

*In Our Own Words:  
Portraits of Brooklyn's Vietnam Veterans*

Exhibit-Related Resources for Teachers and Students



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Dear Educator:

Thank you for your interest in visiting Brooklyn Historical Society's *In Our Own Words: Portraits of Brooklyn's Vietnam Veterans* exhibit. We hope that your visit to BHS and the following education materials provide an enriching addition to your curriculum. In this packet, you will find:

- ★ Background Information about the practice of Oral History and about the Vietnam War
- ★ Class Activities and discussion questions designed to prepare students for the *In Our Own Words* exhibit
- ★ Additional resources to consult for research or classroom use

The activities in our lesson plans have been designed to directly address **New York State Social Studies Core Curriculum**. Activities have also been designed to meet the **Common Core State Standards** in English Language Arts and Literacy in History/Social Studies.

We hope you will continue to draw on Brooklyn Historical Society's Oral History Collections and other exhibits as resources for your classes. Researchers can search, browse, and listen to interviews from several of our collections at Brooklyn Historical Society's Othmer. Audio clips are also available at the following web address:  
[http://www.brooklynhistory.org/resources/oral\\_hist.html](http://www.brooklynhistory.org/resources/oral_hist.html).

Sincerely,

Andrea Del Valle  
Director of Education

## **Introduction to *In Our Own Words* and the Exhibit Experience**

### **What to expect when you come to the exhibit:**

Total time allotment: 50-60 minutes; optional additional 45 minutes

Class size limit: 30 students

BHS educators will divide the class into two groups. One group will go directly to the exhibit on the third floor. The exhibit features eleven oral histories of Vietnam veterans paired with portraits and artifacts from the selected veterans. Students will have the opportunity to explore the exhibit and listen to the oral histories. During this time, the other group will be working with an educator to explore primary sources in the photography section of the exhibit. After 25 minutes, the groups will switch and move to the opposite activity for another 25 minutes.

Pending availability, you may schedule a Q&A session with veterans featured in the exhibit. This unique interaction between students and veterans brings the past to life and encourages students to make connections between history and current events. This portion of the exhibit experience is optional and would last 45 minutes.



### **Objectives of the exhibit and educational materials:**

In order for your class to get the most out of this experience, we have designed activities, lessons, and discussion questions recommended for use before and after visiting the exhibit. Two main objectives of a visit to the *In Our Own Words* exhibit and of the following educational materials are to help students understand both the lived experience of the Vietnam War and the practice and study of oral history.

# Introduction to Oral History

## What is Oral History?

Oral history is a historical method that uses recorded interviews to preserve firsthand memories, accounts, and interpretations of a person's life, an event, a place, a way of life, or a particular period in time. Once familiar with the techniques of conducting oral history interviews, anyone can be an oral historian.

## A brief outline of the oral history process:

- 1. Choose a topic:** What place, event, or time period do you want to learn about?
- 2. Think about who you would like to interview.** The interviewee should be someone who has first-hand experience of the history related to your topic. Make sure you tell them about your project and that they consent to participate. Always be respectful of the interviewee and consider how your work affects them and the memory of their life experiences.
- 3. Once you have a person, do some research.** Make sure you know the historical background of your topic and the context of the interviewee's experience of it.
- 4. Plan what questions you would like to ask.** Incorporate *open-ended questions\**, *follow-up questions\**, and *clarifying questions\** in a logical sequence to allow the interviewee to share their unique life experiences as fully as possible. (\*Key Terms defined on page 5)
- 5. Think about the technology you will use.** Make sure you have access to an appropriate recording device. Oral history technology might include digital recorders, digital cameras, microphones, tape recorders, etc.
- 6. Schedule a time to meet with the interviewee and conduct the interview.** Use your questions as a guide, but don't be afraid to let the interviewee elaborate on other, related topics. He or she might have something valuable to share that you didn't even know to ask about!
- 7. Review the interview** and, if desired, create a transcript of the interview. At this point, you should think about the information, memories, and experiences that the person shared with you. Think about the interviewee's point of view and how you can interpret their oral history.

## Key terms for Oral History

**Clarifying questions:** these are questions that clear up something the interviewer does not understand.

**Follow-up questions:** an interviewer is asking follow-up questions when he or she asks several questions about the same topic, usually in order to gain a richer, more in-depth picture of the subject matter.

**Interviewee:** the person answering questions that are asked by another person who is collecting an oral history.

**Interviewer:** the person who asks the questions in order to collect an oral history from another person.

**Narrator:** another term to describe the interviewee

**Open-ended questions:** these are questions that encourage free-form and lengthy responses, rather than a simple “yes” or “no” answer. Such questions might begin with: “Tell me more about...”, or “Why did you...”.

**Primary source:** a primary source is a document, recording, diary, artifact, or other source of information that was created at roughly the time being studied, often by someone with direct personal knowledge of the events being described.

**Prop:** when collecting oral history, a prop may be used to spark the interviewee’s memory. A prop might be a meaningful object or photograph.

**Transcript:** this is a text copy, usually typed, of a recorded oral history. Although a transcript is a word-for-word account of what was said by both the interviewer and the person giving the oral history, it is not a substitute for the recording. By using a text copy of an audio recording, the value of the oral history as a primary source document is limited since inflections and tone can’t be heard.

## **Historical Background: Overview of the Vietnam Conflict (1965-1975)**

The Vietnam War was among the longest and most controversial wars in United States history, costing the lives of approximately 58,000 American soldiers. The U.S. government became involved in Vietnam to oppose the spread of communism in Southeast Asia, but eventually became caught in a conflict that it could not win. Although the war was widely supported by Americans in the early 1960s, as it escalated and casualties increased, opposition became widespread.

The country of Vietnam had a long history of foreign occupation, and the roots of this conflict can be traced to the French colonial occupation (1884-1954). Following World War II, Vietnamese rebels seeking independence eventually defeated the French at Dien Bien Phu in northern Vietnam, which eventually led to the end of French colonial rule there. When the French left Vietnam, the country was divided in half; a strong communist government took over in the north and a weaker government controlled the south. The leader of communist North Vietnam, Ho Chi Minh, was regarded as a hero throughout all of Vietnam due to his nationalist opposition to foreign occupation and many Vietnamese people hoped that the country would be reunited under his control.

U.S. foreign policy in the 1950s sought to “contain” the spread of communism throughout the world. Although Ho Chi Minh was fighting for freedom from colonial oppressors—a story that aligned with the ideals of the American Revolution—his ties to communism made him a potential enemy for the U.S. Following Vietnam’s independence from France, the U.S. sought to keep the entire country of Vietnam from falling to the Communist government in North Vietnam. The U.S. began to assist the South Vietnamese government, sending military equipment and advisors to help the South Vietnamese military. The military conditions deteriorated in the early 1960s as North Vietnamese Communist guerilla fighters (dubbed the Viet Cong) succeeded in infiltrating many areas of South Vietnam, including taking over the fertile Mekong Delta.

