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"It Looks Like the Future but Feels Like the Past": Oral (Hi)Stories of Appalachia as COVID-19 News Stories

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"IT LOOKS LIKE THE FUTURE BUT FEELS LIKE THE PAST":
ORAL (HI)STORIES OF APPALACHIA AS COVID-19 NEWS STORIES

by

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DEDICATION

To the residents of the South advocating for their communities and their futures. This thesis is also dedicated to Mothy, the best bunny and cryptid.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

ABSTRACT

Oral historians have often felt obligated to collect stories during disasters and crises, to preserve recollections of experiences and trauma of those affected. During the onset of COVID-19 in the United States, this surge was certainly present. Appalachia, although its boundaries are contested, has a strong association with oral histories, and thus was the focus of one project in particular: a collaboration with the Blue Ridge Public Radio and the Foxfire Appalachian Heritage Museum to collect, curate, publish, and broadcast oral histories of "local" individuals. But what does it mean to be local, in a region as broad as Appalachia? What content, or rather whose stories make a good news story or a magazine story? How are stories altered to fit this frame of representing Appalachia? This thesis first summarizes my summer research in the archives of the Foxfire Appalachian Heritage Museum in Mountain City, Georgia, as I gathered transcripts of the project and spoke with the museum assistant curator about the process. Using discussions of entextualization, re-contextualization, and remediation, I then analyze these transcripts to answer these questions of story-making and identity (Bauman and Briggs 1990; Bauman 2016; Koven 2014). I show that editors adjust texts to circulate outside of the time of narration and original context of the original interview, without relying on folksy images of Appalachia, and that oral history narrators deftly operate

between various speaker-inhabitance roles to tell their own stories of Appalachia during the COVID-19 pandemic.

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INTRODUCTION

As the COVID-19 pandemic began spreading across the United States, various pandemic oral history and journaling projects were started as a form of collective memory making[1] chronicling the social isolation that people were experiencing. These projects aimed to accomplish many things: a sense of purpose during a time where many felt lost and anxious, a feeling of importance by contributing personal experiences and voices to the historical record, and a notion of connectedness across the different people and communities submitting their oral histories. The onset of the pandemic ushered in a new age of oral history collection practices that should not be underestimated.

Communities have long used oral histories to establish shared histories and teach knowledge and epistemologies across generations. However, practices employed in academia and governmental agencies often employed models of collection which involved forms of dispossession and withholding-gathering stories from communities which were othered or deemed disappearing. Oral history projects undertaken by academics, private corporations, and political institutions have historically consisted of stories being collected–both by novices and trained experts–stored away in archives, never to be heard again unless one should have the ability to request access to them in the archive. As the digital

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[1] I will discuss the processes and theories of collective memory that I am using in Chapter 2.

age began, some institutions saw a chance to both make oral histories more accessible and to better preserve them through digital archives, including some open access websites which can house thousands of hours of oral histories (Appalachian Oral History Project UNC Chapel Hill). By making oral histories readily available to both the communities who may be engaged with them and outside listeners and readers, these oral history projects increase accessibility as well as change the nature of the field itself. Oral history interviewees can agree to their story being shared to generations to come, and stories are able to leave the archive and travel to the computer of anyone interested. The technical relationship between the place of recording, place of storage, and place of listeners was altered in the process, alongside important changes in who has access to oral histories and who controls access.

For the Foxfire Appalachian Heritage Museum, located in Mountain City, Georgia, both place and accessibility is a crucial element of the museum's mission statement and community engagement. The Foxfire Museum is a series of buildings– full cabins or smaller structures of what remains of historic cabins and barns–situated along a gravel and dirt trail winding up the mountain. Visitors can walk along the path, map in hand, and read different signage describing buildings and stops along the way, including the trail itself, and plants growing naturally or being upkept by the staff. The trail, began at the visitors center and gift shop, and continued past the archive, which was locked but had an interactive part of the tour on the outside of the building- where visitors could click buttons and hear snippets of recorded speech telling stories of life in

Appalachia in the early 1900s. Within the archive of the Foxfire Museum, over 2,700 oral history interviews are stored. These oral histories have been gathered, since 1966, by Foxfire staff and Foxfire high school interns (called Foxfire Fellows). These Fellows travel to community members in Rabun County, Georgia, and sit with them for hours to conduct in-depth interviews and conversations- although these interviews were moved to virtual meetings at the onset of the COVID-19 pandemic. Interviews were transcribed, first by hand in the 1960s, then by typewriter, and finally by computer, by Foxfire Fellows or staff, and stored in the archives of the museum along with the recordings. Of nearly 3,000 interviews, several have left the archive and been made available to the public, through the Foxfire Magazine and podcast "It Still Lives", a publication of the Foxfire books, and, recently, a deliberate effort to circulate oral histories of Appalachia to a broader audience through a collaborative oral history publication project with a news station. In contrast to other institutions who restrict access to oral histories, even those gathered from "disappearing" communities, the Foxfire Museum seeks to simultaneously foster realistic representations of Appalachia and make it accessible to readers and communities beyond the museum's walls.

This thesis aims to investigate how a select number of original oral history transcripts collected during this collaborative project were altered for publication in the Foxfire 2020 COVID-19 special edition magazine, and also processed for publication on Blue Ridge Public Radio's website, in both audio and written forms. In particular, the focus is on processes of recontextualization exploring how oral history narratives are transformed into different genres for publication

serving different imagined 'publics'. The questions addressed are threefold: How are stories transformed for publication in the Foxfire Magazine and Blue Ridge Public Radio? What about them makes these stories interesting news about Appalachia – or local? What alterations are made to make a "good story" that can be circulated- or viewed as representative of a region or group?

By studying these processes, I will connect how regional institutions both form publics or communities of coverage, and transform stories to reach them, in addition to the ways in which different stories travel encompassing different scales and media formats, in order to spread small stories of Appalachia towards a broader conceptualization of the region.

CHAPTER 2
DEPICTIONS OF APPALACHIA

The Blue Ridge Public Radio and Foxfire Museum Project

In February 2021, Blue Ridge Public Radio (BPR) published a call for self-recorded and submitted oral history interviews about the experience of COVID-19 in Appalachia. The call was part of a collaboration with the aforementioned Foxfire Appalachian Heritage Museum, a museum in Rabun County, Georgia, located ninety miles southwest of Asheville, North Carolina, where BPR's headquarters are located. The campaign sought to publish stories of experiences of those in Southern and Central Appalachia, with a particular focus being Western North Carolina, which was a relatively recent geographic focus of Blue Ridge Public Radio's stories, as only in the last decade did BPR hire journalists to cover the region specifically. The campaign (although technically still ongoing) resulted in eighty-four collected oral histories, covering topics ranging from personal stories of life when the first COVID-19 shutdown occurred, to experiences of students in online classes, as many oral histories were actually submitted by college students as part of an Anthropology 101 course. Of these 84 collected, a total of five oral histories were published as news stories on BPR's website, with transcripts alongside approximately three-minute segments of audio. In addition to the BPR features, twenty-seven oral histories were published in Foxfire's biannual magazine, in a special edition focusing on the

COVID-19 pandemic. These magazine publications focused on relatable topics such as businesses, religious services, education, artistry and music, and public services like parks and libraries, and how these topics reflected change due to the pandemic.

The Foxfire magazine, which was first published in 1967, contains content gathered and edited by a group of Rabun County, Georgia, high school students, with the curator of the museum and a high school teacher serving as advisors and overseers for the project. Foxfire's recent editions of the biannual magazine features transcribed excerpts of oral histories, with commentary from the student editors throughout, alongside black and white photos of the places and people referenced in the narratives. The magazine, which has about 600 annual subscribers, is thematically organized, with topics covering different aspects of life in Rabun County which were impacted by COVID-19 in salient ways: education, through perspectives of students and teachers, local businesses, religious services, and more. Oral history interviews are edited in the volume into distinct solo narratives- by removing the questions asked by interviewers and altering the flow of speech to seem like unbroken, flowing storytelling. However, the earliest editions of the magazine differed in several aspects. While the process of student curation and editing remains the same, the content topics and transcription practices were different in earlier editions: as one can see on the first edition, which is available on the Foxfire website, the magazine also included written work from published authors nationwide, as well as new writers creative work from the region and beyond. In addition to this outsider inclusivity, the

earlier magazines also featured topics which leaned more heavily into stereotypes: discussions of feuds between families, recipes and remedies for healing, and stories of isolation. As time progressed, stories featured in the magazine shifted to relatable human interest stories describing individual's experiences in work, family, and community engagement, and the Foxfire podcast moved to feature modern stories with a mix of older oral history recordings. This allows different media forms of the museum to lean into the different affordances offered due to medium: the ability for a podcast to feature music or recordings of old oral histories, as well as the magazine's ability to feature photos of current places and people who are engaged in the interview, and editorial text. The podcast, although it is utilizing nostalgic forms at times, is able to preserve past stories and the literal voices of past and present residents of the region, as opposed to many other publications of the region which market nostalgia.

The oral history excerpts in the early magazines are transcribed in eye dialect: "gratuitous misspellings… which are not contrastive with most American pronunciations" (Jaffe and Walton 2000, 565) with certain words being written in non-standard ways to distinguish them as salient examples of "Appalachian English": "putcha", "a'hold'a", "y'gointa'" (Foxfire 1967, 11, 12). In addition, the roles of the student interviewers in the procuration of these oral histories was present in some stories- with meta commentary about the process of collecting such as "Fascinated, and now reluctant to leave, we pressed him to keep talking" (Foxfire 1967, 14). Although the specific guiding questions are removed from the

oral history narratives, the inclusion of the students recording and interviewing as actors and co-constructors of the narrative is strikingly different as compared to the COVID-19 special edition of the magazine published in 2020. The presence or absence of interviewers as well as other alterations made to oral history narratives for publication has potential to show how certain publications follow particular patterns of editing in order to fit the expectations of the genre, including format, but also the representation of specific communities and regions. This is just one choice in a series of choices made in the process of transforming oral histories in between collection and publication.

Borders and Barriers

The Foxfire Museum features a combination of historical displays and community activities, encouraging the locals to participate in activities or see musical performances in a communal space. The Museum, although it is named an Appalachian Heritage Museum, is dedicated to preserving some history and material culture of Rabun County, and Mountain City itself, as a part of Appalachia–not necessarily representing Appalachia as an entire region. It is important to note here that the widespread idea of Appalachia as a culturally cohesive region–one that could be defined and that one could identify as a part of, both geographically and culturally–is a fairly recent one. In fact, it was largely established as a region through a political move enacted by President John F. Kennedy in 1965, with other events following to complete the process of distinguishing Appalachia as a culturally cohesive area.

