

Title: Introducing Oral History. When living people's stories become history
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Authors:

Charlotte Fischer
Stefania Costache
Chara Makriyianni

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Photographs: Sarah Malian and Beran Djemal, CCMC
& Chara Makriyianni, AHDR

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Peter Cunningham

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For information: The Association for Historical Dialogue and Research

E-mail address: ahdr.mide@ahdr.info

Web-site: <http://www.ahdr.info>



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Όμιλος ιστορικού διαλόγου
και έρευνας **association
for historical dialogue
and research** tarihsel
diyalog ve araştırma derneği

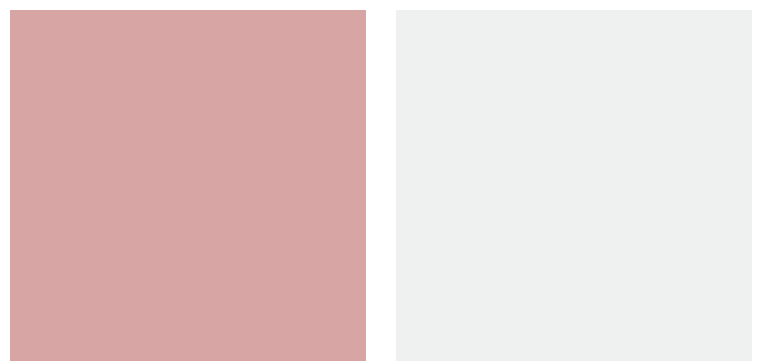
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INTRODUCING ORAL HISTORY

When living people's stories become history



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1. Stories, History and Oral History |

Human experience is usually articulated through stories. When historians use the word 'story' they refer to a narrative that gives human experience some order and structure. Imagine asking somebody about her childhood. She might talk to you about her experience at school, or about her parents, or about the games she enjoyed playing. Whatever she chose to narrate, she would have to organize her memories, and thus create a story.



Historians generally begin their work by going to stories as sources of evidence for studying past human experience. When they study the remote past, they use written stories, that is accounts written by those who lived in previous centuries and that have been passed on down to us. In more recent times, artists and poets, from across the existing divide of Cyprus left both oral and written accounts of Cyprus and its history, where they narrated their experiences in the social sphere. When historians study the recent past, they often consult oral testimonies, that is stories told by living people. In order to study the Holocaust, for example, the historian might draw from the many accounts given by survivors. Stories then, along with other sources, form part of the raw material that enables us to create a version of the past; in other words, to write History.

Oral history focuses primarily on oral sources and composes histories by systematically recording, preserving and interpreting living peoples' stories, memories and testimonies. The historian may record these memories and then use other sources, such as the recollections of other individuals, or written documents such as newspapers, biographies and censuses, in order to extend the evidence and to compose their account. **The purpose of oral history is to bring together different kinds of evidence (sometimes undoubtedly conflicting) and to apply our judgment and understanding in composing a credible account.** Many documentary sources, such as newspapers, biographies and censuses can be just as inaccurate or biased as personal recollection, for a variety of reasons. Drawing on this range of private and public, spoken and documentary material, would be oral history in practice.

2. A history of Oral History

It may be helpful at this point to explain a little about how the practice of oral history developed. Oral history is in many ways quite a recent phenomenon. Whilst it was being used in America by historians from the 1940s on, it really exploded worldwide into mainstream history in the 1960s and 1970s. It grew in line with five trends taking place in about the same period.

The first was a shift in the 1960s, when historians began to look less at kings and queens and bishops and wars, the focus of political and diplomatic history that prevailing at the time, and became more interested in asking questions about the lives of people invisible to that kind of history. This new trend went in many directions. Feminist historians began to look at ignored or understated women; gay and lesbian historians began to chart histories of sexuality; Marxist historians began to ask questions about the working classes' conditions of living and struggles; and historians coming from Afro-American backgrounds in the USA started unearthing the past of black communities. In this context, oral historians became interested in how people experienced events, either everyday or political ones. It was, in other words, a 'bottom up' understanding of changes that occurred in past times, that is an approach that focused on people's experience of events, instead of a 'top down' approach that emphasized the role of political and military leaders in historical turning points.

