

New York City Trans Oral History Project

ORAL HISTORY
HANDBOOK

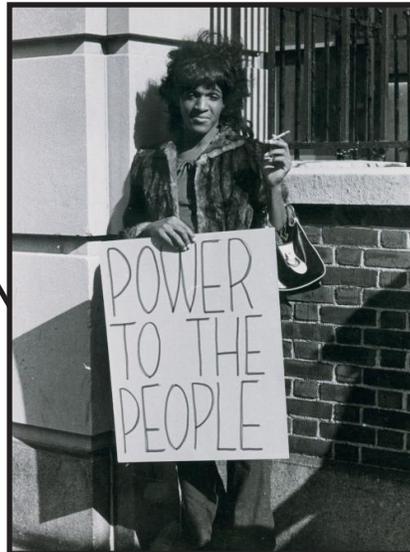


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Cover photos, left to right: Marsha P. Johnson hands out flyers at N.Y.U., photo by Diana Davies; Sylvia Ray Rivera, Marsha P. Johnson, and Barbara Deming at City Hall, photo by Diana Davies; Marsha P. Johnson pickets Bellevue Hospital, photo by Diana Davies; Sylvia Rivera and friend, photo by Tobin Kay. All photos from NYPL Digital Collections.

ABOUT THIS HANDBOOK

This handbook is designed to be a basic resource for interviewers and other people interested in getting involved with the NYC Trans Oral History Project. It includes basic information and tips for doing oral history interviews in general, some information specific to trans oral history, and some background about the NYC-TOHP. No prior oral history experience is required to get involved as an interviewer! So this handbook includes a lot of material geared towards folks who might not be familiar with trans history or oral history, or who are just interested in learning more about how we approach our work. But if you feel like jumping right in, all you really need to get started interviewing begins with the “Setting up Your Interviews” section.

ABOUT THE NYC TRANS ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

The New York City Trans Oral History Project is a community archive of transgender resistance, resilience, and survival in New York City. We work to confront the erasure of trans histories and document the experiences of trans people as intersecting with race and racism, poverty, disability, aging, housing, migration, HIV/AIDS, and sexism. Inspired by public history initiatives like the ACT/UP Oral History Project, we believe oral history is a powerful tool for community organizing and anti-oppression work. We are a volunteer-run collective of activists, artists, scholars, archivists, and other community members. The collective works in partnership with the New York Public Library’s Community Oral History Project. The NYPL hosts our interviews online on their website and provides other support, including recording equipment and space for interviews as needed.

OUR GOALS

Creating an accessible online archive of trans history

Prioritizing the experiences of trans communities that remain marginalized even in the wake of growing mainstream trans visibility.

Empowering and training community members to do oral history work.

Centering histories of trans participation in collective political action, cultural spaces, and artistic communities.

Working with community groups to maximize the uses of oral history as a resource for organizers, advocates, artists, educators, and more.

Who can participate?

The NYC-TOHP doesn't stipulate who is and isn't trans. We include the stories of anyone who identifies with the term "trans," has a connection to New York City, and wants to participate. We especially support trans people taking ownership in the project as interviewers and project organizers. If you don't identify as trans, there are still a lot of ways to get involved! We need help transcribing, coding, and summarizing interviews, as well as event planning and other programming. Keep in mind that even if you're cis, interviews take a fair amount of time and work to conduct – contributing your volunteer labor in this way can be a valuable role for an ally, especially if you have a prior relationship with an interviewee. If you're unsure whether an interviewee would be comfortable with a cis interviewer, ask – don't make the decision for them.

What is oral history?

From the Oral History Association:

Oral history refers both to a method of recording and preserving oral testimony and to the product of that process. It begins with an audio or video recording of a first person account made by an interviewer with an interviewee (also referred to as narrator), both of whom have the conscious intention of creating a permanent record to contribute to an understanding of the past. A verbal document, the oral history, results from this process and is preserved and made available in different forms to other users, researchers, and the public. A critical approach to the oral testimony and interpretations are necessary in the use of oral history.

