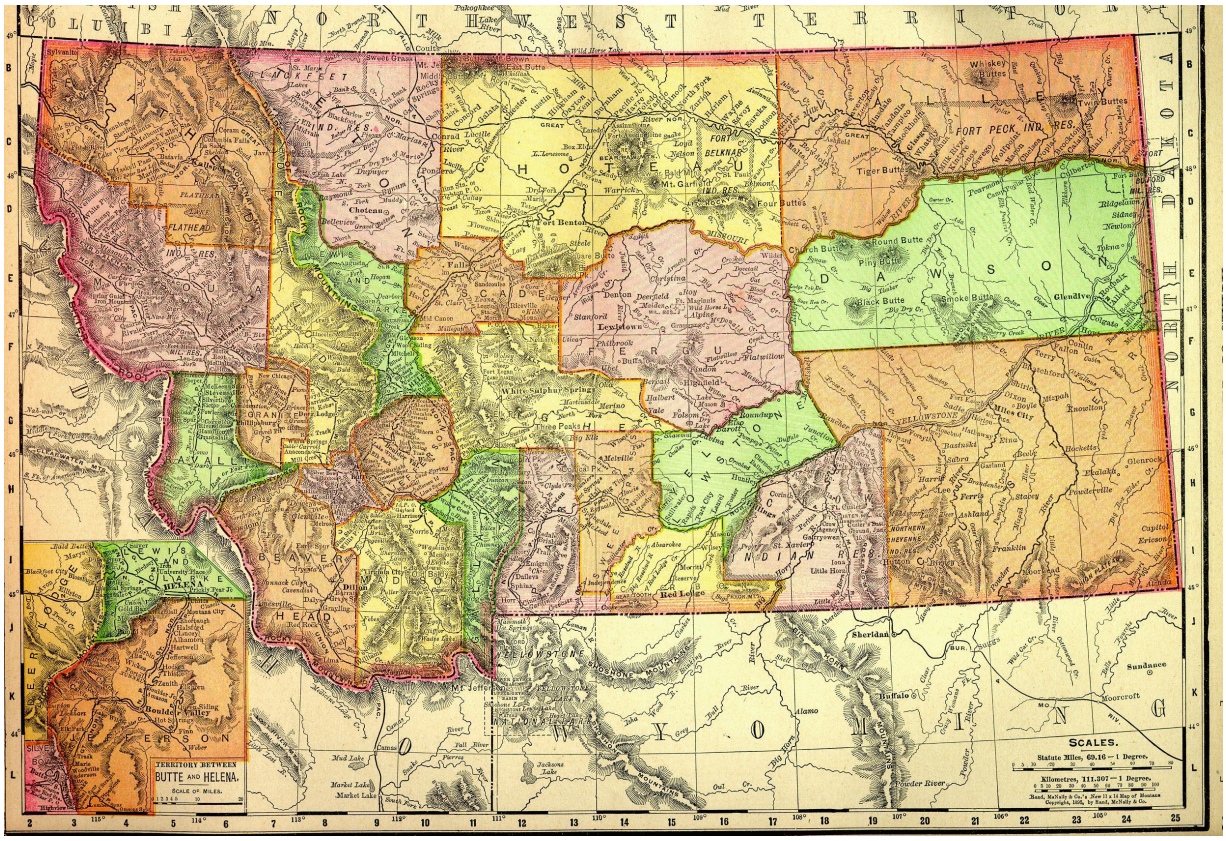
SPEAKING OF MONTANA


COLUMBIA
NORTH WEST TERRITORY
DAKOTA
HELENA
Fort Benton
Choteau
Lewistown
White Sulphur Springs
Red Lodge
Sheridan
Buffalo
Moorcroft
Sundance
Bozeman
Livingston
Dillon
Butte
Helena
Great Falls
Miles City
Glendive
Fort Peck Ind. Res.
Blackfeet Ind. Res.
Crow Ind. Res.
Northern Cheyenne Ind. Res.
Yellowstone National Park
Yellowstone Lake
Yellowstone River
Missouri River
Big Horn River
Powder River
Tongue River
Musselshell River
Milk River
Marias River
Sun River
Gallatin River
Madison River
Jefferson River
Beaverhead River
Clark's Fork
Flathead Lake
Flathead Ind. Res.
Bitter Root Mts.
Rocky Mts.
Big Horn Mts.
Wind River Mts.
Yellowstone Mts.
Gallatin Mts.
Bighorn Lake
Jackson Lake
Market Lake
Mud Lake
Camas
Fall River
Teton
Pondera
Cascade
Meagher
Fergus
Chouteau
Valley
Dawson
Custer
Yellowstone
Big Horn
Carbon
Sweet Grass
Gallatin
Madison
Jefferson
Beaverhead
Deer Lodge
Silver Bow
Lewis and Clark
Powell
Granite
Ravalli
Missoula
Flathead
Lake
Sanders
Mineral
Cascade
Lewis and Clark
Broadwater
Park
Stillwater
Carbon
Yellowstone
Big Horn
Rosebud
Custer
Fallon
Dawson
Wibaux
Richland
Roosevelt
Sheridan
Valley
Phillips
Blaine
Hill
Liberty
Toole
Pondera
Teton
Chouteau
Cascade
Meagher
Fergus
Musselshell
Golden Valley
Yellowstone
Stillwater
Sweet Grass
Carbon
Big Horn
Rosebud
Powder River
Carter
Fallon
Prairie
Wibaux
Dawson
Richland
Roosevelt
Sheridan
Daniels

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Introduction to Oral History Interviewing

WHAT IS ORAL HISTORY?

It is history in its rawest form. The discipline of oral history requires that the interviewer adhere to the standards formulated by the Oral History Association (http://alpha.dickinson.edu/oha/pub_eg.html). Oral history is an investigation of a past event or events. It is a dialogue, although one sided, that records an individual's perceptions based on their own personal experiences.

WHY IS IT IMPORTANT?

Oral history is an important tool in the preservation of local and community history. In an increasingly computerized society we do not write letters or keep journals as past generations did. The result is a loss of much of the personal side of history. Through oral interviews we can restore personal insights, including emotions and motivations, to the historic record. Oral history is not, however, as simple as talking to older folks about their lives. Good oral history interviews come as the result of careful preparation and sustained enthusiasm. This pamphlet is designed to provide a few tips on how to conduct and preserve successful interviews. With some preparation, a love of history and a healthy respect for the power of personal memories you can gather some amazingly detailed and nuanced stories.

Oral history interviews fill in the gaps of the historical record. Any oral history project must, therefore, begin with some basic questions. **What is the purpose of the project? What has already been done on this topic? How can oral interviews add to the existing data? What kind of end product is desired?** (See appendix for project planning work sheet) These questions can be answered with a little planning and research.

