

TOWN OF CARRBORO
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News Release

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The Town of Carrboro Launches Oral History Project

The Town of Carrboro is excited to announce the launching of the [Carrboro Oral History Project \(COHP\)](#). This project, championed by the Mayor and Board of Aldermen, has been in the construction stages for nearly a year. The process to launch the project has included volunteers, community input, and collaborations with [UNC's Southern Oral History Program](#) and The Moxie Project.

“Our Board was asked to consider establishing a historian position for our town. As we explored this idea, we decided to first focus on our town history through the words and stories of our residents and communities – our oral histories,” explained Mayor Lydia Lavelle. “This led us to a natural collaboration with UNC’s Southern Oral History Program. The expertise the SOHP has brought to this project has been invaluable”

In the first steps to make this project a reality, the Town called on a community volunteer to head up the project. Nancy Mason, a 30 year resident, served in the roll as volunteer leader. “I have observed Carrboro grow rapidly, while at the same time maintaining the character that makes it so special. When the opportunity arose to participate in this project, I felt fortunate to be able to leverage my experience and training as an oral historian. The work completed to date should make the community proud, as it intimately reflects the unique journey Carrboro has taken over the years,” said Nancy.

The first phase of the COHP is complete and consists of a [webpage](#) on the Town of Carrboro’s website that has gathered all oral histories that are deposited into the Sothern Oral History Program’s database and are related to the Town of Carrboro. The oral histories are grouped into categories including Food and Agriculture as well as The Modern South, among others. You’ll find former aldermen, farmer’s market vendors, and former mill workers among the oral histories on this webpage. The webpage was created by an intern from [The Moxie Project](#) at UNC, a selective, innovative, engaged curricular program in women’s history and activism that deeply connects scholarship and hands-on learning. Adrienne Bonar, a junior at UNC, spent eight weeks with the Town developing the webpage and working on other projects.

The second phase is underway and includes 13 volunteer interviewers who were trained by leaders of UNC’s Southern Oral History Program. A list of “critical elders” were identified by the Carrboro Board of Aldermen and over the next year each volunteer interviewer will collect

the oral history of a critical elder. These oral histories will be deposited to the Southern Oral History Program for preservation and then linked to the COHP webpage.

Julie Eckenrode, Assistant to the Town Manager, is managing this project for the Town of Carrboro. “This project is unique and is one that has the potential to endure and morph in to a celebration of Carrboro’s history,” she said. “We aren’t sure of its potential yet, but are excited to watch the project grow.”

Project webpage: www.townofcarrboro.org/COHP

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