

How to Research and Write Personal Histories That Family Want to Read

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INDEX	Page
Introduction	7
Writing Family Histories: 5 Questions We All Ask About	8
1. What is a personal history?	8
2. Why should I write a personal history?	8
3. What can I write about?	9
4. How and where do I begin?	9
How-to Books and Articles	9
Fill-in-the-blanks book	9
Fill-in-the-blanks binder	10
Professional Personal Historians	10
Oral and/or Video Personal Histories	10
Online Systems	10
5. How long will it take?	11
Writing a Personal History: The Story of Mary Jones	11
Phase I: Setup and Organization	12
Define the Life Stages	12
Prepare a Filing System to Organize, Preserve	12
Research and Artifacts	12
Create a Personal History Profile Storage Container, "The Box"	12
(Chart) Needed Materials	12
Organizing Folders and Files	13
(Chart) "Mary's Box"--Initial Set-up Example	14
Phase II: Gathering, Interviewing, and Research	16
Gather, Catalog, Clues and Questions	16
Gathering Information and Materials	16
Gathering and Cataloging Example: Mary Jones'	
Sack of Odds and Ends	16
(Chart) Mary's Artifacts List—Sample	18
(Chart) Mary's Family, Friends, and Acquaintance List	19
What are Oral Interviews?	
Oral History Legal Issues	19
Sample Oral History Interview Agreement	22
Do Background Research	22
Involve Family and Friends	22
Who to Interview: Organize Family, Friends, and Acquaintances List	22
(Chart) Mary Jones Interview Plan with Notes	22
Do I Conduct a Telephone or a Personal Oral Interview?	24
Audio vs. Video Taping	24

Choosing Recording Equipment	24
Preparing for the Telephone Interview	27
Recording an Interview via Telephone	27
Call Recording Options	28
Setting up the Interview	28
Preparing for the Interview	28
Practice a couple interviews before it's for real	29
Correcting Recording Noise Problems	29
Preparing Interview Questions	31
Birth to 5 years	30
Childhood (5-12 years)	32
Teenage Years (13-19)	33
Courtship and Marriage	34
Married Life and Children	35
Middle Age and Towards Retirement	36
Reminiscing	37
Words of Wisdom—Summary	37
Personal Philosophy about Life in General	37
Before You Leave Home	39
Conducting the Interview	39
Choose a quiet place	39
Interview introduction	39
Equipment set up	39
Get close	40
Record a tape identification at the beginning of side one. Be reassuring.	39
The interview is not a conversation	41
One to one is best	40
Begin the interview with straightforward questions	40
Ask questions that requires a detailed answer	40
Getting the best answers	40
Use “reversals” to gain more in-depth information	40
You are not the one being interviewed	42
Good interviewers don't shine	42
Be sensitive and always respect confidences	42
Don't interrupt	41
How to manage a stray	42
Use your paper for notes	43
Keep your questions short and clear	43
Don't expect people to remember dates	43
When stories are different than what you've heard	43
When in doubt – don't	43
Try to avoid "off the record" information	43
Ask interviewees to spell out measurements	44
Do not challenge accounts you think might be inaccurate	44
When a negative is better than a positive approach	44
Keep the recorder running	43
The last two questions you should ask	43
Say thank you	44
Don't switch the recorder off and on	44
If you are using interview agreements	44

After the Interview	44
Personal Experience: My First ten Interviews—What I experienced	45
Taking Care of the Recorded Interview	45
Make a copy of the Interview	45
Digitize interview	45
Save Cassette Tapes	46
Transcribe your interviews	47
How complete should the transcript be?	47
How much time does it take to make a transcript?	47
What are some tips for creating and editing transcripts?	47
Personal History Documentation	48
Sorting Fact from Hearsay	48
(Chart) Expanding Fact from Hearsay Example	49
Adding Background Information to Your Personal History	49
(Chart) Example of Expanding Research	50
Phase III: Writing and Publishing	51
A Story Worth Writing Begins with an Outline	51
How to Use the Outline to Write the Story	51
Structure of a Personal History Outline	52
Creating the Personal History Outline	53
Writing the Personal History—Draft 1	54
Need More Help with the Outline or Story? Try the Mapping Technique	56
Need Help Writing the Paragraph?	56
Revising/Editing the First Draft	58
Three Types of Edits	58
Read Your Personal History Aloud and Make Notes	59
Look at Your Writing through a Reader's Eyes	59
Personal History Structure	60
Look at the way the main parts of the body are connected	60
Look at the way your paragraphs begin and end	60
Look for gaps	60
Reorganize and Rewrite Personal	60
Histories from the Top Down	61
Support Your Claims	61
Discover what claims in your essay need supporting evidence	61
Tell your readers how you know the claim is true	62
Explain your sources and cite them where necessary	62
Apply the tests of evidence to your supporting material	62
Use concrete, specific language	63
Use Examples	63
Dates and Places Don't Have to Be Dull	63
Words about Copyright	63
Adding Photos and Scanned Images to Your Personal History	64
Using, Maps, Documents, Letters, and Other	64
Artifacts in Your Personal History	66
Photo/Image Layout for Personal Histories	66
Preparation of Photos and Images	67
Artifacts, Photos, and Images by Life Style	67
(Charts) Personal History Organization and Memory Prompts	68
Other Elements to Include in Your Personal History	72

Example of How to Organize the Sections of Your History	73
Publishing Your History	74
Blog	75
Family Newsletter	75
Family History CD	75
Printing and Publishing	76
Sharing Your History	78
Questions, Questions, Questions	79
Questions for the LDS	79
Story themes and Ideas	83
150-plus Questions to Ask your Family	91
“No Stone Unturned” Questions	97
1. Ancestry	100
2. Birth/Adoption of Children	102
3. Death of the Person You Are Writing About	104
4. Demonstrations and Protests	105
5. Discrimination & Issues of Race	106
6. Divorce	107
7. Driving (w/sub topics)	108
• Driving	
• Driving Accident	
• Driving Ticket	
• Driving Under the Influence	
8. Education (w/sub topics)	112
• Preschool	
• Kindergarten	
• Elementary School	
• Jr. High School	
• Sr. High School	
• High School Reunion	
• Trade School	
• University/College	
• Advance Degree	
• Education Later in Life	
9. Entertainment and Pop Culture (w/Sub-topics)	121
• Youth	
• Adult	
• Sr. Adult	
10. Family Relations (w/sub topics)	122
• Single Child	
• Family	
• Step Brothers & Sisters	
• Half Brothers & Sisters	
• Adopted	
• Antidotes with Parent	
• Parents Divorced	
11. Family Traditions (w/Life Stages)	127
• Childhood	
• Teenager	

• Young Adult	
• Adult	
• Sr. Adult	
12. Friendships (w/Life Stages)	129
• Childhood=C	
• Teenager=T	
• Young Adult=YA	
• Adult=A	
• Sr. Adult=SA	
13. Foreign Events	131
14. Hometown	132
15. Immigration	133
16. Legal Matters (w/Life Stages)	134
• Youth	
• Adult	
17. Looking Over A Lifetime	135
18. Natural Disasters	136
19. Marriage (w/sub topics)	137
• Married	
• Not Married	
20. Medical History	140
21. Moving (w/Life Stages)	142
• Childhood	
• Teenager	
• Young Adult	
• Adult	
• Sr. Adult	
22. Occupation (w/Life Stages and Sub-topics)	143
• Child	
• Teenager	
• Adult	
• Stay at Home Parent	
• Working Parent	
• Own Business	
• Retired	
• Did Not Retire	
• Change Jobs as Adult	
23. Personal Finances (w/Life Stages)	150
• Child	
• Young Adult	
• Adult	
• Sr. Adult	
24. Pets	151
25. Physical Characteristics (w/Life Stages)	152
• Teenager	
• Adult	
• Senior Adult	
26. Personality and Values	153
27. Raising a Family	155

• Had Children	
• Did Not Have Children	
28. Recreation	157
29. Relationships and Dating	158
30. Religion	159
31. Settling the Great Plains (w/sub topics)	161
• Native American	
• Settler	
32. Subsequent Marriages	163
33. The Great Depression	165
34. The New Deal	167
35. U.S. Expansion and Exploration	168
36. WW I (w/sub topics)	169
• Joined Military	
• Stayed Home	
37. War Years (e.g., World War I, WW II, Korean War, Vietnam) (w/sub topics)	172
• Joined Military	
• Stayed Home	
Resources	174

How to Research and Write Personal Histories That Family Want to Read

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Presentation Description: Writing personal histories takes planning, time, and stitching the research into a cohesive blend of resources to tell the story that will inspire generations to come. Learn effective research methods for conducting oral interviews, searching resources such as personal artifacts, newspapers, photographs, and libraries to tell the story.

The following material is a compilation of personal experiences and resources.

Introduction

Every life is a story. As we live our lives, we become a very special, one-of-a-kind cherished set of memories. Stories about the family's past may include immigration or emigration, old neighborhoods, military service, marriages, births, deaths, famous or infamous family members, culture, religion, political endeavors, education, social, and economic status.

Without an autobiography, personal, or family history, these memories become nothing more than a footprint in the sand, a name on a headstone, and a precious opportunity lost. This presentation is about what we can "tell the children."

