in?

Because its potential field of inquiry is so broad, **oral history is an art of making choices,** of shaping **a narrative that reads more like a novel** than an encyclopedia.

This is why preparation matters. Your preparation in advance of the interview will inform the choices you make during the interview and the questions you choose to ask, which chart the narrative's course. You will find that most narrators will look to you (the interviewer) to impose a structure on the interview. Your goal is to suggest a structure that gives them plenty of room to render compelling memories of their own life story and historical experience as a DC resident.

At the same time, you will find that the craft of oral history demands significant measures of **humility and curiosity** on your part as the interviewer. You may be interviewing someone to get their account of X, but if it turns out that they also consider Z to be a crucial part of their life story, you've got to follow up on Z too.

In making the choices that give the narrator a structure to build upon, consider letting yourself be guided by the DC Oral History Collaborative's own broad and ambitious agenda: to catalog the richness and diversity of local life in the District of Columbia. Think of our city the way you would think about the country, as a rich tapestry made up of many communities and subcultures that overlap and relate to one another in a variety of ways.

The vehicle of those overlaps and relationships are the individuals. So always **ask narrators to tell you about their neighborhoods, the schools they attended, the churches they go to, and**

any other spaces they consider personally meaningful. Prompt them to paint a picture of these spaces with all five senses. Ask them to describe how these spaces have changed over time. If they've lived in different parts of the city, ask them to tell you what makes each one distinctive.

Also, keep in mind that one of oral history's highest aims is to give future listeners a better picture of the interconnections between the local and the nation or world. For DC-related projects, this means going beyond the workings of the Federal government to understand the city itself as an important part of the nation's fabric. For example, you might ask:

- If the narrator is a native Washingtonian: What brought their family to DC? Where did their family come from? Does the narrator remember hearing stories about the place their people came from, or about their ancestor's initial encounter with Washington? Has the narrator ever gone to their ancestral land? What was that encounter like?
- If the narrator is a transplant (or someone who moved away and came back): What brought them to DC (or brought them back)? What were their initial impressions of the particular areas in the city where they spent time? How did that compare with impressions of other places in the country or world where they had lived before?

The craft of oral history is inherently experimental. It is easy to learn, but difficult to master. It will challenge you to think deeply about what it means to be human, and to think about life as a never-ending education. Narrators' stories will expand the range of things that you consider to be significant in life and in history. Welcome to your own journey with the DC Oral History Collaborative. We, and future generations of listeners, are so grateful for your presence.

Originally created by Benji de la Piedra

1.4 PROJECT AND PRESERVATION PLANNING

Creating a plan for what to do with the recorded interview is just as important as preparing for the interview itself. Knowing what the intended long-term use for and access to an interview is **can shape the project and impact how you record it and process it as well as the permissions or informed consent needed** from the narrator.

The narrator(s) may be active participants in this process and in this part of the project design. Why is this interview taking place—for personal/family records, for a community archive, or for the broader public? Who do they want to have access to their interview? What kind of archive or institution do they want to donate it to, and who do they trust to care for it long-term? Can a particular archive or institution accommodate all of the access or use restrictions that the narrator might want to put on their interview?

One resource that may be particularly helpful is the Oral History Association information on remote interviewing available here: https://oralhistory.org/remote-interviewing-resources/.

PERMISSIONS AND RELEASE FORMS

Oral history best practices include the narrator's continued informed consent. This means that the narrator understands and agrees to every step of the process, from agreeing to the interview through making the interview publicly available for others to access and use. This also means that the narrator can refuse to give or can withdraw their consent (or participation in the project) at any point. **At the core of oral history is the narrator's ability to always maintain control over their stories.** This is true for the long-term preservation or archiving of interviews.

Having the narrator's consent to each step of the process means separating their agreement to do a recorded interview from their agreement to archive the interview. The process of inviting the narrator to schedule and participate in an interview often serves as informed consent for the interview, which is why transparency and honesty about the interview process is crucial. **Interviewers should always ask at the beginning of each interview session for the narrator's verbal consent to have the interview recorded, captured at the start of the recording.**

Consent for donating, archiving, and sharing the interview should only be obtained after the interview is over. **Narrators cannot give informed consent about archiving or future uses of their stories before these stories are shared.** Oral historians want narrators to feel free to talk about

anything and to fully explore their memories and reflections during the interview—including stories or experiences that they did not expect to share.

Signing archival/use forms after the interview means that narrators know what information and stories they are agreeing to share with others and gives them the opportunity to restrict access to sensitive information in the interview.

Interviewers should, however, **review the archival consent form with the narrator before the interview** so that the narrator can ask questions about it and is informed of the entire process and knows what to expect after the interview.

Unless the interview is being kept in the family, **all archives—including church, community, non-profit, etc—must have a consent form for each interview in their collection**. Every archive has its own consent form that the narrator must sign in order for the archive to accept the interview. These forms are sometimes called a consent form, legal release form, or deed of gift. Most archives only require consent from the narrator in order to add an interview to their collection. Even so, **it is good practice for the interviewer to also sign an archival consent form because they helped create the oral history recording and, in the process, may have shared their own stories or perspectives.**

Common Elements of a Legal Release Form:

For more detailed guidance on oral history legal release forms, see *A Guide to Oral History and the Law* by John A. Neuenschwander.

- **Contact information** for the person giving consent so that the archive can contact the person in case any issues arise. This contact information will remain private because archives never make consent forms public.
- **Copyright assignment** to the archive. Having copyright allows the archive to:
    - Make the interview available to the public
    - Make copies of the interview when current copies become worn or the technology on which the interview is stored needs updating
    - Give permission to those who request to use the interview in publications, documentaries, plays, etc.
    - Prosecute anyone who misuses the interview
- Ideally, a **statement of the narrator's right** to use and publish their oral history without needing permission from the archive.
- Ideally, a **statement of the interviewer's and/or project's right** to also use and publish the oral history without needing permission from the archive.
- **Restrictions** that the narrator may put on the interview. For example: only the written transcript is available to the public and not the recording (or vice versa), certain sections must be redacted, the interview is to remain restricted for 50 years, the interview is to remain restricted until after the narrator's death, etc. Keep in mind that some archives are not able to accommodate all of the narrator's desired restrictions.
- **Signature and date.**

PRESERVATION PLAN CONSIDERATIONS

Please also use: Oral History Association's "Archiving Oral History: Manual of Best Practices" https://www.oralhistory.org/archives-principles-and-best-practices-complete-manual/.

No matter the preservation route, **it is critical to carefully track and document your project.** *(See the "Interview Tracking Spreadsheet Sample Categories" in the optional readings for this section).*

Personal Archives

Sometimes interviews are intended for just family or are best archived in a personal collection. That can be a great long-term plan! Here are some tips for helping it last as long as possible:

- Record the interview at **the highest quality possible** so that as the recording starts to age, it takes a very long time before the sound and/or video become distorted.
- Make **multiple copies** of the interview and its materials and **store them in different locations.** For example, give copies to different family members; keep a copy in a filing cabinet or lock box and another copy online (i.e. Google Drive, Dropbox, etc.). If something happens to one copy, the interview will still be preserved elsewhere.
- Store physical copies of the interview and its materials **in a stable environment**. Ideally, it should be kept at a cool temperature (not freezing), low or no humidity, away from water, and out of the sunlight. Keeping these conditions consistent helps slow the rate at which the physical objects degrade. Try to avoid using metal (like staples or paperclips), which rusts, and rubberbands, which break and stick to nearby objects.
    - If the interview and its materials are password- or lock-protected, make sure someone else knows or has access to the password or key. If something should happen to you or you forget/lose the password or key, the interview may be lost.
- Check and update files regularly. How does it sound? What does the transcript look like?
    - As technology advances and new versions of software are created, **make sure that the files are saved or re-saved in updated versions**. If the file version is too out-of-date, you may not be able to open or play it anymore. For text files, PDFs are the most stable, so it's a good idea to save an editable version (i.e. Word Doc or Google Doc) and a PDF version.
    - The same applies to hardware. If the interview is saved on a cassette tape or CD, it's no good unless you and future generations have the right players. The same goes for USB cables that attach to harddrives or devices.
- If the narrator is not a family member, do you have a release form giving you permission to keep the interview and/or donate it to an archive if you can no longer care for it?

