



# Oral History and Preservation



The New York  
Preservation  
Archive Project



# Oral History and Preservation

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## NEW YORK PRESERVATION ARCHIVE PROJECT

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# Introduction

## Who We Are

Founded in 1998, the **New York Preservation Archive Project** documents and celebrates the history of the preservation movement in New York City.

- We record oral histories to capture the memories of influential preservationists.
- We rescue threatened historic records and help place them with permanent archival institutions.
- We provide training, assistance, and support to preservation not-for-profits to help them become better curators of their own records and history.
- We bring these records and stories to life through public programs and accessible resources.

Our oral histories, upcoming programs, and other resources are available on our website: [www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org).

The Archive Project works to change the culture of the preservation movement for the better. We first began our efforts in response to a tide of loss, where personal papers were abandoned in dumpsters, organizational documents were scattered, and the individual memories of campaign victories or defeats were slowly fading. To reverse that trend, we reclaim endangered histories and put them to use. Historical awareness is vital to the preservation movement's continued health, success, and growth. Rooted by the way we value and remember our past, we secure the future of historic preservation.

This manual helps to introduce the field of historic preservation to the value of conducting oral history projects, and to provide a few key tools to get started. Our goal is to inspire new initiatives in locations across the country that will document the stories of preservationists. Toward that end, this manual will cover recommended resources, lessons learned from our own experience with oral history work, and important steps in project planning.



***“The Archive Project truly grew out of oral history and continues to embrace oral history as a key part of its ongoing work.”***

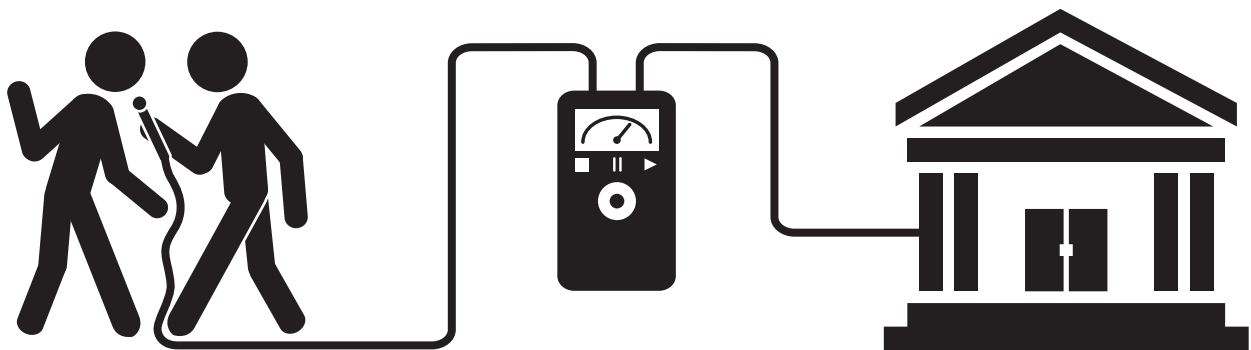
***- Anthony C. Wood, Founder and Chair of the Archive Project***

## What is Oral History?

### ***Oral history starts with a conversation –***

Two or more people gather together to create a valuable historical resource. They draw on their experiences and record what they remember. That recorded conversation preserves their unique contribution to a collective history, be it a family, a local community, or an international network.

### ***An Oral Record of History***



### ***Where Individual Memories Intersect with Public Knowledge***

### ***Making it public –***

An important facet of oral history is the point where that conversation becomes a contribution. The goal of creating a new oral history resource is often to make it available for public use and education. Over the years this has been done in diverse ways, from public art to staged performances, and from academic archives to broadcast media.

## Why Conduct Oral Histories?

Oral history practices present powerful tools for expanding access to the history of the preservation movement.

So often in historic preservation, the perseverance and leadership of a few key people inspires the hard work and dedication of a whole community. Such actions are often left out of the headlines and unheralded regardless of how they have shaped the physical landscape of neighborhoods around us. For that reason, many of the events that compose preservation history are rooted in the memories of individuals rather than published written records. More over, preservationists are often concerned first and foremost with their work, lobbying for designation and fighting against demolition, and so rarely engage in documenting their own efforts and history.

The specific benefits of oral history for the preservation field are:

- Oral history is especially useful for community engagement and amplifying the stories of unsung heroes.
- Oral history practice is focused on the narratives of individuals and how best to draw out, build context around, and document their memories.
- Where the written record has fallen short, oral histories can fill the gap.
- Oral history records reveal accounts of behind-the-scenes interactions, challenges, and learning experiences that are often absent in written sources.

Be aware that oral history also presents some challenges:

- Memories are sometimes inaccurate, especially when it comes to names and dates. In partnership with written records (where they exist) and other oral histories on the same subject, individual recollections can be verified.
- A person's experiences are entirely subjective, and should be interpreted in context with an effort to understand their life and point of view. Subjective experiences are essential to fully capturing preservation history. What makes a historic site beautiful, meaningful, and integral to a city's character are all subjective. What inspires people to organize to preserve historic sites is often personal. The evidence that is provided through oral history is extremely valuable, but must be presented with clarity and understanding.

An archive of oral history records weaves together the learning experiences, advice, and personal motivations of preservationists with their memories of historic sites and what makes these sites unique and important. This versatile primary source material can be utilized for myriad purposes, from new preservationists seeking wisdom to historians researching specific sites, and from journalists uncovering important perspectives to policy advisers consulting community concerns.

## How to Conduct Oral Histories

Oral history methods span diverse disciplines and crafts, but they are rooted in how to:

- Decide whose memories to record
- Gather people together to document what they have to say

And while there are many ways to make a public contribution with oral history, there are fundamental concerns about how to:

- Navigate the ethical and legal considerations of donating personal memories to the public
- Record information that can later be both accessible and useful to others

This manual is a practical guide to designing and running collaborative oral history projects, and creating public resources from the resulting records. In the pages that follow we will elaborate on the basic issues outlined above, and describe tools to address them. Our advice will be most useful to other small organizations or community-based groups. Because our recommendations stem from our experience, they will be specifically relevant to gathering archival information about historic preservation initiatives.

## Our Experience

Throughout this manual the advice offered will be supported with examples from our own experience in the field.

While the Archive Project contains over 100 oral history interviews in its collection, the earliest dating back to 1984, the source material for this manual has been narrowed down to two oral history projects launched in 2015. These two projects are strong examples because they are both modestly-sized, grant-funded initiatives. Also, each provides very different perspectives on the history of preservation in New York City.

**EXAMPLE** *Saving Preservation Stories:  
Diversity & the Outer Boroughs*

The central focus of this project is to seek out preservation stories that have previously been underrepresented in New York City. Oral history interviews are conducted with leading members of historic preservation campaigns that work to save sites significant to minority populations, as well as sites in the four boroughs outside Manhattan. Although some of these sites may have only recently been designated as historic landmarks, their preservation campaigns often go back decades. In some cases, in spite of active campaigns, sites have been lost or compromised before they had a chance to be protected. Documenting the unique challenges and innovative solutions of such campaigns is a valuable resource for future preservationists, but also brings to light many veterans of the movement who deserve recognition.



