

Bates | College

MANUAL
OF
Oral History



Edmund S. Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library
70 Campus Avenue
Lewiston, Maine 04240
muskie@bates.edu

Table of Contents	Page(s)
I. Introduction.....	1
II. Methodology.....	2
III. Pre-Interview Preparedness.....	2-5
IV. Planning Interviews.....	5-6
V. Interviewing.....	6-9
VI. Labeling and Duplicating for Preservation.....	9-10
VII. Transcribing and Editing Interviews.....	10-13
VIII. Cataloging Oral History Collections for Access.....	13-14
IX. Bibliography.....	15-17

Appendices: Sample Forms

A. Equipment Checklist.....	18-19
B. Interviewee Contact Sheet.....	20
C. Invitation Letter.....	21
D. Project Description Sheet.....	22
E. Release Form.....	23
F. Thank You Letter.....	24
G. Summary Sheet.....	25

I. Introduction

The use of oral history at Bates College has been apparent as a research method for many years, although it was not until 1991 when the first attempts were made to formally establish an oral history program. At this time, Professors Steve Hochstadt and Bob Branham approached then President Don Harward with an unsuccessful proposal for a “Bates Oral History Project.” Although the idea remained dormant for several years, it was eventually renewed under the direction of Dean Jim Carignan, who directed student projects during the summers of 1997-1999 resulting in more than 30 interviews with people connected to Bates. In early 1998, the College began an oral history project with funding from the Edmund S. Muskie Foundation to document the life and career of Edmund S. Muskie. The project ultimately spanned seven years and produced more than 440 interviews. The project also equipped a listening/viewing room for audiovisual materials and established an oral history “office” within the Edmund S. Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library. In conjunction with the Sesquicentennial Celebration in 2005, the College embarked on an 18-month oral history project to celebrate and capture the living history of the College from the late 1920s through 2005. This project resulted in more than 50 interviews, as well as a landmark website delivering access to the full transcripts and select audio clips for many of these interviews.

The Bates College Oral History Manual was originally written as a practical guide and reference for students and staff involved specifically in the Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Project. I assembled the information and wrote the basic document, drawing on the work of a number of staff and students in the Edmund S. Muskie Archives, with guidance from then Project Director, Donald E. Nicoll. I owe thanks to the students whose trial and error and thoughtful advice helped shape the manual, and to Nicci Leamon, the transcriber, for her contributions.

This version has been revised to respond to the needs of faculty, staff and students seeking guidance to and standards of oral history for use in the curriculum, across many disciplines, as well as for other purposes. The information provided in this manual is meant to help standardize the way in which we create and preserve oral histories at Bates College. When incorporating oral histories into the curriculum, it is important to think about all future possibilities for its use. Professors who have students conducting oral histories should consider in advance whether these interviews should or might be available in some form for future researchers. If so, it is absolutely critical that the students use a release form, such as the example provided in this manual, where they (the students) convey their willingness to have the interview made available for research by signing as the interviewer. Only in this way can the College be sure that it is adhering to FERPA regulations. For more information about FERPA, see: <http://www.bates.edu/ferpa-test.xml>.

One of the goals of the Oral History Office is to provide educational opportunities to Bates students, faculty and staff interested in oral history. As Oral Historian, I am available to conduct in-class training sessions on oral history methodology and techniques, as well as to meet individually with students conducting oral histories and researchers consulting them. Feel free to contact me by phone: 786-8386 or email: alhommed@bates.edu.

Andrea L’Hommedieu
September 12, 2006

II. Methodology

When conducting an oral history, it is important to remember that the information we are seeking is best obtained through helping the interviewees to “tell their stories.” Oral histories should not be dry recitations of “facts,” but engaging remembrances of the interviewee’s experiences and insights. Recollections are frequently at odds with contemporaneous documents. The recollections are better treated as clues than absolute facts. As Alessandro Portelli, a leading Italian oral historian, was quoted as saying in a recent *New York Times* article, “Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing and what they now think they did.”

I cannot stress enough the importance of stimulating the interviewee to respond willingly to questions. Questions should be framed to encourage, not dampen, the interviewee in his/her recollections. It is best to cast oneself as the student, eager to learn what the interviewee wishes to impart, not the investigative reporter, trying to pin down the facts. The latter approach almost certainly guarantees the equivalent of a lifeless butterfly collection. The former will reveal more than you anticipated and, often, more than the interviewee intended or realized was available in his/her memory.

Much of the oral history work revolves around being meticulous about details. The excitement and ultimate value of oral history is the opportunity to learn from women and men whose lives are intriguing and whose recollections will illuminate your understanding of the period of history or subject you are studying.

III. Pre-Interview Preparedness

There are five basic steps one should follow when preparing to do an oral history:

- Basic training on the equipment;
- Review the basic techniques and procedures to be followed in connection with the interview;
- Research the historic period to be covered in the interview and pertinent information about the interviewee;
- Prepare an outline of topics or list of questions; and
- Prepare a release form.

A. Equipment

1. Recorders

There is a broad variety of recording equipment on the market, including many portable analog and digital recorders. Some institutions are experimenting with recording directly to a

hard drive using a laptop computer and audio software, such as Sound Forge. At present, the Oral History Office recommends using a good quality analog recorder, such as a Marantz model PMD222, and then reformatting the recordings to CD for reference and access purposes. Having recordings in various formats is a critical element in promoting their long-term preservation.

