



Oral Histories

CHURCH HISTORY GUIDES

COLLECTING,
PRESERVING,
AND SHARING
CHURCH HISTORY



Oral Histories

CHURCH HISTORY GUIDES

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Church History Guides: Oral Histories Overview

1. Prepare

- Focus ideas for your oral history project.
- Research the background of your project idea and choose someone to interview based on available resources.
- Learn how to use a digital recorder.
- Extend an invitation for the interview. Choose an appropriate location and time.
- Prepare an outline for your interview based on your research and a preinterview meeting.

2. Record

- Provide instructions to the interviewee before the interview begins.
- Have the interviewee sign a Church History Department Donation Agreement.
- Ensure that the recorder is running and placed properly; minimize distractions.
- Record an opening statement, including:
 - Names of people who are present.
 - The date.
 - Your location.
 - The purpose of the interview.
- Keep the interview on track, and ask follow-up questions.
- Let the interviewee do most of the talking.
- Collect other relevant records, if possible.

3. Process

- Fill out the fields in WebCat and attach the required documents.
- Submit your work to the Church History Department.

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Oral history interviews can be an excellent way of collecting Church history.

Introduction



Allowing people to use their own words can capture aspects of their faith, testimonies, and experiences that may not be recorded in writing.

In November 1831, the Lord commanded John Whitmer to make “a history of all the important things which he shall observe and know concerning my church.” The Lord further stated that this history would “be for the good of the church, and for the rising generations” (D&C 69:3, 8). Church leaders have taught that remembering can increase gratitude for God’s kindness, strengthen a person’s resolve to live the gospel, and provide a pattern for living the gospel and overcoming adversity (see Henry B. Eyring, “O Remember, Remember,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, Nov. 2007, 66–69; Marlin K. Jensen, “Remember and Perish Not,” *Ensign* or *Liahona*, May 2007, 36–38).

An effective way to collect Church history is to conduct oral history interviews. Oral histories are a valuable tool for capturing and preserving information about historical events, major developments in Church units, lives of individual members, testimonies, and memories that may otherwise be lost. Oral histories also allow for in-depth analysis of a topic or event. Allowing people to use their own words can capture aspects of their faith, testimonies, and experiences that may not be recorded in writing.

As with all Church history work, a focused approach with clear objectives is more likely to produce success. Oral histories should be conducted in harmony with the area Church history plan. They can be recorded in audio or video formats. Church history advisers may conduct oral history interviews or oversee others who conduct them. Following the three-step process described in this guide will improve the quality of each oral history.



Including a photo of the interviewee can enrich the oral history.



Preparing for an Interview



Learn about the person you are interviewing, and obtain a basic understanding of the events that shaped his or her life.

Focused Projects

Everyone has a story to share. There are many possibilities for using oral histories to document Church history. To avoid becoming overwhelmed and losing focus, you may want to think in terms of oral history projects that align with the area Church history plan.

The following are examples of possible oral history projects:

- Individuals who have been pioneers in a given locality
- Released Area Seventies and released mission presidents, along with their wives
- Current and former bishops, Relief Society presidents, and other leaders in a given ward
- Recently returned missionaries, new converts to the Church, or youth

Purpose and Background

When preparing, be sure to define the purpose for the interview. Ask yourself, “Why am I interviewing this person? What do I hope to learn? What events or topics do I want to document?” Let your purpose determine appropriate questions for the interview outline.

Once you decide who to interview, check the Church history catalog to determine if he or she has already been interviewed. The catalog can be accessed at churchhistorylibrary.lds.org.

Learn about the person you are interviewing and obtain a basic understanding of the events that shaped his or her life. A preinterview meeting may be a good way to obtain background information and determine if the candidate will interview well. This guide includes a preinterview questionnaire on page 25. This can be used as part of the preinterview meeting. Good preparation demonstrates you are interested in the person, and it will help to develop trust.