The second trend affecting oral history was the rise of postmodern theory arguing that there is not just one 'correct' or 'objective' view regarding an event, but instead that there could be multiple valid views of the same event. Nothing was a simple 'fact', and every narration of an event could be considered biased to some extent. Therefore, if a historian wanted to look at a particular workers' strike, a recording by a working class woman fifty years later could be as useful a source as any formal government document produced at the time.

The third trend that occurred was the development of an interest in collective memory and 'public history'. This is embodied in the ways that societies choose to commemorate past events, as in the establishment of museums, such as the Turkish Cypriot Museum of National Struggle, which was built in 1978 to celebrate the struggle of Turkish Cypriots for *Taksim*, against the Greek Cypriots¹ or the Greek Cypriot Museum of National Struggle that was founded in 1961 to commemorate Greek Cypriots' struggle for Enosis², against the British. Or annual parades, like the ones that take place, in the Greek Cypriot Community, on 1 October³ to celebrate Independence Day of the Republic of Cyprus, and parades that occur in the Turkish Cypriot Community on 19 May⁴, to commemorate the start of the Turkish War of Independence by *Kemal Atatürk*.

Oral history addressed the interplay between official collective or public memory and individual memory, that is the pasts that people construct through their experiences. In this way, oral history unveiled previously unheard voices that challenged the official historical narratives as crystallized in public institutions and practices, thus enhancing multiperspectivity. For example, when Turkish Cypriot interviewees mentioned that the 1974 events marked the ending of hardships endured over previous years, their view challenged an official Greek Cypriot understanding of those events who perceived the 1974 events as the beginning of a violent and continuous division of their homeland, and at the same time brought to the surface experiences that had so far been ignored.⁵

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1. **Taksim** (Turkish for 'division') was the objective of Turkish Cypriots who supported a partition of the island of Cyprus into Turkish and Greek portions. Supporters of taksim felt partition was the only way to ensure that Cyprus would always have a Turkish presence and to prevent the assimilation or ethnic cleansing of Turkish Cypriots, due to its majority Greek-Cypriot population.
 2. **Enosis** (Greek for 'union') refers to the movement of the Greek-Cypriot population to incorporate the island of Cyprus into Greece, during the same period.
 3. Cyprus attained independence after the Zürich and London Agreement between the United Kingdom, Greece and Turkey.
 4. The Commemoration of Atatürk, Youth and Sports Day, or simply Atatürk Commemoration (Atatürk'ü Anma) and Youth and Sports Day (Gençlik ve Spor Bayramı), is an annual Turkish national holiday celebrated on May 19 to commemorate the start of the Turkish War of Independence.
 5. Psaltis, C. & Lytras, E. (forthcoming). Formerly Mixed Villages in Cyprus: Representations of the Past, Present and Future – A Research Report of the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research. Nicosia.

The fourth trend that took place was an increase in ‘amateur history’, that is a growth of historical interest and activity by people other than professional historians. Most amateur historians were interested in family genealogy and the story of their family origins, consulting for this purpose various archival sources, such as birth, death and wedding records. Oral history supported this trend, as instead of beginning with libraries and archives, amateur historians could begin with the newly available portable tape-recorders and an older relative willing to share her past experiences – and literally make history. In the following decades programs of ‘age exchange’ were developed within ethnic communities or care homes, especially popular in the USA, getting the elderly to share their memories with young children from local schools.

Fifth and finally, oral history could not have enjoyed such prominence were it not for the revolutions in technology seen over the past fifty years. From tape recorders to digital recording devices to portable video cameras, collecting and preserving oral testimony has meant that oral history became physically much more accessible than ever before. And it might be noted how some media professionals followed this popular trend, in radio, film and TV productions.



3. Debates around Oral History

Just because it is now possible and popular doesn't mean all problems are resolved. There have been questions and criticisms about oral history, and a vast amount of literature discussing it.

One set of problems has been the reliability of personal recollection as historical evidence. For example, if a historian wants to know how life was in the mixed villages of Cyprus before 1974, she should first sit down with people who lived through that time and ask them questions about their lives, such as whether Greek Cypriots and Turkish Cypriots lived together in the village, whether they resided in the same neighborhoods, whether they knew each other's languages, whether they worked together or had commercial relationships, whether they commonly inter-married and whether they shared aspects of social life. However, when Turkish Cypriots and Greek Cypriots who came from mixed villages were asked the percentage of Greek and Turkish Cypriots in their villages, answers from the same village varied by around 60%, with the 'true' answer – as suggested by census records – actually in the middle of what both groups remembered.⁶ How reliable or accurate is, therefore, human memory?

