

Huntington Beach

Community Oral History



Tool Kit

Presented By

THE CITY OF HUNTINGTON BEACH
HISTORIC RESOURCES BOARD*

*Developed from the Library of Congress' Oral History Veterans' Project support material and the Brea Museum's Oral History
Tool Kit for the Community History Project (2014).

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Introduction

Background

California State University, Fullerton and its Center for Oral and Public History house a number of oral histories that have been conducted over the years. These oral histories are bound in *Huntington Beach: An Oral History of the Early Development of a Southern California Beach Community* (California State University, Fullerton), 1980, 215 pp., index, photos. They highlight the city's early development, pioneer families and life in early Huntington Beach, local politics, the police department, the development of the city's surf culture among other topics. Additionally, in partnership with Bowers Museum and the Japanese American Council, a number of oral histories were conducted with Huntington Beach's Japanese American community as part of the Honorable Stephen K. Tamura Orange County Japanese American Oral History Project (1981-1984). The California State University, Long Beach VOAHA II (Virtual Oral/Aural History Archive) also contains a number of digital interviews documenting individuals and their experiences in Huntington Beach.

These interviews are a wonderful asset to the community, and CSUF continues to add to the collection in partnership with a number of organizations, including the Orange County Historical Society and its predecessor organizations. The Huntington Beach Historic Resources Board would like to help in this endeavor and collect oral histories from a cross section of the community since. This tool kit is intended to help do so.

The Historic Resources Board

The purpose of the Historic Resources Board is to encourage and promote programs and activities that enhance public awareness of historic resources. The Historic Resources Board acts as an advisory body to City Council as well as a liaison to Council for local, state and federal groups and agencies whose interest involves historic issues.

What is an oral history?

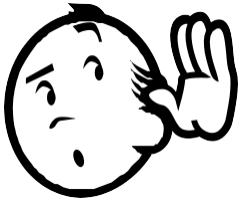
An oral history is the recording of personal testimony delivered in oral (and sometimes visual) form. Oral histories are an important asset to the City of Huntington Beach. Everyone has a story to share, and oral histories help fill in the gaps, giving voice to those who may not always be heard through traditional artifact collections or historic preservation.

Oral histories, however, are not fact; they are memories. Memories provide insight into alternative perspectives, ideas, feelings, and doubts about people, places, and events. They are a product of the present and not the past. With memories, there are no right or wrong answers!

How Can I Get Involved?

We welcome HB residents of all ages (elementary school to seniors) to participate in this digital project!

INTERVIEWERS



- Do you like to listen to stories about the past?
- Do you have experience conducting oral histories?
- Are you good with technical equipment?
- Do you need extra volunteer hours?

If you answered YES to ANY of these questions, we want YOU!

As a volunteer interviewer, you will be in charge of conducting interviews with HB residents to be preserved digitally for future generations.

Your interview will become a permanent part of the oral history collection.

Interviewees



- Do you like to talk?
- Do you like to tell stories about your past?
- Do you like to reminisce?
- Do you have HB memories that you would like to share with others?
- Would you like to help preserve HB memories for future generations?

If you answered YES to ANY of these questions, we want YOU!

As a volunteer interviewee you will be questioned for our collection of oral histories.

Your interview will become a permanent part of the collection.

Step by Step Guide

Step 1 Interview Preparation



1) Identify your interviewee and make contact

- Who do you think tells important or interesting stories about their HB experiences, lived through unique experiences, or can document something for which little information exists?
- Letters, emails, or phone calls can be used to make contact. Obtain consent from this individual, make sure he or she understands why the interview is important, and explain what will happen with the interview.
- If you are utilizing the interview for a special project, be sure to inform your interviewee. If you will use video instead of audio, receive prior consent.

2) Do Some Research

- Try to learn a bit about your interviewee in advance.
- Make sure the biographical data form is filled out (either by you or the interviewee). See **Appendix 2**.