Yvonne Taylor, photo by Leyla Vural, 2015  
Sam Goodman, photo by Anthony Bellov, 2015  
Narrators for *Saving Preservation Stories*

Crown Heights North, photo by Carl Forster, 2007; Courtesy  
of New York City Landmarks Preservation Commission





**EXAMPLE** *Through the Legal Lens:  
Interviews with Lawyers Who Shaped NYC's Landmarks Law*

With this project, the Archive Project set out to capture the memories of influential legal figures in the evolution of New York City's Landmarks Law. In 1965, the law was enacted to protect historic sites and neighborhoods from decisions to destroy or fundamentally alter their character. The law also established a permanent Landmarks Preservation Commission, which was authorized to designate a building as a landmark or an area as a historic district. By 2015, fifty years later, numerous challenges to landmark legislation had been overcome, and the law's powers expanded, thanks, in part, to the work of the individuals interviewed in this project. As lawyers, they defended the administration of the law, argued decisive preservation-related court cases, and worked to secure the legal power that protects New York City's architecture.

Pennsylvania Station, photo by Cervin Robinson, 1962; Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

Gabe Taussig and Virginia Waters, photos by Anthony Bellov, 2016  
Narrators for *Through the Legal Lens*



# First Steps

## Envisioning the Project & Setting Goals

The first steps of any oral history project are to consider the following questions:

- What is the central purpose of this project?
  - What are the subjects and themes this oral history project will address?
  - How will conducting oral history interviews on this specific subject matter fill a current gap in historical records?
- Who is the target audience?
  - What service could this oral history project provide to a specific population of people?
  - How would the audience make use of the oral histories, and what ultimate format would be most accessible to them?

The answers to these questions will guide decisions at every step of an oral history project, including seeking funding for the project, gathering the team, working with narrators, designing interviews, and making the oral histories available to the public.



New York City, Chrysler Building and Queensboro Bridge,  
photo by Samuel H. Gottscho, 1932; Courtesy of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division





**EXAMPLE** *Through the Legal Lens*

At the Archive Project, we answered core questions in the following ways, and the *Through the Legal Lens* project began to take shape.

- What is the central purpose of this project?
  - Subjects: First-hand memories of key litigation and court cases related to New York City's Landmarks Law.
  - Filling a Gap: While court records are already available to the public, the only way to access the experiences of the cases, the personal motivations, the adaptation to challenges, and the specific research and reasoning behind important arguments is to speak with the people involved.
- Who is the target audience?
  - Service Provided: These interviews preserve historical context that acts as a foundation for New Yorkers working in the fields of historic preservation, law, urban planning, architecture, real estate, and local history. They also document practical resources, unique insights, wisdom gained from experience, and advice.
  - Accessible Format: All oral histories collected for this project are available to the public via our online archive at [www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org).

## Preliminary Research & Choosing Narrators

Oral history is an especially useful tool for preserving histories that have not already been documented. For that reason, most oral history projects prioritize reaching narrators who are not well known, have not been interviewed previously, and have not published articles or books about their specific perspective on historical events. This is a core strength of oral history, but it does mean that making initial contact with narrators and conducting preliminary research can be more complicated than if they were public figures.

Building a list of potential narrators to interview may come in several stages:

- Research existing records and publications: Find names of people and organizations that have been involved in the oral history project's particular subject of interest. Those people and organizations may be good first contacts to refer potential narrators to the project.
- Engage with local communities: People who have been connected with the subject of interest over the years may carry valuable knowledge that cannot

be accessed through records and publications. They can identify important sources, provide relevant background information, recommend further contacts, and refer potential narrators to the project.

- **Contact potential narrators:** When possible, converse directly with the narrators who were recommended before scheduling an interview. Through those conversations, determine whether they speak well, are knowledgeable about your subject matter, and would make a good fit for the oral history project.

### EXAMPLE ***Saving Preservation Stories***

Since the purpose of this project is to document underrepresented stories, we began our work with the expectation that personal referrals would be our strongest asset.

- **Engage with local communities:** Our first step was to reach out through our own network of preservationists, historians, and leaders of relevant organizations to form an advisory committee. Based on the recommendations of that committee, we drafted a list of organizations and key individuals involved with the preservation of historic sites located in the boroughs outside Manhattan, as well as sites significant to minority communities in New York City (defined broadly to include racial, ethnic, religious, gender and sexual minorities, and more).
- **Research existing records and publications:** We then followed up on the advisory committee's list of recommendations by researching each suggestion. We prioritized organizations and sites that were important to the history of preservation in New York City, but had nevertheless been previously underrepresented or unrecognized. For these organizations and sites we then researched key individuals who may be able to comment on them.
- **Engage with local communities:** After enhancing our list through preliminary research, we then contacted selected organizations, local leaders of neighborhood associations, and local historians to gain further recommendations and insight.
- **Contact potential narrators:** Through the relationships we built, we were able to request contact information and direct introductions to a few promising potential narrators. Once we successfully contacted them by phone, we were able to gauge their level of interest and determine whether they were a good fit for the project.

## Finding Funding

Institutions that provide grant support specifically for oral history work are rare. Some notable organizations that do are **Baylor Institute for Oral History**, Radcliffe's **Schlesinger Library**, and the **Oral History Association**. Those organizations provide small-scale support for projects led by individuals. For not-for-profit organizations, there are likely to be more options available. The most effective way to find grant funders is through a field or subject matter, such as architecture or local history, rather than a methodology, such as oral history. Oral history efforts within the field of preservation will usually find funding opportunities within arts-, humanities-, and history-focused foundations and organizations.

Listings of foundations:

- **The Council on Foundations:** [www.cof.org](http://www.cof.org)
- **The Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers:** [www.givingforum.org](http://www.givingforum.org)
- **The Foundation Center:** [www.foundationcenter.org](http://www.foundationcenter.org)
- **Government Grants:** [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)

Resources on grant writing:

- **Grantspace: A Service of Foundation Center:** [www.grantspace.org](http://www.grantspace.org)
- **The Chronicle of Philanthropy:** [www.philanthropy.com/resources](http://www.philanthropy.com/resources)

The above resources are a good first step in researching potential funders and reinforcing grant writing skills. Most grant applications will require a clearly articulated goal of the oral history project, the public benefit it will yield, the capacity and qualifications of the oral history team, and why the project matters. All of these questions are essential to successful project planning as well, therefore grant writing can provide valuable structure in the early stages of a project.

### EXAMPLE *Through the Legal Lens* and *Saving Preservation Stories*

As an established not-for-profit organization, the Archive Project is able to cover some costs of an oral history project through our existing budget. Materials, office space, storage for records, and audio equipment are provided and funded through a mixture of foundation support and individual contributions. When initiating oral history projects, additional funds are required to cover the expenses of hiring expert support. *Through the Legal Lens* and *Saving Preservation Stories* were made possible by grants from the Arthur F. & Alice E. Adams Charitable Foundation and the Clara A. Gierisch Fund and the Robert I. & Lucille B. Williams Fund of the New York Community Trust, respectively.

# Gathering the Team

How to gather an oral history team depends on the size and scope of a project. The list below summarizes the tasks required in a typical project and organizes them by role to help visualize the types of support needed, the desired qualifications, and the necessary resources.

For small-scale projects many of these roles could be accomplished by one person. For larger projects, or for those that require quicker production schedules, the roles may be taken on by multiple people. For that reason, we also provide specific examples from our two oral history projects, describing how tasks were distributed and how we built our oral history teams.

## Roles in an Oral History Team



The ***Project Manager*** is the primary point person and coordinator for an oral history project. They oversee the work of other team members, and ensure that a project stays on schedule and within the established budget.

Responsibilities:

- Obtain legal advice to develop appropriate agreements or legal release forms for the project. Coach interviewers on how to explain agreements to narrators and gather signatures.
- Handle recruitment of the narrators. This includes communications, scheduling, drafting letters of invitation, answering questions by phone, and more.
- Work with interviewers prior to the interview to develop questions and review research. Preparation may include training or advice on oral history best practices and clear communication of expectations and standards. After an interview, provide feedback on interviewers' work and help them build on their experience.
- Provide technical assistance as needed for interviewers and videographers. Explain recording standards and any metadata they may need to gather.

