

## **TELL ME YOUR STORIES**

### **Preparation Tips**

Decide who you'll interview

Find out something about them (i.e. where did they grow up and when?)

Research the time and places

See if other family members have ideas for things they'd like to know

Come up with questions for each aspect of the person's life

In preparing for an oral history interview, you need to come up with questions that are *relevant to the person's life*. Most people have some general areas in common, so we'll start with those as the basis for coming up with our questions for the interviews. For each topic, please think of at least 10 questions you could ask your subject.

Remember, in creating your questions, you want to ask in a way that the person will tell *detailed account* of the topic. For example, instead of stopping with "What was your mother's name?" how about asking "Can you tell me about your mother?" Words and phrases like *describe*, *tell me about*, and *why* often get a better response.

### **Topic Areas**

Ancestors (stories about grandparents, great grandparents, names, location)

Parents (their lives before subject's birth – including childhood, youth, meeting each other)

Childhood (birth, early memories, family, friends, religion, their role in the family, recreation, school)

Lifestyle (circumstances, town, home, deliveries, electricity)

Teenager years (school, friends, relationships, feelings, interests, fads)

Young adulthood/adulthood (college, work, marriage, children, interests, involvements, the times)

Historical events (the great depression, wars, political movements, inventions)

The present (interests, commitments, challenges)

Reflections (looking back over life – most important experiences, greatest achievements, greatest joys or disappointments, thoughts about the world and life)

Future (plans, travel, retirement, new interests to pursue)

Advice, words of wisdom to descendants