

chicago manual bibliography for an oral history interview

The Chicago Manual of Style is a widely respected authority for academic and professional writing, and its guidelines are essential for correctly citing sources. When it comes to an oral history interview, the Chicago Manual of Style offers specific instructions to ensure proper attribution and accessibility for your readers. Properly formatting a bibliography entry for an oral history interview not only acknowledges the interviewee's contribution but also allows researchers to locate the source material themselves. This article will delve deeply into the intricacies of creating a Chicago Manual bibliography entry for an oral history interview, covering the essential components, variations in formatting, and best practices for citing both published and unpublished interviews. We will explore the necessary information to include, such as interviewee and interviewer names, interview date and location, and repository details, all while adhering to the meticulous standards of the Chicago Manual. Understanding these nuances is crucial for anyone undertaking historical research involving primary source interviews.

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Understanding the Core Components of a Chicago Manual Bibliography Entry for Oral History

Creating a comprehensive bibliography entry for an oral history interview, following the Chicago Manual of Style (CMOS), requires attention to several key pieces of information. These elements work together to provide a clear and complete reference for your readers, enabling them to locate the interview if they wish to consult it. The primary goal is to identify the source definitively and provide enough context for retrieval. This typically includes the name of the interviewee, the interviewer(s), the date the interview was conducted, its physical or digital location, and any associated identifying information like accession numbers or collection titles.

The Chicago Manual of Style emphasizes clarity and precision in citation. For oral histories, this means distinguishing between the interviewee (the subject of the interview) and the interviewer (the person conducting the interview). Both roles are important for contextualizing the source. The date of the interview is crucial for historical accuracy, indicating when the information was recorded. The location, whether a physical archive or an online repository, is paramount for access. When constructing these entries, researchers must consult the most recent edition of the Chicago Manual of Style for the most up-to-date guidance, as stylistic preferences can evolve.

Formatting Unpublished Oral History Interviews

Unpublished oral history interviews often reside in archives, libraries, or personal collections. Citing these requires a slightly different approach than published works because they are not readily available in a standardized format. The Chicago Manual of Style provides specific guidance to help researchers navigate this. The key is to provide as much descriptive information as possible to pinpoint the specific interview within a larger collection.

Essential Elements for Unpublished Interviews

When creating a bibliography entry for an unpublished oral history interview, several core pieces of information are indispensable. These elements help to identify the specific recording and its physical location, making it discoverable for other researchers. Adhering to these components ensures a robust and accurate citation.

- **Interviewee's Full Name:** This is the individual whose testimony is being recorded.
- **Interviewer's Full Name(s):** List all individuals who conducted the interview.
- **Title of the Interview (if any):** Some interviews might have a descriptive title assigned by the interviewer or archivist.
- **Date of Interview:** Specify the full date (month, day, year) the interview took place.
- **Description of the Interview:** Briefly describe the format (e.g., audio recording, transcript, video) and its length if known.
- **Collection Name:** The overarching name of the collection in which the interview is housed.
- **Archival Repository:** The full name and location (city, state) of the institution holding the collection.
- **Accession Number or Finding Aid Reference:** This is a crucial identifier for locating the specific item within the archive.

Crafting the Bibliography Entry for Unpublished Oral Histories

The structure of the bibliography entry in Chicago style for an unpublished oral history interview typically follows this pattern: Interviewee's Full Name, interviewed by

Interviewer's Full Name, on Month Day, Year, Interview Title (if applicable), format description, Collection Name, Repository Name, City, State, Accession Number or Finding Aid Reference.

For example, an entry might look like this: Smith, Jane, interviewed by John Doe, on October 15, 2010, "Life in Old Chicago," audio recording, Jane Smith Papers, Special Collections, University of Chicago Library, Chicago, IL, Box 3, Folder 7.

Handling Transcripts and Recordings

It's important to note whether you are citing a transcript or an audio/video recording, or both. If a transcript is available and you primarily relied on it, you should indicate this. If you listened to the recording, mention that as well. CMOS encourages citing the form you primarily consulted. If both are available, you can note the existence of both to provide comprehensive information for the reader.

