Entering Metadata for Oral Histories

*Helpful Documents to have open:*

- DACS: https://www2.archivists.org/standards/DACS

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Introduction

This guide was constructed by Trevor Polasek in April of 2018 as part of his internship at the Stephen B. Luce Library, under the supervision of Archivist Annie Tummino. Trevor researched the process for how to create finding aids and digital homes for the collection of oral history interviews archived at the library. The purpose of this guide is to outline the process of taking the raw interview data and creating a frame of metadata around it to make the resource more accessible to all listeners. The framework for this guide was constructed from information in Nancy MacKay’s Curating Oral Histories: From Interview to Archive. Much of the data entry standards were modified for the library based on the information provided in MacKay’s book, and her book is a great resource for anyone interested in archiving oral history interviews.

Timestamps and Note Taking

The note taking and timestamping process is the first and most vital step to describing and presenting Oral history interviews. It is here the archivist will learn the information needed to make the resource accessible to the audience of the archive. Timestamps are essentially a way for us to create an abstract of the interview that can be used by a user to quickly browse the audio for the information they are searching for. Timestamps also allow users to understand the topics covered in an interview without listening to it. Considering most interviews are upwards of an hour long, creating accurate and concise timestamps and description is important for quick browsing. This section of the guide will offer tips and advice to quick creation of concise notes and timestamps.

The first step in processing of an oral history interview is to listen to the interview. Use the Interview Summary Sheet as a guideline for what notes to take and what information should be noted down. As you take notes, you should also be noting the times at which a certain topic starts. Be liberal in noting times, as the timestamps can be refined later after the interview is listened through. Generally, you will be listening for the interviewer to ask a question, which will set up the next topic that will be discussed in the interview. At times the interviewee will go on a tangent without being prompted, so listen carefully for topic changes.

While listening to the interview, you will want to also note down some key details mentioned by the interviewee. Listen for significant points they might make on a subject, or important details brought up by the interviewer or interviewee. As well, to help construct the biographical note, listen for biographical details about the interviewee. Most interviews will start with some sort of background on the interviewee, and details can also be mentioned (such as significant dates or changes in career/lifestyle) throughout the interview. All this information will be useful when creating the finding aid and digital resource for the interview.

To create timestamps, you want to be aware of the current point at which you are in the interview. There will be a bar in the audio player that should tell you at which exact time you are in the audio. When a new topic is started, or a question is asked, stop and note at what time that happens and what is about to be talked about. You may need to refine these topics later based on what is actually discussed, but at least know as you listen when a certain topic is started or when a question is asked.
Listening for Information

- Get familiar with the voices of the speakers in the interview. Identify who the interviewer and interviewee(s) are to help understand the flow of the interview and better understand who is speaking.

- Listen for questions asked by the interviewer. This will help with identifying good places for a timestamp. While there is no real limit to the number of timestamps for an interview, it is generally better to keep the timestamps concise.

- Identify the stories or points the interviewee brings up during the interview. These are usually good for places to note a timestamp, and will help identify when the topic is about to change, and what that new topic is.

Tips for Quick Note Taking

- Keep notes basic and concise. While you want to get the important details of the interview, keep the notes basic. You want to get just enough information to describe the interview, without going too in-depth on the small details.

- Rewind the interview to listen to a segment if needed. Sometimes it is hard to hear at that particular moment, or you want to check where exactly a question begins to record the timestamp. You want to try to be as accurate as you can, so rewinding can be helpful.

- While rewinding is helpful, remember that you only need just enough information for description. To do this, try to keep listening to the interview and note as it continues when possible. This also helps is getting a feel for the flow of the conversation between the interviewee and interviewer.

- Use your notes to help refine your timestamps. At times, a question will not accurately describe the upcoming part of the interview. The notes on that section can help refine the headings for the timestamps in the final digital resource.

- Listen to the context of a situation or background information given by the interviewer or interviewee. While you do not necessarily have to note these background details, the context can be helpful for picking out what information is important in the interview.

- Here are some good topics to listen for when creating timestamps: Favorite stories/notable persons; why the interviewee decided to do something in their life; discussions of larger issues relevant to time periods address in the interview; societal changes related to the life of the interviewee; topics related to SUNY Maritime College or its history.
# Interview Summary Sheet

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Interviewee Name</th>
<th>Interviewer Name</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>File Number</td>
<td>File Size</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interview Date</td>
<td>Processing Date</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Summary Notes</td>
<td>Timestamps</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ArchivesSpace Data Entry

This document will only outline the standards used specifically for creating a finding aid for oral history interviews. For full directions on how to create and edit resources on ArchivesSpace, consult the document Archives Space Directions provided by the archivist. Examples have been taken from a finding aid for an oral history interview already posted on ArchivesSpace.

