

# **PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF MANITOBA**

## **ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM**

### **INFORMATION PACKAGE**

**OCTOBER 1999**



## INFORMATION PACKAGE

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# **COMPONENTS OF AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

- **PURPOSE**
- **METHODOLOGY**
- **RESEARCH**
- **EXPERIENCE**
- **KNOWING HOW TO LISTEN**
- **RAPPORT**
- **TIME**
- **COSTS**
- **RECORDING EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**
- **TECHNICAL ASPECT**
- **FOLLOW-UP**
- **PRESERVATION**

# **PRACTICAL AND THEORETICAL CONSIDERATIONS**

- **USE OF ORAL HISTORY**
- **PLANNING ORAL HISTORY PROJECTS**
- **INTERVIEW TECHNIQUES AND METHODS**
- **EQUIPMENT AND SUPPLIES**
- **DESCRIPTION, CONSERVATION AND  
USE OF INTERVIEWS**

# **THE SIX STEPS OF AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

- **ENTHOUSIASM**
- **DESSILUSIONMENT**
- **PANIC**
- **PURSUUIT OF THE GUILTY**
- **PUNISHMENT OF THE INNOCENT**
- **PRAISE**
- **EULOGY OF THE NON PARTICIPANTS**

## THE PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF MANITOBA

### ORAL HISTORY PROGRAMME

Oral history is the tape-recorded reminiscences of persons speaking on subjects about which they have first-hand knowledge. Oral history is invaluable because it captures feelings and interpretations of events which complement documentary history; and because it also allows those who do not commit their experiences to paper to become a part of history. This process of gathering oral histories can give rise to a beneficial contact between the generations, imparting a sense of self-worth and identity to all involved.

Manitobans are increasingly aware of these important aspects of oral history. They are also aware of the considerable urgency involved in collecting such accounts as many of the persons who can contribute to Manitoba's oral history are passing on.

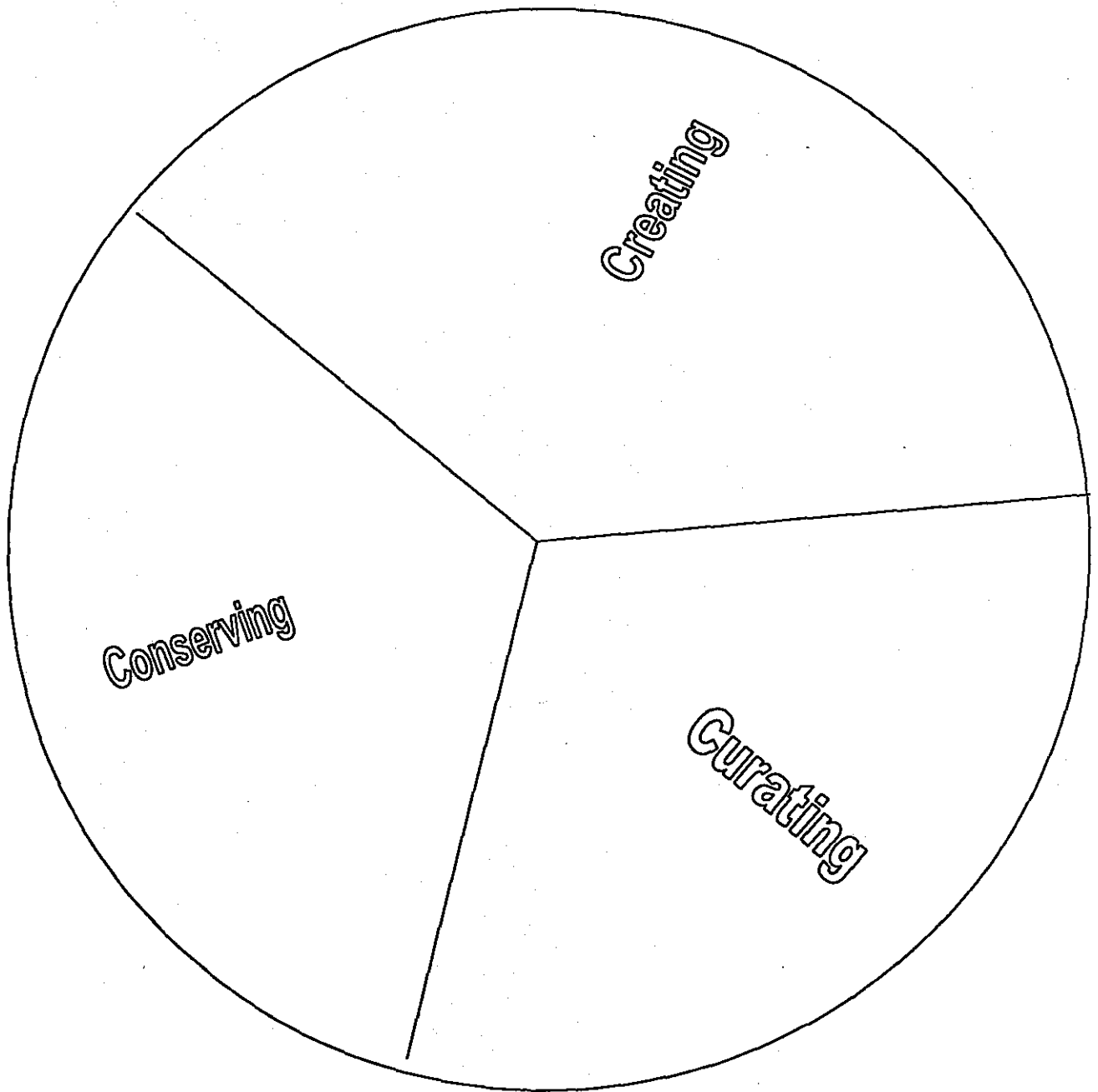
The Provincial Archives of Manitoba contributes to the collection and preservation of Manitoba's oral history in a number of ways. The Archives provides advisory services to individuals and organizations wishing to undertake oral history projects. Advice is provided to applicants wishing to obtain funding under Manitoba Culture, Heritage and Citizenship's ***Heritage Grants Program***. The Archives itself is involved in the acquisition, the description, the preservation and the access to oral history records that fall within its acquisition mandate. The Archives has a limited number of recording units which can be loaned out subject to the cassette recordings being arranged and described according to descriptive standards. The tapes must be made available to a repository accessible to the public.

For further information on the services of the Provincial Archives services related to oral history, please contact:

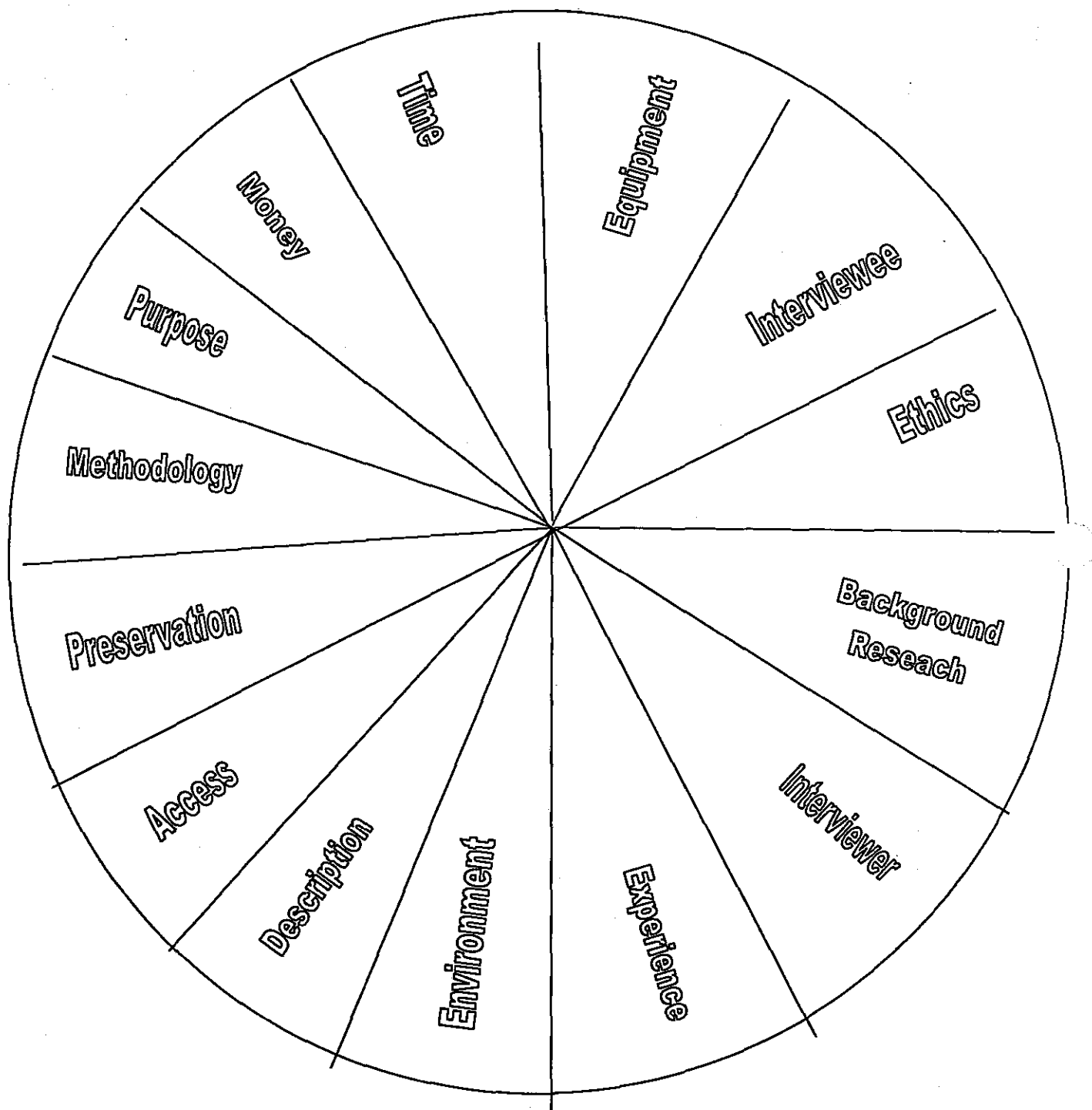
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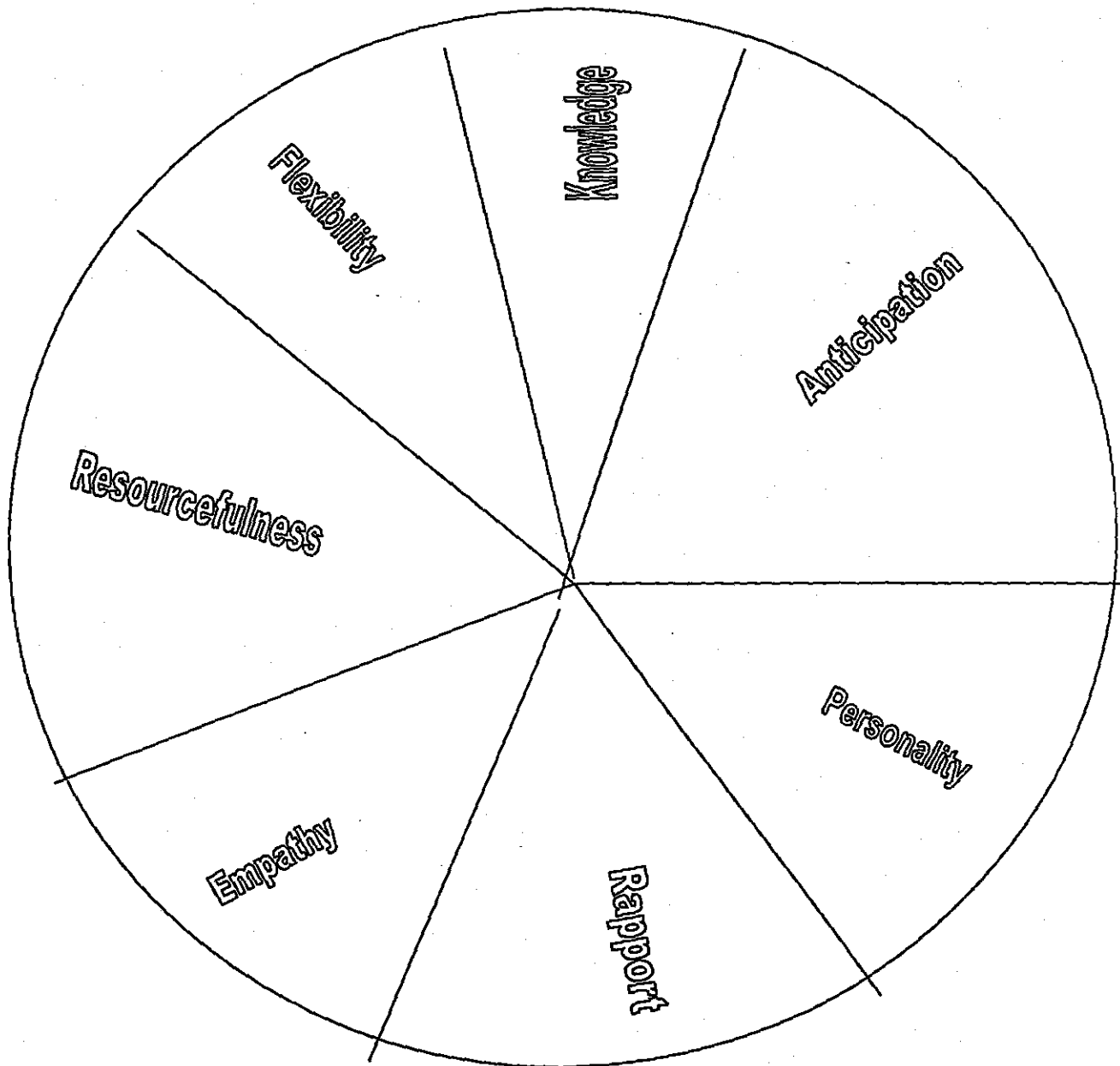
## THE THREE 3 C's OF AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT



## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT REQUIREMENTS



## THE INTERVIEWER



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### Web Sites Web

#### **Canadian Heritage Information Network**

<http://www.chin.gc.ca/>

#### **Canadian Oral History Association**

[www.ncf.carleton.ca/oral-history](http://www.ncf.carleton.ca/oral-history)

<http://www.ualberta.ca/~fmillar/coha.htm>

#### **Minnesota Historical Society**

<http://www.mnhs.org/>

**New England Association of Oral History**

<http://www.ucc.uconn.edu/~cohadm01/neaoh.html>

**Oral History Listserv****Oral History Association Discussion.**

**List:** For information write "review OHA-L" in body of e-mail to:  
**[listserv@ukcc.uky.edu](mailto:listserv@ukcc.uky.edu).**

**Oral History Society**

[www.essex.ac.uk/sociology/oralhis.htm](http://www.essex.ac.uk/sociology/oralhis.htm)

**The AIP Centre**

<http://www.aip.org/history/web-ohi.htm>

**The British Library Online**

<http://www.bl.uk/>

**Video Format Identification Guide**

<http://160.79.188.155/Videoid/HomeText.htm>

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## **ANATOMY OF AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

- 1. CONSIDER RESOURCES REQUIRED (HUMAN AND FINANCIAL)**
- 2. SET UP BOOKKEEPING FOR PROJECT AND INFORM PROJECT PERSONNEL**
- 3. PLANNING**
  - contact resource people
  - evaluate project: is it feasible?
  - know the pitfalls of oral history
  - define workload (30 interviews can involve 75-110 days of work)
  - define time available: use a calendar
  - explore alternative methods of managing the project  
e.g., form a committee and consider selecting/hiring a researcher/interviewer
  - define areas of expertise/roles of people involved in project
  - prepare job list and assign jobs
  - select interviewer(s)/interviewees
  - schedule workload
  - plan for unexpected personal problems
  - attend oral history workshop(s) if available
  - read oral history manuals
- 4. RESEARCH/PREPARATION**
  - research (primary and secondary) is essential background information for interviewing
  - prepare chronology of events (if applicable)
  - prepare list of major themes and issues
  - assess research for gaps and weaknesses
  - interview one key person in the project to fill gaps if necessary
  - distribute information gathered to interviewers
- 5. SELECTION OF INTERVIEWEES**
  - open a file of potential interviewees
  - consult with members 'on the inside' if possible
  - evaluate the card file: how can interviewees on list shed light on themes and issues and why are they being selected?
  - make a preliminary selection

**6. INTERVIEWING**

- pre-interview where applicable
- practice with equipment
- listen to tapes
- conduct interviews
- prepare copyright release forms for signature
- evaluate first interviews as a group
- write tape summaries during the interviewing stage if possible
- if using a computer make backup copies to avoid erasing disks/memory

**7. ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION**

- type or input tape summaries
- label tapes and tape boxes
- collate release forms and tape summaries
- prepare tape list
- arrange tapes chronologically by interview

**8. PROJECT REPORT**

- gather receipts where applicable
- prepare financial statement
- prepare project report
  - what does it mean to the community
  - mention positive experiences
  - explain problems
  - justify adjustments to project
  - account for missing documents, equipment
  - general comments, advice
  - justify major discrepancies in actual and estimated costs
  - justify major discrepancies in actual and estimated interview hours
  - submit tapes and supporting documentation

**CO-ORDINATOR'S JOB LIST**

- find office space, if required
- assist in locating interviewees
- provide letters of introduction where necessary
- make phone calls to set up meetings of committee
- confirm meetings with committee and researcher
- prepare project report
- gather receipts and prepare financial statement
- select personnel (interviewer/researcher and advisors where necessary)

## **INTERVIEWER'S JOB LIST**

- undertake background research
- prepare questions/general outlines of interviews
- attend oral history workshop(s) if available
- establish criteria for selecting interviewees
- select interviewees using (card) file
- attend committee meetings
- arrange for recording equipment and tapes
- write letters/send e-mails or faxes to locate interviewees
- make preliminary phone calls to locate interviewees
- make phone calls to set up interviews and pre-interviews
- travel to and from pre-interview to explain the project to the interviewee
- conduct pre-interview
- check equipment
- travel to and from interview site
- practice with equipment
- listen to tapes to develop skills
- socialize with interviewees
- read and review oral history materials
- prepare tape list
- label tapes and tape boxes
- prepare tape summaries for typing
- arrange for wrap-up

## INTERVIEWING TIPS

1. Before beginning the interview, do everything possible to relax the informant. This is the time for your chat. Explain what is going to happen, show him/her the tape recorder and how it works. Do anything to get the informant at ease.
2. Initially, interview only one person at a time. You may want to interview two or more people together once you have gained some experience. Monitor the results.
3. Record a brief introduction. "This is \_\_\_\_\_ interviewing \_\_\_\_\_ at her home on Lanark Street, on May 28, 1999."
4. Although your project is about the history of your community, every interview should begin with a short personal history of the narrator:
  - date and place of birth
  - schooling
  - marriage and children
  - occupation
  - date moved to this community
  - date joined church, community organizations, etc.

Biographical interviews are also rich sources of information.

5. The interview is not a dialogue or ordinary conversation. You are there to record someone else's experiences, not to talk about yourself.
6. Start with simple questions that are easy to answer:
  - "Where were you born?"
  - "How long have you lived in this community?"
 This will get both of you over the initial 'mike fright'.
7. Ask one question at a time. Be simple and brief. Avoid double-barrelled questions.
8. Don't get flustered by periods of silence. Give your narrator time to think. Relax, write something on your note-pad.
9. Listen carefully and quietly. Encourage the narrator with the odd smile or nod. Do not say things like "yes", "uh'huh", "really?" repeatedly. Don't look bored. Demonstrate interest.
10. Keep the interview on topic. If the narrator wanders off on a tangent, it is your job to politely bring her back by saying: "Before we move on, I would like to know more about..." or "Getting back to...".
11. Help informant describe persons, ask about appearances, personality traits, etc. Ask him/her to be specific and invite elaboration. Encourage lengthy descriptions where appropriate.

12. Don't ask informant to be specific in regard to dates. It is sufficient to fix time in terms of his/her age, stage of event of his/her life.
13. Try to establish at every point where the informant was. Determine his/her role in a particular event. Use photos, documents, props if appropriate.
14. Don't interrupt a good story because you have thought of a question. Jot it down and ask it later.
15. Once you have spent time interviewing the informant and feel comfortable with him/her, once you have established a rapport, then controversial and sensitive matters can be discussed.
16. Avoid stereotype generalizations: "the good old days", "we are one big family". Instead: "What was it like to be living in the North in the 1930's?" "When you were sick, what did you do?"
17. Try to avoid "off the record comment" if possible.
18. Be on your toes! Your list of questions is a guide, not something you must stick to rigidly. The narrator is sure to mention things that you did not know or had not thought of beforehand. Be ready to ask further questions to draw her out on these unexpected subjects.
19. Take advantage of turning the tape over to suggest a break. When ready to continue, you might begin with "You were talking about..."
20. There is no average time for a good interview. It can vary from fifteen minutes to two hours but remember not to exhaust your narrator and make sure that the narrator doesn't ramble on and on! If you have not finished the interview, ask if you can come again, and arrange another date and time. Older people may tire easily and this can lower the quality of your interview. It may be wise to use short sessions separated by a day or so rather than one long session.
21. Remember - there is no such thing as the perfect interview. Don't be discouraged if your tape contains awkward questions or repetition, or if it jumps back and forth from one topic to another. This is the way people recall things. Think of the taped interview as raw material.

Listen to the tape afterwards. Even the most experienced interviewer will spot missed opportunities and things s/he might have done differently. The next interview will be that much better.

## QUESTION FORMATS

The way you word a question will affect the answer you get.

### I. Ask questions that require more than a one-word answer.

- |  |   |
|--|---|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did you go to Sunday School?</li> <li>• Did you sing in the choir?</li> </ul> | <p>What do you remember about Sunday School?</p> <p>How did you spend your Sundays?</p> <p>Describe a typical Sunday.</p> <p>What Church activities were you involved in?</p> |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did you walk to Church?</li> <li>• Do you remember Church picnics?</li> </ul> | <p>How did you travel to Church?</p> <p>Tell me all about Church picnics.</p> <p>What did you like/dislike about Church picnics?</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Did the Church have a Christmas party?</li> </ul>                             | <p>How did the church celebrate Christmas?</p>  |

Start questions with:

Tell me about  
Describe  
What do you remember about  
Explain  
Expand on

### 2. Avoid leading questions. These questions that suggest a particular answer, or influence the narrator to answer a certain way.

- |   |  |
|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I understand Mr. Jones was a wonderful preacher? Do you think so?</li> </ul> | <p>What can you tell me about about Mr. Jones? What did he look like? How did he speak?</p>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• I guess everyone was one big happy family then, eh?</li> </ul>               | <p>How often did you socialize with other Church members?</p> <p>What happened when someone was sick/in trouble?</p> <p>Can you give an example?</p> |

## Questions to ask for a Genealogical Research

Before the interview: test equipment, put person at ease.

1. Identify yourself, your guest, the date, the place, and topic.
2. How many siblings do you have?
3. Who are your parents? Their names, where are they from (native language names)?
4. The grandparents on father's side? The grandparents on mother's side?
5. The parents of grandparents.
6. Father's siblings.
7. Mother's siblings.
8. Father's father's siblings. (paternal grandfather's)
9. Father's mother's siblings.
10. Mother's mother's siblings.
11. Mother's father's siblings.
12. Father's clan.
13. Mother's clan.
14. Other ancestors clans.
15. Native language names.
16. Places where they came from.
17. Attach secondary families on another sheet.
18. Adopted children acknowledged by a bracket.
19. Illegitimate children acknowledged by a bracket (acknowledge father by a bracket).
20. Where Christian beliefs are very strong, put common-law relationships in brackets. In other, treat as legitimate.
21. Birth dates, death dates.

22. Birth places (Where? In log cabins?).
23. Full names, including middle names (nicknames, too).
24. Occupations.
25. Treaty numbers.
26. Banished members.

## **Questionnaire Related to the Work Place**

1. Describe the jobs you held over the years. Include pay (hourly wage, piece work) working conditions, (health and safety, security, place of work, how you felt about the job, seasonally, layoffs, technological changes, what you learned, promotion, various positions held (unskilled labourer to foreman) how you got along with your co-workers (men/women).
2. When did you first become involved with unions?
3. Were you involved with the organization of the union?
4. Tell me about the organization of the union.
5. Tell me about some of the personalities involved.
6. What were some of the issues that led to the creation of the union and/or that the union was concerned with?
7. Do you have any recollection of strikes?
8. Did the union affect the relationship between men and women?
9. Did the relationship change at the foreman, shop floor levels? at higher levels?
10. Did you socialize with other workers in the plant?
11. Would you say most of your friends were people who at one time or another worked with you?
12. Were there any organized social/leisure activities instituted by the company/union?
13. What did you and your co-workers do in your spare time?
14. Where did you live when you worked at the plant?
15. Did any of your co-workers live where you resided?

