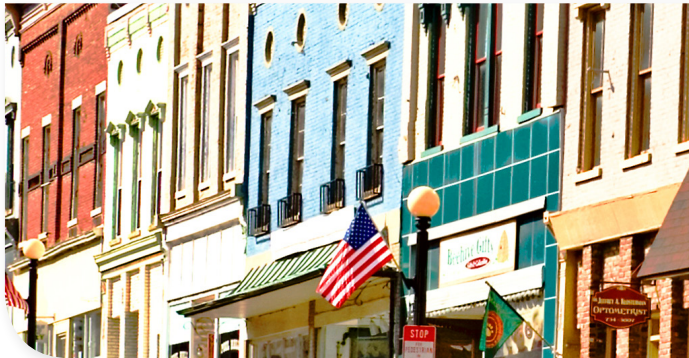




# SMITHSONIAN FOLKLIFE AND ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW GUIDE



by Marjorie Hunt

Special edition, revised by  
Museum on Main Street, a part  
of the Smithsonian Institution  
Traveling Exhibition Service



Smithsonian

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**Smithsonian Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage in collaboration  
with the Smithsonian Institution Traveling Exhibition Service**

In conjunction with the Stories from Main Street project, an initiative of Museum on Main Street, a partnership of the Smithsonian Institution and State Humanities Councils nationwide in service to America

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COVER: Top left and middle right photos by James Kegley. Town photo by Steve Minor. Bottom photo from the Contemporary Jewish Museum. Courtesy Flickr Creative Commons Attribution-NonCommercial 2.0 Generic

## WHY IS THE SMITHSONIAN INTERESTED IN ORAL HISTORIES ANYWAY?



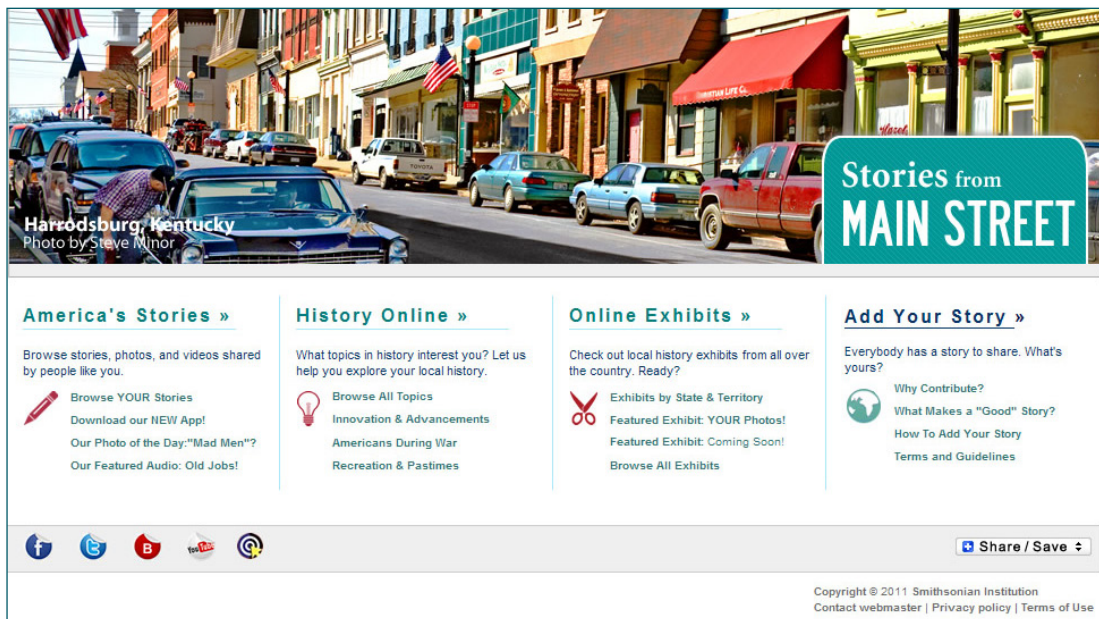
The Smithsonian Institution has been collecting objects, photographs, and books for more than 150 years. We are experts in the “American experience”...and so are you! Real people, sharing their own American experiences, can help the Smithsonian add to the ever-evolving story of life in America. Your oral histories help us document what life is like across the United States, whether in a small town in Colorado or a suburb in Alabama. The way we see it, everybody has a story to tell.