3) Question Preparation

Appendix 6 includes an outline (not script) of suggested topics and questions, BUT let your subject tell the story in his or her own way.

4) Equipment Preparation

- To encourage community-wide participation, you are welcome to use any type of recording equipment. However, some formats may require conversion prior to submission. See **Appendix 5** for the types of video/audio formats the HRB will accept.

Step by Step Guide

Step 2 The Interview



FAQs

Where should I conduct the interview?

It is a good idea to conduct an oral interview in a quiet locale where both you and the interviewee are comfortable.

Suggestions:

- Interview in a quiet area with soft surfaces
- The interviewee should be in a fixed seat, not a rocking chair or recliner
- Avoid places with a lot of background noise (cars, clocks, telephones, etc.)
- Do not videotape your subject in front of a window or bright light

How long should the interview be?

The HRB is happy to accept interviews of any length! Some participants may talk for quite some time. Others may be more concise and to the point. Interviews may range from 10-15 minutes to a couple of hours (or sessions)!

What if I mess up or am unsatisfied with the interview?

The HRB is happy that you are interested in our city's past! While there are a couple of items that must be completed in order for us to accept your interview as part of our collection (ie – consent form and the interview itself), there is no right or wrong way to conduct an interview. It is what is most comfortable for you and your participant. Any and all memories are valuable to us.

What is the importance of the consent form?

When you arrive at the interview, be sure your interviewee signs the necessary paperwork before beginning. Make sure to explain the forms so that your interviewee understands what he or she is signing.

- There are some ethical issues to take into consideration. Do not record your interviewee without his or her knowledge, as it is an invasion of privacy and trust.
- Explain why and how your histories will be used and remind the interviewee that these interviews will be made public, especially in light of possible slander and libel.
- Make sure the interviewee understands he or she has the right to refuse to discuss certain subjects.
- Oral histories are original documents created by the interviewer and the interviewee. Because of this, oral histories are subject to copyright laws. Without the release form, anyone who wants to use the oral history would have to obtain permission from the interviewee and the interviewer.

Do you have suggestions on the interview process itself?

1) Equipment Check

Be sure to prepare your equipment prior to the interview and test your recording device! It would be a shame to complete an interview only to realize it did not properly record.

Be sure to come prepared – bringing extra extension cords, batteries, memory cards, etc.

2) Make sure the consent form is signed and the biographical data filled out!

3) The Basics

Begin your interview with basic information: your name, interviewee's name, the date, and where you are conducting the interview. This information is important for HRB records.

4) Biographical Information

Biographical information helps get the interview started. Ask about birth, parents, early years, school, occupation, etc. These questions will help get the interview flowing and warm up the conversation.

5) The Meat of the Interview

The meat of the interview may cover topics and ideas related to childhood, teen years, family, religion, marriage, attitudes, beliefs, and occupations. Larger topics such as historic events, customs, and traditions may be explored as well. Now is the time to address particular questions related to your project or HB history. Try to ask questions that trigger memories. Remember, however, that this interview is intended to be part of the HRB's collection, and therefore your topics and questions should relate back to the interviewee's time in Huntington Beach.

Please note that some oral interviews may be set up to address particular topics or time periods. In this instance, the interviewee won't be talking about his or her life in Huntington Beach, but rather one particular topic on Huntington Beach.

6) Closing Remarks

Be sure to ask your interviewee if there is anything else he or she would like to add/share. The interviewee may want to revisit a topic you discussed earlier in the interview or recall a topic you did not address. This question reminds the interviewee that this interview is the opportunity to share with others what he or she would like people to know. **Thank the interviewee for his or her time and participation!**

Step by Step Guide

Step 3

Submitting your Interview

Submit

- Make two copies of the interview (one for you and one for the interviewee)
- Be sure to copy any other items you are submitting
- Fill out all of the necessary forms: Double-check your submission by using the **Interview Checklist** on page 12.
- Please contact hbhistoricsourcesboard@gmail.com so that we can provide you with an address to send materials and forms.

