

## **Oral History Suggested Questions**

What is your full name?

Where and when were you born?

Who else was in your family?

What were your parents' names?

How did they meet?

What did they do for a living?

What types of activities would you do together?

Tell me about your neighborhood.

Where did your ancestors come from?

When did they come to the United States?

Where did they first settle?

Did your family name change when your family immigrated to the United States?

Are any of their traditions still carried on today?

What language did your parents and grandparents speak?

What games did you play when you were young?

What toys did you have?

Who did you play with?

Where did you play?

Did you collect anything? Baseball cards, dolls, etc.

Tell me about your grammar and high school education?

Describe your grammar school/high school.

What subjects did you study?

Tell me about your interests in your school days.

Did you have any influential teachers?

Any leadership roles in organizations/classes?

Did you read much, if so, what topics?

Did you belong to any influential clubs or organizations?

What holidays did your family celebrate?

How did you celebrate them?

Tell me about your college years.

What school? How did you decide to go there?

What was your major?

Describe your major interests?

How have historic events, such as 9/11, hurricanes, the Great Depression, world wars, natural disasters, strikes, and now Covid-19 etc., affected you?

Did these events impact your community?

What was your favorite part of the holidays?

Tell me about the house you grew up in.

How was it furnished?

Did you have your own room?

Where did you spend most of your time?

Did you move to another home while you were growing up?

Tell me about the new home.

How did your community change?

What were mealtimes like in your family?

What foods did you eat?

Who cooked the food?

Who cleaned up after meals?

What type of clothes did you wear?

Where did you get them/who made them?

When did you get new clothes?

How did your family get around? Did you have a car? Did

you use public transportation?

If you had a car, when did you get it? Who drove it?

Did you go on vacations in it?

When did you learn to drive? Describe your first car.

What kind of public transportation was available?

Did you watch TV growing up? What did you watch?

Do you remember any epidemics or diseases?

What was your first job?

Describe a typical work day.

How much money did you earn?

How long did you have that job?

Additional jobs and details – trace career path, changes

-Excerpted from the Smithsonian Institute Archives, <a href="https://siarchives.si.edu/history/how-do-oral-history">https://siarchives.si.edu/history/how-do-oral-history</a>