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### The Columbia College Chicago Oral History Model in Action: A Case Study

Erin McCarthy PhD

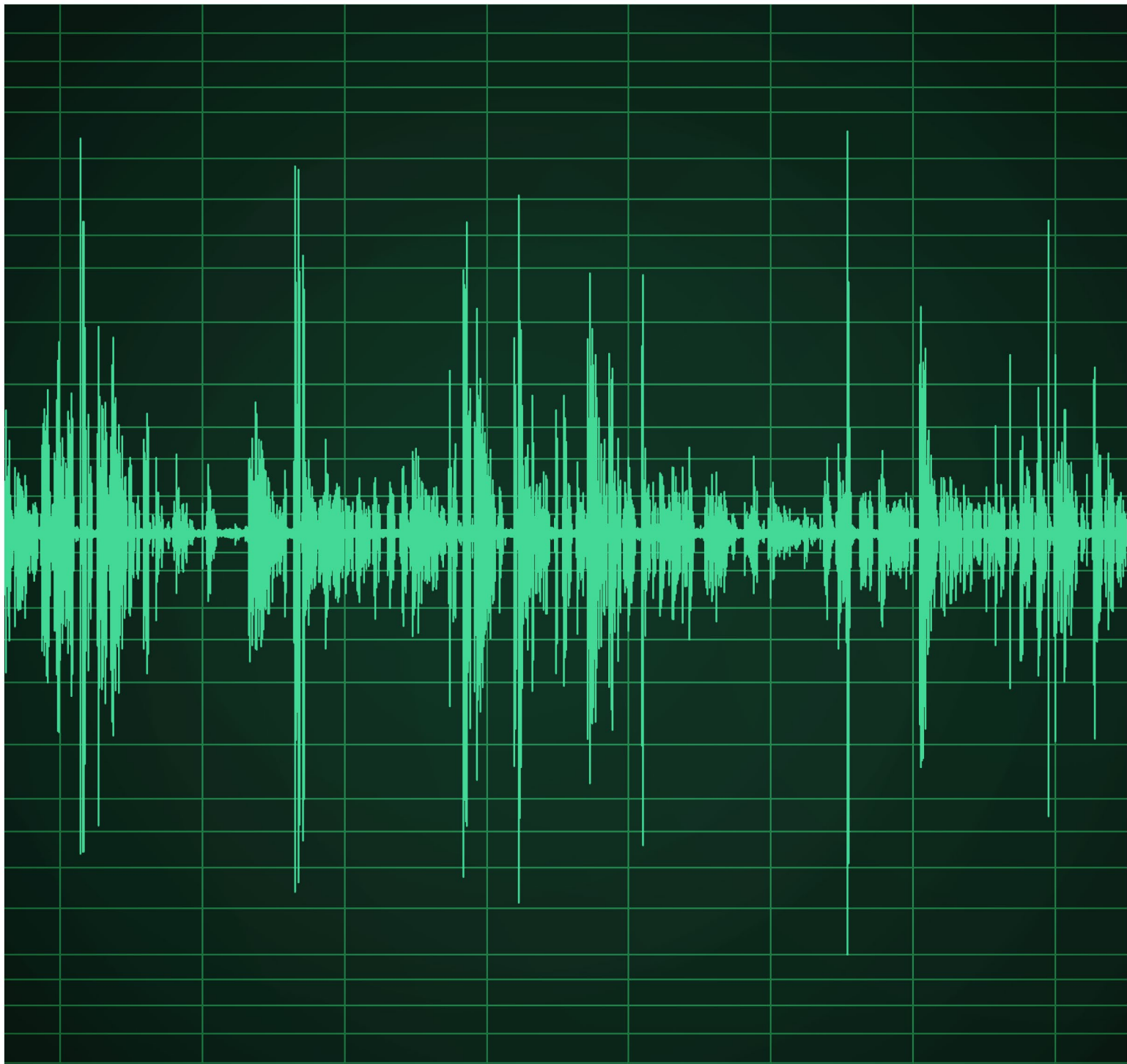
Heidi Marshall MA, MS

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# **THE COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO ORAL HISTORY MODEL IN ACTION: A CASE STUDY**

**Erin McCarthy, Ph.D. & Heidi Marshall**

**August, 2022**

**Columbia**  
COLLEGE CHICAGO

**ARCHIVES**  
& Special Collections

The Council of Independent Colleges [Humanities Research for the Public Good](#) grant, conducted fall 2021 and spring 2022, allowed Columbia College Chicago to put the theory into practice. A team of four, faculty & administrator, Peter Fitzpatrick, faculty member Erin McCarthy, faculty member Matthew Cunningham, and collections specialist, Heidi Marshall, worked with two undergraduate student interns, Adiam Woldu and Bri Ramirez, to explore the question: *Does the Columbia College Chicago Oral History Model offer a systematic way to identify oral history themes, compare stories, and edit existing oral histories into new forms for public dissemination, such as podcasts?*



