

Oral History Interview Recording Instructions

Please use the following guidelines to ensure you get the best possible recording of the interview.

Selection of a Machine:

1. Do not use a mini-cassette machine under any circumstances.
2. If possible, get a recorder with a separate microphone.
3. Radio Shack carries a line of relatively inexpensive tape recorders.
4. Be sure to test the machine you plan to use before you go to the interview.

Recording the Interview:

1. If possible, place the microphone or the recorder if you do not have a separate mike on a table between you and the narrator. If you can, avoid holding the microphone in your hand. Put it on the piece of foam rubber or a soft cloth.
2. Do not use the voice-activated feature. It will leave gaps in your interview.
3. Place the machine on the floor under the table or beside you. Remember to bring an extension cord in case you need it to reach the nearest plug. **DO NOT REARRANGE PEOPLE'S FURNITURE TO REACH A PLUG.** Try to be as non-intrusive as possible.
4. **ALWAYS TEST YOUR RECORDING BEFORE YOU BEGIN THE SESSION.** This can be done during initial casual conversation with the narrator. If you have them, plug the earphones into the tape recorder, check your settings and press record. Ask a simple question like, "How long have you been living in this area?" and let the narrator talk for a few seconds. Then press stop, rewind a bit and play. If the results are satisfactory, rewind to just past the leader and press pause, then record/play. Be sure to press pause again when you are ready to begin.
5. Keep an eye on the tape so you can turn it over after 30 minutes. Be sure to keep an eye on it as you get close to the 60-minute mark or you will miss a portion of the interview.
6. Label each tape in pencil before the session and then use them in the right sequence.
7. 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.