Oral History for Community Engagement

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WHY YOU ARE HERE
01 WHAT IS ORAL HISTORY?
02 HOW ORAL HISTORY CAN INSPIRE YOUR COMMUNITY
03 PLAN A PROJECT
   Who, What, Why, How
04 GET CREATIVE!
05 TALK AMONGST YOURSELVES
   Brainstorming and Q&A
Who am I?
Who are You?
Who are We?
What Is Oral History?

Traditional, Academic, Elite

Start

So Much More

Now
What Is Oral History?

So Much More:

(1) The Encounter
(2) Sharing the Encounter
(3) Creating Social Change
(4) Technology, Creativity, MultiMedia
Oral History & Storytelling for Community Engagement

- Brings Together Disparate Voices
- Offers New Ideas & Experiences
- Brings History, Tradition, Culture, & Heritage to Life
- Raises Awareness & Inspires Action
- Activates Public Discourse
- Celebrates Diversity
- Builds Connections
- Creates Empathy
1. Planning the Project: Basic Formula for Success

- Collect Stories
- Make Something
- Create An Exhibit
- Have Public Programming
- Get Feedback, Solicit Involvement, Make it Grow
Planning the Project: The Pitch & Mission

What is the **Big Idea**? **Goal**? **Mission**? How will this project **Explore** that? With whom can you **Partner**? What **Community Resources** do you need?
Planning the Project: Begin at the End

What Will the Finished Product Look Like?

When Will The Public Event Be?

What Do You Want to Happen Next?
Planning the Project: Basic Formula for Success

1. Collect Stories
2. Make Something
3. Create An Exhibit
4. Have Public Programming
5. Get Feedback, Solicit Involvement, Make it Grow
Planning the Project: The Pitch & Mission

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With whom can you **Partner?**
What **Community Resources** do you need?
1. INTRODUCTION

Why start an oral history and storytelling project in Westport?

Stories have power.

They have the power to educate and enlighten, to connect people and resolve conflicts. They can bring back the past, help understand the present and give us a glimpse of the future.

They can create a defining narrative about a community — which can unite people around shared experiences, shared values, and a common commitment to the future. And they also may tell a story that doesn’t represent all that a community actually is.

Take Westport. There are narratives of the past and the present, of a homogenous town vs. the diverse quilted arts community that it once was. Of a divided community vs. a united one, with neighbors looking out for neighbors. These two narratives are a bit at odds with each other.

I’m sure that the truth about Westport lies somewhere in between, and the stories we tell and share can go a long way to help illuminate what our community is really like, how it’s changed over time, and how the prevailing narrative barely scratches the surface of all the unique stories and people that make up our town.

Developing projects like the ones described below that expose the depth underlying the surface can help change perceptions and connect people in the community more. Conducting interviews, creating audio installations, making short films, developing multimedia websites, building a social media presence, and hosting other storytelling programming can showcase the diversity of Westport and change the prevailing narrative. And may just promote civility and improve relationships within our community.

GOALS

The ultimate goal of this project is to launch a sustainable theme-based multimedia and multidimensional oral history and storytelling project. And to create and build an oral history archives to be housed at the Library and made available to the public and to researchers now and in the future.

Our mission is to: Collect interviews, Share stories, Explore Complexities, Build community.

PROJECT DESIGN

In keeping with the theme of the Library’s remarkable renovation, our first oral history project will be about Transformation.

We will collect video and audio interviews with Westporters about their own transformations and how their individual stories relate to the community as a whole.

Option 1: Find an interesting cross-section of individuals and collect their Transformation stories. We may hear stories about a family’s challenges and how Westporters supported the family during that time. We will look for stories from our seniors about retiring, or changing their life, or starting a new chapter and how Westport played a role in their lives through all those stages. There may be stories about building up or tearing down life shifting unexpectedly or changing deliberately. Stories of failure or overcoming challenges, people think about where it’s headed and where it should be headed in the future. This is a change in town.

Option 2: Start with the Library and then our other iconic institutional individuals there about Transforming — as sort of a “Before” for instance, at the Library, we could interview people in the library and tell their story and how it fits in to people who live and work in our institutions to them. The New England town.

WHY/HOW

Westport is, on the surface, a lovely, quiet, homogenous, affluent New England town. But individuals there about Transforming — how it fits in to people who live and work in our institutions. Westport, asking people to share their stories and encouraging others to listen, can experiences — of all the people here. By reaching into all the different places and spaces in races, ages, religions, genders, backgrounds, socio-economic status, and work and life this narrative barely scratches the surface. It doesn’t include all the diverse backgrounds. Why is Westport a new way. The time is right, too. Recently, the town is build community in a whole new way. The time is right, too. Recently, the town is growing more aware of how racism, sexism, anti-Semitism — not to mention politics in a town-wide participatory documentary becoming more aware of how racism, sexism, anti-Semitism — not to mention politics in a way of bringing people together.

We will do this by:

- Collecting interviews with as wide a variety of Westporters as possible around particular topics — beginning with Transformation.
- Sharing stories online and through the library media outlets.
- Developing interactive public programming that brings people together.
Planning the Project: Begin at the End

What Will the Finished Product Look Like?

When Will The Public Event Be?

What Do You Want to Happen Next?
Westport Voices

Exhibit

Westport Voices

"My photography is like my cave drawing - how I clicked on the wall that I was here."

Jeni Guha, photographer, creative entrepreneur

"Everyone is a mix, and that needs to be acknowledged."

Cindy Rapoport, mother, wife, massage therapist

"I turned 50, my kids left for college, and I left my job. In one fell swoop."

Michael Wolfer, magazine publisher, writer, filmmaker

The Transformation Project: Stories of Personal Change
So Now, What Else Is Oral History?

Storytelling, Audio, Video, Documentary, Podcasts, Interactive Exhibits, Participatory Media, Photography, Live Events, Sound Walks, Maps, Museums, Websites, and Any Other Creative Project You Can Imagine
Get Creative
Create Space For Conversations
Get Creative
Create Opportunities for Listening

Big Stories
Big Stories Small Towns
bigstories.com.au

The Four Chairs Project

Big Stories, Small Town
http://www.bigstories.com.au
Get Creative

Create Opportunities for Participation

It Gets Better

The It Gets Better Project exists to uplift, empower, and connect LGBTQ+ youth around the globe.

G It Gets Better / itgetsbetterproject

It Gets Better Project
itgetsbetter.org

Sandy Storyline
sandystoryline.com
Get Creative

Create With Not About

Create Opportunities for Change

MOTT HAVEN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT
COLLECTION

An Ex Axe
1995 / Berlin, Germany

She was the first woman that I let move in with me. All my friends thought I needed...

❤️ 28 评论 6

Locked until 05.04.2020

EM  Posted

COLLECTION

Divorce Day Mad Dwarf
1995 / Berlin, Germany

The divorce day garden dwarf. He arrived in a new car. Arrogant, shallow and heartless. The dwarf was closing the gate that he had...

❤️ 14 评论 8

Collection

Handcuffs
2005 / Zagreb, Croatia

Atam me...

❤️ 69 评论 10

Locked until 15.5.2025

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Brokenships
Thoughts, Comments, Questions?

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