As Batteau describes in *The Invention of Appalachia¸* two events in the mid-twentieth century played a large role in the creation of Appalachia as a distinct region. The first was the creation of the Appalachian Regional Commission, or ARC, which defined Appalachia by grouping counties along and near the mountain region which the United States Federal Government identified as undergoing economic and educational disparity. Not only were these factors attributed to the geographic environment or the cultural norms of those in the (newly defined and politically created) region, but the actual factors causing economic disparity to the individuals living there, such as parasitic industries with toxic mining practices, were hardly acknowledged as colossal contributing factors. In the first Presidential Appalachian Regional Commission report, the region was described as "a region apart—geographically and statistically" (Appalachia Then and Now 2015, 5). Although poverty rates have decreased by nearly fifty percent, per the ARC's 2015 report, the region is still defined by its difference- or status as Other- relative to the rest of the United States. Appalachia was a region identified as poor, while simultaneously surrounded by natural resources and possibility for growth- separated from prosperity and opportunity by nature itself.

The ARC thus sought to encourage state-wide and national leaders to improve education and poverty in the region, and Appalachia became a label to be leveraged politically for funding, with little reckoning of corporate predation. Political moves, however, were not the only way that Appalachia came into the public eye.
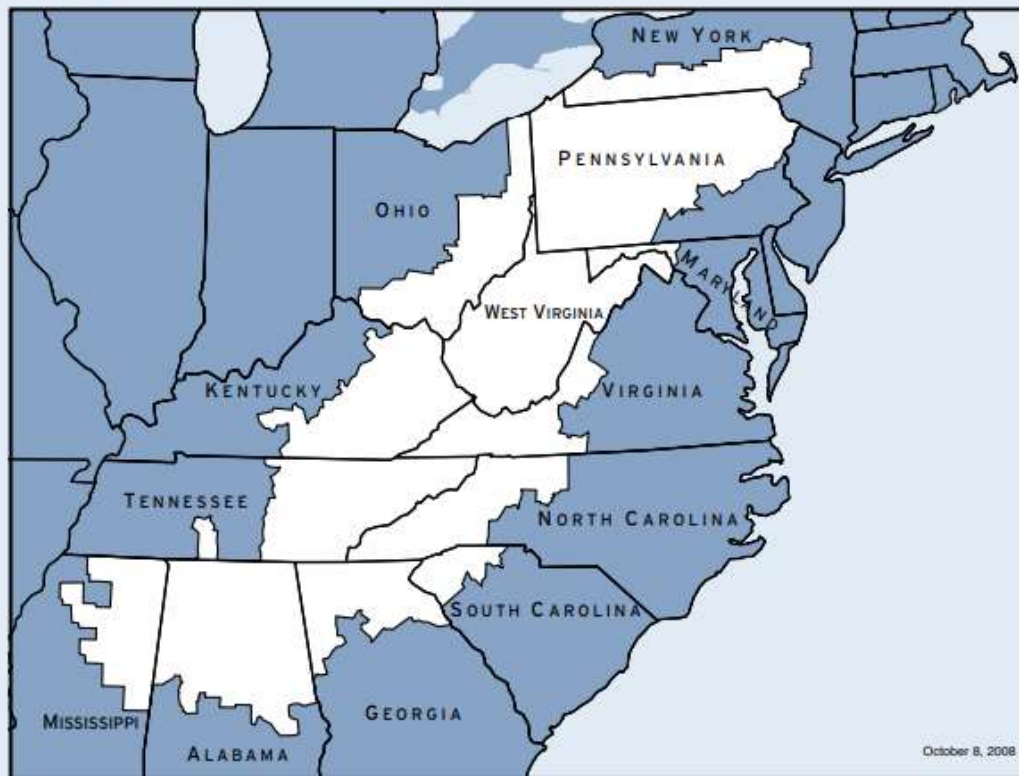
Appalachia is a 205,000-square-mile region that follows the spine of the Appalachian Mountains from southern New York to northern Mississippi. It includes all of West Virginia and portions of 12 other states: Alabama, Georgia, Kentucky, Maryland, Mississippi, New York, North Carolina, Ohio, Pennsylvania, South Carolina, Tennessee, and Virginia. Forty-two percent of the Region's population is rural, compared with 20 percent of the nation's.

Source: Appalachian Regional Commission

Figure 2.1 A Map of Appalachia by the ARC

Around the same time as the creation of the ARC, a CBS documentary was circulated on United States television called "Christmas in Appalachia", which influenced national perspectives on the region and those living in it. The documentary depicted Appalachians as traditional, poverty-stricken, rustic, white Americans living in isolated rural areas. Not only was Appalachia smoothly incorporated into the idea of a nostalgic, traditional rural America, but it also was

set aside as a group of backwards folks, or rednecks, who refused to modernize.

This again not only ignored the economic and cultural reality- both the harmful

mining industries as well as the hopeful activism conducted by individuals in the

area. It additionally erased the presence of people of color living in the region,

including various Native groups who lived along the mountain range and the

counties surrounding it before the movement of white colonizers and later

immigrant populations, and who still live there today. Regardless of the reality,

Appalachia as a cultural idea was effectively created as a bounded geographic

location containing a specific type of individual with certain economic behaviors

stuck in a moment in time. Whether residents of the region choose to identify as

Appalachian- or to even take pride in the label and celebrate their own

communities within the region is another matter entirely; some are surprised to

find their home counties on the ARC map, having never identified as

Appalachian, while some others are proud residents of the region and choose to

advocate for better resources for their area.

The area of the United States defined as Appalachia on the ARC map is

extensive: of the thirteen states included in the government definition, the entirety

of West Virginia is bounded within the region, with select counties of the other

twelve states included. However, these borders are not static; the designated

borders of Appalachia have changed, according to the ARC, over time, with a

total of 420 counties included today, as opposed to the 360 at the original time of

the commission. Of the counties contained within Appalachia, there is some

overlap with counties in the west of North Carolina that are part of another

regional delineation- Western North Carolina (WNC). Which counties are included in WNC sometimes depends on the purposes and beliefs of the person referencing the area. Some residents see themselves as living in WNC but not necessarily Appalachia, for example. For others, the overlap in this area between Appalachia and WNC is significant and the counties are part of *both* simultaneously.

On an institutional level, journalistic institutions may delineate their use of terms like WNC or Appalachian according to the beliefs of their perceived community of coverage, which is the audience they view as potential consumers of the news they will publish. As Cotter describes in her 2010 work on the anthropology of journalism, *News Talk,* "journalists' consideration of audience affects interaction… as well as story" (Cotter 2010, 26). For Blue Ridge Public Radio, establishing WNC as an area first happened in the 1970s with the construction of radio towers in various counties in order to increase the range of broadcasting, up to the last decade where BPR hired its first dedicated journalist to report on stories occurring in WNC. Whether those stories are recent striking news stories, or interesting cultural stories, the two foci of BPR as reflected in its mission statement, is another way that content and the communities it includes are divided and partitioned. However, it is clear that BPR views WNC and Appalachia as connected, through, at the very least, their campaign with the Foxfire Appalachian Heritage Museum.

Foxfire Museum, as described previously, defines itself as an Appalachian heritage museum, but focuses on stories of locals who are in the immediate

vicinity. However, when looking at the stories contained within the Foxfire Magazine, one can see how ideas of geographic locality are possibly complicated by the stories the magazine chooses to publish, by telling stories of those living in the area who have only moved there recently, thus breaking out of traditional expectations of who is "Appalachian".

Although the magazine is disrupting typical barriers in that way, access to oral histories within archives serves as an institutional barrier present across many archival systems. Archives can separate communities from their own histories, by allowing only certain individuals access to oral histories and only within certain frames. In addition to these institutional blocks, archives may also be inaccessible to disabled communities, whether through the lack of accessible spaces or the lack of translations and other accommodations. Archives may entail choice of whose stories are being included or excluded, but there is also power reclaimed by communities who choose not to be involved in oral history projects whatsoever.

Chronotopes and (Depictions of) Tradition

Anthropologists and folklorists alike have studied the ideologies present in publications about regions deemed traditional or old-fashioned. Ideas of what is considered modern are always contrasted against the traditional. Those who are deemed unadvanced or backward coincide with problematic elements of institutions such as education systems and the neoliberal ideologies pervasive within: that individuals can and must choose to "better" themselves or be left behind. The belief that groups can always strive for improvement while ignoring

the institutional forces at play within an area, thus leaves some to suffer while simultaneously being blamed for their own suffering.

Ideologies about Appalachia as a region, and the way these ideologies intersect with on-the-ground lived experiences of those living there, reveal a variety of ways that people interact with other people, time, and place. Mikhail Bakhtin's idea of the chronotope (1986) is one way that ideas of the past and place may be grappled with in the context of Appalachia, at least from the perspective of outsiders, and is found in imagery in mass media, including novels, films and the like. One major chronotype, first developed as a concept to study fiction novels, is stagnant; it is a trope, the idea of a certain group and place stuck within a certain time and space. Chronotopes both minor and major can reflect genres, plotlines, and typical characters expected to exist in a certain text; for example, the aforementioned major chronotope in Western literature analyzed originally by Bakhtin is "the Idyll": the expectations of rurality and those living in rural areas.

For many depictions of Appalachia in the twentieth century, Appalachia was evoked as this particular chronotope: a region stuck in past ways of life, with a refusal to change to adapt the new technological age. Stereotypes of characteristics associated with the region expanded; beyond being erroneously depicted as homogenously white, and poor and uneducated, the idea of Appalachia present in media nationwide was that of a specific type of person in a specific era of time. Conjuring up images of a white farmer in overalls with a long beard, sitting on a front porch, speaking with a certain prosody and Appalachian

dialect, with little modern amenities, Appalachia was such a powerful chronotope that it is easy even today for books, documentaries, and journalism to falsely depict the region. Outsiders sometimes even view oppressive politics, parasitic corporations, and the environmental effects of climate change as Appalachian people's own fault. The region, now more than ever with the availability of social media, speaks out, however, with more and more emphasis on the political and labor activists, diversity in the area, including the Indigenous groups who live(d) in the region, and the need for the role of toxic industries to be acknowledged. In fact, when books such as *Hillbilly Elegy* are published, many Appalachians took to social media to point out the harmful misrepresentations in the book; thus forces of representation and interpretation such as the chronotope have a strong ability to affect the region in both positive and negative ways.