Donating to an Archive

Archives are not required to accept materials and many have restrictions on what they can accept because of limits to their resources and capacity for preserving and sharing materials.

- Is the archive a good fit for the interview/oral history project? Does the interview topic align with the focus (themes, geography, etc) of the archive?
- Does the interview meet the archive's standards for accepting materials? (see technical requirements below)
- Can the archive care for the interview? Do they have experience with and the capacity to add digital recordings to their collection? Will they care for the entire oral history package (the recording + its documentation materials) as a cohesive whole, or will they only prioritize part of it?
- Can the archive accommodate narrators' needs or restrictions? Do they have appropriate security measures if the narrator's anonymity is required?
- Can the archive reach or is it accessible to the communities that this interview is hoping to engage?

MINIMUM TECHNICAL REQUIREMENTS FOR ARCHIVAL DIGITAL ORAL HISTORIES

Choose a recorder or online platform that has the ability to record at the following specification:

- Broadcast .WAV File Format for audio or .MPEG for video
- Sample rate of at least 48,000 Hz (48kHz)
- Bit-depth of at least 16 bits (preferably 24 bits)
- Ability to monitor the recording in real time
- Records to a removable media such as SD card, Compact Flash, or is an exportable file

*Some archives are more flexible about these requirements, so **have a conversation with them before you start the interviews.** *In a pinch, if recording to these standards is not accessible to you or the narrator, record the interview at the highest quality possible. Then convert the audio-only recording to a .WAV file for better long-term stability (Audacity is free and can help you do this conversion: www.audacityteam.org/).*

DOCUMENTATION REQUIRED TO CONTRIBUTE ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS TO ARCHIVES:

Overall:

- Metadata Spreadsheet

Per Narrator (some archives may have additional documentation required):

- Audio or video file(s)
- Legal Release(s)
- Transcript(s)

Sometimes Optional:

- Index
- Photo
- Notes/additional materials

Originally created by Anna F. Kaplan

1.5 SELECTING A NARRATOR

The DC Oral History Collaborative is primarily interested in the lives of everyday individuals—people who can speak to local history on the level of memories about day-to-day lived experience.

By no means do the people that you choose to interview need to be celebrities. In fact, **the best narrators are oftentimes those that have been mostly overlooked.** Perhaps the narrator's fame extends no further than the block they live on, but on that block, everybody knows them. Or perhaps they are a longtime teacher at a local school, or a shopkeeper with decades in business. Such personalities, community elders deeply embedded in their social fabrics, usually make for excellent oral history narrators.

That said, you may also consider interviewing younger people or relative newcomers to the area of focus. These folks may have a fresh perspective on local life, and can testify to the location's relationship to the wider world.

In selecting a person to request an interview with, the most important consideration is access. You want to have some familiarity with the person. This doesn't mean you need to be best friends with the person, but you should be able to expect a response to your request for an interview, and to schedule that person for a 2-3 hour window.

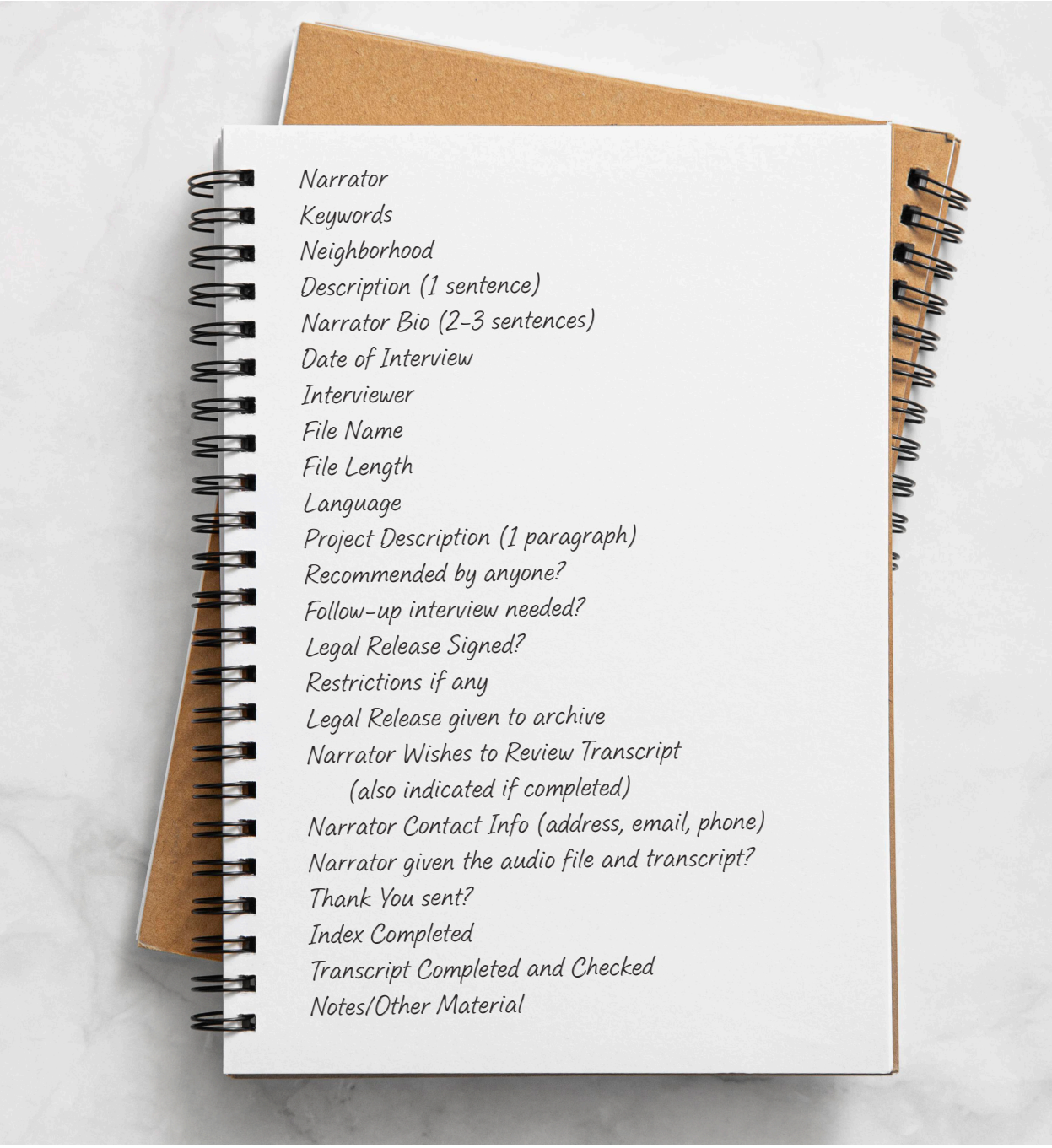
The second most important consideration is buy-in. Does the person want to tell their story, and do they understand a little bit about oral history and your project? Are they committed to speaking to you?

For your first interview, do not plan on interviewing the person who you are most eager to interview, or whose story you think is most crucial to the overall picture. Instead **choose someone who you would feel comfortable experimenting (and perhaps even failing) a bit with.** You can save the blue-chip interviews for when you've gotten a little more comfortable with the practice of oral history.

Optional Readings: Session 1

INTERVIEW TRACKING SPREADSHEET SAMPLE CATEGORIES

It is best practice (and it will save you a lot of trouble and pain) to carefully organize and track your oral history as it develops. It is particularly important to keep close track of contact with narrators, their interviews and interview documentation as you go. The following are sample tracking categories for your oral history project:



CONSIDERATIONS FOR IN-PERSON VS. REMOTE INTERVIEWING

The following guidance and the Oral History Association's "decision tree" (https://www.oralhistory.org/remote-interviewing-resources/) will help you begin to consider which approaches to recording interviews will work best for you and the narrators.

From the Oral History Association:

When considering whether an interview is essential, the practitioner must ask themselves why do an interview at this time, and **how can this interview be conducted meaningfully and ethically.** Health, distance, project deadlines, and interview topics are just a few of the many reasons someone may decide conducting an interview remotely is the best option. However, it is important to be mindful of the fraught, precarious position narrators may be, or that we might find ourselves in. The possibility that postponing interview efforts is the best course of action (even if those eventual interviews will be done remotely) should be explored for any project.