In August 1964, a U.S. ship on an intelligence gathering mission in the Gulf of Tonkin engaged in a skirmish with North Vietnamese torpedo boats. A second alleged attack by North Vietnamese led President Lyndon Johnson to pass the Gulf of Tonkin Resolution, which gave the President the power to conduct military operations without Congress declaring a war. Under this resolution, Johnson began sending combat troops to Vietnam in 1965, and began a widespread bombing campaign. American involvement in Vietnam would increase throughout the decade, as the U.S. became entrenched in a large-scale war without a clear end or exit strategy.

Public and political support eroded as the war went on and a powerful anti-war movement developed in the States. In addition to opposing the draft and arguing against the legality and morality of U.S. involvement in the war, many Americans began to oppose the war because it appeared that little progress was being made while American casualties continued to increase.

In 1969, under President Richard Nixon, the U.S. began a program called “Vietnamization,” which aimed to turn over the defense of South Vietnam to the South Vietnamese leadership and withdraw U.S. troops. The U.S. ceased offensive action against North Vietnam at the beginning of 1973. By 1975 the last troops withdrew, ending U.S. military involvement in Vietnam.

## **Historical Background: Key Ideas, Events, and People for the Vietnam War**

1. **Ho Chi Minh** – A Communist revolutionary who became the president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam (North Vietnam) from 1945 until his death in 1969.
2. **Democratic Republic of Vietnam** – the country in the northern part of Vietnam. Ruled by Ho Chi Minh until 1969, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was a communist country and the opponent of the United States and South Vietnam in the Vietnam War. South Vietnam was incorporated into the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1975.
3. **Republic of Vietnam** – the country in the south of Vietnam. Ruled by Ngo Dinh Diem until 1963, this country received the military and political support from the United States leading up to and during the Vietnam War.
4. **Ngo Dinh Diem** – the president of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). Diem opposed the communist presence in North Vietnam and had a corrupt and authoritarian administration. Initially, the United States supported Diem, but that support declined during the early 1960s. Diem was assassinated in a CIA-supported coup by his generals in 1963.
5. **Vietcong/ Viet Cong** – the term used to describe the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam. This armed group consisted of army units and guerrilla units that fought against the United States during the Vietnam War for control of South Vietnam.
6. **Communism** – a social, political, and economic system in which all people have a common share in the means of production so as to do away with a social and economic classes. Typically, a Communist state also features a one-party political system that controls the government. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union was the leading Communist “superpower” opposed to the United States and the spread of the capitalism.
7. **Cold War** – The Cold War, which lasted from 1945 (after World War II) until 1991, was a period of competition and tension between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allies. The two “superpowers” (the U.S. and U.S.S.R.) that emerged after the devastation of Europe in WWII never actually fought a battle or used military force against each other, but the period was marked by strong competition between them for influence over other countries. The Vietnam War was related to the Cold War because the United States fought to prevent the spread of Communism in Vietnam.
8. **Domino Theory** – a United States foreign policy theory from the 1950s and 1960s that assumes that if one country “fell under Communist influence” that, like a set of dominoes, the neighboring countries would also become Communist. This policy explains U.S. intervention in Vietnam because the U.S. did not want Vietnam to become Communist for fear of losing influence over a much larger portion of Southeast Asia. The United States government also used the Domino Theory to justify intervention in other areas of the world.
9. **Guerrilla warfare** – a style of combat in which small groups of combatants employ tactics such as raids, ambushes, high mobility, and engagement with the physical environment as opposed to a more traditional style of warfare.
10. **Vietnamization** – As the Vietnam War became increasingly unpopular in the United States during the late 1960s, newly elected President Richard Nixon announced a new war strategy, “Vietnamization.” This meant that U.S. troops would transfer the burden of fighting the war to the South Vietnamese army so that more U.S. troops could return home.
11. **Indochina** – an area of Southeast Asia, comprising Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam, which was under French Colonial rule from 1884-1954.

## Putting the Vietnam War in Context: A Brief Timeline of the Vietnam War in American History



### 1954

- Battle of Dien Bien Phu: 40,000 Vietminh troops lay siege to a French garrison. The French, defeated, eventually withdraw from Vietnam.
- Geneva Meeting: Delegates from nine nations meet in Geneva to negotiate an end to hostilities in Indochina. As part of the negotiated Cessation of Hostilities in Vietnam, a provisional demarcation line is drawn to divide North and South Vietnam until nationwide elections are held in 1956.
- 1954: *Brown v. Board of Education Supreme Court decision strikes down “separate but equal” and requires the desegregation of public schools.*

### 1955

- After a fraudulent election in South Vietnam, Ngo Dinh Diem establishes the Republic of Vietnam and names himself President.

### 1956

- *Dwight Eisenhower is elected to his second term as president of the United States.*
- U.S. Military Assistance and Advisory Group (MAAG) starts training South Vietnamese forces.
- The election deadline established by the Geneva Convention passes and no elections are held in Vietnam.

### 1960

- *John F. Kennedy is elected president of the United States.*
- Viet Cong formed: South Vietnamese Communists establish the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam. The Diem government disdainfully calls them the “Viet Cong,” a name which loosely translates as “Vietnamese Commies.”

### 1961

- *Bay of Pigs: A U.S. government plot to invade communist Cuba and overthrow Fidel Castro fails, prompting criticism of President Kennedy.*
- Vice President Lyndon B. Johnson visits Diem in Saigon. Johnson assures Diem that he is crucial to U.S. objectives in Vietnam.

### 1962

- *U.S. – Soviet Union showdown over the Cuban Missile Crisis: The U.S. government discovered Soviet missiles in Cuba and, in the aftermath surrounding this event, the world comes dangerously close to nuclear war.*

## 1963



- *Martin Luther King delivers the “I Have a Dream” speech in Washington, DC.*
- Buddhist monks protest against Diem’s anti-Buddhist policies in Vietnam, including intolerance for non-Catholic religions and the measures he takes to silence them. In a drastic act of protest, one monk, Bodhisattva Thich Quang Duc set himself on fire. A photograph of his self-immolation ran in the New York Times and incited anti-Diem sentiment in the United States.<sup>1</sup>
- Diem overthrown and murdered with the tacit approval of the United States.

- *President Kennedy assassinated. VP Lyndon B. Johnson becomes president.*

## 1964

- Gulf of Tonkin incident: Three North Vietnamese boats allegedly fire torpedoes at the U.S.S. *Maddox*, a destroyer located in the Tonkin Gulf, off the coast of North Vietnam.
- Gulf of Tonkin Resolution: The Resolution authorizes President Johnson to “take all necessary measures to repel any armed attack against forces of the United States and to prevent further aggression.” This resolution officially allows Johnson to conduct an all out war against North Vietnam without Congress declaring war.

