Student Assignment: Voices of History – Oral Histories Project

Student Name: _____

Date: _____

Class / Period: _____

Task Overview

History is not just a collection of dates in a textbook; it is made up of the living memories of people who survived, fought, and built our communities. In this assignment, you will view and analyze a high-quality video testimony from **The Lavender Effect's Oral Histories Project**. These histories are documented using professional historical storytelling standards to preserve vital civil rights and local milestones.

Instructions

1. Navigate to **thelavendereffect.org/programs**
2. Select the assigned Oral Histories Project.
3. Choose one interview and watch the testimony.
4. Take notes on the speaker's words, expressions, and historical context.
5. Complete the primary source evaluation table below and answer the corresponding analytical essay prompt.

Part 1: Primary Source Evaluation

Analysis Focus	Your Observations & Evidence
The Witness	**Who is speaking?** Note their name, background, and their role in the events they describe (were they a leader, a witness, or a community member?).
The Climate	**What was the world like?** Describe the social, legal, or political challenges the speaker faced during the time-period they are discussing.
The Non-Verbal Story	**How do they tell it?** Pay attention to the speaker's tone of voice, facial expressions, or pauses. How do these cues change or deepen your understanding of their story?
The Turning Point	**What was achieved?** What specific action, protest, legal milestone or personal victory does the speaker highlight as a major moment of change?

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Part 2: Analytical Essay Prompt

Select the option below that matches your chosen video collection. Write a thorough response (2–3 well-developed paragraphs) on a separate sheet of paper or digital document. Use specific evidence from the video testimony to back up your arguments.

- **Option A: Pioneers of Pride**
  The collection is titled *Pioneers of Pride*. Based on the testimony you watched, what does it mean to be a "pioneer" in a social movement? Analyze the personal or systemic risks the speaker took to advocate for their community and explain how their individual civic courage connects to larger civil rights movements you have studied in class.
- **Option B: Young City at War**
  This collection highlights how major historical events impact local neighborhoods. How did your speaker describe their immediate Southern California community reacting to a crisis? Explain how local grassroots networks or youth activism stepped up to protect people and discuss why studying localized history changes the way we understand nationwide events.
- **Option C: Beyond the Binary**
  Language is a powerful tool that evolves over time. How did the speaker describe the vocabulary available to them in the past versus the language they use to describe their identity today? Explain how having the right words impacts a person's well-being, and analyze why openly sharing a personal narrative serves as a form of self-advocacy.

How You Will Be Graded

- **Primary Source Mastery (25%):** You accurately identify the speaker, their core message, and meaningfully analyze both their verbal words and non-verbal delivery.
- **Historical Context (25%):** You correctly connect the personal testimony to broader historical laws, dates, social climates, or local milestones.
- **Critical Thinking & Reflection (25%):** Your essay provides deep, thoughtful insights into concepts like empathy, civic courage, resilience, or language evolution.
- **Evidence & Execution (25%):** Your writing is clear, organized, and heavily relies on specific details, quotes, or moments from the video interview.

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