Larger community history projects should create a project committee to divide tasks and compile data. Even individuals conducting family history or single interviews, however, need to do research as well. Research provides context for the interviewees' life, thus providing a framework for questions. You will want to find out about the community they lived in, the people that shaped their lives, the occupations they worked in, and the issues that shaped their worldview…be they political, religious or economic. The importance of this stage in interview preparation cannot be overestimated.

To start your **research,** contact your local library or historical society. They can help you locate basic histories of your community, newspapers, photographs, genealogical writings, and records from history projects that have already been done. If you are doing interviews relating to an organization, review their minutes and newsletters to see what issues were important. If you are doing family history go on-line to see if genealogy sources exist. Talk to family and friends of the interviewee to get ideas about what to ask. Explore every source you can think of to find out what is already known and what needs to be learned about the interviewee.

From your research you can more intelligently decide whom to interview and on what topics. The goal is to choose **a manageable topic that does not reproduce work already done**. In other words if you find from your research that a great deal has been written on mining in your community, narrow your project to an aspect of that history that has not been discussed (i.e. how miners supported each other and their families during strikes).

Once you have chosen a topic you should create an **outline of questions**. The outline can be very specific or just a list of ten topics. The idea is to give you a roadmap for the interview. This keeps you from having a meandering reminiscence rather than an organized, thoughtful and in-depth interview.

When you know what you want to ask you can begin **selecting interviewees.** Good interviewees have first-hand knowledge of the topics of interest; have the physical and mental ability to share; and are willing to openly share their memories. You may find there are just too many people that "should be interviewed". Finding ways to choose between them can become crucial to the projects success. Balancing varied points of view is a good tool to use in deciding whom to interview. In other words ten interviews with people of similar viewpoints will leave a stilted historic record. Interviewing ten people from various backgrounds and with varying ideas will be more representative of your topic and community.

The final stages in creating good oral histories are purchasing **good equipment**, learning **interviewing skills**, and getting lots of **practice**.

HOW DO YOU DO ORAL HISTORY?

