

MANUAL

George J. Mitchell Oral History Project



George J. Mitchell Oral History Project
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I. Introduction

It is with great thanks to Bates College that we have been able to revise portions of their manual to develop the George J. Mitchell Oral History Project Manual, which originally was written as a practical guide and reference for students and staff involved specifically in the Edmund S. Muskie Oral History Project, and later as a more general college-wide manual. I compiled and drafted that original document, drawing on the work of a number of staff and students in the Edmund S. Muskie Archives, with guidance from then Project Director, Donald E. Nicoll. I owe thanks to the students whose trial and error and thoughtful advice helped shape the manual, and to Nicci Leamon, the transcriptionist, for her contributions.

This version has been revised to respond to the needs of staff involved in the Mitchell Project, and it is intended to standardize the way in which we create, manage, and preserve oral history recordings.

Andrea L'Hommedieu
February, 2008

II. Methodology

When conducting an oral history, it is important to remember that the information we are seeking is best obtained by helping the interviewees to “tell their stories.” Oral histories should not be dry recitations of “facts,” but engaging remembrances of the interviewee’s experiences and insights. Recollections are frequently at odds with contemporaneous documents. The recollections are better treated as clues than absolute facts. As Alessandro Portelli, a leading Italian oral historian, was quoted as saying in a March 10, 2001, [New York Times article](#), “Oral sources tell us not just what people did, but what they wanted to do, what they believed they were doing and what they now think they did.”

I cannot stress enough the importance of stimulating the interviewee to respond willingly to questions. Questions should be framed to encourage, not dampen, the interviewee in his/her recollections. It is best to cast oneself as the student, eager to learn what the interviewee wishes to impart, not the investigative reporter, trying to pin down the facts. The latter approach almost certainly guarantees the equivalent of a lifeless butterfly collection. The former will reveal more than you anticipated and, often, more than the interviewee intended or realized was available in his/her memory.

Much of the oral history work revolves around being meticulous about details. The excitement and ultimate value of oral history is the opportunity to learn from women and men whose lives are intriguing and whose recollections will illuminate your understanding of the period of history or subject you are studying.

III. Interview Matrix

The interview matrix is designed to organize potential areas of interest for inclusion within the oral history project, then to populate the defined categories (listed below) with potential interviewees in order to ensure full coverage of Senator Mitchell's life and career. There will inevitably be some interviewees who belong in more than one category. In those cases, a decision will be made to place them in a "primary" category, with research notes explaining the other connections. We will then prioritize the interviewees by age, health, pertinence and availability using the following legend: H=High, M=Medium, and L=Low.

Categories:

Early Childhood and Education

Personal Family and Friends (spanning all years)

Bowdoin College 1950-54

Classmates, professors, school atmosphere

US Army Counter Intelligence Corps 1954-56

Georgetown Law School 1956-60

Executive Assistant to Senator Muskie 1962-65

Legal Career 1965-

Jensen, Baird, Gardner and Henry

Maine Democratic Chairman 1966-68

Deputy Director, Muskie vice presidential campaign 1968

Democratic National Committeeman 1969-77

Deputy Director, Muskie presidential campaign 1971-72

Maine gubernatorial campaign 1974

Mike Aube: scheduling and driving

Tony Buxton

Jay McCloskey

U.S. Attorney for Maine 1977-79

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U.S. District Court Judge 1979-1980

Senate years 1980-1995

Senate Office organization:

Administrative operations

Legislative activities

Constituent services

Press and media activities

Maine Indian Land Claims Settlement 1980

Senate reelection campaign 1982

Democratic Senatorial Campaign Committee Chairman 1984-

Select Committee on Iran-Contra 1986-87

Senate reelection campaign 1988

Senate Majority Leader 1989-94

Legislative work:

Superfund

Clean Air Act 1987 and Clean Water Act 1991

Affordable Housing Act

Civil Rights Bill of 1991

Universal Health Care

Committee work:

Finance Committee

Environment and Public Works Committee

Veterans' Affairs Committee

Governmental Affairs Committee

Special Advisor on Northern Ireland 1995-98

The Mitchell Report 1996

The Belfast Agreement 1998

Mitchell Institute

Mitchell Scholarships Program 1994-ongoing

Sharm el-Sheikh International Fact-Finding Committee

Walt Disney Corporation

9/11 Liberty Fund

Boston Red Sox

Major League Baseball Steroids Investigation

IV. Pre-Interview Preparation

Preparing for an oral history interview involves five basic steps:

- Learn how to use the recording equipment;
- Review the techniques and procedures to be followed in connection with the interview;
- Research the historic period to be covered in the interview and pertinent information about the interviewee;
- Prepare an outline of topics or list of questions; and
- Prepare a release form.

A. Equipment

1. Recorders

There is a broad variety of recording equipment on the market, including many portable analog and digital recorders. For practical reviews on many of the brands available, check this site at the Vermont Folklife Center: [Equipment Guides](#). The George J. Mitchell Oral History Project is using the Marantz PMD670 digital recorder.