Formatting Published Oral History Interviews

Published oral history interviews, whether they appear in books, journals, or online databases, follow citation formats that are more akin to other published works, but with specific considerations for the interview format. The Chicago Manual of Style provides clear guidelines to ensure these sources are cited accurately and allow readers to access them easily.

Key Information for Published Interviews

When citing a published oral history interview, the focus shifts to its published format. While the core details of the interview itself remain important, the citation must also reflect the publication details. This includes the title of the publication, the editor or compiler if applicable, and the page numbers where the interview can be found.

- **Interviewee's Full Name:** As in unpublished interviews, this is the primary subject.
- **Interviewer's Full Name(s):** Essential for context.
- **Title of the Interview (if it has one separate from the publication title):** Some published collections might title individual interviews.
- **Title of the Book, Journal, or Website:** The overarching publication where the interview appears.
- **Editor or Compiler (if applicable):** If the interview is part of an edited collection.

- **Publication Date:** The year the book, journal, or website was published.
- **Page Numbers:** The specific pages where the interview can be found within the publication.
- **Publisher (for books):** The entity that published the book.
- **URL or DOI (for online sources):** If accessed digitally.

Citing Oral Histories in Books

For oral history interviews published as part of a book, the Chicago Manual of Style typically formats the entry as follows: Interviewee's Full Name, interviewed by Interviewer's Full Name, in Title of Book, edited by Editor's Full Name (if applicable), Publication Year, page numbers. Publisher.

An example might be: Davis, Maria, interviewed by Samuel Lee, in *Voices of the Industrial Revolution*, edited by Eleanor Vance, 2015, pp. 87-112. Chicago Historical Society Press.

Citing Oral Histories in Journals or Online Platforms

If an oral history interview is published in a journal or on a website, the citation will incorporate elements specific to those publication types. For a journal article, it would include the journal title, volume, issue, and date. For an online source, a stable URL or DOI is crucial.

Example for a journal: Johnson, Robert, interviewed by Emily Carter, "My Life on the Farm," *Agricultural History Quarterly* 25, no. 2 (Spring 2020): 45-62.

Example for a website: Brown, Sarah, interviewed by David Green, "The Great Depression Through My Eyes," *Online Oral History Archive*, October 20, 2018, https://www.exampleoralhistory.com/brown_sarah.

Special Considerations for Oral History Citations

Beyond the basic formatting, there are several nuanced aspects to consider when citing oral history interviews according to the Chicago Manual of Style. These include how to handle interviews that have multiple parts, or those that exist in various formats, as well as the specific requirements for footnotes versus bibliography entries.

Handling Multiple Interviews with the Same Person

If you have conducted or consulted multiple interviews with the same individual, whether they are published or unpublished, you will need to differentiate them clearly in your citations. This might involve adding additional descriptive details in the bibliography entry or using clear subject headings if you are referencing a large number of interviews within a collection.

Distinguishing Between Footnotes and Bibliography Entries

The Chicago Manual of Style uses two primary citation systems: notes and bibliography, and author-date. For the notes and bibliography system, which is common in historical research, your footnote or endnote citations will be more detailed, providing specific page numbers or timestamps if referencing a particular segment of the interview. The bibliography entry, on the other hand, provides a fuller, more generalized reference to the entire interview or source.

For example, a footnote might point to a specific quote and timestamp from an audio recording, while the bibliography entry would refer to the entire recording as a source. The bibliography entry aims to guide the reader to the source, whereas the footnote/endnote directs them to the precise part of the source used.

Interviews Conducted by the Author

If you are the one who conducted the oral history interviews you are citing, the citation format will differ slightly. You would typically identify yourself as the interviewer. However, for unpublished interviews you conducted and still possess, you might describe them as "Author's own collection" or similar, and provide repository information if they have been formally deposited.