Perspectives on Time and Place

Chronotopic imagery involving the Idyll is often, but not always exploiting nostalgic 'structures of feeling.' While chronotopes can engage with nostalgia, the distinction between the two lies in the fact that chronotopic imagery is connected with genre and its expectations, while nostalgia can be evoked by a genre but primarily affects the emotive ways people engage with a (dis)connected past. This past, and the feelings that surround it, can be connected with a community's history or their expectations of a place's history that is distant from their lived realities. 'Structures of feeling' developed by Welsh author Raymond Williams, invokes this distinction, as he describes how different structures of feeling condition visitors to experience rurality as a calm break from

busy urban life. Nostalgia has been evoked about Appalachia in this way

historically, but it seems to be less prevalent in the work of institutions today.

       As such, nostalgia does not exist separately from individual and

institutional actors; it is more than a feeling, but a feeling that can be harnessed

as action and capital through forces of collective memory making. Scholars like

Will and Krista Kurlinkus, in their 2018 article "Coal Keeps the Lights On",

discuss how political actors such as former president Donald Trump utilized

nostalgia and its connections and breaks with collective memory for political and

financial gains. Collective memory itself is a somewhat broad term- but, for the

purpose of this research project, will be understood via the definition provided by

Glăveanu: "our relation, as individuals and communities, to the collective past.

This past includes events or circumstances that shape entire communities or

societies" (Glăveanu 2017, 256). However, collective memory is not merely a

mental and emotional process, but "encompasses those social, cultural, and

psychological processes (memory included) that help us relate to (i.e. remember,

make meaning of, narrate about) a shared past" (Glăveanu 2017, 256).

Collective memory is a process of working with the past, within the present. It can

be a strategy for building resilience or community, a way to work within close

emotional relationships with a place, or pushing back against hegemonic

narratives. Nostalgia, on the other hand, can exist outside the experienced

realities of groups, and be utilized by institutions and at the state level- it does not

necessitate a current engagement with memory, but rather the emotions tied with

memory of a distant past just out of reach. Institutions can benefit from utilizing

nostalgia, while collective memory is the means by which a contemporary group asserts who they are today.

Oral history projects, in addition to physical community based heritage sites, are particularly salient methods of collective memory making for the purpose of this research. Oral histories, to be coherently sorted, and archived, require some quality that links multiple stories, and multiple experiences, into one category- whether stories are grouped and tagged topically, or due to perceived similarity of social group. However, the act of designing an oral history project is itself instigating a collective memory making process; in the case of the BPR and FF project, two institutions interpellated Appalachia(ns) and created a way to institutionally gather and store memories of a public health crisis within the region- and to transform them into one larger memory of the COVID-19 era in Appalachia.

Foxfire Appalachian Heritage Museum itself, as a cultural heritage site, relies on collective memory to draw in community involvement and support, as well as continuous production of new editions of its magazine, podcast, and book. The site preserves cabins, documents, and ways of life such as weaving and techniques for planting crops, and engages with the memory of those in Rabun Gap, Georgia- inviting community members to simultaneously participate in traditional lifeways in the modern era and see how the community has grown and can be modern but still utilize and learn from the past. Indeed, the physical and internal structures of the museum encourage this building of collective memory, by inviting new generations of Rabun Gap youth to be involved in the

museum and physically stay on cabins on its grounds every summer, while

teaching these students methods of recording and preserving oral histories

through the Foxfire Fellowship. As these fellows are trained, new generations are

taught simultaneously how to preserve recollections of past experiences and how

to convert them into scholarly historicity (Wirtz 2016, 358). In this way, the

museum engages with current collective memory making within the community,

while negotiating expectations of archival practices to convert personal narrative

into neutral history. The museum staff and associates are able to create their

own pedagogy, while simultaneously working as a community of modern folks

engaged with the past, for future generations to come.

CHAPTER 3

HOW TO ASK

Interviewing

Narratives, and their publication, are shaped by particular

professional semiotic ideologies, beginning with expectations concerning proper

ways to conduct them, interpret them, and disseminate them. Interviews are one

strategy to acquire narratives of personal experience, and may be completed

alongside other methods of research. Interviews and their merits or limitations

have had a great deal of discussion, within the field of linguistic anthropology,

and with other qualitative researchers more broadly. Some refer to interviewing

as "deep listening" (Hart 2021), which entails a particular approach to

interviewing tactics, as a form of listening and emotionally connecting with

interviewees to have a successful understanding of their meanings. Interviews

could be viewed as deep listening and be incorporated into ethnographic

methods, which are sometimes referred to as "deep hanging out", or interviews

can be part of a clinical practice. However, it is important to consider the ethical

implications of getting close- especially in a field like anthropology, where the

benefits of proximity are often not weighed alongside possible harms to

researcher. Interviews thus exist as a critical method of research for the field of

anthropology as a whole, and certainly historically formative for the field of

linguistic anthropology, but simultaneously are a method scholars and interviewees alike should be critical of when participating.

Ideologies of the Interview

As Michele Koven described in her 2014 article about interviewing, interviews are widely recognized as a tool that people can use to hear what are presumed to be 'the inner thoughts' and 'true self' of the person being interviewed. Although it is clear to see that this perspective is not always accurate, it permeates the structures of several different types of communication including psychotherapy and oral history. This understanding of the interview, and of ideologies of what language is able to accomplish, emerged as early as the 1690's, with political philosopher John Locke, who believed that "individuals must convey transparent and precise models of the contents of their minds to others" (Briggs 2007, 553). The structures of interviews, and what the interviewers are hoping to accomplish, reflect and are affected by beliefs of knowledge and social interaction. For instance, "psychiatric, oral historical, and life-history interviews center on individual interviewees and the process of self-disclosure, painting interviews as powerful windows into a person's experiences, memories, and feelings" (Briggs 2007, 554).

As Briggs discusses in his highly influential 1986 work *Learning How to Ask,* the positionalities of the interviewer and interviewee influence what is produced in the interview itself. Although text may need to be removed from context and emotionally neutral in order to travel easily across iterations, text

produced from interviews is inherently non-neutral. In the case of oral history interviews specifically, Briggs urges for researchers who engage in interview analysis to consider data as situated in context and dialogic interaction- like every conversation. An example of contextual data that Briggs names specifically to watch out for is the use of filler words, which are often removed from transcripts and not considered part of the analysis.

The Foxfire Pedagogy: Learning How to Ask

As the Foxfire Fellows begin their eight week summer fellowship, they are officially mentored by Foxfire staff as well as a teacher from a local high school. These adults teach the fellows how to conduct interviews, how to record and transcribe them, and how to then transform them for the magazine. However, mentors exist in the community outside of the official affiliation with the museum. Since the inception of the museum, fellows engage in oral history interviews with members of the community, often times elders in the community. These community members are not only receptive to being interviewed for publication in Foxfire, but also are willing to sit with students who are novice interviewers and engage in interviews that last anywhere from ten minutes to three hours. During the duration of the interview, there may be prompting from the fellows towards certain topics, but the interviewees themselves play a large role in directing the conversation. They may choose to redirect from a question- at times stating their confusion or displeasure with the question- or choose to request the recorder be turned off while they answer. This allows these community members to teach the

fellows *how to ask*- and raise new generations of scholars engaged with the community and with the community organization and its practice of oral histories.

For example, in one oral history gathered as part of the COVID-19 collaboration, a Foxfire fellow is interviewing a member of the community about his business. Although the businessman, Tom Majors, owns multiple businesses, the Foxfire fellow chooses to focus on one: a drive-in movie theater, and to not ask questions about Tom's other business, an assisted living facility. From the start, the Fellow was able to have some control over the direction of the interview and the information that would be gathered from it[2]. However, as the interview progresses, the Fellow asks a question which Tom Majors is not satisfied with- and he states this[3] and directs the interview towards another question. In this way, although the Fellow has some control over the trajectory of the interview, the community member is able to also control both what is said as well as offer guidance to the fellow about what to ask and how to ask it. This is merely one example of the pedagogical cycle of Foxfire interviews: where fellows are trained in *how to ask*, then in turn one day very well are *asked* by another generation of Fellow, in another generation of Foxfire interviews. This process can be traced back in time, to the inception of the magazine and the museum, where students developed relationships with community elders as part of the fellowship process, and learned how to conduct interviews over time. As Foxfire emerged during a time where outsiders frequently entered Appalachia to conduct extractive

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[2] See Appendix A for the list of samples questions that interviewers were provided with.
[3] See Appendix B for the full original transcript of the Tom Majors interview.

research, this community and relationship development was crucial, and at times

something the fellows made wry jokes about (See Figure 3.1). Although the role

of the interviewer was more explicitly stated in past editions of the magazine,

those familiar with the routine of the magazine, and the many community

members who engaged with it, have seen how the cycle of learning and teaching

how to ask has continued.

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      We both apologize to those who now shudder when they
see us approach, and hope that the final results of their
particular ordeals as they appear in final form will en-
courage others to be willing - even enthusiastic - about
undergoing the same torture!

                                              The Editors
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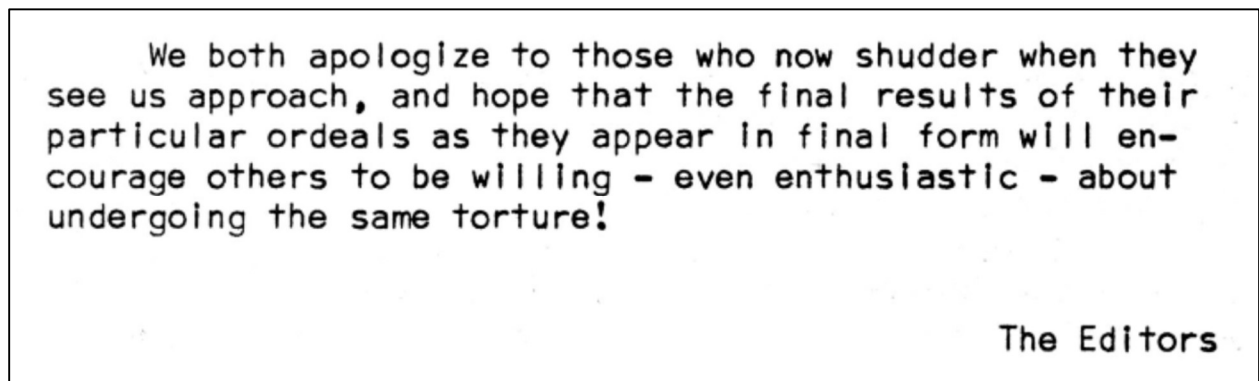
Figure 3.1 Excerpt from the Introduction to the First Edition of Foxfire Magazine

Ideologies of Transcription

After an interview is completed, the recording is typically digitally

stored alongside a transcription of the interview. For many, a transcription seems

to be a natural process of "writing what you hear", but, as linguistic

anthropologists and many other qualitative researchers are aware, transcription

is embedded in ideologies about interactions and the correct way to display

them- or, as Bauman and Briggs may say, to intersemiotically translate them into

text.