(<http://www.oralhistory.org/about/principles-and-practices/>)

Doing Trans Oral History

Our Philosophy and Values

We believe that the open-ended, adaptable format oral history is valuable, and that interviews should develop organically between the interviewer and the narrator. We provide guidelines and suggested questions as resources, especially for those new to interviewing, but we don't dictate what questions, issues, or approaches interviews should focus on. At the same time, however, as members of the NYC-TOHP collective, we do have thoughts about what we'd like to see centered in the archive. We encourage—but do not require—participants to consider the following when conducting interviews:

1

We're invested in building an intersectional archive, one that emphasizes how gender is always connected to structures like capitalism, race, heteropatriarchy, ability, and the nation-state. We especially encourage participation by trans people of color and low-income trans people, as well as trans immigrants, trans women, trans people with disabilities, HIV+ trans people, and trans people with histories in the sex industry. Beyond prioritizing the contributions of marginalized trans communities, for all interviews, we think it's important to emphasize the interconnections of social issues when developing questions and topics to focus on.

2

As a project based in New York City – a city that has been strongly affected by major changes in capitalism since the 1970s – we think trans New Yorkers can make important contributions to our historical understandings of neoliberalism. Trans communities have been disproportionately affected by most major developments associated with neoliberalism. In NYC, these include: gentrification, mass incarceration, intensified policing of poor people and people of color, immigration “reform,” the defunding of social services, growing wealth inequality and homelessness, and attacks on organized labor. We encourage participants to ask about these and related issues—especially about how they have played out in NYC, and how they have impacted trans people specifically.

3

While trans history is under-documented in general, trans involvement in progressive political and cultural movements is especially absent from other historical archives. Trans people are most likely to enter the historical record when they come into contact with medical professionals, service providers, or the law; or when exceptional circumstances lead to mainstream media coverage. These sources can tell us a lot about how trans people encounter major social institutions. But they tell us

very little about how trans people have related to each other historically, or to other marginalized communities. Trans involvement in bar scenes, ball cultures, artistic communities, activist movements, and other alternative cultural spaces are rarely captured by the written record. These histories risk being lost entirely if they are not preserved through the accounts of those who participated in them. We're invested in using the NYC-TOHP to counter this erasure by emphasizing trans involvement in political and cultural communities.

4

Finally, we see trans history as having a complicated relation to one of the standard approaches of oral history: the life course interview. These interviews usually seek to document a narrator's life comprehensively, in chronological progression, placing similar emphasis on all stages. They can also emphasize the narrator's inner sense of self and identity. We don't actively discourage this form of interview. As feminists, we believe in the dictum that "the personal is political," and we think new and important insights about trans identity can emerge in the context of oral history. But within the limited time of an interview session, questions about childhood and identity formation can easily crowd out discussion of trans community, cultures, or political involvement later in life. And because trans people have long been studied by medical professionals, accounts of personal development are comparatively over-represented in other archives. Guiding interviews in this direction can risk eclipsing other important issues. And it can sometimes replicate normative trans narratives, even if neither the interviewer or interviewee intends for this to happen. For these reasons, we simply stress that interviews do not have to take the format of a personal biography. They can also be organized around a particular topic or theme (or a few topics/themes). And if participants choose, they can focus entirely on adulthood, or on life after a narrator began identifying as trans. In general, we also suggest that interviewers give some thought to how they want to balance questions about childhood and inner life with questions about the outer world of collective cultural and political engagement, which is more likely to occur in adulthood.

Why does oral history matter?

Oral history can be used to highlight the perspectives of communities that are often erased from the written historical record. It allows participants to tell their own stories and serve as the authorities of their own lived experiences. This is especially crucial for trans history, since trans people have usually appeared in historical accounts as objects of study, but not as subjects in our own right. A lot of published writing on trans history has had to rely on "top down" sources, like medical, legal, and popular culture materials. In these, professionals—usually cisgender—often appear as the final "experts" on trans issues and experience. In addition, these types of written sources often prioritize the histories of trans people who had the most access to mainstream institutions, like medical or legal transition. In contrast, oral history allows a wide range of trans communities to re-assert ourselves within the social narrative, take up space, and create a unique historical outlook based in community knowledge. For trans and other marginalized populations, this can be especially powerful.

General Tips for Oral History Interviews

Oral history can invite both intimacy and vulnerability. At times, difficult topics, complex and confusing discussion, and sensitive subject matter are to be expected. The following are points to remember before, during, and after your interview.