1. CONDUCTING RESEARCH

Research is an often-overlooked step in conducting interviews.

Some good reasons to conduct research:

- No one lives in a vacuum. Placing your narrator within their historical context is essential to understanding why they made the decisions they did.
- Research shows the narrator you are serious about the project.
- Research allows you to form a knowledge base from which to ask intelligent questions.
- You gather more specific information by knowing some key phrases that will stimulate the memories of your narrator.
- Having a good research base makes oral history collections much more attractive to historians, thus ensuring the collections use and future life.

There are many resources available including:

- College or university libraries archives and special collections.
- City or county libraries or historical societies (look for archives, genealogy collections, local history collections, newspaper files, and oral history collections).
- County government records.
- Church records.
- The Montana Historical Society.
- Interlibrary Loan services.
- Private collections (magazines, photos, drawings, mementos, scrapbooks, letters, sheet music, recipe books).

Remember to file all research materials with the tapes.

2. CHOOSING TOPICS

Once you start the research you will realize you can't possibly do all the topics and interviews that need to be done. You will also find that some things have already been done. Make decisions about what you want to accomplish and how to make your goals attainable. For instance it would be difficult to conduct a project on the history of Bear Creek, Montana. The number of potential narrators and topics would overwhelm you. Trying to interview everyone would be very difficult, and more importantly could result in interviews lacking depth. If you decide, however, to narrow the focus to Slovenian families in Bear Creek, you would have more preparation time and thus a better chance of getting in-depth information. If

you find more topics to cover, plan another project! A series of well-organized small projects is more useful than a large disorganized project.

3. CREATING OUTLINES

Your research should lead naturally to a list of topics. From these topics you should create a **project outline** (see appendix). Outlines are an essential tool in oral interviewing. They give both the interviewer and the interviewee a road map for the interview. An outline should be organized chronologically. Each outline should follow this basic format: basic biographical information about the interviewee (family history, education, hometown); questions based on your topics (arranged chronologically); and a final illustrative story or summation.

The outline should be given to the interviewee to help them prepare for the interview. Keep the length down to one or two pages though, so you do not overwhelm them. Your copy can be much more in depth if you prefer. Remember, however, that the outline is a rough guide. If the interviewee is telling you a great story do not interrupt them. Good interviews result from following the basic outline, but allowing for side trips where some of the richest stories can often be found.

4. CHOOSING A NARRATOR

This can be the most difficult part of preparing for an oral history project. At every turn you will find people who "should be interviewed". Only a small portion of those, however, will fit your needs. Conducting a pre-interview is a good way to decide if the person is really appropriate for your project. Create a **questionnaire/pre-interview worksheet** (see appendix) for potential interviewees to fill out that will reveal their role in the events you are seeking information on. While the questionnaire is completed you can chat with the person to see how vivid their memories are. From this you should be able to tell if the person is appropriate. Those who fit your needs can be asked if they would mind being interviewed. Those who do not can be thanked for filling out the questionnaire and providing background for the project.

Some general rules to follow when choosing a narrator:

- Make your decision based on the quality of information the person can share, not their age. Not all older people will make good sources.

- Choose someone who wants to talk to you.
- Choose someone who has **first hand** knowledge of your topic.
- Choose someone who is mentally, physically, and intellectually able to share their memories.
- Choose the best interviewee but be sure to take into consideration the potential of loosing good stories. Sometimes the best person to interview first is the one whose memories are most likely to be lost. The health of the interviewers should be taken in to account. It is very sad when a potential interviewee passes away before you are able to interview them.
- Choosing the "local historian" to interview first has positive and negative implications. They often have a lot of information, but it is not first hand information. However, they may be the key person needed to get names of potential interviewees, provide research information, and be a great promoter of the project. Take both into account before you decide who to interview first.

