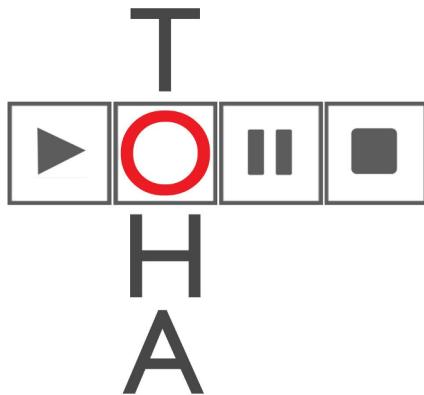
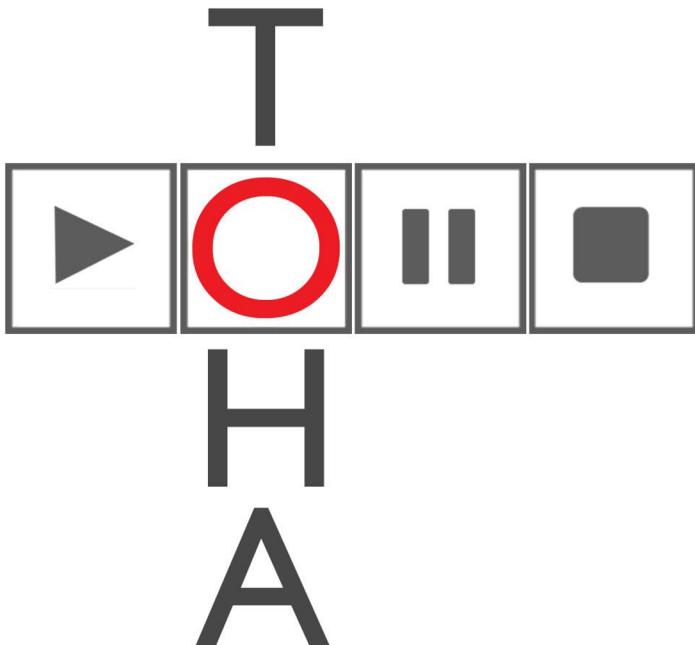


Introduction to Oral History

Adrienne Cain, Baylor University
Abra Schnur, Trinity University





TOHA is a network for oral history practitioners that promotes the use of professional interviewing and archiving standards.

- Established in 1983
- Annual sessions with TSHA
- Annual conferences since 2012