## TABLE OF CONTENTS

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THE COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO ORAL HISTORY MODEL.....	3
INTRODUCTION .....	3
COLLABORATIVE STAKEHOLDERS.....	3
PROTOCOL FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS .....	3
CORE QUESTIONS & SCRIPTS.....	4
DIGITAL INTERVIEW PORTFOLIO .....	4
CORE QUESTION STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE .....	5
CASE STUDY IN ACTION: <i>What We Owe</i> PROJECT CONTENT ANALYSIS .....	6
HUMANITIES RESEARCH FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD GRANT / COUNCIL OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES.....	6
CORE QUESTION IDENTIFICATION .....	6
ANALYSIS.....	7
CONCLUSION .....	10
APPENDIX A – PROJECT SUMMARY .....	11
APPENDIX B – RELEASE FORMS (SAMPLE).....	12
APPENDIX C – BIOGRAPHICAL-DATA FORM (SAMPLE) .....	13
APPENDIX D – LISTENING TO ORAL HISTORIES WORKSHEET (SAMPLE).....	14
APPENDIX E – BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT GUIDELINES.....	15
APPENDIX F – ABSTRACT STATEMENT GUIDELINES .....	16

# THE COLUMBIA COLLEGE CHICAGO ORAL HISTORY MODEL

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## INTRODUCTION

The Columbia College Chicago oral history model is distinct in several ways. While traditional oral history focuses on the individual interviewer and narrator,<sup>1</sup> this model is the result of an ongoing collaboration between oral history faculty and the college archives. Key components of the model include a protocol for community partners, guidelines for the development of core interview questions, an inventory of components required to generate a digital interview portfolio, and an accessioning process to encourage greater use by interested parties.

The model's strength lies in the cooperation between the stakeholders—the student interviewers, the archives, and the community partner—who follow a process that not only collects unique personal experiences but also captures multiple perspectives about topics identified by the core questions. Core questions are a set of specific questions, asked of every narrator included in the project. The inclusion of core questions offers researchers and others a systematic method to conduct preliminary content analysis across interviews. This content analysis tool offers a standardized method by which to identify interview topics and themes, consistencies, and inconsistencies, thereby, discovering new avenues of research and questions.

## COLLABORATIVE STAKEHOLDERS

To carry out a planned oral history project around a central theme or event, the model relies on a partnership between three parties, who each have a distinct role:

1. The **Community Partner** – Personally engaged with a given community and who holds intergenerational knowledge. Their project role includes: identifying the interview topic, providing narrators, and interview question formation.
2. The **Oral Historian and Interviewers** – The oral historian is someone trained in the field of oral history and who teaches interviewers and prepares them to conduct formal oral history interviews following the best practices of the discipline.
3. The **Archives** - Collects the primary source interview recordings and supporting materials, ensures public access to the interviews through open-source digital repositories, and preserves the recordings according to best archival practices.

## PROTOCOL FOR COMMUNITY PARTNERS

To ensure the success of the student oral history projects for a semester term class, potential community partners are asked to provide the following:

- *Project rationale and description* – state the reason for a proposed oral history project (upcoming anniversary, group or organization history, etc.) and include time period, key events, and relevant concepts specific to the era of focus for the interview.
- *Confirmed list of narrators with contact information* – provide a list of community people who have agreed to be narrators.
- *Participate in the core question formation* – recommend core questions and assist in the formulation of questions to be asked during the interview.
- *Background reading list* – provide a background reading list and any instruction material on the relevant topics to be covered during the interview.
- *Recommended guest speakers* – recruit and provide speakers to address the interviewers to build their knowledge of and better prepare them for the interview.

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<sup>1</sup> See: Oral History Association, Principles and Best Practices; <https://www.oralhistory.org/principles-and-best-practices-revised-2018/>

## CORE QUESTIONS & SCRIPTS

The philosophy behind the development of core questions as an essential component of our approach to oral history interviewing grew out of a multi-semester project which ran from 2009 to 2010, to interview activists for the Chicago Anti-Apartheid Movement Collection (CAAM) [https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/cadc\\_caam/](https://digitalcommons.colum.edu/cadc_caam/).

As students conducted interviews, it became clear there were rich topics necessary to ask each narrator about, which evolved into the practice of creating *Core Questions*. Core questions are a group of targeted prompts customized to a specific project for the purpose of stimulating research across interviews. Applying principles of question formulation, faculty, students, and community partner representatives collaborate to create a short list of questions ensuring central topics and key issues are addressed.

While some oral historians advise against creating and using a script, this model uses a modified script, or outline, during the interview to support our student interviewers and remind them to include the core questions, this model uses a modified script, or outline, during the interview to support our student interviewers and remind them to include the core questions. The model also follows Valerie Yow's life history approach to interviewing.<sup>2</sup> The life history approach arranges interview questions chronologically – from childhood through to the present.

Each script has four required elements: opening (or the label), background/context, narrative questions, and reflection questions.

The narrative questions focus on the narrator's personal experience, organized by themes (childhood, family, youth, education, employment, friends, leisure), and are constructed as open-ended responses rather than simple yes or no questions. The themes move from private experiences, such as family and home, to the societal or public interactions (school, employment). The flow of such an interview allows for the insertion of the core questions easily into the script as they can be asked within the questions designed specifically for the narrator.