- Be available to narrators by phone or email throughout the project to respond to questions or concerns as they arise.
- After the interview is complete, coordinate with the transcriptionist and the interviewer to ensure timely retrieval of a finalized transcript that is ready for public use or inclusion in an archive. This will often involve incorporating the narrators' edits into the transcript as well. Be sure to provide written style guides and standards to the transcriptionist as needed.
- Maintain the project files, including backup copies, in collaboration with the archivist as necessary.
- Keep clear records of the project's progress for reporting, budgeting, and institutional memory.



The **Researcher** prepares the preliminary research on each narrator, and provides relevant documents and information to the project manager or interviewer for review.



On the day of the oral history interview, the **Interviewer** is the main person on the ground working with the narrator. They conduct the interview, provide and explain agreement forms, and record the audio.

Responsibilities:

- Ensure that all narrators sign an agreement. Confirm that narrators fully understand the purpose of their oral history interview, and how it will be used, before the interview begins.
- Act as interviewer for each interview session. Sessions, on average, will last between 1.5 and 2 hours, but multiple sessions can be scheduled as needed to complete an interview.
- Record all interview sessions. Typically audio recordings are sufficient, but in some cases interviewers will also collaborate with a videographer.
- Communicate with the project manager to provide brief updates on the status of the interviews and to identify any problems or potential complications as they arise.
- Submit the interview recording and any back-up copies to the project manager along with signed agreements.



The **Videographer** attends interview sessions in order to document the oral history on video.

Responsibilities:

- Provide the necessary equipment and record video.
- Set up the shots for ideal image and lighting. Direct interviewers and narrators as needed to ensure a clear recording and high quality product.
- Monitor video equipment, and be ready to troubleshoot technical difficulties and utilize back-up equipment as needed.
- Maintain back-ups of the video recordings.



The **Transcriptionist** receives audio recordings of the oral history sessions and transcribes them to text according to given style guides and standards.



The **Audit-Editor** reviews transcripts to ensure that they are correct and ready for public use.

Responsibilities:

- Compare the audio recording to the text as written by the transcriptionist. Make necessary edits for accuracy and readability.
- Review transcript formatting according to given style guides.
- Check names of people, organizations, and places for correct spelling.



Once the final transcripts and recordings of the oral history interviews are ready, they are provided to the **Archivist** who will compile and organize them.

Responsibilities:

- Review content of the oral history interviews and approve whether they are ready for public use. In addition to making sure that all agreements are in order, the archivist should flag potentially problematic content (either legally or ethically) for the project manager's approval.
- Draft abstracts of transcripts, and collect metadata that will ensure all records are clear and accessible for future users.





The **Publisher** prepares final products of the oral history project for presentation and dissemination. This can take many forms, from generating polished excerpts for distribution, to building online exhibitions for the content, to merely conveying the archivist's records from the project to a collecting institution.



**Audio and Video Editors** conduct their work in the event that final products of an oral history project require concise, edited, or documentary-style media to be created from the source material.

Responsibilities:

- Create clips from original audio and video as directed.
- Edit together the source material into a cohesive audio or video piece.
- Submit drafts for review to the project manager or publisher, and incorporate requested changes.
- Upon completion, return all final content and original source material to the project manager.



There are two main areas of an oral history project where a **Legal Adviser** is needed.

Responsibilities:

- Draft the agreements that narrators and interviewers sign, which outline terms of use or transfer of copyright.
- Answer legal questions that may arise over the course of conducting the oral history project. This could be in regards to the content of interviews, liability, ownership, and more.

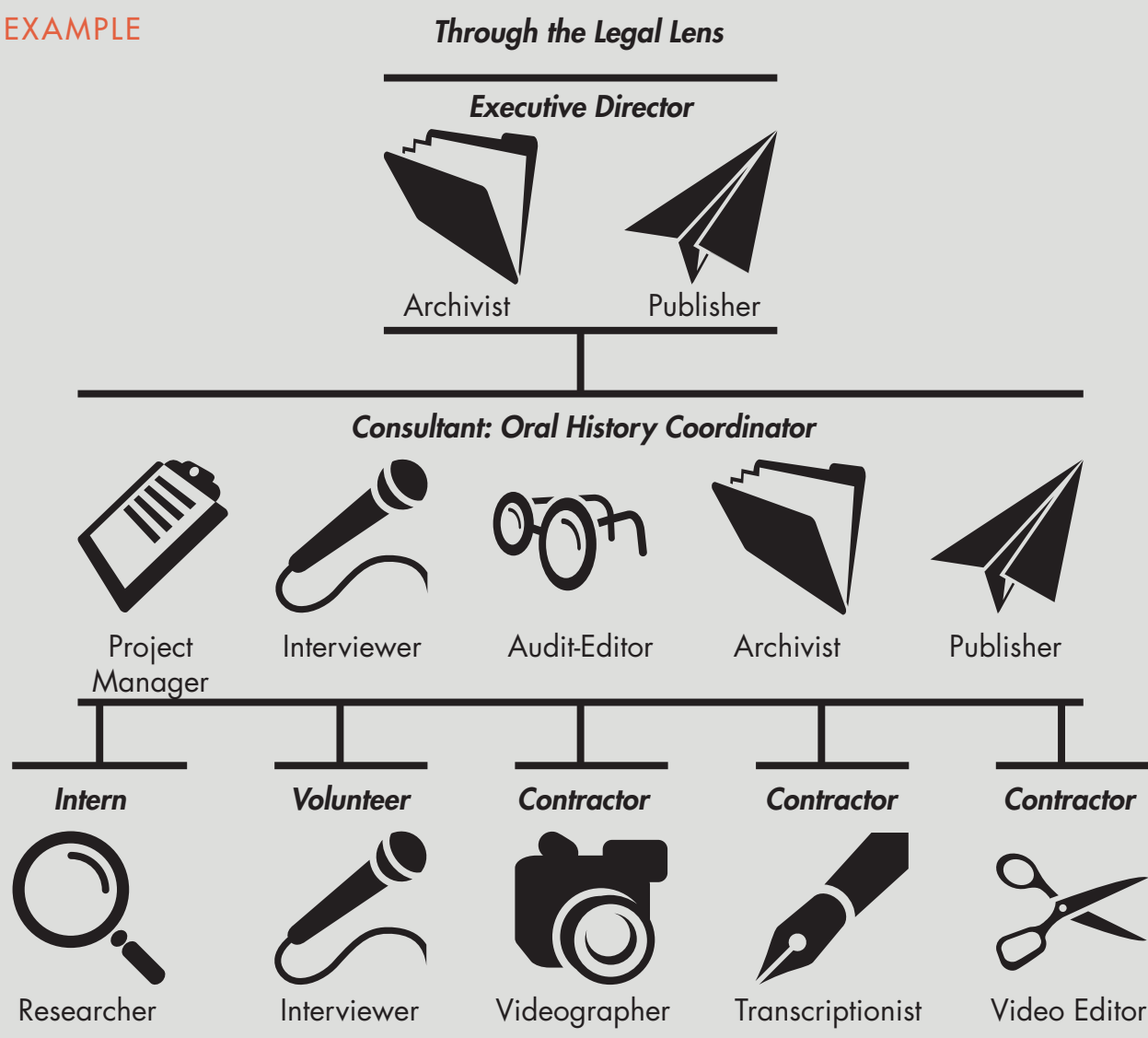
Official legal advice is often costly or unattainable to independent researchers, community organizations, and smaller not-for-profit organizations. In the Archive Project's case, we made use of available templates and resources (see the Resources section of this guide for recommendations). Additionally, we worked with trusted colleagues who have legal experience. While such resources are often unable to provide official legal advice, they may volunteer guidance and help in understanding the language of legal agreements. However, in the event that official legal advice is attainable, there is no substitute for it. The investment pays off over years, as the advice remains relevant and the legal agreements drafted can be used again and again for new projects.