Family histories:

- Tell us the who, what and most importantly the why - the motives and attitudes of the participants - their actions and reactions to the world around them.
- Tell of other times and places such as the Great Depression, WWII, and Civil Rights.
- Record patterns of living: how the household was organized, how the family money was spent, who sat where at the dining table, and what types of meals were served.
- Combine traditional sources such as the family Bible, school diplomas, letters, photo albums, and scrapbooks which provide preliminary research for the interview.
- Include stories of feuds or other stressful incidents that may be painful to revisit, but vital for understanding family dynamics and ongoing or ended relationships. Family members experience the same events, yet react and remember quite differently from each other – depending on their age, attitude, placement in the family, and expectations overall.

This presentation is about the research and writing of personal histories. The difference between a mediocre and a great history is planning, researching, and carefully stitching the memories and artifacts into a cohesive blend of resources to tell the story that will inspire generations to come.

I seek to provide a compilation of ideas from the vast pool of literature that has been written on the topic as well as bits and pieces from my own experiences in a logical start to finish approach. Whether you are looking to write the quick personal sketch or how to conduct a thorough review of one's life, you will find many of the answers within the pages that follow.

Writing Family Histories: 5 Questions We All Ask About

1. What is a personal history?

Personal histories are a documented record of a person's life; the thoughts, feelings, events, people and places of an individual's past in detail. Histories are usually arranged chronologically and have a blend of one or more of the following elements.

- **Topical.** Focus on a particular historical event, such as World War II; a special family event, such as a wedding; or a place associated with the family over the years, such as a farm or neighborhood.
- **Autobiographical.** One person's life history.
- **Genealogical:** What the one tells about ancestors and lineage.
- **Skills or occupations.** Descriptions and demonstrations of how things were done in the past.
- **Social history.** Includes ethnic culture, religious practices, gender roles, everyday life, and etc.
- **Folklore.** Includes favorite stories, songs, poems; local legends; games and other pastimes.

2. Why should I write a personal history?

Good question. The most important reason is because "I want to" and then couple that with other reasons such as you want

1. To provide a gift to your posterity to
 - Ensure that you or the one you write about is not forgotten
 - Share personal stories
 - Share incidents of one's life that teach a lesson
 - Tell of your triumphs over adversity
 - Your recovery after a fall and your rejoicing when you finally achieve
 - Providing inspiration to others facing a challenge
2. To discover who you are, to search for your own identity and to understand the forces that have shaped you.
3. To have a story to go with those old photos.

Every life is important and unique. It's about the people known, the places visited, the decisions made, the opportunities lost or gained, the spiritual, physical, mental exuberance and folly. For no other reason, your life is important to you and that is reason enough.

Do not underestimate your value and how incredibly important your history will be to your loved ones. How many times have you said, “I wish that ...had written a personal history?” We have many questions about those who have gone before us. The history and/or histories you write will be among the most prized possessions you give to others.

3. What can I write about?

Not to worry. With a gentle nudge, the right question, a photo, stories, lessons learned, you will find the memories, and ideas will begin to flow. This presentation will provide many helpful tools to aid in your rediscovery of one’s life. In most cases you will organize your thoughts chronologically through life’s stages. One thought leads to the next. Tip: Once you start to write the personal history, keep a pocket notebook or recorder with you to capture the thought or memory that will come to you at any moment.

4. How and where do I begin?

How about today? You don’t have to be an accomplished or even a published writer. The end goal is to produce a story written in your words reflecting your thoughts and feelings. It’s one memory, one lesson, one line at a time. Find a quiet, comfortable place to sit, define a specific time each day, week or month when you won’t be disturbed. Think about your life, your memories, the one experience you most want to write about. Start there.

Like any project there is the beginning and the end. The focus of this presentation is to outline the phases and provide detailed resources for preparing a personal history. They include:

Phase I: Setup and Organization

Phase II: Gathering, Interviewing, and Research

Phase III: Writing and Publishing

There are many paths, options, and approaches to writing and organizing a personal history. This is an important step and decision. The following are several options that are available. I’m not an advocate of one way or another, it really comes down to what you want to accomplish.

1. **How-to Books and Articles.** How-to books are a great way to get started. Details include:
 - Organization and helpful hints that will guide you through the process of writing a personal history.
 - How to organize your project, how to conduct an interview, what questions to ask, how to write and publish your completed work. You can find books and articles online with a simple search.
2. **Fill-in-the-blanks book.** This is a common method used by individuals writing autobiographies. It is probably the easiest method since it provides you a list of questions to answer that cover the basic chronology of your life. The disadvantage to this approach is that
 - Rarely will your life fit neatly into a bound book.
 - Usually not much space to talk about your life.
 - Lots of irrelevant questions.
 - Limited to writing longhand.

3. **Fill-in-the-blanks binder.** A common approach that combines the ease of a bound fill-in-the-blanks method with the flexibility of a three ring binder into a complete system or kit. You are able to
 - Freely write the wide variety of life stories you have accumulated.
 - Include photo and zipper pockets for heirlooms and other memorabilia.
 - Choose to handwrite onto a prepared page or type onto a computer and print the completed document, or a combination of the two.

4. **Professional Personal Historians.** You can choose to work with a professional personal historian who can help to coordinate the process. Details include:
 - It is not always easy to find a professional personal historian in all areas, but one excellent source of information is the Association of Personal Historians. There are a wide variety of organizational styles depending on the professional.
 - Professional historians bring unique perspective to the process and can be helpful in organizing and packaging a final product, whether that means you end up with a written, oral or video or a combination of the three.
 - You will complete the process more quickly than almost any other method.
 - Remember you are hiring a professional, you are paying for someone else to help complete the task. Sticker shock should not be an issue.
 - You can have them complete the entire project or work with you on different aspects.
 - References are always expected. And make sure you interview several before you make your final choice.

5. **Oral and/or Video Personal Histories.** Oral and video systems are somewhat more complex than writing/typing, or hiring a professional. Details include:
 - You need to purchase, hire or use audio/video equipment.
 - Most often you need to involve another person to help you through the process.
 - You gain both audio and video so persons are able to hear and watch your personal history.
 - Expect cost or complexity of duplicating this type of personal history to limit the number of persons who will be able to view.
 - Consider transcribing and copying the content of the personal history for wider distribution to your family and friends.
 - Consider contracting the services of a professional personal historian to help coordinate the process, since do-it-yourself oral and video programs usually turn out to be easier said than done.

6. **Online Systems.** Online web templates are very popular at the moment. Details include:
 - Normally you pay an annual membership fee or a one-time fee to gain access to an online template containing fill-in-the-blanks type questions.
 - Membership provides you a password to log-in to the online template whenever you please and you will fill in your answers from your own PC.
 - You can type in as little or as much information as you want.
 - It's convenient to log in anytime and from wherever you are.
 - The real question is how safe is your data? Most online autobiography template providers cannot guarantee your data is safe, secure and kept completely private.

5. How long will it take?

It could take a few days, months, or years. It really depends upon what you want to accomplish. The sooner you start, the sooner you will finish. One of the most important lessons learned by those before you is to

- Start with a general chronicle of the life you are writing about.
- Setup achievable goals (e.g., one memory a day, two pages a week) so that you will keep moving forward and not lose interest. Many of the goals will come once you have had a chance to ponder, organize and scope the project. For example
 - If your goal is to write a 250 page autobiography, you could complete the project in 4 months by writing two pages a day or in two months by writing four pages a day.
 - If your goal is to interview five siblings of your Mom, do one interview per week for five weeks.
- Enjoy the experience. At times you will be like Sherlock Holmes searching for the answers to expand upon a topic, you will uncover answers to questions you have asked for years, and you will experience a full scope of human emotions.

Writing a Personal History: The Story of Mary Jones

In addition to providing direction and helpful hints, I will use some of my own experiences related to researching and writing the personal history of my Mother, “Mary Jones.” While the experience is related to researching and writing about a person who is deceased, the principles are the same if you are writing an autobiography or about one who is living.

During the funeral and memorial services of Mary Jones, I had many tell me about their experiences with Mary as a youth, as an adult, at work, about her service and thoughts about her children. I longed to know more about my Mother. Whenever I asked my Mom about her life, she simply replied, it was hard and nothing more needed to be said. Where to begin? Today, I can tell a fairly good picture about Mary’s live story and the four generations before her through word, picture, recordings, and artifacts. The result of my journey is reflected in what I will share with you now. Much of my focus on genealogy and family history have been inspired by some words I heard uttered by my Mother, “Tell the children.”

Phase I: Setup and Organization

Define the Life Stages

The hardest part of creating a personal history is deciding where to start. I suggest you begin by simply breaking down the person's life or experience into an outline consisting of key blocks of time. As you discover, uncover, and learn more about your subject, you will fill in the outline and organize your thoughts so that the writing of the history will be a choice and enriching experience for you.

I created the following outline for Mary Jones:

Mary Jones Personal History	
Life Stage	Years
Childhood (0-11)	0000-0000
Adolescence (11-18)	0000-0000
Early Adult (18-25)	0000-0000
Prime Adult (25-45)	0000-0000
Middle Adult (45-65)	0000-0000
Senior Adult (65+)	0000-0000

Prepare a Filing System to Organize, Preserve Research and Artifacts

Throughout your research you will collect and gather information that needs to be organized, documented, and preserved for later retrieval. You should be able to find any piece of information or artifact in your file in 30 seconds or less.

