

UC Berkeley

"Librarians Navigating Change" Oral History Project, UC Berkeley

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Oral History Methodology for the Qualitative Researcher

[University of California Love Data Week, 2025](#), 2/12/25

Speaker: Ann Glusker, Librarian, UC Berkeley glusker@berkeley.edu

Transcript of workshop (100% reflexive speech retained), recording available on [YouTube](#)

Okay. So, hi everyone! Welcome to Oral History Methodology for the Qualitative Researcher. I'm really glad to be here with you. I'm a Social Sciences Librarian at UC Berkeley and this is University of California Love Data Week. I'm joined by co-host Anna Sackmann, who's our Data Services Librarian and she'll be monitoring the chat. I'm one of those people that I... if things seem unclear or if you have questions as I go along, please do put them in the chat for Anna to pass along to me. It's kind of hard to look at the chat and present at the same time. But I'd much rather have it clarified, and someone else will have the same question, I can pretty much promise you. You can see my email address here. I very much welcome feedback and connection after the session. We just did set the session to record, so hopefully that will work. Okay. If it doesn't, I will re-record it. But that will be available on the UC Berkeley Library YouTube as soon as we get it captioned.

So here we go (maybe). So I did mention we're in UC Love Data Week and that's all week. There's a lot of different presentations. Still many left this week! So if you want to take a look please do feel free. We'd love to have you. This imposing slide is what I'm going to go through today. You'll get used to the fact that my slides are super super dense and I will not, luckily, make [you] sort of go through every single thing in every slide. The reason I kind of do that, although it's maybe not the best pedagogy, is so that when you go back to the slides, you

have the complete information and not just a picture of a nice mountain or something. So, I do, this is one of my things. But for this slide, I will go through each thing, because I do want to sort of give you an overview of what you'll be hearing about. I'm going to start with a tale of two projects. So, I'm going to compare and contrast between a qualitative data project and an oral history. I'll do some defining of terms. We will look at what oral history methodology is, both detailed and sort of basic, and detailed. I will sort of compare oral history with other qualitative methods. Talk a little bit about social justice, human subjects, narrator rights and preservation. I'll talk about how you can use oral history collections on their own. There's a lot available online and super, super fascinating ones. I'll talk about oral history resources through the UC, since this is UC Love Data Week, and then I do have a further reading slide. So welcome all the new people coming in, just quickly--this is being recorded. Love to hear from you after the session.

Here we go. So this slide is the overview of a paper that I and three other Berkeley Library people wrote. It's about library staff morale and it was a qualitative study in the sort of classic sense. So I'm not going to sort of read the abstract to you, but you can kind of get a sense. It was 34 structured interviews, nationwide, academic library staff. It rested strongly on a theoretical model, which was grounded theory methodology. It had a lot to do with sort of "what do I want to say" sort of structure, looking at sort of structural components of libraries and then how people reacted within those structures. The process was that we interviewed 34 people, transcribed the interviews, and then the transcriptions got fed into a qualitative data analysis software. In this case, MAX QDA. So in MAXQDA, we did a lot of coding. We were

extracting themes, we were extracting core categories and then all of that was reported in a research paper, which I'm thrilled [that] the report got published. We love that. So thank you for the "thank you". That happiness made me lose my train of thought! So you can sort of get the sense we did we did have to do a human subjects review for this. Um, it was research-based. And the thing that I really want to sort of talk about for a moment is what it felt like to me emotionally to do these interviews. So, we interviewed 34 people. I think I was in on 23 of them, something like that. And it was June of 2020. This was library staff. They were sitting at home in shock like we all were. And that's sort of point number one. And point number two is, no one had really ever asked them about their experiences. So if you go look at this paper online, you'll see it has a lot of hits. Partly because I made sure that it was open access, but partly because people don't talk about the morale of library staff the way they have traditionally talked about the morale of librarians. So they were sitting there waiting to tell their stories, and finally someone was asking, but pretty much none of the content of those interviews ever saw the light of day. That's to me, and this is very much a personal approach. That's what the qualitative methodology does. Some people use the word "extract." You extract the information from the people you're interviewing and then you're feeding it into a software to extract themes from that. So there's some quotes in the paper, but mostly this very, very heartfelt, insightful, important content that was in those interviews will never be shared. And it kind of felt wrong to me because I sort of felt like I, a librarian, should really not be the one that's mostly talking about their experiences. While I feel like there's a lot of value in what came out of this, it left me a little bit unsettled. Let's say that.