5. CHOOSING EQUIPMENT

You do not need to spend a lot of money to get adequate equipment. Here are some things to look for:

Cassette tape recorders

- AC\DC capabilities (household current or batteries)
- Outside microphone capacity
- Pause button
- Recording light indicator or VU meter
- Manual volume/recording control (Avoid voice actualized or activated as it presets volume and cuts off end phrases)
- Tape counter (can be used for indexing, although I prefer a stop watch!)
- Clear top so you can see the tape is recording
- "Line-in" and "Line-out" for tape duplication or if funds allow buy a high-speed duplicator

Cassette tapes

- 60-minute tapes only, longer tapes stretch and are thinner
- Avoid micro-cassettes as they are difficult to copy and tend to stretch over time
- Screw mounts to allow repair
- Normal bias (designed for music and voice)

Digital recording

- CD and Digital Recorder technologies have superior sound depending on the quality of the digital recorder.
    - MHS oral history program uses the Marantz PMD620 as its digital field recorder (approximately $399)
        - Recommend recording as .wav files rather than compressed MP3
        - Recommend purchase of external microphone as well for superior sound recording
    - Each oral history project will have to research and purchase a digital recorder that fits its own specific needs and budget.
- For archival purposes the recordings should be saved as .wav files as well as burned to CDs
- There are software packages that will allow you to transcribe directly on your PC.
    - See free Express Scribe software download at http://www.nch.com.au/scribe/
        - This software allows you to turn your PC into the transcription machine. It is not, however, voice recognition software so you will still need a dedicated typist to do the transcription.

Microphones

- Dynamic microphone (operated from the recorder's power source)
- Omni-directional (picks up sound in all directions. But be aware of stray noise in the room! These are powerful microphones.)

Video equipment

- External microphone (line-in and line-out for duplication of audio to cassette or CD)
- Sound mixer
- Light stands, lamps (to get 3-point lighting)
- Monitor (to see what you are recording)
- Books on the basics of camcorder operation and good filming techniques, lighting, editing, and composition

6. CONDUCTING INTERVIEWS

Once you have chosen a narrator contact them and make arrangements for the interview, discuss the following:

- A date, time, and location suitable for the narrator to meet. Ideally the interview should take place in the narrator's home. Be sure to get clear directions.
- Explain to the narrator that they will be required to sign a ***release form*** **(see appendix)**. This is for their protection as well as the institution or individual conducting the interview. Most historians and historical institutions will not accept interviews without release forms to protect again libel.
- Explain how the tapes will be used for your project. (i.e. If you plan to donate the tapes to a library let the narrator know the tapes will be made available to the public).
- Explain in detail the purpose of the project to the interviewee. Include here time lines, descriptions of final product, and the expected role of the interviewee at every stage. Also discuss the expectations the interviewee should have of you (courtesy, timeliness, respect of boundaries etc.).
- Invite them to review the outline, personal letters, photographs, scrapbooks, clippings or mementos that might stimulate memories before the interview.

Just before the interview:

Go through your ***equipment checklist*** **(see appendix)** to be sure you have everything. Put an introduction on the tape consisting of the date, name of the narrator, your name, the topics to be discussed, and the location of the interview. This will help identify the tape later and is a good way to check to see how the recorder is working. Always play the introduction back to see if the recording levels are acceptable etc. Call the narrator before you leave for their home to ensure they are ready.

At the interview:

Once you are invited into the narrator's home look for the best place to set up. Be aware of extraneous noises including traffic, heat registers, fans, playing children, pets, clocks, or televisions. Try to have the telephone turned off if possible. You want the interviewee to be comfortable, so try to work around the furniture and allow them to sit in their favorite chair. The microphone should always face the narrator, and be placed in an accessible but not intrusive spot.

Remember that you are a guest, set up your equipment with as little fuss as possible. Light banter about your work on the oral history project will put you both at ease. Once you have your equipment in place, test it by playing back the introduction. This assures you that the equipment is functioning, and reminds

the interviewee of the topics. Put the tape on pause and give the interviewee a moment to prepare, and then begin. The interview should start with questions that will ease the narrator into the process…"Please tell me about your childhood".

Here are some general tips to help you through the interviewing process:

- Ask one question at a time.
- Try to keep your questions brief and concise.
- Start your questioning with open-ended questions and follow-up with requests for clarifications and examples.
- Be sure to have the 6 basics questions answered about each topic—who did what, when, where, why, and how?
- Do not interrupt the narrator during story. If you have a follow-up question or need clarification on spellings, write your question down and ask later. "You mentioned earlier…"
- Be aware of and try to control nervous gestures or fidgeting.
- Keep your eyes on the narrator not the recorder! A quick glance should let you know the equipment is working.
- Remember that the tape recorder cannot see. Clarify narrator statements about objects. "You are referring to the third gentleman on the left in this 1921 wedding photograph?" Also try to get copies of any documents or photographs for the file.
- Do not interrupt a story because you have thought of a question. Just jot it down and ask later.
- Try not to put your own judgments into a question. Avoid phrases like "That must have been." "So, then you…" "Okay"
- Avoid asking leading questions--"Tell me about the kinds of discrimination you encountered" Instead use "Has discrimination been an issue in your life?"
- Try to get your interviewee to explain their role in important events or decisions--"Where were you

when that happened?"