No matter what equipment you choose, it is critical that you make a checklist of what settings work best for sound quality and that you go through the checklist prior to beginning each interview to verify that everything is set in the correct position. Professional quality recorders, such as the Marantz, have numerous dials and switches that must be precisely positioned for the system to work properly. The checklist for the Marantz PMD670 recorder is included in Appendix A.

2. Microphones

An external, omni-directional microphone is always preferable to a recorder's internal microphone to pick up the whole range of people's voices.

Place the microphone relative to the strength of the voices (not too close to someone with a loud voice, not too far away from someone with a soft voice). Learning proper microphone placement can make a significant difference in the sound quality of the interview.

3. Power supply

a. Multiple Power Supplies

Having multiple power supplies will insure that your interview will be successful and comfortable for everyone. A well-stocked equipment bag should contain fully charged batteries for the recorder, a microphone, an AC adapter for outlet plug-in,

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and an extension cord to allow versatile positioning of the equipment in situations where an outlet is not near to the interview location.

4. Recording Media

a. CDs

If recording on or reformatting to CD, select gold-coated CD-Rs. Gold coated CDs are widely considered to be the most stable because the Phthalocyanine (gold) dye burns more accurately and more quickly than other dyes, resulting in extremely high fidelity in the retransmission of the information. Interviewers who are burning a CD for transmission to the Project office do not need to use gold.

B. Learning Basic Techniques and Procedures

1. Listening to Interviews

Listening to interviews conducted by others gives you a chance to pick up some interviewing techniques. You may also wish to follow along with the transcript. Example interviews can be found online (see Bibliography). Consider listening to *bad* interviews also; this is a simple way to find out quickly what doesn't work in an interview, so that you can avoid those pitfalls!

2. Mock Interview

Once you have had time to do background reading on oral history, do a "practice" interview before going on a real interview. Research the subject, create a list of questions, set up the recording equipment, and conduct the interview. Such interviewing is useful in giving the novice some practical experience and providing a safety net for making mistakes.

C. Doing Background Research on the Period and Person

Prior to conducting an interview, find personal and/or professional background information on the individual you will be interviewing. Take notes, thinking about how the person is connected to the subject and time period. You are not expected to be an expert, but general knowledge is necessary to ask intelligent questions.

D. Preparing an Interview Outline

Based upon your background research, you should then form an outline for the interview. This will help you establish a flow to the interview that covers all important areas related to the subject, and it will help you avoid long pauses. Write as many questions as you can think of. It's better to begin with too many, and reduce the number later. However, at the interview, be careful to avoid excessive adherence to your questions as this will prevent the interviewee from telling his/her story. Digression often leads to more in-depth responses and unexpected exploration of important areas of knowledge. With some

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experience, you'll find a brief outline and a few notes will replace your list of questions. See Appendix E for the Interview Outline.

E. Preparing a Release Form

A release form is the means by which the interviewee formally grants permission for the Project and others to reproduce, quote from, or otherwise make scholarly use of the interview. See an example in Appendix H.

V. Planning Interviews

A. Identifying Interviewees

Identifying whom to interview can be an important first step in the planning process. Depending on your topic, you want to seek out someone who can refer you to others and tell you what those people have to contribute. Once you start interviewing, asking each of them who else they know to interview is another great way to add to your list. You may find it useful to create data sheets for each potential interviewee, including contact information and a brief description of his/her relationship to your topic of research, to help you organize the project. The Oral History Project uses a relational database for this purpose.

B. Initial Contact

Once you have decided upon an interviewee, the next step is to invite him or her to participate. Typically, this is best accomplished by sending him/her a brief letter explaining why he or she would have a valuable perspective for your project. Include a brief description of your project, detailing its focus and goals, and a copy of the Oral History Association's *Principles and Standards*. By mailing these prior to telephoning the person, the prospective interviewee will have a better understanding about what you are hoping to accomplish, what is expected of the interviewee, and whether he or she is willing and able to participate. See Appendix C for an example Invitation Letter and Appendix D for a Project Description Sheet.

C. Scheduling

Schedule the interview through a follow-up phone call. Interviews should be scheduled at the convenience of the interviewee and coordinated with the interviewer's schedule. Agree on the length of the interview beforehand if possible, taking the age of the interviewee into account--elderly people tire more quickly and tend to lose voice, etc., and interviews earlier in the day are often better for them.

D. Location

Choose a place that is **QUIET** with minimal distractions. **DO NOT** conduct interviews

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in public places, such as restaurants or cafes. Be aware of open windows, slamming doors, kitchen noises, utensils, squeaky chairs, fans and air conditioners, pet birds, traffic, open spaces that cause echo sounds, etc.