“**Stories from Main Street**” is the Smithsonian’s latest project for collecting stories from America’s small towns and rural communities. Created by the [Museum on Main Street program](#), “Stories from Main Street” is a multi-platform effort to learn from people that call America home.

This project includes a [free app](#), available in the iTunes store for recording and listening to hundreds of stories about American life. Want to hear about sports in Washington state, or about the marching band at a Texas high school, or maybe you’d like to contribute your own story about a community festival? Download the “Stories from Main Street” app to add your voice to the Smithsonian.

If you're not a smart phone user, you can still share your story. Visit the companion website [www.storiesfrommainstreet.org](http://www.storiesfrommainstreet.org) to upload audio clips, videos, and photographs of your small-town experiences. When you add your entries, other members of your community can reference and build upon your contributions, creating valuable primary resources for the study of local history. The memories we collect—that you contribute—help shed light on your community's past as ordinary voices join together to create an extraordinary picture.

“Stories from Main Street” is a place where anyone with an interest in small-town life can add his or her own personal experiences to the Smithsonian’s archive.



The Stories from Main Street website allows users to submit their stories about life in small-town America. Broad topics in American history are also explored in depth.



# INTRODUCTION

“In the presence of grandparent and grandchild, past and future merge in the present.” –MARGARET MEAD, American cultural anthropologist

The significance of oral history rests with its potential to offer new knowledge, perspectives, and interpretations of the past. In every community—in families, neighborhoods, workplaces, and schools—there are people who have knowledge and skills to share—ways of knowing and doing that often come from years of experience and that are preserved and passed down across generations. As active participants in community life, these tradition-bearers are primary sources of culture and history.

A tradition-bearer can be anyone—young or old—who has knowledge, skills, and experience to share: for example, a third grader who knows the hand-clapping games shared among school-children on the playground; a family member who knows about the special foods that are always prepared for holiday celebrations; or a neighbor who has lived in your community for many years and can tell you about local history and ways of life.

Through documenting their memories and stories, the past comes to life in the present, filled with vivid images of people, places, and events. And it is not only the past that we discover: we learn about the living traditions—the foodways, celebrations, customs, music, occupations, and skills—that are a vital part of daily experience. These stories, memories, and traditions are powerful expressions of community life and values. They anchor us in a larger whole, connecting us to the past, grounding us firmly in the present, giving us a sense of identity and roots, belonging and purpose.

We hope the Oral History Interviewing Guide inspires you to turn to members of your own family and community as key sources of history, culture, and tradition. But where does one start? This document presents some guidelines for collecting oral history from family and community members. It features a general guide to conducting an interview, a list of questions to reflect upon, and concludes with a few examples of ways to preserve and present your findings, a selection of further readings, a glossary of key terms, and sample information and release forms.

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## GETTING STARTED: THE INTERVIEW

“Uncovering the past can be exciting. Sometimes, during that process, a new historian is born.” – National Service Learning Clearinghouse

The memories, stories, and traditions of the people you interview grow out of firsthand knowledge and experience. Created and shaped in community life, they are continually being adapted and changed to meet new circumstances and needs. When interviewing members of your family or local community, be sure to seek out not only what they can tell you about the past, but what they can tell you about life in the present.

How have certain family traditions evolved? What holiday customs are practiced today that weren't a generation ago? What special foodways and rituals are part of community celebrations and why? What skills and abilities are needed to practice a particular craft or trade? How are these skills learned, mastered, and passed on to younger generations?

Whenever possible, ask the tradition-bearer you are interviewing for stories and anecdotes about the topic you are interested in. Stories are important sources of information for the community researcher—they encapsulate attitudes and beliefs, wisdom and knowledge that lie at the heart of a person's identity and experience. The stories people tell, and the cultural traditions they preserve, speak volumes about what they value and how they bring meaning to their lives and to the lives of those around them.