Practical Examples of Chicago Manual Bibliography Entries for Oral History

To solidify understanding, let's examine a few more practical examples of Chicago Manual bibliography entries for various types of oral history interviews. These examples illustrate the application of the rules discussed previously and serve as helpful models for your own research.

Example 1: Unpublished Audio Interview in an Archive

Garcia, Elena, interviewed by Mark Williams, on March 12, 2005, "Memories of the Civil Rights Movement," audio recording, Elena Garcia Oral History Collection, Southern Historical Collection, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, Chapel Hill, NC, Call Number OH-1234.

Example 2: Published Transcript in a Book

Chen, Wei, interviewed by Susan Lee, in *The Immigrant Experience: Voices from the Golden Age*, edited by David Miller, 2018, pp. 198-225. University Press of America.

Example 3: Published Interview on a Website

Patel, Raj, interviewed by Aisha Khan, "My Journey as an Entrepreneur," *Global Business Insights*, May 1, 2021, https://www.globalbusinessinsights.com/patel_raj.

Example 4: Unpublished Video Interview in a Digital Repository

Stewart, Thomas, interviewed by Maria Rodriguez, on July 22, 2011, "World War II Experiences," video recording, Thomas Stewart Collection, Library of Congress, Washington D.C., https://www.loc.gov/collections/stewart_video_1122. (Note: Specific URL or archive accession number would be used.)

FAQ

Q: What is the most crucial information to include in a Chicago Manual bibliography entry for an oral history interview?

A: The most crucial information includes the interviewee's full name, the interviewer's full name, the date of the interview, and the location where the interview can be accessed (whether a physical archive or a digital repository, including accession numbers or URLs).

Q: How does the Chicago Manual of Style differentiate between citing a transcript and a recording of an oral history interview?

A: The Chicago Manual of Style advises citing the format you primarily consulted. If a transcript is available and you used it, mention it. If you listened to the audio or watched the video recording, indicate that. If both are available, you can note the existence of both to provide comprehensive information.

Q: What if I conducted the oral history interview myself? How do I cite it in a Chicago Manual bibliography?

A: If you conducted the interview and it's unpublished, you would list yourself as the interviewer and describe the collection as "Author's own collection" or indicate the archive where you deposited it. If it's part of a formal project, you might reference the project name and repository.

Q: Do I need to include page numbers for unpublished oral history interviews in the bibliography?

A: Page numbers are generally not applicable to unpublished audio or video recordings in the bibliography. However, if you are citing a transcript of an unpublished interview and referring to specific parts, you might include transcript page numbers in your notes or endnotes. The bibliography entry focuses on the overall source.

Q: How do I cite an oral history interview that is part of a larger published collection of interviews?

A: You would cite it as an essay or chapter within a larger work. This involves listing the interviewee and interviewer, the title of the individual interview (if it has one), then the title of the larger collection, the editor(s) of the collection, publication details (year, publisher), and page numbers where the interview appears.

Q: What is the role of an accession number or finding aid reference in an oral history bibliography entry?

A: These are critical identifiers for unpublished interviews housed in archives. They allow other researchers to precisely locate the specific interview within a vast collection, acting like a call number for a book. Without them, accessing the source can be very difficult.

Q: How should I format the interview date in a Chicago

Manual bibliography entry for an oral history?

A: The date should be formatted fully, including the month, day, and year (e.g., October 15, 2010). This level of specificity is important for historical context and accuracy.

Q: What if the oral history interview is available online? What is the preferred citation format?

A: For online oral history interviews, you must provide a stable URL or a DOI (Digital Object Identifier) if one is available. Include the website name and the date you accessed the material, as online content can change.

Q: Is it permissible to use abbreviations in Chicago Manual bibliography entries for oral history?

A: While some standard abbreviations are acceptable (e.g., for months, states), it's best practice to spell out most terms, especially collection names, repository names, and city names, to ensure clarity and avoid ambiguity for your readers. Always refer to the latest edition of the Chicago Manual of Style for specific guidance on abbreviations.

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