VI. Interviewing

A. Basic Etiquette

When you arrive to conduct an interview, introduce yourself immediately. The interviewee should be expecting you, but it is always good to state your purpose for the sake of clarity. Set up the equipment, using your *checklist* (see example in Appendix A) before *every* interview. If the interviewee seems uncertain about how the interview process works, take a couple minutes to explain it so he or she feels more comfortable.

Remember that your job as the interviewer is to guide the interviewee, not to be a participant in a conversation. Your voice should be heard sparingly, and the best way to achieve that is to think carefully about what questions to ask, how to word the questions to get the fullest response, and in what order to ask the questions (flow of the interview).

Begin the interview, jotting down names of people, places and things that are unfamiliar and making notes for possible follow-up questions, but mostly listen to what the interviewee has to say and make eye contact. *I can't stress enough the importance of eye contact*—it lets the interviewee know you are listening *and* interested.

Don't interrupt the interviewee, and if you are interrupted by the interviewee, stop mid-word if you must. Why? In terms of transcription, if two people are speaking at once, whatever is said is virtually lost. Also, if a translator is involved or you are interviewing more than one person at a time, instruct everyone, before the interview begins to wait until the other is finished speaking before they begin.

Don't hesitate to ask the interviewee to repeat something you think may not have been recorded clearly due to an unexpected noise (cough, sneeze, squeaky chair, telephone). Also, some people have the tendency to drop their voices at the end of sentences. Asking them to repeat what they've said a few times will hopefully correct this problem. Be sure that you are speaking clearly, too.

Use silence as a tool. If the interviewee pauses, don't jump in immediately with another question. The interviewee may be connecting what they've just said to some other thought that is related and important.

When the interview has ended, be sure to thank the interviewee for his or her willingness to participate in the project. Before you leave, make general notes about the recording. Ask the interviewee to go over names mentioned and get the most accurate spellings

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possible. It is especially important to have the interviewee spell names of non-famous people; most often these are family, friends and co-workers. This is very important for the accuracy of the historical record being created.

After the interview, a representative of the project will send a “thank you” letter. An example letter is located in Appendix G.

B. How to Ask (and Not Ask) Questions

It is often how you ask the question that accounts for the richness of the answer. Below are some ways to ask questions that can be quite helpful, and also some techniques to avoid. I always try to keep in mind that the person I’m interviewing knows more about their life and connection to the subject than I do, and if I give them sufficient berth with my questions, they will often provide information on matters that I couldn’t anticipate.

1. Fruitful Question Formats

a. Open-Ended

This question format promotes broad interpretation and elaborative response. Use this often. Examples: “How did you happen to choose Bowdoin College?” “What was it like to work on Acid Rain legislation with Senator Mitchell?”

b. Two-Sentence

The first sentence gives the interviewee brief background of why your question is important; the second asks the question. Example: “We want to preserve your recollections to pass down to the next generation of Bowdoin students. What was your academic experience at Bowdoin like in the 1950s?”

c. Reverse

This is used to turn the perspective in a different direction. It’s sometimes important to know why someone *didn’t* do something as much as why they did do something. Example: Try “Why weren’t Bowdoin students more politically active in the 1960s? Instead of, “Why were Bowdoin students of the 1960s politically passive?”

d. Follow Up

When the interviewee says something that sparks another question, be sure to follow up rather than just going to the next question on your list.

2. Formats to Avoid

a. Double Question

Asking two questions at once is likely to result in only one being answered and the other forgotten—it is confusing to the interviewee. If you *really* want both questions answered, ask them separately. Example of what NOT to do: “What

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year did you start at Bowdoin College? What was your major?"

b. Yes/No Question

These are questions asked in a way that allows a simple “yes” or “no” answer without elaboration (unless you have a particularly sophisticated or loquacious interviewee).

c. Leading Question: It is important to avoid inserting your own bias or assumptions into a question. Example: “Given that the Republican-run White House has been handling the Iraq war terribly, what do you think that means for the mid-term elections?”

C. Tips for Interviewees

Interviewers should consider printing copies of the “tips for interviewees” prior to the interview and sharing them with the interviewee in advance of the interview.

1. Make interviewer aware of any limitation on your time.
2. Speak naturally but clearly.
3. Try to avoid walking around (or away from recorder) while speaking.
4. Allow interviewer to complete a question before beginning your response. Likewise, if more than one person is being interviewed at once, please allow each person to finish before you speak.
5. Spell any difficult, foreign or unusual terms or names to aid in clarity and transcription of the interview.
6. If you tire and would like a break, don't hesitate to indicate this need to the interviewer.
7. As much as you are in control of the interview, try to keep distractions such as noise or interruptions at a minimum.
8. If you are having difficulty hearing or understanding the interviewer, do not hesitate to say so; feel free to ask the interviewer to repeat any questions.
9. If a translator is necessary for the interview, please allow him/her to translate before you continue speaking.

VII. File Management

Managing files in a digital environment requires standardized procedures for consistency.