Considerations for Choosing an In-Person vs. Remote Interview

There are many benefits and advantages to conducting an in-person interview, but there are times when meeting in person is not feasible or advisable. There are also times when a remote interview is the better method for the narrator, interviewer, or both. The following list of questions is meant to help you decide which is the best option, but the answers to each question may not clearly point in either direction. **It is important to engage in a tactful discussion with the narrator about these questions and to use your best judgment.** These questions can and should be revisited in any interviewing situation.

- What is the health and/or mobility of the narrator? Of the interviewer? Do health, disabilities, or other concerns make an in-person interview challenging?
- What are the narrator's preferences? Do they feel it is important to conduct the interview in the present time, or would they prefer to wait?
- What is the ultimate goal of the recorded interview? Is it solely for historical documentation, or a web-based production (e.g. podcast, vlog)? Is it for a broadcast documentary?
- What is the minimum quality level of the interview audio and/or video needed for your goal?
- What are the project deadlines? Can interviews wait, or is it important to gather interviews at the present time?
- If travel/meeting restrictions are in place and an in-person interview is possible at a later date, can the interview be postponed?
- Is the narrator located too far away to conduct an in-person interview in the near future?
- Is it possible you may have issues making a connection with and/or locating the narrator at a later date?

ONLINE RECORDING OPTIONS

When choosing a platform/software:

Does it record a .WAV file? Is it a born-.WAV file or a lower-quality recording converted to .WAV?

- Do you need video in addition to audio? If yes, are you recording video or just using it during the interview? (*Remember: recording video creates a larger file that requires devices to have more memory and takes up more archive space.*)
    - If recording video, does the platform record both peoples' videos? If it records just one, can you set it to record just the narrator?
- Does it fit within your budget?
- Does it work with your and the narrator's available devices?

Look for platforms that are designed specifically for oral history or podcasting

- Most online programs require both the narrator and interviewer to have computers and internet access. Internet quality will impact the audio quality, so take as many other devices as possible offline and close other tabs or programs during the interview to strengthen the connection.
    - Internet quality will *not* impact the audio quality if the platform records audio locally (i.e. directly from the microphone to the computer or browser) before uploading it to your account.
- Computer processing power is similar -- quit/close extra programs and tabs during the interview to make all of the computer's resources available during the interview. Make sure your device has enough memory/storage space to save large files.
- Chrome handles large files the best out of most available browsers

PHONE RECORDING OPTIONS (AUDIO ONLY)

Telephone signals are already very compressed, which cannot be fixed. This means that the recording will always sound like a phone conversation.

- Have the narrator and interviewer record themselves separately on audio recorders (not through the phone) with headphones on, and sync the tracks later. *This is only an option if you have access to and the skills to use the recording equipment and audio editing software.*
- There are plug-in tools, like JK Audio taps, that facilitate recording through phone receivers on both landlines and cell phones.
- Putting your phone on speaker or playing through a Bluetooth speaker and recording all of the audio with a recorder nearby. You will sound better than the narrator in the recording. *Monitor the audio recording with headphones because digital signal interference between the phone and recorder can create extra background noise in the recording not indicated by the levels meters.*

MICROPHONES AND HEADPHONES:

Consider the difference between how the interviewer and narrator will sound in the recording; will it matter if one sounds better than the other versus sounding the same? Will it matter if the interviewer sounds better than the narrator? If the narrator sounds better than the interviewer?

- If using external USB microphones, look for ones designed for podcasting
    - Some digital audio recorders (like some Zooms) can serve as an audio interface
    - For example, see this video tutorial about using the Zoom H5 for cell phone recordings: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8sHIqbg3K4g (Scan Below)
    - Potentially use digital audio recorder microphones as computer input
    - Also consider a windblocker/pop-stopper to minimize distorted sounds that microphones can pick up
- Headphones on both ends reduce echoing/feedback
    - You can use headsets that combine headphones and microphones. If you do, look for ones designed for podcasting or online gaming since those are designed for capturing clear conversations
    - Note: Mac computers prioritize the built-in microphone in Apple earbuds/headphones over any other external microphone. You will need to manually select which microphone to use in the recording program/browser settings

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THE INTERVIEW

SESSION 2

OBJECTIVES

- Get feedback on narrator invitation scripts
- Introduce the "art" of interviewing including: the narrator and interviewer's joint role in creating the interview, situational flexibility, and an embrace of subjectivity as defining considerations.
- Introduce practical considerations (nuts and bolts) of doing oral history
- Explore and critique interview examples
- Prepare to write an effective guide/outline for an oral history interview; review the elements of a project plan

READINGS

Required

- 2.1 Writing an Oral History Interview Guide
- 2.2 The Steps of the Interview
- 2.3 The Moves of an Interviewer

Optional

- Oral History Recording Checklist
- Example Interview Guide

HOMEWORK

- Read Session 3 required readings.
- Draft an interview guide specific to the (real or hypothetical) person you want to interview. Print and bring a copy of your draft to the next session so you can share it with others.

OR

- Brainstorm your project and preservation plans for your (real or hypothetical) project. Some things to consider in planning include:
    - Scope — how many interviews, who to include, etc
    - Interviewing method(s) — in-person or remote interviews, technology to use
    - Preservation — Where do you and the narrator(s) want the interviews to go? (personal archives and/or a specific repository). What paperwork do you need?
    - Use/Sharing — What do you and the narrator(s) want to make using the interviews? How do you and the narrator(s) want to share it?

2.1 WRITING AN ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW GUIDE

**Note: Generally, oral historians do not share the interview guide with the narrator; it is mainly for the interviewer's preparation. There are of course exceptions, such as when sharing it is necessary for building and maintaining rapport and trust. Oral historians do, however, always share a list of themes and topics they would like to cover in the interview so that the narrator can edit the list and mentally prepare for the interview.*

For the oral historian, preparation is everything. While **the best oral historians may sound effortless and completely intuitive on tape,** this is only **because they spent time conducting research, establishing rapport, and envisioning the interview** long before starting their recorder.

Remember that **the oral history interview is a meeting of two agendas: the narrator's as storyteller, and yours as historian/documentarian.** While it always takes improvisation to make these two agendas meet, it's impossible to do that if you haven't defined your own agenda ahead of time.

Think of the interview guide as a space for you to define your own interview agenda for yourself. Remember, the narrator will generally look to you for guidance and structure in the interview, so don't be afraid of telling him or her what your objectives are. Just be sure to allow for dialogue.

Writing a guide before the interview will help you:

1. Articulate your own objectives for the interview.
2. Frame the narrator in a way that helps you meet your objectives.
3. Consider and rehearse possible pathways for the interview.
4. Consider possible challenges that may arise in the interview.

The interview guide has two parts:

RESEARCH BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

1. Give a short biographical sketch of your subject. Explain in a sentence or two why you chose them to interview for your project.

    a. What information about the narrator's individual biography is publicly available? Are there any holes in that biography that you think oral history could help fill, or stories that could be fleshed out through first-person testimony?

2. Research and write up notes on the topic that your collection of oral histories will illuminate.

    a. What are the larger stories (histories)—about social environments, cultural currents, collective identities, organizational affiliations, particular historical events—that this person's biography can help you to illuminate, especially as it relates to your topic and research question?

    b. What do you need to know about your topic in order to build trust and legitimacy with the narrator(s)?

INTERVIEW OUTLINE

Outline the **general path you imagine the interview taking,** from beginning to middle to end (knowing that this plan could be reoriented during the interview).

1. Thinking about your background research and project topic, draw up a table of five or so broad research questions for your interview.
2. Now write specific interview questions that align with each research question. Arrange them in a sequence that makes sense within the life history framework.

Things to consider:

What are some changes over time—either collective or individual—that you hope to catalog in this interview?

What is your particular relationship with the narrator? Are you in a position to ask certain questions that other interviewers may not be? Do you envision any particular challenges in interviewing this particular subject?