## 1965

- **Operation Rolling Thunder** deployed. This operation involves sustained American bombing raids of North Vietnam.
- U.S. Troop Levels top 200,000.<sup>2</sup>

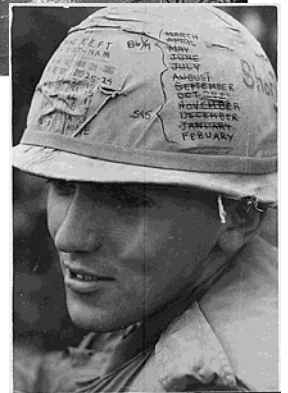


## 1966

- Veterans of WWI, WWII, and Korea stage a protest rally in New York against U.S. involvement in Vietnam.

## 1967

- Operation Cedar Falls: U.S. and South Vietnamese troops set out to destroy the Vietcong’s operations, particularly a massive system of tunnels dubbed the “Iron Triangle.”
- Martin Luther King, Jr. speaks out against U.S. involvement in Vietnam.
- Secretary of Defense Robert McNamara testifies that the bombing raids against North Vietnam have not achieved their goals.



<sup>1</sup> Image 1: A Buddhist monk during his self-immolation, 1963. Photographer: Malcolm Browne. (Associated Press)

<sup>2</sup> Image 2: “Soldiers carry a wounded comrade through a swampy area, 1969.” National Archives. (ARC 531457.)

Image 3: “A sky trooper from the first Cavalry Division keeps track of the time he has left on his “short time” helmet” National Archives (ARC 531453)

## 1968

- North Vietnamese launch the **Tet Offensive**: The North Vietnamese army and the Viet Cong sweep down upon several key cities and provinces in South Vietnam on the first day of the lunar New Year, an important holiday in Vietnam. The U.S. military is caught off guard, but they soon turn back the North Vietnamese and recapture most of the territory. Still, the event leads many to question the progress of the war and when it will end.
- *Martin Luther King, Jr. is assassinated in Memphis.*
- Upheaval at the Democratic Convention in Chicago: antiwar protests and demonstrations take place outside the Democratic Party's nominating convention.
- *Richard Nixon is elected president.*

## 1969

- “Vietnamization” policy announced: The objective of this policy is to shift the burden of defeating the Communists to the South Vietnamese Army and away from the United States.
- Massive antiwar demonstration in Washington, D.C.

## 1970

- **Kent State Incident**: National Guardsmen open fire on a crowd of student antiwar protesters at Kent State University in Ohio. Four students were killed and eight others were wounded.<sup>3</sup>
- Number of U.S. troops falls to 280,000.



## 1972

- Nixon cuts troops by 70,000.
- *Nixon is re-elected to presidency.*

## 1973

- Cease-fire signed in Paris between U.S. National Security Advisor Henry Kissinger and Le Duc Tho of North Vietnam. For negotiating the end of the war, Kissinger and Tho receive the Noble Peace Prize.

## 1974

- *Nixon resigns amid the Watergate scandal and impeachment trial. Gerald Ford becomes president of the United States.*

## 1975

- North Vietnamese and Communists continue to advance into South Vietnam.
- Last Americans evacuate as Saigon falls to the Communists.

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<sup>3</sup> Image 4: Photo of Mary Ann Vecchio crying over Kent State shootings victim, Jeffrey Miller on May 4, 1970. Photographer: John Filo. (Available via Digital Journalist: <http://digitaljournalist.org/issue0309/lm15.html>)

## **Class Activity: Preparing for *In Our Own Words* and thinking about Oral History and the Vietnam War**

### **Discussion Points: What to expect from the *In Our Own Words* exhibit**

**Time:** 25-45 minutes

\*Sensitive topics such as violence, death, injury, discrimination, religion and questioning of faith, patriotism, protest, and Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder come up in the featured oral histories. Addressing these topics before the visit might help students prepare for and understand these issues when they appear in the narratives.

#### **Vietnam War background:**

- When did the Vietnam War take place?
  - What else was going on in American history at that time?
- Why was the United States fighting the war in Vietnam?
- Why did many Americans protest against the Vietnam War?
- What was the outcome of the Vietnam War?

#### **The veteran experience:**

- What kinds of experiences might Vietnam War veterans have to share?
- Do you think that all war memories are bad?
- If the average American soldier in Vietnam was 19-22 years old, about how old are Vietnam veterans today? What do you think they do?
- Is there a particular image or stereotype of what veterans are like today?

#### **Veterans and Oral History:**

- Why would people want to interview war veterans?
- What does oral history tell us that history in a textbook, for example, does not?
- How do you think being a subject of oral history (an interviewee) affects the individuals who choose to participate?

## **VI. Post-Visit: Exhibit Wrap-Up Discussion**

### **Discussion: Thinking about your visit to *In Our Own Words*.**

**Time:** 25-45 minutes

#### **Thinking about the exhibit:**

- What was the purpose of the exhibit?
- Do you think the curators succeeded in getting this point across? How?
- If you were the curator for this exhibit, what elements would you add or eliminate? Why?

#### **Thinking about the oral histories:**

- Do you think the featured individuals were strong choices for the curators to include in the exhibit? Why or why not?
- What kinds of artifacts are included in the exhibit cases?
  - What do these items tell us about those people or their experiences?
- What were the most interesting or engaging oral histories you listened to and why?

#### **Thinking about the media:**

- Do you think these oral histories are different in any way just because they are in a museum exhibit?
- How do you think the veterans felt about sharing their experiences with a museum audience?
- What did you think of the technology used to play the oral histories?

## **VII. Lesson: Oral History as a text; Oral History as a sensory experience (pre-visit, during your visit)**

**Objective:** Students will engage with and analyze oral history transcripts as text-based documents. This lesson is designed as a preparatory activity that will complement students' experiences during the exhibit and a post-visit activity comparing oral history as a text with oral history via audio or visual media.

### **Time:**

30-45 minutes (in class)

1 – 1.5 hours (museum visit)

30-45 minutes (post-visit lesson)

### **Materials:**

- Transcripts of 3-5 oral histories featured in the *In Our Own Words* exhibit.
- Oral History inquiry worksheets
- Pens or pencils

### **Step One:**

Distribute a copy of an oral history transcript featured in the exhibit to each student. Have students read the transcript and answer questions about the document. Suggested questions for this oral history analysis might include:

- Who is the subject of this oral history?
- Who conducted the oral history?
- What are the topics, events, ideas, or places that the individual discusses?
- Where and when do the events described take place?
- What does this particular oral history tell you about the Vietnam War?

### **Step Two:**

For classes that have scheduled a Q&A session with a veteran, have students make up questions they might like to ask the person. Questions might be generally applicable to all of the veterans or students can specify questions for the person who is the subject of the oral history they read.