Create a Personal History Profile Storage Container, "The Box"

The purpose of the container is to provide one central location where you will file and protect your research and artifacts to write the history. I prepared a storage container using the materials I already had for my genealogy color-coded organization system (i.e., based on the system of Mary E. V. Hill. <http://www.123genealogy.com/organizer/instructions/index.htm>). The following is an overview of needed materials.

Needed materials	Description	Notes
Container/Box(s)	The boxes need to be strong, preferably plastic, with horizontal inner ridges or grooves for letter-size hanging files.	Start with one container and expand to section files when you can't slide the files at least ½" in the inside ridge.
Color hanging files or standard green hanging files	You will need letter-size hanging file folders (blue, green, red, yellow, orange, and purple). Use 1/5 cut hanging files that will permit a plastic tab to be inserted. The hanging files help to keep folders and artifacts from being damaged.	Set up the file with 5 hanging files for each color to start with and add as needed.

Manila, letter size, expanding file jackets	Expanding file jackets are similar to file folders, but are closed on the sides and bottom. Expanding files come in 1" to 3" sizes. This type of folder will help keep your research and artifacts together and safe.	I like reinforced, 2" expansion. 2" seems to be the most optimal size. If a file is just for notes, use a ½" or 1" expansion.
Pens and pencils	Use a pen with an ultra fine point, felt tip, and black permanent ink to write on labels or use inkjet/laser printer for labels.	I use mechanical pencils and Sharp fine point markers.
Color coded file identification	Choose 1 of 3 options to label files: 1. Color coded file labels (blue, green, red, orange, yellow and purple) with permanent adhesive on back. 2. White labels with color dots (blue, green, red, orange, yellow and purple) with permanent adhesive on the back. 3. White labels with highlighters or color pencils (light blue, light green, yellow, orange, and red)	Any option is fine. I like option 1 just because it is a cleaner look. I run labels through my laser printer. I like BIC highlighters and Avery extra large labels 5026.
Acid free envelops and paper as desired	Acid free paper envelops (to protect photos) as desired. Good quality photocopy paper is almost acid free.	When photos are lent to me by others, I will put them in acid free envelops to protect them or I will scan and return.
Carrying case	Buy a letter-size carrying case with a handle in case you need to transport a file for research.	

Organizing Folders and Files

Once materials have been assembled, you are ready to set up the file. Choose one color to represent each life stage. I organized "Mary's Box" as follows:

- Insert 5 hanging files of chosen color for each life stage.
- Create and label 1 folder for each life stage.
 - Use 2" expanding file jackets
 - Print and color code labels
 - Add folders as needed/desired

Note: As I interviewed and researched Mary's life, I added additional files.

"Mary's Box"--Initial Set-up				
Life Stage Category	Color Code	File	Timing	File Folder Label
Index and Miscellaneous	White	1A	Set-up	Jones, Mary Index
		1B	Added	Jones, Mary Miscellaneous: Spanish Fork
		1C	Added	Jones, Mary Miscellaneous: Las Vegas/Horseshoe Club
		1D	Added	Jones, Mary Miscellaneous: Acts of Kindness and Service
		1E	Added	Jones, Mary Miscellaneous: Favorite Memories
		1F	Added	Jones, Mary Miscellaneous: Oral Interviews and Transcripts of Friends
		1G	Added	Jones, Mary Miscellaneous: Oral Interviews and Transcripts of Family
		1H	Added	Jones, Mary Miscellaneous: Personal Artifacts
Childhood (0-11)	Red	2A	Set-up	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Childhood: Infancy, Grade School
		2B	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Childhood: Family
		2C	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Childhood: (Cared by extended family)
		2D	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Childhood: Family
Adolescence (11-18)	Blue	3A	Set-up	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Adolescence: Jr. High, High School
		3B	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Adolescence: Family
Early Adult (11-25)	Yellow	4A	Set-up	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Early Adult: Marriage
		4B	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Early Adult: Children
Prime Adult (25-45)	Green	5A	Set-up	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Prime Adult: Marriage
		5B	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Prime Adult: 2nd Marriage
		5C	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Prime Adult: Children
		5D	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Prime Adult: Cards and Letters
		5E	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Prime Adult: Sisters

Middle Adult (45-65)	Purple	6A	Set-up	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Middle Adult: 2nd Marriage
		6B	Set-up	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Middle Adult: 3rd Marriage
		6C	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Middle Adult: Cards and Letters
		6D	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Middle Adult: Sisters
		6E	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Middle Adult: Travel and Pleasure
		6F	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Middle Adult: Cancer
		6G	Added	Jones, Mary (0000-0000) Middle Adult: Best Friend
Senior Adult (65+)	Orange	7A	Set-up	Jones, Mary (00-00-00) Later Adult: Funeral
		7B	Added	Jones, Mary (0000) Later Adult: Probate/Will

Phase II: Gathering, Interviewing, and Research

Gather, Catalog, Clues and Questions

Once you have the file set up, gather together what you currently have associated with the person. Assume you know nothing. You are the detective seeking to understand what you have and what your next steps will be. You are simply gathering information. This is not a time to edit and decide what is or is not important. It is the first round because as you move beyond this stage and begin to interview others, you will uncover new artifacts, other individuals to interview, and places to visit. Start by

- Gathering artifacts you have in your possession that belonged to or references the individual. (e.g., photos, letters, receipts, journals, and etc)
- Develop a spreadsheet to catalog each artifact and identify persons of interest. The spreadsheets will become more and more important as you conduct your research in terms of where you've been, where you're going, and having the details necessary to providing necessary citing and documentation when writing your history.
- Review and catalog each artifact.
 - Look for any and all clues. Write them down. You can decide later whether to do further research.
 - Conduct a "Good Glance." Look at the artifacts close enough to know what you have but not so detailed that you are reading every line of a 4 page letter. For example:
 - Photos: Inscriptions, people, signs, and dates
 - Unpublished (i.e., cards, letters, and journals): To and from names, topics, and dates
 - Memorabilia (i.e., brochures, tickets): Places, events, dates, and notes.
 - Newspaper Clippings: Names, associations, and dates
 - Write down any questions or thoughts that come into your mind as you review the material. You can organize later.
- File the artifacts in the appropriate folder.
- Make a list of family, friends, and acquaintances whom you think knew the person (e.g., name, address, telephone, and relationship). The list will come from your personal knowledge and clues you gain from reviewing the artifacts.

Gathering Information and Materials

Start finding pertinent information and material to support the writing of the personal history by looking for and evaluating:

1. **Diaries:** A regularly kept diary is the most valuable source of personal history.
2. **Letters [and e-mails]:** Letters go two ways—to and from. Letters to you provide important information because the writer often responds to things you told them. As you interview family, friends, and acquaintances, ask to see if any correspondence has been kept that have been sent to them.
3. **Documents and artifacts:** Papers and objects that are important in our lives ought to be saved. Birth, marriage, missionary certificates, awards, and diplomas. Drawings, paintings, poems, and talks. More bulky but still important are artifacts like sewn items, carvings, jewelry and handicrafts. Official government records are valuable as well as church records.

4. **Photographs:** Beyond just faces, pictures ought to capture typical work and play situations. Labeling dates and names on our photographs is a must. The same goes with our digital files too.
5. **Tape [and video] recordings:** Recording voices of children year by year, dictated life stories not only preserve the story, but the voice of the story teller.
6. **Recollections of others:** Written or tape recorded, other people's memories of your subject can provide a wealth of insight. People to contact: your parents, children, brothers and sisters, teachers or students, employers, employees, neighbors, close personal friends, local church leaders, visiting teaching partners, doctors, and former classmates or roommates.
7. **Life sketches and autobiographies:** Among my ancestors there are a number of life sketches and autobiographies that range from a few pages to ten pages. I find them to be very shallow, missing feelings, and experiences. Full chapters could be written on their stages of life and topics such as parenting, work experiences, religious work, family roots and background, influential people, life philosophy, and humorous episodes.
8. **Your memories:** Use photos, documents, etc., to jar memories of those you will be interviewing. If you are researching your own history, look through the family photo album with a tape recorder in hand and record the thoughts and stories as you think about who is in that fuzzy picture and why they're important. What do you remember about the place and time? Jar your memory with other things: visit your old school, listen to old records or tapes, see movies that were filmed about the years you grew up, brainstorm with siblings or old friends.

Gathering and Cataloging Example: Mary Jones' Sack of Odds and Ends

After Mom's passing, I received some of her personal affects. I remember finding photos, articles, brochures from a trip, past checks and receipts, and so forth in bottoms of drawers, tops of closets, and every place imaginable. I put those items in a sack, brought them home and forgot about them.

When I was ready to start my research I rediscovered the sack I had put away and spread the contents out on the kitchen table. I made two spreadsheets to help me sort through the material. The spreadsheets helped me organize the early phases of my research. I was able to:

- Begin building a mental picture of activities/experiences by time periods.
- Identify persons who might have insights and artifacts relating to my Mother's life.
- Identify topics and questions I wanted to discuss with different individuals.
- Identify gaps for which I did not have information.
- Identify areas where I could conduct background research to help tell the story.

Once I completed the sack, I reviewed other artifacts gathered such as our family photo album, items in shoe boxes, etc. The following are examples of the spread sheet I set up. Note: When I develop the spreadsheets I like to pose questions as column headings.