## **Questionnaire Prepared for the Gilbert Abraham Interview**

1. Do you have any recollections about your early childhood prior to being sent to an Indian residential school?
2. You were 3 years old when you arrived at the Elkhorn residential school. Why were you sent there?
3. Were there any closer schools which you could have attended?
4. When did you come home for visits?
5. How far was Elkhorn from the Fort Alexander Reserve?
6. What were some of your impressions of the Elkhorn Indian Residential School?
7. Who administered the school?
8. Did both boys and girls attend the school? Was there any segregation? Were the girls treated differently?
9. Where did the pupils come from?
10. What sort of things did your teachers emphasize? What did they teach you?
11. What are your present thoughts about the kind of education you were given at the residential school?
12. How did you feel about your teachers? the principal?
13. How did they treat students generally?
14. What are some of the things your teachers disapproved of?
15. Can you describe what would happen?
16. What was the language of instruction at the residential school?
17. What language did you speak outside the classroom?
18. What are some of the things you enjoyed?
19. What are some of the games you played at the school? Did everyone participate?
20. Did you speak any other language?
21. What grade were you in when you left the school? How old were you? Do you

- remember the year? 1936. So you were there \_\_\_\_\_ years.
22. What was the house that you lived in like?
23. Can you describe the inside (layout)? Where you ate, slept, played?
24. What kind of family activities did you engage in (dancing, singing, storytelling, get togethers)? (POW WOW)
25. Were there any special times which you remember? (family gatherings; please describe).
26. Did your family belong to any religion? What can you tell me about religious observances in your family?
27. What did you eat? Did it vary from season to season?
28. What did you do in your leisure time? What kind of amusements did you have?
29. What about other members of your family?
30. What about other people on the reserve?
31. What do you remember about living on the Fort Alexander Indian Reserve?
32. What were the conditions like?
33. Did people on the reserve see themselves as being equal?
34. If not, can you tell me about the different groups which one could find on the reserve when you were living there?
35. Who, if any, were considered the most important people?
36. Did you have any contract with them?
37. Why were they considered important?
38. Did most of the people in the reserve adhere to the same religion?
39. Have things changed any on the reserve?
40. What can you tell me about the Metis who lived in the Fort Alexander Indian Reserve?
41. Now Fort Alexander is within travelling distance of certain communities like Pine Falls and St. George's. What kind of relationship did you personally have with these communities?
42. What about the rest of the people on the reserve?

43. Around 1940-41 you began to work at the Abitibi Pulp Mill in Pine Falls. What did you do there?
44. Did someone train you to do the job you were hired for?
45. What were the working conditions like? The pay?
46. How did you get along with your fellow workers?
47. The people working there, where did they come from?
48. How were you treated by management?
49. Did you lose or ever risk losing your job on account of some of your activities?
50. Was the plant unionized when you worked there? If so, did you take part in its activities? If not, were you involved in movements which sought to improve working conditions at the mill?
51. Did you feel that workers had different interests as far as working conditions were concerned?
52. Did you feel that you as a Treaty Indian were discriminated against? Why? What were the origins of this discrimination?
53. When did you stop working at the Abitibi Pulp Mill? Why?
54. What did you do until 1945 (repeat questions 44-53 if applicable)?
55. Did the end of the war affect you at all?
56. Let's now discuss the period 1945-50 in terms of where you worked and for whom?
57. Now can we talk about what you did between 1950 and 1955? You worked in wood camps (1950); did seasonal work in Pine Falls (1952) and you also worked for the Foundation Co. in Power View. (1952-53). I understand you became the spokesperson for French-speaking workers from Quebec. What was the problem?
58. In 1953 you worked for the North American Construction Co. building a power plant at McArthur Falls.
59. Now you told me that at 5:00 a.m., July 3, 1956, you left the reserve to settle permanently in Winnipeg. Why?

60. Had you been there before?

- 1957 Urban Indian Association
- 1958 Indian-Metis Conferences (established 1954)  
Indian-Metis Referral Centres & Services
- 1959 Indian Metis Friendship Centre Queen's Visit
- 1960-1970 ?
- 1970 Housing Projects
- 1971 Native Alcoholism Council/Foundation
- 1977 Human Rights Commission (Federal Government)

61. During those years, did you also come in contact with various ethno-cultural groups/communities? Black people, Ukrainian, etc.?

62. In 1939, you mentioned you had a dream. Can you tell me about it? What was its significance?

63. Over the years, you have experienced discrimination in the work place. What about law enforcing agencies?

64. Maria Campbell: "the system is to be feared much more than in Nicaragua where the government in power is involved in a war of extermination against certain tribal groups...".

65. What does cultural genocide mean to you?

66. How are Indians treated today?

67. Did your father or grandfather ever speak to you about Windigo?

68. Your grandfather told you something about Louis Riel. Can you relate this story to me?

69. You sang some songs with Maria Campbell...can you sing some of them now?

70. Can you provide me with a summary of the interview in your native language?

71. Do you remember the authorities (who were they) coming to the reserves to gather the children to send them to school?

72. What was the reaction of children? parents?

73. How did the parents feel about their children being away at a residential school for a certain length of time?

74. Your generation has a particular sense of feeling about residential schools and reserves. What about native people 30 or under?

**ORAL HISTORY BIOGRAPHICAL SHEET****Title/Project:** \_\_\_\_\_**Name:** \_\_\_\_\_**Present Address** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_ **Telephone:** \_\_\_\_\_**Birthdate** \_\_\_\_\_ **Birthplace:** \_\_\_\_\_**Father's name:** \_\_\_\_\_**Birthplace** \_\_\_\_\_**Occupation:** \_\_\_\_\_**Mother's name:** \_\_\_\_\_**Birthplace:** \_\_\_\_\_**Occupation:** \_\_\_\_\_**Places Lived/Dates of residence:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**Education: school(s)/university/dates attended/grade or degree completed**\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_**Spouse's name:** \_\_\_\_\_**Occupation :** \_\_\_\_\_**Date of Marriage:** \_\_\_\_\_**Children:** \_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

*(continued)*

**ORAL HISTORY BIOGRAPHICAL SHEET (continued)**

**Present Occupation/Employer:**

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**Previous Occupations/Employers/Dates of employment:**

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**Additional Information:**

**Completed by:** \_\_\_\_\_ **Date:** \_\_\_\_\_

## ORAL HISTORY: THE "OBJECTIVE" INTERVIEWER

"People with a direct involvement in a topic do not necessarily make good interviewers unless they exercise extraordinary discipline."

"Sometimes the person you are interviewing will say something offensive, outrageous or just plain 'wrong', at least in your opinion. Your job here is not to correct, but to understand. That can take great discipline. You can, however, interview people with whom you disagree totally about everything and still get a good interview. You are not signalling that you agree with what they say, but you have heard them...."

"One of the marks of a good interviewer is how little he or she is heard on the tape. This means not chiming in to add details, no matter how familiar you are with the subject."

"For the purpose of the interview, [the interviewer's] perspective is not necessary."

"As in science, we can apply the test of reproducibility of results. Another interviewer, all other things being equal, should be able to get substantially the same interview."

## USE OF EQUIPMENT

1. Practice using the tape-recorder at home. Before the interview, check to make sure it is working. Be sure to take all the parts with you: cord, extension, microphone(s) and batteries and battery tester where necessary.
2. TAKE -- plenty of blank tapes  
a pen or pencil  
a pad of paper  
your list of questions
3. Choose a QUIET ROOM away from all noise and interruption. The hum of a refrigerator, air conditioner or fan, or the noise of a T.V. or radio is magnified on tape, and can spoil your recording.
4. Sit close together with a table in between. Place the microphone on the table, on a piece of cloth. Place it some distance away from the tape recorder. Turn the microphone ON. Do not handle the mic. while recording. The tape recorder should be within easy reach of you - the interviewer.
5. BEFORE STARTING THE INTERVIEW. Record some conversation at normal volume. Reverse and play back to check operation. If necessary, adjust the recording volume, the position of the microphone or of your chairs.
6. USE ONLY NEW TAPES. Do not try to erase used ones.
7. LEAVE SOME BLANK TAPE --at the start of each side and, if possible, also at the end.
8. AVOID TURNING THE RECORDER ON AND OFF during the interview. . Don't worry about wasting some tape during pauses in the conversation. Turning the machine on and off is distracting and risks losing some valuable information. Both questions and answers should be recorded.
9. Be aware of the TIME. As the tape approaches the end of oneside, find a natural break in the conversation to stop and turn it over. Again, do not worry about wasting some tape.
10. NUMBER EACH CASSETTE IMMEDIATELY. Before you leave, finish labelling each as you remove cassette and box with both names, the date and the location of the interview.
11. PUSH OUT THE SAFETY TABS on the cassette. This will prevent anyone from accidentally erasing your interview.

## ORAL HISTORY: An Argument for High Standard in Sound Recording

"In view of what we shall see can be quite considerable outlays for machinery, servicing, tapes and their care and storage, we must explain why this cost-intensive standard is necessary for sound recording and archiving. In contrast to the written and printed word which reproduces a verbalised mental process by a series of representational symbols, a sound recording documents a physical event which can be repeated at any time after the event itself....

"The essential value of a sound document...lies in the very information which it supplies over and above what can be transcribed; such as form and variations in tone, manner of speech, or -- in the field of music -- the timbre, the performance, the subtleties of rhythm.

Here, too, we see more clearly that musical notation provides no more than a framework, just a small part of the total musical message. In the case of noise, however, written symbols cannot provide an adequate substitute for any part of a sound recording.

It is the very information which a transcription simply cannot convey, which provides the criteria and the fundamental argument for high quality sound recording. If, for any reason, the additional information supplied by a sound recording is considered worthless, then the recording is no more than an intermediary substitute for a written record and is not worth keeping. Merely making a voice intelligible or a melody clear enough to be transcribed should not become the sole criterion for technical standards in sound recording. Rather, it should ideally be a question of exhausting all available means to obtain the optimum quality of recording. The value of this ideal is further underlined by the fact that more and more scholars in various fields (musicology, linguistics, psychology) are endeavouring to make this element in sound recording which transcends writing, a subject for serious research."

- D. Schuller, "The Technical Basis of Sound Archive Work", in David Lance, ed., ***Sound Archives: A Guide to Their Establishment and Development*** (International Association of Sound Archives, 1983, pp. 12-13.)

## AGREEMENT REGARDING ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS

I, \_\_\_\_\_, HEREBY AGREE THAT THE \_\_\_\_\_ TAPE RECORDING(S)  
 (Interviewee) (No.)

CONDUCTED ON \_\_\_\_\_ AT \_\_\_\_\_ WILL, SUBJECT TO  
 (Date) (Location)

CANADIAN COPYRIGHT LAW, BECOME THE PROPERTY OF \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Name of Institution)

AND, SUBJECT TO ANY RESTRICTIONS INITIALED BELOW, WILL BE USED

UNDER GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED BY THE \_\_\_\_\_  
 (Name of Repository)

I FURTHER AGREE THAT COPIES OF THE TAPE RECORDING(S) MAY BE GIVEN

TO \_\_\_\_\_ AND, SUBJECT TO THE  
 (Name of Repository)

SAME RESTRICTIONS, WILL BE USED UNDER GUIDELINES ESTABLISHED BY

THAT REPOSITORY.

RESTRICTIONS (Please initial) None \_\_\_\_\_ or \_\_\_\_\_

1. The recording(s) is(are) closed to researchers for \_\_\_\_\_ years. During this period the recordings(s) may be used only with my written permission. \_\_\_\_\_

2. Other: \_\_\_\_\_

I understand that any conditions initialled above apply during my lifetime only and that I will notify the Archives of any change to my address.

SIGNED: \_\_\_\_\_

(Interviewee)

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

AGREED TO: \_\_\_\_\_

(Interviewer)

DATE: \_\_\_\_\_

## **AGREEMENT REGARDING ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWS**

For each person interviewed, a signed Agreement must accompany the tapes. Please ensure that the form is completed in full.

Please indicate the number of years any restrictions are to be in effect, in the space provided.

Both the interviewee and the interviewer must sign the form in the spaces provided.

## ORAL HISTORY TAPE LABELS (SAMPLES)

Label the tape and box as soon as the interview is completed.

"Tape 1 of 9" indicates that a total of 9 tapes were recorded with Gilbert Abraham

All original tape recordings should be marked "Original". Any duplicates should be marked "Copy".

DO NOT edit or alter the original tape recordings in any way.

To prevent accidental erasure push out the safety tabs after recording.

### CASSETTE TAPES FOR VOICE RECORDING:

Good quality, 60 minute (30 minutes per side) cassettes,  
"low noise", "normal bias".

Avoid "high bias" (chrome, metal) tapes.

Manufacturers include 3M (Scotch), Sony, TDK, Maxell, BASF.

Most suppliers offer volume discounts.

**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW SUMMARY**

Title/Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Name (interviewee): \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Interviewer: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of recording: \_\_\_\_\_ Place: \_\_\_\_\_

Restrictions: none \_\_\_\_\_ or: \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_  
Tape no. \_\_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_\_ Side \_\_\_\_\_**Time****SUMMARY**

## ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW SUMMARY

The interview summary is an essential guide to the contents of the tapes. It also provides a written record of names, terms or phrases that may be unfamiliar to future listeners.