### **Homework Extension:**

Students can use the transcript they read to write a short response engaging with the emotional impact of the oral history as a text. How does the account of the person's experience make you feel and why?

### **Step Three:**

At the exhibit, each student will listen to the full audio of the oral history for which they already read the transcript. Students should pay particular attention to the ways that listening to the person's voice and seeing their portrait affects their interpretation of the oral history. Students should also take note of the personal effects provided for their person.

## **Lesson: Oral History as a text; Oral History as a sensory experience (post-visit)**

### **Objective:**

Students will analyze how the media used to transmit oral histories (text, audio, visuals, etc) can affect the impact or understanding of the subjects described in the interview. To do this, students will compare their experiences of reading an oral history transcript before visiting the exhibit and then listening to the person share the same experience.

### **Time:**

30-45 minutes

### **Materials:**

- Paper
- Pens or pencils
- Oral history inquiry worksheet

### **Step One:**

Students answer questions or do a short writing assignment about the content of the oral histories after having visited the exhibit and listened to them. This assignment might include the following questions:

- Did the person look and/or sound like you expected them to? Why or why not?
- Did listening to their oral history make you feel any differently about the content they discussed?
- Which do you think (written transcript or audio recording) is the better primary source? Why?

### **Step Two:**

Lead a class discussion in which students share their experiences of the oral histories they examined. Assuming that not every student was able to listen to every featured oral history in the exhibit, this can be an opportunity to have students share what they heard and learned in the specific oral histories they listened to.

### **Homework Extension:**

Students imagine that they are the individual whose oral history they have studied. Students will make up an experience that this person may have faced upon returning home after his or her war service. Students will then write about this experience from the perspective of the veteran and draw on what they know about his or her war experiences and personality to determine why such an event would be meaningful and to create a realistic and personal response to it.

## Documents for “Oral History as a text; Oral History as a sensory experience” lesson: Oral History Transcripts

*In Our Own Words: Portraits of Brooklyn’s Vietnam Veterans*,  
Brooklyn Historical Society  
Oral Histories by Dr. Philip Napoli, Brooklyn College and Sady Sullivan,  
BHS Oral Historian



### *Joan Furey*

My name is Joan Furey; I grew up in the Flatbush section of Brooklyn until we moved out to Long Island in the late '50s. I graduated from Nursing School in 1967 and I joined the Army Nurse Corps in July of 1968. I was sent to Vietnam--volunteered for duty in Vietnam and was stationed at the 71<sup>st</sup> Evacuation Hospital in Pleiku which was in the Central Highlands.

I was there for the entire year of 1969 and I worked as a Staff Nurse in the Post-Op Intensive Care Unit.

You know you have this roomful of patients; you have people who've had multiple amputations, people who've had chest wounds and they have chest tubes and people are on respirators and you have people who had really severe head injuries. I mean it was just--I mean you just looked at this Unit and like--like it was something out of your worst possible nightmare. And you were going to have to take care of these--you know. And most of them were young men between the ages of 17 and 24. And so it's--not only that; it's your--you know it's your peer group. I just really, really found it incredibly overwhelming.

Within two weeks you're dealing with it all. **[Laughs]** I mean somehow or other and--and I always say to people-- I think one of the most amazing things is that--about human beings--is that you know you're faced with this. You--it wasn't like you could say hey, I'm out of here. **[Laughs]** You were there. And not only were you there but you--you couldn't--leaving was not an option.

The first thing that happens is you find these resources within yourself to do what you need to do to take care of people and then I think--I think the shutting down is a little more gradual. One of the things that I did early on--and it was--and this is a huge mistake. I had a guy with a head injury. I remembered his wallet was in his belongings and I was kind of settling him in and I opened up his wallet and I looked at his picture and there's his wedding picture. And it just--like now you're looking at this guy and you know he's probably not going to make it; after that you just don't--you don't look at anything.

You don't do it consciously; I mean you just say well I ain't going to do that again and I think you do start to--to shut down emotionally. You know you would have periods where

sometimes people would snap and you would--it happened to me. It happened to a lot of people and--and people would take care of each other but I was in one of our mass casualty situations. We had patients coming in and we were very busy. *[Laughs]* This--this is just an example of--of the stress kind of thing and I had a patient that came in. He had a big field dressing on his head--on the back of his head and he had an expected tag on him. If you had an expected tag nobody was going to do anything; that just meant you were going--you were going to die. And so what they would do - well they would put them in our Unit and you just waited until they died, and then you'd prepare them. And so I have all this stuff going on around me in this mass casualty situation and I decided they made a mistake with this guy--that he's you know going to make it. And so I decided that I was going to change the dressing on his head and I take off the dressing and not to be gross but half of his head was in my hand. And I just very calmly put--put a new dressing on, went to give him some blood--well you don't give blood to an expected patient because it's a resource you can't waste, you know in those kinds of situations. And one of the male nurses I worked with was a dear friend of mine--came over and said, Joan; you--you can't do that. And you know and it was like--I said I'm going to. He needs the blood; he's losing blood. And it was just this very quiet confrontation--well he's--he's going to die. You have to step away; you have to walk away. You've got all these other patients. You're the only nurse; you've got to start taking care of them.

And I can remember one of thee things I said when I went over after Jude took me away and I washed my hands and I remember distinctly saying to him, I feel like Lady Macbeth. I'm never going to get the blood of Vietnam off my hands.

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BHS Oral Historian



***Rudolph Thomas***

My name is Rudolph Thomas; I'm a disabled Vietnam Veteran. I was born in Trinidad in the West Indies and I came to the United States at the age of 16.

At present I've been working with the New York State Department of Labor as a Veteran Specialist for the past 27 years. It's with honor that I accepted that position considering the fact that as a Veteran I wanted to dedicate my time to Veterans, serving Veterans, assisting Veterans in any way I possibly can.

I have a patch on my jacket that says *not all wounds are visible*. It's a fact because a lot of people will see me and say well you ain't got nothing wrong with you; you're not disabled. See, but you don't see it; it's all up here [*Gestures*]. The mentality and--and the things that happen to me is still there; it's embedded in there.

All and all I would say that my military in Vietnam was an experience that I treasure; I wouldn't really want anyone to go through what I went through in Vietnam because it's something that you don't--you can't lose--you can't lose it at all. I have dreams where I'm up at 3 or 4 o'clock in the morning most every night. And I'm on medication to put me to sleep; I'm on medication to wake me up. I was dreaming a couple of nights ago about my--the only dream I have is that explosion--that last time, and I was dreaming the other night that I was running. And I jumped out the bed and walked right into the closet door and I bounced off the door and back on the bed and I started laughing. And there's many, many nights that I--I sit here; I will see something or reflect back and I will just sit in the chair and just run down. Sometimes I get to the point where I have to actually laugh at myself just to keep the sanity going you know. [*Laughs*] I said man, what you laughing--what you crying for you know; and things like that just to--.