Bucholtz (2000) describes how various choices made by third parties when transcribing can change the content produced. Transcribers may view themselves as knowing what the individual "meant to say", or may correct small grammatical errors, remove awkward hesitations or filler words, or make monumental changes to the structure of the text. One large aspect of transcription is the choice of how to represent various accents and vocal elements of speech into a written form; transcribers may choose to use the International Phonetic Alphabet to represent specific sounds, to transcribe words into standard language forms, or to transcribe into "eye-dialects", as exemplified in the early Foxfire book in chapter one of this thesis. Transcriptions may also feature the use of bold, italics, or colored text in order to emphasize inflection, volume, or prosody. Although all of these choices are meaningful, in addition to conveying speech in textual form, transcription may also translate and transform one meaning into another.

As Bucholtz elaborates, adjusting the order of when a statement is said within an interview or speech can completely change the social meaning of the statement and the overall text. Regardless, different genres have their own practices for transcribing, including excluding or rearranging texts, and this thesis seeks to take a glance at these practices and ideologies about how to "properly" transform a text, alongside what speakers want to be done with their speech, and how they construct statements to fit within a broader frame of text. Thus, the creation of texts and what is deemed a successful text is already heavily

ideologically influenced before it leaves the mouth of a speaker, and encounters significant ideological sifting before publication of any kind.

Regional Representation

Controlling processes and pedagogies of interviewing and transcription is not the only way that communities and community based organizations such as the Foxfire Museum are able to maintain leverage over their stories. Appalachia as a region has a long history of outsiders performing extractive journalism, profiting off stereotyping the region, and focusing on negative aspects of the region instead of the strengths and moments of joy present in Appalachian communities, like all other communities. When a regional news publication such as the Blue Ridge Public Radio, which does not exclusively produce content by Appalachians for Appalachians- or about Appalachia- is publishing stories about the region, it could unearth some feelings of apprehension and mistrust. However, by collaborating with an Appalachian community based organization, the Foxfire Museum, BPR is able to avoid falling into harmful practices. The Foxfire Museum, its employees, and the community members involved in oral history interviews, are able to exert control not only on the content produced in interviews, but also what is published from them.

In the case of the BPR and Foxfire collaboration for the COVID-19 Oral History project, the Foxfire Museum curator Kami Ahrens was able to select stories to send to BPR out of the total amount collected as part of the collaboration. Thus, the museum was able to curate what stories would be

published as representative of Appalachia, and maintain control over the oral

histories on another scale as well: a scale reaching a new group of readers, and

a new community of coverage. Stories of Appalachia were transformed to reach

new audiences- but these transformations were guided by Foxfire at every step.

CHAPTER 4

TRANSFORMATIONS

Entextualization and Re-contextualization

Linguistic anthropologists, with a vested interest in how ideologies of language emerge in text, are able to study varieties of media to see how ideologies of language, genre, or format shape the texts produced and how they are circulated. For the Foxfire Museum, a large part of preserving history meant recording oral histories of Appalachians near the museum and, since the museum's inception, its mission has relied largely on the conversion of spoken word to circulatable text. In *Natural Histories of Discourse*, several authors describe various examples of spoken words made into easily circulatable, seemingly context-free segments of text, known as the process of entextualization, and provide insights into these processes which will be outlined below.

Greg Urban offers several propositions which are relevant to discussions of entextualization, when looking at the replication of oral histories gathered in the COVID-19 collaboration. Proposition 1 is particularly useful: "When replication occurs in relatively deliberate contexts (such as that of transcription), the copy may differ from the original by including segmentable forms not found in the original that explicitly encode meanings that are only pragmatically inferable

from the original" (Urban 1996, 32). When looking at transcribed oral histories,

and then how they are replicated and altered, paying attention to these additions

that seek to add explicit information out of inferable information is a necessary

step.

Later, in the same edited volume, John Haviland offers a set of norms that

one can find as practices of talk are transformed into text. He states five criteria

for rendering speech into text:

> 1. Normalizing-imposing a standard or normal form on pragmatic
> features of the original speech context, especially the organization of
> its participants and relations between author and audience
> 2. Smoothing the turn structure and other interactional features in the
> newly fabricated textual context
> 3. Eliminating processing difficulties: production, reception, and
> grammatical hitches in the original speech
> 4. Searching for a register appropriate to the text
> 5. Perhaps least surprising, adjusting the referential focus of the
> emerging narrative" (Haviland 1996, 47).

These suggested guidelines are fairly simple and are not restricted to any

specific genre. Both inform the analysis to follow. Genres may have, in turn, their

own specific spoken or unspoken rules for adapting texts to fit within them, and

may be particular due to the construction of the genre and how texts circulate

within it- and may be restraints placed on text by the original speakers

themselves.

Transforming Traveling Text Within Genres

For the sake of this research, however, two genres stand out as relevant

in the Foxfire and BPR collaboration: radio and written journalism. Spitulnik, in

her work on radio programming, identified four aspects which were essential to focus on when looking at processes of discourse traveling beyond the radio:

> (1) the inherent reproducibility and transportability of radio phrases; (2) the "dialogic [or intertextual] overtones" (Bakhtin 1986:92) that are carried over into the new context of use; (3) the formal, functional, and semantic alterations that occur in the recontextualization; and (4) the degree to which knowledge of the original radio source is relevant for understanding the recycled phrase" (Spitulnik 1996, 165).

Through Spitulnik's analysis, one can see it exemplified that in order for segments of discourse to be circulated beyond their original presentation on the radio, these segments must be easily moveable, and able to be understood even by those who are not total experts of the original context, but rather just familiar with it.

In the field of journalism, the focus on ease of circulation of knowledge is paramount from the beginning. It is taught from the beginning of a journalist's career that circulatability and clarity is key, to the point that journalists are trained in methods to circulate information quickly and to make stories out of news as efficiently as possible. As Michael Schudson describes in his chapter in Media Anthropology, "Still, the reporter's job is to make meaning. A list of facts, even a chronologically ordered list, is not a story and is not a news story" (Schudson 2005, 121). Journalism is not simply a regurgitation of information, but a performance of it, and the process of a journalist, scholar, publisher, or other any other actor making meaning out of an event, or an oral history, requires engaging with the event with some creativity, even if only a small amount. For this analysis, transforming oral histories into news stories requires creatively negotiating the

inherent properties and limits of both genres, beginning with a narrative of personal history, which are themselves performed- thus meaning is made at different levels of oral history iterations.

Personal Narratives As Performance

Personal narratives, although they may be viewed as a way to access information about the inner self, are performed and sometimes planned for certain functions. Ochs and Capps, in their 1996 article "Narrating the Self ", outline key elements of personal narrative and ideologies attached to it broadly, including the processes of recording a personal narrative but also its rippling effects. They are clear that narrative has the ability to come about as the result of an experience, but also be an experience as you are performing it in the moment.

Narratives can be a tool to reflect on the self, but also to see the self as positioned in society. Personal narratives can also be utilized to make commentary on events or people, both past and present, as well as make meaning of historical or current events. They are truly a crucial element to being social creatures, and, as the authors state, "Through narrative we come to know what it means to be a human being" (Ochs and Capps 1996, 31). Ochs and Capps are clear that a personal narrative does not mean one strict "character" as speaker, engaging with an audience, but rather that "narratives have the potential to generate a multiplicity of partial selves. Selves may multiply along such dimensions as past and present" (Ochs and Capps 1996, 22). Building on this tradition of narrative analysis, Michele Koven elaborates how to track how

speakers inhabit different evaluative roles managing the narrative plot and interactional relationship between the world created within the narrative and the relationships between narrator and co-participants in the interaction where narrative active occurs. This allows scholars to look at these multiple selves present in a personal narrative, which will be incorporated into the methodology of this thesis. For now, we will focus on how narratives are largely structured with intention: to not only tell any story, but to contextualize oneself and one's experiences in the world.

These frameworks applied by Ochs, Capps, and Koven, are not only relevant to personal narratives, but are applicable to interactions in terms of what is being accomplished by different actors situated in broader political and social scales of relevance, for example, mass communication such as news reporting. Silverstein discusses this in his 2011 article "What Goes Around...: Some Shtick from "Tricky Dick"", but not only describing the intertextual circulation of a sexist comment by Richard Nixon, but also seeks to look at what the former president was accomplishing in this particular speech event, in order to fully understand the context of what was said and how it was reported. Silverstein analyzed the news column by decomposing the text to see how the journalist reported on the facts of Nixon's actions while also choosing particular statements that have contrasting socio-indexical framing and evaluating his maneuvers: from humbling the press employee (who was the journalist who crafted the column), to guarding his face by projecting an "old fashion macho" persona. Next is the circulation of the text itself–printed in the press–what it was able to accomplish by fully describing the

story, alongside a photo of the press employee, in the women's page of a Philadelphia paper. This discussion is important because the power of who is speaking and where it is published can have a strong effect on what text is circulated, who reads it, and how far it travels. In this instance, the choice to feature the details of the story on the women's page influenced how the story was framed and interpreted, and also limited it from traveling as far as it would have if published on the front cover. Combining social semiotic analysis of personal narratives, as performed by individuals, alongside how frameworks can be applied to larger scale levels of communication and meaning making, is crucial to this thesis- as personal narratives were molded first by speakers in various participant roles, and then by larger media forces for regional publications.

Remediation: Scalar Technicalities

Ideologies may also be present regarding beliefs about the media formats themselves, and what formats may be deemed capable of accomplishing, and accomplishing well. Remediated texts (text in the linguistic sense not the literal "written word" sense) do not travel and transform on their own, but are adjusted by remediators who edit and adjust texts in order to achieve a certain purpose: to be ensure a text is malleable enough to be circulated but solid enough to be understood to the same degree as previous iterations. We can think about the decisions made for remediation as decisions to accommodate the constraints and to take full advantage of the affordances. Scholars who look at remediation

usually ask what kinds of media ideologies are prevalent about the different

media forms, in addition to what new forms allow or restrict.

