

**ORAL HISTORY
PROJECT GUIDELINES**



MINNESOTA HISTORICAL SOCIETY

ORAL HISTORY OFFICE

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**PUTTING TOGETHER AN ORAL HISTORY PROJECT:
OVERALL GUIDELINES**

1. Identify your narrator—who can tell interesting stories, who has lived through a unique time period, who can document an era for which little other information exists? Make sure this person is in reasonable health for their age, with a good memory and has, preferably, an enjoyment of conversation.
2. Obtain consent—be sure the narrator understands why this interview is important and what your plans are once the interview is completed. Make the interview as professional as possible by scheduling an unhurried, private appointment with your narrator.
3. Before the interview, test your recorder and sound level. Become comfortable with the equipment—be able to locate and use the buttons with ease. It is better to rely on electricity rather than batteries. Pack an extension cord. Be sure to bring more cassette tapes than you think you could possibly need.
4. Put a blank cassette in the machine before the interview. Record an introduction, “This is John Doe interviewing my grandmother, Mary Smith, on May 2, 1999. The interview is taking place at Mrs. Smith's home in Saint Paul at 2000 Montrose Street.”
5. Prepare and take with you a general list of questions or topics that cover the research area as thoroughly as possible. Be sure that you have done enough research to ask intelligent, probing questions. You should also be familiar with names and terms that are a part of your narrator’s area of expertise. [See Attachments I and II.]
6. If possible, use “memory cues”—particularly if this is an elderly narrator. These would include scrapbooks, heirlooms, and old photos.
7. At the time of the interview, be sure to explain again why you are interviewing this person. Make the narrator as relaxed as possible—have him or her sit in a favorite chair. Situate the recorder in a comfortable location so that you can monitor the sound levels and the amount of tape remaining. Eliminate distractions—mute the phone, put the dog outside, banish the relatives.
8. Begin with simple questions, such as those relating to the narrator’s background. Cover

the material chronologically wherever possible, as this is the way most people best remember events. Go through your list of topics, without interrupting the narrator or disturbing the flow of the interview. As new questions or areas of interest emerge, jot them down for follow-up. [See Attachment III.]

9. Listen carefully, and be prepared to ask follow-up questions when necessary. Be especially alert to the shorthand many people use in conversation. Use follow-up questions to clarify the identity of people mentioned only by first name, for instance.
10. After the interview, be sure to review the spellings of names and places that the narrator has mentioned. Jot down any information regarding photographs or other materials that your narrator has identified during the interview, and double-check any dates or biographical information that the narrator has discussed. If possible, take a photo of your narrator.
11. Carefully explain the importance of a signed donor agreement form. [See Attachments IV and V.] Make sure the narrator signs the original and receives a copy for his or her own records.
12. Remove the plastic tabs on the top of the cassette to prevent accidental erasure. Label the cassette and cassette case with the narrator's name, the interviewer's name, and the date of the interview. Be sure to make a duplicate copy of the interview and store the original interview tape in a safe, climate-controlled location.
13. Fill out the inventory sheet with biographical and interview information. [See Attachment VI.]
14. Send a thank-you note to the narrator.
15. Consider whether the interview should be transcribed and who will do the work—yourself, a volunteer, a secretarial service, or a professional oral history transcriber? Also, decide whether the narrator should have an opportunity to review the transcript. Be prepared to audit, edit and proofread the transcript.
16. Think about potential uses for your finished interview—such as to accompany photos, to provide background for a genealogy or community history project, in a publication, etc. Consider how you could tap into publicity sources to maximize awareness about your project. Also, if you are unaffiliated with an institution, you may want to evaluate the possibility of depositing your interviews in a public repository. [See Attachments VII and VIII for a list of ethical guidelines and bibliographical sources.]

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Attachment I

SAMPLE QUESTIONS

The purpose of these sample questions is to provide a guide for you, the interviewer. You will know your narrator best. It is up to you to decide which questions are appropriate and how to phrase them for your interview. The important point is to gather recollections of the same time period. It is our hope that even one of these questions will trigger a wonderful memory.

