

Dakota Memories Oral History Workshops

Sample Questions

Introductory Remarks/Questions

- Today is _____ (date).
- I am _____ (name of interviewer).
- Can you please state your full name (including maiden name)?
- When and where were you born?
- Tell me about your earliest childhood memory.

Environment

- What did you find beautiful and/or enjoyable about growing up on the plains?
- What did you find particularly ugly and/or unpleasant about growing up on the plains?
- What was your favorite season? Why?

Family

- Please tell me about your grandparents.
- What type of person was your grandmother?
- What type of person was your grandfather?
- Please tell me about your uncles and aunts.
- Who was your favorite aunt/uncle? Will you please tell me more about him/her?
- Please tell us about your father
- How did your father cope during hard times?
- Please tell us about your mother.
- Describe your relationship with your mother.
- Who influenced your life more -- your mother or your father? How so?
- Tell me about your brothers and sisters.
- Which brother/sister were you closest to? Please describe your relationship.
- Please tell us what it was like growing up an only child?

Play

- What type of activities did you partake in for fun?
- Where did you learn how to play these games/activities?
- Where was your favorite place to play? Why?
- What were your favorite songs as a child? Will you sing one of them?

Grade School

- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- How did you get to school? How long did it take you to get to school?
- What is your favorite memory about going to school?

Chores

- Who did what around the house: the cooking/cleaning/washing/etc.?
- Did you help care for your family's garden? How so?
- Which chores did you enjoy, and which chores did you dislike?

Daily Life

- How often would your family entertain guests in your home? Please tell us what it was like when your parents entertained guests.
- What types of food did your family usually eat?
- What type of clothes were common when you were growing up?
- How important was the radio in your family? What were some radio programs that your family listened to often?

Farm Life

- How did your family gain possession of the land – did they inherit it, buy it, etc.?
- What type of animals did your family have? What were they used for?
- What was your family's attitude toward town people?

Town Life

- Describe the town you grew up in.
- What were the town kids' feelings toward the farm kids?
- Describe some of the "characters" you remember in your town.

Religion

- How important was religion during your childhood?
- What were some of the religious activities that you participated in while you were growing up?
- What did your parents restrict because of religion?

Holidays & Celebrations

- Did your family celebrate Christmas Eve and Christmas? If so, please describe the location, people, food, gifts, and games.
- What was your favorite holiday? Please describe it.
- Did your family celebrate birthdays? If so, please describe the location, people, food, gifts, and games.

Youth Activities & Dating

- What types of pastime activities did you participate in during your teenage years?
- How are the customs of courtship different than they are today?
- What was the attitude of the older generation towards dance halls?

High School

- Please tell us about your experiences in high school.
- What was the school like – class size, teacher to student ration, supplies, rooms, etc.?
- What was the coursework like in high school?

Health Care & Funerals

- Please tell us about the health care that was available when you were growing up.
- Was anyone in your family seriously ill or injured during your childhood?
- What do you remember about midwives?

Historical Events

- Please describe the Dirty Thirties.
- Please tell us how the outbreak of World War II change your life.
- How did outbreak of the Korean War affect your family?

Childhood Memories Conclusion

- What was your most stressful childhood experience?
- What is your happiest childhood memory?
- What was the most adventurous thing you did during your childhood?

Higher Education

- Please tell me about your college experiences.
- What is your favorite college memory?
- What is your most difficult memory?

Weddings & Traditions

- How did you meet your spouse?
- What was your parents' attitude toward your spouse?
- What foods were served at weddings?
- Anything unusual about your courtship and/or wedding?