

# UC Berkeley

## "Librarians Navigating Change" Oral History Project, UC Berkeley

### Title

Glusker - ACRL-EBSS Slides

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*Creating The*  
“LIBRARIANS NAVIGATING CHANGE”  
*Oral History Project:*

*CHALLENGES, JOYS, LESSONS LEARNED*

Ann Glusker

ACRL: EBSS Education Committee Webinar

May 8, 2026

# WELCOME!

## "Librarians Navigating Change" Oral History Project, UC Berkeley ▾

 Share ▾

Welcome to the “Librarians Navigating Change” Oral History Project! The 15 oral history interview transcripts in this collection (two of which are embargoed until 2/2/29) focus on changes in libraries, and particularly librarianship, over the past 40 years, as related by long-time University of California, Berkeley librarians. The collection is comprised of almost 400 pages of transcripts, with narrators from a range of roles and services in this complex academic library setting, who were interviewed in April-May 2025. In this collection you’ll find content related to:

- Careers in librarianship
- Changes in library service provision (especially the impact of COVID)
- Technological change and adaptations
- Changes in collection processes, publishing, and purchasing
- Budgets, budgets, budgets
- Organizational changes and their impact on collaboration and morale
- Reflections on the rewards and difficulties of being a librarian
- Advice for future generations of librarians, as the landscape changes dramatically

[https://escholarship.org/uc/berkeleylibrary\\_navchange/](https://escholarship.org/uc/berkeleylibrary_navchange/)

Feel free to contact Ann Glusker ([glusker@berkeley.edu](mailto:glusker@berkeley.edu)) with questions and/or feedback!

## BACKGROUND: WHY THIS PROJECT?

- I had been part of two qualitative research teams
- The interviews are rich, and the interviewees open and generous, but the content is not released after thematic analysis, so a lot is lost
- I wanted to learn oral history methodology, which is more collaborative than qualitative research, and has a social justice focus
- When I came to Berkeley in 2019, I'd been a librarian for a decade, but it was my first "traditional" liaison role... I had a year before everything changed and had always wanted to hear more stories about librarianship (at Berkeley) in the before times!

# BACKGROUND: QUALITATIVE STUDY AND DATA COLLECTION TYPES

## Qualitative Methods Overview

Phenomenology

Case Studies

Grounded Theory

Narrative Inquiry

Oral History

Feminist Approaches

Action Research

|              |                                                                                                                                                       |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
|--------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Surveys      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Quickly and/or easily gets lots of information from people in a non threatening way</li> </ul>                 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>easy to compare and analyze</li> <li>administer to many people</li> <li>can get lots of data</li> <li>many sample questionnaires already exist</li> </ul>                                        | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>wording can bias client's responses</li> <li>impersonal</li> <li>may need sampling expert</li> <li>doesn't get full story</li> </ul>                                                          |
| Interviews   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand someone's impressions or experiences</li> <li>Learn more about answers to questionnaires</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>get full range and depth of information</li> <li>develops relationship with client</li> <li>can be flexible with client</li> </ul>                                                               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>can take time</li> <li>can be hard to analyze and compare</li> <li>can be costly</li> <li>interviewer can bias client's responses</li> </ul>                                                  |
| Observation  | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gather firsthand information about people, events, or programs</li> </ul>                                      | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>view operations of a program as they are actually occurring</li> <li>can adapt to events as they occur</li> </ul>                                                                                | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>can be difficult to interpret seen behaviors</li> <li>can be complex to categorize observations</li> <li>can influence behaviors of program participants</li> <li>can be expensive</li> </ul> |
| Focus groups | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Explore a topic in depth through group discussion</li> </ul>                                                   | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>quickly and reliably get common impressions</li> <li>can be efficient way to get much range and depth of information in short time</li> <li>can convey key information about programs</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>can be hard to analyze responses</li> <li>need good facilitator for safety and closure</li> <li>difficult to schedule 6-8 people together</li> </ul>                                          |
| Case studies | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Understand an experience or conduct comprehensive examination through cross</li> </ul>                         | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>depicts client's experience in program input, process and results</li> <li>powerful means to portray program</li> </ul>                                                                          | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>usually time consuming to collect, organize and describe</li> <li>represents depth of information,</li> </ul>                                                                                 |

From Qualitative Research Methods guides,  
[Duquesne University](#), and [Duke University](#)

# BACKGROUND: START WITH TRAINING!!

## UC Berkeley Oral History Center

<https://www.lib.berkeley.edu/visit/bancroft/oral-history-center>

### More about our educational programs

History of Art

Advanced Institute

Intro workshop

Remote interviewing

Interviewing tips

Fellows/Interns

Intro workshop @

The 2026 Introduction to Oral History workshop will be held from 8:30 a.m. to 2:30 p.m. Pacific Time, starting in May and being accepted on a rolling basis.



