

# Conference on Aging

## Collecting Family Stories

Shared by Barbara Truesdell

### Resources:

You can explore the Oral History Archive's collections at <https://cdrp.mediaschool.indiana.edu/oral-history/>. There's also a handy "Oral History Techniques" guide available to download on that same website.

If you're interested in learning more about oral history, the website "Oral History in the Digital Age" at <http://ohda.matrix.msu.edu/> is an excellent resource. I especially like the "Ask Doug" page, where you can learn more about digital audio recorders and microphones.

### The Four Questions You Must Be Able to Answer:

What do you want to learn?

What methods and materials will you use?

What are your plans for what you collect?

What will you do with sensitive information?

### Some Basic Interview Questions/Prompts:

Please tell me your full name, and when & where were you born?

Do you have favorite stories about your grandparents as you were growing up?

Parents? Siblings?

What is your earliest memory?

Please tell me about the first home you remember living in. What was your favorite holiday as a child? Favorite game? Favorite toy? Best friend?

Did you have any childhood illnesses or injuries you particularly remember?

Did you have a favorite food? Is it still your favorite?

What political party did your parents support? Did you follow that as an adult?

In what religion were you raised? Did you follow that as an adult?  
 Tell me about your schooling. Where did you attend? Did you have a favorite teacher? Favorite subject?  
 What was the first movie you saw in a theater?  
 Are there events you remember that changed your family life—either family events or world events?  
 Who taught you to drive? What was that like? When did you get your first driver’s license?  
 Please tell me about your first love. Tell me about meeting your spouse (if married).  
 Please tell me about your work life/career(s). Do you have favorite stories about your work?  
 Please tell me the names and birthdays of your children (if any). How would you describe your parenting style? What values do you stress with your children?  
 What are your favorite leisure activities as an adult?  
 Do you have treasured furniture or objects passed down from your family to you?  
 Did you ever live through a tornado/flood/blizzard/fire you particularly remember?  
 Are there national or world events that particularly affected your life or worldview?  
 What is the most important thing you’ve learned in your life?  
 What single piece of advice would you most want to pass on to your family?

Presenting Partner:



Supporting Partners:



Contributing Partners:

