

Faculty Women's Caucus Oral History Project: Digital Exhibit Proposal

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Between 1997 and 1998, Kyle Mitchell (supervised by University Archivist Jane Turner) began the "Faculty Women's Caucus Oral History Project" by recording sixteen interviews with those involved in the women's movement on the University of Victoria campus. With the rapid increase in the popularity of podcasts and modern interest in preserving and prioritizing oral histories, I believe that a project focused on contextualizing and making accessible the voices and opinions of activists would be a valuable contribution to the existing scholarship in both archival studies and digital humanities. Should my application succeed, I hope to create a digital exhibit using Omeka to make these primary resources shareable and accessible. The name Omeka comes from a Swahili word meaning to display wares. The "wares" in this project are the carefully collected interviews held in [University of Victoria Special Collections](#). The versatility of the Omeka platform will allow me to feature multiple media with detailed metadata, making the project searchable by the public and useful for researchers. The exhibit would feature the audiocassette recordings (enhanced and in their entirety) and their transcripts, as well as multiple information pages contextualizing the interviews in the larger women's movement. Additionally, I hope to highlight those who were underrepresented (not interviewed) but were nonetheless involved in the effort: queer women, women of colour, and those who do not adhere to the gender binary.

Unlike digital remediation of print objects, the digitization of audiocassettes has a low risk of compromising the integrity of the source material. In fact, using the software Audacity to enhance the quality of the recording will aid both their accessibility and preservation. Through the primary source research workshops, however, I hope to learn more about digital remediation

and the ethics of archival studies. Nancy MacKay raises an important point when she says that “curators need to understand the importance of the interview as a primary *document* and the methodology that surrounds it, especially the collaborative relationship between the *interviewer* and the narrator, the importance of the interview within a context, and the role of recording technology” (19). As a member of the *Crafting Communities* research project, I had the opportunity to engage with nineteenth-century material culture through the medium of podcasting. This process accentuated the creative possibilities available in the digital humanities, the ethics of preserving the speaker’s intent, and the importance of maintaining a human element (i.e., the human voice) in academia. Making the voices and passions of those involved in the women’s movement on our campus accessible would not only help me hone my skills as a researcher and audio producer but also allow other students to interact with these fascinating archival materials remotely.

Works Cited

MacKay, Nancy. *Curating Oral Histories: From Interview to Archive*. Vol. 2, Left Coast Press, 2015.