



# GOOD QUESTIONS FOR FAMILY INTERVIEWS

When you interview a relative, it's best to have lots of questions prepared. You don't have to ask them all, but it's good to have a list to choose from. Many questions will come from what you know of that relative's life. I have also found, however, that some general questions can produce very interesting answers. Here are some good ones to print out and choose from:

## PERSONAL BACKGROUND

- Who were you named after? Why were you named after that person?
- What were your parents' full names? And their parents' full names?

## HOME AND COMMUNITY

- What do you remember about your childhood home?
- What did your home look like?
- In which room did most family activities take place?
- What was your neighborhood (village) like?
- What did you do for fun when you were growing up?

## FAMILY LIFE AND CHARACTERISTICS

- Tell me about your parents. What kind of people were they?
- What do you remember most about them?
- What was your relationship like with your father/mother/sister/brother?
- Were there a lot of people in the family who looked like each other?
- Was anyone in our family famous or notorious? What do you remember about that?
- How did the family earn money? Who worked?
- Did you feel rich? Poor? In the middle? Why did you feel that way?

## LIFE IN THE OLD COUNTRY/COMING TO AMERICA (for immigrants)

- What do you remember most about your life before you came to America?
- What kind of work did family members do in the old country?
- Who decided to move your family to the United States? What were the reasons for leaving and going to America?
- Did any of our family members move to any other country besides the U.S.?
- Where did you arrive? What do you remember about your first day in the U.S.?