The Project will be using Compact Flash technology to capture digital sound files. The digital recordings will be saved in .wav format, using the following file naming protocol: Lastname, Firstinitial, Date of interview (mm/dd/yy). Here is an example:

MitchellG092508

Once the Interviewer has named and saved the digital file on the computer, he or she will burn a copy on CD and send it to the Project office within 3-5 business days. The Interviewer is responsible for retaining a readable copy of the audio file (preferably on a hard drive) until the project director notifies the interviewer that the pen drive has been received, saved on the Project's computer, and spot-checked for content. The director will save the audio file in .wav format on a redundantly backed-up server and also convert a copy in .mp3 format for eventual delivery on the Web.

The Project director will deliver a CD of the interview to the transcriptionist, who will return it to the Project with the completed transcript.

The Oral History Project completes an Interview Information Sheet at the time of each interview (see Appendix F):

- Interviewee's name
- Interviewer's name
- Date and time of the interview
- Location of the interview
- Filename of the interview: MitchellG092508
- Approximate length of interview
- Subjects covered, broadly

VIII. Transcribing and Editing Interviews

A. Overview

A transcript is a written record of what was spoken during an oral history interview. In order to promote the long-term preservation of each interview and to facilitate access to its informational content, the Oral History Project prepares a transcript of each interview that it creates or otherwise acquires. Raw transcripts are typically created by an outside service provider and then edited by Project staff for accuracy and completeness. Although there are various approaches to editing, our goal is to create a transcript that is as faithful a representation of the audio recording as possible. This is called "archival" or "verbatim" editing. While editing transcripts, we also create a Summary Sheet for each

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interview that provides an abstract of topics covered, a biographical note about the interviewee, and a list of names mentioned. The Summary Sheet provides a quick and easy means of access for researchers (see below for more information).

B. General Procedures

The following is a comprehensive list of the steps taken in the Oral History Project to bring a transcript from its raw version, prepared by the outside service provider, to its final version when it becomes available to researchers.

1. The interview sound file is transcribed and the transcript arrives at the Project office.
2. A staff member does a manual First Edit of the transcript, employing the transcript, the audio recording, and the folder of administrative information for that interview. The first edit entails the following:
 - a. Play the audio from start to finish, following along with the transcript. It will be necessary to start and stop the tape frequently.
 - b. Correct words/phrases misheard, omitted, or unintelligible.
 - c. Add sentence and paragraph structure to the interview to make it more readable.
 - d. Add quotation marks to conversational recollections.
 - e. Insert clarifying brackets to complete a personal name, usually when just a last or first name is mentioned.
 - f. Correct misspelled personal, geographical, and corporate names. Hyphenate numbers where appropriate.
 - g. Create a Summary Sheet for the interview by:
 - i. Writing as complete of a biographical note on the interviewee as possible using information found in the transcript and notes in the interviewee's folder. Include education, where the interviewee grew up, parents' names and occupations, number of siblings, ethnic background, occupation, other notable achievements, especially those that relate to the main focus of the interview.
 - ii. Write an abstract of the interview, identifying topics covered. This is intended to provide a general overview of the broad subjects covered in the interview.
 - iii. Create an index of people mentioned in the interview, identifying them in a way that allows researchers to find further information on that person. For relatively lengthy interviews, create a list of ALL personal names mentioned in the interview, with page number and brief context notes (see Appendix J for Summary Sheet).
3. A staff member performs a Computer Edit of the transcript, based on the corrections made during the first edit. This is really a second edit, which

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incorporates a second reading into the process of inputting corrections and changes from the manual annotations of the First Edit into the electronic text file.

When the computer edit is complete, the transcription should be fairly polished and ready to stand up to the scrutiny of a final edit from the oral historian.

4. The oral historian does a Final Edit of the transcript using the electronic version which, at this point, is much cleaner and easier to read. If additional changes are indicated, these are made to the electronic transcript, which is saved and printed (12 pt.; single-spaced, single-sided).
 - a. Copy one is sent to the interviewee, with the recording on a CD, as a “thank you” and to elicit any further comments/corrections about the interview. Interviewees are encouraged to contact us by post, phone, or e-mail to correct, augment, clarify, etc. anything in the transcript before we make it available for research.
 - b. Copy two is the “reference copy” to be used by researchers in Special Collections.
 - c. Copy three, the “preservation copy,” is stored in an acid-free folder, within an acid-free box in the climate-controlled stacks area.

C. Editing Specifics

Below are some specific guidelines we follow at the Oral History Project when doing editing.