No matter what equipment you choose, it is critical that you make a checklist of what settings work best for sound quality and that you go through the checklist prior to beginning each interview to verify that everything is set in the correct position. Professional quality recorders, such as the Marantz, have numerous dials and switches that must be precisely positioned for the system to work properly. The checklist for the Marantz PMD222 analog recorder used by the Oral History Office is included in Appendix A.

2. Microphones

An external microphone is always preferable to a recorder's internal microphone to pick up the whole range of people's voices. In addition, it picks up less internal noise from the recorder's motor. One important thing to remember about the external microphone: turn the microphone switch **ON** at the time of set-up—do not wait until the interview starts.

Place the microphone relative to the strength of the voices (not too close to someone with a loud voice, not too far away from someone with a soft voice). Learning proper microphone placement can make a significant difference in the sound quality of the interview.

3. Power supply

a. Multiple Power Supplies

It is good insurance that your interview will actually happen and be comfortable if you have multiple power supplies. The well-stocked equipment bag should contain fully charged, rechargeable batteries for the recorder, microphone, and timer; an AC adapter for outlet plug-in; and an extension cord to allow versatile positioning of the equipment in situations where an outlet is not near to the interview location.

b. Battery Charger and Tester

It is helpful to have a battery charger and tester. It is important to charge the batteries on a regular basis to ensure they are in good working order, in case an interview needs to be recorded in a location with no available electricity.

4. Recording Media

a. Tapes

If using analog tapes, select those with 90 or less minutes of record time as they are the most durable. 120 minute tapes have been known to break more frequently, putting you at risk of losing at least part of an interview. The Oral History Office uses Maxell UR 90 and Fuji DR-I 90 cassettes.

b. CDs

If recording on or reformatting to CD, select gold-coated CD-Rs. At present, one company, Mitisui, manufactures these. Gold coated CDs are widely considered to be the most stable because the Phthalocyanine (gold) dye burns more accurately and more quickly than other dyes, resulting in extremely high fidelity in the retransmission of the information.

5. Test the System before Using

Prior to beginning an interview, always remember to start with a test sentence and play it back to be sure you are recording correctly.

B. Learning Basic Techniques and Procedures

1. Listening to Interviews

Listening to interviews conducted by others gives you a chance to pick up some interviewing techniques. You may wish to follow along with the transcript, too. Example interviews can be found online (see section IX: Bibliography), and are available in the Listening/Viewing room of the Edmund S. Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library. (Consider asking to listen to BAD interview also; this is a simple way to find out quickly what doesn't work in an interview, and avoid doing it!)

2. Mock Interview

Once you have had time to do background reading on oral history, try to do a "practice" interview before going on a real interview. Do some research, create a list of questions, set up the recording equipment, and conduct the interview. This interview is important for giving the student some practical experience and providing a safety net for making mistakes.

C. Doing Background Research on Period and Person

Prior to conducting an interview, find personal and/or professional background information on the individual you will be interviewing. For example, if the person was a Bates alum, spend some time looking at yearbooks in Ladd Library or the Edmund S. Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library. Take notes, thinking about how the person is connected to the subject and time period you are studying.

D. Preparing an Interview Outline

Based upon your background research, you should then form an outline for the interview. This will help you establish a flow to the interview that covers all important areas related to the

subject, and will help you avoid long pauses. Write as many questions as you can think of. It's better to begin with too many, and reduce the number later. However, at the interview, be careful to avoid excessive adherence to your questions as this will prevent the interviewee from telling his/her story. Digression often leads to more in-depth responses and unexpected exploration of important areas of knowledge. With some experience, you'll find a brief outline and a few notes will replace your list of questions.

E. Preparing a Release Form

A release form is the means by which the interviewee formally grants permission for you and others to reproduce, quote from, or otherwise make scholarly use of the interview. Interviewers must sign the form as well, as co-copyright holder, and in the case of student interviewers, to be in compliance with FERPA. See an example in Appendix E.

IV. Planning Interviews

A. Identifying Interviewees

Identifying who to interview can be an important first step in the planning process. Depending on your topic, you want to seek out someone who can refer you to others and tell you what those people have to contribute. Once you start interviewing, asking each of them who else they know to interview is another great way to add to your list. You may find it useful to create data sheets for each potential interviewee, with contact information and a brief description of his/her relationship to your topic of research, to help you organize the project. The Oral History Office uses a relational database for this purpose; see Appendix B for an example record.

B. Initial Contact

Once you have decided upon an interviewee, the next step is to invite him or her to participate. Typically, this is best accomplished by sending him or her a brief letter explaining why he or she would be a valuable narrator for your project. Including with the letter a brief description of your project, detailing its focus and goals, is also useful. By mailing these prior to telephoning the person, he or she will have a better idea about what you are hoping to accomplish, what is expected of the interviewees, and whether he or she is willing and able to participate. See Appendix C for an example Invitation Letter and Appendix D for a Project Description Sheet.

C. Scheduling

The interview can then be scheduled with a follow-up phone call. Interviews should be scheduled at the convenience of the interviewee and coordinated with the interviewer's schedule. Agree on the length of the interview beforehand if possible, considering the age of the interviewee. Elderly people tire more quickly and tend to lose voice, etc. Usually earlier in the day is best for them.

D. Location

Choose a place that is **QUIET** with minimal distractions. **DO NOT** conduct interviews in public places, such as restaurants, if it can possibly be avoided. Be aware of open windows, slamming

doors, kitchen noises, fans and air conditioners, pet birds, traffic, open spaces that cause echo sounds, etc.