Every interview that you do will be unique. We hope the advice and suggestions offered here further your curiosity in community research and help you on your journey of cultural discovery.



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## CREATING A PLAN

### What?

What is the **goal of your research**? What are you curious about? What school subjects do you enjoy? What do you want to find out? The best way to begin is to match a topic to your curiosity. This will determine the focus of your interview, whom you choose to interview, and what sorts of questions you ask. Having a clearly defined goal is key to conducting a successful interview.

### Who?

Once you've determined the focus of your interview, then what? Whom should you interview first? You might want to begin by thinking about yourself and your own interests. What sorts of questions would you like someone to ask you? What kind of responses do you think they would elicit? This

will help you prepare for the interview experience. If possible, try to conduct your first interview with someone with whom you feel very comfortable, such as a relative or a neighbor. Over the course of the interview, you'll probably pick up clues to other sources: "Aunt Judith can really tell some stories about those days," or "You should ask Antonio Martinez—he's the real master."

What if you don't already know someone to interview about the topic you are interested in? The best way to find people is by asking other people. Chances are you know someone who knows just the person you're looking for! Friends, neighbors, relatives, teachers, librarians, folklorists, and local historians can all help point you in the right direction. Local newspapers, community bulletin boards, and senior citizen centers are also good sources of information. And don't forget to check out your local museum or cultural institution!

### Where?

The interview should take place in a relaxed and comfortable atmosphere. The home of the person you are interviewing is usually the best place, but there may also be other settings that would be appropriate, such as your tradition-bearer's workplace, a church hall, or a community center. Productive interviews can sometimes take place at regularly occurring events, such as family dinners, holiday celebrations, and work gatherings. These are often the occasions when stories are told and traditional customs observed.

### For students and other young interviewers:

Remember to always get permission from your parents or guardians to call and/or work with a particular tradition-bearer.

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## CHECK LIST OF BASIC EQUIPMENT



- ✓ **Notebook**
- ✓ **Pens or pencils**
- ✓ **Digital recorder with plug-in microphone, if possible**  
(or cassette recorder with tapes and batteries)
- ✓ **Plug-in charger**  
(especially if using a mobile phone as recording device)
- ✓ **Digital camera**  
(and extra batteries)
- ✓ **Interview and photo release forms**

**Audio or video recording and note taking** are the most common means of recording an oral history interview. In most situations, audio or video recording are preferable, as it allows you to document your tradition-bearer's stories and experiences completely and accurately, as well as capture the inflections, tone, pauses, and other subtleties of performance.

At first, the people you interview might feel a little uncomfortable with a recorder, but after the interview gets going, chances are they'll forget that it is even there! Always keep a pen and paper with you during a recorded interview, so you can note important points or jot down follow-up questions that come to mind while your tradition-bearer is speaking.

**Digital recorders** are helpful when conducting interviews because of their compatibility with today's technology. Flash memory recorders are the primary media type and resemble normal SD cards found in digital cameras. They are easy to upload on any computer and provide higher quality recording settings. Other types of digital recording types include Hard Disc Drive (HDD) Recorders, which offer longer recording time, and Compact Disc (CD) Recorders, which are slightly slower than HDD Recorders and are limited to roughly 90 minutes of recording time. Today, most smart phones also come with easy recording (and photo-video) options, just be sure that your phone is charged up before heading off for the interview!

If you use a cassette tape, a small recorder with either a built-in or an external (plug-in) microphone is a good choice. Use high-quality 60- or 90-minute cassettes. Always bring more blank tapes with you to an interview than you think you will need, so that you don't get caught short. It's also a good idea to have spare batteries, if your recorder isn't the plug-in type or in case you find yourself in a setting where an electrical outlet is not available. Practice using the recorder before your interview, so that you are familiar with how it works. If you are at ease with your equipment, it will help to put your tradition-bearer at ease too.