NEIGHBORHOOD

How did you identify your neighborhood? What did you call it? What were its boundaries? Did neighbors have get-togethers? Was there a neighborhood association? Where did you get news of what was happening in your neighborhood? Was there a neighborhood newspaper? From whom or where were you most likely to hear the neighborhood gossip?

HOUSES

Where were you living in the late 1930s and 1940s? What was the racial/ethnic/economic makeup of your immediate neighborhood? How long did you live there? What prompted you to move? Do you recall if and when your neighbors moved? Was it the custom to take in boarders in these large homes? Do you recall any homes being divided into two or more units? Did you ever consider doing that to your house? It has been said that the neighborhood began to deteriorate in the late 1940s—what changes, if any, do you recall?

HEALTH & SAFETY

Did you leave your doors unlocked? Were you ever robbed? Did you walk in the neighborhood after dark? Was there a neighborhood policeman? Where was the fire station? Do you recall any major fires? What did you do when someone was ill or injured? What hospital or doctor's office did you go to? How did you get there?

SERVICES

What services did the city provide? What happened when there was a big snowstorm? Did schools and businesses close? How soon were streets plowed? Were the alleys plowed? Were the city parks and playgrounds? Were they supervised? Did you know the mailman? How often was the mail delivered? Where was the public library? What grocery store did you patronize? Drugstore? Hardware store? Barber shop? Beauty shop? Clothing store? Did the proprietors live in the neighborhood? Who repaired things when they were broken? Was there a neighborhood handyman? Who did the yard work? Shoveled the snow? Painted the house?

TRANSPORTATION

Did you have a car? What kind was it? Who drove it? Where did you park it? Who repaired it? Where was the gas station? How much did a gallon of gasoline cost? Where did you go when you went out for a drive? How did you get to work? How did you get downtown?

SOCIAL LIFE/ENTERTAINMENT

Where did you go to see a movie? Play? Concert? Was there a neighborhood music or theater group? Who were the favorite local performers? What did a ticket cost? Where were the favorite spots to gather? Was there a neighborhood bar or restaurant? Was it a place for gossip or political discussion? Was it a trouble spot? What did you do on a Saturday night? On Sunday afternoon? Where did you play golf, or tennis, or swim? What were the most popular sports? Where did you go on vacation? How did you get there? How did you celebrate the holidays? What happened in the neighborhood on Memorial Day, Fourth of July, Labor Day?

RELIGION

Where did you attend church? Was your church an important influence on the neighborhood? Did everyone know the pastor? What kinds of church social functions were there? Were there social groups for young people? What churches did your neighbors attend?

COMMUNICATIONS

What newspapers did you read? Did you rely on the radio for national news? What was the first news event you remember hearing on the radio? What was the best source of news during World War II? What were the favorite radio programs? When did you get a television set? What was the first news event you remember seeing on television?

CHILDREN'S ACTIVITIES

Where did children go to school? How did they get there? Where did their classmates live? What was the racial/ethnic/economic mix of the school? Were there discipline problems in school? What did children do after school? Where did they go? Who cared for them? Was there a playground or a park? Did neighborhood children play together? What were the favorite games? How were very young children cared for? Who were the babysitters? Did children take music or dancing lessons in the neighborhood? Who was the teacher? What did children spend their allowance or pin money on? What store or shopkeeper was the children's favorite? Do you remember anything that really caught on as a fad in the late 1930s and 1940s?

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Attachment II

QUESTION FORMATS

The way you word a question will affect the answer you get. Ask questions that require more than a one-word answer.

Not-So-Good Questions

Did you go to Sunday school?

Did you sing in the choir?

Did you walk to church?

Do you remember church picnics?

Did the church have a Christmas party?

Good Questions

What do you remember about Sunday school?

How did you typically spend your Sundays?
What church activities were you involved in?

How did you get to church?

Tell me about the church picnics.
What did you like or dislike about the church picnics?

How did the church celebrate Christmas?

Start questions with:

Tell me about . . .

Describe . . .

What do you remember about . . .

Explain . . .

