

Interview Questions: Learning about the Past

Introductions:

Hi my name is _____. Thanks for helping me with this project. Can I ask you some questions about what it was like to grow up when you did?

Home and Family:

Where did you live when you were my age?

Did your family always live there?

How many people were in your family?

Which child were you in the birth order?

House:

What did your house look like?

How many bedrooms did you have?

How did you keep warm in the winter?

What was the bathroom like?

Food:

Did you get all your food at a grocery store?

Did you go shopping a lot?

If you had a garden how did you keep the food after you picked it?

I know you didn't have stoves and microwaves like we have today so how did you cook?

Who did the dishes and how did you do them?

Transportation:

How did people travel?

What were the roads like? How about after rain?

Did you ever ride on a train?

Were roads closed for long periods of time when there was a blizzard?

Minnesotans talk about the weather a lot. Do you have any weather stories, like blizzards, storms, tornadoes, etc.?

Farming:

Did anyone in your family farm?

What kind of equipment did they use?

Can you tell me anything about threshing time?

How did the farmers sell their crops?

Community:

How did people stay connected with one another without cell phones and computers fast cars?

Can you describe how people would get together?

Did kids go out on dates? If so what did kids do? (You don't have to tell everything.)

Music Radio Newspaper:

Where did you get news about the world and your community?

Is it true that you could hear other people talk on the phone even if yours didn't ring?

What kind of music did you listen to?

How did music get played in people's homes?

Were there ever any cool bands that played around where you lived? What kind of instruments did they play?

Depression and Dust Bowl:

There was a time when our whole country went through an economic depression. How did that affect your family?

Do you think it made you aware of being less wasteful?

What are some ways people tried to make the best of things then?

What did the dirty 30's have to do with the dust bowl?

How did people deal with all the dust and wind?

School:

Can you tell me what school was like?

What was your favorite subject in school?

Advice:

Over the years you have learned a lot about life and people. What advice do you have for the generation that is growing up now?

Or...Do you have any advice for us when we get jobs? (Like how to keep a job and get along with the boss.)