

MICHIGAN ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION

"Preserving Michigan Voices."

MOHA Conference

Postponed to 2021

Due to the COVID-19 Pandemic, the May 18, 2020 Conference of the Michigan Oral History Association is postponed to Spring 2021. We will be hosting an amazing collection of project information! This unique conference will offer a diverse slate of presentations representing a variety of personal and institutional backgrounds, perspectives, and voices.

Fascinating and useful presentations include:

- Alienation and Belonging in the Oral Histories of Michigan Iranian Americans
- Creating, Promoting, and Growing a University Archives Oral History Program
- Using Oral Histories to Enrich Family Genealogy
- Capturing Ethnic Communities
- Incorporating Oral Histories in the College Classroom
- The Detroit/Southern Michigan Punk Scene
- Capturing Oral History Through a Museum

And more...

Remember: MOHA members receive conference fee discounts. Watch for program and registration information in the Fall.

Remote Oral History Interviewing

"Oral historians have always favored the face-to-face interview and discouraged remote interviewing. However, the COVID-19 pandemic has created an extraordinary situation where face-to-face interviewing would endanger the health of the interviewer, the interviewee, and society as a whole."
(Oral History Society)

The Oral History Association, the Oral History Society, and others engaged in and committed to conducting thorough oral histories, have developed guidelines, resources, and suggested technology for assistance in conducting oral history at a distance. In addition, staff of the Institute for Oral History, Baylor University, provided a webinar that is available on the OHA website. *Notes on these resources begin on P. 4.*

Specific endeavors to capture this historical time are presented on p. 3 and p. 8.



*Veronica Johnson, guest writer and oral history interviewer at opening of **Detroit's Jazz Festival exhibit, Detroit Historical Museum.** Check out the exhibit when the Museum opens! Photo by Billy Wall-Winkel.*

About the Michigan Oral History Association

Mission

The mission of the Michigan Oral History Association (MOHA) is to provide effective cooperation and communication among persons, programs, and institutions concerned with the techniques, uses, and promotion of oral history in Michigan. We serve those who are interested in methods and techniques of the oral history process as a means of preserving unique memory of people, places, events and ideas.

Who We Are

MOHA promotes and educates about oral history, as a resource for capturing on electronic media, attitudes and emotions not otherwise preserved. The pool of presenters includes experienced oral history practitioners, archivists, database managers, video producers, authors, professional transcribers, journalists and teachers. Presenters participate in history-related conference sessions, conduct workshops, and serve as facilitators for state and regional forums.

How Can MOHA Help You?

Workshops, information, advice and resources are available to both beginning and experienced oral historians. Forums provide exchange with others who may have similar problems, obstacles, and opportunities. Established or in-progress oral history projects can benefit from MOHA's ability to promote and publicize initiatives and resources.

Contact info@michiganoha.org

Become a Member!

As a member, you will receive:

- The MOHA Newsletter (quarterly)
- "A Guide for Doing Successful Oral Histories"
- Discounted registration fee at MOHA forums and conferences
- Mentoring and assistance with your project
- News of oral history events and projects
- Updates on latest innovations and resources
- Contacts for workshop presentations

Membership Dues:

Individual: \$25

Institutional: \$50

Student: \$15

Additional Donation: \$__

Send check to:

MOHA, 210 Detroit St., Saline, Michigan 48176

Or via PayPal at www.michiganoha.org.

**2020 Annual Meeting
Oral History Association
"One Hundred Years of Struggle:
The Quest for Democracy"**

The Oral History Association is continuing to plan for the October 21-24, 2020 Annual Conference in Baltimore. The Poster Submission Portal has extended its deadline to July 13, 2020. Remember to refer to our [Call for Papers](#) and our [Submission Guidelines](#) pages for more information. www.oralhistory.org.

Understanding there are many unknowns in this situation, the OHA has also begun a risk assessment of COVID-19 and the economic implications stemming from it for the Association. Check the website for updated plans.

Also check their website for resources for resources on remote interviewing.

