

Question Asked	Answer from Sara Wilson
This may be answered later in the presentation, but what is your transcription process? Contract? Vendors? Turn around time?	We do some in-house (usually me) when time allows, but also use professional transcribing services-some vendors and some independents. We pay per transcript. Usual turnaround in a few days depending on time restraints or workload. Some allow rush orders (may charge extra fee). It really varies interview to interview.
I'm interested in collecting oral histories of our museum's visitors regarding their visitation memories. How do I go about finding the right people and vetting them to see if they have a good memory and are willing to go into specific details?	What a great project! If you have emails/addresses, you could start with a survey of interest and ask who would like to share their experience in a more formal setting - or start with those that left feedback or comments after the visit. Place an "ad" on your website asking for subjects to sign-up. But you might also consider some that had "other suggestions for improvement" as well to balance the project and make it more authentic. Not just complaints (if any) but some that offered suggestions/solutions.
What is you are interviewing an older person in the Village and they repeat a rumor you know isn't true? Do you allow them to keep talking, do you correct them? do you not document that part?	Touchy situation but as we are not investigative reporters-we are also not judge and jury. We take their story as told and you can include a disclaimer about their views being their own - or insert in [brackets] an editors version of event or that this is the story as told by the narrator. You can also set the interview aside and not include in archives. You are under no obligation to publish. But me, personally, I would not confront them or correct them. It is still their story, their narrative you asked for, as is.
What if it's an asynchronous online interview, where interviewees submit their responses to a separate platform?	As long as you have permission to collect responses - this format should work. Just remember you are taking their response as is and using their wording and answers. I would note it as such that the responses were submitted separate in such format. Sort of like this Q&A!
What are some tips for developing open-ended questions related to a particular topic that leads to detailed narratives?	Questioning is the art-form of oral history. The go-to book for oral historians: Doing Oral History by Donald A. Ritchie. He talks about open-ended questions on page 81
How can you avoid leading questions or double check that your questions remain open-ended?	Questioning is the art-form of oral history. The go-to book for oral historians: Doing Oral History by Donald A. Ritchie. He talks about open-ended questions on page 81
If I have old photos of an event and I'm not interviewing the person in the photo, can I use that photo to refresh their memory?	If you have permission to use the photo or it is in your possession for public use--especially if taken at a public event--or it belongs to you - it should be okay to use and make reference in the transcript that a photo of the event was used as a tool in bringing out memories of the event.
Are there any best practices/guidelines for preparing and editing written transcriptions? We transcribe events and interviews for publication and I'd love to know about guidelines for making decisions about what to omit for abridged versions, how to handle recalled quotes and non verbal cues (eg, laughs), etc	Our practice is to transcribe oral interviews verbatim and I've attached a guideline we give to students as examples on best practices. We also use the book: Transcribing Oral History by Teresa Bergen as a reference.
I would like to know rules for transcribing	Our practice is to transcribe oral interviews verbatim (with a few exceptions) and I've attached a guideline we give to students as examples on best practices. We also use the book: Transcribing Oral History by Teresa Bergen as a reference.
Is there a state or national archive system for recordings and transcripts of interviews?	Yes - for Texas there is a partnership thru TOHA and Baylor University for the new and ongoing TOLD or The Oral History Locator Database: https://toha.web.baylor.edu/resources-and-newsletter-archive/texas-oral-history-locator-database-told
Yes or no? Include the questions or delete them during the edit?	Yes, we include the questions. The best practice for transcribing an oral history transcript is to type the interview verbatim - including all that was said by whomever was doing/giving the interview. The transcript is the written version of the oral interview as it was recorded. I've attached a partial transcript showing how we format our transcripts - all the UNT transcripts follow this format. In most cases, we do not alter or eliminate words or terms used by the narrator and we include all questions and responses from the interviewer - there may be a few, rare exceptions - but an oral history follows this format to convey the actual conversation as it happened. Best practice: what was said in the recording is written in the transcript. Resources: Doing Oral History by Donald A Ritchie Transcribing Oral History by Teresa Bergen
Any copyright issues releasing video oral histories?	As our (signed) legal agreement states - we are given permission/copyrights to use the interview as recorded whether audio or video and include these in our archives as agreed - unless there are specific restrictions written out during the agreement.
