

- **Interviewing Tips**

- Get explicit permission from your research subject to conduct an interview. Explain thoroughly the nature of the project and let your source know how their words and experiences will be used. You should offer to give them a copy of your finished project. Schedule a particular time to do the interview, even if it is with a member of your own family.
- Consider recording the interview if at all possible so you don't have to try to write out every word as your subject talks. It's probably best to conduct the interview in person, but if that's not possible you should conduct it over the phone or via email.
- Even if you are recording the conversation, be sure to bring a notebook and write down your impressions of your subject. These can often be as important as their words, and you may be able to incorporate these details into the oral history. If you are conducting your interview through email, pay particular attention to the word choices your subject uses, as these choices can be very telling.
- Prepare several open-ended questions to start the interview—try to avoid structuring your questions so they require more than a “yes” or “no” response. This will offer you more information to work with. Take the time to brainstorm some ideas before your interview.
- You should probably limit yourself to a 20-30 minute interview (though I wouldn't be surprised if some lasted much longer). It is unlikely that you will be able to use all of this material in your project, so you'll need to make editorial choices about what to include and what to cut. You should feel free to condense some of your interviewee's comments (use ellipses to indicate if some material is missing) and/or focus on just one part of the interview.