Interview Outline

An outline of questions will help keep the interview focused on its original purpose. However, following an outline too strictly may disrupt the natural flow of ideas and thoughts and cause important information to be missed.

Begin the outline with general questions about the interviewee's life: early years, education, marriage, children, career, and so on. Discussing familiar topics will put the interviewee at ease, build trust, provide context, and create a friendly atmosphere. Use open-ended questions that will encourage the person to talk freely and reflect on lessons learned. Use the information you gathered in the preinterview meeting to help you focus your questions as well (see "Sample Interview Outlines" on pages 27–29) and online at history.lds.org/adviser. Click on the Oral Histories page.

An outline of questions will help keep the interview focused on its original purpose.



Recorder

Typically, a digital recorder will be provided by the Church History Department (see "Recording Guidelines" on page 24). Become familiar with the recorder prior to conducting an interview. Ensure that:

- The quality level on the recorder is set properly. Consult your area Church history adviser to verify, if needed.
- The recorder has sufficient power to last the entire interview; bring backup batteries.
- There is sufficient storage capacity available on the recorder.
- You have identified the optimal distance from the interviewee to place your recording equipment.



Invitation

When extending an invitation, explain why, when, and where you would like to meet. Inform the interviewee how long the interview may last. Invite the person to bring relevant photographs, documents, or small artifacts that could be donated that may trigger memories that will enrich the interview (see "Sample Interview Invitation Letter" on page 26).

Timing

It is best to record an interview when memories are fresh, because then interviewees will generally share more detail. Be sensitive to a person's schedule and to the time of day. When possible, be sure the person you are interviewing is feeling well and is alert.

Location

The location of the interview is extremely important. When deciding on a setting, select a location that will be comfortable for the interviewee and that is free of excessive noise and interruptions. A meetinghouse may be a good location. Wherever you meet, avoid phones, noisy clocks, traffic noise, heavy equipment, and noisy children. Arrive at the interview location with adequate time to set up. Once you arrive, test the recording equipment and minimize background noises.

Recording an Interview



Preinterview Instructions

Set the interviewee at ease by explaining some of the things you will do during the interview. Explain that you will be taking notes and making a word list of proper nouns. Test the recorder to ensure that it is clearly capturing everyone's voice from where each person sits, and explain that periodically you may check to see if it is functioning properly. Describe what you will do if the interview is interrupted, and inform the interviewee that he or she may take a break whenever needed. Before you turn the recorder on, you may want to begin the meeting with a prayer.

Donation Agreement

Ask the interviewee to sign a Church History Department Donation Agreement. For a copy of the agreement and instructions for filling it out, see history.lds.org/adviser. Without a signed agreement, the interview is of limited value to the Church. This agreement gives the Church legal rights to preserve and use the recording and is an essential part of the oral history. Be sure to fill it out as completely as possible. This information not only helps the Church preserve and use the recording, but it will also help you process the recording.

When using the donation agreement for an oral history, write "Oral history" in the section titled "Detailed description of everything you are donating through this agreement." The "Past ownership of Donation Materials" section can be left blank. Include the birth date of the interviewee near his or her name.

Opening Statement

As recording begins, the interviewer gives an opening statement that includes who is at the interview, the date and location, and the purpose of the interview. For example: "My name is Tuli Nafo, and I am the Samoa Church history

adviser. Today is May 27, 2016. I am interviewing Iosefa Tangi in his home in Apia, Samoa. Iosefa is the Church welfare manager in Samoa, and today we will be discussing his experiences with the tsunami that hit Samoa in 2009."

Interviewer's Role

Minimize the amount of time you speak and do not impose your opinions on the interview. Guide the conversation by following the interview outline, but don't be too stringent. Be patient, and let the interviewee share as much information as possible. Allow enough time for the interviewee to think about his or her responses.

Interview Assistant

Sometimes it can be more efficient to have an assistant help you record the interview. This person can focus on the recorder, making sure it functions properly during the interview. He or she can also take notes and write down the time code when the interview shifts from one topic to another. This can be helpful later when you process the interview. Having an assistant allows you to focus on the content of the interview instead of the technical aspects.