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2.2 THE STEPS OF AN INTERVIEW

1. Make sure you've had a conversation with the narrator about safety and health needs.
2. Arrive at the interview location
    a. Never be late!
    b. If possible, try to **scope out the location before you arrive**. If you are going into somebody's home, let them know ahead of time that it's important for you to have a quiet space for the duration of the interview, for the sake of recording quality.
        i. For remote interviews, minimize distractions, interruptions, and background noises on both sides.
3. Set up your equipment. Contact HumanitiesDC (programs@humanitiesdc.org) if you've completed a training course and you'd like to borrow an audio recorder from the Collaborative.
    a. Check how much battery life is left. Bring extra batteries just in case.
    b. While finding a place to sit down and set up your recorder, make small talk with the narrator to start warming up the rapport.
    c. Use PPE to make sure that the space is clean and interview ready.
    d. **Test the recording level** with headphones; ask the narrator an innocuous question like "What did you have for breakfast today?"
    e. Show them the legal release. Remind them that they will have a chance to review and make edits to the interview before signing it.
4. Lead the interview
    a. From OHA Best Practices: "**The interviewer should record a 'lead' at the beginning of each session** to help focus [their] and the narrator's thoughts to each session's goals. The 'lead' should consist of, at least, the names of the narrator and interviewer, day and year of session, interview's location, and proposed subject of the recording."
    b. You can write a short script for this if that makes it easier for you. For instance: "My name is Benji de la Piedra, and I am interviewing Elliott Ness. Today is April 18, 2017, and we are sitting in the living room of Mr. Ness's house in Northwest Washington, D.C. Mr. Ness will be describing his experience as a teacher in the D.C. Public Schools before, during, and after the desegregation that followed the 1954 Supreme Court decision in Bolling versus Sharp."

c. Get verbal consent to record as part of the audio. For example, ask "Do I have your permission to record?"

d. Before my first question, I always **thank the narrator for taking the time to sit** down with me. I usually tell them that this interview will be really valuable for future historians and listeners (in our case, future generations of Washingtonians).

e. I also remind them that they will have a chance to review this recording afterwards, and that they can always refuse to answer a question, ask to take a break, or end the session whenever they wish. Sometimes I say something to the effect of, "I want you to feel safe being honest with me, and if there's anything you say that you don't want others to know, we can always go back and take it out." *Make sure to only promise what you and/or the archive can actually deliver.*

f. And finally I say something like, "Have fun remembering! I am excited to go wherever your memories take us."

5. Conduct the interview

   a. **Active listening!**

      i. Maintain eye contact (if culturally appropriate)

      ii. Communicate with silent facial gestures

      iii. **Avoid "mhm's," "uh-huhs" and the like. No crosstalk.**

      iv. **Embrace silence**

   b. Enacting your outline vs. Following digressions

   c. Asking the right question at the right time (see reading "The Moves of the Interviewer")

6. Conclude the interview
    a. Always ask, "Before we finish, **is there anything you'd like to add** that we haven't talked about? Or were there any points in our conversation that you'd like to go back over?"
    b. Always **thank the narrator again** before turning off the recorder. If it makes sense, try to articulate in a sentence or two what you learned, how this helped you achieve your objectives as a historian, why specifically this recording will be useful for future generations.
7. Turn the recorder off
    a. Be explicit; say/show that you are turning it off.
        i. For online recording platforms, remind the narrator to leave their browser open until notified that the upload is complete.
    b. Make small talk; ask how they are feeling. Don't be in a rush to leave.
    c. If the conversation starts going towards more stories or information that should be documented and archived, ask them, "Do you mind if I turn the recorder back on for this?"
    d. Get a photo of the narrator or remind them to send one to you, if they haven't already.
    e. Let them know that you will be in touch. Ask them if they want to sign the release form now or after they review the transcript.
8. Send a personal thank-you within the next two days. Follow up to check on the narrator's physical and emotional wellbeing. Offer any support you may have access to if needed.
9. Coordinate to get them a copy of the recording that is consistent with your project design (sound file, CD, transcript, etc.) in a timely manner. Remember that oftentimes the signing of the legal release depends on this.
10. Write fieldnotes as soon as you can.
    a. Write these just for yourself, in whatever way feels most useful for you. What stood out to you from the interview setting, the interview content? What were some significant choices you made during the interview? Were you having particular thoughts while the narrator spoke, which affected the choices you made? What were some significant choices the narrator made during the interview? Do these choices possibly reveal something about the narrator, or their context? Were there situations that you would handle differently next time? Were there situations you think you handled especially well? Did you meet your objectives? Why will this interview be a good contribution to the archive or project? What surprised you in the interview?
    b. Again, these notes are first and foremost for you. Don't hold back on noting mistakes, failures, or things that would be embarrassing to discuss publicly— those moments are where the greatest learning happens!
        i. Afterwards, if you are inclined, you can work these reflections into official fieldnotes for the archive, which can provide important contextual information for future users of the document that you helped create.

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2.3 THE MOVES OF AN INTERVIEWER

Oral historians are the most **flexible interviewers** around. We borrow useful techniques—ways of thinking about human experience, and ways of asking questions about human experience—from all kinds of interviewers and conversationalists, no matter what their discipline or background. The oral historian will therefore sound, by turns, like a journalist, a sociologist, a good friend, a psychoanalyst, a detective, a novelist, a filmmaker, a folklorist, and more.

Remember that the oral history interview is an **improvised conversation** about life experience and cultural or community practices. That improvisation is given structure and inspiration by your effort to balance your objectives as historian along with the narrator's objectives as storyteller—**good oral history is therefore not unlike good jazz**, or team basketball.

The type of questions and statements you raise will therefore be determined by what you sense the interview calls for in a given moment. That's why it might be helpful to think about the oral historian's involvement in the interview as a series of "moves" that give the narrator a new sense of direction or pacing in a given moment of the narrative.

This is a list of common "moves" (along with their functions, and some examples) that the oral historian makes during the interview. It is drawn from my own memories of conducting interviews in the past few years, so by no means is this a complete list. Please add to it if you discover new moves in your practice!

1. **Plot-driving question**
    a. Keep the narrative moving forward, open up new stories
        i. "And then what happened?"
        ii. "How did you respond to that?"
        iii. "I want to move on to your high school years, if you don't mind."
        iv. "What was the happiest you ever felt walking around your neighborhood?"
2. **Follow-up/Descriptive/Clarifying question**
    a. Slow down the narrative by seeking more detailed rendering of a scene, setting, personality, relationship, idea, emotion, etc.

i. "Can you describe...?"
ii. "Can you tell me more about...?"
iii. "I'm wondering if we can slow down here and focus on your mother/your Girl Scout troop/those two months after graduation where you said you did nothing/etc...?"
iv. "I'm wondering if we can go a little deeper here. What exactly do you mean by...?"

3. **Research-driven question**

a. Explicitly put your research agenda on the table

i. "As you know, I'm especially interested in the way that someone's first experience of being incarcerated plays into their chances of recidivism. Can you tell me how, in your particular case, there might be a connection there?"
ii. "Lately I've been reading a lot about a concept that sociologists call 'stereotype threat.' Basically, the idea is that people often feel at risk of conforming to stereotypes that exist around their social identity, even if those things aren't true of the person. So for instance, studies have shown that students of color tend to do worse on standardized tests if they are reminded of their race right before the test, compared to those who aren't. Do you feel like that concept of stereotype threat has manifested itself in your experience at all? Not just in testing, but in other aspects of life?"

b. Ask for an example or particular story, to illustrate a larger theme that is either on your agenda, or that the narrator mentioned in general terms

i. "Can you give me an example of that?/Do any particular stories come to mind? I want to get a more detailed sense of..."

4. **Summative questions**

a. The big, more abstract questions are best saved for the end of the interview, or end of a particular movement. These can prompt the narrator to evaluate their decisions/attitudes/personality in the context of the narrative they've been telling.

i. "What kind of a leader are you?"
ii. "What has being a mother meant for you?"
iii. "What do you want someone 100 years from now to know about your neighborhood?"
iv. "What does your name mean to you?"
v. "Has the meaning of your divorce/your career/your moving back to DC/etc. changed over time for you?"

