

Oral History
Capturing Quarantine
Spring 2020
Final Reflection

1. How did you feel when you read the email notifying students the oral history project would change from *Interfaith Chicago* to *Capturing Quarantine* due to the transition to remote learning?

I was admittedly pretty relieved because I was very much struggling to get information for my Bio Data form from the Reverend I was initially interviewing. I also figured that the environment of the interview wouldn't necessarily be less professional, but certainly more relaxed if it was to be between two students instead. It just seemed like a more appropriate project for someone who isn't too familiar with Interfaith history and like I was more qualified for the new project.

2. What were your initial thoughts about participating in an oral history project documenting your classes' experience during the first months of the global pandemic?

I was excited that our voices were going to be heard. I've never been really interviewed for anything important like an archive so it was exciting for me. I also feel like this is an important topic right now. Not that Interfaith work isn't, but I think the stories of people living through COVID-19 are in higher demand right now understandably and I think it's crucial we document what we can while it's still very recent.

3. How do you feel about the project now?

I think it's very important and going off of my last answer, a case where getting our interviews and perspectives now is important. Even if our interviews are more biased because the virus is still so now, it's important for us to document that bias and those feelings for the future.

4. As an interviewer:
 - a. How did you prepare for the interview?

I tried to let Paige say as much as she wanted while filling out the Bio Data form and base my questions off of what she focused on during that process. I also tried to think about what I would want to know about our experiences if I were looking for interviews about the subject.

- b. What was it like to interview a classmate?

It was much more comfortable and felt like I was talking with someone who was more of my equal than someone who has been a Reverend for decades. Paige is my age and deals with many of the same problems as me, so it felt like I could breach certain subjects much more comfortably than I would with someone much older.

- c. How did you feel after the interview?

I felt good. I felt like I'd worked on something pretty important and a project that will last quite awhile. Paige's responses felt very natural and it didn't seem like we hit any snags in the conversation.

- d. What is the most important thing you learned as an interviewer?

Letting people explore the topics they want to explore (even if it isn't in your line of questioning) is important. This way you don't steer their answers and they express what really is important to them by talking about what they want to talk about.

- e. What advice would you give to future interviewers?

Don't try and make your questions a concise narrative. I tried to formulate my questions to be flexible to the topic and not follow a specific timeline. Paige didn't address everything in her life chronologically and therefore it didn't cause problems when we'd hit one point in her timeline and then jumped back a bit in questioning.

5. As a narrator:

- a. How did you prepare to be interviewed?

I didn't really. I figured the only way my honest answers would come through would be if I didn't script out my answers in my head. I wanted to be surprised and find unexpected questions so I honestly tried not to think about it too much before the interview.

- b. Describe your experience being interviewed.

I really enjoyed it, except I did feel a bit self-conscious about how interesting my answers were, since certain questions I just didn't have much to say.

- c. How did you feel after the interview ended?

I generally felt good, but a little worried that my personal experience with the virus situation might not be as interesting as my classmates' to listen to.

- d. What would you tell someone who is hesitant to be interviewed?

If nothing else, it's a good form of reflection. I never really talked about my experience with the virus much outside of my close friends and family, so it felt good to really summarize and reflect on my thoughts in a verbal way.

6. (OPTIONAL) Questions about narrators' private lives and personal relationships were not included in the formal interview, how do you feel about this?

It's for the best, I think. If the subject is important enough to them, they'll likely bring it up anyway. Otherwise they might be uncomfortable with the question and be turned off to your questions for the rest of the interview.

- a. How has your gender, sexuality, race, and/or ethnicity affected your experience during the global pandemic?

Not much to be honest. I'm a cisgender, white, Christian/Agnostic male, so in all honesty none of that's really affected me.

- b. Exploring and developing new relationships is an important part of the undergraduate experience, how has this aspect of your life been affected?

It's limited my social experience significantly. I haven't been able to even try dating or meeting new people which is pretty hard because that's just sort of what someone my age living in the city should be doing.

- c. How are you dealing with the absence of physical contact?

No comment, really. I'm not in a relationship as of the moment so I'm not exactly missing out on something I would normally have right now.

7. Is there anything else you would like to include?

Nope. Thank you!