1. **Punctuation, transcription, and spelling corrections** must be made in the text.
 - a. In editing a transcript, we are correcting the transcriptionist’s work and not changing in any way what the interviewee said. For example, the interviewee answers: “there ain’t no way I’m gonna vote for that.” It’s grammatically incorrect, but it was transcribed perfectly so there are no corrections to be made.
 - b. Punctuation is essential for making a transcript coherent; readability is enhanced too, making it more useful for researchers. Paragraphs and sentences usually need the most attention. Don’t worry about sentences beginning with “and,” “but” or “because;” it is more important to let the reader of the transcript know when one thought was completed and another one began, than to follow, strictly, the rules of grammar. Always keep in mind that people speak differently than they write and that an oral history transcript is an unrehearsed dialogue.
 - c. Although the raw transcription has been subjected to spell-checking, errors will remain. Personal names and place names in particular should be verified by other methods.
2. **Omissions** are words or phrases (not, we hope, complete sentences!) left out of the transcript by mistake. The transcriptionist either didn’t hear them, or heard

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them but forgot to type them. Listen carefully to the recording, stop and reverse if you think you heard something that does not appear on the paper in front of you, indicate where the missing word(s) should go and insert the appropriate word(s), printing as neatly as possible.

3. **Misinterpretations** are parts of the transcript that you (as an editor) hear differently than the transcriptionist. Accents, dialects, and colloquial words or phrases can be difficult to interpret. It is important that you reverse and listen at least a second time (it sometimes takes 3 or 4 times) before making a final decision on what you hear. You should also read a broader section of the transcript to check that your interpretation is logical in context. If you are certain you hear it differently from the transcription, insert your interpretation, but be careful not to obliterate the transcriptionist's text. This is where another editor is valuable. The editor will also listen to the transcript, make any additional corrections, and serve as a sort of "referee" in determining which interpretation seems most plausible. Of course when a copy of the edited transcript is sent to the interviewee, he or she will have the opportunity to correct any errors we may have made.
4. **Unintelligible Word or Phrase** is a notation made by the transcriptionist, in parentheses, letting the reader know that the transcriptionist could not understand a particular section of the interview. A different pair of ears can often decipher what someone else couldn't, but sometimes poor sound quality, background noise, or unclear speech makes the task daunting. Follow the guidelines mentioned in "Misinterpretations" to edit these sections.
5. **Footnotes** may be inserted either for clarification or to augment the oral history transcription. For example, the interviewee might say "Senator Dole worked closely with Mitchell on this issue", and you'll want to identify that person to aid future researchers. A footnote with his full name, years served in the Senate, birth/death dates (lack of a death date may indicate a potential interview) and any other significant information should be added to the transcript. Make a clear notation at the point in the text where the footnote should appear, and write the added information neatly at the bottom of the page.
6. **Clarifying Brackets** are used to make the text more coherent, to correct a mistake or omission in speech, or to complete a person's full name. When correcting, for example, a wrong date, leave the wrong date in the text just as the interviewee said it. Then next to that date add [*sic*], in brackets and italics then clarifying brackets around the correct date (or word). Ex.: In 1967, [*sic* 1963] President Kennedy was assassinated.

IX. Cataloging Oral History Collections for Access

Providing intellectual access to the information in interviews is a key concern for oral history projects. Descriptive inventories can exist in both paper and electronic format, aiding the local as well as the distant researcher. The George J. Mitchell Oral History Project creates a number of tools to aid researchers using its oral history collections. Below are a few typical types.

A. Summary Sheets

As mentioned above, a summary sheet is an overview of an individual interview and includes such information as: a brief biography of the interviewee, an abstract of the interview, including major topics, names, and places covered, and an index of all personal names mentioned in the interview. See Appendix J for a sample Summary Sheet.

B. Alphabetical Collection Guide

This is an alphabetical list, sorted by last name, of all interviewees included in the collection. Typically, such a guide contains: 1) the last name and first name of the interviewee; 2) the accession number (for unique identification) and 3) the name of the interviewer.

C. Numerical Collection Guide

This is a numerical listing, sorted by accession number, of all those interviews included in the collection. Typically this contains the same information as the alphabetical list described above, but is sorted on the unique identification number instead of the interviewee's last name.

E. Web site

Online access to the sound recordings and transcriptions, indexed and text-searchable, provide free access to the oral history interviews recorded by the Project. That online access complements other materials from the George J. Mitchell Papers held by Bowdoin College Library.

X: Bibliography

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Fortunoff Video Archive for Holocaust Testimonies. Available at: <http://www.library.yale.edu/testimonies/excerpts/index.html>. Holds an extensive collection, with some video excerpts/transcripts.

Harvard University. *Iranian Oral History Project*. Available at: <http://www.fas.harvard.edu/~iohp/>. Includes audio and transcripts in Persian.

I, Witness to History. Available at: <http://www.iwitnessohistory.org/>. This is a program of the Cramer Reed Center for Successful Aging with oral histories on a variety of topics.

Illinois Institute of Technology. *Voices of the Holocaust*. Available at: <http://voices.iit.edu/>.

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Library of Congress, American Memory. *Voices from the Days of Slavery*. Available at: <http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/collections/voices/>. Twenty-three interviewees, born between 1823 and the early 1860s, discuss how they felt about slavery, slaveholders, coercion of slaves, their families, and freedom.

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Southern Oral History Program at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. Web site. Available at: <http://www.sohp.org/>.