The interview is recorded, and each interviewer completes an interview portfolio packet for each narrator, containing release forms signed by interviewer and narrator, biographical data forms conducted before the recorded interview which assists the interviewer in the creation of a script, and the oral history recording itself. Once the interview is completed, the interviewer produces a verbatim transcript of the recorded interview, a narrator biography, and interview abstract so anyone accessing the interview understands the interview's content more fully.

## DIGITAL INTERVIEW PORTFOLIO

Columbia College Chicago oral history projects include an interview portfolio packet for each interview, slated for permanent retention in the archives:

1. **Release Forms:** (See sample forms in Appendix B)
2. **Biographical-Data Form:** Collects information about the interviewee. The form should be reviewed for each project, adding relevant questions as needed. (See sample form in Appendix C)
3. **Oral History Recording:** published online
4. **Verbatim Transcript:** published online
5. **Introduction to Interview with Narrator Biography and Content Summary/Abstract:** (See Appendices E & F): published online

These steps allow for unique interviews to be produced with the documentation necessary to assist all parties in research into and preservation of these narrators' words.

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<sup>2</sup> Yow, Valerie...

## CORE QUESTION STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE

Narrator responses to core questions asked within a given project result in the ability to tease out themes and perspectives from their replies, thus creating a standardized method by which to identify topics and themes across multiple interviews.

Oral history's purpose is defined as a means of historical documentation through the creation of primary source materials for the purpose of further and/or future research and investigation. There are two sets of core questions each interviewer asked their narrator within this set of interviews: narrative questions and reflective questions.

The life history approach to oral history, practiced at Columbia College Chicago, arranges interview questions chronologically. The narrative questions focus on the narrator's personal experience, organized by themes (childhood, family, youth, education, employment, friends, leisure), and are constructed as open-ended responses rather than simple yes or no replies. The themes move from private experiences, such as family and home, to the societal or public interactions (school, employment). The flow of such an interview allows for the insertion of the core questions easily into the script as they can be asked within the questions designed specifically for the narrator. A script of questions should be created ahead of the interview, designed to take the narrator through their life chronologically, and the narrative core questions should be inserted in appropriate places in the script. As example, below are the questions from the Chicago Anti-Apartheid activists' oral histories, composed by all project stakeholders.

### Narrative Core Questions

Narrative questions take the narrator through their life to the activity or event on which the oral history project focuses. These core questions appear in the script where it is appropriate to ask the question.

In the oral history interviews, narrative questions do not need to be asked in an exact sequence, but rather where the interviewer feels it appropriate.

At some point in the interview, all core questions must be addressed for the model to work effectively.

The narrative questions for the [Chicago Anti-Apartheid Movement](#) activists' oral histories were:

- How did you first learn about apartheid?
- Why did you become involved in the anti-apartheid movement?
- What was your role in the movement?
- What groups or coalitions did you work with?
- Tell me about conflicts or tensions among anti-apartheid activists you worked with?
- What did your family think about your activism?

### Reflective Core Questions

Reflective questions pull the narrator from the past to the present near the end of the interview. What the interviewer asks the narrator is to reflect upon their whole life and comment on their experience.

The reflective questions asked of the Chicago Anti-Apartheid Activists were:

- What did you learn from being in the anti-apartheid movement?
- How did involvement in the movement change you?
- What are you most proud of?

The structure of the life approach to oral history is designed to ensure interviews of substance. The use of core questions provides a method to compare answers to standard questions and reuse this content in new ways.

Further, core questions provide different perspectives on the same event and allow for further research exploration and greater insight into the event.

# CASE STUDY IN ACTION: *What We Owe* PROJECT CONTENT ANALYSIS

## HUMANITIES RESEARCH FOR THE PUBLIC GOOD GRANT / COUNCIL OF INDEPENDENT COLLEGES

While this Columbia College Chicago Oral History Model has been practiced for more than a decade, analyzing responses to core questions had not yet been tested. Using the Chicago Anti-Apartheid Movement Collection oral histories of activists involved in protest against the South African Apartheid government, captured in 2009 and 2010, two undergraduate interns tested the model for the first time.

The Council of Independent Colleges [Humanities Research for the Public Good](#) grant, conducted fall 2021 and spring 2022, allowed Columbia College Chicago to put the theory into practice. A team of four, faculty member and administrator, Peter Fitzpatrick, faculty member Erin McCarthy, faculty member Matthew Cunningham, and collections specialist, Heidi Marshall, worked with two undergraduate student interns, Adiam Woldu and Bri Ramirez, to explore the question: Does the Columbia College Chicago Oral History Model offer a systematic way to identify oral history themes, compare stories, and edit existing oral histories into new forms for public dissemination, such as podcasts?

In theory, narrator responses to core questions asked within a given project *should* result in the ability to tease out themes and perspectives from their replies, thus creating a standardized method by which to identify topics and themes across multiple interviews.