An assistant can help you focus on the interview content.



Photograph of the Interviewee

A photograph of the interviewee is optional but can enhance the submitted oral history. Use the best digital camera available to you to take a photograph of the interviewee.

Asking Questions

Referring to the interview outline, ask open-ended questions that can be responded to at length. Avoid questions that can be answered with short phrases or with *yes* or *no* responses. Use follow-up questions to fill in areas that need clarification or more detail. Avoid asking questions that deal with topics that may distract from the interview's purpose or detract from the Spirit.

The first 15 to 20 minutes of an interview will set the tone. Begin each interview with questions that will put the interviewee at ease; often, personal background questions will do this.

Accuracy

Sometimes interviewees may misspeak or say something that is inaccurate or contradictory. Do not correct or contradict the interviewee in an argumentative way. Rather, ask for clarification. Restating the comment and asking if that is what was meant can be a good way to clarify without giving offense.

Note Taking

Take notes during the interview. You may decide to write notes on the interview outline you have prepared or on a separate sheet of paper. Record major topics and, if possible, write the time code from the recorder when the interview shifts from one major topic to another. Write important names and locations. If possible, include the birth year and death year for people who are mentioned in a significant way in the interview. When the interview is finished, review your notes with the interviewee for accuracy. These notes will help you process the oral history later.

Language

Conduct the interview in the language that is most comfortable for the interviewee. If you do not speak that language, there are three options, each involving a competent translator:

- **Simulcast**—Every word is translated back and forth.
- **Summary**—The translator provides a brief summary of the interviewee's response to each question.
- **Reliance**—You rely on the translator to understand the purpose of the interview, and, without translating the responses from the interviewee, the translator simply verifies to you that the responses are adequate. The translator also asks follow-up questions when necessary.

With each method there is a trade-off between the amount of control you have as the interviewer and the length of time the interview takes. If possible, orient the translator before the interview so he or she can better assist in achieving your purpose. Interviews recorded in non-English languages do not need to be translated into English.

Length

In general, an interview should last one to two hours. If you have reached two hours and there is still more that should be recorded, consider scheduling another appointment to continue. Multiple sessions are covered under the original donation agreement.

Collecting Other Records

Sometimes a photograph, manuscript, or object is referred to in a significant way during the interview. When this happens, ask if you may scan or photograph the item so you can submit it as part of the interview.

If you are able, bring a small scanner to the interview so that you can scan a small number of records before leaving. For larger record collections, ask the interviewee if he or she would be willing to donate the records to the Church or allow digital copying at another location. When scanning items, be sure to follow the Digital Record and Digitization Standards found on history.lds.org/adviser.



Sometimes interviewees bring records that could be donated.

Left: When you take notes, include major names, dates, and places. Try to write the time code from the recorder when the interview shifts major topics.

Interview on 17 Apr 2017

Abel Petit

Sample Interview Outline for a Modern Pioneer

00:00:04 PERSONAL BACKGROUND

1. Tell me about where you were born and raised; your parents, siblings, spouse, and children; and your education and career.

Noumea, New Caledonia, 23 Jun 1937
U. of Queensland, Electrical Engineering

00:10:35 CONVERSION TO THE CHURCH

1. What was your religious background before you joined the Church?

Agnostic

2. How did you hear about the Church, and what were your first impressions?

3. Were there any doctrines that were difficult to understand or accept?

4. Who were the missionaries that taught you? Were there any language barriers?

Elder Lane Brady
Elder Joseph Jensen
Fall, 1959

5. What most influenced your conversion?

6. When and where were you baptized? Who baptized and confirmed you?

Brisbane, AU 15 Dec 1959 E' Brady

7. What was the reaction of your family and friends?

8. Has there ever been a time when you stopped going to church? If so, what influenced you to return? If not, what has helped you remain faithful and active?

