

PARTICIPATION OPTION 2  
General Discussion  
SMALL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT (1-20)  
AND  
LIBERTY TREE INTERACTIVE

**PART A: SMALL ORAL HISTORY PROJECT**

Initial Discussion

**Project:**

1. Create a project team. This team will organize your project and make it happen!
2. Name your project. *Refer to the Part B below, Timeline for Liberty Trees Overview.*
3. Define the scope and size of the oral history portion of this participation level. Set a realistic goal. Answer the following questions:
  - How many interviews will you do?
  - Who will do the interviews?
  - Who will you interview?
  - What will you do with the interviews once you have them? Will you abstract (summary) or transcribe the interviews
  - Will you need to set up an archive at your site, or will you send your interviews to an archive at an existing archive facility? *Note: this may require you to donate your interviews to that facility.*

**Possible Costs:**

1. How much money is available to spend on the project? Do you need to raise the money for the project? Will you need to apply for funding through grants? If you don't apply for a grant, can you team with another institution?
2. If you plan to apply for a grant, ask the following questions:
  - Where do I find a grant?
  - How do I write a grant application?
  - Can I ask someone familiar with the grant writing process to write do the grant application? If so, who can I ask?

**Equipment:**

1. Will you need to purchase digital recorders to record the interviews on? If so, how many. This will depend on how many people you have doing interviews. *Refer to the Equipment Information Sheet included in this packet.* Are recorders something that you could borrow from another facility?
2. What software will you need to process the interviews? *Refer to the Software Recommendation Sheet in this packet.*

**Training:**

1. Will you need training on how to do oral history interviews? *If so, schedule training with the New Mexico Farm and Ranch Heritage Museum (NMFRHM). Training is available via live Zoom or a pre-recorded training session link.*
2. If you need training, contact Donna Wojcik at the NMFRHM to schedule training.

**Question sets:**

1. What information do you want to get from the people you interview?
2. What specific question do you want to ask the people you interview?

3. Will you create your own questions? *Refer to the sample question set in the project packet. Remember that the goal is to have all the questions uniform, meaning that you are asking the same questions to the everyone you interview. If you know that there is a special topic that you want to interview a person about, perhaps an experience in their life, feel free to add that specific question to the questions you ask that person since it relates specifically to a life experience they have had.*

#### **Making initial contacts:**

1. Make a list of the people you want to interview and discuss why you want to interview them. *You may want to list them by priority, with those that are higher up in years interviewed first. You want to get their stories while they are alive to tell them.*
2. Decide how you will contact the people. Will you mail a formal letter, announce it in the community, or visit them personally? *Refer to the Interview Contact Letter sample in this packet.*

#### **Doing the interviews:**

1. Included in this packet are copies of the required forms: genealogical form, tips on how to conduct a good interview, and a checklist to track individual interview progress from start to finish. *Note: you must have the release signed by the person you interview. Without it you cannot use it, people cannot access it, and all your hard work will have been wasted.*

#### **Processing the interviews:**

1. How will you process the interviews? In other words, what will you do with the recording? *Refer to the abstract and transcript samples in the project packet.*
2. Do you want to abstract the interview? *(An abstract is a summary, outline, or condensed version of what is in the interview. Your goal is to pick out the main points or highlights of the interview and reduce them down to 3-5 paragraphs).*
3. Do you want to transcribe the interview? *(A transcript is a written or typed, and printed version of what is on the audio recording).* This transcript can be edited to remove repeated words, false starts, background noises, coughs, uhs, and ums etc. or it can be a literal transcript with every sound, noise, and word that was recorded.
4. Do you want to do an abstract and a transcript? *Note: if your end goal is to donate it to an existing archive outside of your community or facility, you should at least do an abstract. The archive will need to have an idea of what is on the recording when they accession the item into their collection.*

#### **Abstracting and Transcribing:**

1. If you are going to only do abstracts, you will listen to the recording, jot down main points, and then type them up. On average, an abstract takes approximately 2 hours to type up a 1-hour audio recording.
2. If you are going to transcribe your audio interviews, here are some things to remember:
  - Transcription requires good hearing, good typing skills, and a lot of patience.
  - Allow plenty of time for transcribing. For every 1 hour of interview audio, it will take approximately 10-20 hours to transcribe.
  - Hiring a transcriber is expensive. As of July 2022, the average cost to hire a transcriber is \$90-\$180.00 per audio hour. Higher rates may be charged

depending on quality of sound, multiple speakers, fast speakers, languages other than English, and true verbatim transcripts.