- If your interviewee requests that some of the tape be restricted, you must comply. **Do not try to erase** during the interview. Assure them that the tape can be erased after the interview is complete. In the mean time try to explain why the statements are needed as a true record of history.

- If your interviewee doesn't see the importance of the interview, remind them that they have the unique opportunity of joining 5 generations of their family together. Their grandchildren can only know the life of your grandparents through your recollections.

- Be aware of the physical condition of your interviewee. They will give physical cues of fatigue. By suggesting breaks amid the interview, or setting another session, you should earn their respect and probably get a better interview.

- Ask open-ended questions that require the interviewee to give their opinion. Closed questions require a "yes" or "no" or have a predetermined answer. Some key phrases to use are "Please explain" "Discuss " "Describe "

- The outline is only a road map. If the interviewee goes off on a tangent that is more interesting than the question you gave, let them go. You can return to your outline later as long as you keep track in your notes.

- If the interviewee goes off on a tangent that is not what you need call them back with--"That's interesting. Before we go on to that however, I'm a bit confused about...could you tell me a little more about that?"

- Do not worry about silences. Let the interviewee collect their thoughts. Use the pause button if necessary (**just remember to press it when they start again**!). Let them tell their story in their own time. The pause button is especially useful if someone has become emotional and needs time to recollect him or herself.

- Show interest through nonverbal cues such as nodding the head or smiling. Do not say "Uh-huh" or "right" as they clutter the tape and make transcribing difficult.

- Use a note pad and pencil to write down questions or clarifications you might need.

- Begin the second side of the tape with a clarifying statement like "You were talking about "
- Be sure to label the tapes and put them well out of the way when you change tapes. Placing them out of reach will ensure that you do not tape over them!
- Resist the temptation to show off your knowledge. It's the narrator's information that's important.
- Try to establish dates, locations, and key participants at significant points in the narrative--"That was 1964 in Chinook?"
- Be aware of the tape; try to make a natural break at about 30 minutes so you don't have to turn the tape in the middle of a story.
- Most interviews should not be longer than two hours.
- End the interview with an invitation for the narrator to tell their favorite story or give a summation--"We've covered a lot of ground today. Is there anything I should have asked?" "Is there any topic you would like to return to?"
- **REMEMBER TO GET THE RELEASE FORMS SIGNED BEFORE YOU LEAVE THEIR HOME.**
- Try to set a time for a follow-up interview before you leave.
- Plan to chat for a few minutes before you leave. Accept that piece of cake and coffee. This is a good time to tell them about your interest in the project and what you hope will be done with the tapes.
- Do not unplug your recorder until you are about to leave. Sometimes you get the best stories just after the interview is concluded. By leaving the recorder set up you can get these stories as an addendum.
- Offer to send a copy of the tape and the transcript to the interviewee as a thank you.
- You may want to take a photograph of the interviewee for your files.
- Let the interviewee know that you might have some questions later on.

7. PRESERVATION AND ACCESS

After the interview is over there is still a great deal of work to be done to make sure that the tapes can and are used. The first order of business is to make sure your recordings (whatever media you use) are in safe storage. Seek out established historical institutions that are familiar with the care and maintenance of recorded media. Please consider donating the original tapes to this kind of institution and making use copies for your own use. The recordings will have a wider potential audience and you will be secure in the knowledge that they are being well cared for.

Next you should prepare a tape index/summary or transcript. A transcript is a nearly verbatim, typescript of the interview (See appendix F). Most institutions do some editing. The average time for transcription is four hours for every hour of tape. Each interviewer needs to complete an audio/video time index for each interview they complete (see appendix G). An audio/video time index is a series of paragraphs divided into five to ten minute increments that provide a synopsis of the topics discussed. They take about an hour for every hour of tape.

Here are some suggestions:

- The person who conducted the interview should do the index, summary, or transcript.
- Always have the index, summary or transcript reviewed by a member of the staff and the interviewee.
- Check to see that all the materials for your interview are in a folder. Review your notes to clarify questions you will need answered before you begin the transcript or summary.
- Do a self-evaluation. Remember that this is a learning experience. No interview is perfect!
- Send an evaluation form to participants to fill out. This will help you do your job better and will be appreciated by the participants.
- Be sure to give the interviewee a copy of the final product.
- Once you have completed the project, you might want to have an informal party or get together. Invite **all** the participants: interviewers, interviewees, transcribers, and other staff members. Put together a scrapbook of photos or interesting materials for the participants to look at.