5. **Introducing an opposing point of view**

a. This takes finesse, because you don't want the narrator to shut down in shame or turn into a caricature of their own opinion. The key is to show curiosity, not judgment. *Don't start an argument!*

   i. "It's interesting you say that, because the other day I was reading something that argued just the opposite...What would you say to someone who takes that perspective?"
   ii. "A future historian would really fault me if I didn't ask: How did you arrive at that point of view?"
   iii. "Now, what you just said has become a less popular opinion over the years, am I right? What do you wish the majority of people understood about the issue?"
   iv. "Have you ever been in a situation where someone disagreed with you on that?"

6. **Summing up the narrator's idea**

   a. This can help bring a particular story or movement to a close, or also encourage the narrator to keep going by showing that you are "getting" what they're saying.

      i. "So it sounds to me like your grandfather was a major influence on you."
      ii. "It sounds like that was a really special time in your life."

7. **Connecting multiple threads or resonances of the interview**

   a. Similar to the last point, except this is done by referring back to something that was said in a previous movement of the interview. (As an oral historian, you live for the moments when the narrator says, "Wow, I never thought of it like that before" or "I haven't thought about this in many years.")

      i. "I'm hearing some echoes of what you said earlier about your father."
      ii. "I don't think you would have arrived here without your faith, as you described it for me earlier."

8. **Staying silent while maintaining eye contact** (if culturally appropriate)

   a. Hang in there! You'd be surprised at how this makes people open up. Make sure your features are open and relaxed; don't be scowling!

9. **Bringing up your own experience.** You can do this in different ways, to make yourself more relatable to the narrator. The key is to share just enough about yourself to make the narrator continue to open up about their own experience. Don't take over the narrative!

   a. You can demonstrate a similarity with their narrative. The purpose of this is not to show that you already know what they are talking about, but rather that you empathize with what they are telling you, and that they therefore should feel safe continuing to share.

   i. "I feel like my first relationship was a lot like the one that you're describing. Were there moments when you thought to yourself, 'I don't care how young we are, she really might be the one.'?"

b. You can lay a difference between you and the narrator out on the table for the narrator to comment on. As Charles T. Morrisey writes, "Oral history interviewing is one of the very few activities in life where you can mobilize your ignorance as an asset."

   i. "Now I'll be honest, my upbringing was very different from yours. My parents weren't strict at all. In fact, they were barely even home. Can you tell me how those daily disciplinings shaped you later in life?"

c. You can also weave yourself into the framing of a question, to humanize it.

   i. "Now, I'm going to sound like my mother here, so please forgive me: But do you think that was the right decision to make?"

10. **Interrupting vs. Not Interrupting**

a. In general, err towards not interrupting, especially when you can see the narrator searching for the right words to describe what they want to say.
b. However, a well-placed interruption can be extremely useful; it can reorient the narrator in a way that is productive for both of you. This is always a judgment call. Sometimes a rambling narrator is just rambling, but often those ramblings reveal a lot about their experience and perspective that you may not have accessed otherwise.
c. If you are going to interrupt, maybe try to make a little gesture (lean forward, raise a finger and open your mouth) to demonstrate, "Oh, a burning thought just occurred to me!"

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Optional Readings: Session 2

ORAL HISTORY RECORDING CHECKLIST

Equipment

- ❑ Release form (2 copies – one for you and one for the narrator to keep)
- ❑ External microphone with cable (if available)
- ❑ Headphone and adapter
- ❑ Notepad
- ❑ Pen/Pencil

For in-person interviews:

- ❑ Recorder
- ❑ Formatted Memory card and backup card (both formatted on recorder)
- ❑ Fresh batteries (in recorder)
- ❑ Recorder charge (if available) and extension cord
- ❑ Spare batteries

For virtual/remote interviews:

- ❑ Recording equipment or platform subscription
- ❑ Memory/Storage space on the device and a backup storage device/space
- ❑ WiFi with all other devices, programs, and tabs powered off, off-line, or closed/quit
- ❑ Device power cable

Recording Tips

- Anticipate the extra sounds you will hear and be prepared to break for the unexpected such as sirens, barking dogs, elevator noises, door slamming, and other random noises
- Avoid music or television in the background at all costs
- Avoid ambient noise such as traffic, background conversations, etc.
- Avoid building noise such as HVAC, clocks ticking, and noisy light fixtures.
- Avoid machinery or sound gear noise such as computer fans or hard drives, refrigerators/freezers, ground loop hum/buzz, and loose or defective connectors.
- Always wear your headphones
- Get close and stay close (but respectful of personal space needs)
- Be patient with the narrator

EXAMPLE INTERVIEW GUIDE

Interview Guide: Asian American Voices in the Making of Washington D.C.'s Cultural Landscape

By Crystal Rie and Dave Walker

Note that this project was supported by the DC Oral History Collaborative and it can be found in the DC Public Library People's Archive.

The Narrator: Jane Doe

Jane Doe's son is a chef and co-owner of two Korean restaurants in Washington, D.C. In 2006, he opened his first restaurant with his mother, Jane Doe. The restaurant is one of the pioneering Korean restaurants that has been serving traditional-style Korean cuisine before the recent Korean cuisine boom. His second restaurant is a Korean-Chinese fusion fast-casual restaurant that demonstrates modern interpretation of traditional Asian culinary techniques and flavors.

This story is not only an entrepreneurial story, however it speaks to the integration process of immigrant individuals and communities to their new homeland. The Korean/ Korean American communities have been getting recognition and distinction after a decades long invisibility or conflation into other East Asian ethnic communities in the mainstream media and culture. Along with Doe's story, their stories show the generational change of immigrant communities and their effort to become part of the DC community. In macro-level, I also hope to understand how the globalization of Korean culture known as Korean Wave shapes the livelihoods of transnational subjects.

- Life before coming to the States, early life in Seoul, South Korea
    - Where and when were you born?
    - Could you describe the city/town you grew up?
    - What was your childhood experience like? Did you help out cooking at home?
    - Growing up, did you dream of living in the US or any other countries?
    - What education or jobs have you had in South Korea?
- What was it like to be an international student in Illinois?
    - When did you move to the U.S.? Did you come by yourself?
    - What degree did you pursue in a graduate school in Illinois? Can you describe your experience as an international student and being Korean in Illinois?
    - What was it like coming to the U.S. and living in America for you? Was it similar to what you expected?
- Starting a new life in the Virginia suburbs
    - How did you meet your husband? Why did you move to the Virginia suburbs?
    - Could you describe the neighborhood that you lived in? Did you hang out with

your neighbors?

- What was your life like in Virginia as a married woman?
- How did you feel when you had to be a breadwinner after your husband passed away?
- Could you describe your Picca-deli, a deli, in Old Town Alexandria and Charlie Chiang Kwai, a pan-Asian restaurant in the Ronald Reagan National airport?

- What motivates some individuals/communities on the margin to blend into the mainstream? Opening a Korean restaurant outside of the ethnic enclave
  - How did you get into the food and restaurant industry? Where did you learn to cook? Who taught you?
  - Why did you decide to open a Korean restaurant in the District instead of Annandale or another neighborhood that has Korean community?
  - What were the challenges of starting a Korean restaurant? Many people doubted the success of a Korean restaurant. Did you feel nervous? Or were you confident about the success of your restaurant?
  - Could you describe the first day at Mandu?
  - How did you 'Americanized' your food to cater to the clientele in DC?
  - What is your favorite dish at Mandu?

- Mandu and DC Asian food community
  - How did the DC community respond to Mandu at first? Has the reaction changed over time?
  - In 2013, you celebrated your birthday with the DC food community. Can you describe your birthday party? What does the community mean to you?
  - It seems that the DC Asian food community has strong bonding and support for each other. Can you describe the community?

- How does the recent Korean cuisine boom influence your restaurant?
  - The South Korean government has been promoting Korean Food Globalization campaign since 2008. Were you aware of this campaign? Or benefited from this campaign?
  - Has the demographics of your customers changed over time?
  - As Korean cuisine becomes trendy, many Korean restaurants are opening up and Korean food-inspired dishes are mushrooming in many non-Korean restaurants. How does this new trend influence your food and business? What do you think about this trend?
  - Do you think the Korean cuisine boom brought more opportunities for the Korean American community?
  - What does it mean to run a Korean restaurant in D.C.?