Remembering events from the past is hard, and human memory is not free from the other biases that affect human thought. Particularly when interviewees are asked to recount painful memories, there may be a number of processes that impede easy remembrance or reflection on those times. As well as unconscious bias, there may also be events that interviewees don't wish to talk about, or may be less than truthful about, particularly if the interview focuses on something painful or difficult. Another possibility is that they may not wish to give information that they fear might upset someone else, or be 'family business' or 'private' in some way. In addition, there is also the problem for the oral historian that interviewees may fill in, as most of us do when speaking, their presumptions alongside their own known experience, not always making the distinction between the two parts clear.

Defenders of oral history have responded by arguing that written sources are equally subject to bias and that, consequently, all of these criticisms apply to biographies, autobiographies, newspapers and most other forms of narrative evidence relied upon by historians. What's more, defendants have argued, in some ways oral testimony might be easier to correct, since interviewees can be cross-examined at the time of the interview: without disturbing the flow of the testimony, the historian can politely challenge them and have them answer back.

There are other limitations that the literature on oral history has discussed: its limited chronological reach, since it can only go back two or three generations before it becomes rapidly less useful, as people's knowledge usually reaches as far as their grandmothers' stories; its lack of chronological precision, for interviewees talk about more generalized time periods, like 'when I was a child' or 'when I was at school'; the individuality of the testimony and its alleged limited degree of representativeness; or, the fact that the interviewee's answers might not reflect facts, thoughts or feelings of a past event, but rather be informed by occurrences since the event, or by what the interviewee might judge to be appropriate answer in the present. Yet, all things considered, these weaknesses of oral testimony are replicated in various ways in other documentary sources used by historians. Consequently, the value of oral history is not diminished when used as one more tool, which alongside others, needs to be critically approached and cross-referenced in the process of writing histories.

The second set of debates in the literature on oral history has centred on the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, and how that relates to the ethical conduct of oral history. Scholars have reflected on the role of empathy and distance when conducting oral history interviews. Likewise, the power relationship between interviewer (researcher) and interviewee

6. Psaltis, C. & Lytras, E. (forthcoming). *Formerly Mixed Villages in Cyprus: Representations of the Past, Present and Future – A Research Report of the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research*. Nicosia.

(researched) has been another concern – be it a power relation based on ethnicity, religion, class, education, gender or wealth - and the extent to which this relationship affects the interviewee’s attitude and responses. Last but not least, oral historians have reflected extensively on the issue of potential trauma when interviewees recount difficult past experiences and painful memories or feelings are reawakened.

Over time, oral history has attempted to tackle these issues. If in earlier interviews, interviewers tried to remain as distanced as possible in order to produce an ‘unmediated’ document, later techniques make no pretence that this might be possible and openly recognize a merging of the perspectives of interviewer and interviewee. In addition, various techniques have been developed in order to record sensitive information about conflicts or violent events, along with a theoretical framework that aims to manage the potential ‘trauma’. For example, an oral history project that collects testimonies of life in the Spanish Civil War has used psychoanalytic theory to construct a methodology where interviewer attempts to accompany interviewee to the “danger zone” where the main site of the trauma lies. Nevertheless, anxiety the potential traumatic impact on individuals of oral history interviews, continues to be a hot topic in the literature.



4. How to do Oral History

After considering theoretical debates surrounding oral history, we also need to address some practical aspects.

Things to think about before the interview

It's all about trust and mutual respect. An interview is successful and meaningful if and only if it is based on a trust relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee. Don't expect big things to happen overnight; building trusting relationships takes time and effort. Some interviewers have a gift of gaining other people's trust and some interviewees give their trust easier than the others.

What's your topic? Before the interview you should conduct some preliminary research and reflect on the issues in question. This will enable you to be an 'active interviewer', by asking pertinent questions if respondents say anything particularly interesting or surprising. What's more, if the story your interviewees are telling is one that is painful for them, or that they have been taught they shouldn't talk about, it is crucial that they feel they have an audience who understands this and is prepared to hear what they have to say.

Seek the benefits of cooperation by inviting teams of interviewers, one to conduct the interview, the other to write about the context, what the interviewee looked like, the setting, the mood. It helps towards a more multi-perspectival analysis and presentation of the topic.