**Basic Information**

Create a **Title** using the following format and type it into the field: [Interviewee(s) Name] Oral History Interview

For the **Identifier** field, type in: CA-RG15-[File Number]

For the **Level of Description** field, select **File**.

For the **Resource Type** field, select **Collection**.

For the **Language** field, type in the appropriate language for the interview (usually will be **English**) and select it from the drop down menu.

**Dates**

Under the **Label** field, select **Creation**.

For the **Type**, select **Single** from the drop down menu.

Enter in the **interview date** into the field that appears.
Extents

In the **Portion** menu, select **Whole**.

In the **Number** field, type out the number of megabytes for the file size, to 2 decimal places.

In the **Type** field, select **Megabytes**.

In the **Physical Details** field, type in the audio length of the file as follows: Audio Length - # hours, # minutes, and # seconds. If the interview is under 1 hour in length, just put minutes and seconds.

Agent Links

For the **Agent Links**, you will need at least three different links to add: **Interviewee, Interviewer, State University of New York Maritime College**. More may be needed depending on what other persons need to be tagged based on the contents of the interview. Refer to the Archives Space Directions on how to create an Agent, if necessary.

For each **Agent Link**, enter in the proper **Role** based on the link. For the three mentioned above, use the **Creator** option. For agents that are based on the content of the interview, use **Subject**.

Enter in the appropriate **Relator** according to DACS.

Subjects

Refer to the Archives Space Directions for how to create and enter **Subjects**.

For the AAT (Arts & Architecture Thesaurus) genre heading, select **oral histories** *(document genre)*.
Notes

Refer to Archives Space Directions on how to add and edit **Notes**.

**Immediate Acquisition of Materials**

State the person who conducted the interview, their relation to SUNY Maritime College, and the date the interview was conducted.

**Conditions Governing Access**

Copy and paste the following into the text field:

The resource is available online at maritimedigitalcollections.com at (CollectiveAccess public URL). Please e-mail library@sunymaritime.edu for more information about the resource or to ask questions about accessing the resource.

**Conditions Governing Use**

Copy and Paste the following into the text field:

Reproductions may be provided to users to support research and scholarship. However, collection use is subject to all copyright laws. The responsibility to secure copyright permission rests with the patron.

For additional Copyright information, consult the archivist for details based on the signed agreements for each resource.

**Preferred Citation**

Type up the **Preferred Citation** in the text field in the following format:

Scope and Contents

Under the **Scope and Contents** note, write up a quick summary of what is covered in the oral history interview. Make sure to mention the name of the interviewee and the significant topics covered in the interview.

Biographical/Historical

Under the **Label** field, type **Biographical Note**.

Write up a short biography of the interviewee in the **Content** field.

This is the section is marked as value added. If there is enough information to create a biography, it is recommended to do so. When listening to the interview before creating the finding aid, there should be enough basic information to create a short biography. If time and resources allow it, the describer should do some additional background research to get information missing from the interview that may be relevant (such as birth date, death date [if applicable], places the interviewee has lived, etc.)

Classifications

To link a **Classification** to a resource, it is just like entering a **Subject**.

For the purpose of Oral History Interviews, add the classifications **CA College Archives** and **Oral Histories**.
CollectiveAccess Data Entry

This document will only outline the standards used specifically for creating a digital resource for oral history interviews. For full directions on how to create and edit resources on CollectiveAccess, consult guidelines provided by the archivist. This section will use several elements already completed in ArchivesSpace, so it will be helpful for that to be open as well. Examples have been taken from a digital resource for an oral history interview already part of Collective Access.

Basic Info

For both the **Title** and **titleinfo** fields, use the same title that is in the ArchivesSpace entry.

```
Title
Phyllip Dilloway Oral History Interview
```

For the **Identifier** field, use the same identifier used in the ArchivesSpace entry. The digital file should be named with this same identifier as well.

```
identifier
CA-RG15-01
```

For the **Abstract** field, you will copy and paste the **Scope and Contents** from the ArchivesSpace entry into the text field.

```
In the interview Phyl talks about his life leading up to his Maritime career, his time spent at the New York Maritime Academy from the Summer of 1944 to his graduation in October 1946, the people he knew while he was at the Academy, his time on the training ship Empire State II, and the differences between today's mariners and mariners in the 1940s.
```
In the same **Abstract** text field and below the **Scope and Contents**, type in the refined list of timestamps for the interview. Use the formatting as shown below.