- Chiko and negotiating authenticity
    - Why did you open Chiko in the Capitol Hill neighborhood?
    - Chiko has been getting great recognition in both food and DC communities; did you expect this?
    - How did you come up with the concept of Chiko, combining Chinese and Korean techniques and flavors?
    - If we were to put the dishes at Chiko into categories, how would you categorize them? Korean-Chinese? American? Or fusion?
    - What does Chiko mean to you?

- How does the recent Korean cuisine boom influence their restaurant?
    - The South Korean government has been promoting Korean Food Globalization campaign since 2008. Were you aware of this campaign? Or benefited from this campaign?
    - Has the demographics of your customers changed over time?
    - As Korean cuisine becomes trendy, many Korean restaurants are opening up and Korean food-inspired dishes are mushrooming in many non-Korean restaurants. How does this new trend influence your food and business? What do you think about this trend?
    - Do you think the Korean cuisine boom brought more opportunities for the Korean American community?
    - Among many dishes in Mandu and Chiko, what is your favorite dish that you created? Or a dish that you are most attached to?

- Is there anything else you would like to add that I haven't asked you about?

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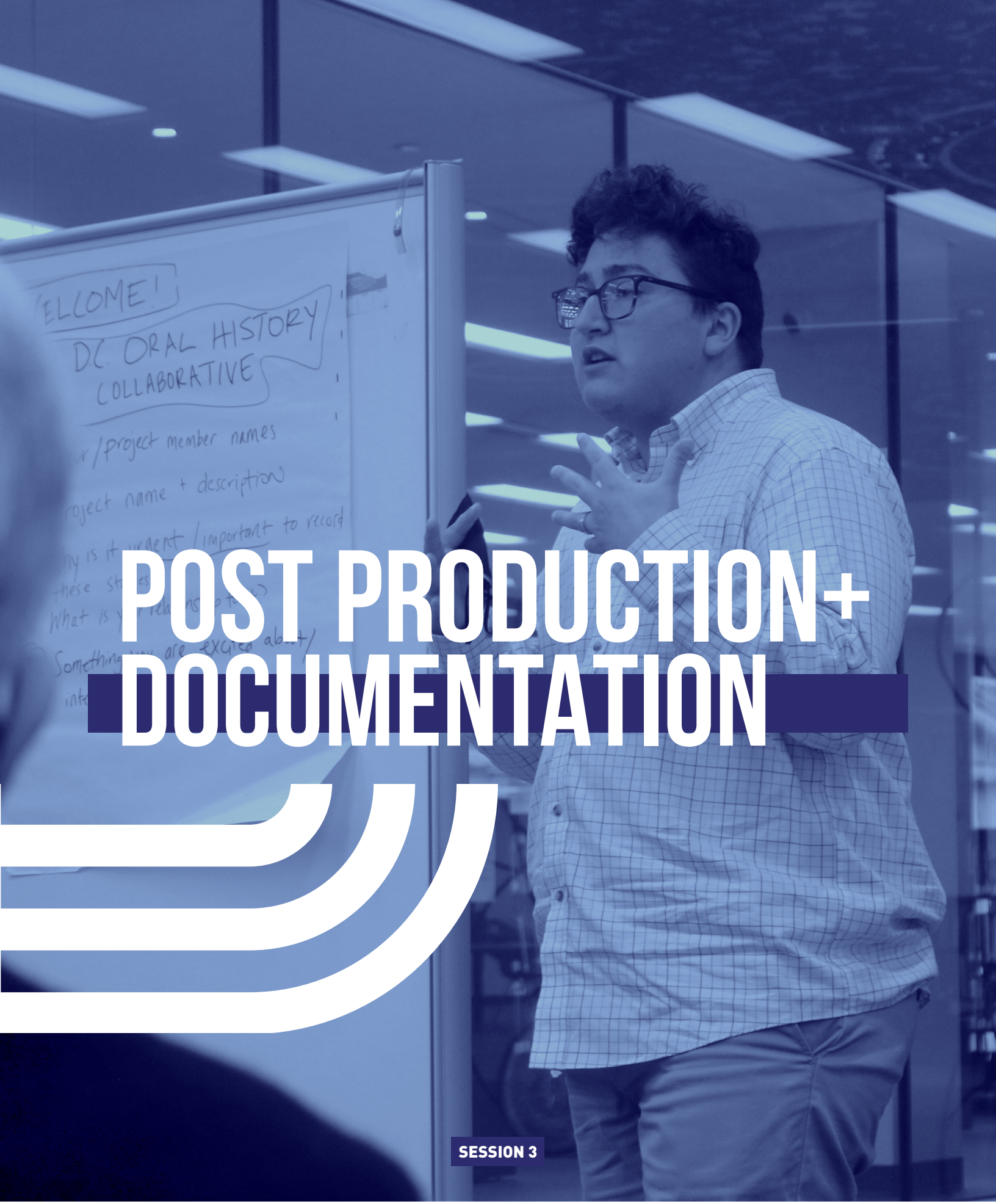

POST PRODUCTION+ DOCUMENTATION

SESSION 3

OBJECTIVES

- Workshop and improve interview guides and/or project plans
- Brainstorm strategies for handling different interview situations
- Review interview techniques from previous session and practice interviewing
- Learn about post-production on oral history interviews including:
    - Engagement with narrator
    - Examples of documentation, helpful for projects and required by archives
    - Brainstorm possible future uses for oral histories to help communities engage with them, and how to get support for such projects

READINGS

Required

- 3.1 After the Interview
- 3.2 Example Transcript Style Guide
- 3.3 Example Interview Index Style Guide

Optional

- Example Interview Index (Excerpt)
- Example Transcript (Excerpt)
- Additional Oral History Resources
- File Naming Example

HOMEWORK

- Revise your interview guide or project plan.
- Start interviewing!

3.1 AFTER THE INTERVIEW

The recorder is off and you are on your way home. You finished conducting an oral history interview. Congratulations!

1. Thank the narrator for their time and let them know what to expect from you moving forward. Ask the narrator if they want to sign the legal release form now.
2. If you borrowed a recorder from The Collaborative, return it to HumanitiesDC (1804 T Street, NW) at the scheduled date and time. The HumanitiesDC staff can transfer the audio file(s) off the recorder for you.
3. Have the interview transcribed. Transcribing is more labor-intensive than might appear at first glance but future researchers will thank you for it. Transcribing the interview yourself is the best way to learn as much as you can from the recording about your topic and yourself as an interviewer.

    a. If you have a company (i.e. Rev.com, Audio Transcription Center, Sharp Copy Transcription) or someone else transcribe the interview for you, **it's crucial that you review the transcript while listening to the audio for errors** (i.e. audit-edit the transcript). This process will also help you learn more from the interview.

4. As soon as the transcript is finished, send the narrator copies of the audio file and transcript for them to review and keep. **Provide the narrator clear instructions on the type of feedback that you are looking for:** corrections of errors (spellings of names and places, incorrect dates, etc.) or full redactions of anything that is potentially too sensitive. **Explain to the narrator that transcripts are verbatim and will look messy, and that they are not meant to be copy-edited or reorganized. If they wish to remove something, full sentences or paragraphs are preferred.** If they previously signed the release form they are **welcome to update it with any restrictions after reviewing the transcript.**

    a. ***Make sure that you and/or the archive have the capacity to implement** the edits, etc. that you're offering to the narrator.

    b. If they have not signed the release form already, ask them to do so now.

        i. You can do this by emailing the narrator the blank PDF version of the release and asking for a scanned signed copy back, or you can mail/take a physical copy of the release to the narrator and ask them to sign it.

        ii. **Make sure the narrator keeps a copy** of the release form that is identical to the one you walk away with (i.e. make sure that both copies have the same restrictions listed, if any).

c. **If the narrator has significant or lingering concerns about their safety or security after reviewing the transcript and further considering their involvement, listen to what their specific concerns are to try to understand them in as much detail as possible. Next, set up a time to discuss the narrator's concerns and potential solutions with the archive. Potential options can include restricting access to the interview (i.e. making them available in 50 years, or only physically and not digitally), granting anonymity, and placing the interview in a non-public archive. Narrators always have the right to completely withdraw from the project at any time.**

5. While waiting for the narrator to review the interview, you can also review it yourself.

    a. If you're also creating an index, copy the transcript into a new document and condense it down instead of writing the index from scratch.

        i. What is an index? It's a document (like a "table of contents") that gives both you and future historians a quick sense of the shape of the interview. It's a great place to identify themes or topics explored in the interview in addition to or instead of directly summarizing the content.

        ii. Writing an index is a good way to make sure you are paying close and active attention to an interview that you conducted before but are reviewing now. It ensures you really learn from the recording.

        iii. Summarize sections of the interview (sections usually close and open whenever a new question is asked, or whenever the narrator changes the subject of conversation). The key is to pay attention to and include the time codes. (See example in Session 3 Optional Readings.)