**NOTE: THIS SPRING 2020
ISSUE IS LIMITED TO E-COPY
DUE TO PRINTER
UNAVAILABILITY**

DON'T MISS OUT!

**Share Your Project!
Your source for information
on oral history projects!
info@michiganoha.org**



COVID-19: Save Your Story

The COVID-19 Pandemic has affected all of us in many different ways and we are all eyewitnesses to the events that have been unfolding the last few weeks. This is a time for us to **record our daily experiences, thoughts, and feelings** in diary form, either in writing or video. **The Library of Michigan and Historical Society of Michigan** envision collecting and preserving these stories. The goal is to preserve the stories of our daily lives during the crisis and to provide future historians, researchers, and students with information and data on life in Michigan communities during the Pandemic.

WHAT SHOULD PEOPLE COLLECT AND HOW SHOULD THEY COLLECT IT?

Take the time each day to record your activities, thoughts, and/or feelings in diary form. The entries can be handwritten, typed, or in video format, and be as long or short as you want. Don't worry about handwriting, spelling, or punctuation. The goal is to capture your personal experiences. Below are some things to think about, with regards to current events, to help you get started:

- What did you do today (or this week)? How was that different than what you would do on a "normal" day/week?
- What changes have you personally experienced (physically, mentally, and/or emotionally) since this crisis began?
- What changes have you observed in your family, your friends, or your local community?
- Are you a student or a teacher? Where and how do you normally attend school? Has this changed? How's that going? Or is there a student or teacher in your family? How is the crisis affecting their schooling situation?
- Do you typically work outside the home?

- What is your job normally like? What is it like right now? Are you still working, whether on-site or remotely? Why or why not? How's that going?
- Are you practicing social distancing? Why or why not? What are you doing? How is this affecting your relationships? How do you stay in touch with family and friends?
- Has this crisis changed (whether voluntarily or involuntarily) any of your plans for day-to-day errands, travel, visiting, leisure activities, celebrations, religious activities, etc.?
- What do you think about the actions of government leaders in response to this crisis?
- What has been the most difficult thing for you personally about this crisis? Do you think there's anything positive that may come from what's happening?

SUBMITTING STORIES TO THE LIBRARY OF MICHIGAN: To submit a diary, please fill out the form at: <http://sgiz.mobi/s3/COVID-19-Save-Your-Story>. Email Library of Michigan staff at Librarian@Michigan.gov if you have any questions or problems sending submissions.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS: Special thanks to the [Special Collections and Archives Department](#) of Wright State University Libraries for their advice during the development of this project. See information about their COVID-19 History

Tools for Sharing Continued on P. 6

Oral History At a Distance: Conducting Remote Interviews

*Notes from presentation as part of the annual conference of the **Oral History Association (OHA)**, held remotely March 31. The presentation is available via webinar recording, free to the public, in full on OHA's website:*

www.oralhistory.org.

*Presented by Adrienne Cain, Steven Sielaff,
Stephen Sloan –
Institute for Oral History, Baylor University*

Many aspects of conducting oral histories remain the same, whether face-to-face in person or remotely:

- Aim for highest quality interview possible
- Use highest quality equipment
- Obtain complete records
- Secure multiple copies
- Allow narrators/interviewees to review and correct transcripts for spelling, names, places
- Signed consent form
- Confirm arrangements with participants beforehand

Consider for distance interviews:

- outcomes
- partners
- narrators
- new tools (video conferencing)
- legal and ethical considerations, particularly privacy

Pre-Interview practice is strongly recommended as a test run. Conduct this test in the same manner as the anticipated interview – particularly for the setting and equipment. Guide the interviewee through the platform and the software, and make sure the person is comfortable with these. Use this time to gauge the sound and the interviewee's environment. If conducting video interviews, the pre-interview test run is a great time to check the interviewee's space for ambient noise and lighting. Make sure the interviewee looks good.

Significant Differences with Remote Interviews

As indicated, the technology can be a barrier, with varying comfort with the technology.

The interviewee has responsibility for using the technology. Also, it's easier to modify the setting if in person, where the interviewer can scan the area and choose the positioning of the interviewee for things like good lighting, removal of ambient noise, and better background.