### CORE QUESTION IDENTIFICATION

Working with thirty-four oral history interviews of Chicago Anti-Apartheid activists, the interns spent time learning South African history, exploring the associated archival collections, how to listen to oral histories, understanding oral history practice, and the existing Columbia College oral history model. They worked to identify the core question responses, conduct content analysis, and analyze the responses for overarching themes. Archives staff created a series of worksheets designed to assist with analysis of primary materials including document analysis and identifying bias in primary materials. For this project, a "Listening to Oral Histories" worksheet was created by staff to assist the interns in extrapolating material and information from recorded interviews, included in the appendices.

Oral history's purpose is defined as a means of historical documentation through the creation of primary source materials for the purpose of further and/or future research and investigation. There are two sets of core questions each interviewer asked their narrator within this set of interviews: narrative questions and reflective questions.

The life history approach to oral history, practiced at Columbia College Chicago, arranges interview questions chronologically. The narrative questions focus on the narrator's personal experience, organized by themes (childhood, family, youth, education, employment, friends, leisure), and are constructed as open-ended responses rather than simple yes or no replies. The themes move from private experiences, such as family and home, to the societal or public interactions (school, employment). The flow of such an interview allows for the insertion of the core questions easily into the script as they can be asked within the questions designed specifically for the narrator. A script of questions should be created ahead of the interview, designed to take the narrator through their life chronologically, and the narrative core questions should be inserted in appropriate places in the script. As example, below are the questions from the Chicago Anti-Apartheid activists' oral histories, composed by all project stakeholders.

### Narrative Core Questions

Narrative questions take the narrator through their life to the activity or event on which the oral history project focuses. These core questions appear in the script where it is appropriate to ask the question. For example, 'how did you first learn about apartheid?', may be asked when discussing the narrator's teenage years or early college years. These do not need to be asked in this exact sequence as they appear here, but rather where the interviewer feels it appropriate. At some point in the interview, all core questions must be addressed for the model to work effectively. The narrative questions for the Chicago Anti-Apartheid Movement activists were:

- How did you first learn about apartheid?
- Why did you become involved in the anti-apartheid movement?
- What was your role in the movement?
- What groups or coalitions did you work with?

- Tell me about conflicts or tensions among anti-apartheid activists you worked with?
- What did your family think about your activism?

## Reflective Core Questions

Reflective questions pull the narrator from the past to the present near the end of the interview. What the interviewer asks the narrator is to reflect upon their whole life and comment on their experience. The reflective questions asked of the Chicago Anti-Apartheid Activists were:

- What did you learn from being in the anti-apartheid movement?
- How did involvement in the movement change you?
- What are you most proud of?

The structure of the life approach to oral history is designed to ensure interviews of substance.

## ANALYSIS

Asking a standard set of core questions allows a researcher a method by which to analyze and compare replies of the narrators across a set of multiple interviews contained within a project.

The *Listening to Oral Histories* worksheet (Appendix D) assisted in the identification of key points in the narrator's interview, in the composition of a biography and interview abstract, and notes where core questions were asked within each interview.

The interns performed intense content analysis on the set of interviews and pulled themes from this set of oral histories to create a new work. Essentially, the decision to use and create core questions at the outset in planning a new oral history project allows fuller investigation and creates a systematic method by which to conduct analysis across a set of oral histories.

Through such analysis, new content can be created as the model allows a built-in and consistent method to compare the interview content. When applying this model systematically to analyze and compare oral histories in each set of interviews to create new formats, a key concept to follow is any new product of this work must honor the narrator's words

The interns then created a simple spreadsheet, identified replies to the core questions from the transcripts of each oral history. They included the line numbers and text where each answer appeared within the transcript (see table on page 9). From this work, themes, topics, and subjects can be extrapolated and identified which are frequently mentioned across interviews.

The interns collected themes present across the Chicago Anti-Apartheid Movement interviews; these represent a portion identified:

- Challenges in organizing people
- The responsibility it requires to be an activist
- Challenges in divestment from South Africa
- Unequal news coverage of events & protests
- History of anti-Apartheid activism in Chicago
- Challenges anti-Apartheid activists faced
- Black vs. Multi-Racial Coalitions
- Conflicting interests between protest organizations
- Violent or Pacifist approach to protest
- Communism vs. Anti-Communism beliefs
- Local churches response to protest
- Pro-Apartheid vs. Anti-Apartheid groups

The podcast format was chosen for the vehicle to illustrate the Columbia College Chicago Oral History model because podcasting is part of the college curriculum, and all necessary equipment is already on campus. The faculty podcast professor worked with the interns to ensure best practices for podcasting production were followed, taught two sessions about creating podcasts content, and was on hand to troubleshoot production issues.



For the creation of a podcast, several other items required consideration. It was decided that the focus of the podcast would be based on information from the oral history interviews themselves and any outside sound clips or sound bites would require have copyright clearance before use. While the oral history interviews and transcripts in this project already held releases and permissions, the interns had to consider the use of any other audio file support for use in the podcast. They chose clips from existing tapes for which the archives had permission to use online. Once a podcast is put online, it is broadcast, published, and disseminated - all rights that are managed by copyright holders.