Expand . . .

Avoid leading questions. These are questions which suggest a particular answer, or which influence the narrator to answer in a certain way.

I understand the Rev. Smith was a wonderful preacher. What did you think?

What can you tell me about the Rev. Smith?
What did he look like?
What were his sermons like?

I guess everyone in church was one big, happy family, huh?

How often did you socialize with other church members?
What happened when someone was sick or in trouble?
Can you give an example?

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Attachment III

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW TIPS

1. An interview is not a dialogue. You are there to record someone else's experiences, not to talk about yourself. The whole point of the interview is to make sure the narrator tells his or her own story. Limit your own remarks to some small talk to make the narrator comfortable, and then prompt him or her with questions to guide the reminiscences. "I understand you emigrated from Sweden. What were your reasons for leaving?" And later, "What specific details can you tell me about the trip—for example, how long did it take?"
2. Ask questions which require more than a "yes" or "no" answer. Start questions with "why," "how," "where," "what," and "when." Instead of asking, "Was Miss Smith a good teacher?" ask, "What did the students think about Miss Smith's teaching ability?"
3. Ask one question at a time. Sometimes an interviewer asks a series of questions all at once. The narrator usually ends up only answering the first question, and the information that would have been supplied in answering the other questions is lost.
4. Ask brief questions. Most narrators will quickly grasp the kind of information you are seeking.
5. Start with non-controversial questions. Save the more delicate questions for when you and your narrator are better acquainted. A good place to begin is usually to ask about the narrator's childhood and education.
6. Don't let periods of silence fluster you. Give the narrator an opportunity to add comments before you rush him or her off in another direction. Relax and jot down a few notes while your narrator regroup.
7. Don't worry if your questions are not as beautifully phrased as you would like. When you fumble somewhat with your questions, the narrator realizes that you do not expect him or her to give perfectly composed responses. Be as natural as possible.
8. Listen quietly and carefully and actively. Encourage the narrator with an occasional smile or nod. Do not say things like "yes," "uh-huh," and "really" repeatedly. Don't look bored or disinterested. Maintaining eye contact is vital.
9. Don't interrupt a good story just because you have thought of a question or because the narrator is straying from your planned outline. Jot down your question for later. Be on your toes and remember that your list of questions is only a guide, not a rigid plan. Be

ready to ask further questions when your narrator offers unexpected information.

10. If your narrator does ramble, wait for a pause and try to pull him or her back to the subject at hand. “That’s very interesting. Now before we continue, I would like to find out more about how the Great Depression affected your family.”
11. It is often difficult for the narrator to describe a person. An easy way to begin is to ask him or her to describe that person’s appearance. The narrator is then more likely to move into a description of the person’s character and personality traits. Ask the narrator to be specific and to elaborate on his or her comments. Encourage lengthy descriptions where appropriate.
12. Try to establish your narrator’s role at important points in the story. “So where were you during the blizzard?” “When did you realize that your life was in danger?” This will establish how much of the narrative is based on eyewitness testimony and how much is based on secondhand information.
13. Do not challenge accounts that you think are inaccurate. Instead, try to develop as much information as possible, which can be used by later researchers to establish what really did happen. As Walter Lord, who interviewed survivors of the Titanic, has said, “Every lady I interviewed said she left the sinking ship in the last lifeboat. As I later found out from studying the placement of the lifeboats, no group of lifeboats was in view of the other. Each lady probably was in the last lifeboat she could see as she left the ship.”
14. Tactfully point out to your narrator where his or her account differs from that of others. Start out by saying, “I have heard…” or “I have read…” This does not challenge the narrator’s account, but rather suggests ways to clarify other stories already in existence. Often the best interview research material comes from a narrator who differs from other sources.
15. Avoid “off the record” information, where your narrator asks you to turn off the tape recorder to tell you a story. When the recorder is off, the information being told is immediately lost to anyone but yourself. It is likely that even you will lose much of the flavor of what is being shared. In addition, once you start turning off the recorder when asked, the narrator will fall into this habit of censoring his or her responses.
16. Interviews work best when it is just the two of you—the narrator and the interviewer. If there is another person in the room with stories to contribute, tactfully ask whether you can interview this person separately at another time. Another good tactic is to thank this third person for being in the another room to intercept the phone and the doorbell, thus contributing to the sound quality of the interview.
17. Do end the interview at a reasonable time. An hour and a half to two hours is usually the maximum. By that time, both the interviewer and the narrator are fatigued. Smile, thank

the narrator profusely, and arrange for another appointment time, if necessary.