Students in our educational programs

UC Berkeley Library

Visit us

Find + borrow

Get help

Re

[HOME](#) / [VISIT US](#) / [BANCROFT LIBRARY](#) / ORAL HISTORY CENTER



## Oral History Center

Recording and preserving the history of California and our interconnected world

[Overview](#)

[Projects](#)

[K-16](#)

[Educational programs](#)

[Podcast](#)

[About OHC](#)

5/2026: Check out the intro workshops in May and August, from the *Science History Institute* in Philadelphia:

<https://www.sciencehistory.org/research/research-centers/center-for-oral-history/oral-history-training/>

# OVERVIEW

- Oral history as opposed to qualitative research –collaborative, not extractive
- The “old days” vs. post-COVID
- Berkeley as a setting – how much and what is Berkeley-specific?
- 15 narrators; tried for diversity on various personal and job characteristics
- Interviewed April-May 2025– massive changes already underway (AI and political changes probably being the top ones)
- Interviews averaged about an hour and a quarter (this shorter “one-shot” format is not universally loved in the OH community—oral histories traditionally cover the narrator’s entire lifespan, comprising multiple hours of interviews across multiple sessions—but it was the right format for this project)

## OVERVIEW (continued)

- While the gold standard for narrator content is the audio file, several narrators did not want to agree to it, so audio is not included in the final uploads, which are transcript-only.
- My participation percentage (the percent of the time I was speaking as opposed to the narrator speaking) ranged from 9% to 25%. I'm a little embarrassed by the 25% (it should be lower) but it's too late now—good learning for the next project. 😊
- Oral history generally doesn't require an IRB— but stay tuned
- To produce transcripts and do collegial review with narrator having equal/priority decision-making takes time and care (i.e., I got behind)
- In the end, there were 400 pages of transcripts, including the two embargoed

| Narrator Name<br>(alphabetical by LN) | Title (at time of interview or retirement)                                                                                                   | Retired (as of<br>December 2025)? | THE<br>NARRATORS |
|---------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|------------------|
| Brandt, R                             | <i>Bancroft Library Head of Cataloging; Curator of the California Detective Fiction Collection</i>                                           | N                                 |                  |
| Castillo-Speed, L                     | <i>Head Librarian, Ethnic Studies Library</i>                                                                                                | N                                 |                  |
| Edwards, S                            | <i>Head, Social Sciences Division; Social Welfare Librarian</i>                                                                              | Y                                 |                  |
| Eifler, D                             | <i>Environmental Design Librarian</i>                                                                                                        | Y                                 |                  |
| He, J                                 | <i>Librarian for Chinese Collections</i>                                                                                                     | N                                 |                  |
| Lee, C                                | <i>Liaison to American Cultures, American Studies, College Writing, Legal Studies</i>                                                        | Y                                 |                  |
| Phillips, M                           | <i>Librarian, Social Sciences Division (Education, Gender &amp; Women's Studies, Psychology)</i>                                             | Y                                 |                  |
| Quigley, B                            | <i>Head, Sciences Division; Mathematics Librarian</i>                                                                                        | N                                 |                  |
| Rowan, DC                             | <i>Director, Reference &amp; Research Services, Library, UC Berkeley School of Law</i>                                                       | Y                                 |                  |
| Sholinbeck, M                         | <i>Public Health &amp; Optometry Librarian</i>                                                                                               | Y                                 |                  |
| Silva, J                              | <i>Scholarly Resources Strategy and Federal Government Information Librarian</i>                                                             | N                                 |                  |
| Tanasse, G                            | <i>Assistant Head, Instruction Services Division: Service Design Lead; Film &amp; Media Services Librarian: Media Services + Collections</i> | N                                 |                  |
| Teplitzky, S                          | <i>Open Science Librarian</i>                                                                                                                | N                                 |                  |