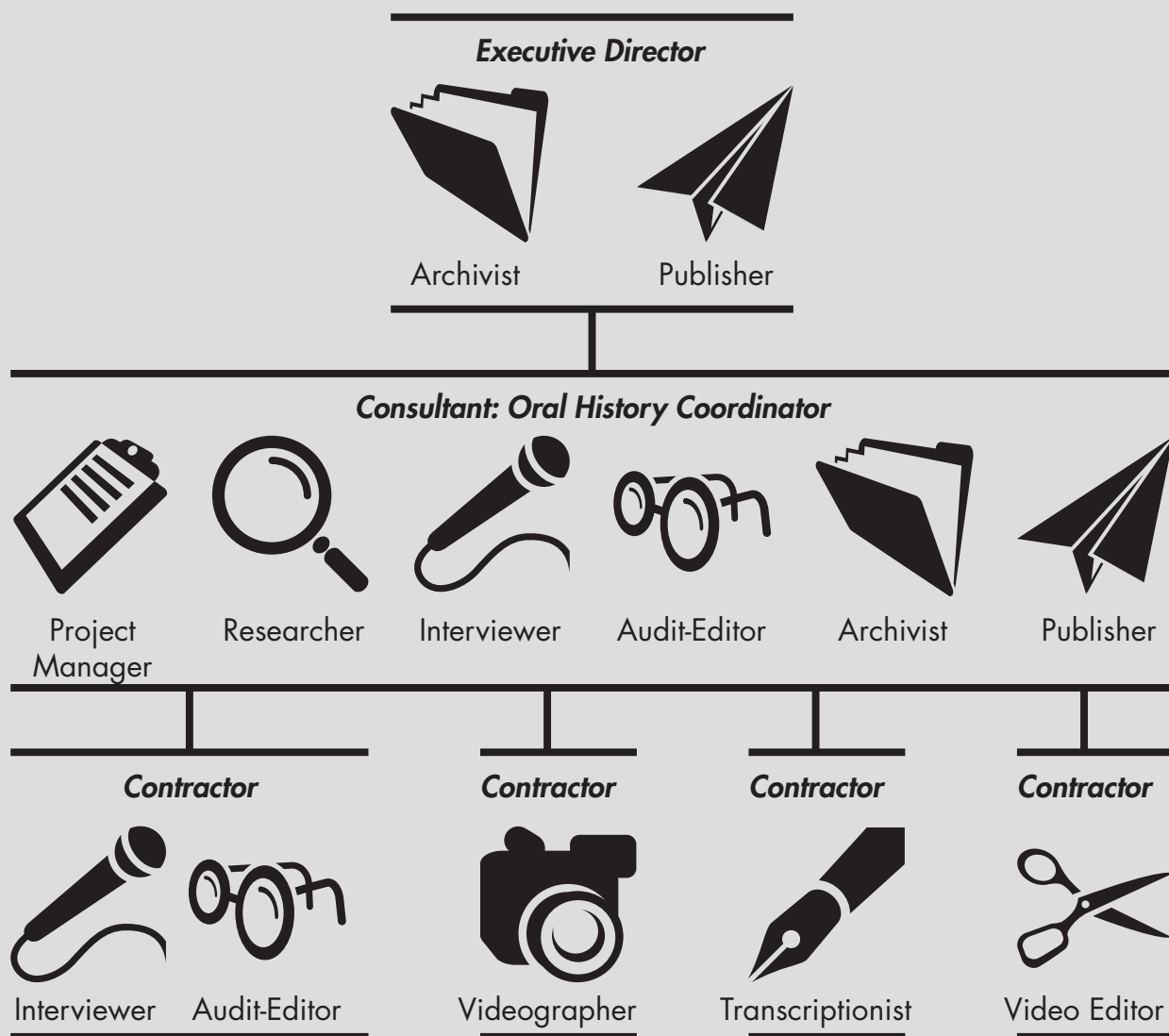
## Costs of Labor

The Archive Project is small, with only one full-time staff member, but we have the benefit of an actively involved board of directors, and a well-established internship program. To adjust to changing demands on staff time, we also contract the services of freelance experts and consultants. In the context of these two projects we were awarded grant funding to compensate the additional labor. Understanding the amount of work, and level of expertise required for each role in the project was essential to determining its value, and to requesting the proper amount of funding when applying for grants.

The oral history teams for *Through the Legal Lens* and *Saving Preservation Stories* were arranged in the following ways (note that the roles will often overlap).

### EXAMPLE



**EXAMPLE*****Saving Preservation Stories******Legal Adviser:***

Because the Archive Project has been conducting oral histories for nearly two decades, we rely on legal agreements, knowledge, and resources that were established prior to embarking on these two projects. For that reason the role of legal adviser was not fulfilled by the teams listed above. However, this is an essential role in any oral history project, and we highly recommend that any group or organization new to the field of oral history attain legal advice when possible.

***Executive Director:***

The Archive Project's executive director is the organization's sole permanent staff member. When it comes to running an oral history initiative, our executive director is the primary holder of institutional memory about how oral history projects have been conducted in the past, the standards for records keeping, the organization's networks, and necessary training practices. For those reasons, it may sometimes make sense to have the executive director take the lead on oral history projects. However, most often an executive director already has considerable demands on their time for general operations of the organization. Leading an oral history project may become too costly, in terms of time and attention lost on other important tasks, or there is a risk that the oral history project may progress too slowly.

One way the Archive Project adapts to this is by hiring independent consultants, contractors, and interns so that the organization can expand its capacity as needed. Hiring a consultant to lead the project means that the executive director can train one person who will then hire and train other members of the oral history team, review and archive the interviews as they are completed, and report back at the completion of a project. This strikes a balance such that the project benefits from the executive director's experience and oversight, without over-burdening available time and resources. Training new consultants can become more efficient by making sure to keep clear records throughout each oral history project and by writing transition documents.

***Consultants and Contractors:***

The most effective way to recruit valuable team members on a contract basis is to build a strong network. Reach out to organizations with similar missions, relevant professional associations, and alumni networks from related programs to get referrals. People who have been hired to work on similar projects, who may have expertise relevant to the subject matter, and may already be trained in standard practices will be the most valuable team members. For that reason, it is also important to stay in touch with contractors once an oral history project has ended. They will be great assets when hiring for your next project.

Cost will vary, but making multiple inquiries to ask for quotes or hourly rates will build a sense for general market value of the labor in a given area. Then make a decision about what is affordable based on a balance

between how to save time and money while getting the highest possible quality of service.

***Interns:***

Internships require either hourly pay, or instruction and guidance of equal value in exchange for labor. One good method of finding interns is by partnering with educational programs that are able to provide school credit for the hours that interns give to a project. However, it is important to strike a balance. Often times, the hours spent by staff and consultants to work with interns may become more costly than the value of having the intern's support. For this reason the Archive Project prefers to compensate our interns financially, in addition to providing training and guidance. This allows us to competitively hire dependable interns who can rely on their own skills, and work independently as needed.

***Volunteers:***

In order to find and retain valuable volunteers, look for individuals who are passionate about the subject matter of the project. Consider what value they could derive from being involved.

