



Do-It-Yourself

Interview Sample Questions

BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONS

Q: Where and when were you born? Where did you grow up? Where have you lived? What jobs have you had? What do you do for a living now?

FAMILY FOLKLORE

Q: Do you know any stories about how your family first came to the United States? Where did they first settle? Why? How did they make a living? Did your family stay in one place or move around? How did they/you come to live in this area?

Q: What stories have come down to you about your parents and grandparents? More distant ancestors?

Q: What are some of your childhood memories? What games did you play when you were a child? Did you sing verses when you played games? What were they? What kinds of toys did you play with? Who made them? Did you make any yourself? How did you make them? What kinds of materials did you use?

What kind of home entertainment was there? Was there storytelling? Music? Were there craft traditions? Describe these traditions.

Q: How are holidays traditionally celebrated in your family? What holidays are the most important? Are there special family traditions, customs, songs, foods? Has your family created its own traditions and celebrations? What are they? How did they come about?

Q: Does your family hold reunions? When? Where? Who attends? How long have the reunions been going on? What sorts of stories are told at these events?

Q: What family heirlooms or keepsakes and mementos do you possess? Why are they valuable to you? What is their history? How were they handed down? Are there any memories or stories connected with them?

COMMUNITY LIFE

Q: Describe the place — urban neighborhood, small town, rural community, suburb — where you grew up. What was it like? How has it changed over the years? What brought about these changes? What did people do for a living? What do they do now?

Q: What are/were your neighbors like? What kinds of local gatherings and events are there? What stories and memories come to mind?

Q: How have historical events affected your family and community? For example, what were some of your experiences during World War II, the Civil Rights Movement?