

Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives
Oral History Project
Project Description & Guidelines

A. Rationale:

As the Archives of the PAOC, part of our mandate is to strive to enhance our collection so that it provides a thorough and balanced reflection of the history of our Fellowship. In the light of this mandate, the Archives is initiating an oral history project based upon an idea originally proposed by Dr. Ron Kydd. The project will improve the scope and extent of our holdings by providing first-hand accounts of the individual and corporate experiences of both clergy and lay persons in the PAOC from across the country.

B. Objectives:

The Project has four primary objectives:

1. To give our ministry students an opportunity to gain personal experience with the practice of history at the most basic level, the eye witness account.
2. To expose our ministry students to the first-hand stories of the PAOC as told by those who lived that history. This will challenge and bless our students as well as give them a valuable intergenerational perspective on Pentecostalism in Canada.
3. To gather for the Archives a significant national sampling of personal stories and research information on a variety of issues in PAOC history.
4. To enhance the awareness and utilization of our Archives collection by PAOC Bible College students and faculty.

C. Logistics:

1. Initially the Project will employ students from our PAOC Bible Colleges across Canada as the researchers.
2. Students who elect to participate in the Project will do so by selecting the oral history assignment as part of their requirements for their course on Pentecostal History.
3. Students will be responsible to:
 - Choose a topic and formulate goals specific to their own segment of the Project in consultation with their Professor
 - Select interviewees, schedule interviews, obtain the necessary releases, and conduct the interviews.
 - Create a typed transcript of the interviews
 - Use the results of their research to create a paper or presentation on their chosen topic
 - Submit the original interview tapes, transcripts and complete paper or presentation to their Professor in accordance with the specified assignment deadline. Once the project has been marked, the Professor will forward the material to the Archives.

4. A semi-formal agreement between each student and the Archives will be put in place to insure that the Archives actually receives useable archival material from the project in a format that facilitates its long-term preservation and convenient access. This will include donation to the Archives of the original recordings plus transcripts, release forms and a copy of any paper or presentation created with the interview material. The student will also be expected to assign the copyright ownership of these items to the Archives to facilitate their use by researchers.
5. The Archives will supply project guidelines regarding things like procedures, release forms, transcript format and interview techniques for each project participant as well as blank cassette tapes for recording the interviews.
6. The Archives will also supply suggested presentation topics and profiles to assist in selecting interviewees who will provide appropriate material for the Archives.

D. Assignment Requirements:

These are the minimum requirements in order to earn marks towards your Pentecostal History course credit by participating in the Oral History Project. The Professor may wish to add other requirements. The number of marks given for this assignment are at the discretion of the Professor and will be specified on the regular course syllabus. *Note: At the discretion of the Professor, this can be done as a collaborative project by as few as two or as many as five students.*

There are four major components to this assignment:

- a. Learning about oral history through selected readings (reader supplied)
- b. Conducting oral history interviews and capturing them on audio or video tape
- c. Transcribing the interviews in the prescribed format
- d. Creating a paper or presentation using the information gained through the interviews

Since the purpose of the Oral History Project is to acquire *historically significant* material for the PAOC Archives, interviewees (also referred to as “narrators”) must be chosen and the interviews conducted in a manner consistent with this purpose. *Simply recording the life story of an elderly Pentecostal person is not sufficient.* The interview should be conducted with a view to gathering significant information on the experiences and ideas of Pentecostal people as these relate to the history of our Fellowship. Here are some examples of historically significant areas to explore:

- Conversion experiences
- Holy spirit baptism experiences
- Description of Pentecostal life (descriptions of services; religious practices; miracles; attitudes towards specific issues such as dancing, styles of dress, etc.; roles of women in ministry; methods of evangelism; style and content of Pentecostal preaching and so forth)
- Life story and ministry experiences of PAOC credential holders
- Noteworthy religious events such as revivals, new church plants, church splits, doctrinal controversies (e.g., Latter Rain Movement, etc.) and so forth

This still leaves a very broad scope for the assignment, hence some suggested topics are provided below.

The student will provide signed originals of the following forms as part of the assignment:

- a. Interviewer Contract
- b. Copyright Assignment
- c. Release form(s) signed by all interviewees

The paper/presentation of at least 1500 words will consist of the following elements:

- a. An introduction which sets forth the objectives of the student's personal project in terms which will enable the outcome to be measured against the objectives. It should also explain the reason specific interviewee(s) were selected and the details of how the interview was set up and conducted.
- b. A brief personal reflection on the experience of doing oral history.
- c. An exposition of the chosen topic drawing extensively but not exclusively upon the interview transcript(s). An effort should be made where possible to compare and contrast these findings with similar information in published sources. Normal rules for footnotes and bibliography citations apply. See below for information on citing information from oral interviews.
- d. A conclusion which summarizes the findings of the assignment in terms of its contribution to our understanding of Pentecostal history in Canada.
- e. If possible, take a few photos of the narrator and include the original prints with your submission.

Potential Topics (your final topic must be approved by your Professor).

