

ORAL HISTORY IN THE HAWKESBURY

HAWKESBURY LIBRARY SERVICE - LOCAL STUDIES FACT SHEET

What is Oral History?

Oral history is another form of documentation used by a wide range of researchers investigating local history. It involves recorded interviews undertaken with a view to eventual archiving for preservation and public access. The Oral History Australia summarises what makes oral history so special and valuable for local collections in their **Statement of Value**, reprinted overleaf.

Members of the local community, bring to life the Hawkesbury through stories and building a picture that may otherwise be lost. The interviews preserve the way people speak, their voices, accents and vocabularies, creating a valuable record that can be accessed by interested people.

Background

An oral history project was first established in the 1980s as part of a grant. Additional interviews were added undertaken by volunteer interviewees. These interviews document life in the Hawkesbury and include stories about living through the 1930s Depression, various floods, riverboats, schooling, entertainment and agricultural practises, to name a few. Some memories even date before World War 1, with some interviewees born in the 1890s or early 1900s. The interviews were recorded from a wide range of community members who were willing to share their stories and include local residents, both men and women, with occupations ranging from farmers, teachers, business managers to RAAF pilots and politicians. These interviews were originally stored on tape and have now been digitised.

More recently, Hawkesbury Library has recommenced the oral history project with several keen volunteers, being trained and currently undertaking interviews. Completed interviews can assist with local and family history research and can supplement other historical sources.

Our Collection

To check the holdings for Hawkesbury Service, search the catalogue at <https://aurora.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/library/> using the term "Oral History Interview" Copies are kept in our Local Studies Collection, as well as lending copies for loan. Any enquiries contact the Local History Librarian via email history@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au or phone (02) 4560 4460.

Note the views expressed in the interviews are the speaker's own and do not represent the policies of Hawkesbury Library Service or views of its employees.

HAWKESBURY VOICES

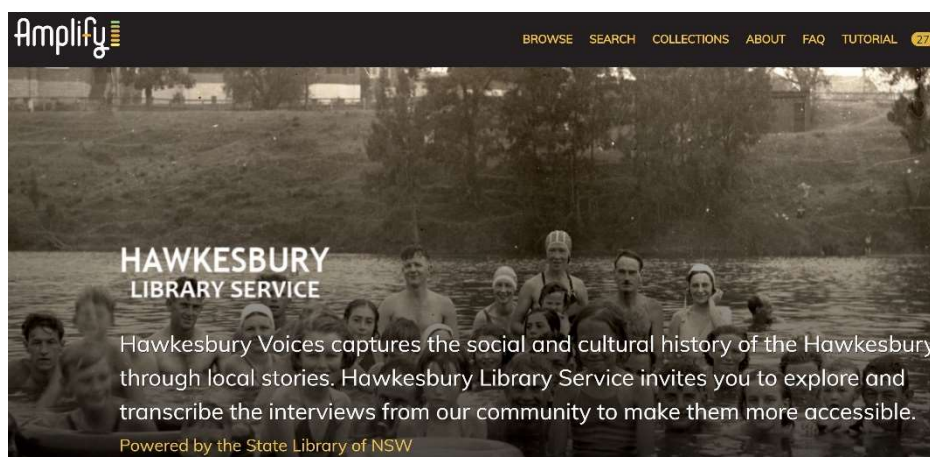
About Hawkesbury Voices

Hawkesbury Voices captures the social and cultural history of the Hawkesbury through local stories. These interviews complement existing records held in the Local Studies Collection of Hawkesbury Library Service. We are constantly adding new interviews to Hawkesbury Voices. If you have a story to share and are interested in sharing your Hawkesbury memories or know someone else, please contact the Local History Librarian on 02 4560 4466 or email history@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au

Amplify

Hawkesbury Library was selected in 2021 to participate in the Amplify project <https://amplify.gov.au/> Using the innovative online tool called Amplify, developed by the State Library of NSW, anyone from anywhere can now search, listen to and transcribe digitised audio oral history interviews. A selection of our digitised oral history collection- focussing on the Hawkesbury, have been placed on the platform with a copy of the interview, as interpreted by a machine.