00:31:21

CALLINGS

1. Describe the callings you have served in (bishop, stake president, Relief Society president, and so on).

Stk. Mission, Bishop

EQ President, Stk. Missionary

2. Which callings had the greatest impact on you? [For each answer, ask the following questions.]

a. When were you called, and what was your reaction?

S.M. - 1960 Bish - 1970

b. What events in your past best prepared you for this calling?

c. What did you hope to accomplish? Describe your efforts to accomplish your goals.

d. Describe how the organization functioned.

e. Tell me about others you served with and about their contributions.

Frank Lavault

Jean-Paul Guilbert

01:03:20

BEGINNINGS OF THE CHURCH IN YOUR LOCAL AREA

Describe the following, and relate these topics to your personal experiences.

1. Early meeting places (from personal apartments or rented space to your own meetinghouse)

Prong - 1960 Plum - 1962

Monte-Dore 1970 Monte Dore Sud 1978

2. Missionaries or other Latter-day Saints who helped establish the Church in (location)

3. The first local Church members called to be leaders

4. Opposition to the Church and other challenges

5. Establishment of the first branch, ward, stake, and so

6. Establishment of a local mission and missionary work

7. Changes you have noticed as the Church has grown

Processing an Interview



The information you submit with the oral history will make the oral history a more valuable and useful part of the Church History Department's collections.

What Is Processing?

Processing an oral history means describing it so that future researchers can find it and know what it contains. It also involves organizing files and submitting them, along with your description of the interview, to the Church History Department. Processing is generally done by the interviewer and is best accomplished soon after the interview is over, when memories are fresh. Taking good notes during the interview, including writing down the time codes, will improve your ability to process the interview efficiently.

Interview Folder

Create a folder on a secure computer where you can store all the electronic files related to the interview (donation agreement, interview outline, notes, and so on). Name the folder with the interviewee's name.

Soon after the interview is completed, copy the recording to the interview folder. If possible, maintain the recording on the digital recorder as a backup until the Church History Department confirms receipt of the submission, and then delete it from the recorder.

Signed Donation Agreement

Without a signed agreement, the interview is of limited value to the Church. Scan the signed agreement so you can upload it to WebCat. Keep the original donation agreement and other documents related to the interview in a safe place. Upon your release from your calling, these should be sent to your area Church history adviser.

Left: It is best for the interviewer to process the interview soon after the interview is over, when memories are fresh.



WebCat

WebCat (web cataloging) is an online tool developed by the Church History Department to gather and submit important information needed to describe a record in the Church History Library catalog (see churchhistorycatalog.lds.org). This catalog helps researchers identify records that may be of interest to them. To see complete examples of well-cataloged records, navigate to the Church History Library catalog and search for these records: OH 9028, OH 9068, OH 9295, OH 8985, and OH 9360.

WebCat is also used to transfer digital files to the Church History Department. Files that are too large to upload should be shipped to the Church History Department, and the shipping information should be entered into WebCat.

To log in to WebCat go to the Church history adviser website at history.lds.org/adviser, and log in with your LDS username and password. Then click **WebCat** in the Resources menu. If you are unable to access WebCat, contact your area Church history adviser or the Church History Department for instructions.

WebCat will assign a unique donation number to every entry. This number can be used when referencing the interview.

In WebCat, you will:

1. Enter general donation information.
2. Enter descriptions for the item(s) you are collecting.
3. Review what you have entered, and, when you are satisfied, submit the information to the Church History Department.

Log in to WebCat to describe the oral history.

1. Enter General Donation Information

In the General Donation section, you will enter information about the donation, such as the date, the name of the interviewee, and his or her contact information. You will also upload a digital copy of the signed donation agreement.

2. Enter Item Descriptions

In the Item Description section, you will write a brief description of the interview that includes the significant themes and topics that were discussed. A good description will help a researcher find the interview in the Church History Library catalog.