V. Interviewing

A. Basic Etiquette

When you arrive to do an interview, introduce yourself immediately. The interviewee should be expecting you, but it's always good to state your purpose for the sake of clarity. Set up the equipment, using your *checklist* (see example in Appendix A) before every interview. If the interviewee seems uncertain about how the interview process works, take a couple minutes to explain it so he or she feels more comfortable.

Begin the interview, jot down names of people, places and things that are unfamiliar, make notes for possible follow-up questions, but mostly listen to what the interviewee has to say and make eye contact. I can't stress the importance of eye contact. It let's the interviewee know you are listening *and* interested.

Don't interrupt interviewee, and if you are interrupted by the interviewee, stop mid-word if you must. Why? In terms of transcription, if two people are speaking at once, whatever is said is virtually lost. Also, if a translator is involved or you are interviewing more than one person at a time, ask them, before the interview begins, to wait until the other is finished speaking before they begin.

Don't hesitate to ask the interviewee to repeat something you think may not have been recorded clearly due to an unexpected noise (cough, sneeze, squeaky chair, telephone). Also, some people have the tendency to drop their voices at the end of sentences. Asking them to repeat what they've said a few times, will hopefully correct this problem. Be sure that you are speaking clearly, too.

Don't allow the interviewee to wander too far for too long from the subject.

Remember that your job as the interviewer is to guide the interviewee, not to be a participant in a conversation. Your voice should be heard sparingly, and the best way to achieve that is to think carefully about what questions to ask, how to word the questions to get the fullest response, and in what order to ask the questions (flow of the interview).

Use silence as a tool. If the interviewee pauses, don't jump in immediately with another question. The interviewee may be connecting what they've just said to something else that is related and important.

When the interview has ended, be sure to thank the interviewee for his or her willingness to participate in the project and ask them to sign a release form. Before you leave, carefully label

each recording and, if using cassettes, **REMOVE THE RECORD TABS** so the tape cannot be accidentally recorded over later (see Preservation section below for more information). Ask the interviewee to go over names mentioned and get the most accurate spellings possible. It is especially important to have the interviewee spell names of non-famous people; most often these are family, friends and co-workers. This is very important for the accuracy of the historical record being created.

Depending on the formality of the arrangements, you may want to send a “thank you” letter following the interview. An example letter is located in Appendix F.

B. How to Ask (and Not Ask) Questions

It’s often how you ask the question that accounts for the richness of the answer. Below are some ways to ask questions that can be quite helpful, and some techniques to avoid. I always try to keep in mind that the person I’m interviewing knows more about their life and connection to the subject than I do, and if I give them sufficient berth with my questions, they will often provide information on areas I didn’t know to ask about.

1. Fruitful Question Formats

a. Open-Ended

Use this often. Examples: “How did you happen to choose Bates College?” “What activities did the Mill management sponsor for employees?”

b. Two-Sentence

The first sentence gives the interviewee brief background of why your question is important; the second asks the question. Example: “We want to preserve your recollections to pass down to the next generation of Bates students. What was your academic experience at Bates like in the 1950s?”

c. Reverse

This is used to turn the perspective in a different direction. It’s sometimes important to know why someone **didn’t** do something as much as why they did do something. Example: Try “Why weren’t Bates students more politically active in the 1960s? Instead of, “Why were Bates students of the 1960s politically passive?”

d. Follow Up

When the interviewee says something that sparks another question, be sure to follow up rather than just going to the next question on your list.

2. Formats to Avoid

a. Double Question

Asking two questions at once is likely to result in only one being answered and the other forgotten. It's confusing to the interviewee. If you REALLY want both questions answered, ask them separately. Example of what NOT to do: "What year did you start at Bates College? What was your major?"

b. Yes/No Question

These are questions asked in a way that allows a simple "yes" or "no" answer without elaboration (unless you have a particularly skilled interviewee).

c. Leading Question: It is important to avoid inserting your own bias or assumptions in a question. Example: "Given that the Republican-run White House has been handling the Iraq war terribly, what do you think that means for the mid-term elections?"

C. Tips for Interviewees

Interviewers should consider printing copies of the tips for interviewees to give to them prior to the interview.

1. Make interviewer aware of any limitation on your time.
2. Speak naturally but clearly.
3. Try to avoid walking around (or away from recorder) while speaking.
4. Allow interviewer to complete a question before beginning your response. Likewise, if more than one person is being interviewed at once, please allow each person to finish before you speak.
5. Spell any difficult, foreign or unusual terms or names to aid in clarity and transcription of the interview.
6. If you tire and would like a break, don't hesitate to indicate this need to the interviewer.
7. As much as you are in control of the interview, try to keep distractions such as noise or interruptions at a minimum.
8. If you are having difficulty hearing or understanding the interviewer, do not hesitate to say so, nor to ask the interviewer to repeat any questions.
9. If a translator is necessary for the interview, please allow him/her to translate before you continue speaking.

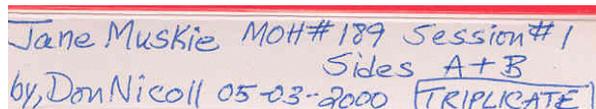
VI. Labeling and Duplicating for Preservation

The ORIGINAL audiocassette or CD is that which was created at the interview site. We call it our “primary” document and its use should be extremely limited once it’s created.