Have a plan. Having a general outline, goal, or central question or focus for the interview will motivate you to keep the storyteller talking and provide the session with a backbone. Have a sense of what you want to get out of the interview, but don't pressure your narrator to get there. We recommend asking your narrator ahead of time if there are specific issues or topics they want to talk about.

Prepare questions ahead of time. Preparing questions in advance lends the interview a basic outline, helps you avoid fumbling, and makes you less likely to miss asking about important issues. Have twice as many questions than you think you'll actually need. It's okay if you don't cover everything! But it's better to be over-prepared.

Share your outline with your narrator in advance. When possible, share a simplified outline of the questions you'll be asking—it doesn't have to be more than a few sentences. This is also a good time to remind the storyteller that if a question makes them uncomfortable it can be revisited or skipped altogether.

Establish nonverbal cues. Tell the narrator that you'll try not to interrupt the tape by responding audibly to their comments between questions. Instead, we recommend using body language so the interviewee knows they're talking to an attentive, engaged human.

Consider taking notes. On the one hand, note-taking can make the discussion feel more formal, more like traditional research, and less relaxed. On the other hand, when interesting things arise, jotting them down as a reminder to revisit later spares you from having to keep a running list of follow up questions in your mind – which can help you stay present with your narrator and give them your full attention throughout the session. Everyone's interview style is different, and everyone's brain works differently. If you do take notes, explain why you do it beforehand and offer to take notes openly, so that they can be seen by your narrator.

Ease in. Starting with easy questions (e.g., “Where are you from?” or “How long have you lived in ____?”) allows you and the storyteller to become comfortable with one another, establish a flow, and makes your storyteller more liable to open up further into the session. If you don't know your interviewee, you are encouraged to tell them about yourself before the interview to make the exchange less one-sided.

Don't be afraid to deviate. It's a good idea to make an outline ahead of time, but it's also important to be willing to abandon the plan if the need arises. Be flexible—let the interview flow and develop organically.

Let silence happen. Don't make your interview into a rapid-fire interrogation. Few people have the monologue of their lives memorized. Silence can be an opportunity for the interviewee to collect themselves and deliberate on what they want to share. Give your storyteller (and yourself!) space. Let silence stretch as long as it needs, but if you can tell the interviewee is struggling to put something into words, it's also okay to gently prompt them. And sometimes the gentlest, most open-ended prompts can be the most helpful! For instance: consider prompting with an interested, sympathetic “hmm...” or just a nod.

Ask for what you need. It's okay—and encouraged!—to ask for details, explanations, context, and backstories. Sometimes you have to press and be specific to get the information you want. But if someone doesn't want to share, respect their privacy and move on.

Be a human first, and an interviewer second. Remember: you are working with real, living people. Do not be afraid to empathize, sympathize, console, or generally be emotionally vulnerable and present. If the interviewee becomes emotional, let them feel what they need to feel. We also suggest having a pack of tissues discreetly on hand to offer should they be necessary at any point during the session.

If you need a break, take a break. The content of interviews might be emotionally heavy. Interviews can also be long! Don't be afraid to take the time you need to collect yourself before continuing.

Before the interview is over, ask the narrator if there is anything that they want to discuss that they haven't shared yet. This can result in new and interesting information, and it allows the narrator a safe way out of the conversation. They may need to tell you about a happy or successful time in their lives if the interview resulted in feelings of regret or sadness. Make sure you have left enough time for this. Additionally, a person may have nothing to add. That is okay. They could be tired.

Thank the narrator for sharing their stories and time. Oral history interviews are narrator-centered and it is important to express gratitude for stories that are shared.

Once you have turned off the recorder, be attentive to your storyteller. Make sure you maintain the connection so they are not left feeling like a research subject. This is a good time to decompress, share a snack, or just be present with one another.

GUIDELINES FOR INTERVIEWING TRANS PEOPLE

Follow your narrator's lead around language and terminology. Trans people have developed a rich and extensive array of terms to describe our identities, bodies, and experiences. These terms can differ greatly from person to person and even moment to moment. Keep in mind that some individuals and communities use language to talk about themselves that seem unfamiliar, dated, or even objectionable to other communities. As an interviewer, it's not your job to judge or evaluate. But don't be afraid to ask for clarification—respectfully!—if you don't understand something. Remember, the narrator is talking to you because they want to answer questions and share their views.