Volunteers can assist by listening to the interviews and then correcting the transcription to help make the interviews more accessible. It is not necessary to log in, just go to <https://amplify.gov.au/hawkesbury> and select an interview. There are tutorials <https://amplify.gov.au/page/tutorial> and FAQs <https://amplify.gov.au/page/faq> on the site. If you'd like to listen to some of our audio collections before you start transcribing, select an individual item and click the Play All button. Remember the golden rule: Use your best judgement to transcribe as you hear.



More information

For additional information about Amplify see the **Local Studies Fact Sheet** titled **Amplify**.

Statement of Value

In their Statement of Value, Oral History Australia (September 2021) summarises what makes oral history so special and valuable. Here are some of the main points:

- Oral history adds to the historical record the experiences of individuals and groups who are less likely to record their stories by other means and preserve those stories in permanent archives. For example, in Australia oral history has made significant contributions to the historical record of indigenous Australians, of workers and the unemployed, of young and old, of migration and cultural diversity, of people with disabilities and special needs, and of people with diverse sexualities, among others.
- Oral history adds to the historical record aspects of experience in the past which are less likely to be recorded and preserved, such as the history of family life, friendship or intimacy.
- Oral history records and preserves voice, and thus ensures that the historical record includes different languages and vernacular speech, accent and dialect.
- Oral history recordings capture the emotion of history, including both the significance of emotion in the past and the emotional resonance of that past in people's lives.
- Oral history can be empowering for people who have not had a chance to tell their story, whose story has been suppressed, denied or manipulated, and who are affirmed by public recognition that their life and their story is significant.
- Oral history can be an invaluable resource for advocacy by groups of people whose history has been suppressed, denied or manipulated, and who wish to tell their version of history and set the record straight.

Full statement at <https://oralhistoryaustralia.org.au/wp-content/uploads/OHA-oralhistoryvalue.pdf>

Publications

If you are interested in finding more about Oral History check the following items in our collection.

Oral history handbook / by Beth M. Robertson.
Shelved at RL907.2 ROB and 907.2 ROB

Oral history and public memories / edited by Paula Hamilton and Linda Shopes
Shelved at RL907.2 ORA and 907.2 ORA

Oral history: a handbook / Louise Douglas, Alan Roberts & Ruth Thompson
RL907.2 DOU

Oral history: from tape to type / Cullom Davis, Kathryn Back, Kay MacLean
Shelved at RL907 DAV

The Oral History Association of Australia journal
Shelved at RL907.2 ORA

Talking together: a guide to community oral history projects / by Lesley Jenkins
Shelved at RL907.2 JEN and 907.2 JEN

More information

For more information about Oral History check the Oral History Australia
<https://oralhistoryaustralia.org.au/guidance/what-is-oral-history/>

Watch a video <https://youtu.be/Xk3gb9xCTFo> from the Oral History Centre <https://oralhistorycentre.ca/> which gives a good explanation of the theory, practice and value of oral history.

Websites and organisations

Oral History and Folklore Collection, National Library of Australia
<https://www.nla.gov.au/oral-history-folklore/using>

Oral History NSW
<http://www.oralhistorynsw.org.au/index.html>

Oral History Australia
<http://www.oralhistoryaustralia.org.au/>

Hills Voices Online
<http://www.thehills.nsw.gov.au/Library/Library-e-Resources/Hills-Voices-Online>

Prepared by the Local History Librarian & updated 10/2/2022

Contact Information

ADDRESS

Hawkesbury Library Service
Hawkesbury Central Library
Deerubbin Centre (Ground floor)
300 George Street
WINDSOR NSW 2756

HOURS

Monday to Friday 9am - 7pm
Saturday 9am - 1pm
Sunday 2pm - 5pm
Closed Public Holidays

LOCAL HISTORY CONTACTS

(02) 4560 4466 or 4560 4460
history@hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au
<http://www.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/library>
<http://www.facebook.com/HawkesburyLibrary>

Access the catalogue <https://aurora.hawkesbury.nsw.gov.au/library/>