

CIVIL AIR PATROL ORAL HISTORY SELF-STUDY GUIDE

This self-study guide provides the information required to comply with the requirements of CAP Pamphlet 223, Study Guide for Historians. It is based on CAP Regulation 210-1 as amplified by the Handbook for Civil Air Patrol Historian.

Suggested revisions or additions to this guide should be addressed through channels to National Headquarters CAP-USA/XR, Maxwell AFB, AL 36112-5572.

	Paragraph	Page
CHAPTER 1 - INTRODUCTION		
Definition	1-1	1
Background Reading	1-2	1
Progress/Status of Oral History	1-3	1
Advantages of Oral History Over Other Historical Documentation	1-4	1
Conceptual Limitations	1-5	2
Mechanical Limitations	1-6	2
Magnetic Tape - Disadvantages	1-7	2
Most Widely Used Programs	1-8	2
Methods of Approach	1-9	2
CHAPTER 2 - EQUIPMENT		
Magnetic Tape Recorders/Reproducers	2-1	3
Magnetic Tape	2-2	3
Features of Tape Recorders/ Reproducers/Transcribers	2-3	3
Care and Cleaning	2-4	4
Practice Use	2-5	4
CHAPTER 3 - PREPARATION FOR AN ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW		
Selecting an Interview Candidate	3-1	5
Soliciting the Interview	3-2	5
Arranging the Interview with the Interviewee	3-3	5
Planning the Interview	3-4	5
Types of Interviews and/or Questions	3-5	5
Equipment/Material Checklist	3-6	5
CHAPTER 4 - CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW		
General	4-1	6
Recording During the Interview	4-2	6
Distractions	4-3	6
Explain Processing of the Interview	4-4	6
Techniques	4-5	6
Concluding the Interview	4-6	7
CHAPTER 5 - PROCESSING THE INTERVIEW		
Record of the Interview	5-1	8
Immediate Post-Interview Activities	5-2	8
Transcribing the Tape	5-3	8
Interview Summary and Guide	5-4	8
Disposition of Tape and Transcript Access Agreement	5-5	8
Disposition of Final Transcript	5-6	8

Attachments

1. Some Notes on the Selection of Transcribers	9
2. Average Time Requirements to Prepare, Conduct, and Process an Interview	10

Chapter 1

HISTORICAL PROGRAM POLICIES AND PROCEDURES

1-1. Purpose and Objectives of the CAP Historical Program. The purpose of the CAP Historical Program is to systematically collect historical data and prepare accurate and useful accounts of the organization, development, administration, operations, and other features of the Civil Air Patrol and its antecedents. The program's principal objectives are to provide historical data for CAP planning, operational and educational purposes; to preserve and disseminate the history of Civil Air Patrol; and to prepare and publish scholarly books and studies that keep the public informed about Civil Air Patrol and its cadet program, aerospace education, and emergency services missions. The CAP Historical Program is designed to:

- a. Prepare annual national, region, and wing histories and encourage their preparation at the group and squadron level.
- b. Assemble and maintain copies of CAP historical documentation.
- c. Prepare historical material for orientation purposes and building esprit de corps.
- d. Assist and advise military personnel and qualified civilians concerning research; preparing lectures, papers, and staff studies; and other activities that require historical knowledge or the use of historical materials.
- e. Arouse and develop increased interest in and an improved understanding of military history among CAP personnel, historians, and students.
- f. Develop an Oral History Program as an adjunct to the traditional written one.

1-2. Explanation of Terms. The following applies to the CAP Historical Program.