Mary's Artifacts List--Sample

What do you have?	Describe what you have.	What clues or questions do you have? (Inscriptions, persons in picture, etc.)	Are any further actions needed?
Photo	Mom and Dad's wedding photo.	On back of picture, list of persons in picture (Name 1, Name 2, Name 3, Name 4, Name 5, Name 6, Name 7)	Find name and address of persons in photos. Setup time to interview.
Photo	Wanda and Mom standing next to life preserver with name of ship.	Mom is on cruise.	Ask Wanda about photo and trip.
Photo	Unknown boy with dog in early 1900's.	Who is this? Family?	Show and ask Mom's sisters if they know about the photo.
Birthday Card	Birthday card given to Mom by (name).	None	None
News article	Obituary of Mom's Dad (name)	Lists surviving family, residence of children and brothers and sisters.	Find name and address of Grandpa's brothers/sisters or surviving spouses. Set time to interview.
U.S. Passport	Mom's passport from 0000-0000	Where Mom traveled and dates.	Look for brochures, tickets, photos of trip. Ask friends who went with Mom and if they have photos.

Mary's Family, Friends, and Acquaintance List

Who is the person?	What is their relationship?	Address and telephone	Notes for follow-up
Name	Friend	Las Vegas	Ask (name) about photo and trip.
Name	Sister	Spanish Fork	Show old photos and see if they can help identify. Ask about other family artifacts.
Name	Sister	Las Vegas	Show old photos and see if they can help identify. Ask about other family artifacts.
Name	Sister	Springville	Show old photos and see if they can help identify. Ask about other family artifacts.

What are Oral Interviews?

The real record of history is found in the lives of ordinary people who lived it. Before you start conducting an interview, it's important to understand the advantages and disadvantages of the oral interview. Oral history is the collection and recording of personal memoirs as historical documentation. It emphasizes the significance of human experience.

Oral history interviews are NOT the best method

- For obtaining factual data, such as specific dates, places or times, because people rarely remember such detail accurately. You will need to use more traditional historical research methods — courthouse records, club minutes, newspaper accounts, and etc., to help fill in the gaps.

Oral history interviews ARE the best method

- To use to get an idea of what happened, what those times meant to people and how it felt to be a part of that time.
- Capture eyewitness accounts and reminiscences about events and experiences which occurred during the lifetime of the person being interviewed.
- Gather narratives passed down verbally from generation to generation beyond the lifetime of any one individual. It includes stories, songs, sayings, memorized speeches and traditional accounts of past events.

Oral histories provide an added dimension to historical research, an oral history project can:

- Foster appreciation for little-known or rapidly vanishing ways of life.
- Verify the historicity of events which cannot be determined by traditional methods of historical research.
- Correct stereotypical images of life, ways and people.
- Recover and preserve important aspects of a human experience that would otherwise go undocumented.

There are four basic types of oral history interviews:

Life histories. These are interviews with individuals about their backgrounds from childhood to adulthood.

- Most follow a chronology.

- Provides an opportunity to discuss a variety of subjects based on the interviewer's interests and the interviewee's remembered experiences and perspectives.
- Ideal for family research, as well as for certain aspects of community and social histories.

Topical histories. These studies are often used for focused studies of particular events, eras or organizations. Examples include: Depression Era in Utah County, Thistle mud slide in Spanish Fork Canyon in 1983. An oral study could include World War II in a specific locale, for example, might include interviews about military involvement, civil defense preparedness, the home front, rationing, bond and scrap metal drives, war industries and a myriad of related topics.

Thematic histories. These studies focus on broad patterns and concepts. These themes could include topics such as love, conflict, hope, religion, education, competition, success or art. Thematic oral histories are not common, but they present opportunities worth considering.

Histories to document specific artifacts or sites. Oral history may be used, for example, to explain items within a museum collection — how to churn butter, how to operate a Farmall F-12 tractor, how to use a Victrola, how to dress for travel in the 1940s. Another method is to have a subject orally document the history of an individual home, a particular street, an old schoolhouse, a vacant field or an overgrown cotton patch.

Oral History Legal Issues

Copyright issues may become a factor, even if you're just conducting an informal interview with immediate family. Legally, both the interviewer and interviewee share the copyright to an oral history interview (an exception occurs when an interviewer is conducting the interview as a work for hire). While copyright may never come into question, you should still protect yourself from potential copyright infringement by having both the interviewer and the interviewee sign release forms at the time of the taping.

Sample Oral History Interview Agreement

This interview Agreement is made and entered into this _____ day of _____, by and between _____, hereinafter called "Interviewee."

Interviewee agrees to participate in a tape-recorded interview, commencing on or about _____, with (name of interviewer) in association with his/her research on _____.

This Agreement relates to any and all materials originating from the interviews, namely the tape recordings of the interviews and any written materials, including but not limited to transcripts or other finding aids prepared from the tapes.

1. In consideration of the mutual covenants, conditions, and terms set forth below, the parties hereby agree as follows:
2. Interviewee irrevocably assigns to Interviewer all his or her copyright, title and interest in, to the Interviewer.
3. By virtue of this assignment, Interviewer will have the right to use the interview for research, educational, and other purposes, including print and electronic reproduction.
4. Interviewee acknowledges that he/she will receive no remuneration or compensation for either his/her participation in the interview or for the rights assigned hereunder.

Interviewee understands and agrees that Interviewer may donate any and all materials to the _____ upon completion of his/her research.

Interviewer agrees to honor any and all reasonable interviewee restrictions on the use of the Interview, if any, for the time specified below, as follows:

Interviewer and Interviewee have executed this Agreement on the date first written above.

<p>INTERVIEWEE</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(Signature)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(Typed Name or Printed Name)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(Address)</p> <p>Date _____</p>	<p>INTERVIEWER</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(Signature)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(Typed or Printed Name)</p> <p>_____</p> <p>(Address)</p> <p>Date _____</p>
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Do Background Research

It is natural to want to rush out and start the interview process. But no project should begin without some basic investigation of available resources. I found that by gathering and organizing material, I was able to gain a very good insight to which direction to go and what questions I needed to ask. As you prepare you may need to review other artifacts such as old newspapers, county histories, archival records, cemeteries and photographs.

Involve Family and Friends

Involving your family and friends in the process of creating your personal history will not only make the process easier (and the end result more interesting), it will help ensure that you have an audience of interested readers who are connected to the completed work. Start the process of involving family and friends by sending them a letter signed by the subject of the project if available. These letters are most effective if, at a minimum, they:

- Introduce the project and explain the desired time frame for completion.
- Ask the recipients to collect photos, stories, and memorabilia that might be appropriate for use in the book.
- Include an offer to pay for any copies and other costs they incur in assisting you.
- Ask family members to contribute their favorite stories concerning the subject.
- Describe the word processing software being used so that the material submitted (either by disk or in an e-mail attachment) is in the correct format.
- Include a self-addressed, padded envelope, and a dollar or two "advance reimbursement" for the out-of-pocket costs they will incur in assisting you.

Who to Interview: Organize Family, Friends, and Acquaintances List

I began by organizing Mary's list of family, friends, and acquaintances into three groups.

- Groups 1: Family and friends she often spoke with during the last 5 years of her life.
- Group 2: Family, friends, and acquaintances that appeared (in artifacts) at key moments in her life (e.g., bridesmaids at her wedding).
- Group 3: Family, friends, and acquaintances that were in everyday activities with her such as a friend's birthday, or a group picture in the cafeteria.

I began with Group one which consisted of ten people. I prepared for the interviews by

- Developing a few general broad-based questions that would help uncover information about each of the periods of my Mother's life.
- Calling each person to set up the interview.

The following is an example of a spreadsheet I used to help plan and map out what I wanted to discuss with each person.

Mary Jones Interview Plan with Notes

Resource		Notes																
Contact: (Name) Focus: Recorded Interview Residence: Spanish Fork, Utah (Address) Relationship: 1st of 7 children Parents: (Name) (1st Marriage) Spouse: (Name) Date/Time/Place: 26 Jun 2001, Telephone		1.5 hour interview. Tape has been digitized and family scrapbook to be scanned and personal Mom's friends were High School (Names...), and work partner at Geneva Steel (Name...), and																
Contact: (Maiden and Current Last Name) Focus: Recorded Interview Residence: Las Vegas, Nevada (Address) Relationship: Best Friend (Mid 70's to Death) Parents: N/A Spouse: N/A Date/Time/Place: 5 May 2001		1.25 hour interview. Tape has been digitized and clues of where Mom liked to go (Warm Springs)																
Contact: (Name) Focus: Recorded Interview Residence: Springville, Utah (Address) Relationship: 5th of 7 Children Parents: (Name) (2nd Marriage) Spouse: (Name) Date/Time/Place: 9 Jul 2000--Home Springville		.75 hour interview. Tape digitized and transcripts Mother's parents and background. Provided early childhood.																
Contact Name: (Name) Focus: Recorded Interview Residence: Salt Lake City, Utah (Address) Relationship: 1st Husband 0000-0000 Parents: (Name) Spouse: (Name) Date/Time/Place: 5 May 2005		3.5 hour interview. Tape digitized and transcripts discuss Dad's life and his parents. Provided and family. Provided clues of Mom's friends (Name...), Dads & residences homes (places)																
Contact: (Maiden and current Last Name) Focus: Recorded Interview Residence: Salt Lake City, Utah (Address) Relationship: Best friend in Youth Parents: N/A Spouse: (First & Last name) Date/Time/Place: 4 June 1999, Home-Salt Lake City		1.0 hour interview. Tape digitized and transcripts and photos to scan. Provided names of Mom's (Names...), Places where Mom worked and																
Places to Visit/Research, Artifacts to Acquire: (Based on interviews.) (Include place, reason for researching, specific photo.)	<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="2" style="text-align: left;">Research Focus Legend</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td style="width: 50%;">1. Childhood (0-11)</td> <td>10. (Name) Family</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2. Adolescence (11-18)</td> <td>11. (Name) Family</td> </tr> <tr> <td>3. Early Adulthood (18-25)</td> <td>12. (Name) Family</td> </tr> <tr> <td>4. Early Adulthood (18-25)</td> <td>13. (Name) Family</td> </tr> <tr> <td>5. Prime Adulthood (25-45)</td> <td>14. (Name) Family</td> </tr> <tr> <td>6. Middle Adult (45-65)</td> <td>15. Request Artifacts</td> </tr> <tr> <td>7. Later Adult (65+)</td> <td>16. Personal Life Qs?</td> </tr> </tbody> </table>	Research Focus Legend		1. Childhood (0-11)	10. (Name) Family	2. Adolescence (11-18)	11. (Name) Family	3. Early Adulthood (18-25)	12. (Name) Family	4. Early Adulthood (18-25)	13. (Name) Family	5. Prime Adulthood (25-45)	14. (Name) Family	6. Middle Adult (45-65)	15. Request Artifacts	7. Later Adult (65+)	16. Personal Life Qs?	Persons to Call/Interview: (Based on clues from Name, address, telephone, relationship)
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7. Later Adult (65+)	16. Personal Life Qs?																	

