

Oral History Review – Special Issue!

Announcing a Special Issue dedicated to Indigenous Oral History Fall 2026

Twenty-five years ago, Winona Wheeler edited “Indigenous Voices from the Great Plains,” a special issue of *Oral History Forum*, the journal of the Canadian Oral History Association. Around the same time, she attended her first OHA conference, where, she figured, she was the only Indigenous person there. It was a lonely event! Indigenous peoples had been engaged in the practice of oral history for centuries but not many of us were finding our ways to meetings like those run by the OHA. The years since then have seen much change: in 2020 Nepia Mahuika’s exceptional *Rethinking Oral History and Tradition: An Indigenous Perspective*, won the OHA’s book award, and in 2021 an Indigenous caucus was formed to provide a recognized space within the OHA for Indigenous oral historians to support one another and to encourage young Indigenous scholars’ oral history work within their communities. As caucus co-founder Sara Sinclair said at that time, her interest in the new group was in part the simple opportunity it granted to engage with other Indigenous practitioners whose work she admired more directly. In 2022, the OHA committed to an Indigenous Initiative, including building an endowed fund “to promote the success of Indigenous oral historians, as well as meaningful and ethical oral historical projects within Indigenous communities.”

There are still many challenges our practitioners face. We remain under-represented within cultural and academic institutions and under-funded in our community-engaged practices. Accounts of what the practice of Indigenous oral history means, and how we do it, also remain under-published and misunderstood. For these reasons and more, we are excited to announce a special issue of the *Oral History Review* and with it, the opportunity to promote meaningful exchange within our community about the practice of Indigenous oral history, by Indigenous practitioners. This is an opportune time to bring the Indigenous oral history community together again, and welcome new peers to introduce themselves and to join us in our pursuits.

We invite you to respond to this call for papers with oral history encounters/interviews, essays, reflections and stories that reveal the multiplicity of ways in which Indigenous oral historians embrace different ways of knowing, and diverse expressions of what it means to “do” oral history in our communities.

Our call for papers asks you to consider:

- What you are doing with your oral histories; what are the unique ways that you are working with your material, and how you are putting it to use.
- The projects that shaped who you are and that most informed your oral history practice.
- The stories of the narrators who changed your life, the relationships that underpinned your adventures, and the experiences that have evoked the most emotion.
- The readings that have most impacted the way you think about/teach about oral history, whether those readings are categorized as “oral history” or not.
- How relationships inform the work that you do.

- How you think about, and feel about, and honor responsibility to community.
- How you have navigated rules and restrictions in mainstream academic institutions that have made it harder to do your work.
- How your own approach to teaching Indigenous oral history has evolved
- How your own thinking about the meaning and practice of oral history has evolved in your own lifetime

We are especially excited to consider multi-media approaches to sharing these reflections in the OHR's digital edition of this issue!

The deadline for submissions is June 1st, 2025.

To submit your articles, use the OHR submission portal, <https://mc.manuscriptcentral.com/ohr>.

For questions, please contact our Special Issue Editors, Sara Sinclair and Winona Wheeler~

- Sara can be reached at sara.e.sinclair@gmail.com.
- Winona can be reached at winona.wheeler@usask.ca.

Sara Sinclair is an oral historian of Cree-Ojibwa and mixed settler descent. Sara teaches in the Oral History Master of Arts Program at Columbia University. Sara recently edited the memoir of former Canadian Senator and Chief Commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Murray Sinclair (McClelland & Stewart, September 2024). With Stephanie Sinclair she is co-editing two anthologies of Indigenous letters, for Penguin/Random House Canada. She is the editor of *How We Go Home: Voices from Indigenous North America* (2020, Voice of Witness/Haymarket Books). At the Columbia Center for Oral History Research (CCOHR) she was Director of the Aryeh Neier Oral History Project and contributed to the CCOHR's Covid-19 Oral History, Narrative and Memory Archive, Obama Presidency Oral History, and Robert Rauschenberg Oral History Project. With Peter Bearman and Mary Marshall Clark, Sinclair edited *Robert Rauschenberg: An Oral History* (2019, Columbia University Press). Sara holds an M.A. in Oral History from Columbia University. Visit saraesinclair.com

Winona Wheeler is a lifelong student of Indigenous knowledge, oral history, anti-colonial theory, and critical Indigenous Studies and a member of Fisher River Cree Nation. She has been teaching and publishing in Indigenous Studies since 1988, and has developed, led, and collaborated on numerous Indigenous oral research projects including, among others, specific land claims, Treaty Rights, and, as an expert witness on Indigenous oral histories in The Victor Buffalo Federal Court case. Winona is currently an Associate Professor in Indigenous Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. She also sits on the OHR Editorial Board and recently co-rewrote a second edition of *Indian Oral History Manual: Canada and the United States* published by Routledge in 2024.

For general questions, contact the *Oral History Review* Editor, Holly Werner-Thomas, at holly@hollythomasoralhistory.com.