- a. National, region, and wing histories are fully documented historical narratives of significant events and actions during the calendar year. The histories should emphasize a command's mission and operational activities and the role of the Headquarters in those activities. Using the Handbook for CAP Historians, the histories should be prepared from primary sources obtained from a thorough research of key files of the Headquarters. Secondary sources, may be used as research guides, filed as reference material, or appended to the history. They should not be used to prove statements in the narrative. If primary documents cannot be obtained, secondary sources may be cited, although such usage is not desirable. The histories should consign as much administrative detail as possible, such as statistics on personnel strength, rosters of key personnel, and organizational changes, to appendices and other appropriate charts. Avoid repeating unnecessarily.
- b. A monograph is a separate narrative account of a particular subject or finite topic. As a rule, it is not fixed by an arbitrary period, as in the case of annual histories. Rather, its intended use dictates in part the scope, period of coverage, and length. Supporting documents are desired. All manuscripts must be reviewed and coordinated with the CAP National Historian (NH) before publication.
- c. Special studies are efforts undertaken to meet the specific requirements of an official or agency, usually on a short-term basis. Special studies may be narrative in form, a special collection of pertinent documents, or a combination. If

published or distributed outside the immediate headquarters of the originating historical office, review and coordination by the National Historian is required.

d. Oral histories are special efforts undertaken to preserve the experiences of individuals as they relate to CAP history. They shall be conducted in accordance with the Handbook for CAP Historians.

e. Supporting documents to a history should include copies of significant correspondence, staff studies and reports, operations orders and after-action reports, organizational charts, rosters of all key personnel and unit commanders, and all orders issued by the unit. A compilation of all individual awards and decorations shall be included.

1-3. National Historical Committee Responsibilities. The National Historical Committee (NHC) is chaired by the National Historian and staffed by volunteers, and by virtue of their background and/or desires, are in a position to positively contribute to the overall program. The National Historian, guided by the NHC:

- a. Formulates policy and directs the CAP Historical Program.
- b. Establishes and carries out a program for publishing general and special histories, monographs, studies and similar works for distribution within the Civil Air Patrol, to other government agencies, and to the public. Also issues bibliographies, catalogs, and abstracts that have information about the publications, both internal and external, of the CAP Historical Program.
- c. Represents the Civil Air Patrol at meetings of historical and other learned societies to encourage interest by educational and professional institutions in military aerospace history.
- d. Coordinates the CAP Historical Program with similar programs in federal government agencies.
- e. Sets up procedures and assigns responsibilities for oral history and end-of-tour documentation programs.
- f. Sets Civil Air Patrol standards for all activities that prepare monographs, special studies, unit narratives and documentation compilations.
- g. Coordinates on recruiting and selecting of qualified historians to make sure that they meet the CAP Historical Program requirements.
- h. Coordinates on documentation disposition recommendations to make sure that important historical material is preserved.
- i. Acts as the coordinating agency with the Air Force Historical Research Center (AFHRC) for the receipt, cataloging, microfilming, and storage of documents relating to the CAP Historical Program. This function will be governed by the requirements of AFR 210-1 and AFR 12-40 as amplified in the Handbook for CAP Historians.
- j. Solicits personal papers of retired or deceased key CAP personnel as well as non-CAP members whose activities directly influenced CAP History.

1-4. Region and Wing Responsibilities. At each region and wing, the historical program is conducted under the guidance of the region/wing historian. This special staff officer shall utilize

whatever resources are available in order to:

- a. Supervise all historical activities and monitor the histories and studies prepared by lower echelons.
- b. Prepare region or wing histories on a calendar year basis. Send HQ CAP/NH, Col Les Hopper, CAP, 3530 Mimosa Court, New Orleans, LA 70114, the original narrative plus a copy with two complete sets of supporting documents no later than 30 June. Also send two copies of a detailed letter of transmittal (inventor) that lists all materials by name and shows the number of copies of each item. One copy of the wing narrative plus the supporting documents will be provided to the region. Histories are sent through command channels.
- c. Prepare monographs and special studies as directed, NHC must coordinate on schedules and review the final product before publication.
- d. Prescribe procedures for obtaining significant historical data from units under its control.
- e. Perform special research as required by the commander and other CAP elements, other military agencies, and nonmilitary agencies and individuals.
- f. Conduct oral history interviews in coordination with NHC.
- g. Collect and preserve copies of documentation of historical significance.
- h. Coordinate on recruiting and selecting qualified historians within the command to make sure they meet the CAP Historical Program requirements.
- i. Encourage the preparation of periodic histories at the group and squadron level.