Another important piece of equipment is a **camera**. It allows you to capture a visual record of the person you are interviewing and is especially valuable if you are documenting a process, such as your grandmother stitching a quilt or making a favorite family recipe. A camera can also be used to snap pictures of old family photographs and other documentary materials, such as letters, birth records, and scrapbooks. You should take notes on the subject matter, date, and location of your photographs, so that you can prepare a photo log and crediting information for all images.

You may also want to use a video camera to capture a special community event or to visually record a traditional process or a family member recounting his or her life story. Remember, the interview is a story with a beginning, middle, and end. Build on your questions and link them together to create the big picture.

One final note on the equipment you may be using: **Technology changes rapidly**. Try to determine a way of outputting your files that will be easily accessible for others and for future generations as well. If you are creating a scrapbook, for example, create a physical copy in addition to the one that might reside on your computer's hard drive. If you are going all digital, remember to rename your files with logical titles so that others can easily identify the content of that file. If you are able, add metadata (all the contextual information about an image) to the image itself in a program such as Adobe Photoshop.

## BEFORE THE INTERVIEW

Get your tradition-bearer's **permission for the interview** (as well as photographs and video) in advance, and schedule a time and place to conduct it. Make it clear that you plan to use a recorder and ask permission.

Be certain from the start that your tradition-bearer understands the purpose of the interview, and what will happen to the recordings and/or notes afterwards. Is it a school assignment? Are you planning to write a family history? Organize an exhibition? Are the recordings going to be kept with family scrapbooks? Will they be deposited in a local library, archive, or historical society? Will they be posted online? Let the person you are interviewing know.

Do your homework. It's always a good idea to conduct some background research about the subject you are interested in at the library, on the Internet, or by visiting a museum or archive.

Books, pamphlets, photographs, maps, family documents—any or all of these can help give you information on your subject before you go on an interview. Knowing more can help you ask better questions and yields a richer interview.



**Prepare a list of questions ahead of time.** Make sure they are clear, concise, and open-ended. Avoid questions that elicit simple yes or no answers and steer away from broad generalities. Questions that begin with “How” “What” or “Why” usually elicit a more complete response than questions that begin with “Do” or “Did.”

Good sample questions: “How did you learn your trade?” or “What was it like learning your trade?” Bad sample question: “Did you like learning your trade?” Because every individual is unique and every interviewer has his or her own special interests and research goals, there is no single set of questions that will fit every situation.

Ultimately, the most useful questions will be those that you develop yourself based on your knowledge of your own family and/or community. Know which questions are key, but don’t be tied to your list. The questions are meant simply to help focus and guide the interview. Be flexible and have fun!



## DURING THE INTERVIEW

Take a little time at the beginning to introduce yourself and establish a rapport, a feeling of comfort and connectedness with the person you are interviewing. Discuss the purpose of the interview and describe the nature of your project. Remember that the tradition-bearer is probably just as nervous as you.

### **Place the recorder within easy reach**

so that you can adjust the controls when necessary, and position the microphone so that you can clearly record both your tradition-bearer’s voice and your own.

Try to eliminate or minimize any loud background noises, such as the radio or television, that could interfere with the recording. This noise is often referred to as the **context** of a recording. You’d be surprised just how distracting a clock ticking or clattering dishes can be!

**Always run a test** before you begin an interview. Record about a minute of conversation and then play it back to make sure you are recording properly and getting the best possible sound. A good procedure is to state your name, your tradition-bearer’s name, and the date, location, and topic of the interview. This serves both to test the equipment and to orally “label” the recording. When you are confident that all your equipment is in good working order, you are ready to begin.

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## HELPFUL HINTS

Start with a question or a topic that will help put your tradition-bearer at ease. You might want to begin with some basic biographical questions, such as “Where were you born?” “Where did you grow up?” Or perhaps you could ask about a story you once heard him or her tell about your topic. These questions are easy to answer and can help break the ice.

Remember to **avoid questions that will bring only a yes or no response.** And, in order to get as much specific information as possible, be sure to ask follow-up questions: “Could you explain?”