TOHA Governing Board



Abra Schnur
President 2020-2021



Mary Kahle
Vice President 2020-2021



Jesus Esparza
Board Member



Jena Heath
Board Member



Kyle Wilkison
Board Member



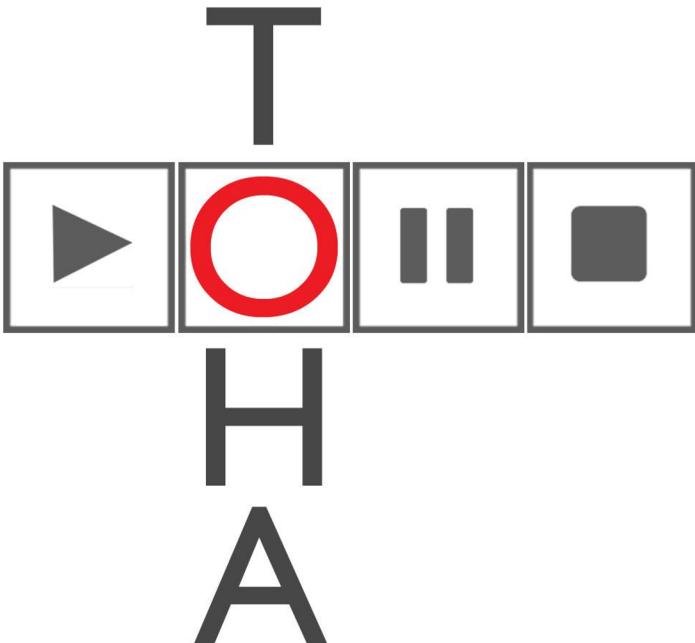
Adrienne Cain
Secretary/Treasurer



Steven Sielaff
Sound Historian Editor



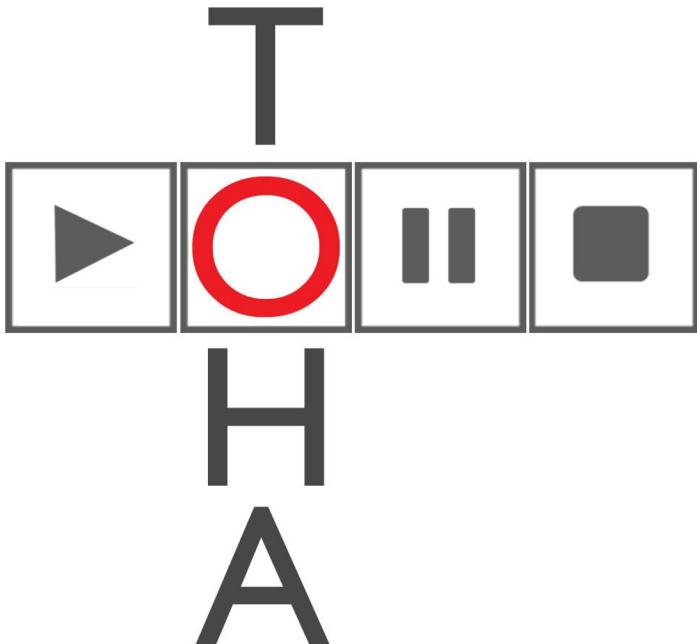
Dan Utley
Book Review Editor



TOHA continues to expand our network.

- Working towards a more diverse membership of practitioners
- Being proactive in sharing resources, support, and skills,
- Actively seeking presentations outside academic circles

Presentation Outline



- What is oral history?
- Project development
- Interview process
- Preservation

What is oral history?



Oral history is...

First
Person

Guided

Recorded

Preserved

Why is it important?

