

Macon County Veterans Oral History Project
in collaboration with students at Tuskegee Public School

Auburn University
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Project Period
August 1, 2017 – May 31, 2018

May 31, 2018

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FINAL REPORT NARRATIVE

Title of Project: Macon County Veterans Oral History Project

Grant Period: January 1, 2017-June 30, 2018

Grantee Name: Auburn University

Project Director: Mark Wilson

DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT

Auburn University ATP students mentored 6th graders in the skill and process of interviewing military veterans and producing digital content as part of the Library of Congress Veterans Oral History Project.

PROJECT ACTIVITIES

Meetings and other activities with the community partner:

Tuesday, August 30

Mark, Rachel, Aaron, MaKayla, Garrett, and Emma traveled to Tuskegee Public School and worked with all four 6th grade classes. We introduced students to the Library of Congress and the LOC Veteran's Oral History Project. We asked students their thoughts on military service, as well as what kinds of questions they would like to ask a veteran if they had a chance.

Wednesday, September 6

Devin and MaKayla traveled to Tuskegee and met with the Media Club. They were interviewed re: the project and learned about the work of the students and their news production. The Media Club meets each Wednesday from 3 to 5 pm.

Wednesday, September 20

Devin and MaKayla traveled to Tuskegee and met with the Media Club. They described the interview project and talked about the students' role in the interviews, which will be notetaking. They showed students the Auburn High School Veterans History Project Website. Students thought it was organized well, and they look forward to adding their own design elements to the Macon County site.

Thursday, September 21

Mark and Aaron traveled to Tuskegee Public School to determine best places in the school for the interviews. After testing one location with the recorder, Mr. Moore suggested the library, and the librarian agreed that we could use the space for interviews. The library will allow three sets of interviews to take place with very little overlap of sound.

Wednesday, September 27

Devin traveled to the Tuskegee Public School to meet with the Media Club. He led an exercise using the question for the oral history project, helping students see what kind of

information is desired for a thorough interview. Students interviewed each other with the questions to get a feel for how interviews are held.

Thursday, September 28

Aaron and AnnaLevi traveled to Tuskegee to hold the first veteran interview with Ms. Gullette.

Wednesday, October 4

Mark, Aaron, AnnaLevi, Garrett, MaKayla, and Emma traveled to Tuskegee Public School to interview scheduled veterans. Five TPS students joined us as two groups. We interviewed Shirley Rogers, Berniece Dawson, Curtis Rayborn, Lula Rountree, Rev. James Jackson, Robert Menefee (phone), and Benjamin Rackley. TPS students recorded with Ipads, and we recorded with audio recorders.

Wednesday, October 4

Celia and Devin attended the Media Club meeting that afternoon, and they worked with students to edit two of the videos.

Friday, October 20

Mark and Aaron traveled to Tuskegee to interview a veteran at Tuskegee University Archives. TPS students were out on fall break this week.

Wednesday, October 26

Mark and Devin traveled to Tuskegee to meet with the Media Club and interview students re: the value of veteran interviews. Two of the students who participated in interviews were available.

Wednesday, November 8

Aaron and Mark traveled to Tuskegee to coordinate Veterans Day program with 6th graders. Five veterans participated, and Aaron and a TPS student asked questions. Veterans brought photos or other memorabilia to describe their experiences. We facilitated questions from the students. Following the program, Aaron interviewed one of the veterans who had not been interviewed.

Thursday, November 16

Mark and Tyra traveled to Tuskegee to work with students on video. Six media club students created a video for use at the ATP Conference in D.C.

Thursday, November 30

ATP team arrived to D.C. early to hold a videoconference meeting between Library of Congress Veterans History Project director and staff and 6th graders at Tuskegee Public School. Students shared some of their insights from the project, and LOC staff thanked students for their participation.

Thursday, December 14

Presentation to the Golden Life Club in Tuskegee to report on the project. This community organization meets regularly and has within its membership and network many veterans who could participate in future projects.