HAVE A GREAT TIME AND GOOD LUCK!

APPENDIX A

PROJECT PLANNING WORK SHEET

PROJECT NAME:

1. What are the goals of our project?
2. What is (are) the topic(s) of our project?
3. What do we want to do with the information gathered?
4. What types of interviews will best suit our purposes?
5. Who will we interview?
6. Who will conduct the interviews? If we use volunteers, who will train them and when?
7. What is the time frame for the completion of the project?
8. When will we start recording? At what rate can we expect to record interviews?
9. What kind of access will we provide? (Indexes, transcripts, summaries)
10. Who will do the work of providing access? Who will set the priorities for processing?
11. Who will store the tapes?
12. What is the budget for the project?
13. What are the potential funding/resource sources?
14. Who can we contact for additional resources or assistance? What other community groups should we include in the project?
15. What are our plans for publicity?

APPENDIX B

Sample Oral History Topic Outline

Small Town Montana Oral History Project Outline

Common history

- Popular Stories about the history of the town, surrounding area, or county
- Who settled the area? When? Where from?

Physical characteristics

- Main street (including name changes)
- Central meeting places, recreational areas, night life

Local businesses

- Long-time businesses and changes over the years
- New comers
- Power of business
- Changes in local practices (credit, bulk goods vs packaged, dress & service standards)

Major employers

- One industry or several? Power of that industry to shape town life?
- Opportunities for young people?
- Industry layoffs or pull outs? Unions?

Local Institutions

- Role of church(s), church leaders as community leaders, meeting place for community, cooperation between faiths
- Role of school(s), community support, tax base, quality of education, student interaction with town, parental involvement with school.
- Library, museum or cultural center

Health care

- Availability of services, doctors, nurses, dentists, midwifery/home medicines
- Hospital, establishment, supporters, fundraising, opposition, competition of service providers

- Nursing homes

Recreation and Culture

- Sports (baseball, basketball, rodeo), wilderness and access, the arts—dance, music, lectures, theaters, special events—parades, picnics, festivals, saloons/Bars

Seasons

- Tourism, summer haying, winter down time

Civic Organizations

- Women's clubs, fraternal organizations, reform groups, booster groups, service groups

City services

- Firsts—electricity, light, gas, sewers, water, sidewalks, fire and police protection, parks and beautification efforts, volunteer services

Local government

- System of government, reform efforts, annexation issues

Small town as community

- Comforts & discomforts, pace of life, changes felt over time

People

- Neighborhoods, "Sides of town", eccentrics, young people, new comers

APPENDIX C

Pre-Interview Worksheet

1. Your name:
2. Name of interviewee (full name):
3. Interview topic:
4. Was the interviewee directly involved in the event or a witness?
    a. Involved☐ b. Witness☐
5. Date, time, and location of interview:
6. Has the interview agreed to sign the release form and be recorded?
    a. Yes☐ b. No☐
7. Did you explain the purpose and use of this project? Yes☐ No☐
8. Has your interviewee been interviewed before? If yes, on what topic?
9. Biographical date of interviewee:
    a. Year and place of birth:
        i. Name and place of birth of parents:
        ii. Places lived:
    b. Married: Yes☐ If yes, what year? No☐
        i. Children
    c. Education:
    d. Work experience:
    e. Nationality:
    f. Interests/hobbies:

g. Military service: Yes☐ No☐

i. Branch of service:

ii. Battalion, regiment, division, etc.:

iii. Highest rank:

iv. Wartime☐ or peace☐?

1. Where stationed:

2. Dates of service:

3. Wartime service:

a. Where served?

b. Decorations?

c. Combat related injury/injuries?☐

v. Drafted☐ or enlisted☐:

10. Additional information: Honors/awards, social organizations, political membership, family history, etc.:

11. Historical period or event the interview will focus on and what was going on during that period. Be detailed with dates.

12. Why did you choose this interviewee and period of focus?

13. Preliminary works consulted for historical contextualization:

14. Topic(s) of interview:

APPENDIX D
CHECKLIST FOR EQUIPMENT

Before Interview

_____ Recording media (60-minute tapes, CDs, flashcards), take more than needed.

_____ Batteries (take twice as many as needed, use rechargeable batteries. Remember batteries for your microphone if they require them).