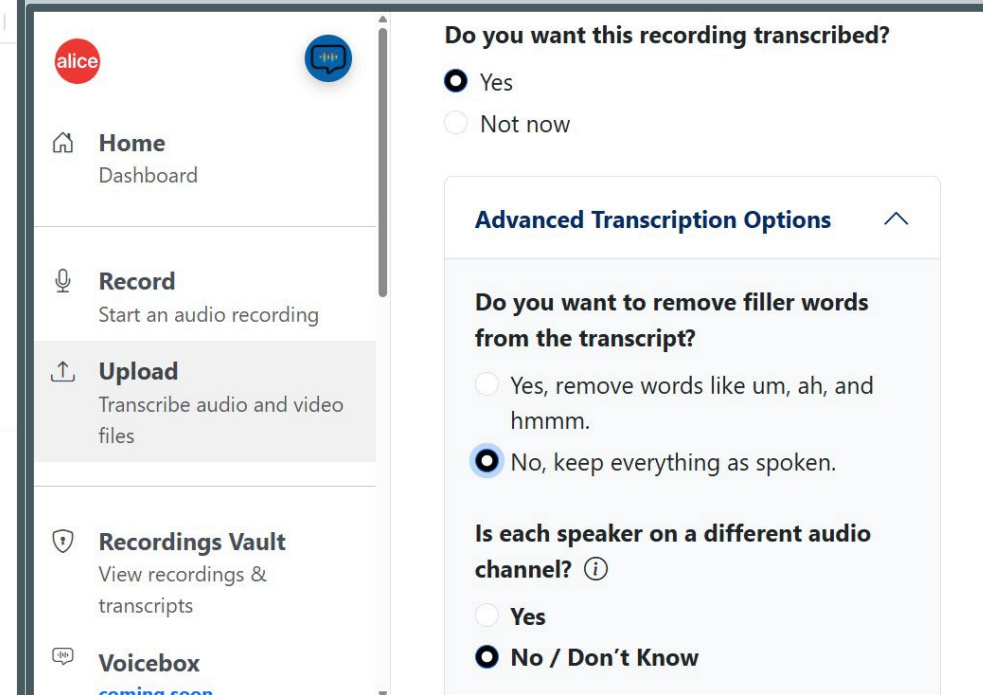
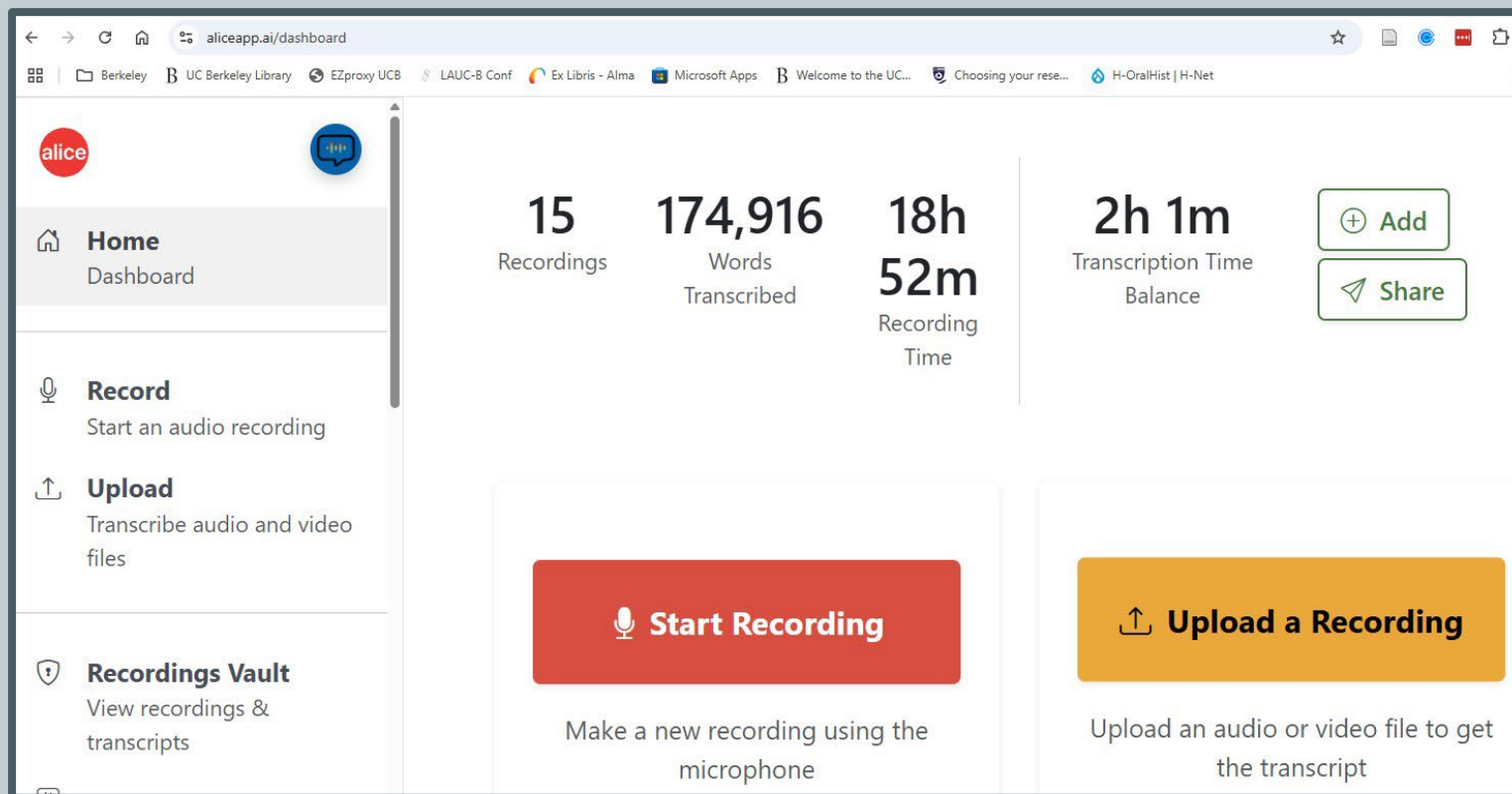
+ 2  
embargoed