The allowances and restrictions of different media forms have technical

restrictions, but users of these forms may choose to utilize them in order to

maximize their communicative potential or replicate content as close to previous

formats as possible. Richard Bauman, studying remediation in 2016 completed a

diachronic analysis on political oratory to see how newly developing forms of

media technologies impacted the content produced. As Bauman describes,

dealing with the benefits of scale in terms of reaching constituents also required

grappling with the issues of scale in maintaining similar recognizable content.

Ideologies about what makes an engaging political performance, and the

expectations of political oratory as a genre can differ in how they are enacted in

media forms, and how audiences are receptive to different forms. So, a

charismatic speaker performing in front of a crowd versus on the radio may have

very different characteristics, due to the different expectations of success in

these different formats. Bauman also looked at remediation in terms of narrative

performances of western stories, and what elements of these stories are viewed

as typical of the genre and therefore must also carry on. Bauman thus is able to

look at several cases of how scale affects content, regardless of what the original

content is in terms of genre.

Another scholar, Ilana Gershon, in her 2008 study, had approached

discussion of remediation by looking at it in the context of yet another boom of

technological changes: handheld communication via cell phones (and landlines),

and in the particular act of breaking off a relationship, the idea of face-to-face became a recognized format. Her work shows that purposes of communication itself also influences the formats developed, and the ideologies surrounding different media is also critical to analyze when looking at remediation. Gershon also discusses media ideologies in her 2010 article dedicated to the topic: Although the definition is sometimes debated, she outlines what media ideologies are and how they impact how certain media forms are used. She clearly states that decisions about what to say and circulate on these forms are impacted by users' beliefs about the possibilities and limitations of them. Gershon, in this article, also elaborates on media ideologies in another sense: not only the affordances and withholdings of different communicative channels, but also the beliefs about these channels as a concept. So, not only can different media forms have their own appeals and drawbacks, but users can have overarching beliefs about media forms: as new or old, innovative or archaic that influence their perceptions about media forms and the users of them.

Through these scholarly discussions about personal narratives and interviews and their possible transformation into a different genre for publication, changes happen through various actors in order to allow for ease of circulation while maintaining appeal to an audience. However, this audience is interpellated, or formed into existence as a group via summoning, through the creation of and publication of these specific genre of interview, and changes made to interviews cannot be too distant to be uninteresting or unrelatable to the audience. Next, I

will turn to the methodology of how I analyzed my specific body of data in order

to trace these changes and the purposes for their initiation

CHAPTER 5

DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS

Data Collection

In order to collect data for this project, I visited the Foxfire Appalachian Heritage Museum and gained permission from the museum board to spend time in the archives sorting through the transcripts. At the beginning of my research, I was interested in broader questions of health and the communicability of ideologies around health in Appalachia, particularly regarding how the COVID-19 virus and other crises of disease such as the 1918 flu epidemic which struck the region intensely- and which the FF museum had extensive oral histories of- could be used to create subjectivities and assign groups to them on the basis of being ill or more susceptible. As my research progressed, my interests turned more towards three particular cases of how oral histories about COVID in Appalachia were altered to be published.

My time at the museum consisted of sifting through manilla folders of oral history transcripts, which I was allowed to copy segments from, listening to oral history recordings, and conversing with Kami Ahrens, the curator of the museum. Her training in historical archaeology underscored reflexive practice, and so she was always working to improve her own pedagogy while working at the museum. I focused on three stories in particular for my thesis, which I will explain in the

next section, so I was able to directly download the full copies of those three transcripts as case studies.

There were limitations to this part of the data collection, however- I was able to listen to the original oral histories while on site, but not able to spend the hours transcribing them within the time frame I was available for research. However, as my research questions developed, I found that comparing my own full transcripts of the original audio to the transcriptions performed by Foxfire Fellows and staff would have been another project entirely.

The versions of the Foxfire transcripts and audio that were published onto Blue Ridge Public Radio's website are publicly available, although I was able to speak with a BPR journalist who worked on the project and confirmed that Foxfire sent over complete original transcripts, which BPR then edited and condensed for publication. I transcribed the audio released on BPR and copied the transcript published onto BPR, and added them into my data as two separate units to be analyzed and compared to each other, to the original Foxfire transcripts, and to Foxfire's magazine publication.

Analytical Frameworks

In order to answer my questions about the transformation of oral history into publishable text, I utilized two frameworks simultaneously: Koven's speaker-role inhabitance, and Bauman and Briggs's six-part poetic analysis. These methods, inspired by a Bakhtinian social-semiotic approach to language and genre, are useful to not only distinguish what is done with oral histories as

cultural texts, but what those participating in oral history interviews are accomplishing within their conversations. Although there are several oral histories published on BPR, and hundreds published in FF magazine, I chose to focus on three oral histories in particular. These three oral histories were collected and published as part the COVID-19 in Appalachia Oral History Project, but what makes them unique is their publication in both Foxfire and Blue Ridge Public Radio. These three stories traveled along two distinct paths, and on their journey were transformed by various actors within the institutions. By focusing on these three, I can shed light on what how editing and publication processes at both institutions affect the same stories, and compare it to the original transcripts completed by Foxfire employees or fellows- and how different media are able to "mediate our very sense of mediation- what we deem near or far, fixed or fluid, rooted or portable, old or new" (Kockelman 2017, 9).

Of course, the actions performed on these oral histories should not entirely overshadow what actions the interviewees themselves are performing in their oral histories. Interviewees were aware of the project and are just as able to have their own goals and strategies as the two public facing institutions. At the same time, what emerges in an interview is a product of the dialogic, negotiated interaction. In this regard, how the patterned distribution of roles that a speaker can inhabit in acts of narration can be key to seeing how this intersubjective process unfolds. Michele Koven (2002), proposed a method to track these "roles" when interviewers and interviewees co-construct narrative and manage the interaction itself as an event. These roles include: "conversationalist /interlocutor,

that of narrator/author, and that of character" (Koven 2002, 176). This framework is useful because it not only breaks out of the imposed binaries of past frameworks, but also acknowledges that participants can be performing multiple roles- which is a lesson of Bakhtin's concept of "double voicing" (Bakhtin 1986). As Koven describes, this framework is able to capture the shifting, and at times multiple, roles in a personal narrative.

Utilizing this framework, I first coded the oral history narratives produced in the interview and then tracked transformations in various iterations. Sometimes editors retained elements of the original interview as they were poetically designed to be easy to recirculate. Other forms of talk were directed to the on-going relationship between the interviewee and Foxfire Fellow, or with an awareness of different relations in the town, the region and beyond. This allowed me to compare what intentions for performance each individual had in any given moment, and how these shifted as the oral histories were transformed. Thus, one can trace how altering these oral histories can not only alter the text being said, but what the speaker is attempting to achieve in any particular moment by speaking something in a certain way, to a certain person- or to a recording device.

Then, in order to compare the publications of the oral history interviews into the Foxfire Magazine and the Blue Ridge Public Radio website, I compared the transcriptions line by line to see any alterations that were made between original and published versions- from smaller additions or substitutions of lexical items, deleted lines, or transformed bodies of texted moved to different parts of

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the interview statement. Depending on the conventions of the different media, when some of the utterance forms from the original interview were hailing proximal or distal relations not part for the magazine or the radio station's imagined communities of coverage, they were transformed through editorial choices – condensing or reordering content, as well as cut out altogether. Bauman and Briggs's six-part poetic analysis thus served as the framework for the next part of my analysis, which I will now outline below.

The framework Bauman and Briggs describe includes looking at frame, form, function, indexical grounding, translation, and emergent structure. As Bauman and Briggs state, framing is "the metacommunicative management of the recontextualized text" (Bauman and Briggs 1990: 75). One can look at the **front content matter** of news stories, or magazine stories, to see how the transcribed interviews have been framed. One can ask- how is the text introduced? Sometimes the management is stated, or sometimes it is more subtle.

Next, is form- a somewhat broad category but a crucial one nonetheless. Form can vary by modality: signed, oral, or written modalities, or medium: online media forms featuring written texts, embedded audio or video files, or print media, for example. Forms featured in this study include audio and written texts. The original oral histories were transcribed for Foxfire, and in turn these transcripts and the original audio recordings were sent to the participating journalists at Blue Ridge Public Radio. Audio of the interview was reduced to approximately three-minute segments, with a transcript of the audio published

underneath it on BPR's website. However, it is important to note that, although the Blue Ridge Public Radio published a transcription of their audio segment publication, the transcription and audio did not directly match up. In fact, they were quite different from each other. Therefore, I was sure to complete my own transcription of the audio and compare it to the text that BPR published and include it in all my comparisons.

The next element of the framework is function, which one can trace to both the tenets of community-based heritage sites or journalistic institutions more broadly, or the intended function of a text created or circulated by an institution may be explicitly stated by the institution.

Of course, the function of a text is often vastly different based on genre, as well as what the performer hopes to accomplish. One should not forget the original oral history storyteller may have viewed the function of the story as something completely different than its later transformations: when we choose certain answers to certain questions, we may emphasize or hold back, or pick one version of an event over another, due to comfort level with the interviewer, the larger context of the topic, or simply based on how one is feeling in that day. As previously mentioned, as Koven discusses in her 2014 work on interviewing, the role of the interviewer in shaping the text emerging from an interview must always be considered. This also applies here- the function of a certain story being told, in the eyes of the storyteller, may be just to appease or entertain the interviewer, in extreme cases.

The fourth element of the framework is the indexical grounding of texts. Looking at indexical grounding across oral histories is actually a productive way to utilize both Koven's and Bauman and Briggs's frameworks, as Koven expands from Bauman and Briggs analytical methods. While the former recommends this analysis as a way to trace what roles are being performed at any given moment of a personal narrative, the latter suggests it generally, especially when comparing change in indexical grounding between original text and recontextualized text. Thus, this part of analysis will be performed in the application of Koven's framework, in order to productively hone in on the specific focus of this research— that is, the elements of an oral history that transform in each stage of the history's trajectory: the telling, the transcribing, the editing, and the circulating.

Next is the aspect of translation. Although there was no interlingual translation occurring in transcription, they acknowledge that transcription is translation insofar as it is a transformation of one modality into another. Indeed, the oral history interview becomes a narrated event, in that moment, and the meaning of statements must carry over as they are converted from speech to text. In order to focus on this intersemiotic translation as speech is represented into text, I focus on the BPR audio published compared to the BPR transcript text published.

