

Example of a Successful DRC Application 1

Department Review Application for Student Human Subjects Research Project

Date: 03/20/2024

Student name: [REDACTED]

Email address: [REDACTED]@swarthmore.edu

Faculty advisor name: [REDACTED]

Email address: [REDACTED]

Advisor Approving Signature: _____

Title of project: **The Battle Over the Past: How the Archive is used to Construct Historical Narratives**

When you have completed this application, your advisor **MUST** read it through and sign it before you send it as a word document to Stacey Hogge, socanth@swarthmore.edu. Mrs. Hogge will forward all applications to the Departmental Review Committee (DRC).

Once the DRC has approved the final version (there will likely be requests for some changes that you make over email), a member of that committee will simultaneously send an approval email to you, your advisor, and Mrs. Hogge; a copy of which will be kept for our records. You may not proceed with your research until you receive this approval.

If you are applying for summer research funds, a copy of the approval email will also be sent to the coordinator of summer research.

In order to receive final approval for your work with human subjects either through the department or the college, you must also submit your completed CITI training certificate. If you are unsure as to whether your research qualifies as work with human subjects, discuss this with your advisor before completing the CITI training. CITI stands for [CITI - Collaborative Institutional Training Initiative](#) and is required of all human subject researchers affiliated with the College.

I. Project Description

A: Describe the proposed research and its specific scientific or scholarly aims of the research project.

The archive is a key step in the chain of the production of history, and I want to further understand how different actors view and use it. My thesis aims to look at the space of the archive and how people use it to construct a particular present and future. My focus will be on the Philadelphia Folklore Project (PFP), a nonprofit organization located in Philadelphia dedicated to documenting, supporting, and presenting Philadelphia-area folk arts and culture. This organization has collaborated with many different communities in Philadelphia on different projects to preserve their unique history, making it a perfect site to conduct my research. I will conduct interviews with members of the organization, as well as participant observation to explore how they approach using the large archive they've accumulated to craft historical narratives.

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B: Summarize existing research and previous work that support the expectation of obtaining useful results without undue risk to the human participants.

With regard to my subject matter, researchers have investigated the ability of community organizations to use archives to craft historical narratives and counternarratives without undue risk to the human participants.

Gudis, Catherine. 2022. "Walking the Talk: Art, History, and the Politics of Public Participatory Memory in L.A.'s Skid Row." *History Workshop Journal* 94:153–80. doi: [10.1093/hwj/dbac029](https://doi.org/10.1093/hwj/dbac029).

In this paper Gudis examines how a local community organization, the ironically named Los Angeles Poverty Department, blends art, performance, and the archive to take control of their own historical narrative. She intentionally blurs the line between the archive, art, and performance, critiquing the disciplinary categories that separate the archives, art, and politics. She is writing this piece not purely as an observer but as an engaged scholar, building community with the organization she is researching.

With regard to my methodology, several researchers have used interviews as a method in and around the archive to explore it as a space of knowledge production without undue risk to the human participants.

Mayrl, D., Wilson, N.H. The Archive as a Social World. *Qual Sociol* 43, 407–426 (2020). <https://doi-org.proxy.swarthmore.edu/10.1007/s11133-020-09462-z>

In this paper Mayrl and Wilson conducted semi-structured interviews with 68 historical sociologists to understand the ways scholars went about their research in the archives. The participants were interviewed in person or via Skype.

Cvetkovich, A. (2003). AIDS Activism and Public Feelings: Documenting ACT UP's Lesbians. In *Archive of Feelings*. Duke University Press.

Cvetkovich experimented with ethnography and interviews in chapter 5 of landmark book *An Archive of Feelings: Trauma, Sexuality, and Lesbian Public Cultures*. This section of the book focuses on activists' response to the AIDS epidemic in the New York ACT UP chapter. Specifically, she focuses on lesbians within the movement, interviewing 24 women, almost all of them lesbians, asking about their experience in the movement to build an "archive of emotions."

C: Research Methods and Activities: Describe and identify all interactions and interventions with human subjects that are to be performed. Include where the research will take place and time required from each subject/participant.

5-8 semi-structured interviews with people who work or have worked with Philadelphia Folklore Project is the main type of interaction with human subjects that will be performed. These interviews will last around 1 hour and take place at the Philadelphia Folklore Project's office in West Philadelphia or at a quiet public location of their choosing, or virtually on Zoom if they prefer. Pending consent from the lead archivist I will also do some more in depth participant observation with them, shadowing their work to learn how they use the archive in practice. This will include multiple interviews with them as their insights develop over the research period. I will also conduct 2-3 interviews with individuals managing archives related to Philadelphia Folklore Project but outside of the direct organization. Specifically I will be interviewing people involved of the archive at AAU, a partner of PFP that recently gave their collection

to Temple, and people involved in Temple Urban Archives who will soon become the new owners of PFP's collection, as PFP is about to move their archive there.