Additional people were gathered to review, listen, and constructively critique the product produced from the model and resulting podcast. When the first cut of the podcast was produced by the interns, several people listened to it to ensure its flow, checked that the audio identified the sound clips, and the entire piece made sense and could be followed easily.

Narrator	Core Q1: How did you first learn about apartheid?	Core Q3: What was your role in the movement?	Reflection Q2: How did involvement in the movement change you?	NOTES/KEYWORDS:
Lisa Ann Brock	<p>L: 353-355 - LB: I think part of it was that I was studying it and so I had a lot of information and it was so clear. It was such a clear struggle against injustice. You got a country, happens to in Africa, now maybe people think Africa is in Europe, but I didn't think it was. Africa is largely a country of Africans that is blacks and you got this country in Africa that's run by whites, who happen to be a minority and have denied absolutely every right to Africans that are indigenous to that country. So you got ten percent of white population, denying the vote, workers rights, just everything to a majority, so it was just so clear and then they were a fascist state, the way they were reinforcing that was so brutal.</p>	<p>L: 293-300 // 334 - LB: I guess and it was a co thing. I co-chaired it with Harold Rogers, we co-chaired that, he's another labor activist here. Well on is I knew that I couldn't go, but I would've loved to go, but I knew I couldn't go because just two years before, I had just gone to Angola for their elections and I had a two year old son so I didn't have the money. If I hadn't gone to Angola and if I'd known all this stuff was going to happen in South Africa, I would have much rather had done that, but I knew I couldn't go so the issue was what role could I play and so the role was to help facilitate people going from Chicago. Basil Clunie went, there were a lot of people who went.</p>	<p>L: 326 // 384-387 - LB: (laugh) Well, my best friend in high school is not an activist and she has a nice family and lives in Cincinnati, you know, we stay in touch so I have a feeling I would have probably been married. It's funny I have a hard time separating my activism from my traveling and going to graduate school and all of that. So I guess I have this sense that if had not this whole, what I became hadn't come together the way it did, I probably would have ended up in Cincinnati where most of the people I went to high school with for the most part did not leave.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Grandparents were childhood sweethearts &amp; she was spoiled by them</li> <li>- Older sis, older bro, younger bro</li> <li>- Glendale elementary</li> <li>- Christmas</li> <li>- Interviewer asks well thought questions about the past &amp; childhood</li> <li>- Very involved in high school</li> <li>- Picked Howard because it was the "blackest city"</li> <li>- Became an activist in DC</li> <li>- Not many direct core questions asked</li> <li>- Felt very strongly about the death of Harold Washington</li> <li>- All of her lifelong connections came from the movement</li> </ul>
Jeremiah Wright	<p>L: 436-479 - JW: I had read about it in the '60s, I had read about it in the military, I'd read about it at Howard University. When I got out of the service, I transferred to Howard University. I started initially as I said at Virginia Union, I was at Howard. But it really hit home I would say, '72, '73, when I was teaching seminary, one of my students was a man named Bongo N'allaguba. He is now Doctor Bongo N'allaguba, was South African. And he and I started having conversations beyond the classroom, in terms of what life was really like for him and what living under Apartheid was like for him...</p>	<p>L: 20-32 - JW: You mean here? The city of Chicago, primarily. Those years span my involvement and my participation in two other-- really three other-- national and international agencies that had feed into the movement. One is my participation with the Trans-Africa forum, Randall Robinson was the executive director, I was on the Board of Directors of Trans-Africa, and the other two related, were denominational-related. I was on the Commission for Racial Justice of the United Church of Christ and served as the Vice President for the Commission for Racial Justice, and I was also the Secretary of the Board of Directors of the Office for Church and Society...</p>	<p>L: 326 // 384-387 - LB: (laugh) Well, my best friend in high school is not an activist and she has a nice family and lives in Cincinnati, you know, we stay in touch so I have a feeling I would have probably been married. It's funny I have a hard time separating my activism from my traveling and going to graduate school and all of that. So I guess I have this sense that if had not this whole, what I became hadn't come together the way it did, I probably would have ended up in Cincinnati where most of the people I went to high school with for the most part did not leave.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- From Philadelphia</li> <li>- Father was a pastor</li> <li>- Mother was an educator</li> <li>- Long and detailed responses</li> <li>- Aware of politics at young age — packed lunches on road trips because. Eating at a restaurant was dangerous</li> <li>- Joined military as a senior in college (6yrs in total)</li> <li>- Divestment movement — frightened and shocked by people who only wanted money &amp; didn't care</li> <li>- Promised himself not to buy any stones or diamonds until apartheid was over</li> <li>- Mobile people using religion</li> <li>- Biblical myths in this context (biblical literalism)</li> <li>sacred myth, a sacred myth of a people and making it factual history? And changing it from a snake who symbolizes the Negro gardener</li> <li>- People using the Bible to support their white supremacy here and in SA</li> <li>- His congregation was very active</li> <li>- Some people in congregation spoke Zulu</li> <li>- Thought apartheid would last a long time</li> <li>- Close connection to Columbia</li> <li>- Prexy — invaluable source of info — recommended that Jeremiah be interviewed</li> </ul>

A sample of the chart the interns created to identify the core questions in each interview and the note field for capturing any pertinent information.