So, this is the project that I'm working on now. I'm calling it "Librarians Navigating Change" and it is an oral history project, and it's kind of almost in direct response to the fact that in the qualitative data analysis that I did, I really felt that those transcripts should be shared and that others should have the benefit of hearing the content. Librarians navigating change, of course, is a topic of personal interest to me. So that's why the topic, I mean, I just felt like I'm a later life librarian, and I felt like I wanted to hear people talk about the good old days and what had I missed. So that was basically the impetus for this project. But you'll see this, what I'm showing you on this slide is the invitation letter that I sent to the participants, who, in oral history, are called narrators, not interviewees. So note that vocabulary shift from-- they are being interviewed versus they are narrating their own experience. I talk a little bit about yeah "we're used to shifting responsibilities" and "shifts in our environment" that kind of thing. The goal is to have a collection of interviews. This is the time to capture the stories. Things are changing fast, and at the very end of this, this is an entirely collaborative project. So as we go through, if you want to sort of pin what I'm saying about oral history methods to "this is a project that I have experience with", that's fantastic. I also feel like this is the time to say, while I have had training now in oral history, and have gone to [the] Oral History [Association] national conference, and belong to the association and listservs, I'm not a super experienced oral historian. So, if anyone wants to add context or additional information or even challenge something I'm saying, I will humbly back off. But at least for now, I'm steeped in it enough that I feel like I can do a bit [of] a beginning presentation.

So, here we are. So, of course, we should start with a definition. I'm a librarian. Start with a definition. I really like at the bottom you can see there's this data glossary from the National Center for Data Services. It's very helpful. It's a little bit sort of science-medical focused but sort of direct and concrete. So qualitative data concepts, that are not represented by numbers, [as] distinguished from quantitative data. So I think we would all sort of start with that same understanding. But in this talk and in this definition, we're going to be getting into the fact that you can analyze qualitative data in a lot of different ways. So there's sometimes you're looking at essential concepts, but sometimes you're doing descriptive studies, that kind of thing. So there's quite a breadth, and oral history is one piece of that picture. So I'll spend a little bit of time on this slide. So down the left you can see there's all these different qualitative methods being mentioned in a particular guide. Later on we'll see a different classification of qualitative methods. Everybody has their own list, but you can see that oral history sits squarely as one subset of qualitative methods and the mechanism for collecting the data, if you want to call it data (not all would call it data. It's hard for me actually to get out of that mindset). But the mechanism for collecting your content would be interviews. So you can sort of see in this right hand part of the slide that when you're comparing interviews with other methods of getting qualitative data there's pluses and minuses, as there would be with anything. But oral history sits squarely in the "information is collected through interviewing the narrators".

To further the definition, Donald Richie is kind of like the titan of oral history. *Doing Oral History* is the fundamental text. You can look through this whole slide later, but basically I have

highlighted the parts that I think are the most important, which is "well-prepared interviewer." It's an exchange which is recorded. It is put into an archive, and so it's made available broadly and then, down at the bottom, it's not sort of *ad hoc* things like recorded speeches, wiretapping, whatever-- it has to be a dialogue. To be honest that's one thing that I really love about it - that it has to be a dialogue. It's collaborative, super, super important concept.

Then I do want to spend a little bit of time with this slide too, which is to say what it is not. And I just sort of love this this little reflection here. It's by Shanna Farrell, who is part of the UC Berkeley Oral History Center, which is connected with UC Berkeley Library. She's also my mentor and someone that did a lot of teaching with me this summer, teaching of me. So she wrote this blog post. "Not oral history." Actually, #notoralhistory is the title of the blog post. So, I'm about to do my radio announcer voice. So, Shanna's biking along and she hears a radio host and the radio host says, "What was better back in the day? It's an oral history of nostalgia, starring you. Tell us about what you think was better from a previous era, why you miss it, and whether you think it's better because of nostalgia or because things were empirically better back in the day. Call us or post below." So, she's riding along and she's like, "Oh my goodness, they got it so wrong." She called them up and she said, "I heard that you're doing an oral history of nostalgia, but that's not oral history." So on the right side [of the slide], I'll just leave you to read this, partly because my Zoom window is over it and I can't read myself now, but you can kind of see her sort of passionate description of what a real oral history takes and what it gives. So all of the planning, the intersubjectivity, so, meaning both people contribute to