8. (Name)	17. Other
9. (Name)	18. Sent Thank You Letter

Do I Conduct a Telephone or a Personal Oral Interview?

When you have an option, choose the person's own home. It is by far the best as the interviewee will be much more relaxed. A one-to-one interview is best. Privacy encourages an atmosphere of trust and honesty. A third person present, even a close partner, can inhibit and influence free discussion.

Audio vs. Video Taping

Should you audiotape or videotape an interview? The choice may not be yours—sometimes a person who is comfortable sitting and talking into a tape recorder will cringe at the thought of being videotaped (if you're uncertain, ask the interviewee). Regardless of whether audio or video is more convenient for you; you'll get the most from an interviewee who is comfortable with the environment.

Choosing Recording Equipment

Because you can't write down everything that someone tells you it is a good idea to use an audio or video recorder. Your recordings will be unique historical "documents" which other people need to be able to hear and understand easily, so it's worth getting a good quality recording.

Audio recorders (Digital vs. Analog)

There are many different makes of portable audio recorders. Digital recordings are not necessarily better than analogue recordings. A good quality tape recording is better than a second-rate digital one. With both kinds of equipment you will need to be aware of the following important considerations.

Digital recording equipment. Minimum recording requirements for all digital media, including computers are:

- 44.1 kHz - minimum sampling rate
- 16 bit - minimum bit depth
- If you are unsure of the capacity of your digital recorder in this regard, check your equipment manual or ask a technician.

Not all digital recorders are suitable for interviewing.

- Avoid those that use proprietary software, for example 'personal recorders' that create files that can only be used with the manufacturer's software.
- You are dependent on such software for listening to the sound and copying it.
- Price range is \$150 to \$500.

Working digital files.

- Keep the raw material from a digital interview recording for archiving exactly as you have recorded it.
- In order for material to be preserved for the future, you need to use standard formats that computer systems recognize.
- Save original as .wav file or AIFF, (NOT) MP3.
 - WAV (or WAVE), short for Waveform audio format, is a Microsoft and IBM audio file format standard for storing audio on PCs.

- AIFF, short for Audio Interchange File Format (AIFF) is an audio file format standard used format used on Amiga and Macintosh computers.
- Both WAVs and AIFFs are compatible with Windows and Macintosh operating systems.
- WAV and AIFF file formats take up considerable more space than MP3.
- Edit a copy of the file.

Tape (analogue) recording. Key points to remember:

- If you buy equipment, the size of your budget will determine its quality. Ideally, a professional quality tape recorder with an external microphone and high-quality cassettes should be used.
- If you have a suitable tape recorder that has not been used for a while, take it to a technician for a maintenance check.
- Price range is from \$50 to \$150 for a mini-cassette/cassette recorder.
- Features to look for in a tape recorder:
 - Controls which allow you to play the tape (PLAY), wind back the tape (REWIND), wind the tape forward quickly (FAST FORWARD), RECORD, STOP and EJECT
 - A tape counter
 - A jack socket for an external microphone
 - A recording-level volume control which allows you to adjust the volume at which you record
 - A recording-level meter
 - The option of using either mains or battery power
 - A jack socket for headphones
 - A built-in speaker
- Cleaning--Isopropyl alcohol, which is 91 percent pure, applied with Q-Tips, will eliminate debris from all recorder parts which come in contact with the magnetic tape. Standard "rubbing alcohol," which may contain some undesirable lubricants, should not be used because the ingredients may damage the rubber pinch-roller if applied regularly.

Microphones

Whatever recorder you decide to use, it is important to use an external microphone. If you are buying microphones, go for the best quality you can afford. An external microphone is preferred over one built into the recorder. An inbuilt microphone will record all sounds indiscriminately, including the noise made by the recorder itself. It is difficult to position a tape recorder with an inbuilt microphone so that all voices are recorded clearly.

- If you are buying only one microphone, you will need one with a stand, not one that has to be held. Hand-held microphones record any sound of the mike itself moving. Free-standing, or table-top, microphones are generally quite unobtrusive and record both the interviewee and interviewer clearly if they are placed carefully. However, they often pick up an undesirable level of background noise.
- Microphones pick up a range of noise in four patterns. The different types are:
 - Uni-directional or cardioid, which picks up sound in a heart-shaped pattern in one direction. They generally record sound around them but not directly behind them. These are the best type to use.
 - Omi-directional, which pick up sound coming from all directions.
 - Bi-directional, which pick up sound from two opposite directions.
 - Hyper-directional, which pick up sound from one direction only and have a very narrow field.

- **Indoor.** For one-to-one interviews indoors, the best microphone is a small tie clip or lapel microphone.
 - Lapel microphones tend not to record as much background noise as free-standing ones because the body of the wearer helps to absorb unwanted noise.
 - Their only disadvantage is that most recorders do not have an input for more than one microphone, so while the interviewee is recorded clearly, the interviewer sounds very distant.
 - There are two solutions: buy a recorder with two microphone input jacks, or buy a 'split cord' which allows you to plug two microphones into one cord and then into the recorder.
 - If your recorder is stereo and has two microphone sockets you can get two microphones - one of your interviewee and one for yourself. They can be attached discreetly to your clothing and give excellent results.

Outdoor. For interviews done outdoors, a uni-directional (or cardioid) hand-held microphone is best as it will pick up less unwanted noise.

- The ideal for interviews is to use two lapel microphones that clip onto the clothing of the interviewer and the interviewee.
- Electric condenser or dynamic microphones are particularly good. Talk to someone at your local electronics shop (e.g., Radio Shack) or contact a manufacturer to find out what model would be best for your requirements. Tell them you will be recording voices, not music.

Video

Many interviews prefer audio over video recordings (I'm one of those) for its ease-of-use, portability, and intimacy; but video equipment has fallen in price and size in recent years and formats such as DV (digital video) are becoming affordable options. Video has its benefits (for example, apart from the interview itself, photographs can also be filmed for later use), but done badly it is perhaps best not done at all. And oral historians have mixed views about the impact of a video camera on the intimacy of the interview relationship.

Cassettes

- Use 60-minute cassettes for recording your interviews.
- They are physically thicker than the longer-playing ones, and so are less likely to stretch (and thus distort the sound) or break.
- Buy 'normal' tapes, not metal or high-bias ones. The latter are designed for recording music and are too expensive for this purpose.
- It is a good idea to use cassettes that are put together with tiny screws in each corner instead of glue, because if the tape jams or breaks, the case can be opened, the tape repaired and the case put back together again. Using tapes without screws, you have to destroy the case to get to the tape.
- Use only named brands of cassettes such as Sony and TDK.
- Do not use 90 minute tapes or larger. Longer tapes are too thin and tend to bleed, stretch or tear.

Other equipment

- Batteries are expensive so use an adaptor, allowing you to plug your tape recorder into the mains supply.

- If you have to use batteries for your recorder, you will need a battery tester to ensure they are fully charged.
 - If they are not, when you are recording the tape will wind through the machine slowly. When you play the tape back at normal speed the voices will be distorted.
 - Battery testers can be bought cheaply from electronic stores.
- For tape recorders you will need some cotton buds and isopropyl alcohol, readily and cheaply available from chemists, for cleaning the heads (i.e. the bit the tape runs over in order to record). This method is more efficient and cheaper than using commercial head-cleaning cassettes.
- A bag, such as a camera bag, is useful for carrying your equipment and protecting it from damage.

Preparing for the Telephone Interview

Because I lived a great distance from most of these contacts, I conducted 85% of the interviews via telephone. Each conversation was taped. Over the years that I have conducted interviews, I have found that taping the interview leaves me free to focus on the discussion. The only notes I took were thoughts that came during the discussion to ask further questions on or expand upon.