What questions exactly are you hoping to research and what kinds of information are you seeking? Whilst it's impossible to predict what anyone is going to say, having a sense of what you would like to know allows you first to choose interviewees you think will be able to answer your questions, and secondly to guide those interviewees to topics you want to learn more about.



How will you choose your interviewees? In practice, in a lot of oral history work, very little ‘selecting’ is done. If you want to find out about what kind of food was eaten in homes in Cyprus of the 1950s, for example, anyone alive at that period would be able to remember her experiences and most probably be willing to participate in the interview. There is also the problem that oral history sources are finite according to the life expectancy of potential respondents, so for earlier periods historians will need to search harder to find anyone who can provide testimony. In other instances, for example if you are trying to get an account of something sensitive or complex such as mapping mixed villages in 1950s Cyprus, you might have to think more carefully about identifying a representative sample of individuals you will ask to provide information.

With that in mind, **there are various methods of sampling your respondents.** Purposive sampling involves the selection of interviewees that are situated in different power relations within a group, or even in different groups, and which could give alternative or possibly contradictory accounts of a specific event. Alternatively, you could choose to try a ‘quota sample’, where you aim for a sample deemed representative of the population at a specific time, or just go out with a ‘non-probability sample’, where you interview all the individuals still available to account for a particular event or period.

Where are you going to conduct the interview? Unless you want a soundscape, it’s normally **best to interview people somewhere quiet.** In order to minimise the inconvenience to your interviewees, it’s considered better to offer them the choice of where to meet – they might be most at ease in their home, or they may prefer to meet you in a neutral location. If you’re interviewing them about their experience in a specific place – for example, about their life at school – you may choose to conduct the interview there in order to jog their memory, but be thoughtful about organizing the interview if it’s a place that will be sensitive for them. If you choose such a location, make sure that they will really be **comfortable to be interviewed there**, and that you have some alternative should they become overwhelmed by past memories. If you conduct an interview in a setting, you might choose to make it a **“walking interview”**, filming them as they show you specific places. Otherwise, it’s probably easiest to be sitting down, ensuring you’re both comfortable and have access to water, tissues, etc.

Think about whether you want to **use props to help your narrator** a photo, a book or a toy, in general something that might be helpful to jog their memory or encourage them to expand on a topic. This might be an object of their own you invited them to bring to the interview, or it could be some pictures or newspaper articles related to the topic that you have previously researched.

Ethics

Anyone conducting an oral history interview should be mindful of ethics to ensure responsible research conduct and ability to protect not only interviewees but also oral history interviewers.

If the interview is going to be archived or copies are going to be made, it’s important you explain this to those being interviewed and that they agree. More important, in cases interviewees will be asked to share memories on sensitive and controversial issues, confidentiality should be clarified and respected, and anonymity (if opted for) should be guaranteed.

In all cases, oral history interviews must be accompanied by a signed consent form⁷, yet another reason to ensure your project follows ethical guidelines.

7. For Samples of Consent Forms, please see Appendix 2 and 3.

These seven guiding ethical principles⁸ could act as your guide through the oral history research project:

1. Respect for human dignity.
2. Respect for free, voluntary and informed consent.
3. Respect for children, the elderly, refugees and displaced persons, victims, the disabled or any other person who is vulnerable or who could be made vulnerable by an oral history interview.
4. Respect for privacy and confidentiality and right of interviewee to withdraw their interview (conditions for withdrawal should also be included in a consent form).
5. Respect for justice and inclusiveness, being representative and fair to the communities or groups examined.
6. Balance harms and benefits.
7. Minimize harm, especially when interviewing vulnerable persons.

Things to do before the interview

Introduce yourself to your interviewees. When you first approach them with the offer of being part of an oral history project, explain to them what you are trying to find out, why they have been asked to participate, and that they can pull out at any time. Talk to them about what will happen – are you looking to meet them once? Twice? For how long? Also explain that they own the copyright of the testimony, and that they are welcome to bring someone else to accompany them.