the content, both of the people in the conversation. That it's preserved, that it's a legacy. You can get a sense in the middle of her statement about how much work it takes. It takes so much background work, and months to complete and then finally the learning that it takes to be sort of an experienced and--what word do I want to use?-- sort of supportive interviewer and sitting with silence. So it's you know you can sort of see even from this that you're kind of moving away somewhat from what from a research approach to gathering information, and it's starting not even to be information. It's starting to be experience and memory and other kinds of content.

So, you know, I'm hoping that some of the picture is starting to develop of some of the differences between qualitative research and oral history. I did share my this presentation with some colleagues before presenting it to you, and they really liked the idea, and so this is you know [my] shout out to my UC Berkeley librarian research colleagues, the differences between capital Oral History and small oral history. So classically an oral history project is what you just heard from Shanna, which is extensive background preparation, in-depth multiple sessions collecting a full life history. The background research is really something. And the people at the Oral History Center at Berkeley, I mean, they're interviewing a series of tech CEOs or a series of rock stars or a series of people who were incarcerated in Japanese American camps during World War II. They're interviewing groups of people um and they're doing extensive background research on the history, on that person, on the community, on the culture if applicable. Most likely the interviews are done in person. The product is the audio recording and so we'll talk about that in a second. And preservation is a very important piece. As you can imagine, this

intensive, and I think beautiful process, is really expensive and hard to implement. So I think there's starting to be more and more of [what I call] small oral history, where you're doing kind of one-shot interviews with people, and you're not pulling out their whole life history. That of course is what I'm about to do. Funding is an issue. The training and interviewing can be an issue, because it's expensive to get that training, often, and you have to do a lot of interviewing before you feel maybe that you have the experience that you need. There's a lot of oral history work, whether you would want to call it large Oral History you know, capital letter Oral History or small letter oral history being done by community members and family researchers. So there's... in the summer institute that I attended here at Berkeley's Oral History Center um there are people doing really really interesting projects in their home churches, with their ethnic origin groups. They were part of the community, and they wanted to document the community but it wasn't sort of sponsored by any institution. There are supports for these people, but you're probably not going to find groups like this doing the kind of classic oral history that people are interested in. And also, your project goals may not call for an in-depth process. So, for example, the project that I'm doing now, that I'm actually talking to UC Berkeley's either recently retired or long-term librarians. I'm really not that focused on getting their full life histories or doing multiple sessions. I'm also not that interested in uploading the audio for reasons which I can talk about later. So my project is very much small letter oral history. So hopefully those distinctions are kind of making sense.

So let's move on to when you're doing an oral history project, like what are you actually doing? So here's kind of an overview. And the thing I kind of love too is that if you look at the

bottom [of the slide], where this comes from, it's a guide from 1999 and people are still citing it and it still totally works. So there's one sort of the timelessness of it really appeals to me too. So basically, you know, you have a central question. You're not just sort of saying "I want to talk to people for the heck of it." You have some question you want to answer, or you want to capture um a set of experiences. There was a very very compelling example, when I went to the Oral History conference, of a hospital in Cincinnati that had bought up and eventually razed a huge historically African-American neighborhood in Cincinnati, that they (the hospital) pretty much characterized as having been, I'm not sure what word to use, but you know, very very diminished neighborhood with not much life in it. And people that are living near there now are interviewing the people that used to live there, and they actually found old photographs that very much show that it was not a diminished neighborhood. It was a thriving, lively, fascinating neighborhood. So that might be like a central issue is that you want to sort of bring out a strength or a historical experience.

Planning the project: if you're doing the classic kind of project, you're going to be thinking about what is the end product you want. All these things that you see: budget, publicity, evaluation, etc., etc. You're doing some background research. You do the interview, you process the interview, you evaluate the interview, you cycle back if needed because if you're doing multiple sessions and you didn't get something in the first one, you can kind of direct towards it in the next one. Organize and present your results and store the materials. So, when I sort of was looking at this, when I was thinking, do I want to do an oral history project? This looks really pretty straightforward. And if you've done qualitative research already or consider yourself a

qualitative researcher, most of this will be familiar to you. Maybe not so much the background research, like when I was doing the qualitative study, you know, we weren't really researching or looking up the people that we were interviewing. You would do that for an oral history, but we did do a literature review about the issue. Anyway, this is the sort of basic idea of what you're doing.