Personally, the interviewee no longer has a stranger in their home. They might even relax more, especially not trying to impress someone with their home. The interviewee has more power and may feel more freedom to terminate the discussion. They always do have that option, but it may feel more socially difficult when in the presence of the interviewer. And it's easier to schedule, pause, and pick up later.

The interviewer/interviewee relationship is altered with remote interviewing. It can become more difficult to build trust and rapport with the distancing.

With less personal contact, there may be more disclosure with anonymity, or – on the other hand -more willingness to disclose sensitive, embarrassing or controversial topics with the building of trust in face-to-face talks.

Without visual aids, the interviewee is forced to describe more fully items they may be talking about.

Lastly, it can be more difficult for the interviewer to pick up cues of character, interest, and emotion regarding particular topics.

Given these challenges, interviewers should be cognizant of looking for ways to develop trust, show empathy, get longer responses (data says responses are shorter and with less depth), and to encourage stories with follow-up questions and comments.

On a practical scale, there are cost savings and time savings without travel – for both the

Continued on P. 5

Oral History at a Distance

Continued from P. 4

interviewer and interviewee. The geographical distribution can be broader for the project. Perhaps safety is enhanced, where conducting interviews on-site (for example, at a manufacturing plant) is eliminated.

Scheduling is more flexible without travel. With that, the pace of the project may even speed up, as well as the ability to gather from more interviewees.

Some behavior can even be less distracting: the note taking and checking equipment by the interviewer is less obtrusive.

Legal considerations

Although protections are universally similar, copyright laws are different in different countries. Check out different laws. A source is the World Intellectual Property Organization (www.wipo.int/copyright/en/). Assess the risks of interviewee discussion topics.

A signed consent form is still required.

Use email or mail to send a copy of the consent form. Ask the interviewee to read through and sign. They can then scan the signed document and send back to you, by email or regular mail. Have them take a photo of the document before sending as a back-up.

Equipment

Some key general points:

- Anticipate obsolescence of both equipment and media.
- Use the best equipment possible and create multiple copies.
- Again, use the pre-interview to walk through a platform with the interviewee. If it proves to be too difficult, consider other means such as a phone with recording.
- It can be difficult to make the interview not sound and look remote.
- Your investment in equipment will not always equal the interviewee's.
- Use name brands.

The interviewer/interviewee relationship is altered with remote interviewing.

Questions/Considerations:

- Do you have enough storage?
- What app will you use?
- Does it record in WAV?
- How will you share the files?

More specific recommendations:

- Most equipment is basic.
- Internet speeds and bandwidth can affect the quality. Keep your internet bandwidth open at your location during the session.
- Volume can be difficult and difficult to balance (since now you don't have a microphone set in the middle between, or have two lavalier mikes).
- Many remote recording apps only support mp3 or WAV format.
- Recommend headsets to eliminate echo and recording overlap. (Consider gaming varieties)

Types of video interviewing:

Zoom

Skype

Facetime

PC and Mac have different apps available.

RESOURCES:

For more (very) specific and detailed information about specific equipment, tools, formats, platforms, check out the recorded webinar on the OHA website.

OHA's Principles and Best Practices

John Neuenschwander *Oral History and the Law*

OHA AIG Collaborative Resource Document:

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/>

H-OralHist Discussion Thread:

[https://network.h-](https://network.h-net.org/node/16738/discussions/6031284/conducting-oral-history-interviews-remotely)

[net.org/node/16738/discussions/6031284/conducting-oral-history-interviews-remotely](https://network.h-net.org/node/16738/discussions/6031284/conducting-oral-history-interviews-remotely)

Vermont Folklife Center

To encourage you to interview people outside just your immediate household, we created this guide to help you find ways to record your interviews remotely.

There are an almost overwhelming number of different ways to record an interview remotely via phone or computer. To help narrow it down we've explored a few options for smartphones and the web that can help. We focused on tools you might already be using, but threw in some others that might be totally new to you.