The equipment I used for the interview was:

- Micro-cassette player with fresh batteries.
- Three 60 fresh minute cassette tapes.
- Radio Shack recording device that connected the phone to the recorder.
- Backup micro-cassette player in case the player failed or the tape became entangled while recording.
- List of questions for interview.
- Note pad to record thoughts, requests, and promises.
- Envelope to enclose tape immediately following interview.

Prior to each interview, I made sure the tape recorder worked and lines were clear. If you haven't used a tape recorder for interviews before, it is imperative that you practice recording and asking questions so you know your equipment and questions. If you have any problems, you will have time to research and make corrections.

Recording an Interview via Telephone

The FCC protects the privacy of telephone conversations by requiring notification before a recording device is used to record interstate (between different states) or international wireline calls. Interstate or international wireline conversations may not be recorded unless the use of the recording device is:

- Preceded by verbal or written consent of all parties to the telephone conversation; or
- Preceded by verbal notification that is recorded at the beginning, and as part of the call, by the recording party; or
- Accompanied by an automatic tone warning device, sometimes called a "beep tone," that automatically produces a distinct signal that is repeated at regular intervals during the course of the telephone conversation when the recording device is in use.

Also, a recording device can only be used if it can be physically connected to and disconnected from the telephone line or if it can be switched on and off.

Call Recording Options

You have several options for recording personal history interviews via phone.

Telephone Recording Controls are used to connect your phone to a recording device of some kind. Radio Shack sells two options which are both under \$30. Results are mixed. But of all the options these are potentially the worst audio sound quality if improperly used. I have used these types of devices for years and been satisfied with the quality.

A second option is using Skype and iChat. This free internet telephony application is a great way to conduct remote interviews and conference calls. There are many options of how to use Skype to record telephone conversations. I have not personally used this option, but know many individuals who use this option to record podcasts.

Setting up the Interview

The best way to approach someone you want to interview is by personal contact, rather than by letter, and often the initial contact will be by telephone. This gives you an opportunity to introduce yourself, explain your project and outline the sort of topics you might cover in your conversation. The person you have approached may be uncertain: they might say they have nothing interesting to say. So you sometimes have to do a bit of persuading. The key is to talk in terms of "a chat about the past" or a "story" rather than an "interview" which can sound forbidding.

Once you have chosen the individuals with whom you would like to interview, telephone them to

- Introduce yourself.
- Explain why you are doing the project.
- Explain what you will be covering in the interview.
- Explain that you would like to tape the interview.
- Explain what will happen to the interview once you have finished it.
- Make an appointment to conduct the interview and record it, preferably within a week.
- If the interviewee is a member of your family or someone you know very well, you will still need to explain the project, get their agreement to record an interview, gather biographical information from them and explain the details above.
- Explain your desire to find photos, document etc. to help tell the story.
- Request their address/email address so you can write to them a few days to ponder the questions.
- Give the interviewee your name and phone number to contact in case they need to contact you.

Note: If the person does not wish to be interviewed, thank them for their time. Do not try to persuade them to change their mind. Every time I have coaxed someone to interview when they first said no, I have had a less than acceptable interview.

Preparing for the Interview

Preparing for any interview whether it is ten minutes or all day in length, requires careful planning, research, familiarity with your equipment and establishing a good rapport with the interviewee. Consider the following as part of your preparation:

Practice a couple interviews before it's for real. Before you start recording, make at least one practice interview, preferably with someone you know so that you are not afraid to make mistakes. This will give you practice in interview techniques and help you become confident in using your equipment.

- Practice setting up your equipment quickly and efficiently.
- Take the time to experiment with different recording levels on your machine and with changing the distance of the microphone from the interviewee, so that you know the optimum positions for recording.
- You are aiming to make recordings in which both the interviewee and the interviewer are clearly audible, with little unwanted background or tape noise.
- Tip: Take some time to watch/listen how professional interviewers conduct interviews on TV/Radio.

Correcting Recording Noise Problems. As I have interviewed, it has been disappointing when I play the recording to have sounds that muffle and distort the voices. Listed below are some common noise problems and suggestions for their solution.

- **Hiss.** This problem may be caused by recording at too low a level. Turn up your recording-level volume. Alternatively the heads may need cleaning or de-magnetizing. The latter can be done by a professional or it is possible to buy special de-magnetizing tapes. Read the instructions carefully.
- **Hum.** The microphone may be too close to the machine and be picking up the mechanical noise of the recorder. Move it away. The machine and microphone may be too near a power source or near another electrical appliance. Move them. The wiring on your machine or microphone may be faulty. Have them serviced if you think this is the problem.
- **Whistle.** This can be caused by a television, radio-telephone or radio-paging system. The only way to stop it is to turn off the apparatus causing the problem.
- **Distortion.** If the level is set too high when recording digitally this can cause clipping which is unwanted distortion of the audio. While distortion happens in analogue recording as well, the artifacts caused by digital distortion can be more severe.

A popping noise when people say 'p', a whistle when they 's' or a sizzling noise when they say 't' occurs because either they are speaking too close to the microphone or the recording volume is too high.

Change the angle of the microphone, move it further away or turn down the recording level.

If you are recording someone with a high-pitched voice, you may need to adjust the recording volume.

- **Echo.** This is the result of recording in a room that has few soft furnishings and no carpet, such as a kitchen. The sound bounces back off the hard surfaces because there is little to absorb it, and is re-recorded.

You may get around this problem by moving the microphone closer to the interviewee, placing it on a cushion to absorb the echo, drawing the curtains, or moving to another room. A lapel microphone is helpful because the interviewee's body will absorb a lot of echo.

The effect will prevent broadcast-quality recording but is acceptable for research purposes.

- **Microphone cable noise.** This is crackling or clicking noise on the tape caused by the movement of the microphone cable, and usually happens if you are holding the microphone.
- It is best to use a microphone stand while recording. Alternatively, place the microphone on some magazines or a cushion. If you have to hold the microphone while recording, wrap the cable around your hand.
- Cable noise sometimes occurs when you use a clip-on microphone and the interviewee fidgets with it. If this happens, explain politely that this will muffle their voice on the recording and ask them to stop. You may wish to give them something else to play with: a rubber band is an ideal toy for restless fingers, as it makes no noise.
- Recording outside. You should avoid interviewing outside, because it is almost impossible to control the recording of background noise.

If you cannot avoid recording outside you will need some sort of windshield for the microphone, either a foam-rubber one that you can buy, or something like a handkerchief or a few layers of muslin secured with a rubber band.

Try to place the recorder on the ground or a wall, as the motor speed may vary if it is hanging from your shoulder and the sound will be distorted when you replay the tape.

- **Other Sounds to avoid.**
 - Rustling paper
 - Clicking pens
 - Fluorescent lights and clocks (both of which tick)
 - Traffic noise
 - Cage-birds
 - Dogs barking
 - Open fires.
 - To avoid the first two, use a pencil and write your questions and notes on card rather than paper. There is little you can do about the others except to notice them at the preliminary meeting and suggest recording the interview in another room.
 - If you deliberately record some of the above effects when you are practicing with your equipment, you will hear how irritating they sound when the tape is played back. You will then realize why you need to make clearly audible recording for interviews, particularly if you are collecting for an archive.

- Check the equipment manual for care and cleaning instructions and follow them.

Preparing Interview Questions

Some of the best things you find out will be unexpected, and once you get started you are likely to be told some things you had not previously thought about. So it is essential to give the person you are recording plenty of space to tell you what they think matters. But you should not let the interview drift: it is your job to guide it. For this you need an overall plan. Group the topics you want to cover in a logical way. I really like the chronological structure such as with the life stages. Common topics that will be covered during an interview include:

Birth to 5 years

Parents: (brief history)

- Full names
- Birth dates
- Marriage date
- Death dates
- Immigration records, etc.

Your birth: (full name and nickname)

- When
- Where
- Surrounding conditions, circumstances
- Your health (defects, etc.)

Mother: Personality and characteristics

- Stature (short or tall, thin or heavy)
- Coloring (hair, eyes)
- Talents
- Temperament
- Family stories about her
- Her role in the home

Father: Personality and characteristics

- Stature (short or tall, thin or heavy)
- Coloring (hair, eyes)
- Talents
- Temperament
- Family stories about him
- His role in the home

Brothers and sisters:

- Names
- Birth dates
- Talents
- Role in the home

Child rearing philosophy of parents: family rules, etc.

Visitors in your home

Earliest memories of grandparents:

- Visits
- Holidays
- Customs or traditions
- Family heirlooms (dishes, etc.)
- Their home (organ, old clock, etc.)
- Language spoken (descent)

Earliest childhood memories

Childhood (5-12 years)

School days:

- Schools attended (names, what the building was like, transportation, etc.)
- Special teachers (humorous situations, good and bad)
- Buddies (influences)
- Special activities (achievements)

Relatives:

Animals and pets:

Games: (entertainment)

kick the can, Annie-Annie-I-over, hopscotch, marbles, etc.

Favorites: sayings, songs, rhymes, poems, ditties, etc.