Generally, an interview description will list about three to five significant topics. In most cases, you can use the list of main topics from your interview outline. For a topic to be considered significant, it should be discussed extensively during the interview and include important information about the subject. Leave out topics that were merely mentioned or not covered in detail. In addition, make sure to include significant topics discussed that were not originally part of the interview outline. When determining what topics to include and what to leave out, consider the following criteria:

- Is this topic relevant to Church history and likely to be of broad interest to future researchers?
- Did the interviewee provide valuable information about the topic?

Occasionally, you may want to highlight a particular part of the interview that is not adequately described in the list of significant topics (for instance, a historically significant or faith-building story). Do this by adding an additional sentence under the topic where it came up.

INTERVIEW DESCRIPTION EXAMPLES

Not Good	<p>Interview with Juan about his life.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [00:02:00] Baptism and early callings in the branch. • [00:34:37] Serving in Independence Mission in the 1980s. Interesting story with Elder Smith. • [01:15:10] Service as branch president
Better	<p>Interview with Juan Garcia about his early years and service to the Church.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • [00:02:00] Baptism and early callings in the Port of Spain branch, Port of Spain Trinidad District (1981-1984) • [00:24:37] Serving in the Missouri Independence Mission (1985-1987). Story about teaching a young man struggling with alcoholism, with George Smith as his companion. • [00:47:10] Service as branch president of the San Fernando branch, San Fernando Trinidad District (1990-1994).

Some interviews you record may contain information that is inappropriate to release to the public because it is sacred, private, or confidential. When you process an oral history in WebCat, you will be asked to review its contents carefully and report what you find. Doing this will help the Church History Department take appropriate precautions when providing access to researchers in the future. Specifically, you will be asked if the oral history contains any of the following:

- Specific wording or details regarding a temple's interior, temple rites or ceremonies, the temple garment, or other temple clothing
- Reports of confessions, Church disciplinary councils, or other personally sensitive matters shared in confidence with a Church leader
- Information shared or discussed in nonpublic Church settings (such as leadership meetings)
- Specific personal health information
- Financial information about individuals, including information about Church donations and welfare assistance
- Information whose release would violate applicable data privacy laws (for example, personal identification numbers, addresses, phone numbers, email addresses, birth dates, criminal history, sexual history, or ethnic background)

- Information that may cause significant harm to the well-being or standing of people named in or related to the record, including stories about persons who are still living who may not know they are discussed in the record
- Restrictions requested by the donor and documented in the donation agreement

The Church History Department considers additional criteria when governing access to oral histories and all of its records. These include intellectual property rights, physical characteristics, location of the records, and other legal and regulatory issues (such as defamation).

ATTACHMENTS AND OTHER RECORDS

Attach the oral history recording to the item record in WebCat. Depending on the file size and your internet connection, this may take several minutes.

If while conducting the interview you acquire a record that is closely related to the topic of the interview, enter information about that record as a second item in WebCat. For example, if you were interviewing a person about his or her experience leading a temple dedication committee and he or she offered you a photograph of the committee, you would describe the interview as item 1 and the photograph as item 2.

3. Review and Submit

Review the information you have entered into WebCat. When you are satisfied that it is complete and accurate, submit the donation to the Church History Department.

Copy for the Interviewee

You may present a copy of the recording to the interviewee as a way of expressing appreciation for his or her participation.

Transcripts

Creating a transcript is not required because it is very time consuming. For every hour of a recorded interview, it may take up to four hours to create a basic transcript or about 10 hours to create a thoroughly edited and reviewed transcript. If you desire to transcribe a particular interview, contact the Church History Department for instructions.

Even though an oral history you record may not become immediately accessible to the public, it may still have historical value and is worth preserving for the future.



Left: When the interview is finished, review your notes with the interviewee for accuracy.

Processing Style Guide

INTRODUCTION

When completing any form that will be submitted to the Church History Department, please follow the style guidelines below. Doing so will help researchers find what they are looking for when searching the Church History catalog (see churchhistorycatalog.lds.org). Include only high-level and significant information. Be objective and professional. Be specific, concise, and consistent. Do not retell stories.

