Family Migration Oral History Interview

Your Assignment: Interview an older family member (parent, aunt, grandparent, etc.) about your family’s story of migration.

Every family has a story of migration. Your family may have stories of migrating to America. Your family’s story may be about when you moved to Alaska or to Anchorage or about migrating back and forth from Anchorage to rural Alaska. Your family’s migration stories may be from several generations ago or maybe it was your generation.

Step 1: Choose who to interview Find the family member who knows the most about your family’s history, and schedule a time to interview them. If your family says they don’t really know, ask them who might know more. Then call that person. If you really can’t find anyone to interview, ask Ms. McBride! We can figure out how to think about migration in a way that fits your family.

Family Member’s Full Name ________________________ Relation (mom, uncle, etc) ______________________

Family Member’s Date of Birth ________________________ Date and time of interview ________________________

Step 2: Questions. Make a list of 5-7 interview questions you will ask. Think about what stories you know and what stories you don’t know. Need some ideas? See the Example Questions on the back.

1. Where is our family from before we lived here (in America/ in Alaska/ in Anchorage)? When did we migrate here?

2. ______________________________________________________________________________________

3. ______________________________________________________________________________________

4. ______________________________________________________________________________________

5. ______________________________________________________________________________________

6. ______________________________________________________________________________________

7. ______________________________________________________________________________________

8. ______________________________________________________________________________________
Step 3: Interview time! Sit down with (or call) your family member. Explain your assignment, let them know that you will be sharing these stories with our class. Ask them if they have any questions.

- Ask each of your questions. If you think they have more to say, add in a follow up question.
- Take detailed notes (write down quotes) – or – record your interview on a smart phone or other device.

1. ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

2. ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

3. ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________

4. ______________________________________________________________________________________
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5. ______________________________________________________________________________________
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6. ______________________________________________________________________________________
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7. ______________________________________________________________________________________
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8. ______________________________________________________________________________________
   ______________________________________________________________________________________
Step 4: Reflection. After you finish your interview, read back through your interview notes (or listen to the recording) and answer the questions below.

1. What stood out to you the most in your interview?

2. What is one thing you think might be unique or unusual about your family’s story?

3. What is one thing you think might be common among other people’s migration stories?

4. Other reflections to share?
EXAMPLE Questions (choose 6-9 of these and/or come up with your own)

1. What was life like in the place we used to live? What do you remember (or what stories do you remember)?
2. Why did our family leave that place? Did we want to leave? Were we forced to leave? What was going on there?
3. Did our family want to come to (America/ Alaska/ Anchorage)? Why?
4. What was the move like? How did we get from one place to another? How long did it take? Were there any obstacles on the way?
5. What was life like when our family arrived at the new place? Was it very different from where we were before? What were/are some of the challenges?
6. What did we gain from this migration (if anything)? What did we lose or leave behind (if anything)?
7. What is our family’s hope for future generations?
8. How do you want our family to remember our history in the future?
9. What traditions does our family maintain that show where we have come from?
10. Is there anything else you haven’t told me that you want to tell me now?

Follow Up Questions (add on to any of your questions if you think your interviewee has more to say)

- Tell me more about that
- What happened next?
- How did that make you feel?
- Can you give me an example?
- Can you describe what that felt like? (or looked like, or sounded like, etc)