6. Update your interview tracking spreadsheet.
7. Send a copy of all of the final materials to the narrator to review and keep.
8. Maintain your oral history field notes as best you can. One of the best ways to become a better oral historian over time is to constantly prepare for and reflect on your interviews.

    a. Look for additional training opportunities from The Collaborative as well as resources from the Oral History Association, Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region, or similar organizations that delve deeper into different aspects of oral history.

    b. Stay in touch with each other! Remember that we now have a deep pool of interviewers, so if there are interviews you want to conduct but you don't want to tackle them alone, just send out a call for one or more of your fellow Collaborative oral historians to join you!

9. Reach out to HumanitiesDC when you need support or guidance on your interview project.
10. Keep interviewing, as much as possible! And keep bringing us your ideas for the future of the Collaborative. We are extremely grateful for everything you will do to share oral history across DC. Future generations of Washingtonians and scholars of Washington, DC will be too.

Originally created by Benji de la Piedra

3.2 EXAMPLE TRANSCRIPT STYLE GUIDE

Transcripts are a text copy of the oral history interview, **including both the interviewer's and the narrator's statements.** They should be an accurate, verbatim representation of the recording. It is more important to retain speech patterns and inflections than it is to produce a grammatically perfect document. However, transcripts **should not include every stutter or filler word ("um," "uh," "like," "you know," etc.).** False starts should remain in the transcript only when capturing speech patterns or the narrator's struggle to vocalize their thoughts around a certain subject. When the speaker ends a sentence mid-way or is interrupted, use a double-hyphen or en dash to signify the end of the incomplete sentence.

Footnotes can be used to clarify details, but should be used sparingly because the interview should include all of that information. In-text brackets can be used to indicate brief factual corrections (i.e. dates or place names) and should follow the accurate transcription of what they correct. For example: "Obama's inauguration in 2008 [2009] had the biggest crowds I'd ever seen." Brackets can also represent nonverbal aspects of the interview, such as [narrator crying] or [long pause] or [narrator and interviewer laugh] or [narrator mimics playing an instrument]. These should also be used sparingly so as not to clutter the transcript and make it difficult to read. *(See example in Session 3 Optional Readings)*

TRANSCRIPT SPECIFICATIONS

- May begin with an "introduction" to the interview, including:
  - Title for the interview
  - Narrator's full name
  - Narrator's relationship to the project
  - Interviewer Name
  - Date of Interview
  - Interview Summary
  - Narrator Bio
- Identify each speaker by name; frequently transcripts use the full name the first time each person speaks and then either just the last name or initials after that.
- Timestamps every 5 minutes or less, starting with 00:00.
- Page numbers
- Spacing: Text is single-spaced; use 1 space between paragraphs; use 2 spaces between different speakers.
- Include audio file names and stop/start notations if multiple audio files comprise a single interview session.

This style guide was created by the DC Public Library; each archive has its own requirements

3.3 EXAMPLE INTERVIEW INDEX STYLE GUIDE

An interview index is a quick way for the public to find out more about the interview. It provides more details about the interview than the summary does, but does not require someone to read through the entire transcript or listen to the entire recording to find a specific topic or story that they're interested in. It is **like a table of contents** because it can 1) quickly tell someone whether or not it includes what they're looking for, and 2) point them to the particular place in the transcript and/or recording where that information is located. *(See example in Session 3 Optional Readings)*

The interview index must include the following:

- ❑ "Index" label in the title
- ❑ Title for the interview
- ❑ Narrator's full name
- ❑ Narrator's relationship to the project
- ❑ Interviewer Name
- ❑ Date of Interview
- ❑ Interview Summary
- ❑ Narrator Bio
- ❑ Keywords (key terms featured in your interview. Think about the kinds of key terms you would use to search in a library)
- ❑ DC neighborhoods and streets that are mentioned in this interview
- ❑ Proper names [this is very important for spelling names correctly]
- ❑ Notes
- ❑ Time-coded index of short summaries of the different segments that make up the interview. Each segment is identified by the minute and second (the time-code) of the interview file at which it starts.

You should follow the same formatting and grammar guidelines for both the transcript and index.

This index style guide was created by the DC Public Library; each archive has its own requirements

Optional Readings: Session 3

EXAMPLE INTERVIEW INDEX (EXCERPT)

*This index was created according to the style required by the DC Public Library; each archive has its own requirements

INDEX

Anne Becker Oral History Interview for CETA Arts DC Oral History Project (EXCERPT)

Narrator: Anne Becker

Narrator's relationship to the topic:

Annie Becker is a poet who was the first employee of ARTS DC CETA during its first year of operation (Oct. 1977 through about Sept.1978), a position that helped her to develop her creative work.

Interviewer: Jonetta Rose Barras

Date: October 6, 2017

Interview Summary:

Poet and CETA Arts DC participant, Anne Becker reflects on her life and work with some of the most celebrated poets of the later half of the 20th century, including work with June Jordan, Dennis Brutus, Shirley Kaufman and Nobel prize winners Joseph Brodsky and Czeslaw Milosz. She also speaks about her seventeen years at Watershed Foundation, the work site for Anne Becker's tenure as an Arts DC CETA participant, where she developed her own poetry, eventually becoming the poet laureate for Takoma Park, MD.

The ARTS DC CETA arts program operated in the District of Columbia from late 1977 to 1982, employing many of the city's artists and arts workers. Using federal CETA funding, ARTS DC paid over 300 theater artists, designers, painters, sculptors, dancers, writers, and the other artists, technicians, and arts administrators to work in over 100 arts organizations during this period. This oral history interview was conducted under a grant from the Humanities Council of Washington, DC to the Center for the Creative Economy.

Narrator Bio:

Born in Chicago Anne Becker grew-up in the southern Maryland towns of Takoma Park and Silver Spring. She attended Beloit college to study anthropology. After a brief stint studying abroad in France she dropped out, finally finishing her education at Johns Hopkins. Her work and reading have made an impact on the DC poetry scene and beyond, as well as the work that she has done with some of the 20th centuries best loved poets as part of her work for the CETA funded program Watershed.

Keywords: Childhood. Creation of Literary Organizations. Published writers and artists in DC during the 1970s and 1980s. Black Box. Watershed. Negritude Movement. Anthropology.

DC neighborhoods and streets that are mentioned in this interview: Walter Reed Army Medical Center, Gold Coast, Lansburg Center, downtown DC, George Washington University.

Proper Names: Beloit College, American Association of University Professors, CETA. Paris, Triangle Shirtwaist Factory, Writer's Center, Arts DC, Folger Shakespeare Library, Pyramid Atlantic, Arts and Humanities Committee of Takoma Park, poet laureate. Textile Museum, Liam Rector, Frank Bullard, Sheila Crider, June Jordan, Bernice Reagon, Abba Kovner, Dan Pagis, Dennis Brutus, Leon Damas, T.S. Eliot, Mary Ann Larkin, Jean Nordhaus, David McAleavy, Julius Lester, Elizabeth Wray, Chris Lewellyn, Maxine Kumin, Myra Sklarew, Grace Cavelieri, Gargoyle, Merrill Leffler, Jose Dominguez, Steve Waldhorn, Edward Kamau Braithwaite, Czeslaw Milosz, Joseph Brodsky, Beth Joselow, Lynne Dreyer Muriel Rukeyser, Audre Lord, E.Ethelbert Miller, Ai,, Don Berger, the University of Maryland, Alan D.Austin.

Notes: None

Anne Becker Interview Time-Coded Index:

0:00 Jonetta Rose Barras identifies the interview location.

0:20 Anne Becker was the first of several people who had ARTS DC CETA jobs at the Watershed Foundation.

2:40 Becker discusses the Watershed tapes, which are recordings of poets made by the Watershed Foundation.