As soon as the recorder is shut off, the recording should be labeled with pertinent information to ensure that it is clearly and readily identifiable in the future. The Oral History Office includes the following information on both its cassette/CD and case labels:

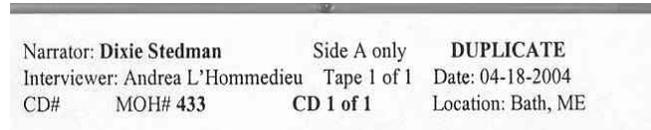
- interviewee’s name,
- interviewer’s name,
- date of the interview,
- accession number,
- the word “ORIGINAL,” and
- how many tapes were used in the interview (i.e. Tape 1 of 1 or Tape 1 of 2).

Here is an example of a handwritten label:



Jane Muskie MOH#189 Session#1
Sides A+B
by Don Nicoll 05-03-2000 [TRIPLICATE]

Here is an example of a printed label:



Narrator: Dixie Stedman	Side A only	DUPLICATE
Interviewer: Andrea L'Hommedieu	Tape 1 of 1	Date: 04-18-2004
CD# MOH# 433	CD 1 of 1	Location: Bath, ME

The actual CD or tape, in addition to its case, should be labeled as well so that if separated, both can be identified. If using CDs, labeling should only be done on the inner disc of the CD which is not covered by the dye layer and with an archival quality ink pen; do not use a Sharpie marker.

When using cassettes, it is critical to remove the two record tabs by punching them out to eliminate the possibility of accidental erasing. Record Tabs are two small rectangular pieces of plastic located on the top of the cassette. The tip of a ballpoint pen works well for this.

As soon after the interview as possible, the original should be duplicated. At the Oral History Office, original cassettes are immediately placed in a high quality recording machine, and two audio cassette copies are made: the duplicate is used for transcription of the interview and later as a reference copy for researchers; the triplicate is sent to the interviewee with the edited transcript as a means of thanking the interviewee for his or her participation. Simultaneously, the recording is digitized onto a master Mitsui archive gold CD. Using a CD duplicating machine, I make additional copies for reference purposes. Once these copies are made, the original audio cassette and the master CD are placed in a secure, climate-controlled area.

After a thorough review of the state of audio preservation, this duplication process was determined to adhere to current best practices within the field. The Oral History Office has made a conscious decision to move away from the use of 1/4" reel-to-reel tape for preservation purposes because of equipment scarcity, cost of equipment and tape stock, vinegar syndrome and sticky shed syndrome. We are preserving the audio in both analog and digital formats because successful past preservation efforts have shown that multiple copies in multiple formats is often a critical key to success. At present, we are working to develop schedules for spot checking the collection for deterioration, identifying and using redundant networked servers for storing digital files, and developing a migration plan to keep pace with changing file formats.

VII. Transcribing and Editing Interviews

A. Overview

A transcript is a written record of what was spoken during an oral history interview. In order to promote the long-term preservation of each interview and to facilitate access to its informational content, the Oral History Office prepares a transcript of each interview that it creates or otherwise acceptions. Raw transcripts are typically created by an outside contractor, and then student and professional staff edit them for accuracy. Although there are various approaches to editing, our goal is to create a transcript that is as accurate a reflection of the audio recording as possible. This is called “archival” or “verbatim” editing. While editing transcripts, we also create a summary sheet for each interview that provides an abstract of topics covered in an interview, a biographical note about the interviewee, and a list of names mentioned. A summary sheet provides a quick and easy means of access for researchers (see section VIII for more information).

B. General Procedures

The following is a comprehensive list of the steps taken in the Oral History Office to bring a transcript from its raw version prepared by the outside contractor to its final version when it enters the Archives and is available to researchers.

1. The interview (audio cassette) is transcribed and the transcript arrives at the project office.
2. A staff member does a First Edit of the transcript. S/he will need the transcript, the audio cassette(s) and the folder of administrative information for that interview. The first edit entails the following:
 - a. Play the audio cassette from start to finish following along with the transcript. It will be necessary to start and stop the tape frequently.
 - b. Correct words/phrases misheard, omitted, or unintelligible.
 - c. Add sentence and paragraph structure to the interview to make it more readable.
 - d. Add quotation marks to conversational recollections.

- e. Insert clarifying brackets to complete a personal name, usually when just a last or first name is mentioned.
 - f. Correct misspelled personal, geographical and business names. Hyphenate numbers where appropriate.
 - g. Create a Summary Sheet for the interview by:
 - i. Writing as complete of a biographical note on the interviewee as possible using information found in the transcript and notes in the interviewee's folder. Include education, where they grew up, names and occupations of their parents, number of siblings, ethnic background, occupations, other notable achievements, especially those that relate to the main focus of the interview.
 - ii. Write an abstract of the interview, identifying topics covered. This is intended to provide a general overview of the broad subjects covered in the interview
 - iii. Create an index of people mentioned in the interview, identifying them in a way that allows researchers to find further information on that person. For relatively large collections, create a list of ALL personal names mentioned in the interview, with page number and brief context notes.
3. Either the student or oral historian does a Computer Edit of the transcript, based on the corrections made during the first edit. This is really a second edit, as well as a computer edit. When the computer edit is complete, it should be fairly polished and ready to stand up to the scrutiny of a final edit from the oral historian.
4. The oral historian does a Final Edit of the transcript using the electronic version which, at this point, is much cleaner and easier to read. If s/he finds any changes to be made, s/he then makes the additional changes to the electronic transcript and prints this version in 12 cpi with single line spacing, single-sided printing. The transcript is produced in three copies.
- a. Copy one is sent to the interviewee, with the audio cassette(s) as a "thank you" and to elicit any further comments/corrections about the interview. Interviewees are encouraged to contact us by post, phone or e-mail to correct, augment, clarify, etc. anything in the transcript before we make it available for research.
 - b. Copy two is the "reference copy" to be used by researchers in the Archives. It is produced on regular paper, using one-sided printing on a laser printer.
 - c. Copy three, the "preservation copy," is stored in an acid-free folder, within an acid-free box in the climate-controlled stacks area. It is produced on acid-free paper, using one-sided printing on a laser printer.