In the examples that follow, ☹ = wrong, ☺ = right.

USE COMPLETE NAMES

For people who are significantly identified in the record, always include their proper and complete names. Do not include names that are not significant to the record.

PEOPLE

The first time you mention a person's name, write his or her complete name. Thereafter, use only the family name. If there are two or more people with the same family name, continue to use complete names when referring to those people. Include non-romanized names in parentheses.

☹	JR Smith	☺	James Robert Smith
☹	Chang Chin	☺	Chang Hsiu Chin (張秀琴)
☹	Juan Ceballos discusses his experiences at the temple dedication.	☺	Juan Ceballos De Hoyos discusses his experiences at the Mexico City Mexico Temple dedication (1983).
☹	Personal reflection of Jean describing his service in the London Mission and Acel as stake president of the Bordeaux Stake.	☺	Personal reflection of Jean Petit describing his service in the England London Mission (1992-1994). Personal reflection of Acel Petit, Jean Petit's brother, describing his service as stake president of the Bordeaux France Stake (1999-2007).

ORGANIZATIONS

Write full names of organizations. For Church units, use the unit's name as it is listed in the Church Directory of Organizations and Leaders (CDOL). Capitalize the word *Church* when it is used in place of the full name of The Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-day Saints.

☹	BYU	☺	Brigham Young University
☹	Arequipa Mission	☺	Peru Arequipa Mission
☹	Oakland Temple	☺	Oakland California Temple

PLACES

For locations, follow this format: city, country. Within the United States and Canada use city, state/province.

☹	San Francisco	☺	San Francisco, California
☹	Tokyo	☺	Tokyo, Japan
☹	London	☺	London, Ohio
☹	Cardston, Canada	☺	Cardston, Alberta

DO NOT USE TITLES

Generally it is not necessary to include a person's title, especially *brother* or *sister*. However, using the title of General Authorities the first time you write their names is acceptable if it is the title they held during the time frame of the story being recorded.

☹	Brother Lopez	☺	Mario Lopez
☹	President Gordon B. Hinckley in 1979 . . .	☺	Elder Gordon B. Hinckley in 1979 . . .
☹	President Seo	☺	Seo Hee Chul
☹	Brother Busoni served in the Berlin Mission under President Reichardt.	☺	Busoni served in the Germany Berlin Mission under mission president Matthew K. Reichardt.

INCLUDE DATES

Dates can be written as part of a sentence or placed in parentheses following the description of the event. Follow this format when writing specific dates: DD MMM YYYY.

☹	11/2/66	☺	11 Feb. 1966
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USE CONSISTENT TERMINOLOGY

Use consistent terminology and avoid LDS-specific jargon.

☺	The sisters in the district held a Relief Society social.	☺	The women in the Harare Zimbabwe District held a Relief Society social.
☺	Stoker describes meeting Elder Cook at the stake center. . . . Thereafter, the meeting-house was known as the Cook Building.	☺	Stoker describes meeting Elder Quentin L. Cook at the Independence Missouri Stake Center. . . . Thereafter, the stake center was known as the Cook Building.
☺	Cook served as an elder in the Independence Mission and later as a missionary in Ohio.	☺	Cook served as a missionary in the Missouri Independence Mission (1965–1967) and later as a senior missionary in the Ohio Columbus Mission (2010–2011).

DON'T REPEAT THE SAME DESCRIPTIVE WORDS IN A SINGLE SUMMARY

Within a paragraph, instead of using multiple sentences starting with similar descriptive words (“Heiss describes . . .,” “Heiss recalls . . .,” and “Heiss shares . . .”), use the descriptive word once (“Heiss describes . . .”) followed by a list of topics, dividing each topic with a comma or semicolon.