“Can you give me an example?” or “How did that happen?” Show interest and listen carefully to what your tradition-bearer is saying. Keep eye contact and encourage him or her with nods and smiles. Participate in the conversation without dominating it. Try not to interrupt and don’t be afraid of silences – give the person you are interviewing time to think and respond. Be alert to what your tradition-bearer wants to talk about and be prepared to detour from your list of questions if he or she takes up a rich subject you hadn’t even considered!



**Make use of visual materials whenever possible.** Old photographs, family photo albums, scrapbooks, letters, birth certificates, family Bibles, tools, heirlooms, and mementos help stimulate memories and trigger stories.

**Don’t turn the recorder on and off while the interview is in progress.** Not only are you likely to miss important information, but you will give your tradition-bearer the impression that you think some of what he or she is saying isn’t worth recording. Never run the recorder without your tradition-bearer’s knowledge.

If you are using a cassette recorder, number each tape as you take it out of the tape recorder so that your tapes don’t get mixed up. Later you can add all the other necessary information to the label.

Near the end of the interview, take a quick look over your prepared list of questions to see if you’ve covered everything you wanted to ask.

**Be sensitive to the needs of your tradition-bearer.** If he or she is getting tired, stop the interview and schedule another session.

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# AFTER THE INTERVIEW

Make sure that you get the person you interviewed to sign a **written release** (see the end of this book) and that you comply with any restrictions that he or she requests. Always ask permission to use the results of the interview in the ways you initially told your tradition-bearer, such as to write a family history or do a school project. Don't make promises you can't keep, and respect confidences and privacy.



**Title or label all your recordings.** Write down notes with the date, tradition-bearer's name, location of the interview, your name (as the interviewer), project title, and any brief thematic information that might be helpful.

Make notes about the interview while it is still fresh in your mind—jot down impressions, observations, important themes, contextual information, ideas for follow-up.

## Transcribe

**Prepare a log** (topic-by-topic summary) of the contents of the recordings as soon as possible after the interview. You can use the counter on the recorder to note the location of each new topic. With this log, you will later be able to go back and select portions of the recording to listen to and **transcribe** (word-for-word translation of the recorded interview). Complete transcriptions are important, but they are also very time-consuming. A good compromise is to do a combination of logging and transcribing: log the general contents of the recording and transcribe, word for word, the parts that you think you might want to quote directly.

Be sure to send a **thank you note** to your tradition-bearer and, if possible, include a copy of the recording(s).

A student works on the Somerset Kentucky Oral History Project.

## CONCLUSION: TIME TO REFLECT

Now that you've given your tradition-bearer time to reflect on his or her past, take some time yourself to reflect on this project by considering the following questions:



- How does your tradition-bearer's story relate to your community in both the present and the past? How does it relate to you?
- How did your perception of community history change, from before the interview to now?
- How did this project inspire you to learn more about your community?
- What were some of the challenges you faced during this project? What could you do differently in your next oral history interview?
- If the roles were reversed and you became the tradition-bearer, what stories would you like to tell?

### Wrap it up

Now that you have interviewed members of your family or local community, how can you share the information and materials you have collected? There are a number of ways to preserve and present your findings. You may simply want to index and/or transcribe your interviews and store your materials in a safe place where you and other members of your family or community can have easy access to them, such as a local archive, school library, historical society, or community organization.

Or you might want to organize and share your information with others by writing a family history, organizing an exhibition, compiling a family or community recipe book, making a memory quilt, producing a video documentary or radio show, or creating a website, blog or other online presentation.

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## PROJECT IDEAS



Here are several ways to present your oral history interviews that can help to give you some ideas about how you might share your own materials:

### Compile a Family or Community Recipe Book

If you have interviewed your relatives or members of your local community about favorite recipes that have been passed down through the generations, compile a cookbook with the recipes you've collected. Find out information about the ingredients that are used and how and why they may have changed over time and place.