Meet them again before the interview in order to build rapport. It's common for interviewer and interviewee to talk before the main interview, sometimes even several times. Before you begin the main interview, you should ask if there are any aspects of the subject they don't want to talk about, and explain that if anything comes up in the interview that they realise they don't want to discuss, they



8. O'Hare, Kirsten (n.d). *Oral History Ethics Tips*. Available at: <http://storytelling.concordia.ca/oralhistory/resources/tips/ethic.html> (2010, December 29).

can just ask to move on to the next question. If you are looking to use props, forewarn them, and ask if they want to bring anything – for example, if interviewing someone about a missing person, they may want to bring a photograph, or if researching someone’s childhood, your respondent may wish to bring a toy.

Prepare some questions to begin and end the interview with. Make a note of any topics you want to be sure of covering. For example, if you are interviewing a grandparent about school, you might want to note: meals, friends, uniforms, teachers, lessons, the building, punishment.

You should also prepare legal release forms for the interviewee to sign that they permit the use of their information for educational and research purposes, with the option of anonymity in any published work. Organise tape and/or video recorders (or, pen and paper)... and practise using the technology so that you are thoroughly familiar with it! Many oral historians have been confounded by a digital recorder that’s run out of batteries, so better to use a new set every time...

The interview itself

Begin with running through the ground rules again – thank them again for taking part, and remind them that they can stop at any point, or move on to the next question. As you start your questions, record the name of the narrator and the date and location of the interview. During the interview, be conscious of the seven guiding ethical principles!



It's often easier to start with simple questions. Ask them their name, and some short simple fact-based questions: where they grew up, what their parents did, their age – anything that is simple for them to answer and will put them at ease. Keep more difficult or emotive questions for a little later in the interview. Phrase your questions so that they are open-ended, to require a fuller answer than simply a 'yes' or a 'no'; for example, instead of asking "were you punished at school?" ask "what kind of punishments were there at school?". Then if you need clarification, you can follow up with more specific questions.

Don't be afraid of silence – if your interviewee pauses, give them the time to think or collect their emotions. It will be helpful to both of you.

Look engaged, make eye contact, smile, nod and lean forward if appropriate. Interviewees can be quite nervous, and a smile or a nod will encourage them. Yet at the same time maintain a balanced distance. Expressing your own viewpoints or opinions could distort the evidence, since an interviewee might try, consciously or unconsciously, to construct a story to please her interviewer.

Whilst you will have your list of topics you want to cover, don't be afraid to follow up something unexpected if it's interesting to you. It doesn't matter if it deviates from what you were planning on asking next – this is the joy of working with a live source!

Try to keep the interview to no more than one or two hours, depending on your topic and your respondent's stamina, or less if either of you becomes fatigued. You can always take breaks, perhaps for a drink if required, and return to the interview.

Don't end the interview on a heavy or emotional note. Make sure you bring them back to 'the present' before finishing the conversation.

Give them the release form to sign. If they want to take it with them and talk to friends or family or a legal counsel before they sign it, that's fine.



Send a note to thank the interviewee for taking part.⁹

Write up your field notes. Field notes are your impressions from the interview, and anything you think might be helpful for future researchers – your purpose, role and first impressions, where the interview was recorded or filmed, whether you thought the narrator seemed confident or nervous, satisfied or upset in any way by the interview. It's important to make these notes directly afterwards because memory fades with time! Label your notes and recordings – so that you know exactly where and when they took place.

Although it's not always necessary, sometimes you might find it useful to transcribe the interview. Write out the speech. Bear in mind that people don't talk in full sentences, and sometimes they repeat things they've said earlier. Never mind – write it out exactly as it's said, with ellipses (...) to show gaps or incomplete sentences, to be as true as possible to the oral record. Send a copy of the recording or the transcript to your interviewee to approve.

Now begins the enjoyment and interest of working with original live testimony, a primary source for history. Now you have your very own evidence to interpret, to evaluate, compare and combine with other sources, and thus to make your own new contribution to the historical record.



9. Appendix 4: Sample Thank you Letter

6. Resources and further reading on Oral History

For the debates around oral history, the theoretical background and ideas to put in practice take a look at the following:

Lynn Abrams, *Oral History Theory*, (Routledge, 2010).

Valerie Raleigh Yow, *Recording Oral History: A Practical Guide for the Humanities and Social Scientists*, (AltaMira Press, 2005).

Donald A. Ritchie, *Doing Oral History*, (Oxford University Press, 2003).

Paul Thompson, *The Voice of the Past*, (Oxford University Press, 2000, 3rd edition).

Linda P. Wood, *Oral History Projects in Your Classroom*, (Oral History Association Pamphlet Series, 2001).

