

INTERVIEW POINTERS

POINTERS BEFORE THE INTERVIEW TAKES PLACE:

Be sure those being interviewed understand what an oral history is. Explain that you want them to talk to you about what it was like to grow up or live or work in Northbrook, or, if they prefer, they can choose a particular event they would like to describe. Emphasize that their stories are significant whatever they are, that they will provide unique historical insight for generations to come. Let the interviewee know that the interview will last no longer than 20-30 minutes.

Inform them that they will receive a CD of the interview and that a copy of the CD will be permanently kept at the Northbrook Historical Society. Tell them it is hoped that there will also be a transcript of the CD that could be published on the Library's and other web sites.

Offer the person being interviewed an outline or list of suggested questions or the choice of preparing a statement/story in advance.

POINTERS JUST BEFORE THE INTERVIEW:

Give the person being interviewed an opportunity to list any sensitive areas or areas to avoid completely. Tell them if they would like the interview to stop for a few minutes during the interview to signal the interviewer by raising their hand.

POINTERS DURING THE INTERVIEW:

1. Be a good listener. This is the most important pointer for an excellent result. Remember to control your usual conversational responses --“Yes!,” “I see,” “Wow!” --that would detract from the recorded interview.
2. Look person in the eye.
3. Ask easy questions first, such as a general question like, How did you first come to live or work in Northbrook?
4. Keep questions short.
5. Ask open-ended questions (where and how) rather than questions that require a yes/no answer.
6. Use follow-up questions to elicit more detailed information. Useful follow-up questions include: a. When did that happen? b. How did that happen. c. Did that happen to you? d. What did you think about that? e. Can you give me an example of that? f. What happened next? g. Tell me more about that.