NOTE.- "Original Narrative" in the context of paragraph 1-4b is defined as the narrative portion of the history typed with a good ribbon and clear type on heavy stock white bond paper. A good permanent copy from a copying machine or printing operation is also satisfactory, provided the copy is black print on white bond paper and does not have ink or toner spots

1-5. Access to Material. Commanders and staff officers must give historians access to all information which they need for accurate and complete histories of CAP activities. It is particularly important that the historian (as a member of the Commander's staff) attend staff conferences, meetings, and briefings that are considered important for preparing histories.

1-6. Retention and Disposition. Retention period for historical material is indefinite.

1-7. Wing Historian of the Year Award:

- a. Award Plaque. HQ CAP/NH awards a plaque to the historian of the wing judged to have produced the best history covering the preceding calendar year.
- b. Nominations. No later than 1 July each region determines their candidate for the award and advises the National Historian of their nominee. This nomination should be by letter addressed to the current National Historian's home address or HQ CAP/NH. It should include the name of the individual being nominated, designation of the history prepared by that individual and pertinent facts relating to the individual's nomination.
- c. Selection Procedure. Based on the recommendation of the region commanders and an evaluation of the submitted annual history, the National Historian, in consultation with the National Historical Committee, will select the winner. In the absence of nominations, the National Historian, in consultation with the National Historical Committee shall make the selection and obtain the approval of the appropriate region commander. In either event, the selection will be completed in time for award presentation at the National Board Meeting.
- d. Selection Criteria. In minimum criteria for selection shall be the submission of an annual Wing History for the preceding year. Submitted histories will be judged on how successfully they meet the standards in paragraph 1-2a above and guidance provided by the Handbook for CAP Historians. Greater value is given to content and coverage than to matters relating to format, cover, photographs, typing, etc.

1-8. Supplements to this Regulation. Regions and wings may supplement this regulation or prepare guides for unit historians so that the functions, administration, and operations peculiar to their units can be covered properly at all levels of command. Any supplements or guides must not conflict with this or any other CAP directives.

1-9. Methods of Approach. Typical oral histories approach people falling in the following broad categories:

- a. Elitist-leaders, decision makers, the powerful.
- b. Nonelitist-anyone involved in an event or subject.
- c. Combining the two-desired when covering the entire spectrum of an event or subject.

Chapter 2

EQUIPMENT

2-1. Magnetic Tape Recorders/Reproducers. As background, the following is offered:

a. There are three common types of magnetic tape recorders: reel-to-reel, cassette, and cartridge.

b. Monaural, stereo, quadraphonic tape recording:

(1) Separate "tracks" on the magnetic tape for differing numbers of channels.

(2) Stereo and quadraphonic requires more complicated equipment.

(3) Monaural more practical for recording in oral history.

c. Reel-to-reel machines rarely in use by oral historians and cartridge restricted to music playback format.

d. Cassette machine considerations are:

(1) Cassettes are self-contained tape units.

(2) Small in size.

(3) Ease in operation-no tape threading.

(4) Cassette can be disabled to prevent re-recording.

(5) Transcribing machines available by many companies.

(6) Difficult to observe proper movement of tape during operation.

(7) Low cost cassettes may cause recorder breakdown by jamming.

(8) Difficult to observe amount of tape remaining to be used.

(9) Costs vary from thirty dollars to thousands of dollars. Avoid either extreme.

2-2. Magnetic Tape. The following should be considered in using magnetic tape:

a. Tape composition consists of iron oxide or other materials on plastic backing of polyester or acetate.

b. Cassette Tape:

(1) Available in C-30, C-60, C-90, and C-120. Number notes total recording time of the cassette.

(2) Standard tape speed for cassettes 1-7/8 IPS, although some new machines have slower speed.

c. Storage:

(1) 50-60 % humidity.

(2) 50-70 degrees temperature.