6:00 Alan Austin, the director of the Watershed Foundation, compiled a list of poets to record and Becker recorded many of them.

10:00 Becker talks about being born in Chicago and growing up in Tacoma Park and Silver Spring, Maryland.

12:50 Becker talks about how her mother loved languages and started an afterschool program teaching French in Becker's elementary school.

16:10 Becker talks about how her father, a research scientist, loved literature as much as science. She went to Beloit College in Wisconsin to study anthropology, but decided she wanted to write like a poet, not like a scientist.

18:00 Becker didn't start writing poetry until she was in high school because until then she felt poetry had to rhyme and knew that she could not do that.

18:30 Hearing her father reading aloud the King James Bible as a model of poetry, and her study of the works of T.S. Eliot, led Becker to start writing poetry.

22:10 Becker discusses studying anthropology at Beloit Collage and taking a literature class and a class taught by a poet.

26:40 After three semesters at Beloit College, Becker studied in France for a semester, volunteered at an archaeological dig in England, and audited courses at University College, London.

[continues through the end of the interview]

EXAMPLE TRANSCRIPT (EXCERPT)

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Anne Becker Oral History Interview for CETA Arts DC Oral History Project

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Interview:

Jonetta Rose Barras: This thing on while we're ... Since you're remembering all of this. We're talking, and it's at 610 Kennebec Avenue in Takoma, Maryland. You were saying?

Anne Becker: So, I was saying that I was the first one hired in the CETA program Arts DC, and then after that Alan found money for me, and then we hired [00:00:30] Liam Rector, again, no longer alive.

Barras: Wow. Yeah, I remember Liam.

Becker: Yeah. And then after Liam, we hired Steve Waldhorn and Frank Bullard.

Barras: Oh, I remember Frank Bullard.

Becker: And then ... somewhere in there Shelia, and then the last person [00:01:00] we hired through the CETA program was Judy … oh I can't think of Judy's last name now, but she was in radio too. So, we had quite a few people.

Barras: Wow, yeah. And they all did ... basically they were all involved with recordings?

Becker: Liam was hired as essentially our sales rep, so he would go [00:01:30] around to university libraries and college English departments and let those people know about the tapes, and everything, and he did. He got our stuff in a lot of big libraries. Steve Waldhorn did the same thing. Frank was a radio producer, [00:02:00] so he really did a lot of the recording. And then Judy ... Shelia worked on tapes, on Watershed tapes in fact. Let's see if I can find the one ... These are not all of them. I have a whole box full of ... Let's see. No. She did ... It was a guy [00:02:30] from New York.

Barras: New York?

Becker: I can't ... Yeah. That doesn't narrow it down very much. I can't remember who, but she did several of the tapes. Let's see ... Oh, this is the one. Let's see who did ... actually I think Frank did the recording on this. Yes, he did. This is between Jordan and Bernice Reagon, [00:03:00] and that whole thing, it was amazing that it actually got done because ... there was a period, I don't know if it continued or whatever, when June Jordan and Bernice Reagon were not happy with each other, and what happened ... I can't remember who was the one who ... We definitely wanted [00:03:30] to do June Jordan, and maybe she was the one who suggested that we do this, but then to get a contract between the two of them was very difficult, and finally they found a lawyer in Washington, a really nice woman, whose name I can't ... who did a lot in the arts, who knew both of them and was acceptable.

I think Bernice [00:04:00] was making it a little difficult. Although, Bernice was not really friendly to me when I had to go to a rehearsal of the two of them at her office [00:04:30] at the Smithsonian. And I finally figured it out. It was because what I said to her was ... and I don't know how I had the guts, it's just because I was ... I said to her, "Well, what I don't want this to be Bernice Reagon does June Jordan. What I want it to be is a real collaboration," and I certainly got that. I'm very [00:05:00] glad, but I could see how most people didn't talk to her that way.

Barras: Oh yeah, no.

Becker: I wasn't really in the music scene. I just knew what I wanted, and I was pretty particular myself about it. So, Frank did this one.

[continues through the end of the interview]

FILE NAMING EXAMPLE

*This file naming system is used by the DC Public Library; each archive has its own requirements

It's important to label each file with a unique but descriptive name. This will help you and the archive keep files organized and keep track of your progress processing the interview.

Information to Include in File Names:

- Narrator Name (first and last)
- Interview Date (day, month, year)
- File Number
    - Only include if the session in question has multiple files.
- Document Type, for example:
    - Index
    - Transcript

Examples:

- AnneBecker_6Oct2017_CETA_DC_Oral_Hist.WAV
- AnneBecker_INDEX_6Oct2017_CETA_DC_Oral_Hist.docx
- AnneBecker_TRANS_6Oct2017_CETA_DC_Oral_Hist.docx

DC ORAL HISTORY COLLABORATIVE GRANT OPPORTUNITIES

- DC Oral History Collaborative Grants
    - These grants are for costs associated with recording original oral histories including: recruiting narrators, purchasing recording equipment, salary and wages for personnel working on the project, honoraria for narrators (when appropriate), transcription, and data transfer. All interviews collected are submitted to the DC Public Library's The People's Archive for public access. Additional funding to extend projects and/or to translate transcripts is also available.
- DC Oral History Collaborative: Beyond the Archives Grants
    - These grants are for publicly-accessible events, programs, or projects that interpret or otherwise elevate existing oral history recordings/collections.

humanitiesdc.org/grant-opportunities

ADDITIONAL ORAL HISTORY RESOURCES:

DC Public Library The People's Archive

www.dclibrary.org/thepeoplesarchive

Dig DC

https://digdc.dclibrary.org/

DC Oral History Map Created By Brian Kraft

https://storymaps.arcgis.com/stories/cad663faaf5c41a78230e4f149b2409e

Ask Doug, Oral History in the Digital Age (Advice on recording technology)

http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/doug/

Humanities Truck: Mobilizing the Humanities in Washington DC

https://humanitiestruck.com/

Oral History Association (OHA)

www.oralhistory.org/

Oral History in the Mid-Atlantic Region (OHMAR)

https://ohmar.org/

Columbia Center for Oral History Research (CCOHR)

www.ccohr.incite.columbia.edu/

The Archives of the Anacostia Community Museum

https://anacostia.si.edu/collection/collection-search/video

The Kiplinger Library at the DC History Center

https://dchistory.catalogaccess.com/

The George Washington University Library

https://searcharchives.library.gwu.edu/subjects/238

The Moorland-Spingarn Research Center at Howard University

https://msrc.howard.edu/

The DC Oral History Collaborative City-Wide Oral History List

https://humanitiesdc.org/dc-oral-history-collaborative/

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

Jasper Collier manages all aspects of the DC Oral History Collaborative program. Jasper has previously worked in curatorial and collections management at the Dittrick Medical History Center and President Lincoln's Cottage. He has also held positions with the National Building Museum and the Western Reserve Historical Society and has worked as an independent consultant in historical research. Jasper holds a Master of Arts in Public History from American University and a Bachelor of Arts in History from Case Western Reserve University.

Anna F. Kaplan, PhD, is an oral historian, project designer, historian, and educator interested in memory and how individuals and communities remember the past and tell stories to shape the future, particularly about race in the US. Working with public-facing organizations and higher education institutions, she strives to bridge the gaps between academia and everyday people, between academic scholarship and the wisdom of communities' and individuals' lived experiences

Maggie Lemereis is a filmmaker, oral historian and National Geographic Explorer. She's been a conflict researcher, storytelling trainer, refugee case worker, and filmmaker on projects globally. She is directing films about the relationship between indigenous communities and olive trees in Palestine (LAND OF CANAAN) and communities fighting against the oil industry in the US (VS GOLIATH). Maggie is trained as a Master Naturalist and works as a contracted oral historian for the Smithsonian National Museum of Natural History.

Benji de la Piedra is an interdependent scholar who consults on oral history methodology throughout the United States. He earned his M.A. in Oral History and B.A. in American Studies at Columbia University. Benji is working on a biographical investigation of the African American Washington Post journalist Herbert Denton Jr. Benji co-chaired the virtual symposium on "Race & Power in Oral History" for the Oral History Association and its 2023 annual conference. He is currently a Visiting Fellow in the John W. Kluge Center at the Library of Congress.

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