

Time coding & indexing oral histories

Time coding: Why?

An oral history is a sound and/or video recording. With the proper technology and training, an oral historian may edit a digital recording to incorporate it into a museum display, Web site, documentary film, or other sound/visual production. To make an oral history recording useful for future editing, use time codes to provide the location of subjects on the recording by hour, minute, and second.

- ◆ Time coding makes information on recordings accessible by subject.
- ◆ Time coding allows electronic synchronization of a sound file with its corresponding subject index or transcript.

How?

- Using digital playback software, insert track marks with annotations into sound files.
- Using digital transcribing software, embed time codes into a transcript.

Time-subject index: Why?

Indexing or logging a recording by time and subject is a satisfactory alternative to transcribing.

- ◆ Indexing helps the interviewer identify information gaps to cover in future interviews.
- ◆ Indexing provides correct spellings for names and terms mentioned in the interview, thereby enhancing the accuracy of the information for future users or transcribers.

How?

- Index soon after the interview.
- Index by obvious breaks in the topic or by time (every five minutes or less).
- The more details included in the index, the better.

Name: Arthur Louis Santos
Date of interview: January 15, 2008
Location: Santos home, 2222 West Drive, Waco, Texas
Interviewer: John Sutcliffe
Project: Waco History Coalition: Sandtown
Recording no. 0778; compact disc

H/M/S	Topic
00:00:03	Introduction
00:01:05	Description: between Brazos River and South 1st, below Clay St. to city dump; shotgun houses mixed with frame structures; railroad tracks; meat packing plants; unpaved streets
00:08:08	Name origin: not sure; speculates it is from sandy, unpaved streets
00:09:25	Came when he was a baby (he was born in 1930) family moved there from Coahuila, Mexico, because several uncles lived there; provides names of family members: father, Juan Reyes Santos; mother: María Zapata Lopez Santos; uncles, Julio and Ernesto Lopez
00:15:33	Childhood games, fishing and swimming in river, walking past city square to attend Sunday mass at St. Francis Catholic Church