_____ Check tone and volume settings by taping introduction and playing it back.

_____ Tighten tapes so lag won't occur at beginning of taping.

_____ Check to see that all equipment is in your bag--tape recorder, power cord, extension cord, 3-prong adaptor, microphone (extra battery if one is required), tapes, batteries, stand for microphone, and all paperwork.

At Interview

_____ Put microphone on a solid surface between you and narrator; cushion the microphone with a magazine or foam pad.

_____ Point mike toward the narrator.

_____ Plug the tape recorder in.

_____ Turn on the microphone.

_____ Check for potential intrusive noises near the microphone (clocks, heating vents, telephones, animals, open windows, or florescent lights).

_____ Make sure tape is running--a quick glance is enough. If it is not check to make sure the microphone is on and the PAUSE button is off.

_____ Glance at the recorder periodically to ensure it is working and to estimate when you will need to turn over the tape. Try to turn the tape at a natural break rather than in the middle of a story.

After Interview

_____ Put the recorder away in a clean, cool place.

_____ Keep the tapes in climate controlled storage (low humidity, cool, dry, clean).

_____ Clean heads of recorder after every 10 hours of use (alcohol and cotton swabs best).

_____ Prevent erasure of tapes by removing the tabs at the top of the tape.

_____ Demagnetize recorder heads after 20 hours use

APPENDIX E

Family History Sample Question Ideas:

The Basics: Make sure you get down the name and birth date of the person you're interviewing, as well as where they fit in your family tree. Then, choose any of the topics below and begin asking questions.

Childhood: What do you recall about your childhood? Where did you live and go to school? What do you remember best about your parents? What did you and your siblings do in your spare time? Were you an obedient child or a mischievous child? What styles of clothing did children wear then?

Family Traditions: Did your family have any special traditions, such as things that they did on holidays or birthdays? What about family heirlooms? Is there anything that's been handed down from generation to generation?

Growing Up: When did you leave home? Why did you leave and where did you go? How did your life change? Did you feel grown up? Were you a little scared?

Historical Events: Which significant historical events have taken place during your lifetime? Were there wars, natural disasters, or political changes? How did these events affect you?

Hometown: What was the name of the place where you grew up? Was it a big city or a small town? Were there any special activities or festivals at different times during the year?

Immigration: How old were you when you immigrated to the United States? Were did you come from and where and when did you arrive? How did you travel? By boat, plane, or train? How long did the trip take? What feelings did you have about coming to the United States? What was one of the biggest differences between the United States and your previous home?

Occupation: What did your parents do for a living when you were growing up? Did you ever help them out? Was your family financially comfortable? What was your first job? How old

were you at the time? How did you get your job? What different jobs have you had during your life?

Physical Characteristics: What physical characteristics do people in your family share? Do they all have the same hair color or eye color? Whom in the family do you resemble?

Previous Generations: Did you know your grandparents or great-grandparents? What were their names? Where did they live? What stories can you tell about them and their lives?

Religion: What part did religion play in your family? Were you very religious? Did you go to religious services on a regular basis?

Other possible topics: Education, Politics, Military Service, Recreation, Entertainers of the Era, Family Personalities, Family Pets, Traveling, Dating, Clothing, Family Recipes, Favorite Songs or Poems, Family Medical History, Marriage and Raising a Family, and anything else that may be of interest to you and your family....

Sample questions for interviews with veterans (from Veteran's Oral History Project Website):

Were you drafted or did you enlist?
Where were you living at the time?
Why did you join?
Why did you pick the service branch you joined?
Do you recall your first days in service?
What did it feel like?
Tell me about your boot camp/training experience(s).
Do you remember your instructors?
How did you get through it?
Which war(s) did you serve in (WWI, WWII, Korea, Vietnam, the Persian Gulf)?
Where exactly did you go?
Do you remember arriving and what it was like?

What was your job/assignment?

Did you see combat?

Were there many casualties in your unit?

Tell me about a couple of your most memorable experiences.

Were you a prisoner of war?

Tell me about your experiences in captivity and when freed.

Were you awarded any medals or citations?

How did you get them?

Higher ranks may be asked about battle planning. Those who sustained injuries may be asked about the circumstances.

Ask questions about life in the service and/or at the front or under fire.

How did you stay in touch with your family?