Be sensitive to how your narrator relates to their body, identity, past, etc. Trans people vary greatly in their comfort level talking about these issues, and in how they prefer to talk about them. Some people have no problem referencing their birth name, discussing a time spent living in a different gender, or they may feel comfortable talking explicitly about their bodies or transition. Others may not want to talk about these issues at all. Don't make assumptions one way or another – check with your narrator.

Remind your narrator that their interview will be public. We post interviews publicly on the internet, in unedited form. Narrators should give some thought to what they're comfortable sharing before starting an interview. Aside from the narrator's own privacy, the main things to be aware of usually pertain to revealing information about other people (keep their privacy in mind too), discussion of illegal activities (especially if the statute of limitations has not passed), and in some cases, discussion of immigration status. Because trans people are often in tight-knit communities—we know a lot about each others' business!—and because trans people are more likely to participate in criminalized economies, it's important to point out these considerations before getting started.

Don't make assumptions. Trans people come from many different backgrounds, racial and ethnic groups, religious histories, economic classes, countries of origin, cultural contexts, and so on. Even if you are trans, or if you feel familiar with trans issues, don't assume that the common terms, narratives, and concepts in your own background apply to everyone else.

Be aware of your own biases. Everyone carries their own biases and prejudices--some are stronger than others. Spend some time honestly thinking about your own, and your plan for addressing them as an interviewer.

Be aware of your own preconceptions about trans issues and history. Keeping an open mind also means being aware of assumptions about what interviews with trans people are “supposed” to focus on. On the one hand, give your interviewee as much space as they need to reflect on their identity, coming out narratives, transition experiences, or general sense of self. But also keep this in mind: trans people are often asked to report endlessly on their personal experiences of identity. Without necessarily realizing it, some narrators may come in expecting that this is the main (or only) thing you want to hear about. Trans people are much less often invited to be authorities on social and historical issues beyond their own identities and bodies. So also create opportunities for interviewees to reflect on all kinds of issues, experiences, insights— whatever they find important. Allowing trans people to share perspectives on a wide range of issues helps build a more expansive and intersectional archive.

Prompt interviewees to put things in context. Concrete details and other specifics that connect an experience to the larger world make a huge difference for what can be learned from these stories in the future. This is especially important in the context of trans history, since so little trans community life is preserved through other historical documents. So for instance, if an interviewee is discussing a bar that was especially important for them, ask follow up questions about specifics like: “what was the bar’s name?” “where was it?” and “what year was this?” If someone shares an interesting survival strategy, ask how they learned it, or if other community members were using similar approaches. Remember that it’s important to get these questions on the record, even if you personally know the answers already. Use discretion of course, and don’t make your narrator feel like you only care about bare facts! But little pieces of information that situate a personal experience in a context—a place, period, or community—can help make these stories even more valuable for future listeners.



Sylvia Ray Rivera, Marsha P. Johnson, Barbara Deming, and Kady Vandeurs at City Hall
Photo by Diana Davies/NYPL Digital Collections

SETTING UP YOUR INTERVIEWS

1. Connect with someone who wants to share their story.

This person can be a friend, family member, or a stranger.

Interviewees can also be found on your own or in coordination with the collective. Any questions, please contact: nyctransoralhistory@nypl.org

2. Introduce them to the project.

Initial Outreach: Introduce the interviewee to the NYC-TOHP main objectives with the “What to Expect” document. Let them know you’re available to talk through any questions they may have – if you get asked questions about the project you don’t know the answer to, don’t hesitate to get in touch with the NYC-TOHP collective. All interviews will be saved and collected in a public archive so it is important the interviewee is comfortable being recorded.

3. Choose a meeting place.

Interviews may be conducted anywhere that is convenient for you and the participant, including their home, so long as background noise is minimized (i.e., appliance sounds, children, pets, traffic, etc). Interviews can range anywhere from one to three hours so be sure to pick a place that can accommodate you for the duration of the interview. Feel free to utilize an NYPL public meeting room, which you can book yourself via this link:

<http://www.nypl.org/about/locations/schwarzman/meeting-room>

Set a time to meet together and prepare to arrive 5-10 minutes early (if applicable) to set up.

Follow Up: Contact your interviewee at least a day before the interview via phone or email to confirm and answer any last minute questions they may have.