While incorporating all previous elements of textual semiotic analysis, I oriented to the final, more broad, element of the framework: the emergent structure. By seeing how different parts of the construction of these stories have

been transformed, one can see how a body of text has been shaped for various purposes and genres.

In the next section, I will discuss in detail the three oral histories that are a focal point of this analysis and what they reveal about the construction of stories by speakers and by editors and journalists for publication. Careful consideration was given to the content of the text, but also the overall set up of the different bodies of text; interviewees made choices in what they said and how, and so I study the re-contextualization of the oral history interviews, using Bauman and Briggs's 1990 six-part framework of framing, form, function, indexical grounding, translation, and emergent structure. While doing so, I incorporate Koven's 2002 framework in order to see how speakers enact roles in interviews and storytelling.

CHAPTER 6

THREE ORAL HISTORY NARRATIVES

Five stories were collected from the BPR and FF collaboration and published to Blue Ridge Public Radio. Of those, three stories were also published in the Foxfire 2020 edition of the magazine: the story of Anh Pham, an international student at a boarding school in Rabun County, Tom Majors, a drive-in movie theater and assisted living facility owner, and John and Alicia Kilby, two Rabun County schoolteachers who were interviewed simultaneously. These three stories were altered in different ways from the original transcripts to fit Foxfire and Blue Ridge Public Radio- and it is by studying this difference that I analyze how stories are evaluated and altered to be good, publishable work at the two institutions, in addition to representative stories about COVID-19 in Appalachia, as well as how these stories are originally planned and performed by interviewees.

(Shifting) Speaker Role Inhabitance

As previously outlined, the text itself was not merely operated on by editorial forces; speakers of oral histories, participating in this project, performed their own stories in particular ways for circulation as well. Michelle Koven developed her speaker-role inhabitance framework in 2002, to build from existing

theory: Goffman's idea of footing, Bakhtin's idea of voicing, and Labovian narrative analysis. She brings a focus back to the intertwined agency of the storyteller and the storyworld; that is, the ability of the story-teller to choose to occupy various roles as needed, to shift roles in the blink of an eye for a certain storytelling purpose, or to even occupy multiple roles. As a personal narrative unfolds, the storyteller may choose to remain in the interlocutory mode, conversing with the interviewer in dialogue and within the interview context.

Storytellers may choose to inhabit other roles, however: that of author and character. In the case of this collaboration between BPR and FF Museum, oral history storytellers largely kept to interlocutory roles. However, one particular storyteller made use of the author and character roles, by participating in repeating an engaged background story- or, origin story- of himself and his business. Tom Majors, the business owner, easily slipped between roles of author and character in order to reproduce a story with ease, as if he told it often (See Table 5.5). Tom's story is prompted by the Foxfire Fellow interviewer asking him to say a little about the drive-in, and Tom then discusses how the theater opened again, against the doubts of himself and other community members, because his wife insisted they open the theater again.

Table 5.5 Tom's Business Origin Story

Authorial Role	Character Role
And in 2004 she said she wanted it	
back and I begged her not to do it and	
she said	"I want it back"
and I said	"Sweetheart there are only 300 people
	that live here and that is not the
	highway anymore, there's a new
	highway."
	"I want my theater!"
So I had to build a theater.	

These strategic uses of speaker-role inhabitance, even if occurring rarely, are important to consider in analysis because they serve as a reminder that participants in this project are also designing their own performances to be able to be circulated, enjoyed, and understood by readers and listeners. In addition, the storytellers have the agency and ability to guide the trajectory of their own story- and to determine which part of the self is private, and which will be performed.

Then, from an editorial standpoint, applying Bauman and Briggs's approach shows that paying particular attention to framing, form, and function of the text reveal institutional differences in approaches to repurposing oral

histories. Elements such as indexical grounding, translation, and emergent structure revealed similarities in the changes made by BPR and FF, and these can be combined alongside an analysis of speaker roles being utilized in each instance.

Form

Form itself is a category with many different elements involved. For these publications, however, two specific types of form stand out: the Foxfire restructuring of oral history segments from an interview into a solo narrative, and the BPR transcription movement of contextualizing information to the beginning lines introducing the transcript.

Foxfire Fellows organize the magazine topically, with different sections of the magazine covering different themes, or aspects of life affected by COVID. Foxfire has editorial introductions and conclusions before each oral history segment, which serve to introduce the theme, offer thoughts on the topic, and provide context to the speaker of the oral history. It is important to note here that this contextual information is sometimes a spoken part of the oral history interview, but is removed from the Foxfire oral history and moved to the editorial statement. Foxfire Fellows ask questions related to a specific topic, one that will later serve as a chapter theme, and then remove their own voices from the story. This is a fascinating alteration to form: as the Foxfire legacy has always included oral histories, it simultaneously has always included a focus on specific topics.

In addition, an editorial, all knowing (or at least, able to elucidate the background of the interviewee who is about to speak) voice being inserted

throughout the oral history publications in the magazine contributes to an

interesting effect: the separation of the interviewer and editor from the

interviewee. Although the editorial statement is often written by the same person

who conducted the oral history interview, this is not made explicit in the published

magazine. Instead, the editor generalizes in their opening statement, and all

questions being asked by the interviewer are removed. The oral history segment

is transformed from a dialogically produced interview, into one cohesive

individual statement as if performed by a lone oral history storyteller. As we

know, this removes the role of the interviewer in co-constructing a narrative, but

also gives the storyteller the full attention in the published segment. Thus, this

community- based museum has effectively established its own rules for

successful story transformation and publication – its own form to follow and

pedagogically pass to future generations of involved community members.

The Blue Ridge Public Radio transformation, on the other hand, follows

standard journalistic practices typical in the beginning segments of their text

publication. By offering initial context to readers, alongside a statement that is

simple but serves to describe the publication enough to draw readers in, BPR

follows journalism best practices. However, the publications retain the oral history

interview transcription style, by including the full name of interviewer and

interviewee, and the question-answer form of dialogue transcription.

Framing as Metacommunicative Management

Foxfire and Blue Ridge Public radio utilized different strategies for

bookending their re-contextualized interview segments, in order to frame the

narratives as published regional news stories. Foxfire Appalachian Heritage Museum situated their oral histories with pieces of editorial text, with the Foxfire Fellows offering meta-commentary from a first person perspective, alongside biographical information about the interviewee and their place in the community. On the other hand, Blue Ridge Public Radio followed typical journalism practice by featuring a short, third person informational statement at the beginning of the transcript with the name, location, and other contextual information of the interviewee. The BPR framing, however, across all three textual publications mentioned Appalachia within the frame- and the Foxfire did not.

Table 5.1 Framing

Foxfire	BPR
Tom Major is the owner of the Tiger Drive-In, in Tiger, Georgia. Since movie theaters have been closed, people are looking for opportunities to still get that movie experience. As an outdoor venue, the drive-in provides a safer movie-going experience that people love. Due to the virus, many movie producers and movie production companies had to stop making movies. This means that there haven't been any new movies to play at the drive-in, but, to combat this, Mr. Major played older movies and streamed live concerts at the drive-in.	Businesses in Appalachia - like the rest of the country - have been hit hard by the COVID-19 pandemic. But some have found themselves uniquely suited to thrive over the last year. This week for BPR and Foxfire Museum's COVID-19 oral history project, we hear from a business owner who was able to carry on with a nostalgic outdoor entertainment that brought people together - safely - during the pandemic.

In this example, we can see how Foxfire references the name of the oral history storyteller and community member and his location in their opening framing of the story. Readers of the magazine will likely be fairly familiar with the location, and it places the story in a town near the museum and part of the museum's community engagement. Moving from this specific statement, which proves the story and its speakers are rooted in the local community, the Foxfire museum presents a broader introductory and contextual statement. This gives readers a glimpse of why this story is being told, and what broader situations its events are placed in; it fits the story within the broader theme of the section of the magazine, which focuses on local businesses. On the other hand, BPR quickly evokes the region of Appalachia in their broad statement introducing a general context to the story, as a force to draw readers in. It focuses not on detail, but sets up for a broader story, which is simultaneously relatable yet still interesting to readers,

and finally is neatly concluded with a sentence about the oral history collaboration as a whole and what was produced from it in this publication.

Tom Majors' story is thus framed as an example of a savvy businessman who was able to succeed due to the circumstances that caused other businesses to fail. Edits throughout the publications emphasized this; for example, BPR editors included a note about Majors' assisted living facility having zero COVID-19 cases at the time of publication, while Foxfire removed text where Majors indicated he had an assisted living facility in addition to the theater at all. Perhaps this was because editors assumed readers of the Foxfire magazine, assumed to be involved with the community, may be less enthused to hear news about local assisted living care facilities during the onset of the pandemic, when their own friends and family could be in those facilities.

The next oral history, that of Anh Pham, is framed by Foxfire as the story of a rising junior at the local boarding school. Her experiences are unique based on her status as an international student, but the magazine included her as one local student story amongst several, in the broader community, and emphasized that she had lived in the area for several years, and thus was able to speak to experiences in Appalachia during COVID-19. BPR, on the other hand, again utilizes their template of framing: a general statement about Appalachia, a mention of the oral history project, and a description of Anh as an international student, facing a struggle to return home to Vietnam.

Finally, in the oral history publication of John and Alicia Kilby, two Rabun County Middle School teachers, Foxfire and BPR again differ in their framing

strategies before the stories. Foxfire gestures to the Kilbys as local teachers, who have worked hard to ensure their students can do their best during a transition to online school. In fact, they were interviewed by a former student, who experienced school during that era, in that location, firsthand, and who is able to speak more personally to the Kilbys' work. Blue Ridge Public Radio, yet again, utilizes their routine: the oral history project is introduced, Appalachia is mentioned, and the Kilbys are introduced. Throughout the framing of all three oral histories, we see the publications negotiating between distance and closeness: BPR mentions very little information beyond basic introductory context, but is always sure to include the name and position of the interviewer in this basic context, while Foxfire, alternatively, includes more personal detail to alert audiences to the proximity of these stories, while seeming more disembodied from routines of interviews.

Function

Function could be referential or emotive, and the choice about which functions to utilize is one of a series of choices made by oral history narrators. Regardless, the function and the changes made to the original segment are part of a cycle – as the function of a text changes, it must undergo some change to perform that function, and vice versa. Function shift is a key part of the change from original transcript to publication, as transformations must occur to allow for the change in function. For the 2020 Foxfire Magazine, the function is to publish stories and perspectives of Appalachian people and how they were impacted by COVID-19.