Include memories and stories about the cooks and the recipes, and descriptions of the celebrations, rituals, and traditions that are associated with the preparation of these special foods. A good example is Mamoo's Soggy Coconut Cake, a family recipe book compiled by the Lewis family of Knoxville, Tennessee.

### Mamoo's Soggy Coconut Cake

Mrs. T. A. Lewis of Knoxville, Tennessee, affectionately known as "Mamoo," was celebrated among family and friends for her inimitable soggy coconut cake. "Christmas is not Christmas without Mamoo's coconut cake," said her granddaughter Faye. "That's the way it's been for years and years, as long as I can remember." When Mamoo was 95, her family decided to document her as she made the cake. With a tape recorder, a camera, and plenty of questions, they followed her through the entire process from the selection of a suitable coconut to the presentation of the finished product.

Far more than a recipe was recorded. Her family also captured on tape and on film the cherished recollections, stories, traditions, values, and attitudes associated with making the cake. Afterward, they transcribed the tapes, edited the materials, and printed a 43-page booklet—illustrated with photographs of Mamoo preparing her specialty—which they distributed to relatives, friends, and neighbors.

There are a number of online, desktop publishing sites available today, where users can simply select a template and "insert" his/her own stories, documents, and photographs. Examples include Kodak Gallery, Blurb, Snapfish, Shutterfly, and more.

Students participate in the Somerset Kentucky Oral History Project

## CREATE AN EXHIBITION

Create an **exhibition** based on your interviews and research. Perhaps you have photographs, keepsakes, copies of old documents, tools, art work, and other visual materials that you could organize and display.

Determine the important themes you would like to address, select photographs and/or objects that illustrate your themes, identify succinct quotes from your interviews that capture key ideas and experiences, then write labels and put together photo/text panels that present the information you discovered.

A fun exhibition project is to assemble a cultural **treasure chest**. Fill a small chest or trunk with family mementos and keepsakes that hold special meaning and express a sense of cultural identity and roots. Write a short label for each artifact that captures the meaning it holds and the memories and stories it evokes. Have fun “unpacking” the treasure chest—at home, in school, or at a community center—and artfully displaying the cultural treasures with their accompanying labels.



Become a docent and give an exhibition tour of the treasures, commenting on the significance of the artifacts and the history and heritage they convey. You can expand on the project by producing an exhibition catalog that includes photographs of the objects and essays that go into more detail about the significance of each piece.

Another great idea for an exhibition project is to make a **heritage box**. Young people from the Latin American Youth Center in Washington, D.C., interviewed members of their community and then put together heritage boxes that were compilations of artifacts, stories, quotes, and pictures that gave insights into a particular person’s life and heritage.

The boxes can be made of wood, cardboard, or any available material. The dimensions should be about 18” x 24” to allow enough room for display. Turn the box on its side and carefully arrange the text, artifacts, and pictures in the box so that they tell a story. Display all the boxes together for a wonderful “group portrait” of a community.

For more information about developing story lines and themes for an exhibition, check out our [“How to Create an Exhibition”](#) resource page

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# SCRAPBOOKS AND MEMORY QUILTS

Make a family **scrapbook**. Put together a scrapbook filled with keepsakes, mementos, old photographs, drawings, reminiscences, and other items that embody and preserve your family heritage.

Make a community or family **memory quilt**. Piece together appliquéd quilt squares that capture the memories, stories, and experiences that you documented in your interviews. For a school project, each student in the class could contribute an appliquéd square that represents an important aspect of his/her family heritage or the cultural traditions of his/her community.

Other related project ideas: paint a **collective mural** of neighborhood life or make an illustrated family tree annotated with stories and reminiscences about different family members.

Write an **essay or compose a song** based on the information you have gathered from your interviews. A great example is the Smithsonian Folkways recording, “Here I Stand: Elders’ Wisdom, Children’s Song”. For this project, Larry Long and students from several small rural public schools in Alabama interviewed local elders about their lives and composed songs based on the elders’ stories and experiences.