C. Editing Specifics

Below are some specific guidelines we follow at the Oral History Office when doing editing.

1. **Punctuation, transcription and spelling corrections** must be made in the text.

- a. It's important to note when editing a transcript, that we are correcting the transcriber's work and not changing in any way what the interviewee said. For example, the interviewee answers: "there ain't no way I'm gonna vote for that." It's grammatically incorrect, but it was transcribed perfectly so there are no corrections to be made.
 - b. Punctuation is essential for making a transcript coherent; readability is enhanced too, making it friendlier to researchers. Paragraphs and sentences usually need the most attention. Don't worry about sentences beginning with "and," "but" or "because," it's more important to let the reader of the transcript know when one thought was completed and another one began, than to follow, strictly, the rules of grammar. Always keep in mind that people speak differently than they write and that an oral history transcript is an unrehearsed dialogue.
 - c. Spelling can be quickly checked with your computer. The transcriber should give you a printed copy of the transcript as well as a disk copy. Be sure the right word is selected to replace the misspelling. Personal names and place names should be verified by other methods.
2. **Omissions** are words or phrases (not, we hope, complete sentences!) left out of the transcript by mistake. The transcriber either didn't hear it, or heard it but forgot to type it. Listen carefully to the tape, stop and rewind if you think you heard something that's not written on the paper in front of you, indicate where the missing word(s) should go and insert the appropriate word(s), printing as neatly as possible.
 3. **Misinterpretations** are parts of the transcript that you (as an editor) hear differently than the transcriber. Accents, dialects and colloquial words or phrases can be difficult to interpret. It's important that you rewind and listen at least a second time (it sometimes takes 3 or 4 times) before making a final decision on what you heard. You should also read a broader section of the transcript to check that your interpretation is logical in context. If you're certain you hear it differently, insert your interpretation, but be careful not to obliterate the transcriber's words. This is where a third editor is valuable. He/She will also listen to the transcript, make any additional corrections, and play a sort of "referee" in determining which interpretation seems most plausible. Of course when a copy of the edited transcript is sent to the interviewee, they have the opportunity to correct any errors we may have made.
 4. **Unintelligible Word or Phrase** is a notation made by the transcriber, in parentheses, letting the reader know he/she could not understand a particular section of the interview. A different pair of ears can often decipher what someone else couldn't, but sometimes poor sound quality, background noise or unclear speech makes the task daunting. Follow the guidelines mentioned in "Misinterpretations" to edit these sections.
 5. **Footnotes** may be added either for clarification or to augment the oral history. For example, the interviewee might say "Senator Brackett of Wisconsin worked closely with Muskie on this issue", and you'll want to identify that person to aid future researchers. A

footnote with his full name, years served in the senate, birth/death dates (lack of a death date may indicate a potential interview) and any other significant information should be added to the transcript. Make a clear notation at the point in the text where the footnote should appear, and write the added information neatly at the bottom of the page.

6. **Clarifying Brackets** are used to make the text more coherent, to correct a mistake or omission in speech, or to complete a person's full name. When correcting, for example, a wrong date, leave the wrong date in the text just as the interviewee said it. Then next to that date add [sic], in brackets and italics then clarifying brackets around the correct date (or word). Ex.: In 1967, [sic] [1963] president Kennedy was assassinated.

VIII. Cataloging Oral History Collections for Access

Like all collections, oral histories should be organized for maximum accessibility. Descriptive inventories can exist in both paper and electronic format, aiding the local as well as the distant researcher. The Edmund S. Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library creates a number of tools to aid researchers using its oral history collections. Below are a few typical types.

A. Summary Sheets

As mentioned above, a summary sheet is an overview of an individual interview, and includes such information as: a brief biography of the interviewee, an abstract of the interview, including major topics, names, and places covered, and an index of all personal names mentioned in the interview. See Appendix G for a sample summary sheet.

B. Alphabetical Collection Guide

This is an alphabetical list, sorted by last name, of all interviewees included in the collection. Typically, such a guide would contain: 1) the last name and first name of the interviewee; 2) the accession number (for unique identification) of the interview; 3) the number of cassettes in the interview; and 4) the name of the interviewer.

C. Numerical Collection Guide

This is a numerical listing, sorted by accession number, of all those interviews included in the collection. Typically this contains the same information as the alphabetical list described above, but is sorted on the unique identification number instead of the interviewee's last name.

D. Finding Aids

A finding aid is a descriptive guide for an archival collection. Typically, it includes information about the origin, history, content, date, and format of the records, papers or other documents, as well as their physical and intellectual arrangement.