## QUESTION TOPICS

- Career journey, personal history
- Review of years at Berkeley
- Biggest changes? Which were Berkeley-specific and which profession-specific challenges?
- What strategies if any did you use to navigate changes?
- Were there times you thought about leaving librarianship or Berkeley?
- What part did your position in the organizational structure play?
- Legacy— how would you like your work to be remembered?
- Advice for new librarians?

# TRANSCRIPTION!

- Selected the Aliceapp.ai tool for transcription; it adheres to European privacy rules, transcripts are produced using AI, but content is not ingested by AI. But there are MANY other options—to me this was easiest
- Transcription is EXPENSIVE and Alice use saved me about 4-5 hours per transcript, but I still spent 6-10 more hours each
- Alice charged \$100 for 20 hours (future idea for others— consider applying for grant funding?)



# REFLEXIVE SPEECH AND AUDIO

## Reflexive speech (ums, like, etc.)

- Not necessary to transcribe each instance. Should include as appropriate to convey speech style, stalling, or significant pauses. We aim to include about 75%, but the narrator may have a different preference.

## Laughter

- [Laughs.] Period inside the bracket if outside sentence.
- [laughs] No period inside the brackets if within sentence.
- [They laugh.] NOT [Laughter.]
- No "chuckles," etc. Do not editorialize.

## Agreeing and disagreeing

- Mm-hmm [affirmative] or uh-huh [affirmative].
- Mm-mm [negative] or Unh-uh [negative].
  - Period after bracket if stands alone
  - No period inside the brackets if within sentence.
- Okay, not OK.
  - Okayed for past tense

The Smithsonian Archives of American Art's Oral History Program Style Guide, from which this screenshot comes, is 36 pages long!

Regarding uploads of audio, check out the podcast "Conversations with Society + Technology," the episode titled "**What Does Consent Mean in the Age of Large Language Models (LLMs)?**" with Monika Sengul-Jones (at the University of Washington)

## AS YOU READ: WHAT TO LOOK FOR

- Most of the narrators talk about how they came to librarianship— those stories are interesting!
- Many of the librarians interviewed have held multiple jobs, or iterations of their original job, during their time at Berkeley, and some made big leaps in their careers.
- Tech and (unavoidable) tech change runs through everything...
  - Quote: *“We couldn't even agree how many catalogs we had! Did we have two catalogs each with two interfaces? Did we have three catalogs because the Melvyl's [two platforms] were more alike than GLADIS and Pathfinder were? Or do we have four catalogs? And I think that's a bad sign. Your staff can't figure out how many catalogs you have. But those were the days, man.”*
- Humor!!! There was a lot of laughter!
- At the same time, budget cuts were a constant companion, as were changes in publishing and collections.
- Sharp delineation between pre- and post-COVID librarianship...
- Core value is service; this is expressed when narrators talk about how they want to be remembered, and their advice for future generations of librarians.
- Check out the [OVERVIEW DOCUMENT](#) for details on replicating this project