- Tips for video conference platforms
- Tips for your smartphone
- Tips for web-based audio platforms

Vermont Folklife Center, 'Recording Interviews Remotely', <https://www.vermontfolklifecenter.org/remo-te-recording>

Oral History Society

<https://www.ohs.org.uk/advice/covid-19/>

This guide is in response to increased interest in conducting remote interviews. The document attempts to summarize the ethical, legal, methodological and technical issues that individuals and projects will need to consider before deciding whether or not to conduct a remote interview.

If possible you should postpone your oral history interview, and instead use remote technology during the period of social distancing to build a relationship with the interviewee or to check that they are healthy and safe or perhaps continue an interview you have already started face-to-face. If delay is not possible there are several criteria that should be considered before deciding whether or not to conduct a remote oral history interview:

Can the interview be postponed?

Can remote interviews be archived?

Can funded projects postpone their work?

What technologies are available for remote interviewing? (However, these options are only viable to the extent that interviewers and interviewees are comfortable in using them.)

What are the legal and data protection implications? (Different providers of remote interviewing software will claim different rights over the audio recorded.)

H-OralHist discussion thread, 'Conducting oral history interviews remotely' <https://networks.h-net.org/node/16738/discussions/6031284/conducting-oral-history-interviews-remotely>

Oral History Association-Archives Interest Group collaborative document, 'Resources, examples, group experience to draw on to prepare Guidelines for Remote Oral History Interviewing', <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PSTjIzQuqCA DjFs6QWm7VZaNNtIjVJwg1AsN1EsrIyU>

J. Towne, 'Recording During The Coronavirus Pandemic', <https://transom.org/2020/recording-during-the-coronavirus-pandemic/>

COVID-19 – Library of Michigan: Tools for Sharing

Continued from P. 3

on their [Out of the Box](#) blog page. Additional thanks to the Historical Society of Michigan in partnering on this project with the Library of Michigan.

TOOLS FOR SHARING THE "COVID-19: SAVE YOUR STORY"

https://www.michigan.gov/libraryofmichigan/0,9327,7-381-88854_89996-523458--,00.html

Shortened URL: <https://bit.ly/2ynT8rj>

URL of submission form: <http://sgiz.mobi/s3/COVID-19-Save-Your-Story>

We Heard the Bells: The Influenza of 1918

As many tens of thousands are perishing each year from the flu, and the new **Coronavirus** has emerged in regions around the world, here's a film that looks back on one of the most tragic of all of history's pandemics. *We Heard the Bells: The Influenza of 1918* recalls the outbreak that swept the planet and eventually killed over 50 million people.

The most unique and haunting aspect of the film are the **interviews with the survivors of the outbreak**. These are the children of the tragedy, many of whom were made orphans during the height of its spread. They speak of the ill effects suffered by the stricken, including the high fever, complete loss of energy and occasional episodes of delirium. Many did not receive proper burials.

The influenza of 1918 was not like the strains of the flu we see today. Traditional seasonal flu is especially hazardous to the very young, elderly and the chronically diseased. The fatalities that resulted from the 1918 scourge did not discriminate based upon age. Younger men and women were considered high risk.

How did this virus become so virulent and claim so many lives across the age and gender spectrum? To a large extent, these answers remain elusive. But it's obvious that the 1918 influenza constituted an unfamiliar strain to which few were immune.

Through the **first-hand testimonies** of the film's interview subjects, we're provided a series of unspeakably tragic anecdotes. In cities like Baltimore and Philadelphia, military parades and other gatherings successfully scattered the virus to countless more victims. Survivors remember waving to their healthy neighbors on one day, and witnessing their dead bodies being carried out of their houses on the next.

The film also features insights from medical researchers who continue to study the events of 1918, and use their collective knowledge to inform the steps we take to prevent and contain modern pandemics. *We Heard the Bells: The Influenza of 1918* is an informative and sobering portrait of one of the most horrific pandemics ever to seize the globe.