E. Websites

In the summer of 2005, the Library launched its first online oral history collection, the Bates

College Oral History Project website. The site was designed by a team including a Collaborative Technology Development student intern, an information services staff person, the archives director, the oral historian and a summer student. Implementation of the web site gave researchers worldwide access to the collection, including full transcripts, select audio clips, and photographs. The Bates College Oral History Project can be found at:
<http://abacus.bates.edu/oralhistory/>.

It is worth noting that there is some controversy within the oral history community about making oral histories available online. It is incontrovertible that online access provides a vastly greater level of visibility than oral histories have received in the past. This can make some interviewees feel awkward or uncomfortable. It also makes it much more complicated for an institution to administer the collection, including assuring that there are no abuses of intellectual property rights. If you think you will want to make an oral history available online immediately or at some point in the future, the prudent course of action is to discuss this with the interviewee at the time of the interview or before placing the interview online.

IX: Bibliography

Oral History Methodology and Practice

Dunaway, David K., and Willa K. Baum, eds., *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*. 2nd ed. Walnut Creek, CA: AltaMira Press, 1996.

Ives, Sandy. *An Oral Historian's Work*. Produced by David Weiss and Karan Sheldon. 33 min. The Northeast Archives of Folklore and Oral History, 1987. Videocassette.

Ives, Sandy. *The Tape-Recorded Interview: A Manual for Field Workers in Folklore and Oral History*. 2nd ed. Knoxville: University of Tennessee Press, 1995.

Moyer, Judith. *Step-by-Step Guide to Oral History*. Available at: http://www.dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html. Includes extensive bibliography.

Oral History Association (OHA). *Website*. Available at: <http://www.dickinson.edu/oha/about.html>. This is the national organization in the U.S.

Oral History Society (OHS). *Website*. Available at: <http://www.ohs.org.uk/>. This is the national organization in Great Britain.

Ritchie, Donald A. *Doing Oral History*. New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995.

Southern Oral History Program. *How To: Resources for Planning and Conducting Oral History Interviews*. Available at: <http://www.sohp.org/howto/index.html>.

Stille, Alexander. "Prospecting for Truth Amid the Distortions of Oral History (Alessandro Portelli)." *New York Times*, March 10, 2001.

Youth Source. *Oral History Unit*. Available at: http://www.youthsource.ab.ca/teacher_resources/oral_overview.html. Provides guidance and examples of oral history and how to use it in the classroom.

Online Oral Histories Collections

Art Institute of Chicago. *Chicago Architects Oral History Project*. Available at: <http://www.artic.edu/aic/libraries/caohp/>.

Bates College. *Bates College Oral History Project*. Available at:

<http://www.bates.edu/oralhistory/>. This is a collection of 50 interviews with people connected to the College with recollections from the 1920s through 2005.

Billy Graham Center Archives. *Oral History at the Billy Graham Center Archives*. Available at: <http://www.wheaton.edu/bgc/archives/oralhist.html> . This site includes several oral history transcripts online. These are interviews with people involved in evangelistic Christian ministry in such capacities as missionaries, chaplains, etc.

The Cable Center. *Oral History Collection*. Available at: <http://www.cablecenter.org/education/library/oralHistories.cfm>.

Charles Babbage Institute. *Oral Histories*. Available at: <http://www.cbi.umn.edu/collections/oralhistories.html>. The site includes transcripts of oral histories relating to the history of computers, software, and networking.

Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies. *Website*. Available at: <http://www.library.yale.edu/testimonies/excerpts/index.html>. Holds an extensive collection, with some video excerpts/transcripts.

Harvard University. *Iranian Oral History Project*. Available at: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~iohp/>. Includes audio and transcripts in Persian.

I, Witness to History. *Website*. Available at: <http://www.iwitnessstohistory.org/>. This is a program of the Cramer Reed Center for Successful Aging with oral histories on a variety of topics.

Illinois Institute of Technology. *Voices of the Holocaust*. Available at: <http://voices.iit.edu/>.

The Japanese American National Museum. *Oral History Programs: Japanese American History Projects*. Available at: <http://www.janm.org/nrc/ohprojects.php>. The site includes oral history transcripts along with other culturally rich material.

Jewish Women's Archive. *Weaving Women's Words*. Available at: <http://www.jwa.org/exhibits/baltimore/activism.html>. The project includes interviews with 60 Jewish women over the age of 75 from Baltimore and Seattle.

Library of Congress, American Memory. *Voices from the Days of Slavery*. Available at: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/voices/> . Twenty-three interviewees, born between 1823 and the early 1860s, discuss how they felt about slavery, slaveholders, coercion of slaves, their families, and freedom.

Library of Congress, American Memory. *American Life Histories*. Available at: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintro/wpahome.html>. Includes interviews with those involved in the Federal Writers' Project.

Naval Historical Center. *Oral Histories: War Against Terrorism, September 11, 2001 to Present*. Available at: <http://www.history.navy.mil/faqs/faq87-7.htm>. Includes a number of oral histories online, linked from the FAQs page.

Southern Oral History Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. *Website*. Available at: <http://www.sohp.org/>.

Truman Presidential Museum and Library. *Oral History Interviews*. Available at: http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/oral_his.htm. Includes more than 100 recordings, including some dealing with the Holocaust and World War II in some capacity.

University of California, Bancroft Library. *Regional Oral History Office*. Available at: <http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/>. The site includes many online oral histories.

The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries. *Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive, Oral History Index*. Available at: <http://www.lib.usm.edu/~spcol/crda/oh/>. The site offers 63 oral history transcripts associated with the Civil Rights Movement.

The Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University. *The Oral History Project*. Available at: <http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/oralhistory/>. Includes an online workshop and many oral histories.

Washington Press Club Foundation. *Women in Journalism*. Available at: <http://npc.press.org/wpforal/ohhome.htm>.

Access, Preservation and Administration

Baum, Willa K. *Transcribing and Editing Oral History*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1991.

Matters, Marion, compiler. *Oral History Cataloging Manual*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1995.

Neuenschwander, John A. *Oral History and the Law*. Oral History Association, 2002.

Appendix A. Equipment Checklist

This checklist accompanies the Marantz model PMD222 used by the Oral History Office, and is stored in the equipment bag with it. The importance of following this checklist cannot be overemphasized, as the whole interview depends on things functioning properly. It is straight forward and detailed, making the process easy if you make the time to go through it.

BEFORE LEAVING FOR THE INTERVIEW

- Are the batteries charged?
- Have you included the Clock/Timer?
- Do you have two AAA batteries for the new black microphone? (One to use and one to spare)
- Do you have the microphone, microphone stand, tape recorder and power pack cord?
- Do you have three blank tapes?
- Have you tested the operation of the machine?
- Have you included paper and pen?
- Have you packed the Folder of the person you're interviewing?

AT THE INTERVIEW SITE

Check Marantz PMD222 Tape Recorder: operation and settings

- Is the machine plugged in on both ends? (the left-hand-side hole & wall outlet)
- Is the switch turned to ECM for the new black microphone in the red box?
- Is the switch turned to XLR for the older gray microphone?
- Is the Input selector in the middle position: "Mic/Tel" ?
- Is the Mic Att. Switch at 0 dB?
- Is the A.N.C. selector in the middle position: "Normal"?
- Is the tape material selector in the right position: "Normal"?
- Is the External Speaker selector in the right position: "Off"?
- Is the Tape Speed selector turned to "Std"? (standard)
- Is the Limiter dial at full? (Turn clockwise until it stops) (this is optional—the "10" setting is safest if you haven't played with the machine to determine the lowest setting which still picks up the voices of the interviewer(s) and interviewee(s).
- Is the Level dial at full? (Turn clockwise until it stops) (also optional)
- Is the Pitch dial at a balanced level? (straight up and down)
- Is the Tone dial at a balanced level? (straight up and down)
- Is the Monitor button off? (pulled out instead of pushed in)
- Is the machine positioned such that you can see it?
- Are the recorder and microphone placed on different surfaces?

Check the Tape

- Is it wound all the way to one side?
- Did you put it in the deck so that all of the tape is on the left hand side?
- Did you run the tape for 10 seconds to let the leader run through?

Check the Microphone

- Is the switch on the microphone switched to “On”?
- Is there an AAA battery in the microphone?
- Did you bring an extra battery?
- Is the microphone plugged into the correct hole? (new: “Mic/Tel” on right side)
- Does the VU needle flicker when you speak into the fully connected microphone and activated Tape Recorder?
- Are the microphone and recorder placed on different surfaces?

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Did you remove the battery from the microphone and turn it to the “off” position, in order to preserve the AAA battery?
- Have you stored all of the equipment in a safe location? (away from direct heat sources)
- Have you recharged the batteries?
- Have you labeled the tape(s) and disabled the recording function?
- Have you used the Interview Information Form to write down the names of people mentioned and asked the Interviewee for the correct spelling?
- Have you asked for additional names?

Appendix B. Interviewee Contact Sheet

ID	Last Name	First Name	Middle Name
122	Interviewee	Joe	
Bates Affiliation		Recommended By	Status
Alumni		Andrea L'Hommedieu	
General Notes			
Joe Interviewee was involved with the student newspaper and the debate society while at Bates. He now works as a newspaper editor in New York City which has an internship program for Bates students.			

 Home Address

 Business Address

 Interviews

Street:	123 5th Avenue
City:	New York
State:	New Yor
Phone:	(800) 123-4567
Email:	joe@interviewee.com
Fax:	

Record: ⏪ ⏩ 94 ▶ ▶▶ ▶* of 94
 Form View

Appendix C. Invitation Letter

The Bates College Oral History Project

**The Edmund S. Muskie Archives
and Special Collections Library**
Bates College



Andrea R. L'Hommedieu, *Oral Historian*
70 Campus Ave., Lewiston, ME 04240-6018
Telephone: (207) 786-8386 Fax: (207) 755-5911
Email: alhommed@bates.edu

August 10, 2005

Mr. Bob Bates
ABC 123 Street
Anywhere, ME 12345

Dear Mr. Bates,

We would like to interview you for the Bates College Oral History Project. We believe you could make a substantial contribution to our work, particularly with respect to your years as a student, as a Trustee and your lifelong devotion to the field of education.

The enclosed short description of the Project will give you some background information about our work and what we are trying to achieve. If you wish to discuss the project further, once you've read the enclosure, please feel free to call or email me.

I will call you within the next couple weeks to answer any questions you may have and, I hope, to arrange a convenient time and place for the interview. We allow for up to a maximum of two hours for an interview, setting up additional sessions, if one is not enough.

Many thanks for your interest and the assistance you can provide.