D: Describe the process for selecting participants in the study. Attach all recruitment materials to this application.

As this is a study of specifically how Philadelphia Folklore Project approaches producing history the bulk of my recruitment will be from people who work there or community members who have been significantly involved over the years. All of the people I interview will be over 18. I aim to conduct 5-8 semi structured interviews. I will be given the contact information of potential interview subjects by the director of Philadelphia Folklore Project or from an individual I have previously interviewed. I will then email them asking for their voluntary participation in the study and outlining the general shape of the research project. If I do not get a response, I will follow up with another email a week later and stop contacting them after that. Recruitment materials in the appendix.

II. Description of Data

A: What type of data (interviews, surveys, audio recordings, etc.) will be collected?

My data will consist of 5-8 semi-structured interviews with archivists and community members involved with Philadelphia Folklore Project. In cases where participants consent to be recorded, I will audio record the interviews on my cell phone. I will take field notes in a physical notebook or record oral field notes on my cell phone during my participant observation.

B: Will any identifiable data or coded data (e.g., data with participant ID numbers) where a master list (linking ID numbers to participants names/identities) to the codes exists, be stored for future use or entered into an existing database as a result of the research?

No identifiable data will be stored for future use or entered into existing databases.

C: Will you collect data electronically?

Yes, I will be collecting audio file versions of interviews taking place both in person and online on the platform zoom. I will also make electronic versions of the transcripts for each interview. I will also scan my written field notes and transcribe my oral field notes and store them as word documents.

D: In what format (paper, electronic, audio tape, etc.) will research data be maintained?

Interview recordings will be created with the voice recorder pro app on my phone before being transferred immediately to my computer and promptly deleted from my phone. Interview audio will then be uploaded to the platform trint which I will use to aid me in creating transcripts that I will end up downloading as word files onto my computer. Finally, I will use Atlas.ti while processing my data. My field notes from participant observation will be in a physical notebook or recorded on my phone. I will immediately transfer any audio notes to my computer and delete them from my phone. Any transcripts from my participant observation notes will be done by me in a word document.

E: Where will the data be stored (notebook, filing cabinet, computer, etc.)? Specify the level of security of the storage place (locked, password protected, etc.).

All data will be stored on my personal password protected laptop in an encrypted folder. Backups of the data will also be saved in a password protected folder on my OneDrive. Recordings will be transferred directly from my phone to my laptop following each interview and subsequently deleted from my phone. My laptop and field notebook will be stored in my locked room when it is not in use.

F: Will anyone other than you have access to the data? If so, who, and how will the data be shared?

No one but me will have access to the data I collect.

G: What will happen to any identifiable data at the end of the study? (Identifiable data MUST be destroyed or de-identified prior to graduation or otherwise leaving Swarthmore.)

All identifiable data will be destroyed prior to my Swarthmore graduation in May of 2023

III. Informed Consent

A: What kind of informed consent (written, oral, etc.) will you obtain from the subjects? You MUST attach copies of all consent documents or scripts.

I will be obtaining written consent from all interviewees. The consent form I will use is in the appendix.

B: Explain the process that you will use for obtaining informed consent.

I will email the consent form to interviewees after we have scheduled a day and time for the interview. I will ask them to review it and let me know if they have any questions. Before beginning the interview, I will summarize key points of the form, including the purpose of the research, voluntary participation, skipping questions, ending the interview early, and withdrawing participation. I will then ask if they have any questions and then have them sign the form. In the case where the interview must be conducted on zoom I will ask them to digitally sign the form and email it back to me before starting the interview.

C: Explain how coercion or undue influence will be minimized when obtaining consent.

I will ask the participants if they are okay with me audio recording the interview before beginning. I will make sure participants understand the interview is voluntary and they can end it at any time. I will also clarify that they don't have to answer any questions they don't want to and can change their mind about any of this at any point during the interview. Before conducting any participant observation I will have a detailed conversation with the archivist about how and when I'll be taking notes and make sure they still agree to the observation. I will also make sure they can always change their mind at any point about participating in the research, and that they can always ask me not to take notes or write about anything happening they'd rather keep private and I will not record it.

IV. Risks and Benefits

A: List the potential benefits associated with this study.

There are no anticipated benefits for participants in this study other than the completion of the thesis exercise.

B: Describe all reasonably expected risks, harms, and/or discomforts that may apply to the research. Discuss severity and likelihood of occurrence including but not limited to data collection, data storage, maintaining confidentiality and privacy, informed consent process, recruitment processes, study processes, etc.

There may be a small risk to interviewees of disclosing personal information in the interview that they do not want their colleagues in Philadelphia Folklore Project to know. For example, it is possible that one of my participants could reveal to me that they have a disagreement with how their colleague approaches the archive. The likelihood of this occurring is quite low as the interview will not focus on the personal lives and relationships of the people I am interviewing. If this does occur it would not be a severe issue because nobody has access to the data from these interviews but me. Further, the kinds of subject interview questions will raise are not different from the kinds of topics one might reasonably expect to be shared in ordinary conversations with family or friends in the course of daily life.