For each interview:

Record the approximate elapsed time in minutes:seconds in the left-hand column;  
Summarize the contents in point form opposite the elapsed time.

The following standard practices are recommended:

- verbatim phrases in quotation marks.
- explanatory remarks and information added to the summary by the interviewer, in square brackets.
- inaudible words or segments to be indicated by a question mark in square brackets:  
e.g., John [?] was the hired man.
- questions asked by the interviewer to be included in parentheses ONLY when needed to explain what follows:  
e.g., (Why?)
- breaks in the recording and significant technical problems such as loud background noise, to be noted in square brackets:  
e.g., [break for coffer]

If possible, verify unfamiliar phrases and spellings with the interviewee.

**ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW SUMMARY (continued)**

Title/Project: \_\_\_\_\_

Name: \_\_\_\_\_ Tape no. \_\_\_\_ of \_\_\_\_ Side \_\_\_\_

**Time****SUMMARY**

## ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW SUMMARY

Title/Project: Abraham, Gilbert

Name (interviewee): Abraham, Gilbert

Address: 450 Pacific Avenue, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Tel. 943-2942

Interviewer: Gilbert-L. Comeault (PAM)

Date of recording: 25 October 1985

Place: PAM studio, M.A.B. 200 Vaughan,

Restrictions: none x or: \_\_\_\_\_

Tape no. df II Side A

Time	SUMMARY
00:00	Brief biography of Gilbert Abraham by interviewer. Early childhood
2:38	recollection prior to being sent to Indian Residential school in Elkhorn; arrival at school; feelings of loneliness; taught English and told not to use his native language (Saulteaux); remembers being called a savage and a pagan.
7:10	Explains that he was sent to Elkhorn when his mother died; describes her death and the long trip to the school.
10:32	Remembers coming home to Fort Alexander Indian Reserve only once in the ten years he was there.
10:58	Describes impressions of school, morning drills, clothes he wore, having no shoes during the summer months, the suits and dresses students put on when important visitors came; compares it to today's child abuse.
16:00	Talks about the girls at schools being "fenced in"; describes how the people in town laughed at them when they went to town; how he came to hate himself.
19:00	Comments on different chores and duties which boys and girls had; tells of lost eyesight; explains he was a cattleboy and learned that the herd follows the leader.
22:08	Music and some trades taught in classroom; Tommy Prince one of his heroes and always stood up for him.

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT INTERVIEW LIST

**Project Title:** \_\_\_\_\_

Item No.	Name (interviewer)	Interviewed By:	Date	Duration (min:sec)	Copyright Agreement

## ORAL HISTORY PROJECT INTERVIEW LIST

List the tapes chronologically, by date of interview

Each separate item (i.e., each cassette tape) should be assigned a separate number:  
e.g., the two tapes recorded with Mary H. Thomas in The Pas may be items 6-7 in the  
interview list.

## **Gilbert Abraham fonds**

1985.

11 audio cassettes (10 hrs., 50 min.).

### **Biographical Sketch:**

Gilbert Abraham (1923 - ) is a Treaty Indian originally from the Fort Alexander Indian Reserve. He was born in Pine Falls, Manitoba on June 16, 1923, and was sent to the Elkhorn Indian Residential School at the age of 3. He returned to Fort Alexander in 1936.

From 1936 to 1942 he spent much of his time learning Saulteaux, the language of his ancestry. During this period he worked at or around Fort Alexander at gardening, fishing, hunting, clearing brush and harvesting rice. About 1941-42, he worked at the Manitoba Paper Co. in Pine Falls. In 1942 he married Rachel Elisa Kipling, also a Saulteaux Treaty Indian. Together they raised one son.

After the war Mr. Abraham worked in various places including Pine Falls, Powerview, St. Georges, McArthur Falls and Kenora, Ontario. On July 3, 1956 he left the Reserve to live permanently in Winnipeg. From 1956 until he was incapacitated by an injury in 1979, he worked at the Ideal Decorating and Sandblasting Co., the City of Winnipeg Engineering Department, the Winnipeg Art Gallery, the Health Sciences Centre, Deer Lodge Hospital and for the Government of Manitoba.

Since 1956 Mr. Abraham has been involved with a number of organizations including the Treaty Indian Movement, the Urban Indian Association, the annual Indian and Metis Conferences, the Indian and Metis Friendship Centre and the Native Alcoholism Council. He represented the native people of Manitoba on the occasion of the Queen's visit to Manitoba in 1959.

### **Scope and Content:**

This series of interviews with Gilbert Abraham was conducted by Gilbert-L. Comeault as part of the Provincial Archives of Manitoba's oral history programme. The interviews were recorded at the Provincial Archives in October and November, 1985. They take the form of a life history.

Finding aids are detailed interview summaries.

### **Notes:**

- Title based on provenance of fonds.
- Accession number(s):
- Agreement date: .
- Researchers are responsible for observing Canadian copyright restrictions.  
Permission is required from Gilbert Abraham to access a segment of the interview.
- GLC, July 1999.
- C279 - C287

- C279      Item 1.    Childhood recollections; experiences at Elkhorn Indian Residential School, including punishment and abuse; relationship with his older brother; Tommy Prince; return to Reserve at age 13; first encounter with Metis children.
- C280            2.    Some happy experiences at Elkhorn School; mealtime; mother's death; his Indian name and nicknames; discovery of Indian heritage; relationship with grandmother; school sports; description of school buildings; sanitation.
- C28            3.    Removal from school by his father; relationship with his father, step-mother, half-brothers and sisters; relationship with grandfather, and influence of his stories of nature and Louis Riel, skills learned from father.
- C282            4.    Responsibilities at home on Reserve; division of labour in family; dances, weddings; reasons for increase in alcohol abuse on Reserve; drinking at school; housing on Reserve; built his own frame house, 1945; social changes on Reserve
- C283            5.    First encounter with Metis boys on return from school, history of Indian Treaties; recollections of Treaty Days; the Indian identity; relationship of Indians with surrounding communities of Pine Falls, St. Georges, Lac Du Bonnet, Lee River; Anglican and Oblate Missionaries on Reserve.
- C284            6.    Changes caused by Depression, War; work and union activities at Manitoba Paper Co. mill, Pine Falls; effect of end of War on Indians' jobs: marriage.
- C285            7.    Adoption of son; employment 1950-55; Foundation Co., Powerview; North American Construction Co.; move to Winnipeg, 1956; discrimination in City; Treaty Indian Movement, later Urban Indian Association; Indian and Metis Friendship Centre.
- C286            8.    Treaty Indian Movement's original goals; Indian and Metis Conference 1958; Referral Centre; Manitoba Metis Federation; Native Alcoholism Council, 1972; employment with City of Winnipeg; alcoholism; reflections on his childhood and personal struggle; views on sex education for young people.
- C287            9.    Reasons for leaving job with City, 1969; fight with alcoholism; involvement with Native Alcoholism Council and Bill 74; job at Civic Auditorium and dismissal; work at Pincock Unit counselling alcoholics; employment as an orderly at General Hospital; observations of native people in hospital.

## BASIC RAD / L'ESSENTIEL DES RDDA

*[Numbers in bold face indicate the relevant section of the RAD manual. Asterisks (\*) indicate required elements / Les chiffres indiquent les sections pertinentes du manuels des RDDA. Les astérisques indiquent les éléments essentiels.]*

- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 1.1    | Titre / Titre*   |
| 1.4    | Dates / Dates*   |
| 1.5    | Extent / Étendue*  |
| 1.7B1  | Administrative history / Histoire administrative*<br><br>Dates of founding/dissolution / Date de création ou de dissolution<br>Mandate/sphere of functional responsibility / Mandats/champs de responsabilités<br>Predecessor and successor bodies / Organismes prédécesseurs ou successeurs<br>Administrative relationships / Relations entre établissement<br>Administrative structure / Structure administrative<br>Names of corporate bodies / Nom des personnes morales<br>Name(s) of chief officers / Nom des membres de la direction<br>Other significant information / Autres informations |
| 1.7B2  | Biographical Sketch / Notice biographique*<br><br>Names and vital events / Noms et faits saillants<br>Place of residence / Lieux de résidence<br>Education / Études<br>Occupation, life and activities / Occupations, vie et activités<br>Other significant information / Autres informations  |
| 1.7C   | Custodial History / Historique de la conservation  |
| 1.7D   | Scope and content / Portée et contenu*   |
| 1.8B2  | Source of Supplied Title / Source du titre composé propre  |
| 1.8B9  | Physical description / Collation   |
| 1.8B13 | Arrangement / Classement   |
| 1.8B16 | Restrictions / Restrictions  |
| 1.8B19 | Accruals / Versements complémentaires  |

Linking Elements/ Groupes de documents reliés à l'intérieurs de fonds différents

## PRESERVATION OF ORAL HISTORY TAPES

Disadvantages of cassette tapes for preservation: see example

- very thin, narrow tapes resulting in less oxide on smaller base and fragility
- adhesive compound kept to a minimum causing drop-off of oxide particles
- slow tape speed (1 7/8 ips), compared to 3 3/4 ips or 7 1/2 ips on reel-to-reel
- jamming more likely
- good quality on first playbacks but tendency to fall dramatically after repeated use

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<u>reel-to-reel</u> <u>1.5 mil polyester backing</u>	<u>C60 cassettes</u>
width: 6.3 mm	width: 3.81
thickness: 1.92 mil	thickness: .66 mil
tensile strength: 8.8 lb/ .25 sq. cm	tensile strength: 3 lb/ .25 sq. cm

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C90 and C120 cassettes EVEN THINNER: NOT RECOMMENDED

INTERVIEWS RECORDED ON CASSETTES MUST BE TRANSFERRED TO REEL-TO-REEL

1.5 mil POLYESTER "MASTER" TAPES FOR LONG-TERM STORAGE.

Aim is to preserve physical object (tape) and sonic content.

**Sonic deformation:**

## 1. "print-through"

Factors: tape tension, thickness, temperature, record level.

-avoid high record level

-use thicker tape with backing

-stored tape should be wound at normal record/play speed (fast forward and reverse cause high, uneven tension).

wound evenly (ridges indicate uneven tension)

periodically rewind

## 2. "drop-outs"

Factors: quality of tape, dust, finger-prints, dirt on heads and rollers

-handle tape with gloves

-maintain equipment

**Storage of tapes:**

1. Vertically on shelves, away from any source of a strong magnetic field.

2. STABLE temperature and humidity (15/18 degrees C.; 35% RH  $\pm$  5%)

Low humidity is important, as is avoiding changes/cycling.

These cause expansion/contraction, leading to distortion, breakage of tape.

High temp and humidity -- fungal attack; decomposition of materials from chemical changes.

3. Dust-free environment: closed containers

-positive-pressure storage area

## **BASIC EQUIPMENT SUPPLY LIST AND RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **General**

- binder for handouts
- chronometer (stop watch) or digital watch
- equipment needs to be well maintained, serviced periodically, mechanics cleaned regularly and heads demagnetized where applicable

### **Audio**

- audio cassette player with earphones
- audio cassette recorder with two (2) microphone outlets, manual recording mode, and two (2) external lapel or table condenser microphones (for oral history)
- battery tester
- cassette recorder equipped with high speed dubbing
- C60 audio cassette tapes with plastic box and labels (low noise, good quality, normal bias and screw type)

### **Industrial AV Equipment & Supplies:**

Advance Professional Electronics  
1300 Portage Avenue  
Winnipeg MB R3G 0V1  
Phone (204) 772-0386  
Fax: (204) 783-2177

Bluewater Sound  
Unit 17-1865 Sargent  
Winnipeg MB R3H 0E4  
Phone: (204) 786-6715  
Fax: (204) 783-5805  
(Audio Equipment)

Healy Visual Inc.  
938 Erin Street  
Winnipeg MB R3G 2W5  
Phone (204) 772-9638  
Fax (204) 772-9645

Inland Audio Visual  
1781 Wellington Avenue  
Winnipeg MB R3H 0G2  
Phone: (204) 786-6521  
Fax: (204) 783-6281

Quantegy International.  
1700 Argentina Road  
Mississauga ON L5N 3S7  
(Reel-to-reel tape)  
Contact J. R. Pariselli  
Phone. (604) 853-4421  
Fax. (604) 853-3377

# EQUIPMENT LOAN AGREEMENT

The undersigned \_\_\_\_\_ representing \_\_\_\_\_  
(Borrower) (Organization)

is hereby granted permission to borrow the following Manitoba Government owned equipment:

Quantity	Description	Model No.	Serial No.
1			
2			
1			

**The borrower agrees to the following conditions:**

Duration of the loan will be from \_\_\_\_\_ to \_\_\_\_\_.