(3) Reels, or cassettes, placed on end.

d. Erasure:

(1) Always automatically erased when you are recording.

(2) Tape erased when held in a strong magnetic field.

(3) Scare stories of accidental erasure are false.

e. Recording time dependent on tape speed and length of tape.

f. Cassette Tape Recommendations:

(1) Name brand such as Scotch, Memorex, Realistic, Supertape, Gold (Radio Shack), Sony, etc.

(2) C-60 or smaller cassettes.

2-3. Features of Tape Recorders/Reproducers/Transcribers. Knowledge and/or consideration of the following is extremely important:

a. Operating current:

(1) Line voltage-50/60 cycle, 110/ 120 volt.

(2) Battery-best to use for backup.

b. Tape motion controls:

(1) Play-this permits listening to previously recorded tape.

(2) Fast Forward (FF)-winds tape on tape-up side of cassette.

(3) Fast Rewind (FW)-winds tape on supply side of cassette.

(4) Record-when pushed in conjunction with "play" control, the machine will record.

c. Volume control:

(1) Adjusts sound level for play back.

(2) Adjusts sound level for "record" on some machines.

d. Record level control:

(1) May be separate from volume control.

(2) Some machines do not have manual record level control.

e. Automatic Volume Control/Level (AVC/AVL):

(1) Disables manual recording control or manual volume level when recording.

(2) Automatically sets recording level.

(3) No need to adjust volume or recording level control.

(4) Picks up all background noise and adjusts volume to that level; may mask normal conversation.

f. Speech-Music-switch emphasizes frequency response for one.

g. Tone Control-sets tone; operates only on play back.

h. Pause Button-allows temporary stopping of tape motion.

i. Battery Level-when batteries installed, will indicate if good or bad when button pushed.

j. Numerical Counter-Counts revolution of reel. Not accurate machine-to-machine.

k. Automatic Shutoff-When tape runs out, machine will stop.

1. VU Meter/Volume Level Light - when recording, this will show if voice is being picked up by recorder. (VU) Adjusts so needle barely goes into the red. (VLL) Light should light on loudest sound.

m. Input and Output Jacks:

(1) MIC-For plugging in the microphone.

(2) AUX-For recording from TV, phonograph, tape recorder.

(3) Monitor-For external speaker or earphones.

(4) Remote-for starting/stopping of tape.

(a) Switch on microphone: stop or start only.

(b) Foot switch.

n. Microphones:

(1) Unidirectional-pick up from only one direction.

(2) Omnidirectional-pick up from all directions

(3) Desk.

(4) Lavalier

(5) Lapel-preferred type.

o. Foot Control-on transcribing machines, allows operation on "Fast Rewind" and "Play" functions by means of foot switch.

2-4. Care and Cleaning. See instruction book for care and cleaning of recording equipment being utilized.

2-5. Practice Use. Practice use of tape recorder/reproducer machines is of prime importance.

Chapter 3

PREPARATION FOR AN ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

3-1. Selecting an Interview Candidate. Some of the numerous sources of interviews are:

- a. Research.
- b. Personal friends.
- c. Referral.
- d. Previous interview(s).
- e. Walk-in experts.
- f. Programmed activity.

3-2. Soliciting the Interview. Suggested ways of actually soliciting interviews are:

- a. Working through mutual acquaintance.
- b. In person. Cost of travel makes telephone or letter contact primary consideration.
- c. Telephone.
- d. Letter-should be signed by the interviewer (Historians Handbook, Attachment 19).

NOTE: Direct contact with interviewee is mandatory in all of the above.

3-3. Arranging the Interview with the Interviewee. An in-person pre-interview is desirable but is not always possible. If possible, the following should be covered:

- a. Explain oral history program objectives to prospective interviewee. Establish prestige of your organization and worthiness of project. Emphasize you are giving him an opportunity to record his views for posterity.
- b. Subject areas for an interview:
 - (1) You wish to cover.
 - (2) He wishes to cover.
 - (3) He and you do not wish to cover.
- c. Set time and place for interview.

