



**PEOPLES
PLACES**
AND THE HISTORY OF
WORDS
IN BRATTLEBORO, VT

Audio Research Guidelines



The Brattleboro Words Project is pleased to include you as a Research Leader or other project participant. The research you do, audio and imagery you collect, and talents you (or your students) contribute, will help inform the first iteration of the Brattleboro Words

Trail: audio walking, biking and driving tours pegged to sites and personalities you will relate to words—history, books, authors, publishing, journalism, speeches, scripts, printing, letters, memoir etc.

Your mission is to gather audio that relates to your specific site (or sites) and the authors or themes you associate with same. We aim to give Trail users a high-quality, immersive experience, to bring the place and its story alive through creative audio. This handbook offers some guidelines to consider as you go about your work.

Project recording equipment can be checked out at Brooks Memorial Library. RFPs can also record in the library first floor 'Story Booth' to secure a professional sound. Training and one-on-one technical assistance is always available.

APPROACH AND GUIDANCE

Research Leaders vary greatly in experience, from those with no audio or research experience to seasoned public radio commentators. One of the main points of the Project is to introduce diverse community members to audio storytelling about places in our midst. Research Leaders represent different ages and walks of life, including writers, college students, artists, veterans, historians, families and teachers—the latter in turn inspiring their students around place-based education and the use of audio.

We hope you will be inspired to tell a story you think is important and relevant today. It is your passion for the topic that will inform your research and the resulting audio. What new things will you find or connections will you Rmake?

Loosely speaking, we encourage Research Leaders to approach your topic through various humanities angles: history, literature, linguistics, philosophy, ethics, jurisprudence; comparative religion and history, theory, and criticism of the arts. **The humanistic social sciences can also be taken into account:** political science, government, geography, anthropology, and sociology.

Research Leaders / Teachers Should Expect To:

- Look at books written about your topic;

- Review any historical markers associated with your site;
- Visit the local or regional historical society to see if they have files, artifacts, maps or other information relating to your site;
- Research whether your author or someone else use the site as a setting for a story or novel;
- Review old newspapers and/or radio accounts, video, film, photos;
 - See for example “Chronicling America” <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>
- Provide a sense of the time, the global backdrop, and how your story fits in.
- Contact experts or other voices you may wish to include.

Your research will give you a handle on your story, and allow you to start getting creative. Is there an illustrative skit that can be performed? What about using examples of the music of the time? What other sounds might you include? What kinds of elements could you use to immerse a listener in your story?

Project partners, scholars and members of the Project Leadership Team are there to provide you with direction, insights, technical guidance, training, and other resources as needed. Area scholars from a variety of the humanities disciplines can speak with you, visit your classroom or otherwise help inform your understanding and work.

Your main point of contact will be Project Director Lissa Weinmann (LRWeinmann@gmail.com) and Assistant Project Director Desmond Peoples (BrattleboroWords@gmail.com), who can connect you with the help you may need from our Technical Director Reg Martell Reggie@BrattleboroWords.com or Creative Director Jen Austin (JenAustinVT@gmail.com) who will design and build your site’s page on the BrattleboroWords.org website.

MONTHLY ROUNDTABLES FOR SHARING INFORMATION

Research Leaders are invited to share findings with other Project participants and the community at large at our *Roundtable Discussions held the third Thursday of each month at 6pm*. Research Leaders give a 15 to 30 minute presentation about their theme/site, we publicize and share it with other Research Leaders and the public. The events are free, and snacks and refreshments are served. Group discussions often continue to 8 pm. The Roundtables convene on site or at 118 Elliot in downtown Brattleboro.

Research Leaders may invite scholars/authors or others to augment a Roundtable Discussion, and an honorarium for them may be possible.

MAKING SCHOOL AND COMMUNITY CONNECTIONS

We hope Research Leaders will, to the extent they are able, interface with other community members who would like to contribute to illuminating your site, including artists, musicians, authors, students, scholars and sources willing to be interviewed to bring audio to life.

The Research Leader, if desired, could interface with local students from 3rd to 12th grade and college students who may also share an interest in your site/topic. Research Leaders may also volunteer to review such student work. In addition to audio, classrooms may contribute artwork, photography and other digitized archival images, video, and handmade books, all of which will be vetted for potential use in the final audio tour and website.

COLLECTING AUDIO

If you have a good digital audio recorder, especially one donated to your school from the Project, use it. Many schools participating in the Project have been gifted an audio set as part of the work; Technical assistance and training is always available.

Project recording equipment can be checked out at Brooks Memorial Library. RFPs can also record in the library first floor 'Story Booth' to secure a professional sound.

If you have questions about how to use the recorder, refer to the equipment user's guide on the brattleborowords.org site: <http://brattleborowords.org/equipment-guide/>. Or you can call or email the Project personnel indicated above.

How many audio segments you submit is up to you. We expect the average site on the map to have from 3 to 6 short segments, each 3 to 5 minutes long, but anything you contribute is needed and welcome. In general, depending on pacing, five minutes of talking translates to about 625-750 words.

The first segment should, as in a lead paragraph in a news story, summarize the story. This may be a script you write for yourself or someone else to read.

Subsequent segments can further elucidate aspects of the story, and be organized any way the research leader sees fit. (see Kipling example below).