- Are there particular narrators who they would like to meet, or could personally benefit from interviewing?
- Are there any project deliverables, interview recordings, edited audio or videos, design pieces, writing samples, etc., that would help them expand their own portfolio or professional connections?
- Are they conducting their own research on a similar subject matter that might benefit from the resources created during the project?

Without these considerations volunteers will sometimes become unreliable, or require more coaching and oversight than staff members or project leaders can afford.

# Narrator Consent

## Communicating with Narrators

Before an oral history interview can be conducted, it is essential that the narrator has been given all the information about the project, how the interview is going to be used, and what their rights are in regards to the project's final products. Standard procedures for ensuring fully-informed consent to participate are an integral part of any successful oral history project.

The **Oral History Association** publishes an up-to-date list of principles and best practices on their website ([www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org)). This is an important resource on ethical practices and communication with narrators.

The following is a list of our own recommended key steps to take throughout a project to communicate with narrators and to collaborate with them about their own goals for the interview:

- **Letter of Invitation:** Ideally, early contact with narrators should be made in writing. A letter of invitation contains introductory information about the oral history project, the process of being interviewed, and how the interview recordings will be used. This is also an opportunity to provide them with some information about their interviewer. We recommend keeping such letters to no more than one page. The letter serves an important role in the consent process, but also needs to be easy to read and geared to spark their interest.
- **Follow-up Phone Call:** After narrators have received their letters of invitation, be sure to reach out to them by phone to follow up. Review key information about the purpose of the oral history interview, why their participation would be valuable, and answer any questions they may have. If they agree to be interviewed, let them know the next steps in the process, and ask them for dates and times when they can be available for an interview.



- ***Schedule the Interview:*** Coordinate available dates with the narrators and the interviewer, make the necessary introductions between them, then set the time and place. Make sure both the narrator and interviewer have one another's contact information.
- ***Coach the Interviewer:*** The interviewer will be responsible for confirming the narrator's consent before the interview, and for collecting their signed agreement.
  - Before the recording begins the interviewer should review the goals of the interview, how it is going to be recorded, how the recording will be used, and the content of the agreement form. Once they are confident that the narrator understands and consents, the interviewer can begin the recording and the interview.
  - The agreement form is an essential document. Without this written permission from the narrator, their interview cannot be used or made available to the public (see next section, Interview Agreement Forms, for more information).
- ***Post-interview Check-in:*** After the oral history interview is complete, write a thank you note to the narrator. This is an opportunity to underscore the value of their participation in the project, explain the next steps, outline how and when they can expect their interview to be available for public use, and invite them to get in touch with any further questions.
- ***Narrator Comments:*** When possible, narrators should have the opportunity to review and approve their interview records before they are made available to the public.
  - This can be done either by sending them a copy of the audio/video recording itself, or by sending them a transcription of the recording.
  - After a mutually agreed upon period of time, the narrators should return their comments, notes, or requests for edits.
  - All such requests should then be incorporated into the final records before they are made public. Narrators must be made aware of the project's capabilities to make edits to the oral history records, as they will vary depending on the project's available resources.
  - If any narrators are not comfortable releasing their recordings after a

reasonable period of review, they have the right to revoke their consent to participate and to revoke any agreement they may have signed. In such rare cases the project must return any interview materials to the narrator and retain no copies for use.

- **Final Contact:** When the final interview records have been made available for public use, be sure to contact narrators again to inform them, and to instruct them on how to access and use their records. Include a final thank you for participating in the oral history project.

Keep track of each step as it has been completed. As projects take on more and more narrators, or span longer periods of time, this is especially important in ensuring all the proper steps have been taken.

Below is an example of a basic log sheet for working with narrators:

Name	Contact Info.	Letter of Invitation Sent	Follow-up Phone Call	Interview	Agreement Signed	Post-interview Check-in	Received Narrator Comments	Final Contact
Sam Hill	555-222-3434	10/12/15	10/24/15	11/1/15	11/1/15	11/8/15	1/10/16	2/15/16
Kate Liu	555-333-2222	10/12/15	10/20/15	11/16/15	11/16/15	11/23/15	1/5/16	2/15/16
John Smith	555-234-5555	10/12/15	10/25/15	10/30/15	10/30/15	11/6/15	1/25/16	2/15/16



Preservationist, Joan Maynard, with students at Hunterfly Road Houses;  
Courtesy of Weeksville Heritage Center

Oral histories about Joan Maynard and local preservation actions are housed at Weeksville Heritage Society



**EXAMPLE** *Through the Legal Lens*

The following list explains each step that was taken to communicate with narrators of the *Through the Legal Lens* oral history project.

- **Letter of Invitation:** Our initial letter of invitation was sent to narrators with the help of the communications director at the New York City Law Department. Once she was confident each narrator was interested in participating, she provided their contact information to the project manager.
- **Follow-up Phone Call:** Our project manager followed up with each narrator by email with further details about the project, then called each of them to discuss the project, to answer questions, and to discuss availability. In most cases, this step required multiple phone conversations with each narrator.
- **Schedule the Interview:** The project manager requested a list of possible dates from each narrator and the interviewer, and arranged a time and place for the interview. She then introduced the narrator and interviewer directly by email, providing the date and time of their interview, contact information for each of them, and a short bio of the interviewer.
- **Coach the Interviewer:** Some interviews were conducted at the offices of the Archive Project, in which case the project manager



Vigil to Save Saint Bartholomew's Episcopal Church;  
Courtesy of The Anthony C. Wood Collection  
The founder of the Archive Project, Anthony C. Wood, is pictured on the right.

was available to discuss the project with narrators in person. For the most part, however, the interviewer was the main point of contact for narrators on the day of their interview.

- The project manager worked with the interviewer prior to each interview to provide research materials, review question lists, and to coach him on agreement forms and the consent process.
- The interviewer reviewed the purpose of the interview in-person with each narrator, prior to their interview, and collected their signature on the agreement.
- After each interview the project manager also reviewed the audio and provided feedback to the interviewer on interview techniques, research questions, and any necessary improvements in the consent process.
- **Post-interview Check-in:** Both the project manager and the interviewer emailed a note of thanks to each narrator after the interview was completed. The project manager also described the next steps for the project and when narrators would be able to review their interview transcript.
- **Narrator Comments:** Once each interview recording was transcribed, the project manager conducted an audit-edit of each to confirm the transcripts' accuracy. She then sent the audit-edited transcript to each narrator for their review. The Archive Project did not have the capacity to edit audio and video for this project, so narrators were only given the opportunity to review their transcripts. The project manager kept in touch with them to provide support and answer questions until their final comments were returned. She then incorporated their comments into the final transcript for use on the Archive Project website.
- **Final Contact:** The final audio recordings and transcripts were added to the Archive Project's archives, and made available for public use via the our website. The project manager then sent a final thank you note to all narrators, which included simple instructions on where to find their online interview records.

## Interview Agreement Forms

A narrator must sign an agreement in order to consent to participate in an oral history project, and to give permission for their interview materials to be used or made available to the public in any way. There are two key purposes of an agreement. The ethical component is to confirm and document the narrator's informed consent to participate. The legal component concerns copyright permissions.

A good resource for sample oral history agreements, and detailed explanations of their ethical and legal functions, is ***Oral History and the Law*** by John A. Neuenschwander. For further advice on drafting agreements, many cities will have an organization such as ***Volunteer Lawyers for the Arts*** that may be able to provide free or low-cost consultation and training. The best option for drafting agreements, especially those that involve legal releases and transfer of copyrights, is professional legal advice.