# WHY I ENDED UP DOING AN OVERVIEW DOCUMENT (MAY '25 POSTER SLIDE)

## **ORAL HISTORY METHODOLOGY: MORE DETAILED PROCESS—**

- Interpretive Framing
- Narrator Selection
- Invite Letter
- Planning and Communication with Narrator
- Research Preparation
- Recording Format
- Interview Setting
- Interview Etiquette
- Legal Release
- Transcription & Editing
- Preservation
- Interpretive Analysis
- Sharing the Results

- Training REALLY helps! It is a very different set of approaches and methods—rigorous ones—than I was used to
- There is a lot of background work to do! You will want to do literature reviews and a deep dive into your topic/historical period/whatever, and also on your narrators as needed
- You will want to develop your correspondence for each stage and for each narrator, and a log keeping track of contact dates and meeting dates
- You will want to give a lot of thought about whom to invite to be a narrator, and have backups as needed
- You need to figure out your tech for the recording, and PRACTICE
- You also should have a sense of where you will be depositing the materials, which in turn will inform the agreement with the narrator
- You probably should consider a practice interview at first to be comfortable with the juggling of equipment
- You may also want to explore transcription tools before rather than after the interview

# THE OVERVIEW DOCUMENT

The Overview Document is organized so that someone who wants to replicate this project or aspects of it can have complete information about both the process, and the decision-making in the face of challenges and complexities.

It's 62 pages long! The acronym list alone is 6.5 pages long! I do feel this is a little ridiculous, but as always in librarianship, you never know who may need what information.

## ***READING LIST***

### **GENERAL RESOURCES ABOUT ORAL HISTORY**

### **ORAL HISTORY EXAMPLES**

### **UC BERKELEY LIBRARY HISTORY**

### **UC BERKELEY LIBRARY MISCELLANEOUS**

### **HISTORY OF LIBRARIANSHIP**

### **LIAISON VS FUNCTIONAL MODELS**

### **MISCELLANEOUS**

- J. Outreach avenues
- K. UC Berkeley Library Organization Charts (March 2023 and December 2025)
- L. Interviewer Brief Biography:

## Jump To

### Article

- Project genesis and context
- Training in oral history methodology
- Selecting narrators
- Timeline and communications
- Developing agreements and approvals
- Interviewing and transcribing
- Transcription and editing conventions
- Depositing and outreach
- Acknowledgements
- Appendices
- A. What is Oral History?
- B. Timelines (for Project, and Reference Timelines for Narrators)
- C. Communications
- D. Agreements
- E. Question List
- F. Acronym and Explanatory Notes List
- G. Reading List
- H. Presentations
- I. Tracking log

# LIBRARY FACTS

THE LIBRARY  
University of California at Berkeley



## THE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Library facilities on the Berkeley campus are collectively known as the *University Libraries*. The *Library* system consists of the Main Library, Moffitt Undergraduate Library, The Bancroft Library, and twenty-one branch libraries. The *Affiliated Libraries* are maintained by research institutes, professional schools, and some academic departments. Many other *academic departments* have also established libraries. This leaflet describes The Library.

## THE LIBRARY

The Library's collections and services primarily support the instructional and research programs on the Berkeley campus. As the oldest and largest library in the University of California system, the UC Berkeley Library is a central research facility in California, and is highly regarded by scholars nationwide. Although some of its resources have restricted access, most are available to everyone. Consult other Library Orientation Leaflets in this series for more detailed descriptions of particular collections and services.

## COLLECTIONS

The Library has developed distinguished collections in most of the disciplines taught at UC Berkeley. Materials in virtually all recorded languages are acquired, and our collections in Oriental and Slavic languages are the most comprehensive on the West Coast. Traditionally the serial publications have constituted a major strength; Berkeley's serial holdings are among the largest of any academic library in the country.

The Library's collections have long since exceeded the shelving capacity of the main building. The following table lists the collections and their approximate size as of June 30, 1989.

