



Inknography

A Digital Oral History Collection
of Tattooed Asian Americans

Notes from the Field

- Identify a person or group to focus on.
- Everyone has a unique history, identity, and experience. However, learn the historical and contemporary issues and values within the community.
- The Institutional Review Board (IRB) is your friend, not your enemy. Make sure you think about the legal repercussions of your project. Have a waiver cover a release of audio, video, and images to protect yourself as a researcher. Make sure narrators understand your project and your waiver. Sometimes, we sign waivers without reading them. Make sure they understand who could access your collection.
- Learn about the narrator's background and their other identities. This will allow you to generate more questions for your interview and avoid being insensitive. For example, if one of your narrators is an adoptee, learn what you can about adoption, in case they feel like discussing that identity. This will also prevent you from asking sensitive questions like, "Do you want to meet your birth parents?" (Some adoptees may not like that)
- Do a practice interview with a friend. Review interview. This will allow you to determine what questions were useful, how you should affirm the narrator, and learn to read body language.
- Shut Up. Do not talk while the narrator is speaking. Do not say "Yeah" or make "Ummm" noises. It will ruin your audio. Nodding and smiling is your go to action to confirm you are paying attention. Remember, this interview is not about you. It's about them.

- ... and because it's not about you, sometimes the narrator will get off track. Do not freak out. It's ok. Thank them for sharing their story and proceed with your next interview question.
- "Thank you for sharing" is the best thing to say if you do not know how to react to the narrator's story.
- Sometimes it takes time for a narrator to warm up to you, a stranger. Do not get frustrated. Attempt to find things you and the narrator may have in common to further break the ice, then get back to your interview guide.
- Transcripts take a long time. Prepare yourself.
- Conducting interviews can be very emotionally draining. Listening to stories about racism or personal struggles can get really hard. It's ok to take a couple days off from interviewing or editing materials
- Your materials will take up a lot of space on your hard drive. Make sure you have an external storage.
- Back up your materials every hour.
- Offering narrators a gift card in return for their time never hurts.
- Turn off your phone.
- Breathe.

Visit Inkography at slis.simmons.edu/inkography

Please take the SLIS Oral History course by Janet Ceja to (accurately) learn more.

Influential Readings:

Thompson, Paul. "History and the Community." In *The Voice of the Past: Oral History*, 1-24. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1978.

Yow, Valerie Raleigh. *Recording Oral History: A Guide for the Humanities and Social Sciences*. London: Rowman & Littlefield Publishers, 2014.