Do you collect interviews that are of different qualitative methods formats?	Interviews can take different formats but by large ours are conducted in-virtual or in-person with an individual following topic lists to gather information. To my limited knowledge, we have not used small group settings, focus groups, case studies -- I'm not sure if you are referring to a specific method, but you can determine your programs needs with best practices in place to protect all parties involved. Remember an oral history comes from the individual and we are influenced in our (open) responses when others are around or in a group setting. These type formats can provide valuable information and insight but may fall under a different category than oral history. The oral historians and experts at TOHA and OHA can address this question better if you have something more specific in mind. Resources: Doing Oral History by Donald A Ritchie; Transcribing Oral History by Teresa Bergen.

<p>Can you discuss common issues that occur during OH interview and how to navigate?</p>	<p>Some issues I have observed: TECHNICAL DIFFICULTIES (check equipment prior to interview, bring extra batteries; DISTRACTIONS (secure quiet/calm location, set expectations prior to interview, check equipment to function properly, be prepared); OFF-TOPIC (redirect-"if I may return to the question about your education"-, use gesture-gentle lifted hand-to politely interrupt and refocus); CHATTY INTERVIEWERS (train interviewers on interviewing etiquette/best practices and remind them "it's not about you" when interviewing others and not to get side-tracked).</p>
<p>What kind of recording equipment for small historical society</p>	<p>There are a variety of small recorders that use sound cards or USB cables. Research what meets your budget needs but keep in mind that this is an investment into the quality of your program. Check reviews on performance. Make sure it is compatible with your computer system and/or software or if additional software or equipment (e.g. external mic) is needed. We have Marantz recorders and Zoom H4nPro recorders but check out the latest or ask at the electronic store or even a small recording studio in the area what they recommend; Having a secure case to transport equipment and keep things together/protected is crucial. I even add an inventory checklist in our cases to make sure everything is returned: recorder, camera, mic, cords, headphones, manual, etc.; For virtual interviews: webcam with built-in mic, headphones with mic, proper lighting (which I need for our new office-lol) and software to record (e.g. Zoom); Purchasing a small recorder should be an adequate start and you can always add on later as your program grows and technical needs develop! Resources: Doing Oral History by Donald A Ritchie Transcribing Oral History by Teresa Bergen</p>
<p>Do you use cd or flash drive for some preservation?</p>	<p>With UNT, we are fortunate to have storage in a network shared drive and with digital libraries. Digital seems the best to preserve and have readily available for sharing as cds and flash drives can become damaged or inaccessible or outdated as software and processors continually outpace our formats. So while these are convenient to use - caution on being the only copy of the interview - the interview can be lost if not transcribe in word form. UNT Special Collections stores origin formats off-site in our annex to access if needed - some on reel-to-reel, cassettes, vhs, floppy disks, etc - but trying to transfer or digitize these is time-consuming and expensive if someone requests audio of past interviews - they also have to pay studio fees for the conversion. So cds and flashdrives are convenient and inexpensive ways to keep records – but I would encourage another “cloud” version of storage as well (e.g. OneDrive). I also use OneDrive to create folders of multiple or lengthy transcript requests where I can drag and drop files into a folder and send a link to share with patrons.</p>
<p>if you are doing transcription in house, is there any software or jsut general things you would recommend?</p>	<p>Resource: Transcribing Oral History by Teresa Bergen. Our practice is generally verbatim and we have the same format for each. We use Express Scribe softwar (NCH)</p>
<p>I have a question about binding. Since ALL interviewers receive a bound copy, is there a privacy agreement between UNT and the printer for those interviews that are restricted access?</p>	<p>We have not had any issues with our binderies – we go off the honor system that the bindery is a professional fee-based company and provides a confidential service. And knowing how busy they are - I don't think they even look at what they are binding! And probably have their own set of codes and rules for employees. It has been many years since we have had restricted access interviews (totally closed) – so no recent restrictions other than release dates and we regulate that in-house. The bindery we use receives our order, prints, binds and returns all volumes back to us for distribution.</p>
<p>What technology (audio/video) is the best for entry oral history reports? After you interview them - what is the best way to get transcripts written ?</p>	<p>That can differentiate depending on interviewee. Having a small recording device can allow for open dialogue - some can be more self-conscious on video - but others more comfortable in either format. You can ask preference before interview. We do in-house transcribing with an Otter template and Express Scribe software to run audio and use with foot pedal. We have paid grad students to transcribe and have some volunteers with our county connections. Or use professional transcribing services - sending them the audio and preferred formatting criteria.</p>
<p>This was very helpful! Have you had someone provide an oral history with no restrictions but then they pass away and the family want to restrict it?</p>	<p>We have not had this issue. If you have a written agreement with the interviewee to publish - you can rightfully do so --- but with caution in determining is it worth going against the desire of the family and causing unrest? Your reputation and integrity can be measured by this. Try meeting with the family to discuss concerns and process and purpose of interview. You make that call - either way - with knowing the outcome - either way.</p>