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Truman Presidential Museum and Library. *Oral History Interviews*. Available at: http://www.trumanlibrary.org/oralhist/oral_his.htm. Includes more than 100 recordings, including some dealing with the Holocaust and World War II in some capacity.

University of Kentucky: *Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History*. Collections list and link to the online database available at: http://www.uky.edu/Libraries/libpage.php?lweb_id=11&llib_id=13<ab_id=259.

The University of Southern Mississippi Libraries. *Civil Rights in Mississippi Digital Archive, Oral History Index*. Available at: <http://www.lib.usm.edu/~spcol/crda/oh/>. The site offers sixty-three oral history transcripts associated with the Civil Rights Movement.

The Vietnam Center at Texas Tech University. *The Oral History Project*. Available at: <http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/oralhistory/>. Includes an online workshop and many oral histories.

Access, Preservation and Administration :

Baum, Willa K. *Transcribing and Editing Oral History*. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1991.

Matters, Marion, compiler. *Oral History Cataloging Manual*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1995.

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Appendix A: Equipment Guide and Checklist

Pre-Settings

Before the equipment leaves the Project office at Bowdoin College, the following settings are applied to the recording equipment and should not be altered.

1. Input is set to DL Mono (the same track will be recorded on both the left and right channels).
2. Microphone input levels are set to adjust automatically, so there is no need for the interviewer to adjust the REC Level dial.
3. ALC Limiter is ON.
4. Recording specifications are set to: PCM, 44.1, wav file. This should allow for approximately 12 hours of recording time on a 4 GB Compact Flash card.
5. 4 GB Compact Flash card is installed and should not be removed.
6. Phantom Power is ON.

Equipment Bag

The equipment bag should contain the following items:

Marantz digital recorder (with Compact Flash card already installed)

Microphone

Microphone cable

Microphone stand

AC adaptor

USB cable for digital file transfer

Extension cord---orange for visibility

Set-Up at the Interview Site

On the right side of the unit, insert the male end of microphone cable into the left (L) of the two large, round, black mic inputs. Note that the three small prongs on the end of the cable must be inserted into the corresponding slots of the 4 input. When inserted properly there will be a click as the cable locks into place.

Insert the female end of the microphone cable into the bottom of the microphone, making sure that the three 3 small prongs on the bottom of the mic are inserted into the corresponding slots on the cable. Place the microphone into the microphone stand.

Make sure the Phantom Power switch on right side of the unit is ON. (This is pre-set, but double check that it wasn't inadvertently moved)

Connect the AC adapter to the DC IN input on the left side of the unit and then plug the

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AC adapter into the wall.

Recording the Interview

Slide the power switch to the right and release.

When the unit is initially turned on it will indicate the amount of recording time left on compact flash card. The display button to the right of the display can be used to toggle between screens which show the:

- 1) time and date
- 2) length of the currently recorded/recording track
- 3) amount of time that is available to be recorded on the compact flash card.

To begin recording, slide the red REC switch to the right. A red light to the left of the REC switch will then illuminate to confirm the unit is recording. Microphone input levels will automatically be adjusted by the recorder as the interview proceeds.

To pause recording, press REC PAUSE button. The red light to the left of the REC switch will blink while the unit is paused. To begin recording again, slide the red REC switch to the right – the red light will stop blinking.

To stop recording at the end of an interview, press the STOP button.

(N.B. The recorder will create a new track each time recording is STOPPED. To avoid the creation of unnecessary tracks when recording, only push the PAUSE button if recording needs to be paused during an interview. Only when an interview is complete should STOP button be pushed. If new tracks are created, however, fear not. Tracks are only file place markers, and one interview with multiple tracks can be made into a single file again after the recordings have been transferred to a computer.)

DO NOT TOUCH THE REC UNDO BUTTON

Pressing this button could result in losing an entire interview. If something on the recording needs to be modified, notify the project director. The Project office has software for editing digital files. Interviewers will not attempt to edit the recordings.

Transfer Recordings to the Computer

Plug the I/O cable into the I/O jack on the left side of the recorder and plug the USB end of the cable into a computer. With the I/O – MENU/STORE button pushed down turn the recorder's power on. The recorder will then appear as a drive on the computer and files can be copied from the recorder to the computer.

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Once the file/s have been copied, save them according to the procedures outlined in Chapter VII: File Management. They should be named and saved as .wav files and copies burned on CD and sent to the project office.

Reformatting the Compact Flash Card

Note: Erasing the Compact Flash card occurs ONLY after the project director confirms with the Interviewer that a viable digital copy of an interview has been received and saved at the project office.

While recording and playback have been stopped, hold the MARK/EDIT button for about 2 seconds to enter Edit mode. "Renumber" will then flash in the display.

While display is flashing press and release the MARK/EDIT button 4 more times. FORMAT will then flash in the display.

While FORMAT is flashing press and release the ENTER button. FORMAT OK? will then flash in the display.

