



## Guidelines

Recording an oral history is a partnership between the interviewer and the interviewee to gather personal experiences, insights, and information that help society as a whole understand a woman's life and her role in history. The following guidelines will aid the success of that partnership.

Send the biographical data form to the woman before the interview. She should complete it before you should read it before the interview. You do not need to ask all of the biographical questions in the interview because they tend to bog down the flow of the interview and her story. The biographical data will be included as a separate file that supplements the audio file and transcript.

### **Responsibilities of the Interviewer:**

- Conduct the interview in a setting that is comfortable for each of you.
- Check for background noises. If there is a consistent ongoing noise (e.g barking dog, radio, ticking clock, or ceiling fan) ask the woman to remove it or shut it off.
- Try to limit the possibility of interruptions.
- Get basic information about names and spellings before your start recording.
- As you ask questions, be flexible. If an interesting topic comes up that wasn't planned, or if the interviewee mentions a term or concept that you don't understand, ask questions to learn more about it.
- Don't dismiss a topic as something too obvious or "normal" to talk about. Ask the woman to describe it in more detail. For example, if she talks about summer fallow get more details. A non-agricultural reader of this history may not know what that means.
- If the interviewee doesn't directly respond to a question that is an important part of her history, rephrase the question.
- Sometimes sharing some of your own experience can prompt an interviewee to go deeper with her own response, but remember that this is *her* oral history and the interviewer should limit his/her personal comments. Also avoid interjecting "uh-huh" and other comments that might distract from the recording.
- Review the questions before the interview.
- Be prepared to adapt and or expand your questions. For example, if the woman states she was a nurse in World War II and worked in a Japanese Internment Camp, ask her more questions about that experience.
- Take the time you need to get full answers to the questions. Don't step in and answer for the woman. Silence is ok.
- Spell out names of people and places you mention.
- Bring up topics beyond the interviewer's questions if they are important to your perspective of your experience as a woman in agriculture.
- Remember the oral histories go into the public domain (e.g. DNRC website). If your interviewee starts to make negative remarks about politicians, family members, or issues (ObamaCare), stop the remarks.