Sometime ago I was watching something on TV and my kids were with me. I had to get up and go out of the room because--and the little one says to me, dad, what's the matter? Oh nothing; but I made sure that I turned my back that he couldn't see me crying. I was actually sitting there just--just sobbing you know. I think it might have been the names. I watch Channel 13 a lot and they show the names in silence. And I'm to the point where all I see is 19-year olds, 20-year olds--these guys have not had a chance; you know they haven't had a chance to--to do anything with their life other than the military so to speak and here they are--they're dead. It--it just strikes me as — as something that shouldn't happen.

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*Tony Wallace*

My name is Tony Wallace and I was born and raised in Brooklyn, New York in an area called Williamsburg--borderline between Williamsburg and Bedford-Stuyvesant. I grew up in the [Mossy] Projects and we were--my mother and father were one of the first families to move in that complex after it was constructed.

The summer of 1970 I wrote President Nixon and told him who I was--gave him my name, my rank, and said I was in Vietnam, such and such a time, Point A to Point B, and then wounded on this day--in other words, trying to give them enough credence to know that hey I'm no--you know phony. I'm--this is the truth. And that there were three other people who were in the bunker and I was able to give two names. Peppy's name I didn't know his full name; they could not find anything on Peppy. I wanted the next of kin. The White House wrote a letter back and said--your--your request has been referred to the Department of the Army but they could not locate and find out what Peppy's name was, so I--but I get Thurman Wolf and I get William DeSantis. I get their next of kin.

I then sat down and wrote a letter to the families--told them who I was and that I was with--I was with their sons. One day I get a letter from Aurora, Illinois and I open the letter and it said, I prayed to God for somebody like you. You did not put your telephone number in your letter. When you get this letter you call me--even if you have to call collect. And that was Bill DeSantis' mother.

I called her, as soon as I finished reading the letter, and--and she said to me--again, I prayed to God for somebody like you. She says--I have to ask you; did my son suffer when he died? And I asked her well what did the Army tell you? And she--she replied, they indicated he was on a bunker that took a direct hit. And I said to her that's exactly what happened and there's no way Bill suffered; it was too fast. And she said, thank you. And I then said, well I want to come to see you. I flew out to Chicago, rented a car, drove to Aurora and they lived on a semi-farm. And I remember driving up like off this long road and then into their property--stopped the car and got out and there was a man on a lawn mower and he stopped and he looked at me and I looked at him. And he said you must be Mr. Wallace, and I said you must be Mr. DeSantis. And we shook hands and we went up on the porch and we talked a while. And we talked about his son. And I told him about when you guys would send the--the care packages-- and we would--you'd send the pepperoni and how Bill shared that with us.

He took me fishing and I really had never been fishing, but he took me fishing and--and the thing was we were able to talk and I was able to share certain experiences that we had over in Vietnam and he thanked me for making this effort to come and see them. He said you'd never realize what it meant to the family to do what you did by coming out there.

When I got back home those guilt feelings began to dissipate. And then in the background, still asking myself, all right God; what else do you want me to do?

*In Our Own Words: Portraits of Brooklyn's Vietnam Veterans,*  
Brooklyn Historical Society  
Oral Histories by Dr. Philip Napoli, Brooklyn College and Sady Sullivan,  
BHS Oral Historian



*Neil Kenny*

My name is Neil Kenny, Retired; I'm married and have three children, three son-in-laws and three grandchildren, three dogs, and two cats, and one frog. It's all multiples of threes [Laughs] and I don't know what else you need me to tell you.

The War at that moment became very personal. There was a guy there and I was here [Gestures] and he was looking this way and I was looking that way and it wasn't a rocket or something that flew in and could blow you up. This was very, very personal. They kept advancing and then our machine gun opened up and they opened up on that guy and they took him out and there were a few more in that position. They took them right out; they were just gone. They--you know they dusted them. And when I looked over to my left I seen this guy running up the other side of the slope and he had a pair of binoculars on; he had a 45-in his hand and he was running up the Hill and it was this guy, Phil Sheridan and I was like what the -- is he doing there? Phil was quite a character; he was from Long Island City and came from some money if you will and was like he was a really good-looking guy, had a year of college, and you're like well this guy should be somewhere else. He shouldn't be here doing what we're doing. I don't know if that makes sense to you but in my mind they were some of the things that played out. And he was charging up that Hill--hell-bent to get up there and it was kind of like--the only thing I could think is that he was trying to get to that position to call in more support. He was--he was a Forward Observer for Artillery. He usually traveled with the CP Group; he wasn't one of the grunts, he wasn't one of the--didn't have to be the tip of the spear. Phil was the first guy that I think I really had a personal relationship with that while it was short in the time that I knew him, it was deep -- it was meaningful and I watched him run up that Hill and then he--he kind of like jerked all the way back.

And I knew at that instant that he had taken a round somewhere in his body. And as he just started to collapse he must have taken another hit to the head because his hand came back up like this [Gestures] and he laid back and he just was--with his arm stretched out and his feet pointing towards the top of the Hill and his arms pointing toward the bottom, and I just knew right then and there--I knew he was dead. I knew he was gone. And he was the first guy that you know I actually seen get killed that I knew--that I had some relationship with.

It was pretty like you know devastating in a way. There was nothing I could do; I couldn't get over there to see him. I couldn't go over there to do anything. I just had to stay where I was and to keep firing out to the front so they could keep moving up.

For the rest of that action I really, you know there wasn't much more for us to do because they had swept over the Hill where we were. We held in position and an interesting that happened was they said--all right, just climb out in front and get down there. And I climbed down a pile--pile of wood and I fell asleep and I--I mean I just slept a total deep--deep cathartic sleep and I come to understand--I really just like--that your body just shuts down [*Claps*] and I was just like totally blank.

We saddled up at some point during the day and as we were going back there were a lot of things that struck me as like why did we go up that Hill if we're not staying on it? I wonder what the hell happened to Phil; I knew he was dead but you still wondered what happened to him. And as we came to the gate the Chaplain, he was like saying oh wow. You guys; they--they got everything. They filmed it; it was incredible and you know you went up over it and--and my question to him was--why? You know my question is thou shalt not kill and I grew up as a Roman Catholic. And you know for some reason [*Laughs*] I always place it as the Fifth Amendment [Note - Possibly meant Fifth Commandment] is thou shalt not kill and here we went and we killed people. And I can't sit here and tell you I actually shot that guy or you know--but I was putting lead out there and there were dead bodies out there.

And--and I was kind of like devastated and I honestly believed that I left my religion on that Hill that Easter Sunday. I mean it was Easter Sunday; it was you know--that's a big thing.