### ***Types of Agreements***

- ***Informed Consent:*** A consent agreement does not include any transfer of rights or specific permissions for the use of intellectual property. The purpose of a consent agreement is to have narrators affirm, in writing, that they have been made aware of how the interview will be conducted, how the information they share will be protected or used throughout the course of the oral history project, what the risks or benefits of participating in the project may be, what their rights are, and who they can contact with questions or concerns.
- ***Permission-to-Use:*** A permission-to-use agreement does not include any transfer of rights to the interview materials. Permission agreements inform narrators about the oral history project and the intended use of any interview recordings. Often such uses are for short term educational or research purposes. However, once the intended use has been carried out exactly as stated in the written agreement, interview materials remain the property of the narrator and must be returned without further use or distribution.
- ***Legal Release:*** A legal release is required in order to retain interview materials, make them available to the public, or publish them in part or as a whole. There are a wide variety of legal release forms. Seek professional legal advice to find the most appropriate format for your project. Essentially, all legal releases require some transfer of copyright from the narrator to a researcher or organization, or directly to the public. The latter can be achieved through Creative Commons agreements or through a transfer of rights to the public domain.



### **When to Sign an Agreement**

- **Informed Consent:** Consent agreements only serve their purpose when they are signed before an interview begins. Consent agreements are often not required for oral history projects. However, key information about the oral history project and how interviews will be used must always be provided to narrators before an interview. This can be accomplished through letters of invitation, phone and in-person conversations prior to an interview, or in the contents of other types of agreements.
- **Permission-to-Use:** The best time to sign permission-to-use agreements is prior to the start of an oral history interview. This ensures that after putting in the time and energy to conduct an interview it will be possible to use it for its intended purpose.
- **Legal Release:** A legal release can be signed before or after an interview. When to sign a legal release depends entirely on the type of release agreement, the needs of the project, and the needs or expectations of a narrator. Ideally, release forms can be signed at the time of the interview as a pre-release. That will save time and resources that may later be spent tracking down a signature after the interview has been completed. In some cases, narrators may decline to sign a legal release until they have had the opportunity to review all the interview materials and to provide their comments or requested edits. Such requests should be accommodated, but a project manager will need to stay in close contact with narrators to make sure their review is completed, and signature provided, in a timely fashion.

#### **EXAMPLE** *Through the Legal Lens* and *Saving Preservation Stories*

The agreements used for the Archive Project's oral histories are legal release forms that request narrators to transfer all copyrights to the Archive Project. This gives our organization the ability to maintain the oral histories and make them available for public use, even as technologies change and new opportunities arise for promoting these perspectives on preservation history. All oral histories we gather are either available to researchers upon request, published on our website, or donated to established archival institutions, as appropriate. To achieve the maximum contribution to public knowledge of preservation, it is necessary for the Archive Project to own the copyrights to interviews we conduct. Whenever possible, we ask narrators to sign a legal release at the time of their interview. However, we have often accommodated narrators' requests to postpone signing a release until after they have reviewed their interview materials.



# The Interview

Interviews are central to oral history practice, but there is great diversity in the ways oral historians conduct interviews. Essentially, at least one person acts as an interviewer and at least one as a narrator, but any number of people could participate. The interview must be recorded in some way in order for it to become a public resource, but anything from audio and video recordings to hand written notes could serve the goals of an oral history project. Usually interviews take place in person, but recording technologies have advanced to a point where interviews can be done remotely by phone or video-conference without significant loss in quality. Even the term “Oral History” implies that interviews will be spoken orally, but many have been conducted in sign language or text with great success. The proper interview techniques for any given oral history project must be decided on a case-by-case basis.

A wide variety of guides on useful techniques and interview methodologies exist. The Resources section of this manual lists a few leading sources of information on the subject, and more are listed on our website ([www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org)). Below are a few key elements.

## Explaining the Interview

Before the interview begins, be sure to communicate with narrators about what to expect. Often, narrators will have received this information before meeting with the interviewer. However, the interviewer should expect to reinforce this information in person. Additionally, it is important to make sure that the narrator feels free to take a break at any time, to decline to answer a question, or to ask questions of their own if necessary.

### EXAMPLE *Through the Legal Lens*

The following is an excerpt of the information provided in writing to narrators before their interview:

“At a time and place of your convenience our interviewer will come to meet with you. The interview will be a relaxed conversation about your experiences. The interviewer will have a few questions to guide that conversation, but you will not need to prepare anything ahead of time. The conversation will be recorded with the intent of making it available online through the Archive Project website. For that reason, the interviewer will also ask you to sign a release agreement for the recording before you begin. Lengths of interviews vary, usually lasting 1.5 – 2 hours. We can also arrange to meet for additional interview sessions if needed.”

Mandingo Osceola Tshaka, photo by Leyla Vural, 2015  
Narrator for *Saving Preservation Stories*



## Setting the Space

The best place to conduct an interview will usually be where the narrator feels most themselves and most comfortable. Interviews can take place in a person's home, workspace, or even a quiet outdoor setting. For the purposes of recording, try to avoid places with background noise.

### EXAMPLE *Through the Legal Lens*

Most interviews were conducted in a conference room at the Archive Project office. Making sure that the space was available added a scheduling constraint, but it was quiet, and often centrally located for both the interviewer and the narrator. In one case, a narrator specifically requested to be interviewed at home to accommodate recovery from an injury.

Before beginning an interview, take a moment to set the space. Arrive with extra time to prepare recording equipment and to adapt the environment as needed. Reduce unwanted sounds as much as possible; unplug noisy appliances, request that pets be kept in a separate room, turn off cell phones.

### EXAMPLE *Saving Preservation Stories*

The interviewer and videographer met a narrator at home, and took time to adjust the space for light and image composition as well as sound quality. With the permission of the narrator, they selected a room, closed windows, and moved a few items of furniture. Then they set up their audio and video equipment, all while conversing naturally with the narrator and reviewing important details about the oral history project. After the interview was completed, they returned everything in the narrator's home to the way it had been before they arrived.

## Recording

Oral histories are most often recorded in audio. High quality audio is more affordable to produce than video, and is also more easily archived. In the event that video recordings are necessary or desired, the cost to hire a professional videographer is well worth the price. A professional videographer will have up-to-date equipment, and will manage the recording while the interviewer focuses on the interview. High quality images and sound are essential to a video recording. If a project cannot afford professional support to achieve that quality, audio recording would be preferable. Poorly made video recordings are distracting, difficult to understand, and often a detriment to preserving a narrator's oral history.

Whether in audio or video, all recordings must meet current archival standards. Digital audio should be recorded in an uncompressed format, at the highest possible bit depth.

Back-up recording is essential. During the interview be sure to bring redundant recording devices and other extra materials, such as batteries, SD cards, or cables, as needed. After the interview immediately save back-up copies of all files to three different places.

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**EXAMPLE**    ***Saving Preservation Stories***

Two interviewers were hired for this project, both were professional oral historians who provided their own audio recording equipment. For some of the interviews a videographer was also present. Video was recorded in a high definition compressed format, using both a primary and secondary backup camera. Audio was recorded in an uncompressed .wav file format at 96kHz / 24 bit. A second recorder was used of redundancy and captured compressed mp3 audio. After interviews were completed, the interviewers and videographer saved copies to external hard drives and the project manager saved copies to the Archive Project office server.

Always mark the beginning of a recording by saying aloud the date of the interview, the name of the narrator, the name of the interviewer, the name of the project the oral history interview is affiliated with, and any other information that might be needed to explain the interview's context.