![Timestamps](image)

In the **Name** field, click the **add name** button to add additional entries. Type in the name and role of both the interviewee(s) and the interviewer.

![Name](image)

For the **TypeOfResource** field, select **Sound recording-nonmusical** from the drop down menu.

For the **Language** field, type in the proper 3 letter identifier (according to MODS) for the appropriate language for the interview (**English is eng**).

![Language](image)

For the **Note** field, copy and paste the **Biographical Note** from the ArchivesSpace entry into the text box.
Coverage

For the originInfo field, place the interview date in the dateCreated text box. In rare cases where the resource was transferred from cassette or physical materials to a digital file, type in the digitization date (if known) in the dateCaptured field.

Format and Rights

Genre

Type in oral histories (document genre) and select the entry from the drop down menu.

physicalDescription

In the reformattingQuality field, select Access from the drop down menu.

For the internetMediaType field, type in audio/[filetype].

For the extent field, type in the file size for the interview.

For the digitalOrigin field, select Born digital from the drop down menu. In rare cases you may need to use one of the other selections based on the particular resource. Use MODS to determine the appropriate selection.

For the note field, type in the audio length of the interview in the same format as used in ArchivesSpace.

accessCondition/copyrightNote

Consult with the archivist on the state of the copyright for the resource and fill in these fields accordingly.
Subjects

Transfer over the Subjects from the ArchivesSpace entry to the CollectiveAccess page. To add new subjects, just click the Add Subject button on the bottom of the field. Make sure the subjects follow LCC authorities and that each subject is entered into the proper field (i.e. topic, geographic, name, etc.).

Media

The resource will already have a prompt to add a new representation for the entry open. If needed, click the Add Representation button on the bottom of the field to upload additional files, such as other audio files or photographs of the interviewee.

In the Representation Label field, type in the alt text for the audio player. Alt text is a standard used for screen readers, so that those that are visually impaired may understand what is being represented on the screen. In the case of audio files for interviews, just type in “Audio player for [Interviewee Name] Oral History Interview”.

Upload the appropriate audio file using the Choose File button.

Change the Status field to editing complete.

Save the page and ensure that the audio file uploaded properly.

Relationships

Go to the Related Collections field and type in “Maritime Memory Oral History Project” and select it from the drop down menu.
**Finalizing Data Entry**

This section covers the final steps in the process of making the oral history interview accessible to the public. The section requires the use of both ArchivesSpace and CollectiveAccess, so it will be useful to have the pages for both resources open at this point in the process. Unlike the steps with ArchivesSpace and CollectiveAccess, these steps will be numbered as they will need to be done in order. All sample images will be taken from a resource already complete on both ArchivesSpace and Collective Access.

**Review**

After the completion of the data entry up until this point (including standard entries not included in this guide), contact the supervising archivist to begin the review process. Go over the entries with the archivist, or separately to check for grammatical/spelling errors, revisions to certain data points, and special entries based on a case by case basis. After the review is done, have the archivist make both resources public and get the URLs for the public pages for both resources. These will be necessary to finalize both entries.

**Finalizing Entries**

1. Ensure both the ArchivesSpace and CollectiveAccess pages for the resource are public. Get the URLs for each of the public pages.

2. Place the public URL for the ArchivesSpace page in the **Relationships** section of CollectiveAccess, in the **Finding Aid** field.

3. On ArchivesSpace, follow the process outlined in the **Archives Space Directions** to create a **Digital Object** for your resource (instances section on the page for the resource).

4. Transfer the information on the main resource to the appropriate fields on the digital object. For the purposes of the digital object, you will only need to complete the fields for **Basic Information**, **Dates**, and **Extents**.
A. For the **Basic Information** field, transfer the **Title**, **Identifier**, and **Language** from the main resource. Make sure the **Publish?** box is checked and you have selected **Sound Recording (Non-musical)** for the **Type** field. Do not use the **VRA Core Level** field.

B. The **Dates** and **Extents** section are exactly the same as the main resource. Refer to earlier in the guide for directions if needed.

5. Click the **Add File Version** button to bring up a new Representation for the digital object. Under the **File URI** field, put the public CollectiveAccess link for the resource. Make sure the **Publish?** Box is checked.

6. Save the digital object and go back to the main ArchivesSpace page for the resource.

7. Place the CollectiveAccess public URL into the **Conditions Governing Access** note in the designated spot.

8. Place the CollectiveAccess public URL into the **Preferred Citation** note in the designated spot.

9. Do one final review of the work to ensure everything has been completed properly with each resource, and to ensure the links are working for both ArchivesSpace and CollectiveAccess.