But then as we move to the next slide, oh my goodness, it's so much more than I thought. So it's really been quite a process. I really could not have done it without the training that I'd gotten, or at least not feel like I was doing it well unless I had gotten this training, because if you look down the left side [of the slide] there's so many things that you have to think about. I'm not totally sure what they mean by interpretive framing. The first one (I probably should have looked that up before this), but narrator selection is a big question, like who do you choose? So, for my project, I'm trying to get some variety of gender identity, race, ethnicity, language, function. It's not always easy to get the variety because not everybody says yes to you. So, you may have to kind of have backup people. You have to do a lot of correspondence. So, you have an invite letter. You have a lot of planning and communication letters. (Excuse me one second.) You're doing your research preparation. And then you have to - there's tons of stuff to think about about recording. So, I'm doing mine on Zoom, which is actually another kind of not classic thing. Generally, they're in person. Where people will be sitting, interview etiquette, legal release, I'll talk about that a little bit later. Transcription, I'll talk about that a little bit later. Preservation, same thing. Analysis, it's-- I'm interested that the Oral History Center has this [on the slide], because you're not really analyzing in a research kind of way. It's definitely not like what I did

with the qualitative transcripts, and then sharing the results. So you can see it's a really pretty detailed process. So that's the list on the left, and on the right is sort of my experience of what has completely surprised me. I wouldn't say that I'm a hugely experienced qualitative researcher. I've done a lot more quantitative research in my life, but I've been on two [qualitative] studies and helped with two others. I was really surprised at the how different the approaches were and how rigorous the methodology was. I was surprised at how much background work there is to do. So now I'm doing tons of reading about librarianship for my own project, librarianship as a profession, trends in the profession. For me to ask good questions and have a good conversation, there's a lot I need to know. I'm in this phase right now where I'm doing pre-interviews with the people who have agreed to be my narrators and they're all I say "old-time." I don't know if that's the most flattering thing. To me, it's a compliment, but old-time librarians and they're saying, "Well, you know, there's all this history of librarians at Berkeley. You need to read it." It's like, "Oh, yeah, you're right."

A lot of correspondents as I said, [and] thinking who to invite, [and] as I said, tech for the recording. Um, "I'm going to be counting on Zoom with my fingers crossed, so hopefully that'll work out". Um, there is a book in my reading list later about doing um, online oral history. It's a good idea in advance to know where you're going to be depositing the materials. So, I'm putting mine in eScholarship. If you're if anybody's familiar with that, it's the University of California repository. It's not as hardcore a set of requirements to upload to it as to some others, but it's a pretty intense uploading, like my materials are not going into the library collection for example. But depending on where you're putting the stuff, you may have to have a different agreement

with the narrator. So, example of this, like you're thinking, why is she talking about this? So the Oral History Center here at Bancroft Library, UC Berkeley, their interviews do go into the library's collection. So their narrators actually have to assign the copyright to the regions of the University of California. My narrators will not have to assign their copyright to the Regents of the University of California, because I am not putting my stuff in the library's collection. And I'm happy about that because I feel like they should keep their own copyright.

Sorry I'm getting a little bit too much in detail, but I think you get the idea. You want to do a practice interview, and then explore transcription tools. So, I'm not saying much about transcription tools here, because there's a ton of them and it would be like a big rabbit hole. I will say that over the summer when I did the training with the Oral History Center, they had us do a practice interview, which is great experience. We interviewed each other, and then we transcribed, and I found this fantastic tool called Alice. Like Alice in Wonderland. The quality of the transcription was amazing. So, generally, if you're doing transcription, like, a human transcriptionist, it's about five hours of work per hour of interviewing. But this tool - it popped out a really really fantastic transcription, delineated by speaker. I mean it was great. And it took me about 50 minutes to do that transcription myself. So to me this is like already making a lot more possible. Okay so moving along a little bit away from now process. Why would you even want to do oral history? Why wouldn't you use other qualitative methods? So, this is where I have that yet a different list of qualitative approaches. It's different than the one I showed before, but you get the sense that there's a lot of different ways to approach gathering content. Oral history falls squarely as a kind of subset. But oral history may be a good fit for you if you