Sincerely,

Andrea L'Hommedieu
Oral Historian

Appendix D. Project Description Sheet

Bates College Oral History Project

A Short Description

The Bates College Oral History Project endeavors to create a collection of recorded spoken memories from individuals connected to Bates College. It is an 18-month project coinciding with the College's Sesquicentennial, and is based at the Edmund S. Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library, Bates College, Lewiston, Maine.

Interviews are being conducted by Andrea L'Hommedieu, an oral historian and librarian. College students provide substantial support to the project through research and editing.

Project staff expects the interview total to be around 40-50. Interviewees include alumni, faculty, staff, presidents and students and cover nine decades of firsthand Bates history, providing a rich variety of insights and recollections.

Interviewees are encouraged to tell their stories, providing a context for other recollections and the extensive documentary materials in the Muskie Archives. That context includes a sense of the time and of the interactions between people involved in the social, economic, educational and administrative history of Bates College.

Each interview is transcribed and edited. The final transcript is an accurate reflection of the oral record, with references and corrections to assist later readers. The Archives retains the sound recording, as well as a paper and electronic copy of the transcript, and these are made available for research purposes.

Photographs are taken at the time of the interview for purposes of historical documentation and oral history exhibitions.

You may visit our web site at: <http://abacus.bates.edu/oralhistory/>

Questions about the Project may be directed to:

Andrea L'Hommedieu, *Oral Historian*
Bates College Oral History Project
Edmund S. Muskie Archives and Special Collections Library
Bates College, Lewiston, ME 04240-6018
Tel: 207-786-8386
E-mail: alhommed@bates.edu

Appendix E. Release Form

Bates College

Oral History Release Form

I, _____, and I, _____ herein
(Interviewee) (Interviewer)
permanently give, convey and assign to Bates College legal title and all literary property rights, including copyright, which I may have in an interview recorded on _____, in _____
(Date) (Location: City/State)
_____.

In so doing I understand that the interview (audio or visual memoir) will be made available to researchers and may be quoted from, published or broadcast in any medium that Bates College shall deem appropriate.

It is agreed that the recording will be made available for research on an unrestricted basis, subject only to those conditions or restrictions specified below:

It is understood that this deed covers the audio/video recording, which is the primary document of the interview, and any copy or transcript that may be produced from the recording.

The deed may be revised and amended by mutual consent of an appropriate official of Bates College and me.

Interviewee: _____ **Date:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Interviewer: _____ **Date:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Bates College gratefully acknowledges receipt from the above donor of the items described.

(Representative of Bates College) **Date:** _____

Appendix F. Thank You Letter

**The Edmund S. Muskie Archives
and Special Collections Library**
Bates College



The Bates College Oral History Project

Andrea R. L'Hommedieu, *Oral Historian*
70 Campus Avenue, Lewiston, Maine 04240-6018
Telephone: (207) 786-8386; Fax: (207) 755-5911
Email: alhommed@bates.edu

June 16, 2005

Mr. W. Joe Alumnus
ABC 123 Street
Anywhere, ME 12345

Dear Mr. Alumnus,

Thank you very much for your participation in the Bates College Oral History Project. Your interview will form an important part of the history of Bates College that we are developing through conversations with you and others.

If you have had some additional recollections that you think would be useful for the project, please send them along or consider an additional interview. We don't want to impose on you, but we do want to get as much of your history of the time as we can.

We are in the process of transcribing and editing your interview. When that phase is finished, we will send a copy of the transcript and cassette(s) to you, for you to keep.

Thanks again for your contribution.

Sincerely,

Andrea L'Hommedieu
Oral Historian

Appendix G. Summary Sheet

Barbara Randall BCOH 044

Biographical Information:

Barbara Ann Varney Randall was born on December 4, 1925 in Dallas, Texas and moved with her family to Lewiston, Maine in 1930. Her mother was a nurse and her father was in advertising. She attended Bates College, just three blocks from her home on College St., graduating in 1946. She worked at the Jordan Pond House in Seal Harbor and as a gym instructor at the State School for Girls in Hallowell. In 1947 she returned to Bates College to work in the News Bureau. In March of 1952, she moved to Philadelphia and worked with an advertising agency called N. C. Ayer. She began her graduate education at UNH, and received her Masters degree in education from University of Maine, Orono in 1960. She then became the Dean of Women at Bates College in 1960. She left that position in 1969. She later was an alumni trustee for five years. She currently lives in Auburn.

Topic Notes:

Moving from Texas to Lewiston; Parents' careers; The Great Depression; Living at home while attending Bates; The downtown area; Deciding on Bates; Bates during WWII; Mrs. And Mr. Lawton; Favorite professors; First jobs; Working in the news bureau; Going to graduate school; Becoming the Dean of Women; Campus changes in the sixties; Responsibilities as Dean of Women; The transition from Phillips to Reynolds; The changes Bates has undergone; The role of the president; Remaining involved in Bates.

Names List:

Verified:

Berkelman, Robert
Bertocci, Angelo Peter
Clark, Hazel
Hansen, Elaine Tuttle
Harward, Don
Isaacson, Judith Magyar
Knapp, Fred A.
Lawton, Jim
Lawton, Mrs.
L'Hommedieu, Andrea
Phillips, Charles
Randall, Barbara Ann Varney
Randall, Jim

Reynolds, Thomas Hedley
Ross, Norman E.
Schaeffer, Lavinia Miriam
Stringfellow, William
Sutcliffe, William Denham
Sweet, Paul R.
Vaillancourt, Bernadette
Walmsley, Lena

Unverified:

?, David