- Hiring college or university students may be an option and cost less than a professional transcriber, or perhaps a student can do it as an intern or for extra credit for a course they are taking.
- If you are going to do both an abstract and a transcript, begin with the transcript. You can write the abstract off the transcript and will only need to listen to the recording once instead of twice, thus saving time.
- Begin transcripts as soon after the interview as possible. The transcripts will require the most time to complete. Other interviews can be done while the transcript from the previous interview is being conducted.
- You will need some type of software downloaded onto your computer to help you transcribe the audio. *Refer to the Software Recommendation Sheet in this packet.*

3. Allow at least one year to type up your interview transcripts

#### **Archiving:**

1. Archiving your interview recordings, abstracts and/or transcripts is a way to preserve the stories and history for future generations.
2. If you want to create your own archive, please refer to one of the many archives in New Mexico for information on how to start a simple archive for your collection of interview recordings and files.
3. If you will be donating your collection to a larger archive, please contact an archive to verify if your oral history interview collection will fit the scope of their collection subjects.

#### **Project Reveal Ideas:**

1. How will you reveal the project to the community and/or public?
2. Will you make the project part of the celebration on July 4, 2026?
3. Could you do a photo and short bio about the people you interviewed, and erect that for the public to see/read?
4. Could you make a photo collage of everyone you interviewed, along with information about the project (why you did it, what it was for etc.).
5. Invite some of the people you interviewed (as honored guests) to what ever you are planning for activities on July 4, 2026. Introduce them and give a short bio of their life.

### **PART B: LIBERTY TREE INTERACTIVE (INDOOR OR OUTDOOR)**

#### **Initial Discussion**

NOTE: This participation level is made up of an oral history project and a Liberty Tree project the two projects have been combined. *Refer to the Participation Option 2: Liberty Tree Discussion for additional discussion questions.*

1. Decide if you will do an indoor or an outdoor interactive Liberty Tree display. An indoor interactive display will require more planning and more time to collect public responses. It may also require some construction elements. An outdoor interactive

can be done six months or earlier (prior to the July 4, 2026 celebration day). *Refer to the Indoor and Outdoor Liberty Tree idea sheets in the packet.*

2. If you choose an Indoor Liberty Tree interactive, will it be a living tree located inside, or a wall graphic of some sort. Consider the following:
  - How large is the available space where you will put your Liberty Tree?
  - Will it be a single tree or multiple trees?
  - Will you include a description of what the interactive is all about? Will you include this where the actual Liberty Tree will be located or print it on an information sheet or brochure?
  - Will you want to add a quote from the Declaration of Independence such as, “We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator with certain unalienable Rights, that among these are Life, Liberty, and the pursuit of Happiness.”
  - What is your budget for this part of your project?
  - How many workers will be needed?
  - Is this something that you could involve the local school students to help with?
  - What supplies would you need? You can use several kinds of materials such as wood, paint, construction paper, fabric, or other textured materials.
  - If doing a wall graphic, is this something that can be projected onto a wall, traced, and then painted?
3. If you choose to do an outdoor interactive, where will it be located? Is it in an area that is sheltered from the element such as sun, wind, rain, or snow?
4. How many trees will you use? Will these be existing trees, or will you need to purchase additional tree(s)? If you purchase trees, choose a variety that grows in your area

Whether you choose an indoor or outdoor interactive is up to your project team.

Additional Liberty Tree Interactive items to consider.