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*Ed German*

I'll never forget the song that was playing when I found out that I was going to Vietnam. That song was *I think it's so groovy now that people are finally getting together; I think it's wonderful now* [**Laughs**] *that people are finally getting--and that was on the radio.*

And then one day late--very late July, near the end of July we got on some buses and these buses took us to El Toro Air Base in California and we were getting ready to--to board our flight to go to Vietnam, which I thought was going to be some green--big green military airplane or something, you know that was going to take us to Vietnam, you know a C-140 or C-141. But we got on a big American Airlines jet. We went to Vietnam; over--there was over 200 of us I guess and we got on a regular American Airlines flight with civilian stewardesses and crew everybody. And we were--they were serving cocktails and we were eating, and that's how we went; we went to Vietnam on an American Airlines flight. We arrived in Da Nang on August 1, 1968.

There was about 30--35 guys gathered around sitting on the ground in this big circle just listening to us sing and there were five of us. We were like *The Temptations*, you know and we had nice harmony. And there was this one guy who was stationed with us; his name was Teeth. I never knew why his--how he got the name Teeth but I always meant to ask him. Teeth was a Navajo; he was tall, he was huge, big hands, big feet, and he walked real slow like this. But I never heard him say anything. I just knew that--that was Teeth over there you know.

Anyway after we finished singing this night everybody was like almost drunk and then Teeth came over to me and he said--and he started to speak to me and I was surprised because I was surprised at how high the pitch of his voice was. I expected him to say hey, G-Man [**Bass Level Voice**] because he was so big. But when he came to speak to me his tone was hey, G-Man [**High-Pitch Voice**] and he was drunk. He said I just want to let you--let you know that you guys really, really sound good man; you sound just like *The Temptations*. And sometimes you sound like *Smokey Robinson*. I said thanks Teeth.

And then later that night I climbed into my little cot and went to sleep. And in the middle of the night Johnny Long came over to me and said G-Man, G-Man; wake up--wake up--wake up--wake up G-Man, yeah hurry up--hurry up. And when I woke up and he said come here, man; come here, man. Look at Teeth. And when I went over there--there was a whole crowd gathered around Teeth including the Captain, the Skipper. He had the red flashlight shined on Teeth and

he was talking to him. Teeth had his M-16 under his chin and his thumb on the trigger and he was crying. Captain Frye was trying to talk Teeth out of doing whatever he was going to do. And he was saying things like Teeth, listen; he says--he called him son. He said listen; son--he said listen. He said things are going to be all right. He said you need to take the rifle from under your chin, come into my hooch, and talk to me. And Teeth was crying and the Skipper kept trying to talk to him.

And then Teeth said Sir, and he pulled the trigger. He pulled the trigger. And that--and we all ran--we all just ran away from it and cried and screamed. He had never said anything to me before; Teeth had never said anything to me. He said--complimented us on how good we sounded, and later that night took his life.

So then it came time to finally come back to the world and I got on some Navy buses and they drove us to St. Alban's Naval Hospital in Queens. I got to St. Alban's and there was Mickey there and my girlfriend, Yolanda, and her mom came to see me; and I still didn't go home yet. And then Sunday, me and Mickey got on the J-train, the subway, and we went home to my house. And my mother--my parents--I didn't--they didn't know exactly--they knew I was--they knew I had gotten wounded but they didn't know exactly what day [*Laughs*] when I was coming home. And I said I'm not going to tell them either; I'm just going to walk in on them you know. And I had to beg Mickey--I had to beg Mickey to put his uniform on to go home because he had been home by this time three--three months. And he had just you know gotten a bad taste of what it was and he--back then people didn't wear their uniforms anymore. When they got home, they--it wasn't the thing to do.

Yolanda was getting ready to graduate high school and I remember she said to me--she said, Eddie if you come to the graduation please don't wear your uniform. So I had to beg Mickey to put on his uniform but he--he said all right--all right; I'll put it on. So you know we were proud; we put on our uniforms, we got on the train; we had all of our Vietnam medals and my Purple Heart. And we got off the train and we turned the corner of Putnam Avenue and we walked down our block and I felt so proud.

## VIII. Lesson: Debating the Vietnam War

### Objective:

Students will engage with the causes, events, and context of the Vietnam War through research and debate.

### Time:

90 minutes

### Materials:

- Textbooks covering the Vietnam War
- Key terms, events, and people handout
- Vietnam War Timeline (as handout)\*
- Primary source documents and images\*\*
- Paper
- Pens/Pencils

\* *available in pre-visit materials packet*

\*\* *see suggested resources*

### Step One:

Divide the class into two groups. Each group will be assigned one position on the question of whether or not the Vietnam War was a just war. Students may draw on textbooks, primary sources provided, and their experiences at the *In Our Own Words* exhibit to defend their position. Students should take the following into consideration:

- events leading up to the war
- the conduct of the war on both sides
- the social and political context
- consequences of the Vietnam War

### Step Two:

Students research their position and the history of the Vietnam War, working both individually and as a group. Each group should be encouraged to divide up the topic in order to give each student a more specific responsibility and so that, as a group, they are able to cover the various aspects of the war. That said, students are also encouraged to share findings and resources with each other in order to strengthen the position of their group.

### Step Three:

The two research groups in the class will debate each other and defend their assigned position. The structure of the debate should reflect the subdivisions of the war that students were assigned to research (causes, conduct, context, consequences).

Keep track of the valid points made by the students in each research group. The team that has the most points in each category and/or overall wins the debate.

*Debating the Vietnam War: Key terms, events, and people*



BROOKLYN  
HISTORICAL  
SOCIETY

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_

1. **Ho Chi Minh** – \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
2. **Democratic Republic of Vietnam** – \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
3. **Republic of Vietnam** – \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
4. **Ngo Dinh Diem** – \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
5. **Vietcong** – \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. **Communism** – \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
7. **Cold War** – \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
8. **Domino Theory** – \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
9. **Guerrilla warfare** – \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
10. **Vietnamization** – \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