feel that the information you're looking for fits a narrative storytelling approach. Hopefully that is clear. We can talk about it more if you want. If you want an in-depth approach, so, not sort of surveys or surface information about something, but you really want to know full life histories for people for whatever reason, oral history is great. If you're trying to work with a community preserving history, preserving culture, there may be like-- suddenly occurs to me, like has anyone done a series of oral histories about Burning Man? Maybe they have, like you know it says an event. If you want to preserve interview content for future generations, so that legacy kind of example, oral history is fantastic. If you want an interactive approach, and as I've said, as I've been talking, for me, the interactive approach was a very, very important part of what I wanted, but what I felt was missing for me in classic qualitative research. I wanted that interaction where the two of you are creating something together and their voice is sort of equally or more important than my voice. I'm sort of more the support and generator or curator of the conversation. I'm not sure what word to use. Finally, if you're interested in memory and personal experience and meaning making, especially giving power to marginalized voices, it's really great. Also, as we've said, if you do want to do theme analysis, oral history is not necessarily what you want. Although you could, like if after I put all these things up into eScholarship, someone could take those potentially. If everybody stays in the project throughout the duration, I'll have 12 transcripts [NOTE: It ended up being 15]. Someone could throw them into a qualitative data analysis software and look for themes from what we generate. But that is not necessarily what I'm going in with. So, oral history is a good choice.

So moving along yet again, just want to talk about two kind of aspects of social justice oral history related to social justice. [On this slide--] This is the first, and it's actually super micro and I really like it. I think it's a work in progress also. It's quite recent movement by the oral history association to um really examine their own processes and biases and approaches towards doing interviewing and oral history or my sense coming into it a new, you know, as a new person recently is that they've very much kind of distinguished themselves from qualitative research, but haven't always looked at the ways in which they themselves are also extractive in the same way that qualitative researchers are. So they're really sort of taking a look at themselves and trying to adjust things like project development, permissions, ownership, and access to make sure that the focus is narrator-centric, and it while they felt it was narrator-centric compared to other approaches, and it was, it could be more so. So now they're talking more about developing stronger trust relations and power sharing. Justice practice moves at the speed of trust.

So again, I think I've been making the point all the way through this that the emotional approach and the emotional sensitivity and the emotional intelligence and the emotional connection are very important parts of what's happening, and I feel like they happen in qualitative research too, but they are not able to be-- um what do I want to say?—centered. The extraction of knowledge is centered if it's research, but here the creation, the co-creation of emotional content is what's centered. And so to me, I just love that as an approach.

And I want to now come... so that was kind of the micro scale. So here's more the macro scale and it comes from this particular book which is *Say It Forward* (instead of play it forward, *Say It Forward*). So it's really talking about the fact that if you make space for individuals to connect their narratives and personal experiences to the dominant narrative, or to inform or change or refocus or shift the dominant narrative, it is a tool for social justice. So, you know, highly recommend this book. There's a lot more stuff about oral history and social justice. I'll let you look that up for yourself, but I just wanted to be sure to present both the micro and the macro kind of ways of looking at oral history and social justice.

Then I want to say a word about oral history and human subjects. So I think... I'm pretty sure I mentioned that for my qualitative study, I did do an IRB. That's institutional review board. That is an application that I had to do because in interviewing those 34 people, and taking the content that they gave me, and doing an analysis for the purposes of research, I had to promise that I was respecting their rights as a human subjects, and protecting them from harm. So, it's a pretty intensive thing. I and the whole team had to do trainings around it. I completely believe in it. Um but to some people it's kind of a deterrent to doing research, which I think is a little bit sad. But on the other hand, oral history, and this is from the Oral History Association's website, generally does not deem this as research. So it is considered more in terms of scholarly and journalistic activities because it's focusing on specific individuals. If you look at the final paragraph at near the end, if you're looking for generalizable knowledge, like for example, if I take my 12 Berkeley librarians and I say "these 12 Berkeley librarians said this and I've analyzed their transcripts and we can say blah blah blah about librarianship in general or what librarians