3-4. Planning the Interview. In planning for the interview the following should be considered:

- a. Quality of interview rests on thoroughness of interviewer's preparation.
- b. Research must be thorough and cover all interview subject areas. Saturate your subject from all available research sources.
- c. Biographical information on interviewee should include career, family, hobbies, and personal philosophy.
- d. Utilization of advance preparation outline covered by Historical Handbook, Attachment 21, will greatly facilitate

this important step.

- e. Avoid group interviews.
- £ Organization of interview.
 - (1) Chronological method.
 - (2) Topical method.
- g. Prepare question bank of pertinent thought-provoking questions and outline them on 3" x 5" cards, one question per card. Good questions are the basis for a good interview.

3-5. Types of Interviews and/or Questions. Types of interviews and/or questions fall into two broad categories as discussed below.

- a. Structured-detailed questions:
 - (1) Designed to answer specific questions.
 - (2) Limited response-usually generates to yes/ no answers.
- b. Unstructured-general questions:
 - (1) Designed for memoirs, etc.
 - (2) Recommended for beginning an interview.
 - (3) Good for interviewer if knowledge of specific area is limited.
 - (4) Allows interviewee latitude in formulating an answer.
 - (5) Usually leads to subjects that are ideal for structured questions.

3-6. Equipment/Material Checklist. The following check list should be used as a minimum before conducting an interview:

- a. Compact carrying case.
- b. Primary cassette recorder with proper power cord
- c. Secondary or backup cassette recorder with proper cord.
- d. Electrical (110 volt) extension cord.
- e. Microphone mixer assembly.
- f. Lapel microphone (2).
- g. Microphone extension cord (3 or more).
- h. Earphone for monitoring.
- i. Cassette tapes.
- j. Question cards.
- k. Tape and transcript access agreement.
 1. Pencils, writing pad, etc.
- m. Pertinent articles and reference material.
- n. Spare batteries, microphone, and mixer.
- o. Spare lapel microphone and spare assembly.

Chapter 4

CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW

4-1. General. The conduct of an interview should be guided in part by the following principles:

- a. Be on time and prepared and don't overlook personal appearance and dress. Create a professional image.
- b. If required, present CAI membership card.
- c. If possible, have equipment set up and ready prior to time of interview.

- (1) Decide location for interview which is free of distractions. Make sure adequate Bower sources for equipment are available.

- (2) Avoid discussing interview subjects while setting up equipment.

4-2. Recording During the Interview. Some suggested techniques during the recording portion of the interview are:

- a. Be professional and competent in setting up and operating equipment.

- b. Microphone:

- (1) Should be as close to interview subject as possible.

- (2) Will pick up all sounds, e.g. air conditioners, street noises, typing, etc.

- (3) If lapel microphones are not available, place mike stand on sound absorbing material, e.g. rubberized pad, desk blotter, etc.

- (4) Do not physically abuse the microphone.

- c. Machine location:

- (1) Should provide easy access to controls during the interview.

- (2) Should not be hidden from interviewee's sight.

- (3) Should be convenient to power source.

- (4) Should make it easy to see (monitor) tape remaining-never let tape run out. Try to leave several feet on supply source for recording interview data.

- d. Test machine:

- (1) Mark take-up reel-to-reel machine to prevent recording over a previously recorded tape.

- (2) Mark cassette tape "side 1" and "side 2" prior to placing in machine.

- (3) Correct volume level for recording determined best by test.

- (4) Run test portion well into tape (approximately ten seconds).

- e. Operation:

- (1) Run several feet of tape on to take-up spool prior to beginning interview. This allows space for recording interview subject, dates, location, and classification.

- (2) Adjust volume during interview if necessary.

- (3) Stop interviewee if machine malfunctions, tape runs out, etc.

- (4) Disable cassette record capability when both sides recorded. This will avoid the possibility of future misuse.

4-3. Distractions. Eliminate distractions such as telephones, intercom, public address system, open windows, repairmen, etc.