Fill gaps in historical record

Capture diverse viewpoints

Help us understand change

Enrich historical understanding

OLD
RICH
WHITE
HETEROSEXUAL
MALE

working class

religious minority

LGBTQIA+

asian OLD

female RICH youth

WHITE

HETEROSEXUAL poor

transgender

MALE

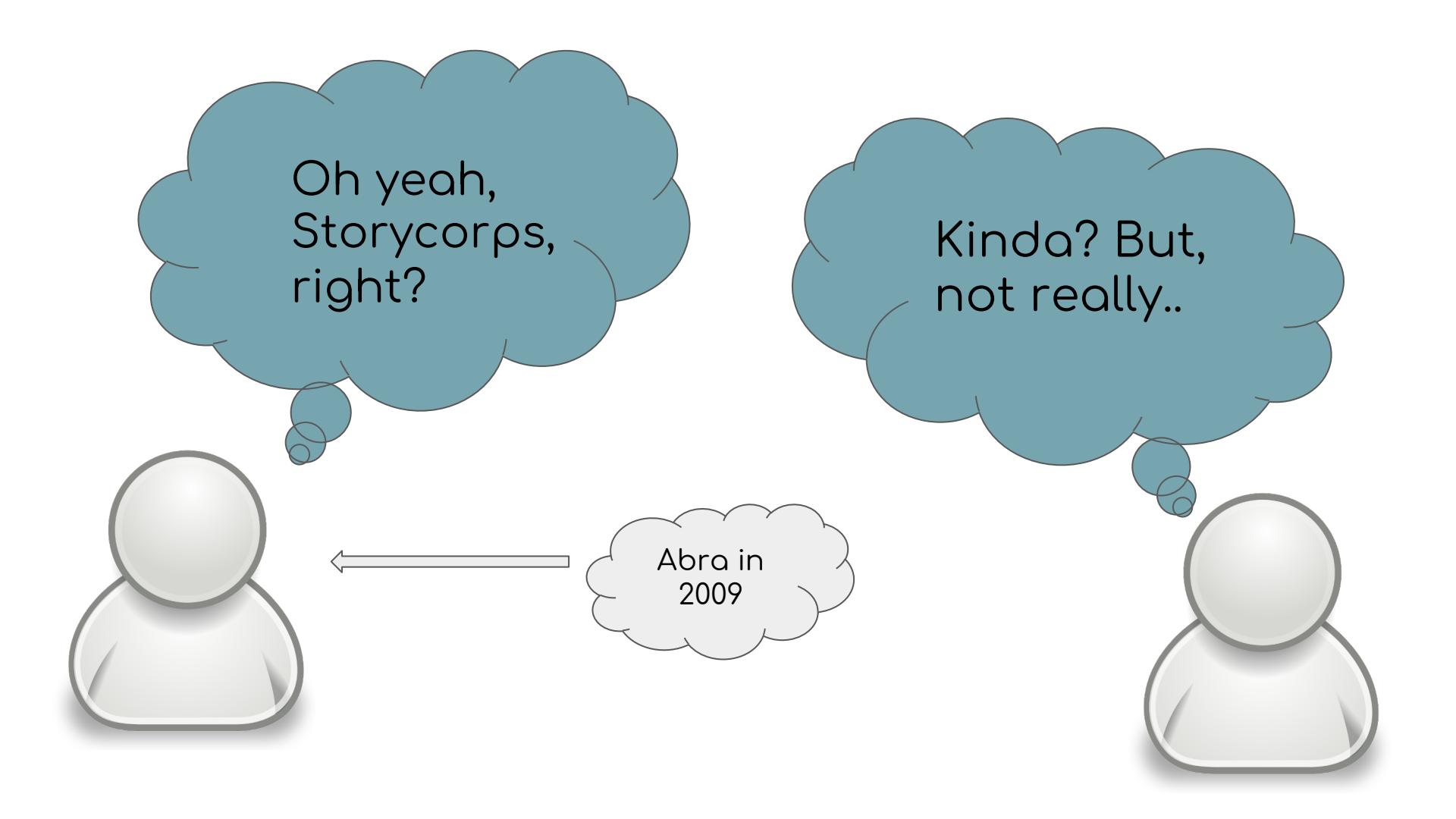
black

latinx

ethnic minority

What oral history is not





Oh yeah,
Storycorps,
right?

Kinda? But,
not really..

Abra in
2009

The short film also inspired Judge's live-action feature debut, *Office Space*: a box-office-flop-turned-cult-classic that ultimately became one of the greatest workplace comedies of all time. The two men spoke to key on-and-off-screen mostly unknown actors – beginning with Livingston) revenge against the printer coversheets. (Did you get it?)

Is this oral history?



AGAINST THE MACHINE

“That scene came from writing the *Beavis and Butt-head* sketch,” says Naidu. “I was in New York. I used to tell him I was going to do it. When the movie was done and videotape it.”

“I did that whole sequence.”

Naidu: We debated, “Okay, in what authentic way would the mob beat you in a field like this?”

Livingston: I was like the mafia don walking around in the back with a bat. I don’t actually touch the printer during “the hit.”

Naidu: Years later I was in New York. Some *Goodfella*-looking guy says to me, “We’re huge fans. What you did with that printer was so authentic.” I think I got props from the mob. [Laughs]

The oral history of



Illustration by Kyle Hilton for EW

1. It's an interview - it is an exchange between a knowledgeable interviewer and a narrator
2. It's recorded, preserved, and made available to others
3. It's historical in intent - it looks for insights and perspectives into the past.
4. It's recognizes the element of subjectivity
5. It's an inquiry that is in-depth

Characteristics of Oral History - Linda Shope

Oral history is a methodology grounded in process

“An interview becomes oral history only when it has been recorded, processed in some way, and made available...Availability for general research, reinterpretation, and verification defines oral history.” – Donald Ritchie

“Oral history is characterized by a structured, systematic planning process, thorough research, careful consideration of copyright, emphasis on the depth and detail of information collected, and adherence to strict processing techniques .”