## *Debating the Vietnam War: Key terms, events, and people*

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Date \_\_\_\_\_



1. **Ho Chi Minh** – the leader of North Vietnam and a communist revolutionary. He was the president of the Democratic Republic of Vietnam from 1945 until his death in 1969.
2. **Democratic Republic of Vietnam** – the country in the northern part of Vietnam. Ruled by Ho Chi Minh until 1969, the Democratic Republic of Vietnam was a communist country and the opponent of the United States and South Vietnam in the Vietnam War. Eventually, South Vietnam was incorporated into the Democratic Republic of Vietnam in 1975.
3. **Republic of Vietnam** – the country in the south of Vietnam. Ruled by Ngo Dinh Diem until 1963, this country received the military and political support from the United States leading up to and during the Vietnam War.
4. **Ngo Dinh Diem** – the president of the Republic of Vietnam (South Vietnam). Diem opposed the communist presence in North Vietnam and had a corrupt and authoritarian administration. Initially, the United States supported Diem, but that support declined during the early 1960s. Diem was assassinated in a coup by leading generals in 1963.
5. **Vietcong** – the term used to describe the National Liberation Front for South Vietnam. This armed group consisted of army units and guerrilla units that fought against the United States during the Vietnam War for control of South Vietnam.
6. **Communism** – a social, political, and economic system in which all people have a common share in the means of production so as to do away with a social and economic classes. Typically, a Communist state also features a one-party political system that controls the government. During the Cold War, the Soviet Union was the leading communist “superpower” opposed to the United States and the spread of the capitalism.
7. **Cold War** – The Cold War, which lasted from 1945 after World War II until 1991, was a period of competition and tension between the United States and its allies and the Soviet Union and its allies. The two “superpowers” (the US and USSR) that emerged after the devastation of Europe in WWII never actually fought a battle or used military force against each other, but the period was marked by strong competition between them for influence over other countries. The Vietnam War can be considered part of the Cold War because the United States fought to prevent the spread of communism in Vietnam.
8. **Domino Theory** – a United States foreign policy theory from the 1950s and 1960s that assumes that if one country fell under communist influence that, like a set of dominoes, the neighboring countries would also become communist. This policy explains U.S. intervention in Vietnam because the U.S. did not want Vietnam to become communist for fear of losing influence over a much larger portion of Southeast Asia. The United States government also used the Domino Theory to justify intervention in other areas of the world.
9. **Guerrilla warfare** – a style of combat in which small groups of combatants employ tactics such as raids, ambushes, high mobility, and engagement with the physical environment as opposed to a more traditional style of warfare.
10. **Vietnamization** – As the Vietnam War became increasingly unpopular in the United States during the late 1960s, newly elected President Richard Nixon announced a new war strategy, “Vietnamization.” This meant that U.S. troops would transfer the burden of fighting the war to the South Vietnamese army so that more U.S. troops could return home.

## **Finding Primary Sources**

### **Useful websites for primary source DOCUMENTS:**

Vietnam War documents and primary sources: <http://vietnam.vassar.edu/abstracts.html>

National Archives Digital Records: <http://www.archives.gov/research/arc/topics/vietnam/>

Historical New York Times: [www.nytimes.com](http://www.nytimes.com)  
*\*or available for free through most libraries*

### **Useful websites for primary source IMAGES:**

National Archives Vietnam Lesson Plan: “The War in Vietnam: A Story in Photographs”  
<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/vietnam-photos/#documents>

BBC selected Vietnam War images:  
[http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/picture\\_gallery/05/in\\_pictures\\_the\\_vietnam\\_war/html/1.stm](http://news.bbc.co.uk/2/shared/spl/hi/picture_gallery/05/in_pictures_the_vietnam_war/html/1.stm)

### **Useful websites for Vietnam War ORAL HISTORIES:**

Vietnam: Stories Since the War: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/stories/vietnam/about.html>

Library of Congress Veterans History Project: <http://www.loc.gov/vets/>

New York Times Oral Histories of four Vietnam veterans:  
<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/10/01/20091001-vietnam-audio.html>

Vietnam Center and Archive Oral History Project: <http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/oralhistory/>

## **IX. Lesson: Becoming an Oral Historian**

### **Objective:**

Students will become oral historians by planning and conducting an oral history interview. In doing so, they will gain an appreciation for the process and practice of oral history. Also, students realize their ability to document the histories of their communities and the people around them everyday who are, at the same time, witnesses to history.

### **Time:**

Approximately 3-4 class periods, with additional time for students to conduct the interviews for homework.

### **Materials:**

- “Guide to Doing Oral History”\*
- Recording devices

*\*available to download on the Brooklyn Historical Society website*

### **Step One: Getting Started.**

Revisit the “How To” process and distribute the more complete “Oral History: Step by Step” packet to students. Have students read through the packet and familiarize themselves with the process of conducting oral history.

### **Step Two: Crafting the Project.**

Choose a topic as a class. Some suggestions for continuing with themes featured in *In Our Own Words* include:

- Broaden the Vietnam veterans topic to include people who were alive (and at least young adults) during the 1960s and early 1970s. Students would have to pick someone they know (a relative, neighbor, community member) who is at least 60 years old. The topics of the interviews should be their response to and understanding of the Vietnam War era (which might also include the Civil Right movement, women’s rights movement, etc.)
- Broaden the Vietnam veterans topic to include veterans of other wars. In this case, students might be able to draw on veterans of conflicts from WWII through to the Iraq and Afghanistan.

Prepare a description of the project as a class. Include an introduction to oral history, a clear statement of the topic, a brief consent statement, and a space to identify the interviewee and have them sign to grant consent. Type and print this page for each student by the end of the day (or the following day).

### **Step Three: Homework.**

**Part 1:** Students should decide on a person to interview and, if possible, have them look over the project description and sign it.

*Suggestion:* Identify some additional community members who would be willing to be interviewed in case any student doesn't have family members or neighbors who are willing to do it.

**Part 2:** Students should also prepare a preliminary list of interview questions.

**Part 3:** Students should see whether they will have access to a recording device to use during the interview. This might be a digital audio recorder, a digital camera, a camcorder, etc.

### **Step Four: Creating Questions.**

Lead a class discussion about how to ask good open-ended questions. Have students share examples of good open-ended questions that they came up with. As a class, create a list of core questions that each student should ask in the course of their interview. In addition, students should make up a complementary set of questions that is more specific to their interviewee.

### **Step Five: Technology.**

If not every student has access to a recording device, distribute technology evenly among groups or pairs of students.

### **Step Six: Conducting Oral Histories.**

Students should conduct oral history interviews.

### **Step Seven: Interpreting Oral Histories.**

Discuss the events, ideas, and themes that came up in the course of students' interviews. Assign students to groups based on similar themes in their interviews. Have students discuss their experiences conducting the oral histories and, if possible with classroom technology, share their oral histories in small groups. Students should discuss how they think the oral histories fit together to illuminate something about history.

### **Step Eight: Presenting Oral History.**

Have each group create a presentation (or mini exhibit) based on their oral histories. These presentations should present the interviewees, the subjects discussed and some over-arching interpretation of what these oral histories reveal about the topic at hand. If possible, presentations should include segments of the oral histories in the form of audio clips or short transcripts. When complete, have each group present their interpretation and oral histories to the rest of the class. Students should reflect on how their oral histories fit together and what they reveal about history.

*Suggestion:* Encourage students to bring in personal effects or props belonging to the person or that were used in the interview process to add to the presentation.

## Becoming an Oral Historian: Our Project

Student's Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class \_\_\_\_\_

### *Introduction to Oral History:*

Oral history is a historical method that uses recorded interviews to preserve firsthand memories, accounts, and interpretations of a person's life, an event, a place, a way of life, or a period. Once familiar with the techniques of conducting oral history interviews, anyone can be an oral historian.