Stephen Caunce, *Sozlu Tarih ve Yerel Tarihçi*, (Translated by Bilmez Bulent Can and Alper Yalcinkaya), (Tarih Vakfi Yurt yayinlari, 2001).

Sozlu Tarih & Paul Thompson, *Gecmisin Sesi*, (Translated by Sehnaz Layikel), (Tarih Vakfi Yurt yayinlari, 1999).

Robert Perks & Alastair Thomson, *The Oral History Reader*, (Routledge, 1998).

For insights into the way academic researchers have worked with oral sources in the context of cultural and political conflict, you can take a look at these:

Yiannis Papadakis, 2005. *Echoes from the Dead Zone: Across the Cyprus Divide*, (I. B. Tauris, 2005) [also published as an e-Book and partly available in Google Books] – English version.

Γιάννης Παπαδάκης, *Η Ηχώ της Νεκρής Ζώνης: Οδοιπορικό στη Διαίρεμένη Κύπρο*, (Εκδόσεις Scripta, 2009) – Greek version.

Yiannis Papadakis, *Ölü Bölgeden Yankılar: Kıbrıs'ın Bölünmüşlüğü Aşmak*, (Bilgi University Press, 2009) – Turkish version.

This is an anthropological study on issues of memory, history and identity in Cyprus. The author mixes personal recollections with oral accounts of the past provided by people in the two sides of Cyprus. In the process of research, it is revealed how all accounts are partial and problematic (whether of people, officials, museums, history books etc.), thus calling for a multi-perspectival approach. The book also reflects on methodological issues related to the position of the researcher and the processes of disclosure and revelation involved in this kind of research.

Riki Van Boeschoten, *Περάσαμε πολλές μπόρες, κορίτσι μου* (We've gone through a lot, my girl), (Plethron, 1999).

Using oral history sources the book reflects on what seem to be important factors in shaping people's memories after traumatizing events, such as the civil war experience, the political context, the social structure, local politics and cultural patterns.

Luisa Passerini, *Autobiography of a generation*, Italy, 1968 (Wesleyan University Press, 1996).

Passerini mixes Oral History testimonies of participants in the 1968 student movement in Italy with her own reflections on her past and her day-to-day life at present to produce a compelling account of the events that marked contemporary European history and the psyche of the people who created them.

Richard Price, *First Time, The historical vision of an African American people* (John Hopkins University Press, 1983).

This book is considered to be a classic in the field of historical anthropology. First Time traces the shape of historical thought among peoples who had previously been denied any history at all. Each page is composed of two parts. The top half presents a direct transcript of oral histories told by indigenous people of Suriname. On the bottom of each page, Price provides commentaries placing their testimonies into broader intellectual, social and historical contexts.

For further guidelines as well as Oral History Projects you can visit the following web pages:

International Oral History Association, founded in 1996

<http://www.iohanet.org/>

Oral History Society, founded by British historians in 1973

<http://www.oralhistory.org.uk/>

Oral History Association, founded by American historians in 1969

<http://www.oralhistory.org/>

South African History Online

<http://www.sahistory.org.za/pages/library-resources/oralhistory/people.htm>

Oral History Society - Oral History Handbooks and Bibliographies

Step-by-Step Guide to Oral History

http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html

Teachers' materials and lesson plans from the Library of Congress Oral History section

<http://memory.loc.gov/learn/lessons/oralhist/ohhome.html>

A great website with students interviewing elders who witnessed key historic events of the twentieth century

<http://www.tellingstories.org/index.html>

The Centre for Oral History and Digital Storytelling serves as a point of convergence for collaborative digital historical research, teaching, and publishing among faculty and students at Concordia, as well as members of local, national and international communities.

<http://storytelling.concordia.ca/oralhistory/index.html>

Oral histories of 1968 as a joint project between South Kingstown High School and Brown University, interviewing Rhode Islanders – be inspired for what can happen in your classroom!

<http://www.stg.brown.edu/projects/1968/>

The USC Shoah Foundation Institute –one of the largest Oral History projects in the world, with nearly 52,000 video testimonies of Holocaust survivors and other witnesses in 32 languages and from 56 countries.

<http://college.usc.edu/vhi/>

Children's Oral History Project documents the lives of Afro-Americans in Iowa State, U.S. Interviews have been conducted and recorded by elementary, high school and college students.