– Barbara Sommers



Principles & Best Practices

<http://www.oralhistory.org/oha-principles-and-best-practices/>

Legal and Ethical Considerations

A Guide to Oral History and the Law

Donor agreements

Narrator rights

Examples/scenarios of legal matters

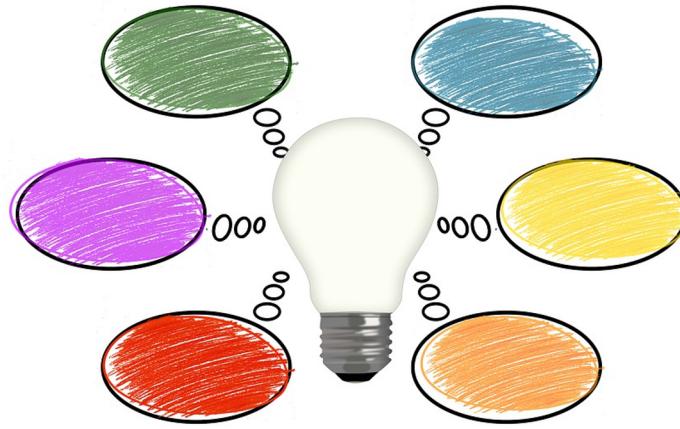
Use OHA's Principles and Best Practices as your ethical guide

Building trust and rapport with your narrators

Informed consent

Correct representation of narrators





Project Development

SO YOU WANT TO DO AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT



TRAINING



RESEARCH

Project Planning

Start with the end in mind

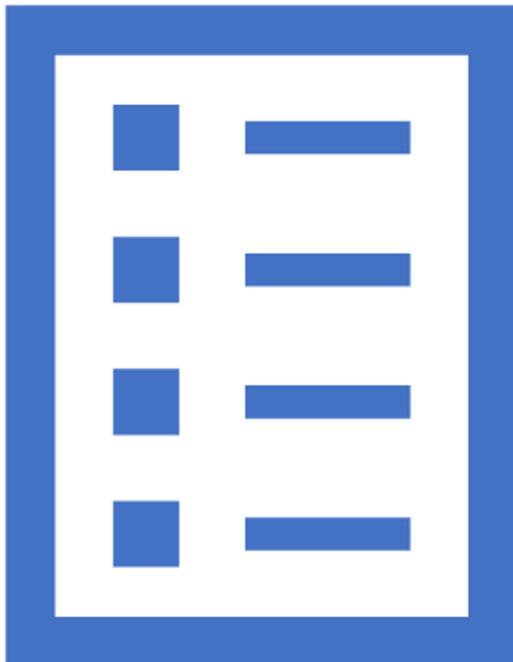
What does “finished” look like?

How will you track your progress?

Who is responsible for what?



Project Design



- Title
- Topic/Purpose
- Methodology
- Scope: time, place
- Potential narrators
- Selected archives
- Planned outcomes
- Time frame for completing project



Interview Process

Before, During, and After

Pre-Interview Checklist

Build rapport with your narrators

Go over your project (your project design will help with this)

Choose your recording location

Check to see if there are any photos, scrapbooks, or other items available

Discuss potential topics and gather and biographical data that may be missing

Develop your project outline



Items to have on hand

Your outline

Recording equipment

Notepad and pen/pencil

A watch (or silent time-keeping device)

Forms

Extra batteries, power cords, etc.



During the Interview

Use open-end questions and discussion

“How did you handle...?”

“Tell me about your experience with...”

Get examples and ask for elaborations

Allow the narrator to fully share their experience

Take notes during the interview

A good interviewer is a good listener



Post-Interview

Be sure to thank your narrators for their time

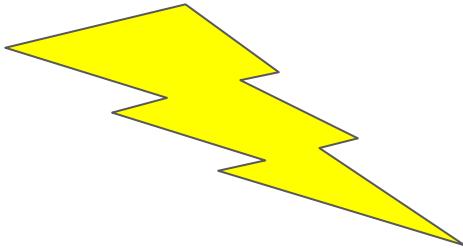
Make a copy of the interview (and leave the original alone)