### SIZE (June 30, 1989)

#### THE LIBRARY

|                                                     | VOLUMES<br>(bound) | SERIAL<br>TITLES<br>(currently<br>received) |
|-----------------------------------------------------|--------------------|---------------------------------------------|
| MAIN LIBRARY                                        | 3,303,207          | 45,526                                      |
| MOFFITT UNDERGRADUATE                               | 177,795            | 719                                         |
| BANCROFT                                            | 372,910            | 2,174                                       |
| BRANCH LIBRARIES                                    |                    |                                             |
| ANTHROPOLOGY, 230 Kroeber Hall                      | 63,574             | 1,024                                       |
| ASTRONOMY/MATHEMATICS/STATISTICS,<br>100 Evans Hall | 72,440             | 1,477                                       |
| BIOCHEMISTRY, 430 Biochemistry Bldg.                | 9,647              | 142                                         |
| BIOSCIENCES, 40 Giannini Hall                       |                    |                                             |
| Biology                                             | 220,257            | 3,663                                       |
| Natural Resources                                   | 120,301            | 3,267                                       |
| BUSINESS/SOCIAL SCIENCE,<br>30 Stephens             | 115,651            | 2,928                                       |
| CENTER FOR CHINESE STUDIES,<br>2223 Fulton Street   | 43,065             | 425                                         |
| CHEMISTRY, 100 Hildebrand Hall                      | 53,915             | 919                                         |
| EARTH SCIENCES, 230 Earth Sciences                  | 96,631             | 2,412                                       |
| EAST ASIATIC, 208 Durant Hall                       | 563,739            | 5,734                                       |
| EDUCATION/PSYCHOLOGY,<br>2600 Tolman Hall           | 116,352            | 1,690                                       |
| ENGINEERING, 110 Bechtel Engineering                | 143,052            | 2,334                                       |
| ENTOMOLOGY, 211 Wellman Hall                        | 16,467             | 362                                         |
| ENVIRONMENTAL DESIGN, 210 Wurster                   | 163,104            | 1,491                                       |
| FOREST PRODUCTS, 478 Field Station                  | 10,079             | 333                                         |

HISTORICAL  
MATERIALS:  
COMING  
SOON

## FURTHER ORAL HISTORY READING

- Presentation: “*Oral History Methodology for the Qualitative Researcher*”, UC Love Data Week, Feb 12, 2025, Ann Glusker
- Journal: *The Oral History Review*
- *Capturing Our Stories: An Oral History of Librarianship in Transition*, by A. Arro Smith (2016)
- *Doing Oral History*, by Donald Ritchie (2003)
- *Oral History for the Qualitative Researcher: Choreographing the Story*, by Valerie Janesick (2010)
- *Oral History at a Distance*, by Steven Sielaff (2024)
- *History of Oral History: Foundations and Methodology*, by Thomas Charlton (2007)
- *Oral History Theory*, by Lynn Abrams (2010)
- Portelli, Alessandro. “What Makes Oral History Different?” In *Oral History, Oral Culture, and Italian Americans*, edited by Luisa del Guidice, pp. 21-30. Springer.

“In this important article from 1979, Portelli argues that orality, narrative form, subjectivity, memory, and the relationship between the interviewer and the interviewee – all distinctive characteristics of oral history – should be considered oral history’s strengths, not weaknesses.”



# ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

(In no particular order except the last 2 are most important)

- Shanna Farrell, oral historian at UC Berkeley's Oral History Center
- The UC Berkeley Library's Oral History Center, part of the Bancroft Library
- Susan Edwards, for asking "What is your next research project?"
- Celia Emmelhainz for the invaluable education on qualitative research
- Beth Dupuis, Susan Edwards, Hilary Schiraldi, and Cody Hennesy, my grand-manager and managers as I worked on this effort
- Chan Li for not only presenting my research poster on the project in May 2025 but agreeing to be co-administrator of the eScholarship site
- Michael Lange and Tim Vollmer, of the UC Berkeley Library's Scholarly Communications Office
- The Oral History Association, for their wonderful conference and list-serv
- My husband Peter (this project took 2 years from starting training to launch, and was often 100% absorbing)
- THE NARRATORS

# QUESTIONS?



UCB Library News:  
<https://www.lib.berkeley.edu/about/news/glusker>

Oral History Association  
Conference Presentation,  
coming in October 2026:  
“Adventures you can't even  
begin to imagine”: The  
Librarians Navigating  
Change Oral History Project

Feel free to contact me!  
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