



## Classroom Activity

### *Our Community: Then and Now*

#### LESSON OVERVIEW

**Subject:** U.S. History

**Grade Level:** Elementary

#### Learning Goals:

Students will:

- Explore the past through firsthand accounts
- Learn about oral histories
- Investigate their family history

**Essential Question:** How has my community changed over time?

#### Procedure:

##### Materials

- Oral Histories from the Upcountry History Museum (<https://soundcloud.com/upcountryoralhistory>)
- Paper and Drawing Materials
- Family Oral History Worksheet

##### Lesson

- Begin by reviewing what you and your students saw, heard, and learned at the Upcountry History Museum –Furman University. Ask students to recall how life was different in the past, specifically focusing on the experience of children living in mill communities.
- Ask students how we learn about the past. Make a list of their ideas (teachers, books, museums, etc.) Explain that another way we can learn about the past is through oral histories. Oral histories are verbal recordings of an individual's experience. We can listen to (or read transcriptions of) these firsthand accounts to learn what people saw, heard, felt, and experienced when they lived through events in the past.
- Play a clip from one of the oral histories on Sound Cloud. There are many oral histories available but for this lesson, focus on one from a mill community (the images on the left will help you identify mill themed clips). Discuss the oral history





with students. What are the challenges (hard to understand accents, words students don't recognize) as well as the advantages (first person account, details often not included in books) of using oral histories to learn about the past.

- Play the oral history clip again but this time have students draw a picture based on the oral history. They will need to listen closely and carefully.
- Have students share their drawings in small groups, discussing what details they took from the oral history.

### **Take Home Activity**

- Ask students if they can be oral historians. Tell them they can! And they are going to start at home. Oral histories are conducted by holding an interview. Each student is going to interview a family member for homework. They will use the Oral History Worksheet to help guide them.
- Suggestion: When all of the oral histories have been collected, host a classroom showcase. Either hang up the students work to create an oral history exhibition or roleplay by having students talk to each other while pretending to be the person they interviewed. They can ask each other questions and answer based on the information they learned during their interviews.





Name: \_\_\_\_\_

## Oral History Worksheet

Directions: Select a member of your household to interview about their childhood. Ask this person each of the following questions and record their answers below. Draw a picture of the person you interviewed on the back of this sheet.

What is your full name? \_\_\_\_\_

When and where were you born? \_\_\_\_\_

Where did you start school? \_\_\_\_\_

What was your favorite part of school and why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Did you have a best friend? If so, who was he/she? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

When you were little what was your favorite toy and why? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What was the hardest part of being a kid when you were little? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

What was the best part of being a kid when you were little? \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_





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