



ORAL HISTORY GUIDE



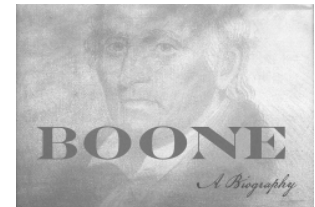
Stories and pictures help describe, strengthen, and guide a community. What we choose to collect and remember shapes our future. Literature provides models for making history memorable and human. Together We Read presents a program that involves oral history, creates a community literature, and brings people together.

1. Map your neighborhood.
2. Meet.
3. Collect stories and images.
4. Create history, following models.
5. Keep the process alive.

COLLECTING HISTORY: See back of this handout.

USING MODELS: The first model for creating community history is Robert Morgan's biography, *Boone*, the 2008 Together We Read pick. There are other models, too. TWR's "Reader's Guide" presents "Building Community through Literature: A Reading, Discussion, and Local History Guide," which outlines the use of such models.

The story of every community mirrors the Boone story: seeking new land, responding to what's native, shaping community, and defending against threats.



The 2008 Together We Read Book: *Boone* by Robert Morgan



THEMES: The story of Daniel Boone and the opening of the American wilderness reveal the tensions between development and preservation—forces that face much of Western North Carolina today. It also highlights the relationship between native and new; and stability and progress.

Together We Read is interested in recording and collecting the changing story of Western North Carolina. Oral history projects explore the following themes:

- The settlement of local communities
- Local historical figures
- Real-life heroes and the American dream
- The changing nature of places in the face of development

ORAL HISTORY PROJECT GOALS:

- To record and preserve local stories and documents that chronicle the changing nature of community in Western North Carolina.
- To enhance the reading and discussion of *Boone* by collecting stories from residents of Western North Carolina that mirror themes found in the book.
- To support community efforts to bring people together in creating a picture of their past and future—one of the important functions of literature.

WHAT DOES AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT LOOK LIKE?

An oral history project can take many forms. Your oral history project might include:

- Individual oral history interviews
Together We Read staff or a community member interviews and records a resident's story in their home.
- Oral history training
Oral History Coordinator Rebecca Williams provides an oral history training workshop to local community members.
- Story Circle
Together We Read staff records a community celebration in which residents share memories and stories.
- Photo Drive
Pictures and other mementos are collected, scanned, and digitized in a local history day photo drive.
- Memoir Writing Workshop
Participants write personal and family stories.
- Products
For sharing and for future research, TWR supports materials in print and on the web.

HOW TO GET STARTED:

- Contact Rebecca Williams, Oral History Coordinator for Together We Read 828-686-3922
serpentchild@earthlink.net
- Identify community partner organizations
- Connect to Boone for examples of themes; see TWR's Reader's Guide.
- Identify oral history project goals, needs, and time frame.
- Consult with TWR's oral history coordinator for support services and workshops.

WEB RESOURCES:

- Together We Read: www.togetherweweread.org
- "The Read on WNC": thereadonwnc.ning.org
- The Smithsonian Folklife and Oral History Interviewing Guide:
http://www.folklife.si.edu/explore/Resources/InterviewGuide/InterviewGuide_home.html
- Preparing for the Interview—from Story Corps:
http://www.storycorps.net/participate/do-it-yourself_guide/how_to_interview/
- Oral History Evaluation Guidelines—Oral History Association:
http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/pub_eg.html
- NC ECHO—Information about state standards for digitalization projects: www.ncecho.org