

Sabbatical Fall 2024 Report
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NORTH BAY LATINO AND BIPOC ORAL HISTORY PROJECT

Introduction

The North Bay Latino and BIPOC Oral History Project (LOHP) is a pilot project designed to collect and preserve Oral Histories and narratives of Latino leaders here in Sonoma County. The purpose of this project has been expanded to include other people of color. The project came out of a need to document the experiences of the Latino community in Northern California.

Rationale

The LOHP meets the need to document the history of the Chicano/Latino community in Northern California. The focus of historical narrative in this area, as throughout the Southwestern United States, has revolved around themes of Manifest Destiny, White Supremacy, and a celebration of Gold Rush mythology. In short, the history of Northern California if not the entire United States is one that deliberately and systematically obscures the true history of this region, and in particular, the History of Mexican origin people, Native Americans, and other BIPOC people. Chicanos/as and Latinas/os have played an important role in the development of the North Bay region, contributing to social, political, and economic development since before the U.S. Invasion of Mexico in 1846.

Chicana/o and Latina/o History generally, and in the North Bay in particular is minimized and treated as an afterthought, or subsumed within a narrative of that emphasizes recent migration, to the extent that even young Latinos whose families have been in the region for generations see themselves as 'recién llegados', as recent arrivals. This perception of Latinos as a 'new' population is well known. The same is true for African Americans and Asian Americans. Native Americans have also been subject to erasure on various levels.

Project Goals and Principles

The Goal of this Project is to create an archive of oral history interviews for a North Bay Latina/o History Archive. This first round of interviews has been conducted primarily in English. Additionally, most of these interviews have been conducted using Zoom to create an audio and video recording. Additionally, subjects have been asked to provide a preferred photograph, a resume if one is available, and articles or other supporting evidence when possible. In several cases, interview subjects have requested that the interview be conducted in person. In these cases, only an audio recording was made. In every case, before the completion of this project and the archive launch, editing and cleaning up will be necessary.

Interview Protocol and Format

The Interview questions are very basic. I have four basic questions. 1. Where are you/where is your family from and how did you get here? 2. Tell me about your youth and coming of age, how you became involved. 3. Please share your professional and activist life. Finally, I ask 4. Who else should I speak to? Of course, these are open ended prompts and the interviews are designed to elicit life stories to reveal both the individual experiences and also the development of organizations within the Latino community here in the North Bay.

A Note on Research with Human Subjects and the IRB at SSU

I went through the IRB training - and completed the evaluators training. I have successfully submitted IRB applications in the past. However, upon completion of the training, I was informed that I was not required to complete that process. I suggest that the rules, regulations, and trainings be more clearly defined and presented so that researches do not waste precious time on unnecessary processes.

Online Platform and Community Access.

I am working with Sonoma County Librarians (and SSU Librarians) on constructing a 'home' for the archive. There will be a homepage with links to the Sonoma County Library, SSU's library, and the Online Archive of California. I have a planned meeting with Sonoma County Library's Zayda Delgado to plan out the page. I will find a person to help me design the appearance of the webpage interface and make it easily accessible to the general population.

Future Progress

A central goal of this study is to set up the platform, complete with forms, guidelines and tutorials, so that others may continue this work into the future, and expand it into other BIPOC populations. I have met with, and am planning meetings with other scholars, educators, and librarians. I am building alliances with members of the community for an expanded community based collaboration.

Conclusion

The North Bay Latino and BIPOC Oral History Project Pilot was a success. I plan to continue and expand this project, and eventually to hand it off to others when I retire.

List of Interviews

This is a list of completed interviews on the left. On the right, is a prospective list of persons who shall be interviewed. Please note that this list only includes Chicanas/Chicanos and Latinas/Latinos. Other leaders who are Indigenous/Native American, Asian/Pacific Islander, and African American may also be included. While I do have a list of these names, I have not included them here.

Completed Interviews

Cristina Briano
Omar Gallardo
Herman Hernández, Sr.
Sylvia Lemus
Omar Medina
Richard and Luz Navarrette
Raquel Rodríguez-Rasor
Alfredo Sánchez
Wanda Tapia
Francisco Vásquez
Donna Zapata

Alegría de la Cruz
Javier Guzmán
Laura Larqué
Frankie Lemus
Dan López
Isabel López
Josue López
Omar Malfavón
Miguel "Gavilán" Molina
Michaele Morales
Gervacio Peña
Sally Hurtado-López
Roberto Rodríguez
Alicia Sánchez
David Saucedo
Georgina Warmoth

Prospective Interviews

Ligia Booker
Ramón Cairo
Davin Cárdenas
Lisa Carreño