Note: Please do not submit any materials other than those specified. Should any part of the submission be found to include materials that are deemed inappropriate for retention with the digital collection, such materials may be returned.

Step by Step Guide

Step 4

What happens to your interview?



When the HRB receives your materials, it will do the following:

- The required forms will be reviewed.
- Both you and the interviewee will receive an acknowledgment of your completed submission and all materials will be processed.
- Your submission will be digitally stored to ensure your materials will be preserved for generations to come!
- Your submission may be utilized by the HRB, online research tools, special exhibits, newsletter articles, other publications, etc. (please see your consent form).

Interview Checklist



The following items **MUST** be turned in with your oral history in order to be accepted as part of the HRB's digital collection.

Consent Form

Digitized Oral History

Biographical Data Form

Audio & Video Recording Log

Note: the Recording Log may be completed by an HRB volunteer. However, Numbers 1-5 should be filled out prior to submission.

Donation Logs [optional]

Note: this form is only necessary if any digital photographs or manuscripts are being submitted with the interview. The HRB will NOT accept non-digital donations at this time but will happily suggest an appropriate repository if possible.

Appendices

Required Forms

1. Consent Form
2. Biographical Data Form
3. Audio and Video Recording Log

Optional Forms

4. Donation Logs

Others

5. Accepted Media and Format Standards
6. Sample Questions
7. Interview Tips

Appendix 1
**INFORMED CONSENT
REQUIRED**

City of Huntington Beach Historic Resources Board

INTERVIEW # _____

INTERVIEWEE CONTENT RELEASE FORM – To be completed by interviewee.

I, _____, am participating in the Oral History Program conducted by the Historic Resources Board (“HRB”), which is acting on behalf of the City of Huntington Beach. Part of my participation involves an interview. I understand that the purpose of the Oral History Program is to collect audio and video-recorded oral histories of people on matters associated with the history of the City.

The recorded interview and other digital materials I provide will be retained by the HRB as resources for future public use, commercial use, and/or public consumption. These materials may include my interview, my presentation or a presentation of me, a video of me (possibly), digital photographs I have procured or photographs of me, my statements, my name, my image or likeness, my voice and associated written materials (collectively as “Content”) as part of HRB’s historical collections.

I hereby grant to the HRB ownership of, and full rights to use, the Content I provide. Furthermore, I hereby grant the HRB , at no cost, the perpetual, non-exclusive, transferable, worldwide right to use, reproduce, transmit, communicate, display, perform, prepare, derivative works from, distribute, and authorize the redistribution of, all of the Content I have provided. By giving this permission, I understand that I do not retain any copyrights and may not retain other rights and/or privileges for the Content or its use.

I hereby release the HRB and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of the Content, including but not limited to any claims for copyright infringement, defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity. I also rescind, release and hereby disclaim any future financial gain, claim for royalties, payments, or other pecuniary benefit related to HRB’s use of the Content for potential commercial purposes.

Should any part of the Content be found to include information that the HRB deems inappropriate for retention or for transfer to another City collection, the HRB may dispose of such materials in accordance with its procedures and State and Federal laws.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED by

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

Name of Interviewer(s) (if applicable) _____

Relationship to Interviewer _____

Appendix 3
**AUDIO & VIDEO RECORDING LOG
 REQUIRED**

City of Huntington Beach Historic Resources Board

1. Name and address of Interviewer*

Name of Interviewer _____
 Address _____
 City _____ State _____ ZIP _____ - _____
 Telephone (_____) - _____ Email _____
 Organization affiliation (if any) _____

2. Name and birth dates of the individual being interviewed as it appears on the Biographical Data Form:* _____

3. Recording format (please check)

VIDEO Type:

Digital Video _____ DVD-Video _____
 MPEG-2 _____ Other (identify) _____

AUDIO Type:

CD-Audio _____ Digital Audio Tape (DAT) _____
 Other (identify) _____

Do not add labels to DVDs or CDs

4. Estimated length of recording* (in minutes) _____ **Date of Recording** _____

5. Location of recording* _____

6. Please log the topics discussed in the interview in sequence**

For example:

1:45 enlisted with best friend 22:30 on board troop ship to Europe
 2:50 chose Signal Corps and reasons why 26:30 part of 2nd wave at Omaha Beach on D-Day

* required to be completed by the interviewer

** may be completed by a HRB volunteer

Minute Mark	Topics presented in order of discussion on recording
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____
_____	_____

(Continue on additional sheets as needed)

Appendix 4
DONATION LOG
OPTIONAL

City of Huntington Beach Historic Resources Board

I own the personal property described below and desire to give said personal property to the HRB in digital format as part of my oral history interview. I do hereby irrevocably and unconditionally give and transfer to the HRB all right, title, and interest including all copyright, trademark, and related interests, in and to the following described property.

Donor Name: _____ Date: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip: _____

Phone H/W: _____ Email: _____

By my signature below, I accept the foregoing conditions and acknowledge having read the attached information.

Date: _____ Donor/Agent Signature: _____

Date Received: _____ Received by (Interviewer): _____

The Digital Gift Described below is accepted for the HRB

By: _____ Title: _____ Date: _____

Photograph Donations

Note: at this time, the HRB will only accept photographs in digital format for its oral history collection.

Name of Individual Interviewed _____ Interview Date _____

Photograph #1

Place _____ Date _____

Description _____

Photograph #2

Place _____ Date _____

Description _____

Photograph #3

Place _____ Date _____

Description _____

Photograph #4

Place _____ Date _____

Description _____

(You may photocopy this form to use for additional photographs if needed)

Manuscript Donations

Note: at this time, the HRB will only accept photographs in digital format for its oral history collection.

Please complete this form when donating [digital copies of] letters, diaries, and other printed and handwritten manuscripts to the HRB. It is to be used in conjunction with the required forms.

Name of Individual Interviewed _____ Interview Date _____

Types and dates of manuscripts submitted, for example:

Diary, November 20, 1942- February 17, 1994; Letters, 1969-1972; etc.

Title of Item: _____

Topic: _____

Description: _____

Title of Item: _____

Topic: _____

Description: _____

Title of Item: _____

Topic: _____

Description: _____

(You may photocopy this form to use for additional manuscripts if needed)

Appendix 5
ACCEPTED MEDIA AND FORMAT STANDARDS
Audio and Video Recordings

City of Huntington Beach Historic Resources Board

The HRB encourages you to submit original, unedited materials, and to use the highest quality equipment available. Recordings may be any length.

We will accept the following formats:

VIDEO Formats and Media (please obtain permission prior to video recording)	
DVD-Video*	
MPEG-2*	On CD or DVD Specifications; at least 3Mbps, with spatial resolution of 702x480 at 30fps; or the highest your set-up allows.

Note: although you may make use of Digital Video (DV) systems (cameras, camcorders, and video cameras) for your oral interview, the product must be submitted to the HRB in either a DVD or CD format. We do not have the capability to convert these formats ourselves.

AUDIO Formats and Media	
CD-Audio	
WAV*	On CD or DVD
Smart Phone Audio	

***Do not copy protect any CD or DVD. Do not add labels to any CD or DVD.**

Please use only one interview per recording.

Contact us if you have any questions.

We encourage you to retain high-quality copies of materials for your own personal use and enjoyment.

NOTE: Please convert into accepted digital formats before donating.

Appendix 6

SAMPLE TOPICS/QUESTIONS

City of Huntington Beach Historic Resources Board

Biographical

- 1) When/Where were you born?
- 2) When did you move to Huntington Beach?
- 3) Where were your parents from?
- 4) What is your occupation?
- 5) Can you tell me a bit about your family?
- 6) What is your first memory of Huntington Beach?