<p>Should there be a portrait or video of each interviewee? Do you have a relationship with The Smithsonian? Is there an International directory of oral histories?</p>	<p>Portraits or videos is on a case-by-case basis. We do not have many portraits but a few have wanted to include one which we place after the interview in an appendix at the end of the transcript. We also have added photos, letters, certificates, etc at the interviewee's request. Side note: photos are a great addition but are usually printed in grayscale - color photos can get costly to reproduce or add to a bound volume. They do look great in a pdf sent digitally but hard to get good scanned quality unless professional done at a cost! So we do not require photos or videos for our program – but you get to set your own standards/procedures. Just keep in mind time and cost. We do not have a relationship with The Smithsonian. We do with The Portal to Texas History ☺: https://texashistory.unt.edu/ I am not aware of an International directory – you might inquire with IOHA: https://www.ioha.org/ There is a Texas directory in the works – TOLD: https://toha.web.baylor.edu/resources-and-newsletter-archive/texas-oral-history-locator-database-told</p>

<p>If someone breaks down crying because of something they said, what do you do? Do you stop that line of questioning?</p>	<p>That would be an on-site call and at the discretion of the interviewee (first and foremost) and interviewer if they would like to proceed or continue after a pause or reschedule at a later time – or if they prefer to skip such an emotional topic. This is when being prepared and doing some prep work in advance may eliminate this concern – but as that is not always the case – we can't be prepared for everything and sometimes we just don't know what might trigger an emotional reaction in someone. But that would be a call in the moment. Donald Ritchie has a chapter on Conducting Interviews in his book (this is widely-used in the oral historian field) that might give more insight.</p>
<p>How long is the average interview?</p>	<p>Interviews vary but on average 1 - 1.5 hours provide adequate content. But some may share their story in 30 minutes or take 2+ hours. It becomes awkward if you try to drag it out or cut it off after a time stamp. People share at their comfort zone. Setting a timeframe prior to the interview ("would like to speak with you about an hour or so of your time") can let them know in advance you want to honor their time (and yours). Going in prepared can help with asking additional questions if needed (or not) and helps set the pace. I usually prompt coming to a close (you can feel when the interview should end) by asking "as a final question - is there anything you would like to add?" - this helps them know to come to a conclusion, respectfully. Some people are reluctant to talk and others can talk for hours. So set the time expectations (with leeway) prior to the interview.</p>
<p>Any additional suggestions on how to convince people to participate? We are working with Black and Latino communities and many are hesitant to participate. We do have people of color helping with the interviews, but that has not made a big difference.</p>	<p>You take the time to connect with someone seen as a leader or trustworthy in the community - someone that lives in the neighborhood. Trust is a huge factor for populations that may have felt exploited in the past - you need an insider. Make a connection and explain your purpose, process and promotion for these interviews. Why do you want their stories, how will you go about interviewing and then what are you going to do with them? Full disclosure for the purpose of your collection. Maybe set a "townhall" meeting in the neighborhood (at community church or business) explaining all this thoroughly and allowing questions (be prepared to answer them). Then have those interested sign-up. If you have past examples to give of how these interviews has been valued - then others may want their voices to be heard as well. Approach that you are looking for the good (celebrations in their lives) as well as concerns. It is not just a complaint forum - but a positive about them and who they are and their concerns and solutions to make things better (or whatever your focus ay be). Highlight similar projects you have completed. People can be wary (or suspicious) of only being asked about "what's wrong" and not enough about "what is good in your life". Maybe approach it in a balanced effort of "come tell us something good" and they may open up to other conversations to get the full-range of their voice heard. Start with a celebration!</p>
<p>How are translations treated? With Spanish speakers or other languages? Or when interviewees speak both languages in interview?</p>	<p>We have several interviews in English/Spanish and transcribed in both languages and included in same bound volume. I've attached the first page of each with the English version stating the editor's note. We also have completed a recent interview with a Vietnamese American in English but with words and sayings in Vietnamese throughout the transcript and worked closely with this person in correct spelling and using the Vietnamese alphabet when editing. We try to be considerate of the interviewee's native language and preference for interviewing and have an appropriate interviewer, translator (if needed) and transcriber assigned.</p>
<p>Do you have suggestions on how to make oral histories available to folks who are hearing or sight impaired?</p>	<p>Having audio formats available for people with sight-impairment. For hearing impairments – audio can be transcribed to text or using closed captioning and subtitles in audio/videos and I believe it can also be added to previous recordings but not sure of the process or software needed. We have not had that type of request at this time.</p>