

The Power of Preserving Oral History – PH2348

For hundreds of years, the names and stories of millions of Africans have survived in the minds of people that have been taught oral history across generations. The passing of elders who possess the historical knowledge of their families combined with urbanization and modernization threaten the disappearance of African oral histories.

FamilySearch International is conducting an ambitious effort to collect the oral history narrative that tells the real history of Africa across multiple nations. FamilySearch is recording oral history and genealogy from rural villages across the vast continent. In Africa, where written records are relatively scarce, this reality carries solemn consequences.

This presentation will share the project, recent results, and potential. This will share a vision of the initiative to interview over 700,000 people before its completion, generating audio, photos and recording of names from each.

The interviews capture audio recordings of the stories shared in hundreds of indigenous languages. The genealogies include millions of names, relationships and places mentioned in the families which are indexed for lookup. All this information is published for access online to the public across the world.

The collection, preservation and accessibility of African oral histories for future generations is unprecedented, inspiring and urgent.

Three key take-ways from this rapid presentation will be:

- 1) Understanding of the African oral genealogy program
- 2) Recent results from the collection
- 3) Potential use of this information

