

MASSANUTTEN  
REGIONAL  
LIBRARY



**Collecting Stories and Building Community:  
Lessons from “[Century of Stories](#)”  
The MRL Oral History Project**

# Who We Are

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# Why would you even open this can of worms??

Massanutten Regional Library is a seven branch system, in two counties.

Branches all have unique stories.

Wanted to collect community members' memories of the library.

We turned 90 in November 2018!

Create an archive of stories about the library. Goal to show how the library fits into the community.

Eventually combine with a photo archive and create displays and exhibits, and perhaps a published piece.



# Oral History, Memory Studies, and Community

- ▶ Memory Studies is an emerging multi-disciplinary field that seeks to understand why, how, and what we remember.
- ▶ Oral history is the guided and structured articulation of personal memories.
- ▶ It is usually gathered in the form of personal stories.
- ▶ It is as rich and reliable as human memory.
- ▶ The interviewer, the questions, and the environment of the interview can all affect what is remembered, how it is remembered, and how it is articulated.
- ▶ Even when facts are objectively inaccurate, emotional meaning, an understanding of community, and a sense of what is important can still be clear and accurate.
- ▶ It is the best technique for understanding culture and community.
- ▶ With a large enough group of narrators and an adequate body of documentary evidence, cross-referencing can create effective objective histories, too.



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# Before you hit record:

- ▶ Release forms!!! Different ones for adults and kids.
- ▶ Workflow for accessioning interviews, number and naming schema for the interviews as well as the release forms and transcripts that will go with them, form to record interview information.
- ▶ Scanner or access to scanner (digitize release forms)
- ▶ Separate space on your server (so not everyone can get in there and mess around!)
- ▶ Transcription software (not necessary, but nice)
- ▶ Marketing for project - logo, website, press releases, publicity pieces (It takes more than someone willing to do the interviews)



# Resources - or how cheaply can we do this?

- ▶ 2 Tascam DR-05 recorders (\$85 on amazon)
- ▶ 2 tripods (\$5.59 on amazon)
- ▶ Express Scribe transcription software (free)
- ▶ Audacity Software for audio editing (free)
- ▶ Spark software (part of Adobe suite) to create audio visual pieces (part of cost of Adobe)
- ▶ Stand up Banner and Posters to take to events (approx. \$100)
- ▶ Current staff doing interviews; one does administrative/accessioning work
- ▶ One part time volunteer doing transcriptions
- ▶ IT staff help for file share creation, and website support
- ▶ Buy in from all staff members



# Tascam dr-05



# Express scribe transcription software

- ▶ Free Version
- ▶ Could consider foot pedal to get one copy of full Version
- ▶ <https://www.nch.com.au/scribe/index.html>



## Express Scribe Transcription Software Foot Pedal Controlled Digital Transcription Audio Player



Express Scribe is professional audio player software for PC or Mac designed to help transcribe audio recordings.

Reduce your turn around time using Express Scribe's audio playback with keyboard hot keys or by installing one of the supported transcribing pedals. Additional valuable transcribing software features include variable speed playback, multi-channel control, a video player, file management, and more.

 [Download Express Scribe Transcription Software for Windows](#)



