

GET INSPIRED

Oral history is a method of learning about the past through interviews with people who experienced it directly. They can be well-known people or people you know personally. Troup County Archives collections include many oral history collections and personal conversations.

Troup County Archives continues to collect oral histories, but a recorded conversation with a family member can also be a way for you to learn more about your family and to preserve family history and family stories.

To better understand how to interview a family member, listen to an oral history from [Troup County Archives](#) or one of the projects at the [Library of Congress](#). StoryCorps, another collector of oral history offers best practices on [this video](#). Then talk about the following questions together:



Mike Moncus prepares to interview Betsy Moultri. Mrs. Moultri was interviewed in May of 2003. *TCA Collections.*

1. What surprises you most about the story?
2. What did you learn from the clips that you might not have learned from reading a book?
3. What do you think later generations will find remarkable about this story?

GET READY

Is there someone you know who has experienced a historical event who might be available for an interview? Or is there a family member whose life you'd like to know more about, or whose stories you want to preserve and share with others?

Decide whom to interview, then prepare a list of questions.

Try to keep questions short and avoid any that can be answered with "yes" or "no."

If you are interviewing a family member, you can find suggested questions for a conversation [here](#).

Here are a few examples for interviews with parents:

- How did you choose my name?
- What was I like as a baby?
- What were the hardest moments you had when I was growing up?
- What are your dreams for me?

And questions for interviews with grandparents:

- What was Mom/Dad like growing up?
- Do you remember any songs that you used to sing to her/him? Can you sing them now?
- What were your parents like?
- How would you like to be remembered?

Decide how you will record the interview, using a digital recorder, a mobile device, a computer, or other item, and test your equipment.

RECORD

Be sure to select a quiet location for recording, then:

- Start with date and place of the interview, your name and the name of your interviewee, the topic
- Ask your questions and encourage the interviewee without interrupting.
- Take notes as you record if you can.

After your interview is complete, listen to your recording and talk as a family about the experience. Here are some questions to guide your thoughts:

- What did you learn about your interviewee or your family that you did not know before? What did you learn about the historical events they experienced?
- If someone were going to do an oral history interview of you, what events would you talk about? Is there anything you would want later generations to know about your experiences?

EXPLORE MORE

If you are interested in formally recording your interview for historical purposes, Troup County Archives accepts submissions. Email info@trouphistory.org for more information.