**Purpose of the loan is to** \_\_\_\_\_

Location where equipment will be used \_\_\_\_\_

The oral history interview(s) will be made available to archives, museums, library or other public institutions which make information available to the general public.

**The cassettes will be properly labelled and numbered.**

The interviewer(s) will provide the accepting institution with a list of the taped interviews, indicating the name of the interviewee(s) and the date and the location of the interview(s).

The interviewer(s) will obtain a release agreement signed by him/her/them and the interviewee(s) as to conditions of access.

**The interviewer(s) is/are encouraged to prepare tape summaries of the interviews.**

The equipment is to be returned to a Provincial Archives staff on date specified at borrowers expense.

The equipment is to be returned in the condition it was received (normal wear excepted). Damage, breakage or loss of equipment is the responsibility of the borrower and is to be reported to the Provincial Archives of Manitoba. The borrower undertakes to reimburse the Government of Manitoba for repair and/or replacement costs of the lost or damaged equipment as determined by the Provincial Archives.

The borrower hereby undertakes to indemnify and save harmless the Government of Manitoba, its officers and servants and agents from and against all manners of actions, claims and demands whatsoever which may hereafter exist or be made for or by reason of any cause, matter or thing whatsoever arising out of the loan agreement and the transportation or operation of the equipment therein referred to.

\_\_\_\_\_  
Signature of Borrower

\_\_\_\_\_  
Street

\_\_\_\_\_  
City/Town

\_\_\_\_\_  
Postal Code

( )  
\_\_\_\_\_  
Telephone

\_\_\_\_\_  
for the Provincial Archives of Manitoba  
200 Vaughan Street  
Winnipeg MB R3C 1T5  
City//Town Postal Code  
(204) 945-1269 or 945-1270

## **Oral and Video History at the Minnesota Historical Society**

### **Statement of Purpose for Video Oral History Program**

1. To add a visual dimension to selected oral history interviews, with emphasis on providing visual information that amplifies an audio interview with the same narrator.
2. To provide visual contact for narrators and the subjects they discuss.
3. To develop teaching aids from both interview and cover videotape footage that will provide instruction to participants in the Society's oral history workshops and seminars.
4. To develop edited videotape features that will heighten understanding of the Society's oral history program by both the general public and potential funding agencies.
5. To build an archive of broadcast quality videotape interviews and cover footage for research use.

## **Questions to ask before doing a Video Interview**

1. What is the purpose of the video interview?
  - a. Will it be part of a finished "program"?
  - b. Will it mainly be for research and reference and typically viewed in its entirety?
  - c. Why do you need moving images and visual elements?
  - d. How does the purpose support the goals and objectives of your project and/or organization?
2. What is your budget? How can you make the most of it? Do you want to emphasize technical quality (best camera, best format) and good editing or do you want to create the greatest number of interview you can afford?
3. Who is the audience?
4. Where and how will the video be used? Where will the master be preserved?
5. Is Video the correct medium? (as opposed to slide/tape program or audio only interview?)
6. What visuals will add information and interest to the interview?
7. Where will the interview be taped? (studio, home, office, outdoors).
8. How will the video interview be made known and/or distributed?

## Video Personnel

Any kind of video recording requires certain types of jobs be done. In smaller scale efforts such as oral history there are the same number of jobs just fewer people taking on more responsibilities. The following is a list of traditional video production jobs with their responsibilities and how they relate to oral history.

**Producer** – project supervision; narrator selection; site selection; crew selection.

Person in charge of overall video project (not just a single shoot). Defines the project. Chooses the people who will serve in other roles. The historian will serve this role by selecting any crew and the narrators to be included in a history project. The historian will also scout the site of the interview to make sure it is suitable for the interview.

**Director** – shoot manager; narrator relations; shot selection.

Person in charge of the video shoot. Deals with the technical people; directs the camera, chooses and composes the shots, suggests background video, oversees the audio. Responsible for problem solving. Instructs the talent (in this case the narrator). An oral historian will either serve in this role or work VERY closely with the director.

**Grip** – Equipment handling.

The grip assists others in the set-up and tear down of their equipment; camera, tripod, lights, etc. The historian will most likely act as a grip to some extent for the interview.

**Camera Operator** – Camera set-up; camera operation.

The camera operator will run the camera during the interview. This includes composing shots for the interview, focusing and following any activity that takes place during the interview. If there is to be any background or exterior shots the camera operator will also shoot these. The grip will help the camera operator in any transport of the camera equipment needed. If there is a director present the camera will follow the director's instructions, if there is no director then they will use their own discretion. The historian must make their requirements clear in order to get the images they desire.

**Sound Technician** – Audio Set-up; recorder operation; audio level control; monitor tape remaining.

This person is responsible for the set-up of the audio side of the interview. This includes mincing the historian and the narrator, setting proper mica levels for the interview and maintaining them during the interview. The sound technician also monitors the recorder during the interview to be sure it is recording and warns others when the end of the tape is near. The sound technician may also be the grip.

**Editor** – Operate editor.

Person who will operate editing equipment to do any editing required for the program. May be the historian or a technical person directly under the direction of the historian.

## **Interview Set-Ups**

All of these responsibilities must be taken care of in some manner. For the oral history interview it will most likely be done as a one- two- or three-person set-up.

### **One person crew (Oral Historian as operator/interviewer)**

The most demanding set-up would be a one-person set-up with the historian acting as the entire crew. This is a very demanding and limiting way of interviewing. The historian is taking on the responsibility of handling all equipment operations including transport, set-up and operation. Either the camera must be unattached during the interview or the interviewer must split his/her attention between camera and the narrator. An immediate trade-off takes place between attention to the narrator and attention to the equipment.

At the time of set-up the interviewer must ask the narrator to wait while equipment is set-up. Along with the camera there should be at least be: a tripod and microphone (separate from the camera). The interviewer would position the narrator as they will be during the interview, compose the picture, set the focus on the camera and adjust the audio (interviewer's and narrator's) all before the interview can take place.

The interviewer must decide what approach they will use for the interview. They may wish to simply conduct the interview while the equipment (hopefully) runs in the background. In this case the interviewer concentrates attention on the narrator to conduct the best interview from the standpoint of content. The risk is that the narrator will move out of the picture by slumping, shifting to one side or moving in some direction. A narrator may gesture off-screen costing the video some of its impact and value. If the interviewer tries to operate the camera they must juggle their duties as camera operator and interviewer. Sitting back behind the camera will damage the relationship between the narrator and the historian. As a camera operator they will most likely respond slowly to any necessary camera adjustments. As interviewer they will be distracted, they may not ask important follow-up questions. If at all off-mica they will sound distant possibly even like they are shouting at their narrators.

### **Two person crew (interviewer and operator)**

The next possibility is to separate the interviewer from equipment operation. In this arrangement one individual is dedicated to each side of the camera. For the purposes of set-up the operator may be assisted by the narrator. One function the interviewer will serve is to occupy the narrator during set-up, making the narrator comfortable with the process.

During the interview the interviewer can concentrate on the content of the interview while the operator maintains focus, makes sure the tape is running and monitors the audio. If the interview is more ambitious the operator may recompose the picture for visual variety.

### Three person crew

The next major division of responsibilities would be between camera and sound. The interviewer would possibly assist during set-up but during the interview would be able to give 100 per cent to the narrator. Behind the camera one person would serve as camera operator and the other would serve as sound technician.

### Equipment List:

Camera and Videorecorder or Camcorder – of course the first piece of equipment required for videotaping is the camera and deck chosen for the interview and plenty of tapes for recording.

Tripod – An absolute requirement for steady video, especially as interview length grows.

Microphones – Also an absolute must, as in audio-only recording separate microphones should always be utilized for better audio quality.

Lights – May be required for shooting in some situations. Interviewer should know when and how to use.

Cassette recorder – Standard audio recorder for back-up.

Monitor – To insure image quality a video monitor can be used to view the image during the interview. The screen size will be larger than the camera's viewfinder and in color.

Extension cords – for power to equipment. Should be on hand even when planning to use batteries.

Batteries – Although AC is recommended (so slow battery failure will not ruin the interview), batteries should be available for shooting background material or outside, etc.

### Videotaping Terms and Features:

Camcorder – A unit including a video camera and self-contained videorecorder.

Camera:

**Pick-up Device; CCD MOS** – The imaging device of the camera that translates light into electronic signals for recording. The two types are CCD (Charged Coupling Device) and MOS (Metal Oxide Semiconductor). Some cameras still use picture tubes.

**Pixels** – The picture elements of an imaging device. Higher numbers mean the video is divided into smaller units, yielding greater detail.

**Iris** – The control of the opening for light to strike the imaging device.

**Aperture** – The size of the opening created by the iris.

**Lux Rating** – A rating for the smallest amount of light in which the camera can be used and still record a usable image. (Expressed in footcandles).

**Auto Focus; TTL, Infrared** – A camera that adjusts itself for proper focus. May be TTL (through-the-lens) or Infrared.

**Auto White Balance** – A camera setting for automatically adjusting to proper color temperature.

**Power Zoom** – A mechanical zoom control that adjusts focal length smoothly at the touch of a button. May be adjustable to more than one speed.

**Zoom Ratio** – The range a camera has in focal length. Higher ratios mean increased ability to make distant subjects seem closer.

**Macro** – A camera lens setting to get very close to an object while maintaining focus.

**Shutter Speed** – Higher shutter speeds are used to prevent image smearing during fast motion.

#### Recorder:

**Horizontal Resolution** – The number of visible lines used to make up the video picture. Higher numbers are in indication of a sharper more detailed image.

**Flying Erase Heads** – Special heads on the head drum to erase previously recorded material to create a smooth transition to the new material.

**HiFi/AFM/PCM** – Enhancements for the audio portion of video recording. HiFi recording, AFM (Amplitude Frequency Modulation) and PCM (Pulse Code Modulation) are three of these.

**Fade (-to-Black/-to-White)** – A feature for putting printed information over the top of the other video information.

**Titling/CG/Superimpose** – A feature for putting printed information over the top of the other video information.

**Digital Effects** – Digitized video information used to create special effects such as a dissolve from the last frame of video of one segment (digitally frozen) to a second moving video image.

**S-Connector** – A special connector used by the high resolution formats (S-VHS, Hi8 & ED-Beta) to maintain their superior performance.

**Remote Control** – A feature on some units to help it be used as a home deck.

**Self-timer** – A feature common to still cameras to get the photographer into the picture by delaying the start up of a recording segment.

**EIS** – A feature designed to steady camera movement (Electronic Image Stabilization).

**Index Search System** – A feature for finding segments of video information easily.

**Time code** – A professional feature that assigns a number to each frame of a video for use during editing.

**Time lapse** – A feature used to record an event in a uniform manner over an extended period of time.

### Editing:

**Assemble (Editing)** – A type of editing where the edited tape is “assembled” in a linear fashion from beginning to end one piece at a time. A basic example would be recording opening titles for a tape, then copying the raw interview, and ending with the closing titles.

**Insert (Editing)** – A feature of an editor that can substitute new video or audio over the original material while maintaining a stable recording without glitches.

**Control Track** – The information in a video information. Causes the editor to stop functioning.

**Pre-Roll** – The amount of time the camcorder or VCR needs to run to reach a stable speed. In recording it is essential to let the recorder run 10 seconds before the interview actually begins, and again after each pause so that the editing equipment will function properly.

**Cut** – A simple transition in video that butts one video image up against another.

**Jump Cut** – A cut from one image to a very similar image. Repeated jump cuts may be jarring to the viewer.

**Special Effects** – Video manipulation used to show more than one image at a time, usually used for transitions.

**Fade** – A quick transition from one image to another in which both images are seen overlapping for a short time.

**Dissolve** – Similar to a fade but with a longer transition period.

**Wipe** – An effect in which one image pushes another off the screen.

**Digital Special Effects** – Special electronics that freeze the last frame of a video image and overlap it into new video information to create special effects such as the fade, dissolve or wipe.

