Introduction

The Newcomb Oral History Project began in 1987 and has grown to include almost 300 recordings of Alumnae, Faculty Members, and others with a connection to Newcomb College. Those interviewed recall stories of their classes, professors, social life, cultural developments, and any other details they wish to be preserved.

Most of these histories were recorded onto audio cassettes, which are a delicate media for such important histories. The Project is now undergoing fullscale digitization and is now featured on its own website. The digitization of this collection will ensure that these vital memories will be preserved for students and researchers in years to come.

Digitization

Two components of the Oral History Project must be digitized:

- Hundreds of documents: These are scanned and converted to searchable PDFs. Each recording is accompanied with the following documents:
  1. Permission Form
  2. Biographical Information
  3. Transcript or Summary of Interview
- Oral histories on cassettes: Each cassette is digitized using the Tape 2 PC Converter System. This system and its accompanying software converts the audio from the cassette to a digital .mp3 file

Website

The Newcomb Oral History Project can now be viewed on its own website. The site was created with the goal of making the histories more accessible for those interested in the College and the women who shaped it.

- The site was created using WordPress
- It is minimilistic in design, structured to make browsing of the histories easy
- It allows the viewer to browse categorically and chronologically

- The screenshot below shows the Oral Histories Page. It features all of the histories on the site, along with a graduation photo of the Alumnae
- The Alumnae are listed in order of graduation date

Challenges

- Most recordings were done in the 1980s. The quality of most of the cassettes is diminished by the buzzes and hums characteristic of cassettes. Adobe Audition is used to remedy noise issues
- The cassette digitization requires the tapes to be digitized in real time, and most of the interviews range from 30 minutes to an hour
- Thus digitization is a time-consuming process

The Project’s Future

The entire Collection is nearly digitized, and is currently being uploaded to the website. In the meantime, the project welcomes all those who wish to be interviewed about their Newcomb experience, and those who wish to conduct interviews. These oral histories will continue to preserve the legacy of Newcomb College and the women who attended it.

http://newcomb.tulane.edu/blogs/oral-histories/