### *Our Project Description:*

Our class is undertaking an Oral History project about \_\_\_\_\_. Each student in our class will conduct an oral history interview with a family member, friend, or community member who can share their firsthand experience of this particular historical moment.

### *Participating in the Project:*

If you would like to participate in our project and contribute your oral history, please sign below. Please know that, by agreeing to participate, you grant consent that your interview can be submitted to our teacher, \_\_\_\_\_, and all or part of your interview can also be made available to the other students in our class. Feel free to share as much or as little as you choose in your interview.

Name of Oral History Interviewer (student): \_\_\_\_\_

Name of Oral History Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Signature of Oral History Interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

### *Tentative Plans to Conduct Interview:*

Date of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

Location of interview: \_\_\_\_\_

For students: Do you have access to a recording device that you can use to record your oral history interview?

yes

no

## VI. Further Resources to Consult

### Books on the Vietnam War: (\*compiled by Philip Napoli, oral historian and co-curator for the *In Our Own Words* exhibit)

Mark Philip Bradley, *Vietnam at War*. New York: Oxford University Press, 2009 (highly recommended)

Arthur J. Dommen, *The Indochinese Experience of the French and the Americans: Nationalism and Communism in Cambodia, Laos, and Vietnam*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2001

William J. Duiker, *Sacred War: Nationalism and Revolution in a Divided Vietnam*. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1995.

David Elliott, *The Vietnamese War: Revolution and Social Change in the Mekong Delta, 1930–1975*. Armonk, NY: M.E. Sharpe, 2003. 2 volumes.

Marc Jason Gilbert, ed., *Why the North Won the Vietnam War*. New York: Palgrave (Macmillan), 2002. xiv, 254 pp.

George C. Herring, *America's Longest War: The United States and Vietnam, 1950–1975*. New York: Wiley, 1979. Second edition New York: Knopf, 1986. 3d ed. New York: McGraw-Hill, 1996. xiv, 354 pp. 4th edition New York: McGraw-Hill, 2002

Gary R. Hess, *Vietnam: Explaining America's Lost War*. Malden and Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2009.

Stanley Karnow, *Vietnam: A History*. New York: Viking, 1983. xiii, 750 pp. Second revised and updated edition: New York: Penguin, 1997.

A.J. Langguth, *Our Vietnam/Nuoc Viet Ta: The War 1954–1975*. New York: Simon & Schuster, 2000.

Robert Mann, *A Grand Delusion: America's Descent into Vietnam*. New York: Basic Books, 2001

George D. Moss, *Vietnam: An American Ordeal*, Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1990. 6th edition: Upper Saddle River, New Jersey: Prentice Hall (Pearson), 2009

John Prados, *Vietnam: The History of an Unwinnable War, 1945-1975*. Lawrence: University Press of Kansas, 2009.

Robert D. Schulzinger, *A Time for War: The United States and Vietnam, 1941–1975*. New York and Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1997. (NB: I use this textbook in my course.)

Neil Sheehan, *A Bright Shining Lie: John Paul Vann and America in Vietnam*. New York: Random House, 1988. (Highly recommended)

Marilyn B. Young, *The Vietnam Wars, 1945–1990*. New York: Harper Collins, 1991.

### **Websites and Online Educational Resources about the Vietnam War:**

Vietnam Center and Archive: <http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/>

\*Vietnam War Oral History Project at the Vietnam Center and Archive:  
<http://www.vietnam.ttu.edu/oralhistory/>

PBS Khe Sanh Siege Retrospective: <http://www.pbs.org/battlefieldvietnam/khe/container.html>

PBS Battle Field Vietnam: <http://www.pbs.org/battlefieldvietnam/index.html>

PBS Interactive map and timeline:  
[http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/maps/map\\_pop\\_intro.html](http://www.pbs.org/wgbh/amex/vietnam/maps/map_pop_intro.html)

\*Vietnam: Stories Since the War: <http://www.pbs.org/pov/stories/vietnam/about.html>

\*New York Times Oral Histories of four Vietnam veterans:  
<http://www.nytimes.com/interactive/2009/10/01/20091001-vietnam-audio.html>

\*Library of Congress Veterans History Project: <http://www.loc.gov/vets/>

On conducting oral histories and contributing student oral histories of veterans to the Library of Congress collection: <http://www.loc.gov/vets/youth-resources.html>

National Archives Vietnam Lesson Plan: “The War in Vietnam: A Story in Photographs”  
<http://www.archives.gov/education/lessons/vietnam-photos/#documents>

Vietnam War documents and primary sources: <http://vietnam.vassar.edu/abstracts.html>

On the Tet Offensive and Media Coverage: <http://www.historyandtheheadlines.abc-clio.com/ContentPages/EventIndex.aspx?entryid=1194542>

On President Kennedy and the Diem Coup (documents and analysis)  
<http://www.gwu.edu/~nsarchiv/NSAEBB/NSAEBB101/index.htm#docs>

Digital History: <http://www.digitalhistory.uh.edu/modules/vietnam/index.cfm>

*\*Resources that include Oral Histories*

## **On Incorporating Oral History into Your Curriculum:**

[http://www.doingoralhistory.org/sources/Oral\\_Hist\\_Educ\\_Methodology.htm](http://www.doingoralhistory.org/sources/Oral_Hist_Educ_Methodology.htm)

### Selected Articles:

Michael Brooks. "Long, Long Ago': Recipe for a Middle School Oral History Program." *OAHA Magazine of History* 11, no. 3 (Spring 1997): 32.

Luther B. Clegg, et al. "Creating Oral History Projects for the Social Studies Classroom." *Social Studies Review* 32, (1992): 53-60.

Larry E. Hudson Jr. and Ellen Durrigan Santora. "Oral History: An Inclusive Highway to the Past." *The History Teacher* 36 (February 2003), 206-220.

Grace C. Huerta,, and Leslie A. Flemmer. "Using Student-Generated Oral History Research in the Secondary Classroom." *The Clearing House* 74, no. 2 (2000) 105-110.

Tracey E. K'Meyer "'It's Not Just Common Sense': A Blueprint for Teaching Oral History." *Oral History Review* 25, nos. 1-2 (Summer/Fall 1998): 37-38.

Glenn Whitman. *Dialogue with the Past: Engaging Students and Meeting Standards Through Oral History*. California: AltaMira Press, 2004.

## **Websites and Educational Resources about Oral History:**

Brooklyn Historical Society: [http://www.brooklynhistory.org/oral\\_history/oral\\_hist.html](http://www.brooklynhistory.org/oral_history/oral_hist.html)

"Oral History in the Classroom" <http://www.learnnc.org/lp/editions/oralhistory2002/cover>

History Matters: Making Sense of Oral History: <http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/>

Oral History Association <http://www.oralhistory.org/>

American Century Project at St. Andrew's Episcopal School: <http://www.doingoralhistory.org/>

H-Net Oral History Projects by Topic: <http://www.h-net.org/~oralhist/projects.html>