

**Oral History
Capturing Quarantine
Spring 2020
Final Reflection**

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Section I:

1. Thinking back to the start of the semester, what were your initial thoughts about participating in an oral history project documenting your experience during the ongoing global pandemic?

I was excited. I thought it would be a unique experience to participate directly in the creation of historical information. I was honored to both have the chance to tell the story of my experience in the pandemic, as well as giving one of my peers a chance to give their experience as well.

2. How did your feelings about the project change?

Once I got into the project and knew more about the details, it became a more daunting task. I knew that it would be a lot of work, but I was still excited to get started.

Section II:

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

I prepared by becoming familiar with my narrator, and developing several drafts of a script to follow along with during the interview. I also studied the practice of oral history and the strategies of conducting a good interview.

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

I thought it was very interesting to go so in depth with someone that I had not met until just a few months ago. There are so many things that are similar between us simply because we are around the same age, but growing up in different places with different people can create an infinite amount of new and different experiences. Overall, it was fascinating to have someone tell you their life story. You feel like you know them so much more, and understand their life and how they live a lot better.

- c. How did you feel after the interview?

I felt very content with the product I had just created. I was happy with how my narrator and I had interacted for the past hour or so, and I thought that our end product would be a very good resource for the future.

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

This is something I already knew, but it became so evident while working on the interview, and that is "listening is the best thing we can do for another person." It is very rare that we as people get the chance to just talk about our lives, and it is extremely therapeutic. When you can, give people the chance to just talk, and you will be amazed on what comes from it.

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

The best thing you can do for your narrator is make them feel important. During the interview you have to imagine that they are the most interesting person in the world. If you do that, they will feel much more comfortable sharing the information about themselves, and you will get a much richer and more valuable final product.

4. As a **narrator**:

- a. How did you prepare to be interviewed?

Speaking is something that comes very easily to me, so I did not do much to prepare. On the day of I just made sure I had enough water, and that I was nice and relaxed to be ready to answer whatever I was asked.

- b. Describe your experience being interviewed.

The time just flew by. I think the final interview was just under 90 minutes, but it really did not feel that long. I think I was too busy thinking about my experiences to really notice the time. Bu

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

I feel like I really got the chance to participate in something very important. The pandemic is, hopefully, the most intense and serious historical event I will ever live through, and simply because I did, I will be asked about it for the rest of my life. We all will. So, to have a chance to look back on it, even while it is still going on, I think it gave me a really great chance to analyze what I had been through up until that point. I hope that my personal testimony will be put to good use to really help people understand what the pandemic was like.

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

It is not intimidating like a job interview. It is not an interrogation either. It is an opportunity to tell the world your story. You get an hour or so to speak your truth about your experiences in this world. Shed some light on what you

lived through. This may be your only opportunity to really speak on what your life was like. We as average folks, do not often have the opportunity to be storytellers in this same historical way, but it is important that we do so. It also gives you a chance to really analyze your life, and gain new perspective on how things have gone that you would not have gained on your own.

Section III:

5. What information is missing? What else do you think those trying to understand the pandemic should know?

I think I explained my story pretty well, but I think that the most important things people should know is that the pandemic affected everyone so differently. There was no average experience. From a distance it is easy to assume that everyone had a similar experience of zoom meetings, and shutdowns, and social distancing, but that's just the surface level. If you really take the chance to look deeper, or talk to someone who lived through it, you will know that we all lost things, things like high school graduation, or the chance to go on a trip with friends, or our personal sense of freedom, and many lost loved ones. To assume that the experience was similar for everyone is to discount everyone's personal experience that really made the pandemic so hard. In those stories is the reality of the pandemic, and we must listen to them in order to really understand it.