4-4. Explain Processing of the Interview. Explain process-

ing of the interview covering the following points as a minimum:

- a. Tape repository: Be specific-CAP National Headquarters archives and other official CAP archives, etc.

- b. Transcript is made of interview and also placed in repository.

- c. Copies of transcript sent to interviewee.

4-5. Techniques. Consideration of the following techniques is of utmost importance:

- a. Avoid adversary relationship. Establish rapport and empathy.

- b. No extra people should be present at the interview.

- c. Have pencils, papers, maps, question cards, etc.

NOTE: Maps can create a problem as do other extraneous material since the recorder cannot "see" the material and verbal description is not always appropriate.

- d. Write down difficult names, foreign words, etc., and ask interviewee after interview how to spell them.

- e. Ask direct, single, short questions and avoid long two-part, involved questions.

- f. Use care in asking sensitive questions. Generally, sensitive questions should be asked at the conclusion of the interview.

- g. Don't pressure interviewee for more information when it's obvious he is finished or gone as far as he desires in answering a question. If possible, return to that question later in the interview.

- h. Avoid expressing your opinion unless specifically pressed by the interviewee. Then keep your answer short!

- i. Don't be afraid of silence.

- j. Control the interview. Don't let him talk you into turning off the recorder. Suggest that you tape it and then restrict it later if necessary.

- k. Do not talk or interrupt when interviewee is speaking.

- l. Use diversified techniques in responding to interviewee. Use gestures or an occasional yes or no. Avoid "uh huhs," "humms" and nervous laughter.

- m. Try to maintain eye contact during the interview and, at the same time, avoid a stiff, formal appearance which can tend to make the interviewee feel ill at ease.

- n. Be careful of personal actions that would lead to tape clutter; i.e., playing with microphone, drumming on desk, etc.

- o. Establish interviews in the morning if possible.

Afternoon interviews are to be avoided; the quality is reduced due to:

- (1) fatigue.

- (2) poor responsiveness.

- p. Don't ask a question that has already been answered.

- q. Be flexible. Be objective. Be patient. Be attentive.

- r. Don't interject personal comments and opinions into interview. Don't make value judgments.

- s. Don't pretend to be an expert.

- t. Don't discuss commonly known information.

- u. Put questions in third person.

- v. Use discretion when discussing previous interviewees or quoting from them.

4-6. Concluding the Interview. In order to smoothly terminate an interview, the following should be considered:

a. Ask the interviewee if he has any additional comments.

b. Thank the interviewee and turn off the tape recorder.

(1) Do not hesitate to turn the recorder back on if interviewee recalls additional information. If interview does continue after once stopping, note the false stop.

(2) The quality of an interview is not determined by its length, therefore, end the interview when the subject has been adequately covered.

c. Impress upon the interviewee the value of the interview and its importance as a primary source document.

d. Explain the processing of the interview tape.

(1) Transcript is made with great time and effort.

(2) Tape and transcript are placed in a repository as a permanent historical document.

e. Present the "Tape and Transcript Access Agreement." Explain access and restrictions to interview information as covered by Attachments 22 and 23 of the "Historian's Handbook." (It is not in the best interest to show the form to

interviewee prior to actual interview.) The following should be emphasized:

(1) Who has access.

(2) How it will be controlled.

(3) How it will be used.

(4) Interviewee can choose restrictions, but make a strong effort to avoid over restricting.

(5) It is considered a memoir and donated to collecting agency.

f. A copy of the final transcript may be returned to the interviewee for review, but discourage attempts by interviewee to edit transcript extensively.

g. Never close the door to further contacts with the interview subject.

h. Common courtesy rules at this point-do the obvious.

(1) Remain congenial but do not lose professionalism. Subject may wish to talk about the interview session.

(2) Do not leave abruptly.

(3) Generally avoid socializing with interviewee unless interviewee encourages it. However, having lunch together, drinking, etc., may be the only way to obtain a quality interview.

Chapter 5

PROCESSING AN INTERVIEW

5-1. Record of Interview. The maintenance of an accurate record of the interview is extremely important.