While FORMAT OK? is flashing press and release the enter button to confirm you want to reformat and erase the compact flash drive. (Or press and release the STOP button to cancel).

The card will then be erased after a few moments.

Appendix B. Interviewee Contact Form

NAME: _____ **Priority:** _____

ADDRESS: _____ **Contact Person:**
Name: _____
Address: _____

PHONE: (_____) _____ **Home** **Phone:** (_____)

(_____) _____ **Work**

FAX: (_____) _____

E-MAIL: _____

Pertinence to the George J. Mitchell Oral History Project:

Biographical Sketch/Notes:

Special Considerations:

Appendix C: Invitation Letter

February 7, 2008

Mr. So-and-So
ABC 123 Street
Anywhere, ME 12345

Dear Mr. So-and-So:

Bowdoin College is undertaking an oral history project to document the life and career of Sen. George J. Mitchell (Bowdoin College Class of 1954). We hope that you will agree to an interview as part of this project. We believe you could make a substantial contribution to our work, particularly with respect to

The enclosed brief description of the Project will give you some background information about our work and what we are trying to achieve. If you wish to discuss the Project further once you have read the enclosure, please feel free to call or e-mail.

I will call you within the next few weeks to answer any questions you may have and, I hope, to arrange a convenient time and place for the interview. We generally schedule between one and two hours for an interview, setting up additional sessions if necessary.

Meanwhile, many thanks for your interest and the assistance you can provide.

Sincerely,

Andrea L'Hommedieu
Project Director

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Appendix D. Project Description

George J. Mitchell Oral History Project

The George J. Mitchell Oral History Project is creating a collection of recorded spoken memories from individuals connected with George Mitchell in a variety of ways. The three-year project is based at Hawthorne-Longfellow Library, Bowdoin College, Brunswick, Maine.

Interviews are being conducted by Director Andrea L'Hommedieu, an oral historian and librarian, and several field interviewers. College students provide additional support to the project through research and editing.

Interviewees include Sen. Mitchell's childhood friends and acquaintances, family members, college contemporaries, Maine legislators, political associates and competitors, campaign supporters, Senate office staff, Senate colleagues and committee staff members, public agency officials, foreign policy specialists, law practice associates, public policy advocates, board members of various affiliations, and friends.

Topics vary broadly and cover the Senator's childhood years, education, and legal career; Maine politics and campaigns; U.S. Senate years; the Northern Ireland Peace Accord; the Mitchell Institute; and, his involvement with the Boston Red Sox, the Walt Disney Corporation, Major League Baseball, and the 9/11 Liberty Fund, among others. Collectively, documenting these facets of his life will provide a comprehensive mosaic of Senator Mitchell's contributions to Maine, to the United States, and to the world.

Interviewees are encouraged to tell their stories, in settings that are conducive to thoughtful and candid remembrances, providing a context for other recollections and the extensive documentary record found in the George J. Mitchell Papers at Bowdoin College. That context includes a sense of the time and of the interactions between people associated with Sen. Mitchell that are otherwise poorly documented in the historical record.

Each interview is transcribed and edited. The final transcript is an accurate written reflection of the oral record, with references and corrections to assist later readers. Each interviewee is provided with an opportunity to review and correct their transcript, before signing a release to make the interview accessible.

Ultimately, the Project will make the recordings and the transcripts freely accessible on the World Wide Web. We invite you to visit our Web site at:
<http://library.bowdoin.edu/arch/mitchell/oralhist/>

Questions about the Project may be directed to:

Andrea L'Hommedieu, *Director*
George J. Mitchell Oral History Project
One College St., 3000 College Station
Bowdoin College, Brunswick, ME 04011
Tel: 207-725-3927
E-mail: gmoh@bowdoin.edu

Appendix E: Interview Outline: Flow of Questions

1. Introduce the interview using the following format:

This is an interview for the George J. Mitchell Oral History Project on **(Date)** with **(Name of Interviewee)** in **(Location: city/state)**; this is **(Name of Interviewer)**.

2. Begin the interview by asking for the interviewee's full name (spelling it if needed), date and place of birth, and parents' names.

3. The next questions will focus on childhood, family, community and educational background. Ask about parents' occupations, religious beliefs, political and social beliefs and values. "Where did you grow up? What were your interests in school? Were there teachers who influenced you? If so, who were they and what were they like?" *(Note: if you are interviewing a high profile person whose time is limited and for whom there is biographical information already published, you may want to abbreviate this piece of the outline. However, it is important to understand that the majority of interviews should include this piece, because the project's substance is greatly enhanced by providing a full picture of each person interviewed, not solely focused on the interviewee's connection to the subject.*

4. **When interviewing people from Waterville**, the questions about the Waterville community will be an essential part of the interview. "What was the community like at that time? Socially (what did people do to relax?) Religiously (what churches predominated?) Ethnically (what mix of cultures was there: Franco, Yankee, Lebanese?) Politically? How has Waterville changed over the years? Can you think of others in the community who would be valuable sources of information for this project?"