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**EXAMPLE**    ***Saving Preservation Stories***

Example of what the interviewer said on the recording at the start of an interview:

"Today is Monday, August 17, 2015. My name is Liz Strong. This is an oral history recording for the New York Preservation Archive Project's *Saving Preservation Stories*. We are here today with Denise Brown-Puryear and Deborah Young."

Monitor recordings throughout the interview in order to catch technical glitches or unwanted noises. The interviewer should also try to avoid talking over a narrator or making any superfluous sounds as much as possible. This not only preserves the clarity of the narrator's words, but also the versatility of the recordings for later uses.



## Questions

A good place to start an interview is to determine where and when the narrator was born, and to learn about their background. In general, biographical information is useful to future researchers as they interpret the interview and work to understand the narrator's perspective.

A detailed written list of potential topics to discuss is extremely helpful. Developing the list prior to an interview helps to organize preliminary research, and to plan an effective interview structure. However, interviewers should feel free to set their list aside during an interview, to improvise and follow the organic direction of an interview as it unfolds. Follow-up questions that clarify and add context to a narrator's statements will be some of the most valuable questions in an interview.

Even after all the background research conducted for the project, within the context of the interview the narrator is the expert on what they remember and what they have experienced. If they have a date or name wrong, there is no need to correct them. The goal is to encourage them to share as much as they can about what they remember.

Be aware that oral history interviews can be exhausting, mentally, emotionally, and even physically. It is important to keep the process enjoyable, so be sure to take breaks as needed, and try to limit interviews to no more than two hours at a time.

As the interview comes to an end, find a way to conclude the conversation constructively. This may include forward-looking questions, or an invitation to reflect on the interview, what the narrator would like future listeners of the recording to understand, and whether they would like to add thoughts that did not come up during the interview.

When the interview is complete, leave narrators with contact information of the interviewer and the project manager, so that they can get in touch with further questions or thoughts. Feel free to ask them if they know of any important books, resources, or other people to talk to who could be helpful for the project.

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### EXAMPLE ***Saving Preservation Stories***

Below are two versions of an interview structure outline. The first outline, created by the project manager, was a template for the interviewer to build on while drafting lists of potential questions for each narrator. The template was provided to the interviewer, along with relevant primary source documents and background information about each narrator. The second outline is a draft of potential questions, which the interviewer developed based on the template and research provided.

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## ***1) New York Preservation Archive Project Oral History Interview Template***

### ***Individual's Background***

- Tell me where and when you were born.
  - (A few follow-up questions about their childhood are always helpful so we can get to know them. Focus on areas that may have led to their interest in preservation. Sometimes this can take the form of an interest in their own family history, or the culture of the neighborhood they grew up in. Sometimes it comes from school or other areas completely)
- Tell me about how your interest in preservation developed.
  - (These questions can be more explicit, and target the early stages of their career and higher education)

### ***Questions about Specific Sites***

- (These questions will vary widely depending on what you learn when you research each person. The goal is to gather experiences and observations of the individual, beyond what can be—or in some cases has already been—documented in written sources. How they came to certain decisions, how specific challenges affected them, how their expectations may have changed, what their personal connections to a project were, their feelings and motivations, are all good places to start.)

### ***Broader Historic Preservation Questions***

- (These questions get into their perspective on the broader relationship of their work to the preservation field in general. This is also an opportunity to get their take on how things have changed over time, specific insights on the preservation movement, etc.)

### ***Reflections on the Present and Future***

- What do you see as the future of historic preservation in this area?
- Do you have any advice for preservationists getting started these days?
- Have you archived or considered methods of archiving items such as personal papers, newspaper articles, photos, records, etc. related to your preservation work?



**2) Oral History Interview Questions for Sam Goodman, urban planner for the Bronx Borough President's office, and Grand Concourse native. (This oral history interview is available in its entirety at [www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org).)**

### ***Individual's Background***

- Tell me where and when you were born.
  - Tell me about growing up in the Grand Concourse area.
  - Can you tell me a little about your family history in the area, since they moved here in the 1920s?
  - How did this history and the character of the neighborhood play a role in your life growing up, or help to shape your identity?
- How was it that your family came to move away from the area in the 1960s?
  - How was the area changing at that time? From your perspective now, what was causing those changes?
  - How did you feel about leaving the area at that time? What did you miss about it while you were living in Connecticut?
- Tell me a little bit about what this area went through in the 1970s.
  - How have minority populations in the area (racial, ethnic, religious, etc.) been affected by policies of planned shrinkage, and "benign neglect"?
  - How have the people who stayed, and lived through those circumstances, contributed to the character and history of this area?



Grand Concourse, photo by Christopher D. Brazee, 2011;  
Courtesy of NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission



- What brought you back to the area in the 1980s?
  - What was it like here at the time? How had the area changed since you were young?
  - What changes or improvements to the area did you want to see at that time? What actions did you take to participate in positive change?
- Tell me how your interest in urban planning developed.
  - How did you get your current position in the Bronx in the 1990s?
  - Over the two decades that you have been working in urban planning, what are a few contributions you have made to the area that you are proud of?

### ***Questions about the Grand Concourse***

- What is unique about the design of the Grand Concourse, and how does that play a role in the lives of the people who live here?
  - Can you describe the look and feel of the buildings here, and what sets it apart from other neighborhoods of the city?
- What led you to start providing walking tours of the area?
  - What is your experience of teaching visitors about this area? Is there anything in particular that you have found that surprises people when learning about its history?

### ***Broader Historic Preservation Questions***

- What types of local community actions have you taken part in to preserve the history of the area, and the quality of life for people living here?
- Who would you say are some of the most active preservationists in the area? What can you tell me about them?
- Have you seen an increased interest in historic preservation over the years?
  - What do you think has led to these changes, and what impact has it had (or will have) on the area?
- What has changed since the landmark designation of the Grand Concourse? How do you think the future of this area has been impacted by that decision?

- What is your impression of the way minority populations (again, broadly defined) have or have not been represented in New York City's historic sites?
  - How are the contributions of such populations apparent in the history and character of this area?
  - How has the landmark designation of the area contributed to preserving that history?
- What are your thoughts about the relationship, if you see any, between historic preservation and economic development?
- From your perspective, does historic preservation play a role in gentrification?
  - What would you say to people who are concerned that engaging in preservation might make access to affordable housing in an area more difficult? How can their concerns be addressed?
- What do you see as the future of historic preservation in this area?
  - Do you think that awareness of the area's history, and the potential for preservation, will continue to grow?
  - Are there buildings or districts you are aware of that are still in need of landmark status?

### ***Reflections on the Present and Future***

- In what way does the history of this area have a role to play in its future?
- Do you have any advice for New Yorkers who want to preserve their neighborhood?
  - What do they need to think about in advance?
  - What resources do they need?
- Have you archived or considered methods of archiving items such as papers, newspaper articles, photos, records, etc. related to your preservation work?

# A Public Resource

An individual interview becomes a collective historical resource only when it is made accessible to the public. There are myriad ways to make contributions to public knowledge, all of which depend on the intended audience and the goals and capabilities of the project. Many of the guides listed in the Resources section of this manual, and on the Archive Project website ([www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org)), describe the necessary practical and ethical considerations in detail.

Decisions about how to make oral histories accessible begin with the following questions:

- What is the goal of the oral history project?
- Who is the intended audience?
- How can the oral history records be made most accessible to that audience?

Weigh the answers to those questions against the resources available for the oral history project to determine not only what is possible, but what the potential risks and benefits might be.