Fads:

Favorite outfit or attire:

Hobbies:

Jobs or chores:

- Responsibilities at home (before and after school)
- Elsewhere

Family life:

- Fun times together (mode of travel)
- Family projects
- Financial conditions
- Moves and why?
- Homes, neighbors, neighborhood
- Community (size and populations, important buildings, landmarks)

Family difficulties:

- Sickness and grievances
- Diseases
- Accidents
- Operations
- Death of loved ones

Religion practiced in the home: (faith promoting stories)

Vacations or trips

Thrilling experiences:

- Scouting, etc.
- 4-H club

- FFA

Additional information:

- Unusual happenings
- Events that drastically changed your life
- Visitors in your home

Personality: dreams, goals

Teenage Years (13-19)

High School:

- Courses and achievements
- Activities, sports, clubs, offices
- Honors and awards
- Influential teachers
- Service groups
- Important decisions
- Special friends
- Daring escapades

Social life: dances, movies, music, dating, summer outings, church functions

Talents and hobbies:

- Special lessons in music, art, dance, etc.
- Guns, photography, animals

Jobs and work experiences:

- Including summer and part-time work
- First full-time job and social security number

Vacations and travel:

Religion:

- Attendance
- Classes taught
- Youth groups
- Influential teachers or leaders
- Religious experiences
- Advancement in Priesthood

Early Romances

Signs of the times: entertainments, sports, music, people in the news, fads and fashions

Inventions affecting your life:

Mission:

- Call and reaction
- Financing
- Companions
- Living arrangements
- Mission President
- Experiences
- Events of importance
- Converts
- Main problems and successes
- Visa and passport problems
- Language training
- Geographical description

- Economic situation
- Social and religious situation
- General attitude toward America, LDS people
- Means of transportation
- Areas of labor

Military:

- Why entered, what branch and why chosen
- Feeling at time of entry
- Basic training
- Special development training
- Promotions and honors
- Combat duty
- Friends and social life
- Conflict between personal standards and military life
- What liked and disliked about military life
- Benefits resulting from service

College or technical school:

- Motivation—why did you go?
- Schools attended and why selected
- How financed
- Who did you live with?
- Close friends
- Subjects studied major interests
- Social life, clubs, activities, dating, dances, etc.
- Degrees and honors
- If dropped out, why?
- Unusual learning experiences
- Influential teachers and friends
- Religious activities, experiences, conflicts
- Key decisions

Courtship and Marriage

Meeting your spouse:

- First impression
- Special dates
- Lovers spats and why
- Length of engagement
- How “special” question was popped
- Marriage plans

Marriage:

- Date
- Place
- By whom
- Parties
- Wedding and reception
- Wedding colors
- Maid of honor

- Best man
- Gifts
- Honeymoon
- Flowers
- Temple

Meeting of In-laws:

Mate's personality: what convinced you most in choice of spouse

Married life:

- Settling down
- Making ends meet
- Your own home
- Starting housekeeping
- Job hunting
- Bride's biscuits (or cooking blunders)
- Spats and adjustments

Vocation:

- What career(s) and how selected
- Changes, promotions, transfers, re-training, etc.
- Important positions held
- Main job problems, failures, successes
- Effect of job on family
- Effect of job on personal beliefs and standards
- Details on how your job was done
- Membership in unions, business or professional organizations
- Unusual job experiences

Married Life and Children

Children:

- Names
- Dates and places of birth
- Health of mother before and after
- How father fared
- Characteristics and differences
- Talents and hobbies
- Smart sayings and doings
- Growing up (daily routine in home)
- Humorous episodes
- Problems
- Joys and sorrows
- Accomplishments

Child rearing psychology:

- Role of yourself, spouse, children in the home

Family traditions:

- Christmas
- Birthdays
- Graduation
- Fourth of July
- Halloween

- Thanksgiving
- Deer hunting
- Funerals
- Memorial Day
- Mother's Day
- Father's Day
- Weddings

Family Vacations:

Grandchildren:

- How many
- Just as much joy
- Where they live
- How their parents raise them
- Things done together
- Trips to visit them and vice versa

Middle Age and Towards Retirement

General life pattern changing:

- More time on hand
- A little more money left over now
- Different and new interests
- New friends and associates
- New hobbies (genealogy, golf, reading, music, art, books)

Health: in general

- Operations
- Allergies
- Physical disabilities

Decided preferences such as certain foods, etc.

Civic and political activities:

- Positions held
- Services rendered
- Politics
- Political issues you were involved in
- Memorable campaigns
- Red Cross, etc.
- Church positions

New business ventures:

Memorable travels:

New and different homes:

Retirement:

- Impact (financial, family, leisure time, volunteer activities)

Reminiscing

Superstitions:

- What brings good or bad luck
- Nature signs that predict rain or snow, bad winters, dry summers, etc.

Home cures or old wives tales for hiccups, warts, toothaches, colds, earaches, birth control, physical deformities, arthritis

Old talents:

- Food making (baking, canning, meat drying, herbs, teas, etc.)
- Entertainment (clothes pin dolls, card tricks, willow whistles, whittling, rock skipping, pottery, quilting, etc.)

Anniversaries:

Other special events

Ancestors:

- Pertinent dates or events for historical purposes

For History's sake

- Forgotten or obliterated roads
- Buildings
- Gravesites
- Boundary lines
- Canals
- Trails

World events and how they affected you

- Wars, natural disasters, strikes

Changes seen during your lifetime:

- Society in general
- Technology
- Fashions
- Fads
- Morality
- Politics
- TV

Discoveries and development in your lifetime:

Words of Wisdom—Summary

Accomplishments:

- Family (children, goals achieved)
- Church activities
- Associates
- Routine and responsibilities
- Finances
- Fund raising projects
- Special activities
- Unusual happenings
- Failures and successes
- Spiritual experiences
- Rewarding experiences

Contributions to society:

Financial advice

Important persons you have known

Personal Philosophy About Life in General

- Your ideal: What personal trait do you admire most and why?
- Regrets: if you had your life to live over again, what would you do differently?
- One of the most important days of your life and why?
- Greatest joy and biggest sorrow
- Biggest lesson in life you found to be true
- Most important lesson, message or advice you've learned that you would like passed on for others to profit by
- *One* word on how to live successfully
- Your secret for living a long, healthy, happy, prosperous life
- Does the Lord answer prayers?
- How you would like to be remembered
- Funeral arrangements: music, speaker, ceremony, special instructions, headstone inscriptions, selection of burial clothes
- Special words of counsel:
 - To children
 - Grandchildren
 - Other kin

See the appendix for sets of questions you may want to choose from, modify, and/or add to. The following are a few guidelines when putting together your own questions.

As you develop your questions,

Use plain words and avoid suggesting the answers.

- Rather than: "I suppose you must have had a poor and unhappy childhood?"
- Ask: "Can you describe your childhood?"

You will need some questions that encourage precise answers:

- "Where did you move to next?"

But you also need others which are open, inviting descriptions, comments, opinions:

- "How did you feel about that?"
- "What sort of person was (you/he/she)?"
- "Can you describe the house you lived in?"
- "Why did you decide to change jobs?"

There are some points to cover in every interview:

- Date and place of birth
- What their parent's and their own main jobs were.

Before you actually begin the interview, explain to the person that

- Not all of the information provided will not be used in the family history
- That they will have an opportunity to see and approve it before it is published or distributed to other family members.
- You will ask questions to prompt for ideas but they do not have to answer all the questions.
- If a question seems too personal, let you know and you will go on to the next question.

- If they tell you something they later regret , just let you know and you will exclude it from being used.

Before You Leave Home

Well, it is the day before your interview. Take time to do a quick check of your material, equipment, and artifacts you will take with you to make sure you are all set. A simple check list might include:

- Make sure you have all the equipment you need.
- Make sure that everything is in good working order.
- Check that you know how to operate all your equipment properly.
- Make sure that you have enough cassettes, fresh batteries and /or an adaptor.
- Put together a folder that includes
 - Maps
 - Extra questions
 - Note pad
 - Pencils/Pens
 - Interview agreements (If you are using them)

Conducting the Interview

Following my initial call, I reviewed the questions I had developed and chose which would be most appropriate for each person as well as whether there were other questions I should be asking specifically about the family line the person belonged to (e.g., about my grandparents, times in which they lived, etc.). Each person was then sent a letter or email with:

- Your name, address, email, and telephone number.
- A brief overview of the project.
- Questions you are going to ask
- A request to share artifacts.
- **Choose a quiet place.**
 - Try to pick a room which is not on a busy road.
 - If you can, switch off radios and televisions, which can sometimes make it difficult to hear what someone is saying.
- **Interview introduction.** Before you actually begin the interview, explain to the person that
 - Not all of the information provided will be used in the family history
 - They will have an opportunity to see and approve it before it is published or distributed to other family members.
 - You will ask questions to prompt for ideas but they do not have to answer all the questions.
 - If a question seems too personal, let you know and you will go on to the next question.
 - If they tell you something they later regret , just let you know and you will exclude it from being used.
 - Remind interviewee of time-limit for the interview.
- **Equipment set up.** (It's really important to make sure your equipment is set up right.)
 - Plug the recorder into the wall or put in the batteries. Switch it on.

