

## Lesson Plan 3: Introduction to Oral Histories

Name: Allison Gant  
Ages of Students: Seniors  
Lesson Title: Intro to oral histories

Date of Lesson:  
Number of Students: 30

### Focus Standards:

RI 7: Integrate and evaluate multiple sources of information presented in different media or formats (e.g., visually, quantitatively) as well as in words in order to address a question or solve a problem.

Objectives/Learning Targets: After reading Portelli's "What Makes Oral Histories Different" and showing selecting examples of oral histories recorded at UK from the JHFE Jewish Kentucky Collection or other collections, I will introduce students to a new type of history and gain a greater understanding of why oral histories are important

Length of Lesson: 1 day

Day 1: Discussing strengths and weaknesses of oral histories; viewing select clips from samples of oral histories (see slides for URL and dates of oral histories)

Homework day 1: students will have read the following:

- Portelli, Alessandro. "What Makes Oral History Different"

Notes and Concepts: See attached slides

Individual/Practice: Students will work individually or in small groups to think of strengths and weaknesses of using an oral history versus a more traditional written history

Class practice: class discussion of strengths and weaknesses of oral history as a method of research

# Oral Histories

## What is an oral history?

- ▶ Oral history is a field of study and a method of gathering, preserving and interpreting the voices and memories of people, communities, and participants in past events.
- ▶ Oral History Association

## Components of an Oral History

- ▶ Interviewer: asks the questions
- ▶ Interviewee: answers the questions
- ▶ Transcript: a written or printed version of material originally spoken
- ▶ Index: “chapters” for the interview
- ▶ Summary: overview, synopsis of the interview

## OHMS

- ▶ OHMS is open source platform designed to enable people to index oral histories
- ▶ OHMS stands for “Oral History Metadata Synchronizer”
- ▶ OHMS facilitates digital segmentation, access, and searchability
- ▶ Examples on the next slide

**OHMS** | ORAL HISTORY  
METADATA SYNCHRONIZER

## Examples

- ▶ [https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/oh/render.php?cachefile=2015oh434\\_jk010\\_ohm.xml#segment342](https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/oh/render.php?cachefile=2015oh434_jk010_ohm.xml#segment342) Leon Cooper- Naval Service and Jewish identity in the Navy
- ▶ [https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/oh/render.php?cachefile=2016oh399\\_jk034\\_ohm.xml#segment671](https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/oh/render.php?cachefile=2016oh399_jk034_ohm.xml#segment671) Madeline Abrahamson-Education and Career
- ▶ [https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/oh/render.php?cachefile=2017oh220\\_jk049\\_ohm.xml#segment526](https://kentuckyoralhistory.org/oh/render.php?cachefile=2017oh220_jk049_ohm.xml#segment526) David Wirtschafter- Childhood Jewish traditions

- Leon was a prominent member of the Lexington Jewish community for many years and a software engineer who was part of the IBM team that invented Word processing, he recently passed
- Madaleine Abramson, converted to Judaism and has served in the public as wife to Louisville's Mayor for Life "Jerry Abramson"
- Rabbi David Wirtschafter was born in Lexington, and has recently returned to serve as pulpit rabbi for the REform congregation, Temple Adath Israel

## What's the big deal?

Work individually or in small groups to think of strengths and weaknesses of written history versus oral history

## Class Discussion

### Oral Histories

- ▶ Strength
- ▶ Weakness
- ▶ Strength
- ▶ Weakness

### Written Histories

- ▶ Strength
- ▶ Weakness
- ▶ Strength
- ▶ Weakness

**During the class discussion, I fill in the strengths and weaknesses as students discuss them.**