Load dictation



Transcribe



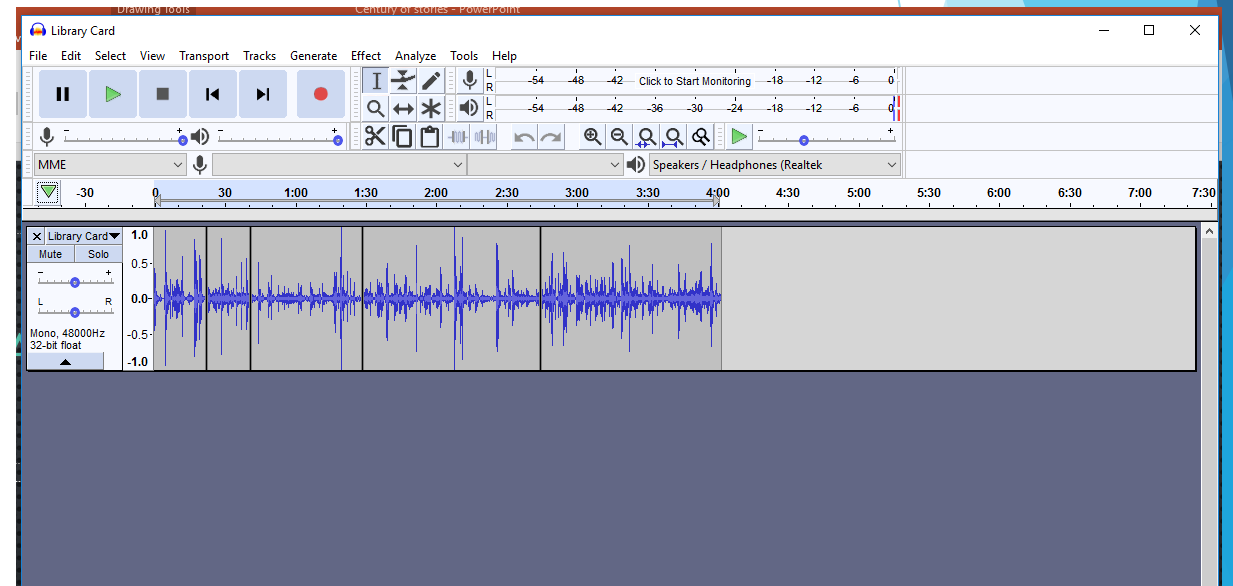
Send transcription



Transcription Software Features

# Audacity

- ▶ Audacity is a free and open-source digital audio editor and recording application software
- ▶ <https://www.audacityteam.org/>





# Kick Off Event - More than just Birthday Cake



		Lamp (hung from ceiling)		Assistance Signs					
		Remember When sign				What do you remember sign			
Door		x Craftsman Wooden Chair	Library Directory Sign						
	Timeline banner				Mezzanine Railing	x lg green chair		1950 Blueprints on wall	
				x orange cloth chair					
Table	Book Drop					Table with 1920 memorabilia			
									S c r e e n
						Computer			
		Childrens Angeled Table / Bench	Snoopy Vest Dog House					Tech Services memorabilia	2000 Architectural rendering
wooden card/reference tools								x Yellow arm chair	
									Card Catalog
		x new Red chair							x Children's room green club chair
			Small Card catalog & stamps						
		Window		Window					