## CONCLUSION

The interns' conclusion was that core question analysis does allow for consistent editing into new formats. Their podcast, *What We Owe*, was created through content analysis and core question research to identify themes and compare and contrast responses to these questions. They summarize their work in Appendix A.

The Columbia College Chicago Oral History Model is easy to adopt within any organization or institution. This model has been tested in-house on both intergenerational interactions, with student interviewers and life experienced narrators as well as peer to peer, where students interviewed each other in the [Capturing Quarantine](#) project capturing the undergraduate student response to the pandemic.

Technology should not be a barrier to successful implementation of this oral history model. A less than perfect recording is better than someone's voice not being heard. Advances in technology are making preservation easier to manage as well, such as cloud storage and user-friendly open source or low-cost software for audio processing and transcription.

This model was created by oral historian, Dr. Erin McCarthy, who perfected the collaborative stakeholder mode of faculty oral historian/students; community partner; and archives. She also honed the development of core questions as the method by which to analyze and produce standardized oral histories designed for analysis, encouraging new avenues of research exploration, as it offers a systematic way to identify oral history themes, and compare stories, to inform new engagement and study into a set of interviews.

## APPENDIX A – PROJECT SUMMARY

### WHAT WE OWE: THE WORK OF CHICAGO ANTI-APARTHEID ACTIVISTS

The podcast, *What We Owe*, is part of the Modeling History Project at Columbia College Chicago funded by the Council of Independent Colleges and completed in partnership with Chicago Cultural Alliance (CCA).

Working with oral histories from the Chicago Anti-Apartheid Movement Collection (CAAM) at Columbia College Chicago, student interns, Adiam Woldu and Bri Ramirez, produced a podcast on Chicago-based anti-apartheid activists' interviews. The podcast will be broadcast on WCRX (the college radio station) and Pacifica Radio in fall 2022.

In exploring the oral history interviews from CAAM activists, both students felt surprised and awed by the richness of the collection. As keen enthusiasts for history and storytelling, the archives offered a space for them to engage with and learn from these activist stories for the first time.

In the interviews, the students noted a particular challenge found within activist coalitions in the Chicago area around the issue of single or multi-race participation. In those organizations, where people from different racial and ethnic backgrounds came together to bring attention to the racist Apartheid regime, their challenge became one of trust-building—a foundational value in insuring solidarity. Since these interviews were conducted in 2009 and 2010, the rapid growth of social media discourse and the rise of social tensions in response to the current political climate has shown the continued relevance of trust building within and between activist organizations. With this in mind, the students led their research with the question: “What do we owe, to ourselves and to one another, to ensure the valuing of human life and well-being?”

While conducting research, the students found success in their organization methods. Contained in each interview was a set of core questions, which the students used to assess narrator responses across the interviews and organize their data according to the nature of each response. In particular, the core question “What conflicts or tensions among anti-apartheid activists did you experience?” revealed the racial tensions within and between organizations. A few challenges were noted as well, including a disruption in workflow because of audio quality or miswritten transcripts, the conflict in working both independently and collaboratively, and the task of scheduling around class schedules. However, the student worked through these challenges and built on their listening, teamwork, and time-management skills.

The students describe the importance of approaching research with questions and an open mind. Adiam stated: “We had to work with the unknown, and looking back, developing a research question early on would have offered us some more guidance. The question can change but having a place to start is crucial.” Bri echoed these thoughts: “A lesson I have taken from this is to be open-minded with research. When we started this project, we didn't know what we wanted or which direction to take the podcast. So while listening, we had to have an open mind to answers we did not expect.”



*(Bottom row) Harriet Parker (activist & donor), Lisa Brock (activist & donor), H.E. Ms. Nomaindiya Cathleen Mfeketo (South African Ambassador to the U.S.), Heidi Marshall (archivist & CIC grant team member), Bri Ramirez (Columbia College Chicago student & CIC grant intern)*

*(Top row) Reginald Ratshitanga (Political Counsellor, Embassy), Funeka Sihlali (activist & donor), Erin McCarthy (Interim Chair & CIC grant team member), Phumzile Pride Mazibuko (South African Consul General – Chicago), Marcella David (Senior Vice President & Provost, Columbia College Chicago), Nada Senic (South African Consulate-Chicago, Secretary to the Consul Political and Consul General), Adiam Woldu (Columbia College Chicago student & CIC grant intern), Carla Cherry, (South African Consulate-Chicago, Administrative Assistant).*

*Photo by: Analy Martinez-Pantoja*

## APPENDIX B – RELEASE FORMS (SAMPLE)

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### NARRATOR ORAL HISTORY RELEASE

I, [PRINT NAME HERE], am a participant in the Columbia College Chicago Oral History Project (CCCOHP) sharing my experiences and observations. I understand its purpose is to collect audio- and/or video-recorded oral histories for inclusion in the permanent collection of the Columbia College Chicago Archives, as the oral history and related materials serve as a record of the CCCOHP experiences and as a scholarly and educational resource for the general public.