## EXAMPLE *Through the Legal Lens* and *Saving Preservation Stories*

- **Goal:** The goal of the Archive Project's oral history efforts are to propagate valuable sources of information on preservation history.
- **Audience:** The intended audience for the oral history records are New Yorkers in the fields of historic preservation, law, urban planning, architecture, real estate, and local history.
- **Accessibility:** Such audiences regularly make use of online resources and archival institutions, such as universities and historical societies, when they conduct research. They may also be effectively reached through local events or conferences relevant to their fields. With that in mind, the Archive Project makes our oral history records available online through our website, partners with local archival institutions to provide permanent homes for these resources, and makes use of oral history excerpts during programs or presentations.

## Practical & Ethical Considerations

### ***Online:***

One risk of putting full oral histories online is that the audio and text of an oral history could be easily accessed by anyone, excerpted, taken out of context, or quoted without permission. Also, once records are available online, they cannot be fully removed. Even if records are deleted from a website, they may still be found through other online sources. For these reasons it is essential that narrators are fully informed and have consented to their interviews appearing online. Members of the oral history project's team, usually a project manager or archivist, should also review interviews for potentially damaging information before they are made available to the public. When both of those steps have been taken, the risks of publishing oral history records online will be minimal.

Information available through an online archive must be relevant, well maintained, and intuitively organized in order to be truly accessible. If potential audiences are unable to find what they need, or cannot clearly understand what they do find, then the online records cannot reasonably be utilized. At the Archive Project we address this by periodically reviewing our website's holdings to update them as needed, and when necessary have contracted professional web designers to improve the site's overall functionality.

### ***Archives:***

Archival institutions provide a valuable service for the long-term professional preservation of records, but also as hubs of information for researchers of related fields. Be sure to select an institution that is familiar to the target audience, and be sure to notify potential audiences that the records can be found there.

Collaborate closely with the institution throughout the course of the oral history project to make sure that the oral history records are organized according to their standards, and that all necessary metadata has been gathered for each interview. To ensure that the oral histories are made available in a timely fashion, the records will have to be delivered in a complete and organized fashion.

### ***Events and Presentations:***

Hosting programs and events, presenting at conferences, and visiting classrooms are some of the most targeted ways to reach audiences. Each event can be tailored to cater to the specific needs and interests of a given group. Events can be used to promote full oral history records housed online or at an archival institution, and to raise awareness about key aspects of preservation history. However, they can often be costly to plan and develop. At the Archive Project we have addressed potential resource constraints by partnering with other organizations on programs.

# Project Evaluation

Throughout the process of conducting an oral history project, engage in active evaluation of the work. Draft a clear framework of what success looks like, and what kinds of concrete evidence will show whether the project has met its objectives, the needs of the target audience, or the mission of the organization. This helps to adapt to problems as they arise, document important learning experiences for future projects, and maintain accurate reporting to sources of funding.

Plans for evaluation will be unique to each oral history project. The following examples are some categories of effective metrics that can be useful both during and after a project.



## ***Participation***

- Narrators' level of interest: How many narrators agreed to participate, and how many declined? How responsive were they to communications after their interview, such as requests for comments on their interviews or invitations to participate in related events and programs?
- Project appeal for volunteers and interns: Did the project attract new volunteers and interns with especially relevant training, connections, or interests?
- Donations and support attracted: How many volunteer hours were donated to the project? What was the overall value of monetary or in-kind donations? Did people, unaffiliated with the organization, provide advice, connections, resources, or promotion for the project?



## ***Awareness***

- Growth of awareness about the organization's mission: How many narrators expressed interest in archiving their personal preservation records after their oral history interview? How many were willing to refer further potential narrators to the project?



- Growth of involvement in the organization's activities: How many participants joined the organization's mailing lists, began to attend programs, or recommend the organization's services to others?
- Independent promotion of the project by participants: Did narrators or volunteers mention the project in their social media, publications, their organization's mailings, or public programs?



### ***Service***

- Benefit of project participation for narrators: Did narrators foresee using recordings of their interview for their own benefit, or for the benefit of any related organizations?
- Benefit of project participation for other participants: Did volunteers or interns gain new training or skill sets by participating in the project?
- Use of the organization's services and resources: In the case of the Archive Project, how many narrators, after their interview, also enlisted the organization's help or advice to archive their personal preservation records?



### ***Accessibility***

- Intuitive use of the oral history records generated: Monitor the rate of traffic to online oral history records, resources, and related media. Communicate with collecting institutions to assess level of interest in the oral history records housed there.
- Accessibility for project participants: Distribute specific instructions to all project participants on how and where to access the oral history records, and invite their feedback.

# Resources

The history of the preservation movement is the bedrock of intellectual capital that will inform and strengthen its future. At the Archive Project, we urge preservationists to make safeguarding their memories and records a priority. Conducting oral history interviews is a powerful tool to accomplish that objective, and a valuable contribution to public knowledge. This manual has provided clear descriptions of key component parts of oral history initiatives, and provided a road map to get started. Whatever the size and scope of the project you envision, or the goals and resources of the team conducting the project, we encourage you to tailor the elements described in this manual to your unique needs.

The New York Preservation Archive Project is available as a resource, and we will continue to share tools for capturing important histories of preservation. Please contact us with any questions you may have about this manual, our work in New York City, or about beginning an oral history initiative of your own.

## ***New York Preservation Archive Project***

[www.nypap.org](http://www.nypap.org) | [info@nypap.org](mailto:info@nypap.org) | (212) 988-8379  
174 East 80<sup>th</sup> Street  
New York, NY, 10075



Archive Project Executive Director Matthew Coody  
speaking at the Statewide Preservation Conference, 2016

## Other Resources

**The Oral History Association** maintains a valuable resources section on their website ([www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org)) which includes lists of online guides to doing oral history, oral history centers and collections, regional and international oral history organizations, as well as principles and best practices.

Research Institutes:

The Columbia Center for Oral History Research and the Baylor Institute for Oral History both provide up-to-date resources on oral history technology, project guides, and more on their websites.

**Columbia Center for Oral History Research:** [www.incite.columbia.edu/ccohr-resources](http://www.incite.columbia.edu/ccohr-resources)

**Baylor Institute for Oral History:** [www.baylor.edu/oralhistory](http://www.baylor.edu/oralhistory)

Books:

**Catching Stories: A Practical Guide to Oral History** by Donna M. DeBlasio et al.

**Doing Oral History** by Donald A. Ritchie

**Handbook of Oral History** by Thomas E. Charlton, Lois E. Myers and Rebecca Sharpless

**Oral History and the Law** by John A. Neuenschwander

**Recording Oral History** by Valerie Yow

Funding:

Listings of foundations:

- **The Council on Foundations:** [www.cof.org](http://www.cof.org)
- **The Forum of Regional Associations of Grantmakers:** [www.givingforum.org](http://www.givingforum.org)
- **The Foundation Center:** [www.foundationcenter.org](http://www.foundationcenter.org)
- **Government Grants:** [www.grants.gov](http://www.grants.gov)

Resources on grant writing:

- **Grantspace:** A Service of Foundation Center: [www.grantspace.org](http://www.grantspace.org)
- **The Chronicle of Philanthropy:** [www.philanthropy.com/resources](http://www.philanthropy.com/resources)

Cover Photos:

Demolition of the Mark Twain House, 1954; Courtesy of *The New York Times*

Kent Barwick leading protest, photo by Steven Tucker, 1988;  
Courtesy of Anthony C. Wood Collection

Denise Brown-Puryear and Deborah Young, photo by Anthony Bellov, 2015

Crown Heights North, photo by Carl Forester, 2007;  
Courtesy of NYC Landmarks Preservation Commission