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Oral History Metadata Synchronizer
www.oralhistoryonline.org
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In 2014, the Louie B. Nunn Center for Oral History at the University of Kentucky Libraries made its Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS) system available to the public. This open source, web-based system "provides users with word-level search capability and a time-correlated transcript or index [of oral history recordings], connecting the textual search term to the corresponding moment in the recorded interview online."[1]

The OHMS system consists of two main components, the OHMS Application and the OHMS Viewer. The OHMS Application is the behind-the-scenes portion of the system. The web-based application is where metadata is created and transcripts are uploaded, time-synced, and indexed. The Application also serves as a workflow management tool, as the primary Interview Manager module provides a quick overview of progress on every step in each oral history interview; each step can be marked as "in progress," "ready for QC," "active QC," or "complete," and links to the various steps appear in different colors depending on production stage. This allows multiple people to work on different stages of a single oral history. Additionally, it allows a supervisor to quickly confirm progress on the work being done.

The OHMS Viewer serves as the user interface, allowing one to toggle between an indexed view or a time-synced view of the interview and transcript. Users can easily skip between topics or to specific time periods in the Viewer. The Viewer can be installed on a third-party website or integrated into an existing content management system, and the OHMS website (http://www.oralhistoryonline.org) includes general installation documentation for both environments. The website also includes links to examples of uses of OHMS across different environments (from third-party websites to Omeka to CONTENTdm and more).

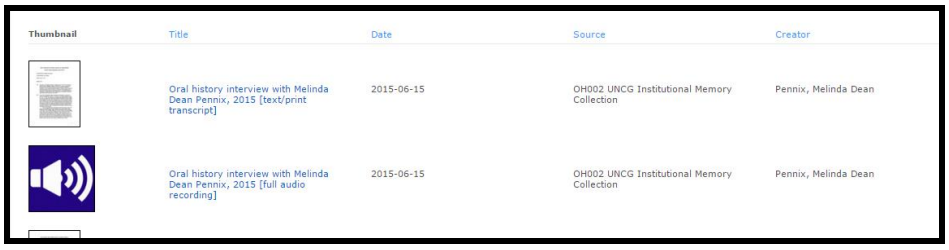
At the University of North Carolina at Greensboro, we have used OHMS since August 2014 when we began a pilot project to enhance access to 25 interviews in our African American Institutional Memory Project. OHMS was specifically chosen for this project because of its syncing and indexing features. Many of the interviews are more than an hour long, and the PDF transcripts were difficult for researchers (primarily undergraduate students) to search and use. If a researcher did find a portion of the transcription that they wanted to hear, finding the exact moment in

[1] Doug Boyd, "OHMS: Enhancing Access to Oral History for Free" *Oral History Review* 40, no. 1 (2013), par. 1, accessed December 10, 2015, http://ohr.oxfordjournals.org/content/early/2013/03/20/ohr.oht031.

the audio recording was problematic because no timestamps were included in the transcripts. OHMS proved to be a freely available solution to this problem.

Since completing the pilot, we have continued to use OHMS, resulting in 48 oral history interviews synced, indexed, and available online as of December 2015. We found the OHMS Application quite easy to use and intuitive. With minimal documentation and training, student assistants, who do the bulk of the work in OHMS, are able to index and sync interviews at a rate of just over one hour of work time per one hour of oral history recording. Our university archivist was able to use the Interview Manager to easily track the students' progress and conduct quality control checks on the work being done.

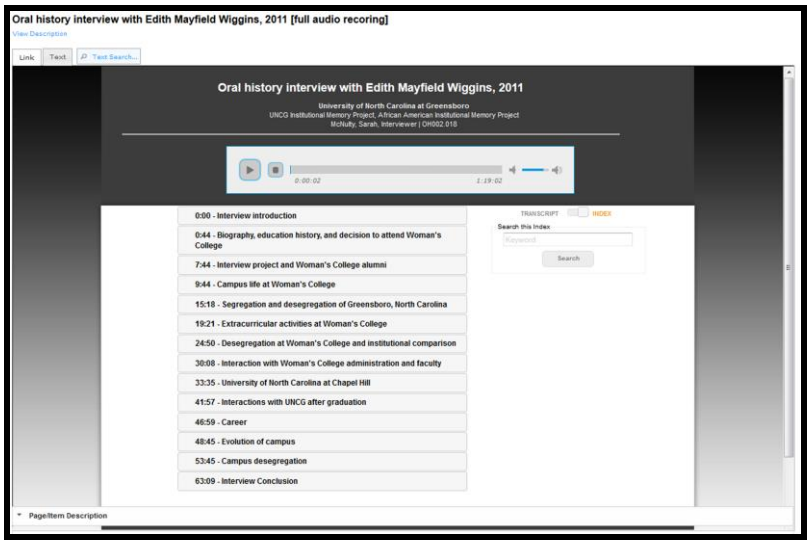
Most of the challenges encountered in incorporating OHMS into our oral history workflow were due to our content management system, CONTENTdm. Prior to using OHMS, we provided access to oral history interviews in CONTENTdm as PDF transcripts. Audio was available only upon request. Access was provided in our reading room or through a CD. The OHMS Viewer currently does not have an option for printing a copy of the transcript, and we wanted to continue using CONTENTdm in order provide that functionality for our researchers. We initially explored the possibility of creating access to a single interview with both the PDF and embedded OHMS files as parts of a compound object. However, this option was ultimately rejected when we realized CONTENTdm would not allow a compound object if one of the objects is a PDF. As an alternative, two instances now exist for each interview: one for the audio file, accessible through the embedded OHMS player, and another for the PDF transcript. The OHMS audio file and PDF transcript instances are differentiated both by their title and by the icon displayed in the CONTENTdm search results. Additionally, the two instances are linked using the "Related" field in each instance's full item description.



Search results showing two instances of each interview, the transcript and the audio file.

Embedding the OHMS Viewer into CONTENTdm was another challenge. While we could provide links to the OHMS Viewer in CONTENTdm, we wanted to embed them directly to produce a more seamless experience for researchers. After exploring a number of options for embedded viewer access, our digital projects librarian edited a portion of code in the CONTENTdm DMZ area to embed the OHMS Viewer directly in the CONTENTdm window using an IFRAME. We are uncertain as to how future CONTENTdm upgrades might affect this work-around. Institutions unable or unwilling to do this type of customization could simply forgo the Viewer installation

in CONTENTdm and link to an OHMS Viewer installation on a website outside of CONTENTdm.



OHMS Viewer displaying oral history for Edith Mayfield Wiggins.

While the indexing and syncing of interviews in OHMS requires a time commitment, the product is one that is appreciated both by users and archives staff. Since uploading our first OHMS-enhanced interviews, we have received feedback from users (primarily undergraduate students) indicating that they much prefer this form of access instead of the PDF transcript. In our own work, we have found that OHMS's indexing and syncing functions make it easier to create audio clips from oral history interviews that can be shared on social media, incorporated into web exhibits, or used during classroom instruction. We anticipate that demand for these clips will grow as we move into our university's 125th anniversary celebration in fall 2016. Other institutions with significant, yet underused, oral history collections will find OHMS to be a useful tool.

To view and listen to the oral history interviews that we have synced and indexed using OHMS, visit http://bit.ly/1Q2XbaM. As of December 2015, 48 interviews are available with enhanced access through OHMS. A current project focusing on interviews conducted during the university's centennial celebration in the early 1990s will add significantly to this total in the coming year.