I understand my material (including but not limited to my interview, presentation, video, photographs, statements, name, images or likeness, and voice) will be posted to the College Digital Repository and I grant to Columbia College Chicago, at no cost, the perpetual, nonexclusive, transferable, worldwide right to use, reproduce, transmit, display, prepare derivative works from, distribute, and authorize the redistribution of my submitted materials. BY GIVING THIS PERMISSION, I UNDERSTAND I RETAIN ANY INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, COPYRIGHT, AND RELATED OTHER RIGHTS THAT I HOLD. Further, I release Columbia College Chicago and its assignees from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of my materials.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature:

Printed Name:

Date:

Address/City/State/Zip:

Email:

### INTERVIEWER ORAL HISTORY RELEASE

I, [PRINT NAME HERE], am the interviewer for the Columbia College Chicago Oral History Project (CCCOHP), whose purpose is to collect audio- and/or video-recorded oral histories for inclusion in the permanent collection of the Columbia College Chicago Archives, as the oral history and related materials serve as a record of the CCCOHP experiences and as a scholarly and educational resource for the general public.

I understand my work and material (including but not limited to my interview, presentation, video, photographs, statements, name, images or likeness, and voice) will be posted to the College Digital Repository and I grant to Columbia College Chicago, at no cost, the perpetual, nonexclusive, transferable, worldwide right to use, reproduce, transmit, display, prepare derivative works from, distribute, and authorize the redistribution of my submitted materials. BY GIVING THIS PERMISSION, I UNDERSTAND I RETAIN ANY INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY, COPYRIGHT, AND RELATED OTHER RIGHTS THAT I HOLD. Further, I release Columbia College Chicago and its assignees from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of my materials.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED

Signature:

Printed Name:

Date:

Address/City/State/Zip:

Email:

## APPENDIX C – BIOGRAPHICAL-DATA FORM (SAMPLE)

---

Interviewee/Narrator (full name):

Address:

City:

State:

ZIP:

Cell Phone:

Email:

Year of Birth (do not enter exact entire birthdate):

Place of Birth:

Pronouns (they/theirs; she/hers; he/his):

Race/Ethnicity (optional):

Title:

Places lived (through high school):

Education and degree(s) (if applicable):

Other expertise/interests:

Previous Employment:

Volunteer Work (organization/years/focus):

Mentors:

Key Events (year/location):

Other Information not included:

## APPENDIX D – LISTENING TO ORAL HISTORIES WORKSHEET (SAMPLE)

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Listening to recorded interviews feels a little like eavesdropping on someone else's story. It is part of being human to empathize, connect, and learn from someone else, especially those who were present during a seminal event. Such information offers insight into history as told by fellow humans. These tips and questions assist in obtaining information from listening to recorded voices. If the oral history has a transcript, listen to the interview while following the transcript. Consider these while listening:

### IMPRESSIONS/SOUNDS

Describe the narrator's voice.

Tone – is it positive or negative? Explain your reasoning.

Describe the tone of the conversation.

During the interview, does the narrator's voice change in:

- Expression or volume?
- Tone or tightness?
- Stressed words or phrases?
- If so, where do these occur? What is being discussed?

### PAUSES/GAPS

Note any moments when pauses occur.

Why do you think such moments are in the interview?

What is being discussed when pauses, a struggle for word choices, or silences take place?

What do these gaps or pauses suggest to you as listener?

Describe the background noises.

Are there other verbal clues to note?

### TOPICS / SUBJECTS

Narrator history (birthplace, parents, childhood, employment, organizations, role pertinent to the interview)

List the topics the interview covers.

List the subjects discussed in the interview.

List the geographic places mentioned in the interview.

How many core questions were present in the interview and when were they asked?

Where else or what else might you research to learn more about the subjects/topics?

### REFLECTION

What are your initial impressions or thoughts about the work?

What one story or moment impacted you most and why?

What in the interview surprised you?

What story did you have an emotional reaction to in the interview?

What follow-up questions were missed?

### INFERENCES

What inferences can you make about the values and assumptions of the author/artist?

What evidence in the piece verifies the inferences you have made? Where can you look for more information?

What questions do you have for the author/artist that are left unanswered by the piece?

## APPENDIX E – BIOGRAPHICAL STATEMENT GUIDELINES

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The interview is part of collection, so when composing the Narrator's biography, describe the collection focus.

Use the information collected from the worksheet (Appendix D) to draft a short biography of the narrator and point out highlights from the overall interview. This should include information to assist researchers in understanding the interview's contents such as the role the narrator may have held during the seminal event or time period, and the interview's main topics and subjects that are central to the interview. You are the expert in listening to this interview, so help others understand what the interview is about. Lastly, briefly address how this interview ties into the archival collection itself.