## Videotaped Oral History Interview Series Shot List

### Minnesota Resort Economy Oral History Project

Reel#/Time Code	Description
<b>Driftwood Resort</b>	
01:00:25	color bars
01:00:30	dining hall; Driftwood Family Resort
01:00:39	pan right to show dining hall fireplace and tables
01:01:03	return to dining hall shot
01:01:10	pan right again
01:01:26	close-up of stained glass dining hall windows
01:01:34	pan right across picture on fireplace mantle to more stained glass
01:01:57	close-up of table flowers with stone fireplace in background
01:02:08	extreme close-up of fresh peonies on table
01:02:27	close-up of other plants in dining hall
01:02:37	shot of antique wares in wooden wall cases
01:02:54	return to original dining hall shot
01:03:06	shot of Driftwood shoreline, including lakeside cabin
01:03:17	pan left to main Driftwood lodge
01:03:33	return to shot of Driftwood shoreline with cabin
01:03:45	pan left again
01:04:03	pan right across small putting green to shot of lake
01:04:23	shot of Driftwood beach area with water toys, fishing boats & dock
01:04:36	pan left across large bay
01:04:46	pan right across bay back to Driftwood beach
01:05:06	close-up of beach area with fishing boats and water toys
01:05:27	close-up of fisherman fishing in the bay
01:05:43	close-up of opposite shoreline
01:05:53	powerboat enters picture of opposite shoreline
01:06:04	catching fish, and returning it
01:06:31	zoom to show Driftwood dock, fishing boat with father and son, and lake view
01:07:22	close-up of guests on Driftwood lodge deck
01:07:40	extreme close-up of Mr. Leagjeld, Driftwood's owner, sitting on deck conversing with his guests
01:08:10	shot of swinging bench with forest in background
01:08:29	close-up of guests on deck with Mr. Leagjeld
01:09:02	close-up of stationary bench next to cabin

## Ten Statements Video Oral Historians Should Never be Heard Making

1. "I can do it all by myself." Nope. Quality video production is always a group effort. It is impossible for one person to conduct an interview, run a camera at the same time, and come away with excellent results. Interviewees move about requiring camera adjustments and refocusing. Audio levels require constant attention. Concentrate on the interview and leave the technical problems to your camera and sound people. Reserve the one-person operation for home movies.
2. "We'll wing it." This expression should only be used to describe the mode of transportation to an interview site. It should never apply to video production which is far too complicated to produce reliable results. The more you prepare—the more you anticipate—the better your results. This is particularly true from a technical standpoint, as it is for content, in most cases.
3. "There's no need for site survey." Yes, and arrive for production to discover your interview takes place directly above an open-air child car center? Or that Tuesday is when the landscapers mow the lawn? Or that there is only one AC outlet and it powers the tropical fish tank pump and light? If at all possible, check the production site ahead of time. Select location with care, and try to anticipate all that could go wrong. And ask questions. "When do they polish the floor? Where is the fuse box? Will someone be here to unlock the building?"
4. "Forget the audio interview beforehand: this is hot stuff!" Sometimes, audio interviews in advance aren't necessary. But most of the time they are incredibly valuable. They prepare interviewees. They allow you to be selective about the content. It gives you time to collect and review visual materials. It is inexpensive, compared to video. Interview to your heart's, and budget's desire. Then, record what you want on videotape.
5. "We shouldn't need more than a half-hour to set up." You always need more than that to set up. Just hauling the equipment takes half an hour. Then assembling it and making sure it is working takes a lot more. Also, there will always be problems that slow you down: hum on an audio line, furniture rearrangement, to name but a couple.
6. "No need to bring the tripod." No. Don't come back from a shoot with unstable pictures. They'll drive you crazy. Even if the cameraperson is rock solid, it is impossible to hold a camera steady for longer than a few seconds. Keep hand-held work for moving shots and put the camera on a tripod for everything else.

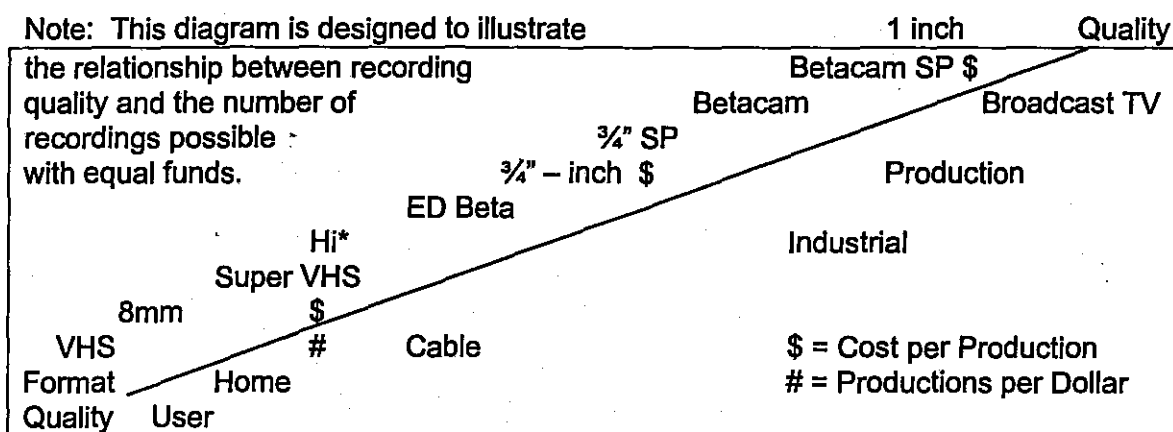
7. "We'll just use the camera mike." Yes, and get awful sound! Camera mikes pick up ambient sound but are never right for an interview. Your interviewee will sound distant and you'll record extraneous sound, including mechanical adjustments made to the camera and chatter among the crew. Invest in quality lavalier mikes and reserve the camera mike for ambient sound only.
8. "It would be fun to do the interview out-of-doors!" Oh, no, it wouldn't. The pitfalls of exterior production are many and varied: harsh, overhead sunlight, barking dogs, neighbors, planes, to name a few. The much safer bet is indoors interviewing.
9. "Let's zoom some more." Put a camera in a person's hands for the first time and he or she will inevitably zoom here, zoom there, and zoom everywhere. (As well as pan and tilt.) Professional camera people keep camera movement to a minimum. The zoom is unnatural to human eyes and becomes tiresome and dizzying when overused. Moreover, it is awkward to edit between moving shots—a consideration if records are incorporated in a program.
10. "Uh huh. Really? Oh, my! I see!" These are helpful aids to a conversation, but anathema if an oral history recording is ever to be edited. In such cases, the interviewer is eliminated. But that's impossible if your interjections accompany—or, worse, override and obscure—an interviewee's statements. Develop the practice of remaining silent between questions, even if you run the risk of disconcerting some people. Explain the interviewees why you will remain quiet, then offer supportive non-verbal communication to compensate for your silence.

Excerpted with permission from the Fall, 1991 issue of the OHMAR Newsletter.

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Note: This diagram is designed to illustrate

the relationship between recording quality and the number of recordings possible with equal funds.



### Format Performance Comparison

Format	S/N 3	Running Time 1	Resolution 2	Audio
	full size/mini	Introduced	OEM 4	
		lines	standard/enhanced	
3/4-inch	90/20	260	48	1971 JVC Sony
Betamax	120	250	48/72	1975 Sony
VHS	120/30	240	45/72	1976 Panasonic JVC
8mm	120	250	70	1986 Canon Sony
3/4"-inch SP	60/20	340	52/72	1986 Sony
ED-Beta	120	500	70	1986 Sony
S-VHS	120/30	400	44/91	1988 JVC Panasonic
Hi 8	120	400	60	1989 Canon Sony

1. At standard (best quality) running speed.
2. In Horizontal lines, a major factor in picture quality, the higher the better.
3. Signal-to-Noise ratio, a major factor in audio quality, the greater the better.
4. Original Equipment Manufacturer (not comprehensive).
5. Enhancements; for 1/2 Inch formats - HiFi for 3/4-Inch SP - Dolby C Noise Reduction.

## PROVINCIAL ARCHIVES OF MANITOBA

### *Oral History: The Spoken Record*

Jocelyn McKillop

In this century the tape recorder has made it possible to record the first-hand experiences of individuals in their own words. Its possibilities for historians, archivists, and museologists are only beginning to be realized.

It is often pointed out that the use of oral sources is as old as history itself, and that the more or less exclusive emphasis on written sources in historical writing sources is a relatively recent phenomenon.<sup>1</sup> This bias toward the written document was a result of the development of professional academic history in the nineteenth century. The rule "no documents, no history", which has influenced the way most professional historians approach their work, made practical sense at a time when constitutional, diplomatic and military history, along with the biographies of statesmen and generals, were considered of primary importance.

At the same time, nineteenth century scholarship left an important legacy which has a bearing on the collection and use of primary sources. This is the emphasis on training in methods of research, the insistence on the careful and rigorous use of sources, and the principle that others must be able to examine the same sources in order to correct or revise previous interpretations. It was the same era that produced the professional archivist, whose practice is based on the related principle that the historical evidence and information contained in records cannot be properly interpreted without knowing the circumstances of the records' origin and preservation: who created them, what function they served, and how they came to be preserved in their present form and situation. These principles apply to all records, regardless of physical form, and they have implications for anyone involved with oral history.

In the twentieth century various social and political developments have led to a fundamental change in the way history is written and understood. Accompanying this

has been a revival of interest in non-manuscript sources such as material artefacts, photographs, and oral history records. The emergence from colonial status of developing societies without a written tradition, interest in the Resistance and other popular and political movements which by nature were without records, and the post-war strengthening of the labour movement, the women's movement and the aboriginal rights movement, are some of the factors involved in this change. There has also been a renewed contact between history and other social sciences such as sociology, anthropology and political theory.

Social history has developed on the assumption that "ordinary" people and their everyday experience are important areas of enquiry and that no account of history which ignores them can be considered complete. Social historians want to know about people's childhood and family life; how they dressed and what they are; what their work involved and what they did in their leisure time; their relationship to community, employer, and state; and their beliefs and expectations. They also want to know about ordinary people's experience of major events like a war or a depression; their involvement in political movements; their experience of migration and settlement or of their changing urban neighbourhood. Underlying this is the belief that one of the historian's tasks is to reconstruct what life was like and to understand the individual in relation to the particular historical context in which s/he lived.

With these developments has come a renewed interest in oral history as a means of investigating the past, and of enriching and supplementing existing records. Oral history has helped make possible the study of subjects for which the written record is inadequate or nonexistent. Some groups - women, children, and native people for example - have generally had neither the means nor the opportunity to create written records, and information about them has been limited to statistics or the observations of outsiders. In some cases the written records on which historians have depended for a glimpse of daily life in another age - such as the enquiries into social conditions carried out in nineteenth century England - were based on oral communication which was written down, in an abbreviated and interpreted form, by an investigator. Because oral history gives a direct voice to the "silent", the poor, and the unorganized, it has been seen as a corrective to the built-in tendency of written records to represent the views and

activities of elites in society.

Perhaps most important, the tape recorder has made it possible to create a permanent and precise record of the spoken word in all its richness and authenticity.

The controversy over the legitimacy of oral sources which has preoccupied the supporters of oral history in recent years shows signs of being laid to rest. As Paul Thompson has written, "neither oral nor written evidence can be said to be superior; it depends on the context".<sup>2</sup> While a written document created in the course of an official's activities is certainly the primary document, a tape recording is a far more reliable record of a meeting than the written minutes. As George Ewart Evans concluded from his work in recording the skills of rural people, the craftsman's testimony is much more accurate than the average printed source. "He is, moreover, able to give a fuller account, with all the local variations, of his craft; and in the process of describing it he uses a wealth of vocabulary and illustration that does not often find its way into the more concentrated written descriptions that are concerned with technique alone."<sup>3</sup>

The objections most often raised by sceptics are the common sense ones that memory is not reliable, that recollections are biased and selective, and that individual interviews are not necessarily representative. In grappling with these and other challenges, the practitioners of oral history have developed a better grasp of its strengths and weaknesses and a more sophisticated approach to creating and using recorded interviews. It is useful to mention some of the points that have emerged from these discussions and from the practical experience of "oral historians" over the last few decades.

First, it should be stated that oral history is not a separate branch of history, but a method that can be used in other fields as well, and in conjunction with other sources. The tape recorder is not a substitute for other kinds of research, but when it is used together with photographs, written records, and published sources, each part of the research is enhanced.

As for the reliability of oral sources, it should be remembered that they require the same critical assessment that is applied to any other source. Bias and inaccuracies of one

kind or another are present in all types of documents. Written records, like memories, are incomplete and selectively preserved. In both cases the information they contain must be carefully interpreted and corroborated by other sources.

Related to this is the fact that oral history is most useful for gathering certain kinds of information. It is not the best way to establish a chronology of events and similar "factual" details, since on these matters the human memory is least reliable. Repeated activities of daily life are remembered better than unusual events, and details in which the informant has an interest - such as the natural landmarks that are of crucial importance to an Inuit hunter - are more reliable than other types of information. While there are some notable exceptions, in most cases direct personal experience is more dependable than second-hand information or hearsay. It is in this area that the individual is the real expert. Who else can give a more authentic account of his own childhood, his own living conditions, what his work involved, his own relationship with family members, his own attitudes and beliefs? Even when information is deliberately or unconsciously distorted or suppressed, what is said can provide valuable social or psychological information, and this is an important dimension of the oral account. As Paul Thompson put it, "stories which are not literally true may be socially important because others believe them. Other stories may be of value for their incidental details or for their symbolic meaning, rather than for the narrative itself".<sup>4</sup>

It should also be noted that the value of the information will be affected by the way the interview is conducted. The interviewer must have a thorough knowledge of the subject in order to ask informed questions that are appropriately phrased and historically relevant. S/he must be able to guide the discussion without influencing it by imposing her own views. S/he must be able to enlist the informant's co-operation and encourage an atmosphere that is conducive to recall. In addition, s/he must be knowledgeable enough to recognize and pursue an unanticipated but significant topic when it arises.