Congratulations! You set up your first interview!

BASIC CHECKLIST: WHAT YOU NEED

- Recording equipment
- Release form
- Data sheet form
- Camera or camera phone (if narrator isn't providing their own photo).
- This introductory recording text: "Hello, my name is _____ and I will be having a conversation with _____ for The New York City Trans Oral History Project in collaboration with The New York Public Library's Community Oral History Project. This is an oral history project centered on the experiences of trans identifying people. It is [INSERT DATE] and this is being recorded at [INSERT LOCATION]."

Recording Equipment

If you use your own equipment: Use of library recording kits is optional. If you use your own recording device, please record in high definition MP3 or WAV.

If you have a smartphone, one option is to use the app AudioMemos. Download the \$0.99 version of AudioMemos, open it, then click on the gear icon in the lower left hand-corner, scroll down through the preferences to "Quality" and slide the Quality bar all the way to the right. This serves as an adequate recorder. The interview file can be exported from your phone either by emailing it, syncing it to dropbox, or plugging the phone into your computer and accessing it through iTunes.

If you use library equipment: At least two days prior to your interview, contact nyctransoralhistory@nypl.org with your checkout date and time and any additional information about your interviewee. With advance notice, recording kits can be picked up at 445 Fifth Avenue and kept out for up to three days. A standard Recording Kit includes: A Recorder, a folder containing a Data Sheet and Consent Form for the participant to fill out, and a camera.

1. Complete necessary paperwork.

Have the interviewee fill out a consent form acknowledging that the interview will be recorded and made publicly accessible (including possibly as a written transcript) online. You will both need to sign this form.

2. Reiterate project intentions.

Remind them of NYC TOHP's goals. Address any last minute questions they may have. Make them feel comfortable. If applicable, decide on a time limit for the oral history and set a silent or quiet reminder on your phone/watch.

3. Prep all equipment.

Follow the instructions the recording kit came with. Check to make sure all equipment is in working order and, when ready, make sure the recorder is set to ON.

4. Begin recording the interview.

We ask that all recorded interviews begin with the following introduction:

Hello, my name is _____ and I will be having a conversation with _____ for The New York City Trans Oral History Project in collaboration with The New York Public Library's Community Oral History Project. This is an oral history project centered on the experiences of trans identifying people. It is [INSERT DATE] and this is being recorded at [INSERT LOCATION].

The format of the interviews is open ended—it's up to you and your narrator to formulate much of the interview, but you're welcome to draw from the suggested sample questions in the next section.

Towards the interview's end, ask them "Is there anything else you'd like to share or forgot to mention?"

AFTER THE INTERVIEW

1. Express gratitude.

Thank the participant for their time.

2. Get or take a photograph.

We include interviewees' pictures along with their interviews on the NYPL website, so listeners can put faces to the stories. You can take a photo after the interview, or have your narrator send you a photo of their choosing. If a narrator has concerns about anonymity, a non-identifying photograph can be used (e.g., a photograph of part of the participant's body that does not include their face, or of something else entirely that they choose).

3. Confirm contact information.

Make sure the interviewee has written down their correct mailing address and contact information on the Data Sheet so they can receive a copy of their interview and any other pertinent information from the collective.

4. Complete the Data Coding worksheet.

This allows you to choose from a list of material that may have been discussed, or write in any relevant keywords. The purpose of this worksheet is to make files more accessible in the archive.

5. Upload files.

If using your own equipment, send all audio, photo, video, and document files to nyctransoralhistory@nypl.org through WeTransfer.com. Before sending, make a note of the interview's contents in the WeTransfer comment box and let us know if there's anything in particular we should be aware of. We recommend flagging interviews if they contain especially triggering, controversial, or delicate material.

6. Follow up.

Within three days of the interview, send the participant a thank you email!

7. Debrief.

Find someone you can talk to after particularly emotionally taxing interviews. Remember to take care of yourself.

Suggested Interview Questions

Note: Not all questions are appropriate for everyone. Use your discretion. Be emotionally nimble. The provided questions are to be used in conjunction with your own questions. Choose questions based on the goals of the interview and the interviewee's responses.

INTRODUCTORY

- Tell me your name and your age (if you'd like)?
- What are your gender pronouns?
- How would you describe your gender?
- When and where were you born?
- Tell me about an early encounter you had with a trans community.
- When was the first time you heard the term “trans” (or other terms—e.g., transsexual, transvestite, queen, gender nonconforming, butch/AG, etc)?