<http://www.blackiowavoices.org/>

Born in Slavery: Slave Narratives from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1938 contains more than 2,300 first-person accounts of slavery and 500 black-and-white photographs of former slaves.

The Slave Narratives have within them many of the pitfalls of doing oral history, i.e. a questionnaire that allowed no flexibility, the use of white interviewers who had no sense of the culture of those they interviewed. Nevertheless, these narratives comprise a valuable source of information. These narratives were collected in the 1930s as part of the Federal Writers' Project of the Works

Progress Administration (WPA) and assembled and microfilmed in 1941 as the seventeen-volume Slave Narratives: A Folk History of Slavery in the United States from Interviews with Former Slaves. This online collection is a joint presentation of the Manuscript and Prints and Photographs Divisions of the Library of Congress and includes more than 200 photographs from the Prints and Photographs Division that are now made available to the public for the first time. Born in Slavery was made possible by a major gift from the Citigroup Foundation.

<http://www.loc.gov/teachers/classroommaterials/connections/narratives-slavery/file.html>

For Oral History Projects in Cyprus you can have a look at the following links and publications:

Sociopolitical Studies Institute – Cypriots' Oral History project. The database contains transcribed interviews of both, Greek and Turkish Cypriots, with the aim to highlight patterns of interaction in mixed-community villages.

<http://www.ikme.eu/cybihi/>

The University of Cyprus Library hosts the archives of SIMAE (Council for the EOKA Struggle Historical Remembrance), which contain interviews of EOKA members:

http://library.ucy.ac.cy/digital_library/greek/simae/eoka_gr.htm

For an example of breakthrough scholarship on social research in Cyprus¹⁰:

Spyrou, S. (Ed.) Children as social researchers; a Resource Book for Teachers and Other Educators', (United Nations Development Programme, n.d.).

This is the first tri-lingual publication in Cyprus on research methodology encompassing a range of topics and issues in doing social research, which includes a variety of chapters addressing different topics such as research design, approaches to research methodology, research ethics, doing field research, report writing and disseminating research findings, collecting and analysing quantitative and qualitative data, social research and children. It is also a book with an inter-disciplinary outlook (authors represent a variety of disciplines or areas of expertise, ranging from anthropology and sociology to educational research to political science and international relations) about teachers supporting children in becoming social researchers. Moreover, it is a publication-product of a project which brought together scholars from the Greek Cypriot and Turkish Cypriot community to present ways on how to break down the traditional 'boundaries' of the academic and school worlds by facilitating a process of mutual interaction wherein researchers become mentors in situations where research takes empirical forms at the school level to be conducted by and for teachers and children.

10. From the book presentation by Stavroula Philippou, Assistant Professor of Curriculum and Instruction, and AHDR Board Member, 25 October 2008.

Appendix 1: Sample Questions

On the topic 'what did people eat for breakfast in the 1950s?'

- Where were you living in the 1950s?
- Who were you living with?
- Did you have a breakfast every day?
- At what time did you eat breakfast?
- Did you eat breakfast with anyone else?
- Where did you eat the breakfast? At a table? In the kitchen? In a dining room?
- Who had to clear up afterwards?
- Did you have any siblings/parents living with you? What did they eat for breakfast?
- Who cooked/made the breakfast? How did they make it?
- What did it taste like? Did you like it?
- Could you have a second serving?
- What happened if you didn't eat/finish your breakfast? Did you get punished?
- Were breakfasts always the same every day? What about birthdays? Christmas? Summer/winter?
- Looking back from present conditions do you think breakfast was healthier, more enjoyable? How and why do you think breakfast has changed over the years? What have been the most significant changes?
- Is there anything else that strikes you as interesting about breakfast habits at the time? Is there anything else you'd like to tell me about?



Appendix 2: Sample Interview Consent Form 1

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM [PROJECT NAME]

Date:

I, _____, hereby grant _____ permission to document through audio and/or video recording and transcription oral history interview(s) for the purpose of protection, preservation, and encouragement of history, culture, tradition, and heritage.

The information I agree to share with the interviewer is to be used solely for the purposes of identification and protection of _____, _____, and _____.

The knowledge contained in the oral histories will not be given to any non-project staff except in cases where it is useful for protection and preservation purposes. When this material becomes available, it may be read, quoted, or cited from and disseminated for educational and scholarly purposes only.