While the interview is inevitable affected in some way by the relationship between interviewer and informant, it is essential for the interviewer to be aware of her role in the process and to minimize its liabilities. Because these skills are acquired mainly through experience it is best for organizations conducting oral history projects to limit the number

of interviewers and develop their expertise over the long term.

Oral history interviews will also be most valuable for future research if they are properly documented. Accurate labels and written summaries of the contents are necessary if the information is to be easily accessible. To interpret the material, researchers must also know how the tape was created and who was involved. Biographical information about the informant is essential, and any other documentation produced in the course of the project, such as a written proposal, correspondence, or question sets, should be collected in a file to accompany the tapes. For the same reason, the complete, unedited tape recording should be preserved as an original document. In these respects, the collection of oral history for research and archival purposes differs markedly from the practice of some popular writers whose names have become identified with oral history.<sup>5</sup>

Finally, there is the issue of representativeness. For oral history projects whose purpose is to document whole communities or populations, the sampling methods developed by social scientists have been used to select informants in a way that ensure the proportionate representation of different groups and points of view, and provides safer grounds for generalization.<sup>6</sup> At the same time, the story of a single individual has its own intrinsic value and is always representative in some respects. Such accounts may be so rich and vivid that they merit recording apart from a larger group study. No historian familiar with the importance of various isolated written memoirs can question the value of recorded life histories of this kind. It is one of the strengths of oral history that it documents both what is unique and what is common in an individual's experience.

Oral history has a variety of uses, and the way a project is designed will partly depend on its purpose. In academic fields such as history, anthropology, folklore and linguistics, it may be applied to specific research projects. It can also be valuable for community projects and family history, or for general archival collecting where the recordings will have long-term value for a variety of potential users. In the museum oral history can play an important role in the collection and documentation of artefacts, and can also be used as an audio component in the interpretation of exhibits.<sup>7</sup>

Oral history need not be limited to professional researchers - there are many fine examples of projects carried out by trained individuals and groups in community settings.

All the same, it is demanding work and a successful project requires careful planning and special resources. Anyone considering such a project should first consider whether this is the best way to achieve their goals. Is oral history the best way to gather the type of information you need, or are other sources more appropriate or reliable? What is the relationship of this project to other projects and to existing records: is there adequate material for background research, and will you be collecting new material or duplicating information that is readily available? Is the project feasible given your time and resources, and the availability of suitable informants?

Certain basic procedures are recommended for any project. First, the purpose and scope of the project should be clearly defined. Identify the subject, the themes and issues to be investigated, and the anticipated short - and long - term uses of the tapes. Decide on the optimum number of interviewers (in many cases one if sufficient) and select them on the basis of their experience, interpersonal skills, knowledge of the subject, and research abilities.

Plan the duration of the project and estimate the number of persons to be interviewed and the total number of interview hours. Here, several factors should be taken into account. Background research is of crucial importance and the average project may spend forty percent of its time on this. Allow sufficient time for the post-interview work as well: arrangement and labelling of the tapes and the preparation of written interview summaries are essential tasks which take at least as much time as the interviews themselves. In estimating how many interviews are feasible, keep in mind that a smaller number of extensive interviews is more valuable than a large number of superficial ones.

Determine what research needs to be done and exhaust the available sources. Informed questioning depends on your familiarity with the subject and with the informant's personal history. It may also be necessary to gain some knowledge of special terms or local customs in order to ask appropriate questions about your informant's work or her daily life if she lived in circumstances that are different from your own. In oral history, as in other fields, the more one knows, the more likely one is to be able to elicit valuable information.

Deciding whom to interview may be straightforward. On the other hand you may need to select a sample of informants from a large group, or carry out considerable detective work to locate suitable people. For every informant, basic biographical information should be assembled ahead of time: this is the starting point for a good interview, not the main point of the recording session. A pre-interview meeting may be useful for this, and will give you a chance to explain the project and discuss the possible interview topics. This information, along with the results of your background research, will provide the basis for planning the interview.

In a group project there should be a committee or co-ordinator to manage the budget, obtain suitable recording equipment, and co-ordinate the research, selection of informants and development of question sets. Interviewers should be instructed in interview techniques and the use of the equipment. It is also important to set common procedures for collecting biographical data, conducting the interviews, and documenting and handling the tapes.

Every project should aim for the highest possible sound quality, for the value of an oral history recording lies partly in the information it supplies over and above what can be transcribed. The sound of the voices and the nuances of language and tone are significant parts of the record. Because the medium is a magnetic signal on audiotape, sound recordings are fragile and require special care and handling. Cassette tapes are not considered suitable for permanent preservation: they must be re-recorded on 1/4" preservation tapes and stored, unused, in a suitable environment. Projects might consider offering their tapes to an archives that has the necessary equipment and storage facilities. In the meantime, aim for minimum use and handling of the originals.

If your oral history collection is to be placed in a public repository such as an archives or museum, your informants must agree to this in writing. They may want to specify that access to the tapes be restricted for a period of time in order to protect privacy, and this is acceptable. For obvious reasons it is best to arrange this at the time of the interview.

More detailed advice on these subjects is available in several useful handbooks, and through the Provincial Archives' advisory services and oral history handouts. Also

available are technical advice, assistance in planning projects, and facilities for the storage, preservation, and research use of oral history tapes. For more information on these services, contact Moving Images and Sound, Provincial Archives of Manitoba, 200 Vaughan Street, Winnipeg R3C 1T5 or phone (204) 945-1270 or 945-1269.

#### NOTES:

1. For this discussion of the use of oral sources and the development of oral history I am indebted to Paul Thompson, "Oral History and the Historian", *History Today*, (June 1983) and his longer work, *The Voice of the Past: Oral History* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978).
2. *The Voice of the Past*, p. 100.
3. *Where Beards Wag All: The Relevance of the Oral Tradition* (London: Faber, 1975), p. 18
4. *The Voice of the Past*, p. 107
5. See, for example, the publications of Canadian writer Barry Broadfoot. In this genre, excerpts from interviews are presented without context or information about the informants and without interpretation or explanation of how the project was conceived and carried out.
6. These methods were applied to oral history by Paul Thompson in *The Edwardians: The Remaking of British Society* (London: Weindenfield, 1975). See also Ronald Fraser, *Blood of Spain: An Oral History of the Spanish Civil War* (New York: Pantheon, 1979).
7. Riley, Barbara. "Domestic Work: Oral History and Material Culture", in Proceedings of the 1984 COHA Conference, *Canadian Oral History Association Journal*, Vol. 8. In press.
8. For example, Derek Reimer, ed., *Voices: A Guide to Oral History* (Victoria: Provincial Archives of British Columbia, 1984) is an excellent practical handbook with Canadian content. A bibliography is available from the Provincial Archives of Manitoba.

## **Oral and Video History at the Minnesota Historical Society**

### **Statement of Purpose for Video Oral History Program**

1. To add a visual dimension to selected oral history interviews, with emphasis on providing visual information that amplifies an audio interview with the same narrator.
2. To provide visual contact for narrators and the subjects they discuss.
3. To develop teaching aids from both interview and cover videotape footage that will provide instruction to participants in the Society's oral history workshops and seminars.
4. To develop edited videotape features that will heighten understanding of the Society's oral history program by both the general public and potential funding agencies.
5. To build an archive of broadcast quality videotape interviews and cover footage for research use.



## **Questions to ask before doing a Video Interview**

1. What is the purpose of the video interview?
  - a. Will it be part of a finished "program?"
  - b. Will it mainly be for research and reference and typically viewed in its entirety?
  - c. Why do you need moving images and visual elements?
  - d. How does the purpose support the goals and objectives of your project and/or organization?
2. What is your budget? How can you make the most of it? Do you want to emphasize technical quality (best camera, best format) and good editing or do you want to create the greatest number of interview you can afford?
3. Who is the audience?
4. Where and how will the video be used? Where will the master be preserved?
5. Is Video the correct medium? (as opposed to slide/tape program or audio only interview?)
6. What visuals will add information and interest to the interview?
7. Where will the interview be taped? (studio, home, office, outdoors).
8. How will the video interview be made known and/or distributed?

## **Video Personnel**

Any kind of video recording requires certain types of jobs be done. In smaller scale efforts such as oral history there are the same number of jobs just fewer people taking on more responsibilities. The following is a list of traditional video production jobs with their responsibilities and how they relate to oral history.

**Producer** – project supervision; narrator selection; site selection; crew selection.

Person in charge of overall video project (not just a single shoot). Defines the project. Chooses the people who will serve in other roles. The historian will serve this role by selecting any crew and the narrators to be included in a history project. The historian will also scout the site of the interview to make sure it is suitable for the interview.

**Director** – shoot manager; narrator relations; shot selection.

Person in charge of the video shoot. Deals with the technical people; directs the camera, chooses and composes the shots, suggests background video, oversees the audio. Responsible for problem solving. Instructs the talent (in this case the narrator). An oral historian will either serve in this role or work VERY closely with the director.

**Grip** – Equipment handling.

The grip assists others in the set-up and tear down of their equipment; camera, tripod, lights, etc. The historian will most likely act as a grip to some extent for the interview.

**Camera Operator** – Camera set-up; camera operation.

The camera operator will run the camera during the interview. This includes composing shots for the interview, focusing and following any activity that takes place during the interview. If there is to be any background or exterior shots the camera operator will also shoot these. The grip will help the camera operator in any transport of the camera equipment needed. If there is a director present the camera will follow the director's instructions, if there is no director then they will use their own discretion. The historian must make their requirements clear in order to get the images they desire.

**Sound Technician** – Audio Set-up; recorder operation; audio level control; monitor tape remaining.

This person is responsible for the set-up of the audio side of the interview. This includes mic'ing the historian and the narrator, setting proper mic levels for the interview and maintaining them during the interview. The sound technician also monitors the recorder during the interview to be sure it is recording and warns others when the end of the tape is near. The sound technician may also be the grip.

**Editor** – Operate editor.

Person who will operate editing equipment to do any editing required for the program. May be the historian or a technical person directly under the direction of the historian.

## **Interview Set-Ups**

All of these responsibilities must be taken care of in some manner. For the oral history interview it will most likely be done as a one- two- or three-person set-up.

### **One person crew (Oral Historian as operator/interviewer)**

The most demanding set-up would be a one-person set-up with the historian acting as the entire crew. This is a very demanding and limiting way of interviewing. The historian is taking on the responsibility of handling all equipment operations including transport, set-up and operation. Either the camera must be unattached during the interview or the interviewer must split his/her attention between camera and the narrator. An immediate trade-off takes place between attention to the narrator and attention to the equipment.

At the time of set-up the interviewer must ask the narrator to wait while equipment is set-up. Along with the camera there should be at least: a tripod and microphone (separate from the camera). The interviewer would position the narrator as they will be during the interview, compose the picture, set the focus on the camera and adjust the audio (interviewer's and narrator's) all before the interview can take place.

The interviewer must decide what approach they will use for the interview. They may wish to simply conduct the interview while the equipment (hopefully) runs in the background. In this case the interviewer concentrates attention on the narrator to conduct the best interview from the standpoint of content. The risk is that the narrator will move out of the picture by slumping, shifting to one side or moving in some direction. A narrator may gesture off-screen costing the video some of its impact and value. If the interviewer tries to operate the camera they must juggle their duties as camera operator and interviewer. Sitting back behind the camera will damage the relationship between the narrator and the historian. As a camera operator they will most likely respond slowly to any necessary camera adjustments. As interviewer they will be distracted, they may not ask important follow-up questions. If at all off-mica they will sound distant possibly even like they are shouting at their narrators.

### **Two person crew (interviewer and operator)**

The next possibility is to separate the interviewer from equipment operation. In this arrangement one individual is dedicated to each side of the camera. For the purposes of set-up the operator may be assisted by the narrator. One function the interviewer will serve is to occupy the narrator during set-up, making the narrator comfortable with the process.

During the interview the interviewer can concentrate on the content of the interview while the operator maintains focus, makes sure the tape is running and monitors the audio. If the interview is more ambitious the operator may recompose the picture for visual variety.

