

DOING YOUR OWN GENEALOGY INTERVIEWING

A STEP-BY-STEP GUIDE



Interviewing is a great resource to not only document and preserve existing family stories, but to uncover new ones as well! Follow the steps below to begin conducting your own interviews.

STEP 1: PLANNING

- **How** will you conduct your interview? How will you be recording it?
 - Zoom, in-person, phone-call, audio recording
- **Who** will you interview?
 - When it comes to doing your own genealogy, some good places to start are:
 - Immediate family
 - Extended family
 - Family-friends
 - As you begin to speak with people, they also might lead you towards more possible interviewees.
- **What** do you want to get out of the interview?
 - What do you want the interviewee to get out of the interview?
 - Refer to our reflection questions to help generate ideas!

STEP 2: SCHEDULING

- **Outreach**

- Get in contact with your interviewees and tell them about yourself and your project!
- Pre-Interview Survey
 - This is an optional step, but one that we decided to take. Before interviewing, it might be helpful to send out a brief survey to get some basic information about your interviewees. You can see our example [here](#).

- **Scheduling Software**

- If you're conducting multiple interviews, it might be useful to use scheduling software. For our project, we opted to use [Doodle](#), this software allows you to create scheduled times for meetings and anyone with the link can book a time.

The screenshot shows a Doodle scheduling interface. On the left, the meeting details are listed: the organizer is Neema Kimondo (NK), the title is "Loomis Family Tree Meetings", the duration is 1 hour, the location is "Zoom/In-person (depending o...", the platform is Zoom, and the time zone is (GMT-4:00) - America/New_York. A message reads: "Hello! Our names are Neema Kimondo and Reese San Diego...". Below this is a "More" link and a "Connect your calendar" button with icons for Google, Outlook, and iCal. The main area is titled "Choose a time to book" and shows a calendar for June 2022. The current date is Monday, June 27. A time slot of 2:00 PM is selected. The calendar grid shows days from Sunday to Saturday, with the 27th, 28th, 29th, and 30th highlighted in blue circles.

STEP 3: PREP

- **Brainstorm questions**
 - [25 Questions to ask in a Genealogical Research interview](#)
- **Create an interview guide**
 - An example interview guide that we created can be found [here](#).



STEP 4: CONDUCTING THE INTERVIEW

- **Try to think of the interview as less of an interview and more of a conversation!**
 - These interviews are all about connecting with the family (yours or otherwise). These “interviews” are just giving people the opportunity to tell their stories-- you’re there to listen!
- **Go off script!**
 - The most generative conversations happen when the interviewee is impassioned to speak--make space for the stories that come organically and don’t worry too much about answering each question you have planned.
- **Encourage the smallest details**
 - Remind your interviewee that there are no right or wrong answers. Anything that they have to offer is valuable, meaningful, and important. Small stories often hold the biggest meaning.

HAPPY INTERVIEWING!