

# Interview Checklist

## Things to bring to the interview:

- \_\_\_ Your question guide
- \_\_\_ Pen/pencil and notepad
- \_\_\_ Recorder
- \_\_\_ Memory card with plenty of free space
- \_\_\_ Headphones
- \_\_\_ Extra batteries (at least one full set)
- \_\_\_ Contact information for interviewee (in case you need to track them down)
- \_\_\_ Consent form
- \_\_\_ Tripod/handle (optional)
- \_\_\_ External microphone (optional)
- \_\_\_ Microphone cable (optional)

## Before you begin your interview:

- \_\_\_ Find the quietest place possible to record.
- \_\_\_ Turn off or move away from noisy appliances like clocks, TV's, and refrigerators.
- \_\_\_ Make sure you and your interviewee are comfortable.
- \_\_\_ Do a test recording, holding the microphone about one hand's distance from your interviewee's mouth. If anything sounds strange, stop and figure out what the problem is before starting the interview.

## During your interview:

- \_\_\_ Double check that the recorder is actually recording (not on pause).
- \_\_\_ Start each recording with an ID: state your name, age, date, and the location of the interview and ask your interviewee to state the same information.
- Stay quiet when your subject is talking. Don't say, "Uh, huh." Instead, nod your head.
- If your interviewee makes a mistake or if a noisy truck passes by, feel free to ask her/him to repeat the story.
- Ask emotional questions like, "How did this make you feel?"
- Look your interviewee in the eyes, pay attention, and stay engaged.
- Stick with amazing moments in the interview. Follow-up questions often yield the best material.
- Be curious and keep an open heart. Great things will happen.

## After your interview:

- \_\_\_ In some situations, you'll need to ask your interviewee to sign a consent form. The form must explain all the ways you might use the interview. You may want to offer them a chance to approve the final product before you share it with a larger audience.
- \_\_\_ Be sure to thank your interviewee. For oral history interviews, offer to make them a CD of the recording. Let them know when or where they can see anything you might create from the interview.