## And remember ...

Be sure to contact your local cultural institution! More often than not they will be responsive to your project and would like to get involved with your collections (recordings, interview transcriptions, logs, materials gathered during project, etc). Present them with some ideas for exhibiting your collections. They could help you with any questions and offer resources for creating a fun and engaging exhibit. Your local cultural institution could also aid in the development of an online exhibit, which can be created on the Smithsonian website [www.storiesfrommainstreet.org](http://www.storiesfrommainstreet.org). Here, interview recordings, photographs, and other parts of your collections could be displayed and used as sources of historical research by your community.





## A Glossary of Key Terms

**Anecdote** – a short narrative about an interesting, amusing, or curious incident, often biographical and based on a real event

**Archive** – a place where documents, letters, diaries, photos, recordings, and other information are stored and can be used by researchers with special permission

**Community** – any group of people sharing a common identity based on family, occupation, region, religion, culture, gender, age, interest, or avocation; where you live, go to school, work, worship, have family; people may be part of many overlapping communities, including their neighborhood, church, school, clubs, service organizations, or peer groups

**Context** – background noise captured on a recording

**Culture** – a people's ways of being, knowing, and doing

**Custom** – a usage or practice that is common to a group of people or to a particular place

**Docent** – a person who conducts guided tours through a museum and discusses the exhibits with visitors

**Ethnography** – the process of documenting a group's cultural traditions

**Family Folklore** – the stories, traditions, customs, rituals, sayings, expressions, celebrations, nicknames, foodways, games, and photographs that are preserved and passed on within a family

**Fieldwork** – documentation of cultural expressions and ways of life conducted in the social and cultural contexts in which they take place; the gathering of anthropological or sociological data through first-hand observation and interviewing of subjects in the field

**Folklore/Folklife** – the traditional expressive culture shared within various groups: familial, occupational, religious, and regional. Expressive culture includes a wide range of creative and symbolic forms, such as custom, belief, occupational skill, foodways, language, drama, ritual, music, narrative, play, craft, dance, drama, art, and architecture. Generally these expressions are learned orally, by imitation, or in performance



Students participate in the Somerset Kentucky Oral History Project.

## A Glossary of Key Terms (continued)

**Folklorist**—someone who studies how people’s expressive traditions—their stories, customs, art, skills, beliefs, music, and other expressions—are created, shaped, and made meaningful in community life. Folklorists conduct much of their research by observing and interviewing people “in the field.”

**Genre**—a category of expression (art, oral tradition, literature) distinguished by a definite style, form, or content, such as folktales, legends, proverbs, ballads, or myths

**Heritage**—something of value or importance passed down by or acquired from a predecessor; recognized cultural identity and roots

**Indigenous**—originating and developing naturally in a particular land, region, or environment

**Legend**—a narrative supposedly based on fact, and told as true, about a person, place, or incident

**Log**—a topic-by-topic summary of the contents of a recording

**Oral History**—a process of collecting, usually by means of a recorded interview, recollections, accounts, and personal experience narratives of individuals for the purpose of expanding the historical record of a place, event, person, or cultural group

**Personal Experience Narrative**—first-person narratives usually composed orally by the tellers and based on real incidents in their lives

**Rapport**—a feeling of comfort and connectedness between people

**Tradition**—knowledge, beliefs, customs, and practices that have been handed down from person to person by word of mouth or by example, for instance, the practice of always having a certain meal for a holiday

**Tradition-Bearer**—a person who has knowledge, skills, and experience to share, for example someone who learned to quilt or cook from a family member or someone who has been farming for many years

**Transcribe**—writing down the contents of a recording

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## Online Oral History Resources

Baylor University Institute for Oral History “Oral History Workshop on the Web”  
[http://www.baylor.edu/oral\\_History/family.html](http://www.baylor.edu/oral_History/family.html)

Cultural Arts Resources for Teachers and Students  
<http://www.carts.org>

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<http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/resources/1minute.html>

The Library of Congress American Folklife Center Veterans History Project  
<http://www.loc.gov/vets/kitmenu.html>

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<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral/>

