

Oral History Center

How to Use the Oral History Center Advanced Search Tool

This excerpt from an article about the 1918 flu walks you through how to use the Advanced Search tool on the Oral History Center website, and shows what you can find by using different search techniques. Read the article, "[Dying By Inches](#)," to see examples of quotes and themes that resulted from the below search.

From "Dying By Inches: Epidemics and Oral History"

We at the Oral History Center at UC Berkeley have our own stories that touch on the Spanish Flu. Using our "Advanced Search" fields in our collection's [search engine](#), you can search using a number of terms to bring up these oral histories. I found eight for "Spanish Flu," accounting for duplications. But it's important to try different search terms. When I searched "flu" and "1918," I got 591 hits. And when I pull up an oral history in PDF form by clicking "view transcript," I hit Ctrl-F (or Command-F if you have a Mac) and type a search term into the field, which takes me right to each location in the transcript where that word is mentioned, in sequence. A lot of the mentions of flu come from our Rosie the Riveter World War II Homefront Project and a series on Russian immigrants to the US that was conducted by UC Berkeley Professor Richard A. Pierce in the 1960s and 70s.

Usually there is just a brief mention or anecdote about that dreadful year 1918, as these are life histories about much more than just that year.

But note that you can also narrow your search by year, project, and subject area. The more you cross-reference, the more precise you can be in your searches.

At the bottom of the [Advanced Search](#) page, there is a box you can click on to limit to records that include audio/video. These will be the oral histories that have been featured on our Oral History Metadata Synchronizer (OHMS), which syncs transcripts and keyword metadata to the audio and A/V of an oral history. Most of this content is limited to the Rosie the Riveter World War II Homefront Project, but we also hope to have audio synced with transcripts from the AIDS epidemic project and more. This will be useful as the content with OHMS-synchronized audio and video grows over time and will permit greater engagement with the material.