Huntington Beach Youth

- 1) How would you describe your youth in Huntington Beach?
- 2) What do you remember about attending school in Huntington Beach?
- 3) What is your most memorable moment about growing up in Huntington Beach?
- 4) How has your vision of Huntington Beach changed since you were little?
- 5) Where did you play as a child?
- 6) What games did you play when you were a child?
- 7) What kind of home entertainment was there?

Occupation

- 1) How did you first get started in your particular skill? How did you learn, who taught you?
- 2) What are the most rewarding and challenging aspects of your occupation?

Home Ownership & Neighborhoods

- 1) When did you move into your home in Huntington Beach? Where did you move from?
- 2) What attracted you to become a homeowner in Huntington Beach, as opposed to the surrounding cities?
- 3) What features of your house and neighborhood did you like when you first moved in? What did you feel could have been improved upon?
- 4) What exterior changes have you made to your house over the years? Interior?
- 5) Are there any reasons for the change? If so, what are they?

Home Ownership continued

- 6) How has the neighborhood, houses, and people in your neighborhood changed since you moved in? How do you feel about the changes in your neighborhood?
- 7) Where did you get news of what was happening in your neighborhood?
- 8) What is your most memorable moment in your home or neighborhood?

Huntington Beach Life

- 1) Can you recall any major events that happened in Huntington Beach in the past?
- 2) What services did the city provide? What services did you make use of?
- 3) Were you ever involved in civic activities? Can you elaborate?
- 4) Where did you buy groceries, shop for clothes, and other necessary goods?
- 5) Where did you go to socialize and with whom?
- 6) Were you involved in any extracurricular activities (church, sports, social organizations)?
- 7) How did you typically spend your weekends?

Sense of Community

- 1) Why did/do you choose to live or work in Huntington Beach?
- 2) How does the Huntington Beach community you live in now differ from when you originally moved in?
- 3) How do you feel about these changes?
- 4) Do you think Huntington Beach differs from other cities in Orange County? If so, how? How are they similar?
- 5) What community traditions are celebrated in Brea? Are there some traditions no longer celebrated? Why?
- 6) How have historical events affected your family and community? (ex. – Civil Rights Movement)

Other

- 1) Do you have anything else you want to talk about?

Appendix 7
INTERVIEW TIPS

City of Huntington Beach Historic Resources Board

Location

- The interview works best when it is only the two of you, in a quiet, uninterrupted environment.
 - Note: You may choose to schedule a couple/group interview, which is acceptable as well.

As the Interviewer

- Make sure your equipment is working properly and can record your interviewee clearly.
- Offer your interviewee water.
- Be as natural as possible. Do not worry if your questions are not phrased perfectly.
- Listen quietly, carefully, and actively. Maintain eye contact. Encourage your interviewee with smiles and nods. Avoid saying things like “yes,” “uh-huh,” and “really.”
- Do not let periods of silence fluster you. Give the interviewee a chance to add comments or think. You can use these moments to write down notes.
- An interview is not necessarily a dialogue. You are recording someone else’s experiences, not your own. Limit your remarks to prompting him or her with questions.

For the Benefit of the Interviewee

- Try to ask questions that trigger memories and require elaboration.
- Ask questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” response.
- Ask one question at a time. If an interviewer asks a series of questions all at once, often the interviewee only ends up answering the first question.
- Start the interview with non-controversial questions. Ask more delicate questions when you and your interviewee are better acquainted.
- Do not interrupt a good story for another question. Jot down questions you think of to ask later in the interview. Your list of questions is only a guide; do not worry about straying from your list to get clarity or for an interesting story.
- Find your interviewee’s role in a story if it is not clear.
- Do NOT challenge accounts or memories you think are inaccurate. Just try to develop as much information as possible.

The Historic Resources Board, City of Huntington Beach, and future generations of HB residents thank you for your participation in this oral history project!

For more information, contact:
Oral History Committee
Huntington Beach Historic Resources Board
hbhistoricalresourcesboard@gmail.com