# Remember When...



90 years as a library  
90 years as a community



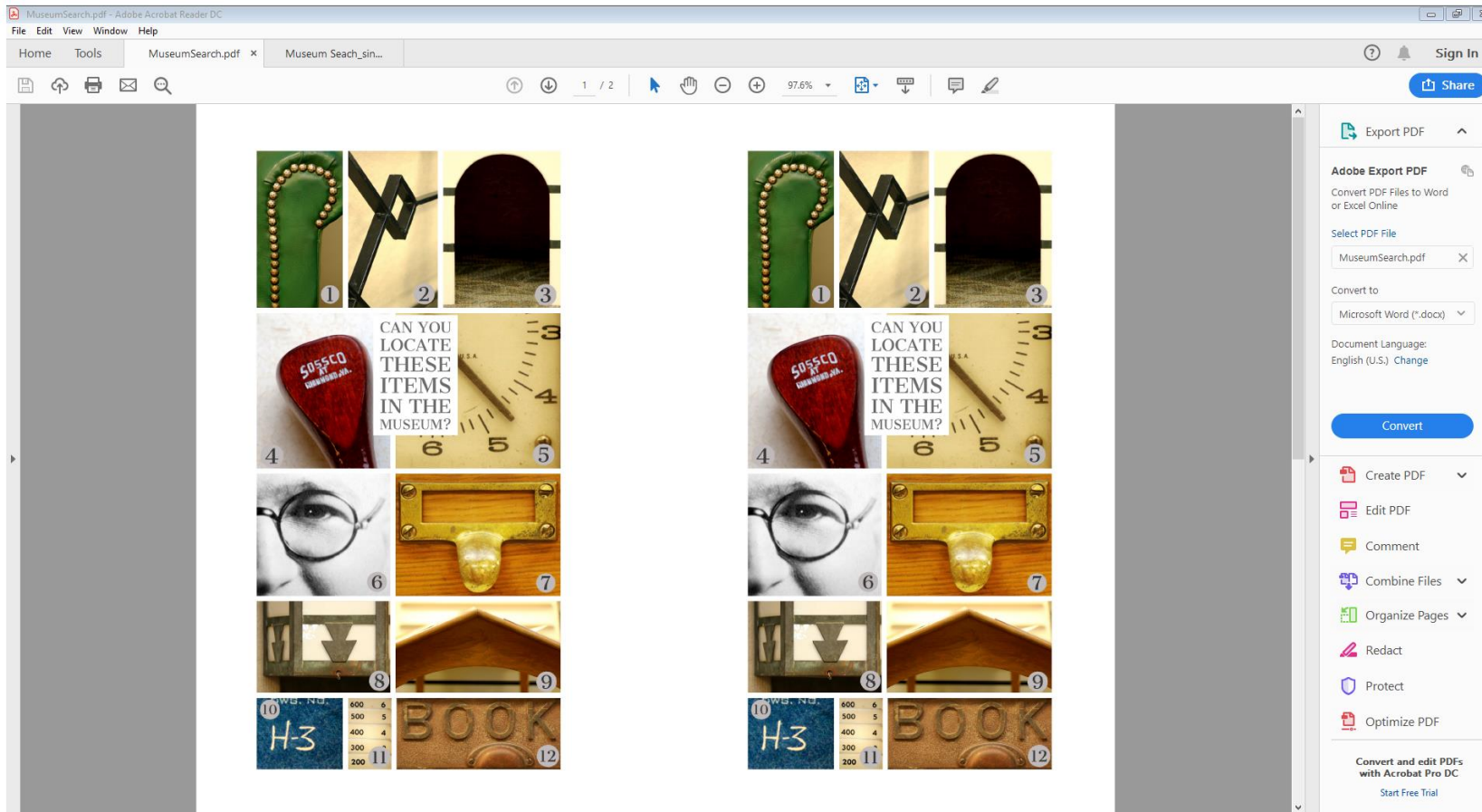




Century of Stories  
MRL 1928 - 2028







## Look and Find

# What do you remember?



Century of Stories  
MRL 1928 - 2028

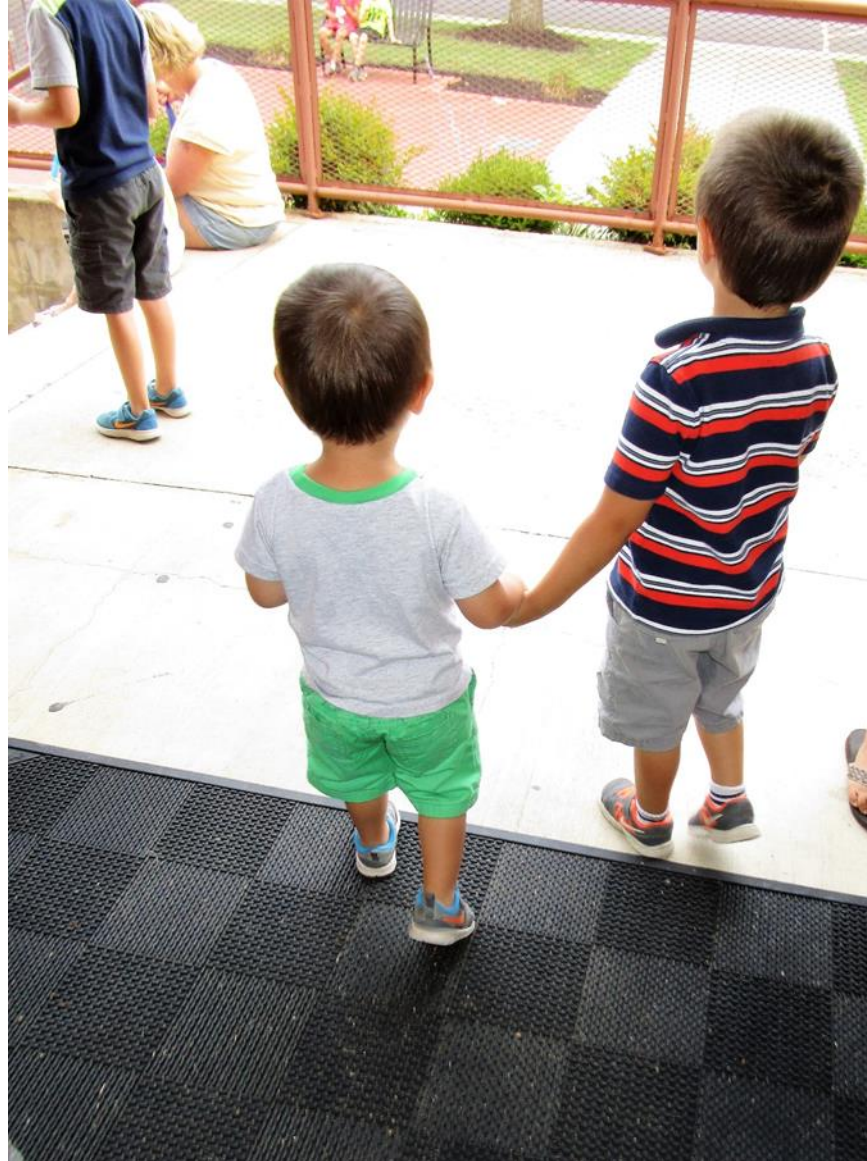


MASSA NUTTEN  
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LIBRARY





# Grottoes Branch



# Community @ Grottoes

## Family Story Time Wednesdays @ 1 pm

- Nurturing first experiences

## Afterschool Thursdays @ 4

- 1<sup>st</sup> Thursday—Legos
- 2<sup>nd</sup> Thursday—Crafty Kids
- 3<sup>rd</sup> Thursday—Board Games
- 4<sup>th</sup> Thursday—Keva
- 5<sup>th</sup> Thursday—Legos