This consent does not preclude any use, which I may want to make of the information contained in the recordings or transcription.

It is desired that the following restrictions (if any) be placed on this material:

I would like a copy of any interview recording and transcript to be given to:

Myself Other Individual or NGO or Government Agency or institution (please, specify which)

Signature of Interviewee

Signature of interviewer

Name

Name

Signature of Interpreter (if any)

Date

Name

Appendix 3: Sample Interview Consent Form 2

INTERVIEW CONSENT FORM¹¹ [PROJECT NAME]

If at any time you have questions about your rights as a research participant, please contact _____
(name of coordinator).

This is to state that I agree to participate in a program of research being conducted by _____
(name of student/s) of the _____ (name of school).

Questions or concerns should be directed to _____ (name of coordinator) at _____
_____ (contact details of school).

A. PURPOSE

I have been informed that the purpose of the research is to _____ (*here interviewee should explain purpose of research*). Oral history interviews will then be combined with other research information to produce _____ (*here interviewee should explain*).

B. PROCEDURES

1. The interview will take one to two hours and you can withdraw at any time during the interview.
2. The interview will be either audio taped, video taped or digitally recorded. In the resulting _____ (*here interviewee should explain what is to be produced, i.e. essay, paper, power-point presentation*), you may be identified by name, subject to your consent.
3. If you choose to remain anonymous, the interview will be identified using a pseudonym.
4. Should you agree, recording of this interview will be donated to an appropriate archive with open access to researchers.

C. RISKS AND BENEFITS

This study involves minimal risk.

1. Should you agree, the audio or video recording of this interview may be donated to _____ (*here interviewee should explain what could be the contribution of this research piece, i.e. a lasting contribution to the history of Cyprus, Europe, the world*).
2. You will be provided with a copy of your interview and any resulting works free of charge.

D. CONDITIONS OF PARTICIPATION

I understand that I am free to withdraw my consent and discontinue my participation at anytime without negative consequences.

- I agree to be quoted directly
- I agree to be quoted anonymously
- I agree to the donation of my interview to an appropriate archive
- I agree have my full interview included in an online collection of oral history interviews.

I HAVE CAREFULLY STUDIED THE ABOVE AND UNDERSTAND THIS AGREEMENT. I FREELY CONSENT AND VOLUNTARILY AGREE TO PARTICIPATE IN THIS STUDY.

NAME (please print)

SIGNATURE

DATE

11. Adapted from the Consent Form of the Adela Reid, Research Ethics and Compliance Office, Concordia University, available at: http://storytelling.concordia.ca/oralhistory/resources/tips/consent_ko.pdf, (2011, January 2).

Appendix 4: Sample Thank You Letter

Dear Mrs. _____ ,

Thank you very much for contributing to the ‘ _____ ’ Oral History Project that our class has undertaken.

I really appreciated you taking the time to answer my questions and tell me a little bit about your experiences. Your comments will make an excellent addition to our Oral History Collection, and I’m very excited to put the rest of my project together now.

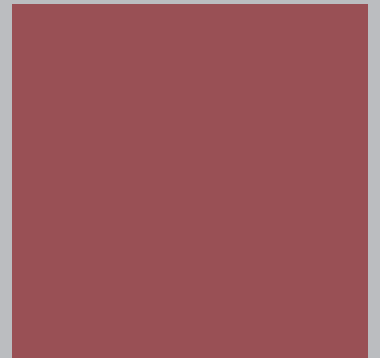
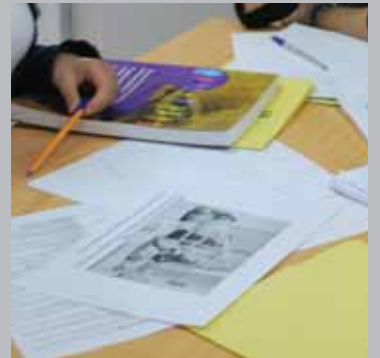
I have enclosed two copies of the transcript – one for you to keep, and one for you to organise any corrections on. I have written up the transcript from the recording I made at the time, but if you feel there are any corrections to make, please write them on there, and post it back to me in the enclosed stamped and addressed envelope by 1 _____ 2011. If you have any queries, please call me on _____ .

Thank you again for your help.

Sincerely,

_____ (sign here)

_____ (type your name here)



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