☺	Heiss describes his experiences traveling to Europe (1988). Heiss recalls meeting with Juan Carlos Berta. Heiss shares how he collected historical records, including several large paintings, from members of the Bilbao Spain District.	☺	Heiss describes his experiences traveling to Europe (1988); meeting with Juan Carlos Berta; and collecting historical records, including several large paintings, from members of the Bilbao Spain District.
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BE OBJECTIVE

Do not impose adjectives that editorialize an experience or situation, even if you feel it is true.

☺	Rodolfo Puertas was an important Church leader and member in Chile.	☺	Discussion of Rodolfo Puertas’s experiences as a Church member and leader in Santiago, Chile.
☺	Pino describes the wonderful experiences he had while serving as bishop of the El Portal Ward.	☺	Pino describes his experiences as bishop of the El Portal Ward (1987–1993).

Resources

Recording Guidelines

- Standards for a Recording Device
- Recording Tips
- Video Recording Tips

Preinterview Questionnaire

Sample Interview Invitation Letter

Sample Interview Outlines

- Sample Interview Outline for a Modern Pioneer

Standards for Naming Electronic Files



Recording Guidelines

Standards for a Recording Device

The Church History Department encourages the use of a standard model of recorder because it simplifies training and support. Contact the Church History Department for information on the latest standard model. If you are unable to obtain one, you will receive guidance on acceptable alternatives. This applies to both audio and video recording devices. Recording devices, batteries, and other supplies are purchased using funds supplied by the area and are the property of the area and must be turned in when you are released from this calling.

Recording Tips

- Create an optimal recording environment that is free from outside noise and distractions. This includes turning off cellular devices as their signals can interfere with the recording.
- Generally, the closer the microphone is to the interviewee, the better.
- You may use a small tripod or foam pillow to stabilize the device and reduce the impact of table noise entering the recording.
- Monitor the recording in progress by periodically looking at the display window and making sure the recorder is working properly.

Video Recording Tips

With approval from the Church History Department, you may also choose to video an interview. If possible, follow these techniques to achieve the best possible recording results. If possible:

- Use an external microphone on a video camera and place it close to the interviewee. If you do not have an external microphone for a video recording, record the interview using the camera's internal microphone as well as the audio recorder. Submit both the video and audio files when processing the interview.
- Do not put the interviewee between the camera and a strong source of light. Move the interviewee so that the strongest source of light is behind the camera and is shining on the interviewee's face. Frame the video so that both the interviewer and the interviewee are visible. An assistant can monitor a video camera and reposition it if the interviewee moves out of frame.
- Always use a tripod for video cameras. Avoid zooming, panning, or tilting the camera, as this is distracting. Make sure the interviewee stays in focus.

Preinterview Questionnaire

This questionnaire is to be filled out by the interviewer.

Instructions: In the space below, write the purpose of the oral history for which you are conducting this preinterview. Use the numbered questions that follow to gather important information from the interviewee. Write down key points in the spaces provided.

1. Interviewee's full name, birth date, and place of birth:
2. Name of interviewee's parents and family members; place(s) raised:
3. Spouse's full name; date of marriage, if applicable; number of children, if any:
4. Education and employment history:
5. Date and circumstances of baptism:
6. Missions served (include places and years served):
7. Church callings as an adult, including units where served and approximate dates:
8. Significant Church experiences:
9. Participation in significant Church events:

Sample Interview Invitation Letter

January 22, 2016

Rafael J. Hernández 123 Any Street, Anywhere City, Peru

Dear Brother Hernández:

Recording the experiences of mission presidents who have served in Peru is an important part of documenting the history of the Church in Peru. As the Peru Church history adviser, I am interviewing individuals who have had this significant experience. Interviews will be submitted to the Church History Department in Salt Lake City for preservation. This project has been endorsed by the Area Presidency. I want to include you in this project.

An interview lasts approximately one to two hours. We can meet at your home or at the La Molina meetinghouse. You may want to prepare by making a few notes about your experiences as a mission president. Also, if you have records or photographs related to your experiences, you may want to bring them, as they may help you remember specific information.