18. Be sure to review the tape afterwards. Even the most experienced interviewer will spot missed opportunities or things he or she might have done differently. Use what you've learned to make your next interview that much better. When reviewing the tape, remember that there is no such thing as a perfect interview. Don't be discouraged by awkward questions or repetition, or if your narrator jumps from one topic to another. This is how people often recall things. Try to think of the taped interview as raw material.

Finally, remember that:

GOOD INTERVIEWERS DON'T SHINE, ONLY THEIR INTERVIEWS DO.

Adapted from Oral History for the Local Historical Society, by Willa K. Baum (see bibliography for complete citation).

SAMPLE ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT FORM

I, **[name of narrator]**, a participant in an interview recorded on **[date]**, hereby give and deliver to **[name of institution]** all the incidents of ownership in that interview, including copyright, from this time forward.

Signed (donor):

Address:

Date:

Signed (interviewer):

SAMPLE RESTRICTED ORAL HISTORY AGREEMENT FORM

I, **[name of narrator]**, a participant in an interview recorded on **[date]**, hereby give and deliver to **[name of institution]** all the incidents of ownership in that interview, including copyright, from this time forward, with the single exception that access should be given until **[date]** only to those persons having the written permission of **[name of narrator]**, his or her heir(s), or his or her designee(s), as specified below.

Signed (donor):

Address:

Date:

Signed (interviewer):

Specified heir(s) or designee(s):

TAPE INVENTORY SHEET

NARRATOR:

ADDRESS:

BIOGRAPHICAL INFORMATION:

DATE OF INTERVIEW:

INTERVIEWER:

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW:

NUMBER OF CASSETTES:

LENGTH OF CASSETTES (i.e., 60 minutes):

LENGTH OF INTERVIEW:

SUBJECTS DISCUSSED:

**PROJECT EVALUATION GUIDELINES
FROM THE NATIONAL ORAL HISTORY ASSOCIATION**

PROGRAM/PROJECT GUIDELINES

Purposes and Objectives

- A. Are the purposes clearly set forth? How realistic are they?
- B. What factors demonstrate a significant need for the project?
- C. What is the research design? How clear and realistic is it?
- D. Are the terms, conditions, and objectives of funding clearly made known to judge the potential effect of such funding on the scholarly integrity of the project? Is the allocation of funds adequate to allow the project goals to be accomplished?
- E. How do institutional relationships affect the purposes and objectives?

Selection of Interviewers and Interviewees

- A. In what ways are the interviewers and interviewees appropriate (or inappropriate) to the purposes and objectives?
- B. What are the significant omissions and why were they omitted?

Records and Provenance

- A. What are the policies and provisions for maintaining a record of the provenance of interviews? Are they adequate? What can be done to improve them?
- B. How are records, policies, and procedures made known to interviewers, interviewees, staff, and users?
- C. How does the system of records enhance the usefulness of the interviews and safeguard the rights of those involved?

Availability of Materials

- A. How accurate and specific is the publicizing of interviews?
- B. How is information about interviews directed to likely users?
- C. How have the interviews been used?

Management, Qualifications, and Training

- A. How effective is the management of the program/project?
- B. What provisions are there for supervision and staff review?
- C. What are the qualifications for staff positions?
- D. What are the provisions for systematic and effective training?
- E. What improvements could be made in the management of the program/project?