C: Describe how potential risk, harms, and/or discomforts will be minimized.

I will make clear to the interviewees that their participation is voluntary, and they are able to skip any question they would rather not answer. Additionally, I will be anonymizing responses and changing any identifying information so that the interviewee is not identifiable. Any quotes that are eventually published will be under a fake name. I will do everything possible to protect the identity of everyone I interview.

D: Discuss how risks to participants are reasonable when compared to the anticipated benefits to the participants and the importance of knowledge that may reasonably be expected to result.

There are neither anticipated benefits nor risks beyond those that one would encounter in a discussion with family or friends.

V. Appendix

A: Recruitment Email:

Title of email: Inquiry about interviewing you for my senior thesis

Dear _____,

Hello I hope this message finds you well! My name is [REDACTED]es and I am a senior at Swarthmore college. I was given your contact information from [REDACTED] through my research with Philadelphia Folklore Project. I am contacting you today asking if you would be willing to be interviewed by me for my Senior Thesis, which investigates how community organizations use

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their archives and for what ends. I am the sole researcher on this project. I would like to interview you as someone who has worked extensively with Philadelphia Folklore Project; your insights will be invaluable to my study. The interview would last around 1 hour and would be conducted at a location of your choosing, including Zoom if you prefer. If you would like to be interviewed let me know what times in the next two weeks would work best for you. If you agree to be interviewed I will send you a consent form to review to make sure you are comfortable being interviewed. Again I'm happy to answer any questions or discuss the details of my research with you further; if you'd prefer to contact me by phone my phone number is [REDACTED]

Thanks!

[REDACTED]

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B: Interview guide, further follow up questions will be asked based on their responses

Hi! Could you tell me a little about yourself, maybe starting with name, pronouns, education, and what you do for work?

What brought you first to Philadelphia Folklore Project?

What is your relationship with PFP?

What is your main goal in doing the work you do, what do you hope to achieve?

What do you see as the key mission of PFP, why is it so important?

What have your experiences been like working with the archives at PFP?

What role does the archive play in the projects you've worked on with PFP?

PFP is working on digitizing their archives in order to make some materials available online, what do you think about this? Do you think this will change the way the archive is used, both by you and by others?

It seems to me like a large part of the work at PFP is focused on preserving histories that might otherwise be forgotten. Why does preserving those histories matter? How do the stories we remember about history shape the present?

What brought you to the decision to transfer the archive to a larger institution?

Why did you choose Temple as the right location for you?

How has it gone having your archives housed at Temple?

Can you tell me about the first time you collaborated with a community archive?

How do you view Temple's role in supporting independent archival collections?

Is there anything else related to these topics that I missed or that you'd like to talk about?

C: Consent Forms

The Battle Over the Past: How the Archive is used to Construct Historical Narratives

Informed Consent Form

You are invited to participate in a research study about how community organizations use archives. I am interested in learning how communities are able to reclaim their historical narrative through the use of the archive.

This study is being conducted by [REDACTED], an undergraduate student in the Department of Sociology and Anthropology at Swarthmore College. It will be the core of my senior thesis, which is a requirement for my major.

There are 2 qualifications to participate in this study (for example): (1) You must be at least 18 years old; (2) Be involved in Philadelphia Folklore Project.

Participation in this study is voluntary. If you agree to participate in this study, you would be interviewed for about one hour about your experience working with Philadelphia Folklore Project. You may choose not to answer any questions, and you may discontinue participation at any time.

I do not anticipate any risks or benefits as a result of this study, but it is helping me to complete my work in college. The information you will share with me if you participate in this study will be kept anonymous. Your information will be assigned a code number that is unique to this study. The list connecting your name to this number will be stored in a locked folder on my computer and only I will be able to see the list or your interview. No one else will be able to see your interview or even know whether you participated in this study. When the study is completed and the data have been analyzed, the list linking participant's names to study numbers will be destroyed. Your name will not be used in any writing that results from this project, any quotes from the interview that would be used will be anonymized.

If you have any questions about this study or your rights as a research participant, please contact me at [REDACTED] or the Chair of my department:

Professor Christy Schuetze
Department of Sociology and Anthropology
500 College Avenue Swarthmore College
Swarthmore PA, 19081 USA

By signing below, you are certifying that you are at least 18 years old and agree to be interviewed.

Signature _____ Date _____

Agreement to be Audio-Recorded:

I would like to record this interview. I will store the recording in a password-protected file on my computer and will destroy the file when my research is complete. If you do not agree to be recorded, I will simply write notes.

By signing below, you are agreeing to have the interview audio recorded.

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Signature _____

Date _____