do when faced with change," it sort of turns it now into research. I'm taking the smaller group and extrapolating to the larger group. So that would probably have required an IRB. But in the case of my project and I was very careful to ask about this, I have not done an IRB. You know, if you ever want to talk to me more about this, I don't know that much, but I've done some reading about it. Very much tied to the question of the IRB is narrator rights. We really we don't really talk about this in qualitative research. I never really saw anything that dealt with did I have to worry about the people that I was interviewing? Their rights as people being interviewed? I never really had to think about that. Because in the oral history process, the narrator is a co-creator. Their rights are very very central to the process. So there's a lot of things here. I won't go through this in detail, but access, usage rights, family and community members, the right to approve what goes-- what is uploaded from the transcript of the interview and updates. So, some oral history agreements, and I've read a lot of them at this point, are pretty specific about once you agree that the transcript is something that can be uploaded, that's it. It doesn't come back down. But others are really kind of more of a power sharing kind of thing, if someone decides that they want their transcript removed, it can be removed. So there's a lot of questions around this narrator rights, but just the very fact that it's a collaborative process to me gives more rights than it does to the subject of a qualitative research study.

And then there's question of preservation. So one thing I really like about the oral history method is that preservation is a is a very very crucial central part of it. For my qualitative research, all of the work that I did, all of the transcripts will get deleted after a certain amount

of time from my computer, which is the only-- well actually my drive, which is the only place that they exist. So they'll all go away. The whole point of oral history is that it does not go away. So it will be preserved in the long term. We're looking for ongoing preservation. That does put the burden on the person doing the oral histories or the organization to find such a resource. In the bottom paragraph [of the slide], the part that I have bolded, organizations or people will do oral research work that don't necessarily have the infrastructure or resources to preserve them. So what does that mean? Where do you go from there? I don't have an answer to that question. But any of you that are in preservation work or concerned with preservation know how much of an issue this is. So, I'm very very excited for myself that I can upload to eScholarship, which is a repository that I feel will have stability across the long term. Since I'm only going to be uploading transcripts, I'm also not worried about obsolescence of media. But given that many oral history projects people are uploading audio and video, you want those to be in formats which will be presumably able to be read into the future. Sorry I know this is all super technical but um it's also very important. So thanks for sticking with me.

Then I wanted to say something about using oral history collections. So, you know, I've been talking about how to do an oral history, why it's important, why it's kind of differentiated from qualitative research, but now you know what happens when you've finished, and all of this stuff is now sitting in a collection. Who uses it? So, in fact, it was just kind of one of the most fun processes I've ever had, even just doing the pre-interviews with my narrators for my um "Librarians Navigating Change Project". Questions they asked, I mean, well, okay, I'm kind of a library geek anyway, but people were asking these amazing questions, and several people said

to me, "Who is the audience? Who's going to see this stuff?" So you know, if I have a collection of 12 transcripts from librarians, who is the audience? How could these things be used? Library school students might use it. People researching librarianship as a profession might use it. There's all sorts of things I could think of off the top of my head, but here's a list that I created of ways that I heard people saying that they were using this stuff at the Oral History Association Conference. So oral histories are generally considered to be primary sources rather than secondary sources. So if you're looking for the inside stories of rock and roll and you find an oral history of rock stars, you know you can explore that community using the oral histories, geographies, events, cultures etc. I have used it as a tool when I'm teaching students to do qualitative methods. So if I want to teach a student to use for example the software platform Taguette, I have my favorite oral history collection, which is from the Medical Library Association, and I have them upload those transcripts into Taguette and play around with them, and extract themes. If you are thinking about planning a project of your own, an oral history project of your own, you can take a look at oral histories. If you are trying to recruit narrators, so when I was recruiting the narrators for my study, I said, this is the kind... I sent two or three links of "These are the kinds of oral histories that I'm kind of aiming at ours being similar to. These are the kinds of collection overviews that we might sort of attach to our collection." So, they had a kind of a sense, before they were agreeing to do it or not, where their material was going. There's a lot of interesting ways that both high school and university professors are using oral histories, not actually the collections as much as the processes for teaching for students to get involved in really firsthand experience with a particular topic area. Oral histories are often used as an enhancement for other kinds of content. So I actually recently visited for the first time the

Museum of Flight in Seattle. It's fantastic. As you can imagine, you know, Seattle - very, very heavily influenced by the employer Boeing. The museum is near Boeing Field. They had lots of planes because Museum of Flight, but next to every plane were little televisions playing videos of oral histories with people that had flown that kind of plane. And people talking about the development of flight during World War I or during World War II or whatever. The stories were fascinating and people that like had you know had to jump out of their plane and all sorts of stories.. but they really really enhanced you looking at that plane. And then, there's now increasing interest in using oral history collections for text mining and AI. So that's kind of an area of exploration for future.

