

## PRE-INTERVIEW TASKS

(List compiled by Stacy Torian, former Museum of Durham History volunteer)

**Demo the recording equipment.** Make sure you can use it and that it works.

**Have a pre-interview conversation with the interviewee.** Get some background on the interviewee (i.e. bio, how long in Durham, what led the person here, what the person does for a living and/or for leisure). Confirm what topics will be discussed during the actual interview.

**Write an opener and practice it.** Example: Today is March 12, 2016. My name is Stacy Torian and I am here at the Durham History Hub with Beth Jumman. Today Beth will be sharing her memories of growing up in North Durham during the early 1970s. Beth, do I have your permission to record this interview? (Interviewee answers yes). Please state your name, the year you were born, and how long you've been in Durham.

**Create a list of questions and topics.** Make a short list of starter questions (e.g. Where do you live in Durham, what led you here, how did you get involved in such-and-such), a short list of more substantive questions (e.g. how did you make it when money was tight, why did you leave that job, describe how it felt that first day of being in business for yourself), and a list of topics you would like to cover. The topics list should be longer than the questions list. Practice saying some of your questions out loud, but don't over practice. Focus on topics and themes so as to avoid getting too wedded to a particular line of questioning. Jot down some words and phrases that might elicit vivid responses (e.g. describe what you were doing, who all was there, set the scene for me, what was going on around you, what did that place look like). Avoid questions that will only yield yes/no responses.

**Encourage the interviewee to bring in photos, if you think it would enhance your understanding of the subject matter.** Be sure to ask what format the photos will be in (i.e. print or digital) so that you can have a laptop on hand to view them, if need be.