ETHICAL AND LEGAL GUIDELINES

What procedures are followed to assure that the interviewers/programs recognize and honor their responsibility to the interviewee? Specifically, what procedures are used to assure that:

- A. The interviewee is made fully aware of the goals and objectives of the oral history program or project?
- B. The interviewee is made fully aware of the various stages of the program/project and the nature of his or her participation at each stage?
- C. The interviewee is given the opportunity to respond to questions as freely as possible and is not subjected to stereotypical assumptions based on race, ethnicity, gender, class, or any other social/cultural characteristic?
- D. The interviewee understands his or her right to refuse to discuss certain subjects, to seal portions of the interview, or in extremely sensitive circumstances even to choose to remain anonymous?
- E. The interviewee is fully informed about the potential uses to which the material may be put, including the deposit of interviews in a repository; publication in books, articles, newspapers, or magazines; and in all forms of public programming?
- F. The interviewee is provided a full and easily comprehensible explanation of his or her legal rights before being asked to sign a contract or deed of gift transferring rights, title, and interest in the audio and/or visual tape(s) and transcript(s) to an administering authority or individual; and whenever possible, the interviewee is consulted about all subsequent use of the material?
- G. All prior agreements made with this interviewee are honored?
- H. The interviewee is fully informed about the potential for and the disposition of royalties that might accrue from the use of the interviews, including all forms of public programs?
- I. The interview and any other related materials will remain confidential until he or she has released their contents to use?
- J. Care is taken when making public all material relating to the interview?

What procedures are being followed to assure that interviewers/programs recognize and honor their responsibilities to the profession? Specifically, what procedures assure that:

- A. The interviewer has considered the potential for public programming and research use of the interviews and has tried to prevent any exploitation of or harm to the interviewees?
- B. The interviewer is well trained and will conduct the interview in a professional manner?
- C. The interviewer is well grounded in the background of the subject(s) to be interviewed?
- D. The interview will be conducted in the spirit of critical inquiry and that efforts will be made to provide as complete a historical record as possible?
- E. The interviewees are selected on the basis of the relevance of their experience to the subject at hand and that an appropriate cross-section of interviewees is selected for any particular project?

- F. The interview materials, including tapes, transcripts, agreements, and documentation of the interview process, will be placed in a repository after a reasonable period of time, subject to the agreements that were made with the interviewee; and that the depository will administer their use in accordance with those agreements?
- G. The methodologies of the program/project, as well as its goals and objectives, are available for the general public to evaluate?
- H. The interview materials are properly cataloged, including appropriate acknowledgment and credit to the interviewer, and that their availability for research use is made known?

What procedures are followed to assure that interviewers and programs are aware of their mutual responsibilities and obligations? Specifically, what procedures are followed to assure that:

- A. Interviewers are made aware of the program goals and are fully informed of the ethical and legal considerations?
- B. Interviewers are fully informed of all the tasks they are expected to complete in an oral history project?
- C. Interviewers are made fully aware of their obligations to the oral history program or sponsoring institution, regardless of their own personal interest in a project or program?
- D. Programs/sponsoring institutions treat their interviewers equitably, including the establishment of provisions for appropriate compensation and acknowledgment for all products resulting from their work; and that support for fieldwork practices is consistent with professional standards whenever there is a conflict between the parties to the interview?
- E. Interviewers are fully informed of their legal rights and of their responsibilities to both the interviewee and to the sponsoring institution?

What procedures are followed to assure that interviewers and programs recognize and honor their responsibilities to the community and to the public? Specifically, what procedures assure that:

- A. The oral history materials, and all works created from them, will be available and accessible to the community that participated in the project?
- B. Sources of extramural funding and sponsorship are clearly noted for each interview or project?
- C. The interviewer and project endeavor to not impose their own values on the community being studied?
- D. The tapes and transcripts are not being used in an unethical manner?

TAPE/TRANSCRIPT PROCESSING GUIDELINES

Information about the Participants

- A. Are the names of both the interviewer and interviewee clearly indicated on the tape, abstract and transcript, and in catalog materials?
- B. Is there adequate biographical information about both interviewer and interviewee? Where can it be found?