- a. *Generational Study* — This involved interviewing two or three generations of Pentecostal people in the same immediate family (e.g., grandfather, father, son). Look for issues of continuity and change in their religious/ministry experiences, practices and beliefs.
- b. *Congregational History* — Relying primarily on interviews, reconstruct the outline of a specific congregation's history from its founding to the present using at least three informants. Investigate how and why the church was started, by whom and under what conditions. Research significant events such as revivals, challenges, conflicts and so forth. Try to relate these where possible to the larger story of Canadian Pentecostalism.
- c. *Topical Issues in Pentecostal History* — Choose a significant topic or issue (Latter Rain Movement, women in ministry, faith movement, etc.) and explore it from the viewpoint of those who experienced it.
- d. *PAOC Music* — Here you would look into the types of music sung in PAOC churches in earlier decades and compare it with that used today. Specific comparisons of musical styles and lyrics as well as the narrator's feelings about the changes in worship are required, not simply a litany of general complaints.
- e. *Missionary Life* — Interview one or more retired PAOC missionaries to discover what it was like to be a missionary in our Fellowship 40 or 50 years ago. Besides gathering interesting stories of their field experiences, investigate the more mundane aspects of missionary life such as finances (personal remuneration), travel, schooling arrangements for children, impact of cross-cultural ministry on the family, strategic thinking and planning, methods of evangelism and church planting, fundraising, relationships with other missionaries on the field, the Missions Division, the churches and so forth.

- f. *Pastoral Ministry* — Interview former pastors who can describe the experience of being a PAOC pastor 40 or 50 years ago in detail. Have them make comparisons with today on issues such as their expectations going into the ministry, the congregation's expectations of them, weekly workload, challenges faced in the church, adequacy of ministry preparation, personal remuneration, their understanding of the pastoral role and so forth.
- g. *Non-PAOC Pentecostals* — This topic looks at people who were/are Pentecostal in experience but never belonged to a PAOC church. There are 13 Pentecostal groups in Canada, however, because most of them are very small, their story is has never been told. Besides capturing the outline of their understanding and experience of the Christian life, investigate their dealings with and attitude toward the PAOC and its people. You may uncover some painful memories so be prepared to be sensitive, supportive and patient. Avoid any attempt to refute their claims or concerns. You are there simply to hear *their* story as they want to tell it. For the purposes of this project, look beyond the label, "Pentecostal" as this includes some groups who do not share our understanding of the Baptism with the Holy Spirit as an enduement of power for service but rather, identify it with entire sanctification. Seek out people who share the same basic experience as we do but have no direct affiliation with the PAOC.

These are just some of the possibilities. All creative proposals are welcome. Be sure to gain the approval of your Professor before proceeding.

Criteria for Selection of Interviewees:

Interviewees should meet all of the following criteria:

- a. They should have clear recollections that go back at least into the decade of the 1950's (with the exception of some interviewees in a generational study or congregational history).
- b. They should be persons whose experience of Pentecostalism is first-hand
- c. They can be clergy or laypersons
- d. They must be willing to have the interview tape-recorded
- e. They must be willing to sign the Release Form

Oral Interview Citation Format

Footnote: (Name of person interviewed), interviewed by (your name), tape (or video) recording, (place of interview: City: Province), (date: d/m/y), PAOC Archives, Mississauga.

e.g., John Doe, interviewed by James Craig, tape recording, Toronto: ON, 16 May 2001, PAOC Archives, Mississauga.

Subsequent

Reference: Doe, interview. (Include the specific date if your interview stretched over more than one day)

Bibliography entry: Doe, John, interviewed by James Craig, tape recording, Toronto: ON, 16 May 2001, PAOC Archives, Mississauga.

E. Project Guidelines

In order to ensure that the time and effort you put into this project results in a permanent record of your research that is useful to other researchers in the future, your full cooperation with the following guidelines is greatly appreciated.

1. To participate in the Project, a signed copy of the “Copyright Assignment” form must be in the possession of the Archives.
2. If the interviewer is participating in this project as part of the requirements for a course of study, he or she will fulfil all academic requirements of the professor before submitting any material to the Archives.
3. Begin by reading all the material provided in the Project Kit.
4. Interviewers will use only the C-60 audio cassettes (no minicassettes) provided by the Pentecostal Assemblies of Canada Archives (PAOCA) for this project.
5. If video tapes are used, the student must provide their own blank tapes in standard VHS format.
6. A typed transcript of all audio or video interviews will be prepared according to the “Transcript Format Guidelines” provided.
7. The Interviewer agrees to obtain a completed and signed “Release Form” from each narrator interviewed.
8. If the narrator offers to donate historical material to the Archives such as documents, magazines, old books, photos and so forth, please contact the PAOC Archives before you accept any material. We will advise you if the material is of interest to the Archives and make arrangements with you to ensure the donation is legally secured and properly documented (email: archives@paoc.org subject: Oral History Project).
9. Once you have finished interviewing someone, be sure to pop out the two tabs on the end of the cassette to avoid recording over top of your interview. Do this immediately the interview is concluded.
10. Upon completion of the project, the following materials will be submitted to the Archives through your Professor or local Archives representative:
 - a. Original audio or video tapes of interview(s)
 - b. Transcript of all interviews
 - c. Copy of paper or presentation made using the interview research
 - d. An original signed “Release Form” from each interview narrator.

Please note that digital files of any of these items *will not be accepted as a substitute but may be submitted in addition* to the other formats requested with the exception of the release form(s). Computer files should be saved in “rich text format” or “.rtf” to enable them to be opened by a variety of word-processing programs and submitted on floppy disk or as email attachments not exceeding 1 Mb in size. If you are emailing files, please indicate clearly your name, college and the names of your narrators and dates of the interviews. Indicate as well that the paper copies have been mailed. *Paper copies of the transcripts, your paper or presentation and release forms must be submitted by snail mail along with the tapes.*