

ORAL HISTORY VS ORAL TRADITION

EXACT DEFINITIONS	
Oral history. <i>“A field of study and a method of gathering, preserving, and interpreting the voices and memories of people ... through recorded interviews.”</i> (oralhistory.org) The Library of Congress adds that it’s both the method (recording and preserving testimony) and the product (the interview/transcript). (ask.loc.gov)	Oral tradition. Spoken forms—including proverbs, tales, myths, songs, chants, and genealogies—used to pass knowledge, social values, family relationships, and collective memory across generations. (ich.unesco.org) Britannica: a vital, multifunctional means of verbal transmission in many cultures. (Encyclopedia Britannica)
Quick Comparison	
Oral History: First-person accounts. Living witnesses. Recorded interviews.	Oral Tradition: Multi-generational lore. No living witness. Verbal transmission over centuries
To help you remember	
Oral History is modern memory	Oral Tradition is ancient folklore

Prepared by Catherine dee Auvil, July 2026, with editorial assistance from ChatGPT and Google Gemini.