### EXAMPLE BIOGRAPHIES

[From the [Capturing Quarantine at Columbia College Chicago](#) Oral History Collection]

#### **Interview with Paige Barnes (Interviewed by Alex Schmelter)**

*Paige Allison Je Cai Chu Barnes was born in Guangzhou, China. She was raised by her adopted parents in Wyoming, Ohio and was actively involved with the student body of Wyoming High School as a member of the prom court, a student council representative, and served as both secretary and treasurer of the student body. She spent her time outside of school in dance and performed in a variety of shows including Sleeping Beauty, Snow White, and Le Corsaire, throughout her high school years. She was also the runner-up for Junior Miss Ohio in 2018. She graduated high school with the intent of pursuing higher education. When she decided on Columbia College Chicago, she originally chose to pursue a double major in dance and journalism, but ultimately opted to focus on the latter with a concentration in broadcast.*

*She has worked at Columbia as a student ambassador, a news editor for Columbia's Chronicle newspaper, and a residents' assistant before and during the outbreak of the coronavirus. She first heard about the virus in January of 2020 and it came to affect her housing and job situation with the announcement of the college's shutdown.*

*Over the course of the Illinois lockdown, Paige moved into an apartment in Chicago with her significant other and learned to adapt to life in quarantine. She continued to work as an editor for the Columbia Chronicle while managing the life of a student at home attending online classes.*

#### **Interview with Nolan Flavin (Interviewed by Quinton Walker)**

*Nolan Flavin was born in St. Louis, Missouri and grew up in Fenton on a farm with their mom and brother. When Flavin was six years old, their family moved to Manchester, a suburb of St. Louis, where they were homeschooled until college. Nolan did lots of volunteer work throughout high school, including tutoring special needs children at a school downtown. At 18, Nolan came out as bisexual and abandoned their religion. Flavin considers this their intellectual awakening. Nolan first began college at University of Colorado Boulder where they studied literature for two years until transferring to Columbia College Chicago in spring of 2019 to study film. At Columbia College Nolan is the vice president of The Art House, a film organization dedicated to screening experimental, foreign, and art house cinema, followed by discussions. Nolan also takes part in the Literary Buffs and was briefly involved with Columbia Voter Geniuses before ceased meeting due to COVID-19. Outside of class, Nolan does lots of writing and film making and is currently working on both during their self-quarantine. Flavin is expected to graduate from Columbia College Chicago in Fall of 2022 with a bachelor's degree in Film (Directing) and Literature.*



## APPENDIX F – ABSTRACT STATEMENT GUIDELINES

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The purpose of an abstract is to give the user an idea of what the interview contains without providing detail of what the interviewee says. If a researcher wants to use the information, she or he must listen to the interview.

Components:

- Opening: List of 5-6 key-terms and/or themes covered (e.g., remote learning, relocation, isolation).
- Length: Brief guide to contents, keep length to no more than 300 - 450 words
- Voice: Write in the third person
- Pronouns: Confirm their pronoun preference, if possible
- Structure: paragraph (one topic per paragraph)
- Word Choice: Use words like 'explains', 'describes', 'mentions', 'recounts' and 'recalls' to give the researcher an idea of what is included and how much material there is on a particular topic. 'Mentions how travelled to school', for example, means that there is less information than if you had written 'Describes how travelled to school'. It is important to choose your words carefully.
- Emphasis: Draw attention to what is unique about their story—why should we listen to this interview?
- Quotation use: Quotes help to give an idea of how the interviewee speaks and may be used to highlight key points in the narrative. However, use them sparingly—you are not recreating the transcript.

### EXAMPLE KEYWORDS AND ABSTRACT

#### **Alice Palmer (Interviewed by Katherine Elizabeth McAuliff)**

*Keywords: Free South African Movement (FSAM), Divestment, South African Consulate, Northwestern*

*Abstract: Alice Palmer, an author, educator, politician, and human rights activist, was interviewed by Kate McAuliff on March 29th, 2010, at the Black United Fund of Illinois.*

*As a youth, Palmer mentions, she encountered news of South African Apartheid through a magazine to which her grandparents subscribed. The article outlined methods of classifying race in the country, particularly through hair texture. In college, Palmer mentions a deepened awareness of the issues in South Africa, which propelled her student activism during the boycott against the South African Krugerrand.*

*Later, Palmer describes her involvement in putting together the Free South Africa Movement with other Chicago-based activists. She also describes the demonstrations between November 1984 and March 1985 in front of the South African Consulate on South Michigan Street to urge divestment from the city. After being arrested in one of the January protests, Palmer describes, she and eight other protestors were put on trial and eventually acquitted based on the Law of Necessity. The activists were acquitted based on their need to demonstrate for the people in South Africa and the international atrocity of the Apartheid regime. As a central area for rallies and protests, Palmer describes protesting outside of the South African Consulate to correct misinformation published by the Chicago Tribune. Herself and others, "...read the names of the children who had been killed and we had a coffin, built and coffin and we just walked up and down."*