Transcribe

Keep your narrators in the loop

Preserve your interviews





Preservation

*“The obsolescence of all media formats
should be assumed and planned for.”*

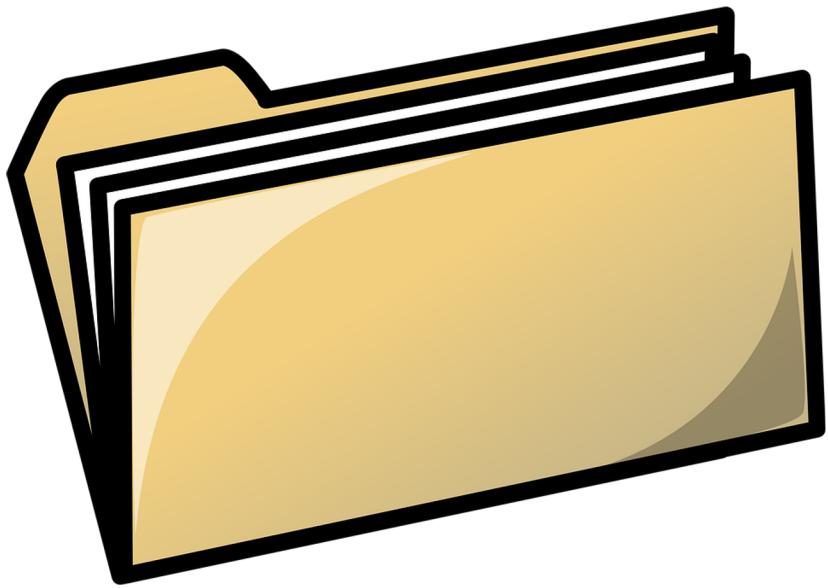
– OHA



File Types

File Storage

File
Descriptions



File Storage and Repositories



File Formats

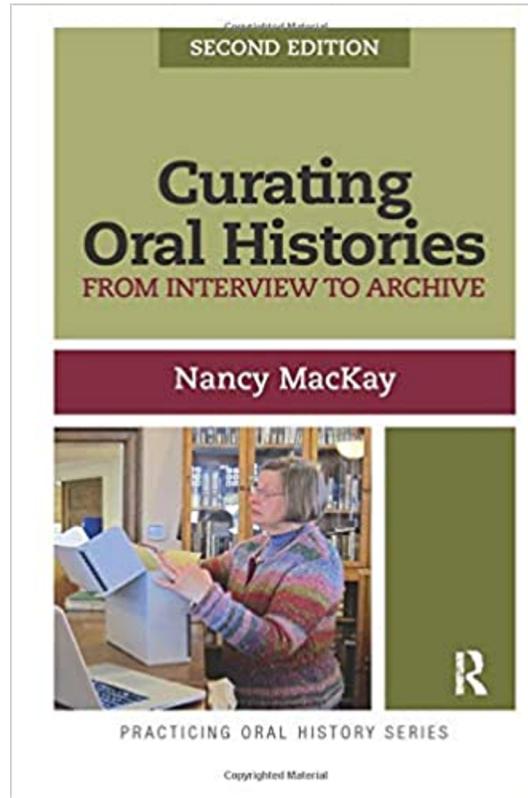


**ORAL HISTORY
ASSOCIATION**

Metadata Task Force



File Descriptions - aka METADATA





That's all Folks!

Resources

- Oral History Association - <https://www.oralhistory.org/principles-and-best-practices-revised-2018/>
- Remote Interviewing Practices - <https://www.oralhistory.org/remote-interviewing-resources/>
- Baylor University Institute for Oral History - <https://www.baylor.edu/oralhistory/>
- Voces Summer Research Institute - <https://journalism.utexas.edu/home/voces-oral-history-research-summer-institute>
- Oral History in the Digital Age - <http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu>
- Texas Oral History Association - <https://www.baylor.edu/toha/>



Adrienne Cain, MLS, CA
Assistant Director,
Baylor University
Institute for Oral History
Adrienne_Cain@baylor.edu
254-710-6285



Abra Schnur, MLS
University Archivist,
Trinity University
aschnur@trinity.edu
210-999-8179

