Oral History for Beginners Workshop

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Workshop Outline

- Introductions
- What is Oral History?
- Native Americans and Oral History
- Standard Practices
- Oral History Jargon
- Project Development
- Paperwork
- The Interview
- Non-Traditional Interviews and what to Collect

- Break
- Using Oral History
- Collections: Basic Care and Housing
- Equipment
- Software
- Hands-On Stations
  - Marantz Station
  - Video Station
  - Handheld Station
  - Basic Audio Editing

What is Oral History?

- Historic Account passed down in oral tradition
- Herodotus *The Histories*
- Thucydides *History of the Peloponnesian War*
- Oral History Association, Study of Oral History as an academic discipline

Native Americans and Oral History

- An Exception to the rules
- Treatment of Interviewees/ Narrators
- Oral Tradition
- Differences
- Accessibility to Collections

Standards and Best Practices

- The Oral History Association is the authority on Oral History best practices and standards
- Evaluation Guide
- Lack of Native American representation at OHA conferences and membership
- Human "research" subjects
- Privacy
- Scholarship

Oral History Jargon

- **Narrator/Interviewee-** This is the person being interviewed.
- **Interviewer-** Person conducting the interview
- **Oral History Project-** A project is set up with plans, goals, and a list of narrators or potential narrators. Typically projects have specific parameters and a purpose.
- **Oral History Program-** A program is an ongoing effort, usually with a director, to put together projects, organize and manage collections, and collect interviews.
- **Accession Number**- The accession number is a unique number assigned to each interview and the corresponding material.
- **Catalog Number**- The catalog number is followed by the accession number. Each item in the accession receives a catalog number.
- **Accession Records-** This is the file that contains the deed of gift and other pertinent information to the catalog record.
- **Digitization-** The process of converting older media, especially magnetic tape, to a digital format.
- **File Formats-** This refers to the end product of digital formats. Some formats such as .WAV and .AVI are uncompressed, large, and the most desirable formats. Compressed formats such as .MP3 and .MPEG are not archival quality, but may be acceptable for interviews placed on the internet.

Project Development

- **What is a "project?"**
- **Project Description**
  - *The Seminole Tribe wished to honor their veterans by documenting their memories of life and service to the United States. The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum, therefore, has launched a Veterans Oral History Project.*
  - *Our primary focus is:*
  - *World War II (1939-1946)*
  - *Korean War (1950-1955)*
  - *Vietnam War (1961-1975)*
  - *Persian Gulf War (1990-1995)*
  - *Afghanistan and Iraq conflicts (2001-present)*
  - *The interviews will be kept in the Oral History Collection at the Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum and will only be accessible to Seminole Tribal Members. If the narrator wishes, their material will be considered for use in future exhibits in the museum and the Veteran's Memorial Building on the Brighton Reservation.*
  - *The interviews will be a mixture of audio and video mediums, depending upon the situation surrounding the interview. The program will also interview family members of deceased and living veterans. The interviews with family members will focus on how the veteran's service impacted their life.*

Project Development

- Projects may not be the bulk of your program
- Life story interviews
- Projects require planning and funding
- Projects can develop into exhibits, books,

- The "How to"
  - Establish goals and objectives
  - Determine staff requirements
  - Identify potential narrators
  - Equipment
  - Budget

Starting Off and Finishing: Paperwork

- Deed of Gift
  - Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Oral History Agreement
- Biographical Data Sheet
  - Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Bio Data
  - Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Veteran's Bio Data
- Family Trees
  - Uses
  - Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Family Tree

After the Interview

- Photograph
- Thank-You Letter
- Copy of the Interview
- Copy of the Transcripts
- Contact for usage and editing if necessary
- Gift

The Interview

- Organization
- Memory Aids
- Be comfortable!
- Let your narrator take the lead
- Script for starting
- Importance of biographical data

Non-Traditional Interviews and What to Collect

Seminole Storytellers
April 3rd & 4th 2009

The Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum's
Oral History & Outreach Program
invites Tribal Members to
listen and share legends and
stories as part of this event.

April 3rd : 10am - 11am
Broward Community
College Planetarium
Limited seating - *RSVP required*
Seniors get priority

April 4th : 5pm - 8pm
On the grounds of the
Ah-Tah-Thi-Ki Museum
Big Cypress Reservation
Food will be served.

AH-TAH-THI-KI
M U S E U M
A PLACE TO LEARN. A PLACE TO REMEMBER.

For more information / RSVP
Contact Elizabeth Lowman
863.902.1113 Ext. 12210

- TRIBAL MEMBERS ONLY -

- Group Interviews
  - Benefits and warnings
- Life Story and Subject-Based Interviews
- Demonstration Videos
  - Anything visual that accompanied by a verbal explanation
- Language
  - Preservation
- Oral Traditions
  - Legends
  - Traditional Arts
  - Interactions
- The Unknown
  - Do not fear!

