

# River Tales: Interview Procedures

## **Preliminaries**

1. Call the person you want to interview. Explain the project and set a time and place for the interview.
2. Practice using your recording equipment. Make sure you know how to operate it and where to place it for best sound. If using a recording app for your cell phone, be sure it stores recordings as MP3's (ie., the extension to the name of the recording is .mp3.) Voice Record Pro Super is a good app iPhone and Super Voice Recorder is good for Android phones.
3. Prepare a list of questions you would like to have answered.
4. Gather materials you will take on the interview: (1) recording and photography equipment or smart phone (2) 2 copies of the authorization form (release), one for FLFR and one to give to the interviewee (3) list of questions (4) note pad and pen
5. Consider doing the interview with another person. One does recording and photography, the other conducts the interview.
6. Try to do the interview in a quiet place with very little background noise (such as TV, air conditioner, refrigerator, etc)

## **Opening the Interview**

**1. Data and Intro:** When you start the recorder, state the date, and name of the person you are interviewing and the place. On the recording restate for the interviewee the purpose of the interview and the fact that this interview and any photos taken may be used only for educational purposes. Thank them for consenting to give the interview. You can use the following to help you explain the purpose of River Tales:

*River Tales is a project sponsored by Friends of the Locust Fork River and the Blount County Memorial Museum. We are gathering tales about life on the Locust Fork River and how it has shaped and continues to shape our heritage in Blount County.*

*We hope to better understand just how fundamental to life in Blount County the Locust Fork has been, and in just what ways - through the many stories our people tell. We hope to gather lots of many kinds of stories, and will carefully preserve them for others to enjoy and learn from in the future.*

## **2. During the interview:**

Start with background questions such as "When and where were you born?" "How long have you lived in Blount County?" "What do you or did you do for a living?" Then ask about how the Locust Fork River has been part of his or her life. You can ask specific questions that pertain to a certain location or use of the river or might try general questions such as "How has the river shaped you, your family, your community, the county?" "What have you learned by being with/in/on the river?" "Without the river how would you and/or your life be different?"

Ask them to spell names of people and places unless you are sure you know how to spell them. You can make a note to ask about spelling after the interview.

If they say "I don't want you to use or publish what I'm about to tell you," stop the recorder, let them tell it, then make sure you start the recorder after they finish that part.

Remind yourself not to talk too much during the interview. Remind yourself to encourage the interviewee by nodding and showing interest—not by agreeing verbally and adding on

to what he or she says. Just talk as much as you need to get the interviewee to elaborate and give details.

### **End of Interview:**

**Authorization form (release):** At the close of the interview, get them to sign the authorization form (release). Give them a copy of the form. You can use the following statement to explain what they are signing:

*Please sign this release form to give us permission to use the information you gave us in publications, videos, FLFR presentations, and websites for educational purposes. The form says you will not receive monetary payment for any of these uses. It also says that the stories you tell us are yours and you may publish them or use them in any way you wish.*

Give them a copy for the interviewee's own records which has your contact info on it.

### **Post-Interview paperwork**

(This is the tedious part but it is crucial to the usefulness of the work).

1. Transfer the recording to your computer via e-mail or USB cord and save it in a River Tales folder that you create. Change the name of the file from a long line of numbers to the name of the interviewee. Ex. Janie Smith.mp3
2. Transfer any photos you took and put them in your River Tales Folder. Change the name of the file from a long line of numbers to the name of the interviewee. If more than one photo add a number after the interviewee's name: Ex. Janie Smith2.jpg
3. Log the interview on the Field Notes and Interview Log Form handed out or one of your own design. It will consist of a time mark (from the recording) and a summary of what was said at that time. It can be a brief note about the subject of discussion at that point or it can be fully and carefully transcribed. Do the latter for stories of interest that you think FLFR will want to use in programs.
4. Log the photos. Make sure their titles match the names you gave them when you transferred them to your computer. Write notes about what the photo shows. Include date the photo was taken.

### **Transferring your Work to FLFR**

Upon completion of the interview and paperwork, bundle all documents pertaining to a single interview into one folder. It should consist of

- \_\_\_\_\_ The completed Authorization Form (It's not digital so will have to be turned over in person unless you scan it).
- \_\_\_\_\_ The recording of the interview
- \_\_\_\_\_ Photos
- \_\_\_\_\_ The Interview and Photo Logs

All of this (other than the paper copy of the Authorization Form) can be sent to FLFR via Drop Box. Nancy Jackson or Donna Matthews will advise you on this process.