

QUESTIONS TO GET HISTORY FLOWING

Yellow Pine Backcountry Historical Museum

Whether you are interested in interviewing someone else or in stimulating your own memory about the Yellow Pine area backcountry, these questions can be used to get things going. “There” means whatever place you may have experience with or information about. Don't just stick to answers – let the reminiscences flow, on whatever topic comes to mind. When they dry up, use the next question as another jumping-off point. Use old photographs, mementos, letters, and songs to trigger memories.

How to get it down: Give yourself time – go at it in multiple sessions. You can write out answers. You can read through the questions and jot down notes about anecdotes that crop up, then write about them later. You can ask yourself the questions and then talk into a tape recorder in response – then write out what you've said at a later time (or ask someone else to do that for you). One of the best ways to get your own reminiscences down is to ask a friend or relative to read the questions to you and record what you say – then they can ask you further questions about the topics you speak of. ...And that's a great way to interview another person, too!

Consider follow-up questions to whatever crops up: Explain things people might not know about. Give examples, details about a setup or a process. How you felt about something. How something came about, why it happened. What you did next. How something that happened affected you and people you knew. Challenges you faced. Stories you heard but can't verify (and other people who might know more).

For anyone:

- ⤴ What part of the Yellow Pine backcountry area do you know about? (maybe more than one area – e.g., if you lived in Stibnite, you probably visited Yellow Pine, Cinnabar, etc.)
- ⤴ What years were these? How old were you?
- ⤴ If you came from another place, what effect did the contrast between there and the YP area have on you?
- ⤴ What was your first impression/memory of the place? Of the people?
- ⤴ Were people different there than elsewhere? How?
- ⤴ Who there made the biggest impression on you? (who in early history; who of the people you actually met)
- ⤴ If you're related to any of the pre-WW2 settlers of the area, how would you describe those folks? What do you suppose drew them there and caused them to want to live in the backcountry? What sort of environment did they come from? If they left, what caused them to decide to leave for elsewhere?
- ⤴ How do you feel about the backcountry surroundings?
- ⤴ What do you know about prospecting and early mining in the area?
- ⤴ What are the most interesting anecdotes you know of about critters in the area?
- ⤴ What are some interesting anecdotes about people of the area?
- ⤴ Describe details of primitive living, or living conditions in Stibnite, or in post-WW2 Yellow Pine, etc. (cooking, washing, plumbing, power, schooling, transport/roads, recreation, hobbies, chores, purchasing household needs, growing/procuring/storing food, entertainment, religion, mail, making money, childbirth, medical emergencies, pets, clothing, reading materials, etc.)

For those who grew up there:

- ⤴ What brought your family to the Yellow Pine area? Do you remember getting there? from where?
- ⤴ What did your household consist of? (including names) What was each person like?
- ⤴ What dwelling place did you live in, where? What do you know of its history? What features about it do you recall? (indoors and out)
- ⤴ What was it like to grow up there? What kind of toys, games, pets, chores, pocket money did you have? What do you remember of the store? How did you celebrate holidays/birthdays? Who were your friends? What do you recall of travel to and from your home? Did family or friends visit from elsewhere, and what did they do when they were with you? Could you swim?
- ⤴ What was school like? your teacher/s? Do you think you got a good education there?
- ⤴ Did you ever hear anything about “the outside world”, and how? (news, fads, fashions, politics, etc.)
- ⤴ What stories have you heard about the YP area? (of the old days; of the not so old days)
- ⤴ What are the most valuable things you learned growing up there?
- ⤴ Would you want your own kids to grow up there?
- ⤴ What has changed since you were first (and last) in the area?
- ⤴ What were/are your favorite places in the area? favorite things to do?
- ⤴ What did/do you like to do when you were/are alone there?
- ⤴ What were the most dangerous moments spent in the area? How did they affect you?
- ⤴ What were your favorite things about growing up there? least favorite

For those who live there now:

- ⤴ What first brought you/attracted you to the YP area?
- ⤴ What stories/myths had you heard about the YP area before you ever came there?
- ⤴ What dwelling place do you live in, where? What do you know of its history?
- ⤴ What stories have you heard about the YP area? (of the old days; of the not so old days)
- ⤴ How has spending time there formed you? changed you?
- ⤴ What recommendations would you make to people who're thinking of moving to the area to live?
- ⤴ What has changed since you were first in the area?
- ⤴ What are your favorite places in the area? favorite things to do?
- ⤴ What do you like to do when you're alone there?
- ⤴ What were the most dangerous moments spent in the area? How did they affect you?
- ⤴ What are your favorite things about the area? least favorite?

For those who used to live there:

- ⤴ What first brought you/attracted you to the YP area?
- ⤴ What makes you think about the YP area? with what attendant feelings?
- ⤴ What made you move away?
- ⤴ What stories have you heard about the YP area? (of the old days; of the not so old days)
- ⤴ How has spending time there formed you? changed you?

- ⤴ What recommendations would you make to people who're thinking of moving to the area to live?
- ⤴ What has changed since you were first (and last) in the area?
- ⤴ What are your favorite places in the area? favorite things to do?
- ⤴ What did you like to do when you were alone there?
- ⤴ What were the most dangerous moments spent in the area? How did they affect you?
- ⤴ What are your favorite things about the area? least favorite?

For those who have only visited the area:

- ⤴ What first brought you/attracted you to the YP area?
- ⤴ What makes you think about the YP area? with what attendant feelings?
- ⤴ What stories/myths had you heard about the YP area before you ever came there?
- ⤴ What sort of recommendations would you make to people who have never been to the area and want to visit there?
- ⤴ What has changed since you were first (and last) in the area?
- ⤴ What are your favorite places in the area? favorite things to do?
- ⤴ What are your favorite things about the area? least favorite?

For those who are only related to someone who has lived there:

- ⤴ What stories have you heard about the YP area? (of the old days; of the not so old days)
- ⤴ What sort of “persona” did your informants about the YP area give it when talking of it to you?
- ⤴ How have other people in your family looked on their YP area relatives' experiences?
- ⤴ What sort of heirlooms were handed down in your family with a YP area connection?

Once you've captured the responses to such questions
as these, we would love to hear from you at
YellowPineMuseum.org!