15 Minute Break

Using Oral History

- **Museums-** Exhibits, publications, interpretive material
  - Smithsonian Traveling Exhibit: Native Words Native Warriors: http://www.nmai.si.edu/education/co detalkers/.
  - Oklahoma History Center: http://www.oklahomahistorycenter.or g/index.php?option=com_content&ta sk=view&id=30&Itemid=46.
  - American Indian Cultural Center and Museum (currently under construction): http://www.aiccm.com/cultural-center-museum.
- **Archives-** Primary sources, interpretive
- **Libraries**- Research collection, publications
- **Archaeology-** Site identification, cultural awareness
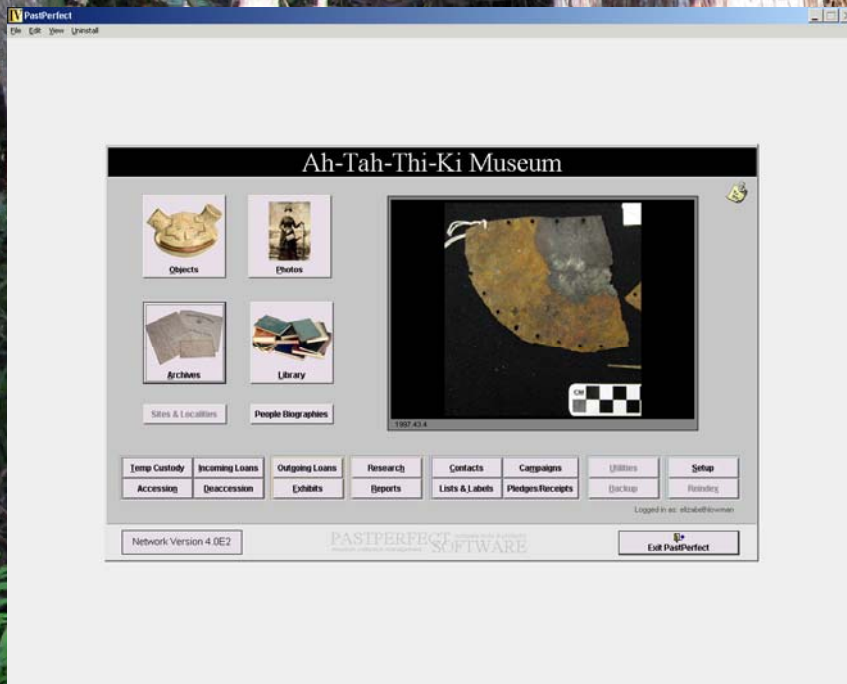
Oral History Collections: Basic Care and Housing

- Older Media
- New Recordings
- Organization
- Housing
- Digitization
- Accompanying Paperwork
- Where to purchase

Equipment

- **OHA**- Digital Audio Recorders: http://www.oralhistory.org/technology/recorders/

- Marantz v. Handheld Recorder

- Video Cameras

- Digital Camera

Software

- **Audacity-** http://audacity.sourceforge.net/
- **Adobe Soundbooth**
- **Apple Garage Band**
- **DeBugMode Wax 2.0-** http://www.debugmode.com/wax/

- Pastperfect

Audio Editing: The Basics of Audacity

- Will Splice tracks
- Will put tracks together
- Can generate sound effects- including silence
- Amplify and clean up tracks
- FREE!!!
- Audacity
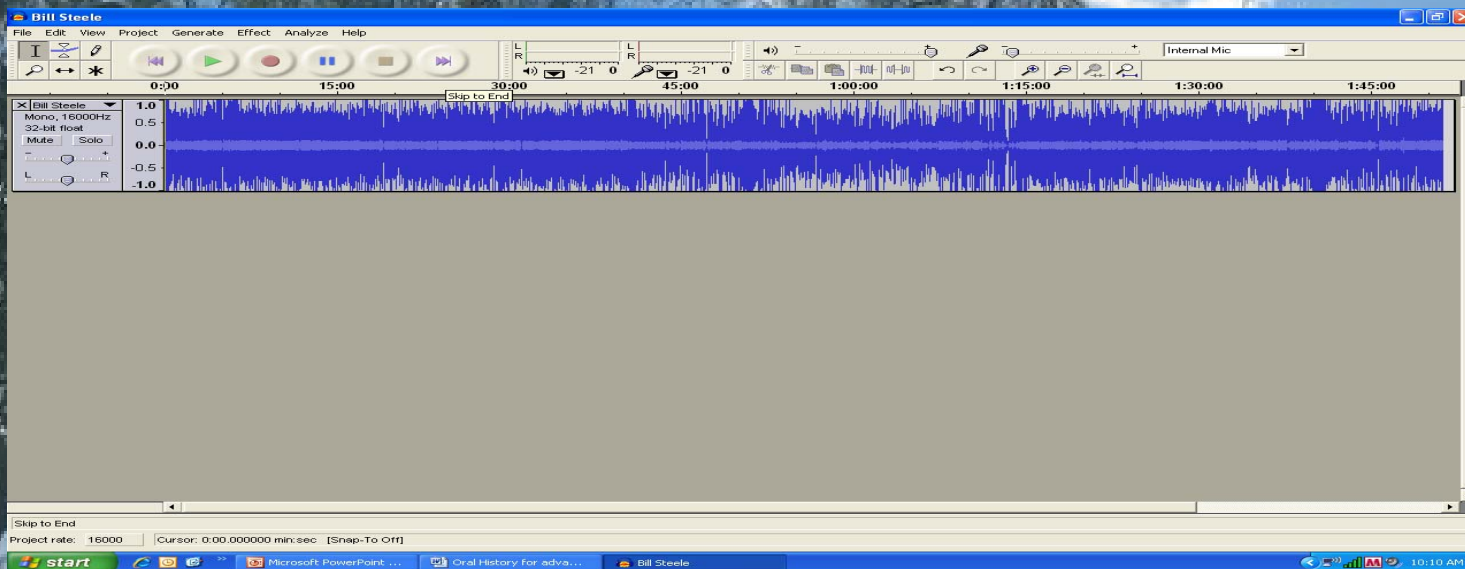
Sho-na-bish! Mvto!

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