

Oral History, Storytelling, & Institutional Memory

A. Paige Hendrickson, University Archivist
aphendrickson@ecsu.edu or Archives@ecsu.edu

Early Storytellers

Pictorial Storytelling

- Pre-Language
- Drawings
- Paintings
- Crafts
- Dance
- Plays/Skits

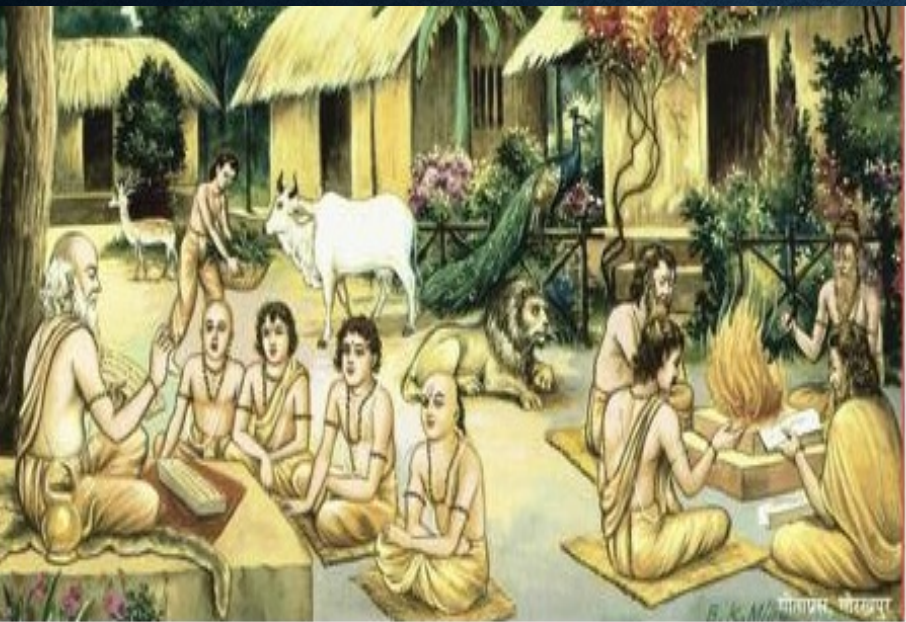


Oral Traditions

- Pre-Writing
- Poems/Rhymes
- Songs/Chants
- Dance
- History
- Entertainment



Historians
Keepers Of Memory
Recordkeepers
Soothsayers
Sages
Mystics
Clerics



Modern Oral Histories

- Purpose
- Personal Interviews
- Community Outreach
- Special Events
(Celebrations, Disasters, etc.)
- Technology
- Format
- Accessibility
- Promotion

Institutional Memory

n. The information held in employees' personal recollections and experiences that provides an understanding of the history and culture of an organization, especially the stories that explain the reasons behind certain decisions or procedures.

Notes

- Records may be considered a part of institutional memory, but the term generally connotes informal, unrecorded knowledge.

Source: SAA Dictionary <https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/institutional-memory.html>

Online Resources

- Smithsonian Institution Archives <https://siarchives.si.edu/history/how-do-oral-history>
- National Archives—Oral History <https://www.archives.gov/about/history/oral-history-at-the-national-archives>
- Oral History Association <https://oralhistory.org/principles-and-best-practices-revised-2018/>
- Library of Congress—The American Folklife Center <https://loc.gov/folklife/familyfolklife/oralhistory.html>
- Science History Institute—Oral History Collections <https://www.sciencehistory.org/oral-history-collections>
- National Library of Medicine—National Institute of Health Oral Histories <https://www.nlm.nih.gov/hmd/manuscripts/oh.html>
- British Library—Oral Histories <https://www.bl.uk/subjects/oral-history>