

Northern Territory Archives Service

Oral History Unit

Introducing the Oral History Unit

The aim of the Oral History unit is to collect and preserve oral histories that represent the depth and breadth of Northern Territory society for research purposes.

Knowledge held in the human memory, which does not appear in written records or photographs, is one of the most important sources of historical information.

Human memories of events, people, places and ideas are often never preserved in written or photographic form, so records of spoken memories preserved in the form of oral history interviews are a vital source for historical or social research.

The oral history collection has grown to over 2,000 interviews since its inception in 1979. It includes oral histories collected by non-NTAS interviewers, such as individual researchers and community heritage groups using oral history as part of their own projects. For many of these interviews a printed verbatim transcript has also been made.

The Oral History Unit also provides professional advice and training to private and community oral history projects, both informally and in workshops and seminars in Darwin, Alice Springs and other centres. It can also assist with providing recording equipment, advice on the transcription and documentation of interviews, and offers preservation copying, custody and managed access of the final materials at the NTAS.

The Oral History unit welcomes nominations and information from the public regarding potential interview subjects. Nominations are considered and prioritised by the Oral History Advisory Committee. The committee meets twice a year in June and November. Selected interview candidates will be contacted by the Oral History Unit to arrange a convenient time to conduct an interview. If you know someone whose story you consider is important to the history of the Northern Territory, please contact us.

Interviews

The Oral History Unit has collected interviews with people from all walks of life and cultural backgrounds, reflecting the diversity of the Northern Territory itself. Topics covered by our collection include the Second World War, Aboriginal history and culture, the public service, the pastoral industry, the development of regional centres, immigration, life in our towns, as well as in remote or isolated settlements, sport and the arts.

Although priority is given to recording older people whose memories reach into the distant past, interviews are also conducted with people who have recently retired or been involved in a particular set of events.

NTAS interviews are recorded wherever is most comfortable for those involved. This may be in the homes of interviewees or anywhere there is not too much background noise. Sound recordings of interviews are made first. Discussion takes place between the interviewee and the OHU to confirm the content of the interview and then a master and preservation copy of the sound recording are deposited under permanent and safe storage conditions in the NTAS repository in Darwin. In the past transcripts were produced as part of the process however this is no longer automatic. Interviewees are also provided with a copy the recording if required.

Access to Oral Histories and transcripts

Interviewees control how their oral history is used by others. This is set down in a written agreement. Most interviews are available for inspection by NTAS registered researchers without restriction.

However, some people control access to their interviews by requiring written permission to be obtained prior to access. The use of any part of an interview in the public domain (such as in written publications, broadcast or on web pages) must always be first cleared by the NTAS, and generally the NTAS will need to seek the interviewee's written permission for this.

NTAS has a searchable index for oral history interviews in the collection. You can search by name, topic, place or event. Visit the NTAS website to search <http://oralhistory.nt.gov.au>.

Researchers can access available transcripts and sound recordings for research in the reading rooms at the Darwin and Alice Springs repositories of the NTAS.

Copying of oral history materials is subject to condition of access decided by interviewees and donors, as well as provisions relating to copyright. Details of charges for copying may be obtained from the Archives staff at the Darwin and Alice Springs search rooms.

Research using Oral History Archives

Research assistance is available from our reference staff in the search rooms in Alice Springs and Darwin. Consider the focus of your research and then phone and make an appointment. The reference staff will discuss your research with you and provide advice so that you can benefit from the full potential of the NTAS Oral Histories.

Contacts

Northern Territory Archives Service, Darwin	Northern Territory Archives Service, Alice Springs
Northern Territory Archives Centre Kelsey Crescent MILLNER NT 0810 PO Box 1347 NIGHCLIFF NT 0814	Minerals House 58 Hartley Street ALICE SPRINGS NT 0870 PO Box 8225 ALICE SPRINGS NT 0871
Telephone (08) 8924 7677 Fax (08) 8924 7660	Telephone (08) 8951 5669 Fax (08) 8951 5232
Website address: https://artsandmuseums.nt.gov.au/northern-territory-archives-service E-mail: OHU.NTAS@nt.gov.au	

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Oral History Unit Interview Nomination

The Northern Territory Archives Service Oral History Unit welcomes nominations and information from the public regarding potential interview subjects. If you know someone whose story you consider to be important to the history of the Northern Territory, please complete the following form and forward it to:

Northern Territory Archives Service Oral History Unit
PO Box 1347
NIGHTCLIFF NT 0814
E-mail: OHU.NTAS@nt.gov.au

Nomination

Name of person to be interviewed:	
Length of time in the Northern Territory:	
List locations where the person lived within the Northern Territory:	
Age range of the nominated person: [Please tick the relevant age range]	<input type="checkbox"/> 20-45 years <input type="checkbox"/> 46-60 years <input type="checkbox"/> 61-80 years <input type="checkbox"/> older
Name of person nominating (if different to interviewee):	
Relationship to interviewee:	
Date of nomination:	
Contact details of nominated interviewee Name:	
Postal Address:	
Telephone numbers:	
E-mail address:	

Please turn over...