Interview Information

- A. Are the tapes, transcripts, time indices, abstracts, and other material presented for use identified as to the project/program of which they are a part?
- B. Are the date and place of the interview indicated on the tape, transcript, time index, abstract, and in appropriate catalog material?
- C. Are there interviewer's statements about the preparation for or the circumstances of the interviews? Where? Are they generally available to researchers? How are the rights of interviewees protected against improper use of such commentaries?
- D. Are there records of contracts between the program and the interviewee? How detailed are they? Are they available to researchers? If so, what safeguards exist for individual rights and privacy?

Interview Tape Information

- A. Is the complete master tape preserved? Are there one or more duplicate copies?
- B. If the original or any duplicate has been edited, rearranged, cut, or spliced in any way, is there a record of that action, including by whom and when and for what purposes the action was taken?
- C. Do the tape label and appropriate catalog materials show the recording speed, level, and length of the interview? If the interview was videotaped, do the tape label and appropriate catalog information show the format (e.g., U-Matic, VHS, 8mm, etc.) and scanning system and clearly indicate the tracks on which the audio and time codes have been recorded?
- D. In the absence of transcripts, are there suitable finding aids to give users access to information on the tapes? What form do they take? Is there a record of who prepares these finding aids?
- E. Are researchers permitted to hear or view the tapes? Are there any restrictions on the use of tapes?

Interview Transcript Information

- A. Is the transcript an accurate record of the tape? Is a careful record kept of each step of processing the transcript, including who transcribed, audited, edited, retyped, and proofread the transcripts in final copy?
- B. Are the nature and extent of changes from the original tape known to the user?
- C. What finding aids have been prepared for the transcript? Are they suitable and accurate? How could they be improved?

- D. Are there any restrictions on access to or use of the transcripts? Are they clearly noted?
- E. Are there any photo materials or other supporting documents for the interview? Do they enhance and supplement the text?
- F. If videotaped, does the transcript contain time references and annotation describing the complementary visuals on the videotape?

INTERVIEW CONTENT GUIDELINES

Does the content of each interview and the cumulative content of the whole collection contribute to accomplishing the objectives of the project/program?

- A. In what particulars does each interview or the whole collection succeed or fall short?
- B. Do audio and videotapes in the collection avoid redundancy and supplement one another in interview content and focus?

In what ways does the program/project contribute to historical understanding?

- A. In what particulars does each interview or the whole collection succeed or fall short of such a contribution?
- B. To what extent does the material add fresh information, fill gaps in the existing records, and/or provide fresh insights and perspectives?
- C. To what extent is the information reliable and valid? Is it eyewitness or hearsay evidence? How well and in what manner does it meet internal and external tests of corroboration, consistency, and explication of contradictions?
- D. What is the relationship of the interview information to existing documentation and historiography?
- E. How does the texture of the interview impart detail, richness, and flavor to the historical record?
- F. What is the basic nature of the information contributed? Is it facts, perceptions, interpretations, judgments, or attitudes, and how does each contribute to understanding?
- G. Are the scope, volume, and, where appropriate, representativeness of the population interviewed appropriate and sufficient to the purpose? Is there enough testimony to validate the evidence without passing the point of diminishing returns? How appropriate is the quantity to the purposes of the study? Is there a good representative sample of the population reflected in the interviews?
- H. How do the form and structure of the interviews contribute to make the content information understandable?
- I. If videotaped, does the information capture unique visual information? Has the interview captured interaction with the visual environment, processes, objects, or group interaction?

INTERVIEW CONDUCT GUIDELINES

Use of Other Sources

- A. Is the oral history technique the best means of acquiring the information? If not, what other sources exist? Has the interviewer used them, and has he or she sought to preserve them, if necessary?
- B. Has the interviewer made an effort to consult other relevant oral histories?
- C. Is the interview technique of value in supplementing existing sources?
- D. Do videotaped interviews complement, rather than duplicate, existing stills or moving visual images?

Historical Contribution

- A. Does the interviewer pursue the inquiry with historical integrity?
- B. Do other purposes being served by the interview enrich or diminish the quality?
- C. What does the interview contribute to the larger context of historical knowledge and understanding?