I would be happy to discuss this project with you in greater detail. If you are willing to participate, please contact me at 1-123-456-7890 or by email at mkh@com.com.

Sincerely,

Marcus K. Harris

Peru Church History Adviser

Sample Interview Outlines

Sample interview outlines, like the one below, can be found in the Oral Histories section of the Church history adviser website (history.lds.org/adviser). These may assist you in creating your own outlines. These outlines are meant to be adapted to the person you are interviewing, based on the information you gather during your preinterview research. It often works best to subdivide your outlines into topics. The General Questions outline contains questions that are applicable to almost any interview.

Remember that it is not necessary to ask all of the questions in these suggested outlines or in your outline. Other important topics that should also be discussed will likely arise in the course of the interview. Be flexible and be open to the Spirit's guidance as you record Church history.

The Church history adviser website contains the following sample interview outlines:

General Questions

Area Seventy

Bishop or Branch President

Mission President

MTC President

Modern Pioneer

Perpetual Education Fund

Relief Society President or Counselor

Ward or Branch Auxiliary Leader

Women

Sample Interview Outline for a Modern Pioneer

PERSONAL BACKGROUND

1. Tell me about where you were born and raised.
2. Talk about your parents, siblings, spouse, and children.
3. Describe your education and career.

CONVERSION TO THE CHURCH

1. What was your religious background before you joined the Church?
2. How did you hear about the Church, and what were your first impressions?
3. Were there any doctrines that were difficult to understand or accept?
4. Who were the missionaries that taught you? Were there any language barriers?
5. What most influenced your conversion?
6. When and where were you baptized? Who baptized and confirmed you?
7. What was the reaction of your family and friends?
8. Has there ever been a time when you stopped going to church? If so, what influenced you to return? If not, what has helped you remain faithful and active?

CALLINGS

1. Describe the callings you have served in (bishop, stake president, Relief Society president, and so on).
2. Which callings had the greatest impact on you? [For each answer, ask the following questions.]
 - a. When were you called, and what was your reaction?
 - b. What events in your past best prepared you for this calling?
 - c. What did you hope to accomplish? Describe your efforts to accomplish your goals.
 - d. Describe your most significant experiences.
 - e. Tell me about others you served with and about their contributions.

BEGINNINGS OF THE CHURCH IN YOUR LOCAL AREA

Describe the following, and relate these topics to your personal experiences.

1. Missionaries or other Latter-day Saints who helped establish the Church in _____ (location)
2. Opposition to the Church and other challenges
3. Establishment of the first branch, ward, stake, and mission
4. The first local Church members called to be leaders
5. Early meeting places, from earliest locations up to having your own meetinghouse
6. Changes you have noticed as the Church has grown

7. Establishment of Church programs, auxiliaries, and organizations
8. First temple trips, the sacrifices made to travel to the temple, and the difference it made when people were able to go to the temple
9. Dedication of a temple near you
10. Translation of the scriptures and other Church literature into your language
11. Visits of General Authorities and other Church leaders

CONCLUSION

1. What are the blessings that have come into your life as a result of your Church membership?
2. Are there major issues that we have not covered in this interview?
3. How would you feel about ending the interview with your testimony?

Standards for Naming Electronic Files

Prior to attaching files in WebCat, name each one with the name of the interviewee, followed by an underscore, and then a label that communicates what the file contains. See the examples below.

REQUIRED FILES

Santos, Marta_agreement.pdf

Santos, Marta_audio.mp3

OPTIONAL FILES

Santos, Marta_photo 1.jpg

Santos, Marta_photo 2.jpg

Santos, Marta_word list.docx

MULTIPLE AUDIO FILES FROM THE SAME INTERVIEWEE

Santos, Marta_audio 1.mp3

Santos, Marta_audio 2.mp3

Santos, Marta_audio 3.mp3



THE CHURCH OF
JESUS CHRIST
OF LATTER-DAY SAINTS