5. **When interviewing people from Maine in general**, ask how the Maine political scene has changed over the years. "What was it like from your first memory/involvement? How did you become involved in politics (if applicable)? What are some of the memorable events or circumstances from your involvement with politics?"

6. "What involvements did you have with George Mitchell in connection with (subject area: Senate, baseball, hometown, etc)?" If the interviewee worked for him in the Senate, for instance: "What was it like working with him? What was his style as a legislator? How did it compare to other Senators you observed?" Ask about particular legislation or committee work as relevant. Example: "What were some of the challenges your committee faced in pushing through the acid rain bill?"

7. **When interviewing people with National stature (e.g., other Senators and DC staffers)**: "What was it like to work with (or for) Sen. Mitchell? If you and he had different perspectives/opinions at times, how was that resolved? How did the two of you

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deal with those differences?”

8. “Is there anything I haven’t asked you that you feel is important to add?”

9. Whatever the subject area, and the interviewee’s connection to it, there will be a set of more specific questions to consider. We will be developing sets of area-specific questions as the project progresses.

Appendix F: Interview Information Sheet

- **Interviewee's name:**

- **Interviewer's name:**

- **Date and Time of the interview (M/D/Y & time):**

- **Location of the interview (City & State; exact address if known):**

- **File Name (Convention: LastnameFirstInitialDate) Ex.: MitchellG021808**

- **Approximate length of interview (in minutes):**

- **Subjects covered, broadly (use Matrix as guide):**

Appendix G: Thank You Letter

February 14, 2008

Mr. So-and-So
ABC 123 Street
Anywhere, ME 12345

Dear Mr. So-and-So:

Thank you very much for your participation in the George J. Mitchell Oral History Project. Your interview will form an important part of the history that we are documenting through conversations with you and others.

If you have additional recollections that you think would be useful for the project, please send them along or consider an additional interview. We don't want to impose on you, but we do want to capture as many of your recollections of the time as we can.

We are now in the process of transcribing and editing your interview. When that task is finished, you will have the opportunity to review and correct the transcript before signing a release to make the interview accessible.

Thanks again for your contribution.

Sincerely,

Andrea L'Hommedieu
Project Director

Appendix H: Release Form

THE GEORGE J. MITCHELL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT RELEASE FORM

I, _____, hereby permanently give, transfer, assign,
(Interviewee)
and convey all of the my right, title, and interest, including any copyright and related interests that
I may possess in an interview recorded with me by _____ on
(Interviewer)
_____ in _____ to
(Date) (Location: City/State)
Bowdoin College, an Education Corporation Established by Law at Brunswick, Maine, hereafter
referred to as "Bowdoin College," as an unrestricted gift.

In so doing I understand that this recorded interview, hereafter referred to as "the work,"
will be made available to researchers and may be quoted from, published or broadcast in any
format or medium, including on the World Wide Web, that Bowdoin College shall deem
appropriate.

**It is agreed that the work will be made available for research on an unrestricted
basis, subject only to those conditions or restrictions specified below:**

I understand that this deed covers the audio/video recording of "the work" and any copies,
transcripts, and reformatted versions that Bowdoin College may produce from the original
recording.

This agreement does not preclude any non-exclusive use that I may want to make of the
information in the work.

Interviewee: _____ **Date:** _____

Address: _____

Telephone number: _____

Interviewer: _____ **Date:** _____

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Appendix I: Release Form Letter

February 14, 2008

Mr. So-and-So
ABC 123 Street
Anywhere, ME 12345

Dear Mr. So-and-So:

We have transcribed and edited your interview and welcome the opportunity for you to review and comment on the transcript enclosed.

Please make corrections, annotations, etc., directly on the transcript and send those comments back to me for further editing. Please don't hesitate to point out misspelled personal names, as these can be the most difficult for staff to recognize and verify.

I am including a release form for you to sign after you have reviewed the transcript and we are both in agreement on changes.

Thanks again for your contribution.

Sincerely,

Andrea L'Hommedieu
Project Director

Appendix J. Summary Sheet

Joe Smith

GJMOHP# 006

Biographical Information:

Joseph W. Smith was born on December 7, 1935, in New York, NY, and moved with his family to Waterville, Maine, in 1942. His mother was a nurse and his father was in the US Air Force. He attended Bowdoin College (Class of 1957). He worked at the New York Stock Exchange for several years and, in March of 1962, moved to Philadelphia and became an accountant. He was an active Democrat, serving on various county and state committees for more than twenty years. At the time of this interview he lived in Augusta, Maine.

Topic Notes:

Childhood facts; parents' careers; The Great Depression; Downtown Waterville area; Bowdoin College in the 1950s; Favorite professors; First jobs; New York Stock Exchange; Moving to Philadelphia; Maine Democratic politics.

Names List:

Donovan, John
Hazelton, Paul
Smith, Joseph W.
Smith, Joshua M.
Smith, Nancy (Peters)