Participants are not required to submit complete, polished segments unless they wish to.

Interviews, music, sections read from works, etc. can be submitted raw, but please try to edit

long pieces. All audio will be edited and ‘polished’ to reflect the tone of the Project, including unified intro and extro text/music for all sites.

EDITING

The degree to which audio is ‘perfected’ is up to each Research Leader. We do ask that if you have a long interview that you listen and snip out the briefer segments you think are most important to your story. The Project will teach Research Leaders to edit if they don't know how to already, how to upload segments to our cloud archive for ultimate finishing by audio editors for the entire project.

Most of us are using Audacity, free, open source editing software which you can download here: <https://www.audacityteam.org/download/>. The library also has Audacity plus a full editing suite with tutorials available for you as well. We hold periodic audio making workshops. Project personnel will alert you to upcoming gatherings and workshops where your we can edit together.

UPLOADING AUDIO AND OTHER FILES

You will upload your segments for Project personnel’s review directly to the BrattleboroWords.org website, top right corner of home page. Artifacts or documents discovered along the way that may illuminate the audio can also be submitted in this way to be featured on the website/tour.

Getting files off the recorders and onto the web can be a process that varies greatly, depending on your hardware and software. Bearing this in mind, we’ve adopted a crazy M.O.: an actual human will work with you to assess each group’s needs and develop a workflow for uploading content to the project database. So if you’re ever stuck with a technical problem, please feel free to email our Tech Director, Reggie Martell, with any related questions:

(reggie@brattleborowords.org)

Before uploading audio, we apply a specific naming structure to all our files so they’re easy to find later. At the time of this writing, there are 7,506 program files, holding 1.29TB of data, and Research Leaders like you are only just getting started. So, the naming scheme is critical to file, but also relatively simple and intuitive. It works like this:

Each file is given a numerical code, based on the date it was created. After that we list the “Place”; the topic and the content creator and other pertinent information.

Example:

The audio from our July 7th, 2018 Roundtable discussion at Scott Farm would be listed as:

[20180712_Kipling_Roundtable_Martell_audience_microphone1.wav](#)

Strict adherence to the date format is important, but the rest of the file name is more subjective and, more flexible.

CREDIT, COMPENSATION AND RESPONSIBILITIES

It is up to Research Leaders to let us know who gets what credit, which will be listed on the website at the site page. You should also feed emails and other info about others involved to us so we can include them in our contact lists for Roundtable invitations and other events.

Research Leaders should also be aware of rights issues and use issues for images and other data you may use. Even as a non-profit, creating an open-source product for use by all, we may often need to acquire rights to use a song, voice clip, audio from radio or film etc. and clearance should be maintained by anyone being interviewed. Release forms are available from the Project directors.

Research Leaders will be awarded a \$250 honorarium for their work once files are submitted, and a modest Project budget, as needed, may also be available. Research Leaders are required to file a W-9 form in order to receive the honorarium.

KIPLING EXAMPLE

There is certainly no shortage of information on Nobel Prize winner for literature Rudyard Kipling.

The first segment hits the highlights, so if a person using the map only listens to one, they get the gist of the story, such as (in shorthand terms):

"Kipling was one of the world's most famous writers. Born December 30, 1865, died January 18, 1936, he lived in India and authored the Jungle Book among other famous works. A figure not

without controversy due to views on the civilizing force of imperialism, but a family man, who experienced some of the best and worst times in Dummerston where he lived from 1892 to 1896. He built a house here on Kipling Road called Naulakha—“precious jewel”—and came with his wife, a native, who's brother Wolcott Kipling loved and whose other brother, Beatty, Kipling eventually came to hate. Their feud animated the town and eventually drove the Kiplings away.

Other segments could be:

- *"Kipling's Descriptions of Vermont"*
- *"Kiplings Feud with Beatty"*
- *"Naulakha Architecture"*
- *"A day in the life of Kipling at Naulakha"*
- *"Kipling & the 'White Man's Burden,'"*
- *"Kipling's Literary Friends in Vermont,"*
- *"Kipling's Views on Society and Civilization,"*
- *"Passages from the Jungle Book, written at Naulakha."*

Research Leaders also can collect music of the era, (did Kipling and Carrie have favorites?), sounds of horse cloppings or golf balls being hit, quotes from newspapers, etc.—anything the Leader thinks will add artistry and color to the words. Project staff can also help find these sorts of records, audio effects, and ephemera from relevant archives.

TIMING

We aim to complete the first iteration of the Brattleboro Words Trail by the end of 2020, but rolling deadlines will be created along the way depending on when Research Leaders started their work. Schools generally submit work from the academic year by the end of May.

JUNE PICNICS

All Research Leaders, teachers, students and family members will be invited to share their work at a June picnic, date TDB.

MORE QUESTIONS

As above, contact: Project Director Lissa Weinmann (LRWeinmann@gmail.com) and Assistant Project Director Desmond Peoples (BrattleboroWords@gmail.com) or Technical Director Reg Martell Reggie@BrattleboroWords.com or Creative Director Jen Austin (JenAustinVT@gmail.com) who, with the input you provide, will design and build your site's page on the BrattleboroWords.org website.