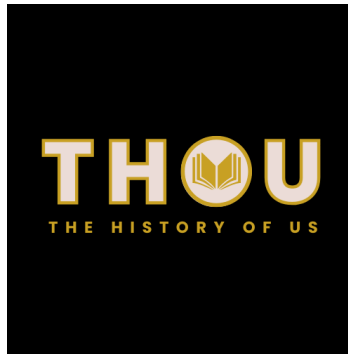




THOU Elder Interview Script – Preserving Our History

To capture and preserve the lived experiences, wisdom, and untold stories of African American elders, ensuring their legacy is permanently recorded in the digital history books of the internet. Each interview will provide a powerful first-person perspective on history that will be uploaded to YouTube, creating a lasting digital footprint.

Interview Preparation

Confirm Participation: Obtain permission from the elder and/or their family.

- ✓ **Set the Environment:** Ensure a quiet space with good lighting and minimal distractions.
 - ✓ **Use Quality Recording Equipment:** Clear audio and video quality will enhance preservation.
 - ✓ **Prepare the Elder:** Explain the process, reassure them that their voice matters, and encourage them to share as much as they feel comfortable.
 - ✓ **Obtain Signed Release Forms:** Secure consent for recording and publishing their interview.
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Guidelines for Conducting Interviews with Empathy

Before beginning, remember that these interviews are not just about gathering historical facts—they are about honoring lived experiences. **Approach each conversation with deep respect, patience, and active listening.**

- ✓ **Make the Elder Feel Valued** – Begin with warm conversation, express gratitude, and reassure them that their story matters.
 - ✓ **Create a Comfortable Atmosphere** – Allow them to speak at their own pace, and don't rush responses. If they need a moment to recall memories, give them space.
 - ✓ **Use Gentle Follow-Ups** – If an elder shares a difficult experience, acknowledge their feelings, express empathy, and let them decide how much they want to share.
 - ✓ **Respect Their Boundaries** – Some topics may bring up painful memories. If they hesitate or become emotional, **allow them to pause or shift the conversation.**
 - ✓ **End on a Positive Note** – Before closing, invite them to share **a message of wisdom or hope** for future generations.
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Section 1: Introduction



Interviewer's Opening Statement:

"Thank you for taking the time to share your story with us. Your experiences and wisdom are invaluable, and we want to make sure they live on for future generations. Today, we'll talk about your life, history, and the lessons you've learned along the way. Let's start from the beginning."



Basic Information:

1. What is your **full name**, and do you know the meaning or history behind it?
 2. When and where were you born?
 3. What was your **hometown or neighborhood** like growing up?
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Section 2: Early Life & Community

4. Can you describe your **childhood home and family dynamics**?
5. What were some of your **earliest memories** of your community?
6. What were the biggest **challenges and joys** of growing up during your time?
7. Who were the most **influential people in your life**, and what lessons did they teach you?
8. What were some traditions, holidays, or customs that were important to your family and community?

Section 3: Education & Career

9. What was school like for you growing up?
 10. Were there any **teachers or mentors** who had a major impact on your life?
 11. Did you experience any **challenges in education** due to segregation, discrimination, or social barriers?
 12. What career path did you choose, and what led you to that decision?
 13. Looking back, what is something you **wish younger generations knew about education and career choices today?**
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Section 4: Historical Moments & Life Lessons

Personal Experiences in History:

14. Do you remember any **major historical events** from your lifetime? What was it like living through them?
15. Were you or your family ever personally affected by **civil rights movements, segregation laws, or activism?**
16. What are some stories about **overcoming adversity** that you think should be passed down?
17. In your experience, how has the world **changed the most** in your lifetime—for better or worse?

Wisdom & Advice for Future Generations:

18. If you could tell today's youth **one thing about life, history, or resilience**, what would it be?
 19. What does "community" mean to you, and how can we rebuild the unity of the past?
 20. Is there a **story or lesson** that was passed down to you that you would like to pass down now?
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Section 5: Final Reflection & Digital Legacy

Interviewer's Closing Statement:

"Your story is now part of the history books of the internet, ensuring that future generations can learn from your experiences. Before we close, is there anything else you'd like to share, or a message you'd like to leave behind?"

Final Notes:

- Thank the elder for sharing their time and wisdom.

- Ask if they would like to **share any photos or documents** to add to their digital legacy.
 - If the elder seems emotional, express gratitude for their courage in sharing.
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How This Interview Will Be Preserved

- **Uploaded to THOU's YouTube channel** with a detailed description including their name, background, and key moments discussed.
 - **Shared on TikTok & other platforms** to reach younger audiences.
 - **Indexed by Google**, ensuring that their name and story live on forever in the digital archives.
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Final Thoughts

This script is designed to **capture history in its rawest form**—not just through facts, but through the emotions, struggles, and triumphs of those who lived it. **Every elder's story adds another page to the history books we refuse to let be erased.**