I did want to just give a slide for best practices for using oral history in the classroom. So the link is here. You can see on the left hand side there's a high school teacher in Maryland that had her students conduct oral history interviews with residents of Maryland who served in Vietnam. Students learned a ton of stuff. They created short documentaries and it's all going into the Maryland State Archives. So this is a beautiful thing and uh to me because I think that what happened is what the quotes imply, would be the best case scenario, which is that the students had an amazing experience. They felt connected to history. They felt that history was more important more interesting now. They learned so much. It was an important experience for them. So that's kind of... it's labor intensive but it's also just so so rewarding. So, not sure if anyone here is interested in this, but if you were, there's some good background to connect with.

And then if I've gotten you so excited about oral history that you might want to become a freelance oral historian, there are quite a few people that do that. As you can imagine, the same sort of cautions and benefits of any kind of freelancing apply. So, you do have flexibility. You do get to do really, really cool stuff. But, you know, you really have to be in the world of contracts and valuing your own services so that you can actually make a living, that kind of thing. But this toolkit was kind of a groundbreaking thing. I went to a workshop at the conference by the person that had developed this, and I guess my impression was it sounded really exciting and really hard both together.

So then I just wanted to give you a sense of some of the resources that are available from the University of California. So what I did was I just looked up oral history at each campus, because this is UC Love Data Week. All of the UC campuses have oral history collections. So, but I wanted to look at material that would actually help you do an oral history. I will say the UC Irvine toolkit is fantastic. Also, UCLA - they are very, very sort of step-by-step guidelines and aimed more at community members. So, if you wanted just a starting place, I kind of would suggest those. The UC San Diego link - there's a course called "race and oral history." So getting back to that question of how oral history can be used in classroom settings-- also super interesting to look at.

So I'll leave you with these to look at, and then here's further reading. There's a really really, to me, fascinating journal if you want to take a look at that and your university has it. The fourth

bullet point here, *Oral History at a Distance*, is sort of my Bible right now, because how [do] you effectively do oral history through some kind of online connection, in my case, Zoom? And then if you get into sort of trends in oral history as a method, you will hear about Portelli over and over and over again. Portelli, Portelli, Portelli. So he wrote this article in 1979. Oral history was really looked down on, and I think it was kind of, by the academic establishment, oral history have been kind of considered as “this is how pre-literate-- don't really like that word, but—pre-literate societies passed on their knowledge” or it's how folklore got transmitted. And it was kind of sort of a lesser kind of thing, and Portelli really was the one that got academia to sit up and take notice that oral history had its own strengths. So actually the creation of relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee, the distinctive characteristics that should be-- and that as a method it should be considered more positively.

I am realizing I forgot to say one interesting thing. So, sorry, side digression, which is, um, when I was working with the UC Berkeley Library Scholarly Communications about the agreement that I wanted to have my narrators sign (and I think I said before I was very very interested in them keeping their copyright to their interviews and not having them have to sign it over to anyone) it turned out that in any agreement like this, the narrator has the copyright for the words that come out of their mouth and I have the copyright for the words that come out of my mouth. It's kind of sort of cool. I mean, I think their words will be way more interesting, but it's still two people have to sign the agreement because the copyright belongs to both people. So, I thought that was kind of an interesting thing.

And then here's a picture of [the book] *Say It Forward*, which we talked about earlier. And so that is all I have for you today. I do hope that if you have any questions, you'll contact me. I had to... I showed someone this slide and they're like, "Why do you have the cat?" It's like because it's tail is question mark! So that's why. I'm really really thrilled to have you all here today. And I guess I'll just stop sharing. Maybe take a look at the chat.

[Anna Sackmann, UC Berkeley Data Services Librarian] Thank you so much, Ann. I will kind of highlight a couple of questions that came through the chat. [Recording stopped for Question and Answer session]