The Southern Oral History Program Practical Guide  
[http://www.sohp.org/site\\_images/csas/practical\\_guide\\_\(Apr-2009\).pdf](http://www.sohp.org/site_images/csas/practical_guide_(Apr-2009).pdf)

Smithsonian Institution Center for Folklife and Cultural Heritage Cultural Education Resources/  
 Materials/Programs  
<http://www.folklife.si.edu>

Smithsonian Institution Center for Education and Museum Studies  
<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org>

American Folklore Society  
<http://www.afsnet.org>

American Association of State and Local History  
<http://www.aaslh.org>

The National Genealogical Society  
<http://www.ngsgenealogy.org/cs/home>

## Photography | Multimedia Release Form

I, \_\_\_\_\_, hereby grant a royalty-free, irrevocable and non-exclusive license to \_\_\_\_\_ to use, reproduce and publish a photograph in which my image appears in connection with all standard purposes including, without limitation, exhibition, publication, research, public programs, promotional and publicity in print and electronic media of all kinds, including the World Wide Web.

I **do / do not** (circle one) want my name to be included in the credit line of the photograph.

### AGREED

\_\_\_\_\_  
PARTICIPANT NAME

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE\*

\_\_\_\_\_  
ADDRESS

\_\_\_\_\_  
TELEPHONE NUMBER

\_\_\_\_\_  
EMAIL

\_\_\_\_\_  
DATE

\_\_\_\_\_  
SIGNATURE OF INTERVIEWER/RESEARCHER

\* If subject is a minor, this form must be signed by the parent and/or guardian who has the authority to grant such permission.

## Digital Audio | Tape Log

---

NAME OF PERSON(S) INTERVIEWED

---

OTHER PEOPLE PRESENT

---

RESEARCHER/INTERVIEWER

---

DATE OF INTERVIEW

---

LOCATION OF INTERVIEW

---

SPECIAL CONDITIONS (NOISE, INTERRUPTIONS, ETC.): GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

---

---

---

FILE NAME

---

FILE TYPE

---

WHERE IS FILE STORED?

---

TYPE OF DEVICE USED TO DO RECORDING

## Photo Log

---

PERSON(S)/SUBJECT(S) PHOTOGRAPHED

---

PHOTOGRAPHER

---

DATE(S) TAKEN

---

LOCATION(S)

---

PHOTO CONDITIONS (LIGHT, WEATHER, ETC.)

---

GENERAL DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

---

---

---

FILE NAME

---

FILE TYPE AND SIZE

---

WHERE IS FILE STORED?

---

WILL HARD COPIES OF THE PHOTOS BE AVAILABLE? IF SO, WHERE?

---

---

## Interview Information Form

---

FULL NAME OF PERSON INTERVIEWED

---

NICKNAME, IF ANY

---

DATE OF INTERVIEW

---

RESEARCHER'S NAME

---

ADDRESS OF PERSON INTERVIEWED

---

TELEPHONE NUMBER

---

EMAIL

---

DATE OF BIRTH

---

PLACE OF BIRTH

---

CULTURAL BACKGROUND

---

HOW MANY YEARS LIVING IN THIS COMMUNITY?

---

WHERE ELSE LIVED?

---

SPOUSES AND CHILDREN'S NAMES (IF ANY)

---

OCCUPATION

---

SKILLS AND ACTIVITIES

---

EDUCATION

---

HOBBIES, INTERESTS

---

OTHER INFORMATION

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The Smithsonian Folklife and Oral History Interviewing Guide is available online at:  
<http://www.folklife.si.edu/resources/pdf/interviewingguide.pdf>

“[Tradition-bearers] are living links in the historical chain, eye witnesses to history, shapers of a vital and indigenous way of life. They are unparalleled in the vividness and authenticity they can bring to the study of local history and culture.”

– BARBARA KIRSHENBLATT-GIMBLETT, Folklorist

<http://www.storiesfrommainstreet.org>

<http://www.museumonmainstreet.org>

<http://www.folklife.si.edu>

<http://www.sites.si.edu>

## Share Your Ideas!

