

# COLLECTING STORIES

LAC DU FLAMBEAU'S ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

## AN INTRODUCTION

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# WHAT IS ORAL HISTORY

- Oral History is the collection and study of historical information using sound recordings of interviews with people having personal knowledge of past events.



Oral History Interviewing is  
Simple. We've Been Doing It  
Now For Years



# WHAT STARTED LAC DU FLAMBEAU'S ORAL HISTORY PROGRAM

- Interest of Community Members
- Part of the THPO "Historic Preservation Plan"
- Historic Preservation Department wrote a grant to fund the project, the grant was awarded in 2016.
- Necessary equipment was purchased with the grant money.
- Trainings were held to train community members to go out and interview other community members.
- Interviews began in September 2016

# OUR GOAL

- Archive interviews indefinitely – housed at Historic Preservation and the LDF Museum
- Have available for family members to view even long after the interviewee has passed.
  - Childhood
  - Family tree
  - Family Traditions and Stories
  - Bio/life story



# OUR GOAL

- Educational Purposes
  - Some interviews are topic specific such as:
    - Wild Ricing
    - Spearing – in the past and present
- POW-WOWS
  - Historic Events
  - Arts and Crafts
  - And More
- Cultural Preservation
  - Passing or sharing this cultural information down to another future generation

# EQUIPMENT



# EQUIPMENT

- Lightweight video camera with built-in microphone
  - Capable of using battery or power cord
- Memory
  - External cards (SD Cards) are easiest to transfer, but can get expensive
  - Internal memory cards only require a USB cord, but those can get lost easily and memory capacity can be limited
- Tripod
- Laptop
- Scanners (optional, incase photos are present)
  - Portable
- Tobacco Ties



## QUALITIES OF A GOOD INTERVIEW

1. Conversational narrative
2. Comfortable
3. Listening Skills
4. Performance
5. Being Prepared
6. Confidence



# PREPARATION

- Selecting an Interviewee(s)
- Group
  - Focus Group
  - Community Interviews
- Select a topic(s) – or keep it general initially

# PREPARATION

- Setting Up / Pre-Interview
  - Who to Interview First
  - How to Locate Interviewees
  - Initiate and Make Contact
    - Call or write letter
    - Biographical Sketch
    - Ask if its okay to record the interview



# PREPARATION

- What Equipment to Take?
- Pre-Test Equipment
- Placement of Equipment
  - Keep close
  - Place near outlets!

# WHERE TO HOLD AN INTERVIEW

- Safe & Comfortable Place
- Consider Surrounding Dynamics
- Be Near Outlets

# LEGAL ISSUES

- Copyright
  - Who holds the rights
  - How should they be handled
- Release Forms are essential!
  - Restrictions
- Present at beginning
- Explain
- Bring multiple copies!

INTERVIEWEE RELEASE FORM:

**“Collecting Stories” Documentation Project  
Lac du Flambeau Tribal Historic Preservation Office  
George W. Brown, Jr Museum and Cultural Center**

**RELEASE FORM**

I, \_\_\_\_\_ (name of interviewee)

hereby give to the **Lac du Flambeau Tribal Historic Preservation Office**, as a donation,

this interview recorded on \_\_\_\_\_ (date).

With this gift, I hereby transfer to the **Lac du Flambeau Tribal Historic Preservation Office** legal title and all literary rights to the interview, including copyright.

I understand the **Lac du Flambeau Tribal Historic Preservation Office** may make the interview available for tribal research, tribal public education projects, and other tribal benefits as it may determine, but it may not be broadcast, cablecast or published for commercial purposes without my written consent.

Beyond this, my consent for use has:

\_\_\_\_\_ no restrictions

\_\_\_\_\_ restrictions as specified here:

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee/narrator \_\_\_\_\_ (signature)

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

City, state, zip code: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

# DEVELOPING QUESTIONS

Questions will serve as a guide

- They can be general questions or topic specific
- Being consistent with your questions with each interview will help interviews go smoother and keep things in order.
- be prepared for the possibility of one question taking the entire interview allotted time, this is not a bad thing. (just schedule another interview)

# ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEWING

## Interview Strategies & Tips

- Have equipment ready to go before the interview starts – to avoid fidgeting with it during the interview
  - Plenty of battery and Memory
  - Good angle and lighting
- Begin With Brief Introduction:
  - Today is \_\_\_\_ (month, day, year), \_\_\_\_ (time AM, PM). My name is \_\_\_\_ and we are interviewing \_\_\_\_ at \_\_\_\_ (location). Also present are \_\_\_\_.
  - This interview is part of the “Collecting Stories” project.
- How To Help Nervousness
  - Make it more of a discussion rather than a formal interview.
  - Be an Active Listener
  - Getting Personal- Share how you can relate



# AFTER THE INTERVIEW

- Thank you / Follow-up Letter
  - Listen and Evaluate
  - Interview History
  - Biographical Sketch
  - Transcribe
- 
- Good form to provide interviewee with a copy of the final interview and transcription

# TRANSCRIBING

- Increases Accessibility, Use, and Ease of Use
  - Better for searching, easier sometimes to read, and sometimes easier to understand
- Shelf-life of paper versus tapes/CDs/DVDs
- Some distortion will occur; but helps readability;
- Has the potential to alter order of speech; impose meaning; but can ultimately make or break the value of an interview.
- Transcription is labor intensive and expensive if paying someone for this service.
  - Typically takes 8-10 hours per one hour of interview time.

# TRANSCRIPTION STANDARDS AND GUIDELINES

- Useful websites for transcription tips:
- [http://www.wwhp.org/files/oral-history-project/Transcription\\_Tips\\_for\\_Oral\\_History.pdf](http://www.wwhp.org/files/oral-history-project/Transcription_Tips_for_Oral_History.pdf)
- <http://www.mnhs.org/collections/oralhistory/ohtranscribing.pdf>
- Baylor's Guide, I think, is the best:  
<http://www.baylor.edu/content/services/document.php?id=14142>

# WRAP UP

- Any Questions?

# LINKS FOR ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

- Oral History has its own history, development, and unique issues
  - Oral History Association: [www.oralhistory.org](http://www.oralhistory.org)
  - H-Oral History: [www.h-net.org/~oralhist/](http://www.h-net.org/~oralhist/)
  - Texas Oral History Association: [www.baylor.edu/toha](http://www.baylor.edu/toha)
  - Baylor University, Institute for Oral History: [www.baylor.edu/oral\\_history](http://www.baylor.edu/oral_history)