What was the food like?

Did you have plenty of supplies?

Did you feel pressure or stress?

Was there something special you did for "good luck"?

How did people entertain themselves?

Were there entertainers?

What did you do when on leave?

Where did you travel while in the service?

Do you recall any particularly humorous or unusual event?

What were some of the pranks that you or others would pull?

Do you have photographs?

Who are the people in the photographs?

What did you think of officers or fellow soldiers?

Did you keep a personal diary?

Appropriateness of questions will vary if the veteran had a military career.

Do you recall the day your service ended?

Where were you?

What did you do in the days and weeks afterward?

Did you work or go back to school?

Was your education supported by the G.I. Bill?

Did you make any close friendships while in the service?

Did you continue any of those relationships?

For how long?

Did you join a veteran's organization?

What did you go on to do as a career after the war?

Did your military experience influence your thinking about war or about the military in general?

If in a veteran's organization, what kinds of activities does your post or association have?

Do you attend reunions?

How did your service and experiences affect your life?

Is there anything you would like to add that we have not covered in this interview?

SEE ALSO: http://www.loc.gov/vets/ regarding veterans' oral history projects

APPENDIX F

Transcript Format Sample:

ELMORE TINTZMAN INTERVIEW

OH 1957

Introduction

This is Suzanne Julin, I'm east of Corvallis, Montana this afternoon, on the ranch of Mr. Elmore Tintzman. And Mr. Tintzman and I are going to be doing an interview in conjunction with the Montana Historical Society and the Montana Oral History Project, "Reflections on a Forgotten War."

Interview

JULIN: And Mr. Tintzman and I have been talking about his family background. He's originally from North Dakota, and moved here as a child with his parents, who left North Dakota during the Depression because of the agricultural crisis. And Mr. Tintzman, you said you went to high school in Corvallis?

TINTZMAN: Mm-hm. Yes.

JULIN: And then you moved onto this ranch after you came back from the war, and this is actually the ranch that your wife was born on.

TINTZMAN: Right, uh-huh.

JULIN: That's very interesting. Beautiful place, by the way. Beautiful views and lovely day today. Well, I wanted to ask you, Mr. Tintzman--were you married at the time you went into the service?

TINTZMAN: No, I was in the service once, and then we got married.

JULIN: Okay. And what led you to go into the military?

APPENDIX G

Audio/Video Time Indexing

1. Interviewer:
2. Interviewee:
3. Date of interview:
4. Location of interview:
5. Recording format:

Audio Type:	Video Type:
Cassette☐	Cassette☐
Microcassette☐	Microcassette☐
CD☐	CD☐
Digital (DAT)☐	Digital (DAT)☐
DVD☐	DVD☐

6. In five minute intervals, summarize interview topics in the order they occur during the recording and note the number and side of the recording (e.g. Tape 1, Side A.).

Minute mark Topic of discussion

APPENDIX H

ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM
RELEASE FORM

I hereby give, convey, and consign to the **MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY** as a donation for such scholarly, educational, academic, and historical purposes as the **MONTANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY** shall determine, according to the governing regulations of the Society, all legal title and interest in copyright in this (these) specific tape recorded interview(s) and most particularly the exclusive right of reproduction, distribution, preparation of derivative works, public performance, and display (including presentation on the World Wide Web through its web site) except for those restrictions as state below:

RESTRICTIONS: _____

_____

_____

_____

Date of Interview: _____

Date of Agreement:_____

Interviewee's Name (printed):_____

Interviewee's Name (written):_____

Interviewee's Mailing Address: _____

_____

_____

_____

Interviewer's Name (printed):_____

Interviewer's Name (written):_____

Send completed form to:
Oral Historian
Montana Historical Society
PO Box 201201
Helena MT 59620-1201
#444-6779

BIBLIOGRAPHY

ORAL HISTORY INTERNET BIBLIOGRAPY

Vermont Folklife Center: www.vermontfolklifecenter.org

I. Digital Audio Field Recording Equipment Guide

II. Field Recording in the Digital Age

III. Digital Editing of Field Audio

IV. Audio Recording Equipment Guide: Retired Equipment List

Oral History Association: http://alpha.dickinson.edu/oha/

Regional Oral History Office (ROHO): http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/resources/index.html

Veterans History Project (Library of Congress): http://www.loc.gov/vets/

Using Oral History (Library of Congress): http://international.loc.gov/learn/lessons/oralhist/ohstart.html

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