The intended function of a text created or circulated by an institution may also be explicitly stated by the institution as its end goal. For Blue Ridge Public Radio, publications of stories are for a certain mission, i.e. locatable in the mission statement:

> "creates and curates content that informs, inspires, connects, and reflects the people and places of Western North Carolina. BPR cultivates a more engaged, curious, and empathetic public by listening deeply and embracing diversity" (Blue Ridge Public Radio: "About BPR").

In BPR, these oral history publications serve as human interest stories, which slot nicely beside stories describing current events affecting Western North Carolina, and perhaps, fulfill the role of inspiring, connecting, and reflecting the people of Western North Carolina. These stories have been selected and adjusted to fulfill this mission for BPR to its perceived community of coverage- or the perceived publics to whom the news station is reaching as an audience. As Kathryn Graber describes, a public is "a collection of people oriented, however temporarily, around a mutually perceived, shared social fact." (Graber 2020, 62-63). For a journalist, such as those working for BPR, creating human interest stories about Appalachia require making shared meanings amongst readers, and the ability to circulate a story, alongside which stories are chosen, rests on this ability.

For the Foxfire Museum, the function is harder to nail down. The Foxfire Museum, as a community-based museum, has community engagement in several different forms, from hosting events to encouraging local high school

students to participate in video and audio editing, as well as interviewing skills.

The Foxfire Magazine fits into the latter; as stated on the website,

> "The mission of the Foxfire magazine is to empower students to share their voice and visions with an audience beyond the classroom by providing a platform for creative expression and investigations into the world around them. Foxfire is committed to inclusiveness and accessibility to all, regardless of gender, race, ethnicity, religion, disability, sexual orientation, age, or national origin. Let your voice be heard! Contribute to the Foxfire magazine." (Foxfire).

Note that for the magazine, a focus on the stories told by locals is not explicitly stated as a goal- rather, a focus on empowering students to participate. To those unfamiliar with the institution and its history, this may seem simple, but it is important to be clear that the museum magazine, since its inception, has been run by Rabun County high schoolers and teachers, alongside Foxfire staff, as part of the Foxfire Fellow pedagogy: raising young community members to engage with local elders and record their life histories.

Indexical Grounding in Circulation: Text out of Time

The most obvious adjustments to the indexical elements that occurred in the process of de- and re-contextualization were the removal of indexical anchors showing the specific time the oral history interview occurred- in both the publication of BPR and FF. In the interview with Anh Pham, a specific referential phrase was removed which Anh supplied as an example to supplement her point. Even though it provided more specific detail to the point she was making, as she constructed a clear and precise answer to the interviewer's question, "How do

you think the Vietnamese government handled the virus?", the last sentence of her utterance was edited out (see Table 5.2).

Table 5.2 Anh's Full Response

Published Text	Unpublished Text	Speaker Role Inhabitance
recently I heard that they had their		*Interlocutory* *Authorial*
final, and not all of them did well		*Interlocutory* *Authorial*
because they didn't have enough time in class.		*Interlocutory* *Authorial*
They should have adjusted		*Interlocutory* *Authorial*
their educational plan more, but		*Interlocutory* *Authorial*
overall, in handling the pandemic, I		*Interlocutory*
think they did a pretty good job.		*Interlocutory*
	There are only 15 cases at this time	*Interlocutory*
	so I'm impressed.	*Interlocutory*

When the interviewer was asking questions in this particular oral history interview with Anh Pham, he asks about her opinion about the

Vietnamese government handling COVID-19. Anh Pham occupies an authorial role (Koven 2002) in a narrated event, providing a descriptive response for most of the answer, and simultaneously an interlocutory role in the conversation. She then switches roles to occupy a solely interlocutory role oriented to the event of narrating – that is the time of the interview -end with a statement estimating the number of cases in Vietnam at the time of the interview. The **deictic** phrase, 'at *this* time', temporally anchors the event being narrated as proximal to the event of narrating and provides an evaluative coda, which interactionally provides an assessment of the relevance of the narrated content as co-text, to the intersubjectively negotiated interactional context of the interview. The decision to cut the utterance with pragmatic forms, anchoring the assessment to the moment of interview is the same across all publications, even though the editors are different people. This is fascinating because it allows the text to have content of the COVID-19 pandemic but not be traceable to any specific day of the pandemic; as the nature of the virus and its communicability it made case numbers rapidly jump from day to day or week to week. Perhaps more crucially, her statement is beyond descriptive- she is amplifying her statement about the government's handling of the virus by providing an estimate of the amount of cases. She thinks they did a good job- and provides a case number showing proof. This amplifying process follows an evaluative phrase: "Overall.. I think they did a pretty good job", and in both, Anh is utilizing the interlocutory speaker role, so they may have edited such a phrase to also avoid redundancy in order to keep publications brief while still retaining meaning.

Another example can be found in the oral history interview with Tom

Majors, as exemplified below in table 5.3, which shows another example of the

removal of text referring to specific moments of time, though the more general

text is published by both institutions. This is an instance, again, where the

storyteller is providing more detail, but regardless the text is removed to be more

easily circulatable outside of the original and complete interview context. In this

example, however, the provided detail is contrasting the drive-in's hours in a pre-

COVID-19 era vs COVID-19 era, and the retained, published text conveys this

meaning. Again, conciseness is valued for publication

Table 5.3 Tom's Full Response

Published Text	Unpublished Text	Speaker-Role Inhabitance
	We had about 400 people on Monday	*Authorial*
	night and 400 people on Tuesday	*Authorial*
	Night. Normally we're closed on	*Authorial*
	Monday and Tuesday. So	*Authorial*
all in all, we've been able to adapt		*Interlocutory*
to COVID and do very well.		*Interlocutory*

Although several other oral histories make reference to specific moments of time, they are moments in the *past*: as this excerpt exemplifies, specific referential phrases grounding the interview in the here and now are actually removed from publication. Speakers thus perform roles describing events out of time, or within specific moments of time, and editors work to adjust stories to be able to travel as smoothly as possible while still retaining meaning and while still being easily understandable.

Intersemiotic Translation

As stated, there is no interlingual translation occurring in transcription and publication of these oral histories, but there is actually still a fair amount of translation occurring. Transcription is a process that Bauman and Briggs specifically list as a type of translation: that is, translating audio to written text. The oral history interview becomes a narrated event, in that moment, and the meaning of statements must carry over as they are converted from speech to text. Although transcription choices can matter on many different levels of circulation, as Bucholtz 2000 points out, the transcription practices followed by linguists, journalists, or non-experts differ greatly at times. As such, Foxfire Fellows shift in their strategies of transcription: at times capturing a laugh, at times omitting one from the transcription, or indicating sound effects as deemed necessary (see table 5.4). BPR, perhaps to stay true to the material provided by Foxfire as an institution, seems to make no large alteration to the transcription practices as well. However, by transcribing and publishing effects such as that in Table 5.4, one can try to maintain the affective power of a sound across mediums. A *snap* places listeners into the exact embodied moment, and in the case of the interview with the Kilby's and the Foxfire Fellow, a *snap* brings the Fellow student into sharp recollection of a shared experience of school modalities rapidly shifting during the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. Readers, viewing the transcribed sound, are also able to embody the feeling of quick change, even if they did not directly experience the same situation as the teachers and student, who were in the same school district. Similarly, although

the readers may not be the original intended audience of the inclusive "we",

readers are also drawn in and able to relate and be part of the imagined "we".

Thus the Kilby's are able to design a segment that is easily circulatable, across

various mediums, and is proven to be easily circulatable by being retained across

multiple variations of publication.

Table 5.4 Non-Lexical Item Translated for Transcription

Foxfire Transcript	BPR Transcript	Speaker Role Inhabitance
We were at school regular on Friday	We were at school regular on Friday	*Interlocutory* *Authorial*
and then *snaps* that next Tuesday	and then *snaps* that next Tuesday	*Interlocutory* *Authorial*
we were in a virtual classroom,	we were in a virtual classroom,	*Interlocutory* *Authorial*

Overall, through combining the analysis of frame, form, function, indexical

grounding, and transcription, the emerging structure of the Foxfire Magazine and

Blue Ridge Public Radio emerge as genred publications, with their own quirks

and choices, completing the process of de-contextualizing a text in order to

circulate it to broader audiences.

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CHAPTER 7

CONCLUSION

As this research has shown, oral histories can be re-contextualized into new genres and contexts using changes ranging from small to large. In turn, museums can use things like oral history interviews for their own purpose, whether to utilize nostalgia as a form of consumer tourism, or to amplify the experiences of current individuals while still forming communities based on traditional practices and engaging with collective memory making. In the case of Foxfire Museum, the magazine serves as a way to include the voices of both the editorial staff and the original oral history speakers, but perhaps, by moving away from past practices of publishing oral history transcripts, the museum is able to move away from stereotypical depictions of Appalachia as featured in the earliest magazine. The shifts that occur from the oral history interview to the page do, regardless, reveal how stories can be transformed in fascinating ways to fit expectations of genres, even as the genre expectations themselves are hybridizing and adapting to shifting ideologies and technical capabilities. Blue Ridge Public Radio, for example, was not only able to publish the text of the oral history, but was able to publish audio snippets- themselves interwoven with instrumental music. The genre allowed flexibility and creativity, although this creativity and flexibility can transform the text even more for the new context, and to hold onto lingering ideologies about how the text should be performed.

Incidentally, one such song that served as instrumental music on BPR's audio publication was very aptly named "It Looks Like the Future But Feels Like the Past." This speaks rather well to the ways in which the magazine, and the museum itself, are able to work to redefine what, and who, Appalachia is, while still engaging with the past histories of the region.

In the case of the COVID-19 in Appalachia Oral History Project, three oral histories traveled across media genres, each representing a different voice of the region. Tom Majors, a local businessman, was able to thrive during the pandemic due to his theater being outdoors and was situated as a success story of a business with a longer history in the community, being able to stand firmly as many other businesses struggled during the pandemic. Anh Pham, an international student, presented a story of adapting to student life during COVID-19, and her role as an authenticated member of the Appalachian community while simultaneously evoking her Vietnamese ethnicity. Alicia and John Kilby, two teachers, were able to be in dialogue with a student, a Foxfire Fellow, about a shared schooling experience in the region, but an experience that is interesting and relatable outside of Appalachia as well. These three oral histories reveal the goals and trajectories of two regional institutions, who are depicting Appalachia beyond a stagnant stereotyped version of the region, but instead are combining the traditions of the past with stories geared towards the future of the region, and made to circulate across media.