### **Three person crew**

The next major division of responsibilities would be between camera and sound. The interviewer would possibly assist during set-up but during the interview would be able to give 100 per cent to the narrator. Behind the camera one person would serve as camera operator and the other would serve as sound technician.

### **Equipment List:**

Camera and Videorecorder or Camcorder – of course the first piece of equipment required for videotaping is the camera and deck chosen for the interview and plenty of tapes for recording.

Tripod – An absolute requirement for steady video, especially as interview length grows.

Microphones – Also an absolute must, as in audio-only recording separate microphones should always be utilized for better audio quality.

Lights – May be required for shooting in some situations. Interviewer should know when and how to use.

Cassette recorder – Standard audio recorder for back-up.

Monitor – To insure image quality a video monitor can be used to view the image during the interview. The screen size will be larger than the camera's viewfinder and in color.

Extension cords – for power to equipment. Should be on hand even when planning to use batteries.

Batteries – Although AC is recommended (so slow battery failure will not ruin the interview), batteries should be available for shooting background material or outside, etc.

### **Videotaping Terms and Features:**

Camcorder – A unit including a video camera and self-contained videorecorder.

#### Camera:

**Pick-up Device; CCD MOS** – The imaging device of the camera that translates light into electronic signals for recording. The two types are CCD (Charged Coupling Device) and MOS (Metal Oxide Semiconductor). Some cameras still use picture tubes.

**Pixels** – The picture elements of an imaging device. Higher numbers mean the video is divided into smaller units, yielding greater detail.

**Iris** – The control of the opening for light to strike the imaging device.

**Aperture** – The size of the opening created by the iris.

**Lux Rating** – A rating for the smallest amount of light in which the camera can be used and still record a usable image. (Expressed in footcandles).

**Auto Focus; TTL, Infrared** – A camera that adjusts itself for proper focus. May be TTL (through-the-lens) or Infrared.

**Auto White Balance** – A camera setting for automatically adjusting to proper color temperature.

**Power Zoom** – A mechanical zoom control that adjusts focal length smoothly at the touch of a button. May be adjustable to more than one speed.

**Zoom Ratio** – The range a camera has in focal length. Higher ratios mean increased ability to make distant subjects seem closer.

**Macro** – A camera lens setting to get very close to an object while maintaining focus.

**Shutter Speed** – Higher shutter speeds are used to prevent image smearing during fast motion.

Recorder:

**Horizontal Resolution** – The number of visible lines used to make up the video picture. Higher numbers are in indication of a sharper more detailed image.

**Flying Erase Heads** – Special heads on the head drum to erase previously recorded material to create a smooth transition to the new material.

**HiFi/AFM/PCM** – Enhancements for the audio portion of video recording. HiFi recording, AFM (Amplitude Frequency Modulation) and PCM (Pulse Code Modulation) are three of these.

**Fade (-to-Black/-to-White)** – A feature for putting printed information over the top of the other video information.

**Titling/CG/Superimpose** – A feature for putting printed information over the top of the other video information.

**Digital Effects** – Digitized video information used to create special effects such as a dissolve from the last frame of video of one segment (digitally frozen) to a second moving video image.

**S-Connector** – A special connector used by the high resolution formats (S-VHS, HIS & ED-Beta) to maintain their superior performance.

**Remote Control** – A feature on some units to help it be used as a home deck.

**Self-timer** – A feature common to still cameras to get the photographer into the picture by delaying the start up of a recording segment.

**EIS** – A feature designed to steady camera movement (Electronic Image Stabilization).

**Index Search System** – A feature for finding segments of video information easily.

**Time code** – A professional feature that assigns a number to each frame of a video for use during editing.

**Time lapse** – A feature used to record an event in a uniform manner over an extended period of time.

**Editing:**

**Assemble (Editing)** – A type of editing where the edited tape is “assembled” in a linear fashion from beginning to end one piece at a time. A basic example would be recording opening titles for a tape, then copying the raw interview, and ending with the closing titles.

**Insert (Editing)** – A feature of an editor that can substitute new video or audio over the original material while maintaining a stable recording without glitches.

**Control Track** – The information in a video information. Causes the editor to stop functioning.

**Pre-Roll** – The amount of time the camcorder or VCR needs to run to reach a stable speed. In recording it is essential to let the recorder run 10 seconds before the interview actually begins, and again after each pause so that the editing equipment will function properly.

**Cut** – A simple transition in video that butts one video image up against another.

**Jump Cut** – A cut from one image to a very similar image. Repeated jump cuts may be jarring to the viewer.

**Special Effects** – Video manipulation used to show more than one image at a time, usually used for transitions.

**Fade** – A quick transition from one image to another in which both images are seen overlapping for a short time.

**Dissolve** – Similar to a fade but with a longer transition period.

**Wipe** – An effect in which one image pushes another off the screen.

**Digital Special Effects** – Special electronics that freeze the last frame of a video image and overlap it into new video information to create special effects such as the fade, dissolve or wipe.

# Videotaped Oral History Interview Series

## Shot List

### Minnesota Resort Economy Oral History Project

Reel#/Time Code	Description
<b>Driftwood Resort</b>	
01:00:25	color bars
01:00:30	dining hall; Driftwood Family Resort
01:00:39	pan right to show dining hall fireplace and tables
01:01:03	return to dining hall shot
01:01:10	pan right again
01:01:26	close-up of stained glass dining hall windows
01:01:34	pan right across picture on fireplace mantle to more stained glass
01:01:57	close-up of table flowers with stone fireplace in background
01:02:08	extreme close-up of fresh peonies on table
01:02:27	close-up of other plants in dining hall
01:02:37	shot of antique wares in wooden wall cases
01:02:54	return to original dining hall shot
01:03:06	shot of Driftwood shoreline, including lakeside cabin
01:03:17	pan left to main Driftwood lodge
01:03:33	return to shot of Driftwood shoreline with cabin
01:03:45	pan left again
01:04:03	pan right across small putting green to shot of lake
01:04:23	shot of Driftwood beach area with water toys, fishing boats & dock
01:04:36	pan left across large bay
01:04:46	pan right across bay back to Driftwood beach
01:05:06	close-up of beach area with fishing boats and water toys
01:05:27	close-up of fisherman fishing in the bay
01:05:43	close-up of opposite shoreline
01:05:53	powerboat enters picture of opposite shoreline
01:06:04	catching fish, and returning it
01:06:31	zoom to show Driftwood dock, fishing boat with father and son, and lake view
01:07:22	close-up of guests on Driftwood lodge deck
01:07:40	extreme close-up of Mr. Leagjeld, Driftwood's owner, sitting on deck conversing with his guests
01:08:10	shot of swinging bench with forest in background
01:08:29	close-up of guests on deck with Mr. Leagjeld
01:09:02	close-up of stationary bench next to cabin

## **Ten Statements Video Oral Historians Should Never be Heard Making**

1. "I can do it all by myself." Nope. Quality video production is always a group effort. It is impossible for one person to conduct an interview, run a camera at the same time, and come away with excellent results. Interviewees move about requiring camera adjustments and refocusing. Audio levels require constant attention. Concentrate on the interview and leave the technical problems to your camera and sound people. Reserve the one-person operation for home movies.
2. "We'll wing it." This expression should only be used to describe the mode of transportation to an interview site. It should never apply to video production which is far too complicated to produce reliable results. The more you prepare—the more you anticipate—the better your results. This is particularly true from a technical standpoint, as it is for content, in most cases.
3. "There's no need for site survey." Yes, and arrive for production to discover your interview takes place directly above an open-air child car center? Or that Tuesday is when the landscapers mow the lawn? Or that there is only one AC outlet and it powers the tropical fish tank pump and light? If at all possible, check the production site ahead of time. Select location with care, and try to anticipate all that could go wrong. And ask questions. "When do they polish the floor? Where is the fuse box? Will someone be here to unlock the building?"
4. "Forget the audio interview beforehand: this is hot stuff!" Sometimes, audio interviews in advance aren't necessary. But most of the time they are incredibly valuable. They prepare interviewees. They allow you to be selective about the content. It gives you time to collect and review visual materials. It is inexpensive, compared to video. Interview to your heart's, and budget's desire. Then, record what you want on videotape.
5. "We shouldn't need more than a half-hour to set up." You always need more than that to set up. Just hauling the equipment takes half an hour. Then assembling it and making sure it is working takes a lot more. Also, there will always be problems that slow you down: hum on an audio line, furniture rearrangement, to name but a couple.
6. "No need to bring the tripod." No. Don't come back from a shoot with unstable pictures. They'll drive you crazy. Even if the cameraperson is rock solid, it is impossible to hold a camera steady for longer than a few seconds. Keep hand-held work for moving shots and put the camera on a tripod for everything else.

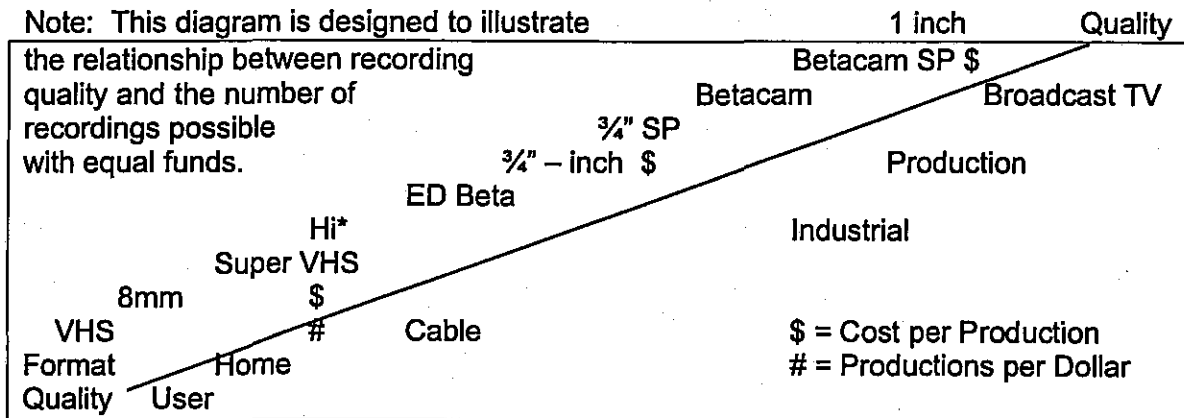
7. "We'll just use the camera mike." Yes, and get awful sound! Camera mikes pick up ambient sound but are never right for an interview. Your interviewee will sound distant and you'll record extraneous sound, including mechanical adjustments made to the camera and chatter among the crew. Invest in quality lavalier mikes and reserve the camera mike for ambient sound only.
8. "It would be fun to do the interview out-of-doors!" Oh, no, it wouldn't. The pitfalls of exterior production are many and varied: harsh, overhead sunlight, barking dogs, neighbors, planes, to name a few. The much safer bet is indoors interviewing.
9. "Let's zoom some more." Put a camera in a person's hands for the first time and he or she will inevitably zoom here, zoom there, and zoom everywhere. (As well as pan and tilt.) Professional camera people keep camera movement to a minimum. The zoom is unnatural to human eyes and becomes tiresome and dizzying when overused. Moreover, it is awkward to edit between moving shots—a consideration if records are incorporated in a program.
10. "Uh huh. Really? Oh, my! I see!" These are helpful aids to a conversation, but anathema if an oral history recording is ever to be edited. In such cases, the interviewer is eliminated. But that's impossible if your interjections accompany—or, worse, override and obscure—an interviewee's statements. Develop the practice of remaining silent between questions, even if you run the risk of disconcerting some people. Explain the interviewees why you will remain quiet, then offer supportive non-verbal communication to compensate for your silence.

Excerpted with permission from the Fall, 1991 issue of the OHMAR Newsletter.

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Note: This diagram is designed to illustrate

the relationship between recording quality and the number of recordings possible with equal funds.



### Format Performance Comparison

Format	S/N 3	Running Time 1	Resolution 2	Audio	
		Introduced	OEM 4		
	full size/mini	lines			
		standard/ enhanced			
¾-inch	90/20	260	48	1971	JVC Sony
Betamax	120	250	48/72	1975	Sony
VHS	120/30	240	45/72	1976	Panasonic JVC
8mm	120	250	70	1986	Canon Sony
¾"-inch SP	60/20	340	52/72	1986	Sony
ED-Beta	120	500	70	1986	Sony
S-VHS	120/30	400	44/91	1988	JVC Panasonic
Hi 8	120	400	60	1989	Canon Sony

1. At standard (best quality) running speed.
2. In Horizontal lines, a major factor in picture quality, the higher the better.
3. Signal-to-Noise ration, a major factor in audio quality, the greater the better.
4. Original Equipment Manufacturer (not comprehensive).
5. Enhancements; for 1/2 Inch formats - HiFi for 3/4-Inch SP - Dolby C Noise Reduction.

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