Directed by: Lisa Laden . PublicResourceOrg. Check out this video on YouTube: https://youtube/XbEefT_M6xY

MOHA Board of Directors

Jim Cameron (President), Social Studies Consultant, Michigan Department of Education

Michael Laney (Vice President), Head, Gerald M. Kline Digital and Multimedia Center and Manager, G. Robert Vincent Voice Library, Michigan State University (MSU) Libraries

Brad Jarvis (Treasurer), Assoc. Professor, History, Saginaw Valley State University

Veronica Johnson (Secretary), Project Manager for Issue Media Group
Geneva Kebler Wiskemann, Founder of the Michigan Oral History Council (parent title of MOHA), former MOHA President and long-time Secretary and newsletter production

Camron Michael Amin, Professor, History, University of Michigan-Dearborn

Marci Cameron, Editor, Retired Gerontologist and Writer

Brittany Bayless Fremion, Asst Professor of History, Central Michigan University

Tim Gleisner, Director of Archives, Michigan Library

Lindsay Hiltunen, Archivist, Michigan Tech. University Archives and Copper Country Historical Collections

Julie L. Loehr, Senior Acquisition Editor, MSU Press

Russ Magnaghi, Professor of History Emeritus, Northern Michigan University

Celestine Petoskey, Cultural Library Specialist, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians

Karen Schaumann-Beltran, Asst. Professor of Sociology, Schoolcraft College

Jordan Shananaquet, Education Director, Niigaandiwin Education Dept, Little Traverse Bay Bands of Odawa Indians

Kim Schroeder, Coordinator, Archival Program Lecturer and Career Advisor, Wayne State University

Billy Wall-Winkel, Curatorial Asst., Detroit Historical Society

Matthew Wilcox, Archivist, Michigan State University Archives

Detroit: Quarantine2020

We are living in exceptional times. The COVID-19 Pandemic has impacted all of us. This crisis has impacted all of us in different ways. The **Detroit Historical Society** wants to hear how this crisis is affecting you. Every experience and perspective is important.

SHARE YOUR STORY WITH US TODAY!

It's EASY! Here's how:

Using your phone, pad, laptop or desktop, record a 10-15 minute memory. Please address the questions below. That helps us with consistency. If you do not want to share an audio recording with us, you can share your story by writing as well.

After you've looked over the questions, click below to share your story!

<https://detroit1967.detroithistorical.org/detroit-quarantine>

Please Note: This should be a memory of an event or a place, with details such as names and dates stated as clearly as possible. This should NOT be a recorded opinion related to a political or social issue – these will not be saved. Of course, opinions related to the event or place you are memorializing are fine, but they should not constitute the bulk of your narrative.

USE STATEMENT: Material on this website is made available to researchers and students. If this material is used to produce a product (book, poem, movie, theatrical piece, etc.), permission must be obtained from the Detroit Historical Society.

QUESTIONS

What neighborhood (of Detroit) or city do you live in?

How old are you?

When did you first hear about COVID-19 (coronavirus)?

Were you worried at all?

When did you begin to worry about COVID-19 (if you worried at all)?

What steps did you take in response?

What do you do for work?

How has your job been affected?

Were you laid off or are you able to work from home?

If you're self-isolating, what are you doing to pass the time?

What books are you reading?

What movies or TV shows have you been watching?

How are you feeling?

Are you quarantined by yourself or with others?

What was it like to visit the grocery store?

Have you had any issues getting supplies?

Have you personally been afflicted with COVID-19?

Has your family or immediate friend group been personally impacted by COVID-19?

Do you work in the medical field? How has this crisis been you for?

How do you feel about the 'shelter-in-place' order?

What lesson do you hope is learned through this crisis?

Neighborhoods: Where Detroit Lives is made possible in part by a grant from Michigan Humanities.

NEXT ISSUE OF THE MOHA NEWSLETTER:

- Detroit Activists: Wayne State University Archival Administration Oral History Project. Oral History course students engage leaders in Environmental Justice, the Cass Corridor, Southwest Detroit, and the LGBTQ communities
- Living Archives of Rwandan Exiles and Genocide Survivors in Canada, Montreal Life Stories Project, Concordia University, Montreal
- Detroit's Jazz Festival Exhibit, Detroit Historical Museum