EARLY LIFE

- Tell me about your childhood and family background.
- What were the circumstances of your life like when you were _____?
- What was your class background like growing up? Religious background? (etc)
- What was NYC like when you grew up here/first moved here?
- What kind of relationship do you have now with your family of origin?
- What is your earliest memory of New York City?

COMMUNITY, RELATIONSHIPS, SOCIAL LIFE

- What people have been most important in your life?
- What communities are you a part of now? In the past? Tell me about them.
- What scenes have you been a part of? Tell me about them. What were some key moments when the scene(s) changed?
- What kinds of relationships do you have with other trans/nonbinary/gender nonconforming people?
- How did you first learn about, or encounter, other trans people?
- What was it like getting more involved in trans communities? What did you get out of it? What did you enjoy? Struggles you've had?
- How do you think trans (etc) communities have changed over the years?
- What are some memorable positive experiences you've had related to community? Negative?

- Who do you party with?
- How do you see yourself in this moment of increased trans visibility?
- How do you see yourself in relation to other social and political movements?
- Do you identify with LGB communities? If so, what's it been like being trans in those spaces?
- Do you have any intergenerational relationships with trans or LGB people?

IDENTITY

- What aspects of your identity are most important to you? What has shaped your sense of who you are?
- How does being trans (nonbinary/GNC/etc) relate to other aspects of your identity?
- How do you understand gender? (Your sexuality? Race? Class? Ability? Etc)
- Has your understanding of your gender (sexuality/race/class/ability/etc) changed over the years? If so, how?
- When did you first become aware of gender? Sexuality? Race? Ethnicity? Religion?
- What do you do to cope with _____?

NEW YORK CITY

- How has NYC changed in the years that you've lived here?
- What's your favorite thing about NYC?
- What's hardest about living in NYC?
- What's it like being trans in NYC? How does it compare to other places?
- Are there particular communities in NYC that have been especially important for you?
- What particular places/spaces in NYC have been most important for you?
- Are there aspects of trans community in NYC – past or present – that you would especially want remembered?

TRANS AND OTHER SYSTEMIC ISSUES

- How does your experience of being trans now compare to the past?
- How do you think trans issues/politics have changed over the years?
- What are the biggest challenges you've faced around being trans?
- What kinds of employment have you had? How do you make ends meet?
- Have you ever been discriminated against at your job or school—either because of your gender or other aspects of your identity?
- Have you had experiences with police/law enforcement?
- What are your everyday safety concerns?
- Have you ever been homeless?
- Do you feel that you've had to choose between expressing your gender identity and economic security or safety?
- Do you have any experiences with mental health and mental illness?
- Do you have experiences using substances (drugs)— has that been important in your life?

- What have been your experiences with healthcare?
- If you've accessed medical transition, how did you do that? How did you cover the costs for transition?
- Have you ever gotten healthcare outside of licensed/legal contexts? (black market hormones, unlicensed or "back alley" medical procedures, e.g., surgery or silicone injections, etc).
- Have you ever used things besides western medicine to help you feel better in your body or gender? (e.g., body modification, drugs, religious/spiritual practices, etc)
- Have you ever been on public assistance? What were your experiences like around that?
- Have you gone to other service providers (e.g., support groups; medical care, including HIV/AIDS providers, Planned Parenthood; housing or employment providers; etc)? When was the first time you did that?
- What have been some important sources of support for you over the years?
- Tell me a time when you felt seen.

WRAP UP QUESTIONS

- If you wanted people to hear one thing from you, what would it be?
- If you wanted to be remembered for one thing, what would it be?
- Is there anything you wanted to add?
- Is there anyone else you know who might be interested in participating in this project?

Thank you for reading through this Interviewer's Handbook. We are excited to have you working with us and actively making history! Please contact NYCTransOralHistory@nypl.org with questions, ideas, etc.