February 1, 2018

Aaron traveled to Tuskegee to interview a veteran for the project.

April 10, 2018

Aaron traveled to Tuskegee to interview a veteran for the project.

May 18, 2018

Tuskegee Public School Media Club traveled to Auburn University for a workshop on media production. At this meeting, students viewed the Website for the project and gave feedback on a classroom session we would like to develop with them for future students.

Conference presentation and poster:

All students who traveled to the conference presented on Friday, December 1, 2017. Students prepared and presented a poster that summarized the project and outcomes.

Student presentation of the project report to the community partner:

Preliminary presentation to community partner was held as part of a Veterans Day Project on November 8, 2017 at Tuskegee Public School. A second presentation to unveil the Website created for the project was held as part of a field trip of the community partner to Auburn University on May 18, 2018.

Presentation of the project report to a civic organization: We presented the project to the Golden Life Club of Tuskegee on Thursday, December 14.

PROJECT OUTCOMES

Goal 5: Leadership and Community Capacity: This project sought to develop next-generation leaders as innovators and collaborators. We worked toward this goal through classroom interactions with 6th grade students brainstorming questions they would like to ask of veterans. We designed the November Veterans Day program so that one student would serve as co-moderator of the panel and that all students would be asked to formulate a question. We interacted as often as possible with the afterschool Media Club so that students would have opportunities to interact with college students. Our end-of-project field trip was designed to provide students with an opportunity to visit the college campus, interact with university students and professionals, and practice leadership skills.

Goal 4: Natural and Cultural Assets: We achieved our goal of ten interviews during the grant project period. We created the Web site to house the interviews. In one interview, a veteran stated that this was the first time he had shared his story of service, and we tried to remind students at every opportunity that the interviews are primary sources for history. In our classroom presentations introducing the Library of Congress Veterans

History Project to students, we helped students understand how a federal organization works to preserve cultural assets for future generations.

PROBLEMS ENCOUNTERED

Although we were able to interact with all 6th grade students on several occasions through classroom activities and the Veterans Day program, we were not able to include all students in the interviews, due to scheduling challenges. Some of our communication related to scheduling interviews with the school (and a place to hold interviews) resulted in some scrambling and need for flexibility on our part. Also, because students are in the course for fall semester only, the timeline for project completion and presentation to community organization is challenging.

PROGRAM CONTINUATION AND SUSTAINABILITY

We found that the only way to complete the project and sustain the project's momentum was to hire one of the ATP students to work five hours per week to 1) build the Web site; 2) arrange and record two more interviews. Although this required internal funding, the creation of this "ATP" position provided the capacity we needed to meet our goals and lay the foundation for the continuation of the project in the next grant cycle. Our plan is for the student who served as our "ATP Fellow" will participate in the next project as a mentor to incoming ATP students, and then out of that group of students I will choose one student to serve as our spring 2019 ATP Fellow.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Interviews: The process became a little chaotic. For the next round, we could work with school administrators and teachers to schedule interviews to take place during a class period, which would allow maximum participation of students.

Veterans Day Program: The program was successful, but we could increase interaction with students by organizing the event to include time for veterans to meet students in "small groups," which would allow more interaction and questions from students.

Community Organization Presentation: We need to put this on the calendar, if possible, for one or two weeks before the ATP conference. Even though the project will not likely be completed, we have a better chance at scheduling all ATP students to participate in the presentation.

Video Conference – LOC and Tuskegee Public School: We barely pulled this off because technological difficulties, but the LOC has a new room that allows for cell service and WiFi, so we need to run the meeting with the program Zoom. This program will allow us to publicize the event to the community and provide a link to the Zoom meeting so that elected officials and others can see the interaction between the LOC and students.

ATTACHMENTS

Supporting information included in PDF format:

- Newspaper articles
- Photographs showing students in action











