Tips for a successful interview project

1) Email the copy of the edited questions to your person a couple of days ahead of time. This will allow them to consider their answers and give you concise responses. Remember that they will answer the autobiography questions (whichever set that pertains to them – i.e. have they emigrated to the U.S. or not?) and then will choose only 2 of the 5 focus areas to answer.

2) Do a practice run with your person (go ahead and record it) and focus on just listening to what they have to say without stress. Take the time to clarify things you didn’t understand or ask follow-up questions to probe deeper – if you don’t know how to form the questions properly, ask your interviewee, write it down, and then ask the follow-up question(s) in your “real” interview.

3) Try and offer up some of your own commentary and/or appropriate interjections to respond to what your person says – do NOT just read rapid-fire questions at them! Make it conversation-like. It should not be a one-sided conversation. Try to use appropriate interjections that indicate your understanding

EX) ¡Ay, que pena! / Wow, no lo sabía / ¡Qué interesante! / ¿Qué significa….(when you don’t know a word they said) / ¡Qué bien! / Yo entiendo. / ¡Claro que sí! / ¿En serio?

4) Don’t wait until the last minute to find someone! Schedule a time early-on to get this done! Expect to spend between 45 mins. to 1.5 hours with your person.

5) When asking a series of questions, don’t just rapid-fire all 3-4 questions at them at once. Let the person answer 1-2 at a time, then follow up with more detailed questions.

6) Ask your person to speak clearly and slowly. If they’re going too fast, just say, “más despacio, por favor.”

7) Choose a quiet, comfortable place that is as free from interruptions as possible.

8) Do not interview someone that is too elderly or that has not lived in or visited their birth country for a long time (1-2+ decades).