5-2. Immediate Post-Interview Activities. After leaving interviewee, label the tape as soon as possible--in car, hotel room, office, etc. An unlabeled tape will be accidentally used and erased.

a. Record verbally on the tape:

(1) At the beginning, the name of the interviewee, date, place, and subject.

(2) At conclusion of interview, you may wish to note on tape your observations of interviewee, time of day, physical surroundings, and any other pertinent factors. Record that the interview is ended, if you have not made this clear when terminating the interview.

b. Place plastic leader or timing tape at the beginning and end of any reel-to-reel recording tapes used and print "who, what, when, and where."

c. Place gummed labels on the cassettes or reels (both sides) identifying tape.

d. Label tape box with "who, what, when, and where."

e. Keep "Tape and Transcript Access Agreement Form" associated with the tape(s) until the transcript is begun.

5-3. Transcribing the Tape. A very vital step is the proper transcription which should consider the following:

a. The oral history interview must be transcribed to be of optimum value to the researcher. The written document is the common tool of the researcher and can be:

- (1) Easily scanned.
- (2) Duplicated quickly and easily.
- (3) Easily stored.
- (4) Easily indexed.
- (5) Difficult to destroy.

b. Mechanics of Transcribing:

(1) Attach "access agreement" to working transcript.

(2) For each hour of taped interview, it is estimated that 6-25 hours of actual transcribing time will be expended for a verbatim transcript.

(3) The initial transcript is then collated against the interview tape to enhance transcribing accuracy.

(a) Task should be undertaken by the interviewer.

(b) Six to twelve hours per hour of interview tape for this step. (Attachment 2)

(4) The collated initial transcript is edited to eliminate interviewee verbal false starts, crutch words, thinking aloud, faulty grammar, etc. Three hours per one hour of interview tape are needed for this process. Good audio quality is vital to speed and accuracy in transcribing, collating, and editing. This dictates the need for quality tape recorder and transcribing machines.

c. Requirements for transcribing/collating/editing machines:

- (1) Basically a tape recorder/reproducer machine.
- (2) Be capable of fidelity output.
- (3) Have capability to vary frequency or tone.
- (4) Have foot pedal control for play and reverse functions (optional).
- (5) Can use headphones.

5-4. Interview Summary and Guide. Prepare a summary and guide to contents of interview and attach to transcript. See Historian's Handbook, Attachments 30 and 31.

5-5. Disposition of Tape and Transcript Access Agreement. Attach the "Tape and Transcript Access Agreement" to the transcript. Copies of the agreement are placed with the tapes.

5-6. Disposition of Final Transcript. Copies of the final transcript will be sent to interviewee after completion as covered by the Historian's Handbook. (Attachment 30)

SOME NOTES ON THE SELECTION OF TRANSCRIBERS

From the Oral History Association Newsletter, Vol. VI, No. 2, June 1972.

What are the qualifications of a good transcriber? One point of view is expressed by George A. Magers in an article entitled, "The Blind Employee as Transcriber," *Medical Record News*, February 1965. According to Magers, a minimum of high school graduation with a good academic background in English grammar and spelling is considered a basic requirement for a transcriber. It is usually agreed that a skill of 45 wpm or 125 lines per hour is a good indication of a person's capability for this work. Ability to use the electric typewriter is important. Also, above average intelligence combined with a keen interest in the subject matter is preferable.

Cornell University's Program in Oral History has recently issued some tentative conclusions on the selection of transcribers. These are based on five years' experience with 31 transcribers ranging in age between 19 and 60. According to Peggy Pack of the program's staff, who supervises the selection and training of transcribers at Cornell, "A good typist may be a poor transcriber. While typing ability is essential, a knowledge of subject matter sufficient to recognize whether words are appropriate in a context is equally essential."