Interviewer Preparation

- A. Is the interviewer well-informed about the subjects under discussion?
- B. Are adequate primary and secondary sources used to prepare for the interview?

Interviewee Selection and Orientation

- A. Does the interviewee seem appropriate to the subjects discussed?
- B. Does the interviewee understand and respond to the interview purpose?
- C. Has the interviewee prepared for the interview and assisted in the process?
- D. If a group interview, have composition and group dynamics been considered in selecting participants?

Interviewer-Interviewee Relations

- A. Do interviewer and interviewee motivate each other toward interview objectives?
- B. Is there a balance between empathy and analytical judgment in the interview?
- C. If videotaped, was the interviewer/interviewee relationship maintained despite the presence of a technical crew? Did the technical personnel understand the nature of the videotaped oral history interview, as opposed to a scripted production?

Adaptive Skills

- A. In what ways does the interview show that the interviewer has used skills appropriate to:
 - * the interviewee's condition (health, memory, mental alertness, ability to communicate, time schedule, etc.)?
 - * the interview conditions (disruptions or interruptions, equipment problems, extraneous participants, etc.)?

Technique

- A. What evidence is there that the interviewer has:
 - * thoroughly explored pertinent lines of thought?
 - * followed up on significant clues?
 - * made an effort to identify sources of information?
 - * employed critical challenges when needed?
 - * thoroughly explored the potential of the visual environment, if videotaped?
- B. Has the program/project used recording equipment and tapes that were appropriate to the purposes of the work and uses of the material? Are the recordings of good quality? How could they be improved?
- C. If the interview was videotaped, are lighting, composition, camera work, and sound of good quality?
- D. In the balance between content and technical quality, is the technical quality good without subordinating the interview process?

Perspectives

- A. Do the biases of the interviewer interfere with or influence the responses of the interviewee?
- B. What information is available that may inform the users of any prior or separate relationship of the interviewer to the interviewee?

INDEPENDENT/UNAFFILIATED RESEARCHER GUIDELINES

Creation and Use of Interviews

- A. Has the independent/unaffiliated researcher followed the guidelines for obtaining interviews as suggested in the Program/Project Guidelines section?
- B. Have proper citation and documentation been provided in works created (books, articles, audio-visual productions, or other public presentations) to inform users of the work as to interviews used and the permanent location of the interviews?
- C. Do works created include an explanation of the project, including editorial procedures?
- D. Has the independent/unaffiliated researcher provided for the deposit of the works created in an appropriate repository?

Transfer of Interviews to Archival Repository

- A. Has the independent/unaffiliated researcher properly obtained the agreement of the repository prior to making such a representation?
- B. Is the transfer consistent with agreements or understandings with interviewers? Were legal agreements obtained from interviewees?
- C. Has the researcher provided the repository with adequate description of the creation of the interviews and the project?
- D. What is the technical quality of the interviews? Are the interviews transcribed, abstracted, or indexed, and, if so, what is the quality?

EDUCATOR AND STUDENT GUIDELINES

Has the educator:

- A. Become familiar with the “Oral History Evaluation Guidelines” and conveyed their substance to the students?
- B. Ensured that each student is properly prepared before going into the community to conduct oral history interviews?
- C. Become knowledgeable of the literature, techniques, and processes of oral history, so that the best possible instruction can be presented to the students?
- D. Worked with other professionals and organizations to provide the best oral history experience for the students?
- E. Considered that the project may merit preservation and worked with other professionals and repositories to preserve and disseminate these collected materials?
- F. Shown a willingness to share his or her expertise with other educators, associations, and organizations?

Has the student:

- A. Become thoroughly familiar with the techniques and processes of oral history interviewing and the development of research using oral history interviews?
- B. Explained to the interviewee the purpose of the interview and how it will be used?
- C. Treated the interviewee with respect?
- D. Signed a receipt for and returned any materials borrowed from the interviewee?
- E. Obtained a signed legal release for the interview?
- F. Kept his or her word about oral or written promises made to the interviewee?
- G. Given proper credit (verbal or written) when using oral testimony, and used material in context?

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