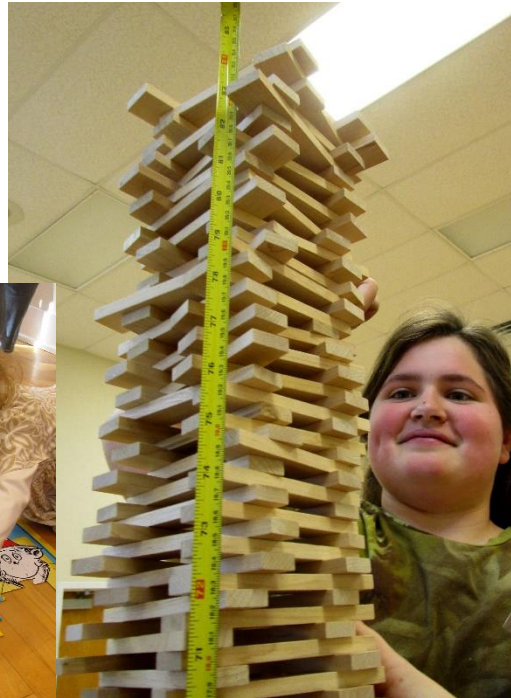
## Monthly & Special Events

- Brown Bag, Teen & Adult Coloring
- Month-long programming such as Puzzle Month, Poetry Month
- Intergenerational & interactive
- Special events such as trick-or-treat and monarch watching
- System programs such as live theater & musicians



# Grottoes Branch & Century of Stories

- ▶ Started with existing core groups
- ▶ Regular & enthusiastic participants & volunteers
- ▶ Brown Bag—adult readers
- ▶ Thursday Afterschool—family activities



# Excerpts from interviews:

**Teen:** *It's a happy, happy feeling...I just come here to enjoy myself.*

\* \* \*

**Volunteer:** *I think that without this library I wouldn't like this town, at all. I wouldn't wanna live here without this library. Like I said I love it.*

*...they have all the things I want, they have books and they have nice people and you're comfortable here*

\* \* \*

**Homeschooler:** *I like how it's a place where people socialize and like um try new things...*

**Homeschool mother:** *We really like the resources we're able to get and we can order books from other libraries and they get here pretty quickly...*

*...we have a free place to come and hang out*

**Brown Bagger:** *Well the Brown Bag events are memorable for me because they have helped me a great deal. Not only do I get information about new books to read...I have made some very close friends from the people that I have met here.*

*...the friendliness, comfort, and ease of doing things here.*

\* \* \*

**Afterschool child on his favorite memory:** *doing games and arts and crafts*

**Afterschool mother:** *he gets upset if we miss ...even though we moved away we still come over...pick them up from school and...come straight here on Thursdays.*

**Afterschool child on his favorite book:** *the chicken books, it's all about the chickens.*

**Afterschool mother:** *he likes when you guys have Halloween here [and give] free books.*



# Challenges

- ▶ Privacy - this is where release forms are so important
- ▶ Convincing people there is no “right” answer
- ▶ No one will care
- ▶ I hate my voice on tape
- ▶ Scheduling & location
- ▶ Getting staff “buy in”



# How much do we have?

- ▶ Since November 2018
  - ▶ 54 interviews with 61 narrators (as of October 14, 2019)
  - ▶ Vary in age from 3 - 90
  - ▶ Vary in length from 2 minutes to over 20 minutes
  - ▶ Have held events at six of our seven branches
  - ▶ Created website so patrons can contact us - <http://mrlib.org/cos/>



# What have we found?

- ▶ People love the library - for children one of the first places of independence
- ▶ That as a system we have a strong balanced collection
- ▶ Show strength of being a system - courier system, larger collection
- ▶ Showed us some of our unsung heroes (longtime story time leader)
- ▶ Hub of community
- ▶ Patrons have a strong sense of loyalty and community tied to “their” branch
- ▶ Activities are important (not just what we have) what they can do at the library
- ▶ Summer programming important for multiple reasons
- ▶ Allowing us to collect memories of bookmobile which came off road in 2009
- ▶ We need more parking! Again, because system can go to one branch to get things sent from other places.



# Goals

- ▶ More traffic through web site <http://mrlib.org/cos/>
- ▶ Conduct interviews with narrators over time
- ▶ Produce audio stories to help libraries mission





# Questions?

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# Interviews - More than just hitting record

- ▶ Interview space
- ▶ Security
- ▶ Be early
- ▶ Bring Extra Batteries
- ▶ Know schedule for interviews and names.
- ▶ Prompting Narrators