Forms

INTERVIEWEE: WHAT TO EXPECT

NYC Trans Oral History Project

You will be contacted by an oral history interviewer in order to schedule your interview. Interviews can be held anywhere most convenient for you. Interviews typically last anywhere between 30 minutes and 3 hours depending on how long you'd like to talk. Interviews come prepared with some questions, but don't be afraid to change topics during the interview or to suggest topics prior to the interview. Interviewers are interested in capturing your story as you'd like it to be told. Interviews will be conducted in audio and your interviewer will also ask for a photograph of you at the end of the interview, to be posted on the website along with your story. You can also provide your own photograph if you prefer.

You will be asked to sign a Release Form. By signing this form, you give copyright of the interview to the New York Public Library as well as the New York City Trans Oral History Collective so that it can be placed in the library, online, and in NYC TOHP archives. Interviews are posted under Creative Commons license, which makes them public domain. Please let your interviewer know if you have any questions about the release form prior to signing.

The New York City Trans Oral History Project is an archive of transgender resistance, resilience, and survival in New York City. We work to confront the erasure of trans histories and document the experiences of trans people as intersecting with race and racism, poverty, disability, aging, housing, migration, HIV/AIDS, and sexism. Inspired by public history initiatives like the ACT/UP Oral History Project, we believe oral history is a powerful tool for community organizing and anti-oppression work. We are a volunteer-run collective of activists, artists, scholars, archivists, and other community members. The collective works in partnership with the New York Public Library's Community Oral History Project.

The New York Public Library's Community Oral History Project is an initiative taking place throughout the NYPL system that aims to document, celebrate, and make accessible the rich history of the city's unique neighborhoods by collecting the stories of people who have experienced it firsthand. To date, more than one thousand stories have been collected by close to three hundred community volunteers. All recordings are available at oralhistory.nypl.org and will be archived in the Library's Milstein Division of United States History, Local History and Genealogy research collection.

If you have more questions or would like additionally information about this project, please contact the NYC Trans Oral History Project at nyctransoralhistory@nypl.org.



Oral History Release Form

I understand that my interview is being recorded, collected, and stored for the New York City Trans Oral History Project. I understand that my interview may also be collected by the New York Public Library. I understand that my interview may become part of NYPL's and NYC TOHP's records and be made publically available. I understand that my interview may be used to advertise for other participants. I agree that NYPL and NYC TOHP may use my name, voice, video, photographic likeness and biographical story.

In consideration of my participation in the interview, I hereby freely and voluntarily relinquish and transfer to NYPL and NYC TOHP all title and property rights that I have or may be deemed to have in the interview throughout the world. I understand that these rights include, without limitation, all rights, titles, and interest in any copyright. I understand that NYPL and/or TOHP may assign, license, and sublicense these rights to other entities.

I understand that NYPL and/or NYC TOHP may exhibit, distribute, edit, produce, transcribe, publish, publicly perform, publicly display, and broadcast, without any further approval on my part, the entire interview or parts of the interview with or without my name, in, on, or through any and all media whether now existing or hereafter being developed. I hereby waive any right to inspect or approve any uses of the interview.

I release, hold harmless and indemnify NYC TOHP and NYPL and its trustees, officers, agents, patrons, and employees from and against any and all claims, including but not limited to claims for defamation, invasion of privacy or right of publicity, liabilities, damages, or expenses including attorney's fees, court costs, or any other such losses resulting from or related to the interview process, the use of my likeness, the reproduction of this interview, or the content of the interview. This release shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with, the laws of the state of New York, without regard to its conflict of law principles.

I understand this contract is binding on me, my heirs, legal representatives, assigns, and legal or biological family.

Interviewee

Name (please print):

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Interviewer

Name (please print):

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Date: _____

NYC Trans Oral History Project

Interviewee Data Sheet (Page 1 of 2)

(Please fill out prior to the interview.)

Any information collected will be used to catalogue, label, and organize interviews.

The following information will appear on our public archive website alongside your recording. Please fill out these fields exactly as you'd like them to appear on the website. We are happy to accommodate requests to change your information after publication.

Name:

Birth Year:

Pronouns:

Place of Birth:

Occupation(s); previous or current:

Interview Location (ex. X's apartment, Crown Heights, Brooklyn, NY):

Name of Interviewer:

Interviewee Data Sheet (Page 2 of 2)

The following information will be kept **private** within the NYC Trans Oral History Project collective.

Full Name:

Birth Date (ex: 6/28/1984):

Email Address:

Phone:

Address:

How do you know the interviewer?



New York
Public
Library