On Campus

# Obama Presidency Oral History Archive is Now Available

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Pete Sousa / White House

**After recording** more than 450 interviews over several years, a team of Columbia historians and social scientists has released the full Obama Presidency Oral History archive to the public.

The digital archive was produced by Columbia's Incite Institute, which fuses social science, oral history, and public engagement. It contains more than 1,100 hours of audio and video conversations with people reflecting on the presidency of Barack Obama '83CC. Included are White House advisers David Axelrod and Valerie Jarrett, cabinet secretaries Timothy Geithner and Hillary Clinton '22HON, former members of Congress, heads of universities and philanthropies, cultural figures like Oprah

Winfrey and author Marilynne Robinson, and activists and labor union leaders who fought to shape the Obama administration’s agenda.

Whereas presidential oral histories have typically recorded the memories only of top administration officials, the Columbia scholars say they included the voices of ordinary people whose lives were touched by administration policies, such as those who wrote letters to President Obama about their economic precarity, their struggles to secure health insurance, or the effects of gun violence on their lives.

“This archive reminds us how the government can work to enrich the varied communities that make up our enormously complex world,” says Columbia sociologist and Incite director Peter Bearman, who oversaw the project.



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