Ms. Pack says that the clerical aptitude test administered by Cornell's personnel department has not been useful because it does not measure general knowledge. When its limitations became apparent, she designed her own test composed of words which had been transcribed incorrectly on at least several occasions. The test was then put on tape, simulating the condition of poor diction frequently encountered in interview situations, including slurs and run-on sentences. Prospective transcribers were asked to transcribe the test double-spaced and leave a blank space if they could not understand what was said. They were also cautioned that a departure from the oral record would be counted as an error. The test follows:

"In order to produce a verbatim transcript, many skills are necessary. Perhaps foremost is that of being a good listener. A wide knowledge of current events and of history are important, as is an extensive vocabulary, the ability to spell, to know when to use quotation marks and other punctuation, when to capitalize, and so forth. Some of these skills can be partially acquired or improved by carefully reading on a daily basis of a wide variety of subject matter - newspapers, magazines, books, and so forth. There is no guarantee that a typist will achieve success as a transcriber unless she is knowledgeable about people and events past and present. Since oral history interviews consist of conversations between two (or more) persons, more skill is required than is needed to type ordinary dictation. Depending upon the types of projects currently under way, a transcriber may have to understand terms ranging from George Meany's current problems with an injunction to bale elevators and heifer calves owned by a farm family. A college professor may salt his conversation with academic terms - and be certain that grammatical errors in the transcript were made by the transcriber. An attorney may talk about the right of due process and cite examples of defendants' being deprived of this right. An old-timer on Nantucket Island may speak of whaling in the North Atlantic. A politician may reminisce about Franklin Roosevelt and the New Deal. A government economist may focus upon the long-range effect of declining profits. A transcriber whose vocabulary is definitely limited may have trouble knowing what words fits the context. She may also have difficulty with Latin phrases such as *sub rosa* and *per se*. Constant reference to a dictionary adds to the time necessary to complete the transcript.

"Since we require that the transcript reflect the tape as nearly as possible, punctuation must be varied in order to indicate pauses in the conversation, false starts, and so forth. The transcriber must watch for changes in thought in order to paragraph properly. She must also accommodate us by typing improper grammar just as it was spoken. To add to her woes, she must be able on occasion to understand regional or foreign accents. All of these skills must be accompanied by a good typing ability. The original transcript is eventually sent to the library archives, so a transcriber's commitment to neatness, accuracy, and careful listening will help insure success."

"A transcriber, however, is not expected to be a lexicographer. An adequate interviewer will provide a list of proper names, scientific terms, and other words which might be difficult, such as L-e-x-i-c-o-g-r-a-p-h-e-r."

Selection of Cornell's transcribers has been determined at least in part by their performance on this test which indicates their ability to spell the words correctly and to use them in a sentence. However, there are some additional criteria that Ms. Pack applies in the selection process. She believes that interest is another dimension of success in transcription. So applicants are asked what periodicals they read with some regularity. Ms. Pack observes that "young women haven't been good transcribers on subjects which don't command their interest." She thinks the same may be true of men, but Cornell has never had a male transcriber. In the final analysis, "age as an interest factor seems to be related to the need to supplement a family income, young people often having less incentive to become interested in subjects which are outside the perimeters of their current values and aspirations. However, income as the sole (apparent) motivation for transcribers has not been associated with the quality of performance."

The Cornell test is reproduced by permission of director Gould P. Colman, Cornell Program in Oral History.

**AVERAGE TIME REQUIREMENTS TO PREPARE, CONDUCT,
AND PROCESS AN INTERVIEW**

Average times required to transcribe, audit, edit, proof, summarize, page index, correct, and final type one hour of oral history interview conducted by the CAP Oral History Program:

Duty by Transcriber-Editor	
Initial transcribing/editing	10:00
Retype of transcript/editing	3:00
Proofreading of transcript	3:45
Typing corrections to transcript	:15
Summary preparation	:20
Page Index	:10
Final type of interviewee's corrections	:45
	18:15 hours
Duty by Interviewer	
Auditing transcript with tape	3:00
Editing transcript	5:00
Proofreading final transcript	3:00
	11:00 hours

TOTAL TIME 29:15 hours*

* One hour of tape equals 25-30 pages of transcript.