This work, and its goals, are about studying and appreciating processes of representation and recollection. Representation of a community, and a widely

spread community, is a task not to be taken likely- especially how

misrepresentation, deliberate or otherwise, can directly lead to inequities.

However, media, in all its forms, uses tools of representation every day- and

different institutional and individual actors engage with their own personal

pedagogies of representation every day. For those within Appalachia,

representation may be about recalling the past, or negotiating the present and

the future. It may involve rejecting outside collaborators or labels or embracing

community histories and recalling them in ways that reach broader audiences.

However tangled past relationships of representation may be, it is crucial to

remember that the people of Appalachia have agency- and something to say. It is

the still the responsibility of institutions working with communities in the region to

be considerate of their own personal motivations when engaging in any project,

but especially oral histories.

Oral histories may be recorded for any number of reasons, but there is an

increased impulse to record oral histories or create oral history projects in order

to document natural disasters and epidemics. In fact, there is often a conflation

between oral history interviewing and therapeutic interviewing (Cramer 2020).

When traumatic events occur, it can provide the affected some relief to discuss

their troubles, and it certainly is important to give people the chance to speak

about their own experiences, but oral historians should be careful in moments of

crises not to be causing individuals to relive trauma in their pursuit of recording.

Historians may choose to wait until a year or longer has passed in order to give

time for healing; but even then, it can lead groups to have even stronger

associations with the anniversary of the event, as they are constantly reminded of it by researchers as the years go by (Tansey 2020). Even beyond the psychological effects of retelling traumatic events, archivists and oral historians should always be careful to consider their positionality in relation to those they are recording, especially if money is involved: whose pain is being recorded and why? In addition, who is benefiting from these publications– if anyone?

Through analyzing shifting speaker roles, and how these roles are transformed when transcribed, one can discover the effects of repurposing narratives for a different genre. As the inhabitants of the region of Appalachia have been historically denied a voice in the media, it is crucial to look at how their voices are represented in the media today. The purposes of this oral history project extends beyond just documenting the experiences of people in Appalachia during COVID-19 and storing it, but for circulating forms of these oral histories. Although the archives of many institutions may be closed off from the public, allowing access to the oral histories gathered as part of this collaboration allows any interested individual to read the depiction of the particular place and time. However, Foxfire Museum does not focus on chronotopes of a stuck-in-time rural Appalachia, but rather focuses on the current voices of residents who volunteer to be part of the project. Instead of utilizing stereotypes and nostalgia to hold onto a slipping past, the museum cherishes past ways of life while praising the modern residents of the county who embody what it is like to live in a part of Appalachia, by teaching community members how to participate in collecting and preserving memories of the present Appalachia.

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APPENDIX A:

COVID-19 ORAL HISTORY PROJECT INTERVIEW QUESTIONS

The following list of questions was provided as a guide for those participating in the COVID-19 Oral History Project Interviews.

1. Describe the community where you live.

2. When did you first learn about the coronavirus? What were your initial reactions?

3. What were the first few months like during the stay-at-home orders? How did that impact you?

4. How were you affected by closures or restrictions? Did your local government implement any (business/social/educational/financial) closures or restrictions?

5. How has your opinion or feelings about the virus changed since you first learned about it?

6. How did your community respond to the virus? What surprised you?

7. Describe any events you witnessed that capture your or your community's response to the virus. (example: a drive-thru "party," a virtual graduation, a Zoom conference))

8. How are you responding to the pandemic?

9. How is your response affecting time with family and loved ones?

10. Do you know anyone who contracted COVID? What was it like for them?

11. Did you get tested for COVID? Describe your experience.

12. Did you get a vaccine? Describe your experience.

13. What lasting impact did quarantine make on your lifestyle or your attitude? How has social distancing changed your life?

14. How do you think the virus will impact Appalachia in the future? How has it already impacted Appalachia?

15. What permanent changes do you expect to see in our society and culture?

TOM MAJORS FULL ORIGINAL TRANSCRIPT

Below is the full transcript, including front metadata from the Foxfire museum, and

crediting the Fellows who completed the interview and transcription.

A-20-09

Interviewer: Zain Harding

Interviewee: Tom Major

Transcriber: Kyle Rolader

Interview Date: July 13, 2020

[Start 14:00]

Zain: For starters I want to thank you for your time today, for letting us have this

interview. State your name and a little bit about yourself, that would be where we can

start off and then we'll go from there.

Tom: My name is Tom Majors. I have some businesses in Tiger Georgia, I've got a

drive-in movie theater and right next door I've got an assisted living facility. I'm a busy

guy.

Z: Now could you tell us a little about the drive-in?

T: The drive-in was built by my wife's father in 1954 and they shut it down in 1984. And

in 2004 she said she wanted it back and I begged her not to do it and she said "I want it

back" and I said "Sweetheart there are only 300 people that live here and that is not the highway anymore, there's a new highway." "I want my theater" So I had to build a theater. Didn't know anything about the business, and that was 17 years ago. And they told me then, Mr. Major they will never work and those are fighting words (laughing) and it's doing very well.

Z: Now, regarding the pandemic, how has it affected your operations of the drive-in?

T: Well, a couple things on one hand we don't get first run movies anymore because the studios are pushing them back to when, you know, covid's over with and they can open up the real theaters. There's only 300 of us and there's thousands of regular theaters. And then we had to fight covid regulations and get, because we're an outdoor theater and I had to get Kemp's Staff to agree that being an outdoor theater, even though real theaters had to be shut down, that we could be open and he agreed to do it about two months ago. But agreeing to it was not was not as easy as agreeing to open it up. We normally hold 220. With Covid regulations we hold 70. All of our staff wears masks and gloves and they don't actually interact with the customers. The people that come order food, they come to the one, out of the car comes to the window, they order their food and we call them when it's done but we don't actually, they don't come into the restaurant. And we have to go through all kinds of sanitation. Sanitizing the bathrooms and having all the products that you need and put out markers to keep people six feet apart when they are standing in line for their food. So it's a different feel. Overall because we are about the only thing that's open for families to go to, we're doing very well. We sell out almost every night. And that's using really old vintage movies but we're also doing concerts now. I've done, there's a dance studio in Clarksville, very large, they

couldn't do their recitals and I helped them film their recitals and invited their customers to come to the theater and watch the recital, their daughter or son, on the screen and they went bonkers. We had about 400 people on Monday night and 400 people on Tuesday night. Normally we're closed on Monday and Tuesday. So all and all we've been able to adapt to Covid and do very well.

[17:54]

Z: Now regarding the playground, are you keeping the playground open and if so, how are you maintaining cleanliness?

T: The playground had been closed until about two weeks ago when they opened up national parks and other playgrounds so we opened up ours. And basically we keep it clean, obviously. But, when the children are on a slide or whatever, they're kinda forced to have social distance and so we decided to open it up.

Z: What are some pros and cons of having a drive-in, health wise?

T: I'm not sure I understand the question, the fact that we follow all the covid regulations.

You're much safer being outdoors than you are in your own home. And so in terms of being a health issue, it's just the opposite, it's a healthy issue.

[19:12]

Z: What kind of movies are you currently showing? I know that you said that since movies aren't being produced currently, so what are some that you have been showing recently?

T: It's kind of interesting, I went on my Facebook page and said "Folks, can you think of some of your favorite movies, please let me know what they are." I had 8000 responses,

people wanted, you know, have us show their most favorite movies. So going back as far as Dirty Dancing and Ghostbusters, I mean just think of all the favorite movies, Ferris Buller's Day Off, yep, people, those are great movies to begin with, but our customers just want to be out. And if I put the worst movie in the world I think they'd still come. But they enjoy the classics and the old good ones.

Z: Now, flipping back to how many people you let in, are there any special restrictions on how many people are allowed to be inside the area at a point in time?

T: We put markers out that are all fifteen feet apart and we have security that goes around and make sure people park on markers. That allows everyone in the car to actually get out and set up chairs and not be forced to stay in the car. And then send someone up to get food. So that's how we work it.

Z: Have you seen an increase or decrease in ticket sales?

T: That's an interesting question because our food sales are way up, even though we are restricted to 70 or 80 cars instead of 200. Because we sell out every night our overall ticket sales are, and compared to last year, its strong, it's got to be close to it. Plus, our ability to do other things like concerts and dance recitals and I had the North GA Democratic Party want to get together and watch the returns on the Tuesday voting and I put it on the screen. I mean, so it's more than just ticket sales. We're doing very well this year, very well.

[21:58]

Z: Regarding ticket sales, why do you believe that they have increased regarding how many people that are inside the area?

T: Because we sell out every night, I don't know how to tell you. Because we sell out every night and we sell tickets to other things besides movies. You know, concerts. We had two concerts on, we had a concert Sunday and we have two more concerts on the 25th and 26th with people like Blake Shelton and Gwen Stefani, Garth Brooks, Chase Rice, I mean nothing but superstars.

Z: Could you tell us a little bit about how the concerts have been doing regarding normal movies and the concerts themselves?

T: Typically, when we have a concert, like on Sunday we do the concert at 1:00 or 4:00 in the afternoon and then we turn around and allow people to come in and watch the movies at 6:30. So it's a double dip, that we have our concert revenue earlier in the day and our movie revenue later on in the day

Z: Have you seen more people show up for the concerts than for movies?

T: Well first of all we sell out, so it's the same amount of people that come but we typically sell out. The key to that is if it's a well-known person like Garth Brooks, we'll sell it out.

[23:55]

Z: Regarding the live concerts, how could you describe how you operate them?

T: Well actually we've worked with two concert promoters now, one that actually streams it from another stage and streams it to, I think there are all 200 drive-in theaters they do this for. Then the second company I worked with actually they bring a stage and they set it up on our playground and they have all the sound equipment and it's a full production concert. They have people that actually get it all set up ready to go. Does that answer your question?

Z: Yes, sir, are you currently still renting out the campers to customers?

T: They love em, yeah.

Z: How are you keeping the campers clean?

T: (Laughing) I have to state, I'm not good at cleaning, I have a maid that cleans them every night. And they're small so typically it's a couple that comes and so you know they're Covid friendly for sure.

Z: Well I believe that's all the questions that I have today. Is there anything that you would like to add regarding how your business has been affected?

T: No, I just feel like I'm a very fortunate guy.

Z: Thank you for your time today