- Put a battery in the microphone if it needs one, and plug it into the microphone jack socket. Turn the microphone on.
- Always check the microphone battery before going to an interview, and carry spare batteries at all times.
- I always put in fresh batteries for an interview. All you need is one experience where the recorder became slow or stopped and you have to do the interview over to make you a believer.
- If using a tape recorder, make sure you have the tape in the right way, and remember that nothing will be recorded on the clear plastic lead-in at the beginning, so wait until it has wound through before you start talking. Alternatively, wind the lead-in tape through manually so that you can begin to record as soon as you press the RECORD button.
- Check that you have your recording volume adjusted to the correct level and your playback volume turned off. If you do not, you may experience a shrieking noise called feedback. Check to see that you have copies of your questions and other material that are pertinent for the interview.
- Place the microphone on the table or clip it to the interviewee.
- Press the RECORD button or the RECORD and PLAY button, depending on your machine.
- Remember that if your recorder has only a playback volume control, this does not control the recording level, which you can adjust only by moving the microphone or speaking more loudly or softly.
- If you have only one clip-on microphone, place that on your interviewee and speak up yourself. While it is more important to record their voice than yours, it is useless if the listener to the tape is unable to hear your questions, so make sure that your voice is also audible.
- For a uni-directional, table-top microphone, the optimum position is for the two of you to speak over it at an angle of 90 degrees.
- **Get close.**
 - Sit side-by-side.
 - Generally, the closer the microphone the better the results.
 - If possible use using a clip-on microphone and put it about nine inches from the person's mouth.
 - With a hand-held microphone place it as near as possible but not on the same surface as the recorder, nor on a hard surface which gives poor sound quality.
- **Record a tape identification at the beginning of side one.** Do this at the beginning of every cassette in case it is ever separated from its case. This is a typical tape identification:
 - Side A
 - Interview with (Say name and spell it.) (i.e., say – Susan Longhurst, spelled S-U-S-A-N, Longhurst (i.e., New word L-O-N-G-H-U-R-S-T)
 - 25 May 2007
 - Interviewed by Barry Ewell
 - Purpose of interview
- **Be reassuring.**
 - You are their guest, and if they are elderly, you may be the first person they have spoken to for several days.
 - They will be as nervous and apprehensive as you are, so it is essential to be cordial and patient.

- **The interview is not a conversation.**
 - The point of the interview is to get the narrator to tell her story.
 - Limit your own remarks to a few pleasantries to break the ice, then brief questions to guide her along.
 - It is not necessary to give her the details of your great-grandmother's trip in a covered wagon in order to get her to tell you about her grandfather's trip to California. Just say, "I understand your grandfather came around the Horn to California. What did he tell you about the trip?"
- **One to one is best.**
 - Interviews usually work out better if there is no one present but you and the interviewee.
 - Sometimes two or more interviewers can be successfully recorded, but usually each one of them would have been better alone.
- **Begin the interview with straightforward questions.** Start with questions that are not controversial; save the delicate questions, if there are any, until you have become better acquainted. A good place to begin is with the interviewee's youth and background.
 - Date of birth and birthplace
 - Names of parents
 - Name of spouse and children
 - Names of siblings
 - Their occupation, schooling
- **Ask questions that requires a detailed answer.** Early in the interview, ask a question that requires a very detailed answer. After having gained the trust of the person you are interviewing, have some question ready to signal to the person that you want details. Sometimes asking for a tour of a place such as a house or place of work helps to gain much information. Ask follow-up questions with each "step" through the structure.
- **Getting the best answers.**
 - Throughout the interview the questions that will give you the best information are those that start 'How...', 'Who...', 'Why...', 'What...', 'Where...', or 'When...'
 - Ask specific questions to get specific answers, and open-ended ones to get longer, more detailed answers.
 - Avoid questions where your interviewee only has to answer 'Yes' or 'No'. Say, for example, 'What were your living conditions like?' rather than 'Did you have cramped living conditions?'
 - Ask open-ended questions if you want description or comment: 'What can you remember of the trip over to England ?' or 'Can you tell me more about what swimming in the Great Salt Lake was like?'
 - Don't ask more than one question at a time.
 - Getting behind stereotype and generalization is one of the most challenging aspects of interviewing people. As well as a mere descriptive retelling of events, try to explore motives and feelings with questions like "Why?" and "How did you feel?"
- Ask for concrete illustrations and examples. If someone says, for example, "Aunt Marjorie was a great cook," then ask, "Could you give me an example of that?" Not only does this add depth and illustration to the material you are collecting, it also requires the interviewee to be specific and to qualify sweeping statements.
- **Use "reversals" to gain more in-depth information.** As you interview, you will have interviewee say "General sentences like: "I thought it was a great experience." or "Mom,

made a great stew.” or “That was a trying time.” Reversals are statements that say, “please tell me more” It keeps the flow of the conversation moving. For example:

General Comments

“I thought it was a great experience.”
“Mom, made a great stew.”
“That was a trying time.”

Example of reversal:

Great. What do you mean by great?
Which means?
In what way?

Sometimes you will need to use reversals multi-times for the same questions. For example:

Comment 1: I admired Mr. Jones.

Reversal 1: Tell me more.

Comment 2: It was a kind man.

Reversal 2: Meaning?

Comment 3: Whenever he went to town, he would always stop by our house and give my widowed mother extra food, coal, etc. Whatever he purchased for his family, he purchased a little extra for us.

- **You are not the one being interviewed.**
 - You are there to find out information.
 - Your aim is to get them to talk, not to talk to yourself.
 - Don't tell them the answer to a question: 'So you milked the cows by hand?' Allow them to explain how they did things.
 - Listen carefully and maintain good eye contact.
 - Don't contradict and don't get into heated debate.
 - Respond positively--body language like nodding and smiling is much better than "ers" and "ums" and "really."
 - Try not to say 'yes' or make encouraging noises, and don't wriggle about or shuffle your papers.
- **Good interviewers don't shine.**
 - Don't use the interview to show off your knowledge, vocabulary, charm, or other abilities.
 - Good interviewers do not shine; only their interviews do.
- **Be sensitive and always respect confidences.**
- **Don't interrupt.**
 - Be relaxed, unhurried and sympathetic.
 - Make sure that your interviewee has finished answering before you ask the next question.
 - Don't interrupt a good story because you have thought of a question, or because the interviewee is straying from the planned outline. If the information is pertinent, let her go on, but jot down your questions on your notepad so you will remember to ask it later.
 - Do not fill every pause they take. Most people will need to think about answers, especially if they are remembering things that happened long ago.
 - Don't worry if you seem to be straying from your prepared questions, as long as the information you are hearing is relevant.
 - Listen carefully and maintain good eye contact.
- **How to manage a stray.**
 - It's not uncommon for interviewee to stray on a subject that is not pertinent to the discussion. Common areas to stray include: family medical problems, what family children are doing.

- Try to pull the interviewee back as quickly as possible. Say for example: "Before we move on, I'd like to find out how the closing of the mine in 1935 affected your family's finances. Do you remember that?"
- It is often hard for a narrator to describe people. An easy way to begin is to ask her to describe the person's appearance. From there, the narrator is more likely to move into character description.
- **Use your paper for notes.**
 - Jot down names or other details that you need to clarify before leaving.
 - If the interviewee is telling a story and you think of another question, don't interrupt, jot it down and come back to it.
 - Don't sit and transcribe all his/her answers.
- **Keep your questions short and clear.**
 - If your interviewee does not understand, repeat the question and /or rephrase it.
- **Don't expect people to remember dates.** Most won't. For example ask, 'How old were you then?' or 'Was that before or after [Regensburg/Munich]?' If you have done your background research well enough, the answer should allow you to pinpoint the year.
- **When stories are different than what you've heard.**
 - What do you do when the interviewee is telling a story that is contrary to what you have heard?
 - Tactfully point out to interviewee that there is a different account of what (you/he/she) is describing, if there is.
 - Start out by saying, "I have heard . . ." or "I have read . . ." This is not to challenge her account, but rather an opportunity for her to bring up further evidence to refute the opposing view, or to explain how that view got established, or to temper what (you/he/she) has already said. If done skillfully, some of your best information can come from this juxtaposition of differing accounts.
- **When in doubt – don't.**
 - If you feel awkward or uncomfortable in asking for sensitive or potentially damaging information, then don't ask.
 - Your hesitation reminds you that there is a human being with feelings, sitting right across from you.
 - Details are important, but maintaining a respect for privacy is even more important.
 - Sometimes, interviewees simply need a moment to compose themselves for sensitive discussions or they may actually be evaluating your behavior as a decision-making factor in whether to talk openly about specific individuals or events.
- **Try to avoid "off the record" information.**
 - At times the interviewee will ask you to turn off the tape recorder while they tell a good story.
 - Ask the person to let you record the whole thing and promise that you will erase that portion if (you/he/she) asks you to after further consideration.
 - You may have to erase it later, or (you/he/she) may not tell you the story at all, but once you allow "off the record" stories, (you/he/she) may continue with more and more, and you will end up with almost no recorded interview at all.
 - "Off the record" information is only useful if you yourself are researching a subject and this is the only way you can get the information.
 - It has no value if your purpose is to collect information for later use by other researchers.

- **Ask interviewees to spell out measurements;** 'It was about this wide' will mean nothing to a listener. Try to get the interviewee to give a verbal estimate of size: 'Oh, about 3 feet,' or give it yourself: 'Is that about 3 feet?'
- **Do not challenge accounts you think might be inaccurate.**
 - Try to develop as much information as possible that can be used by later researchers in establishing what probably happened.
 - Your interviewee may be telling you quite accurately what (you/he/she) saw or heard. As Walter Lord explained when describing his interviews with survivors of the Titanic, "Every lady I interviewed had left the sinking ship in the last lifeboat. As I later found out from studying the placement of the lifeboats, no group of lifeboats was in view of another and each lady probably was in the last lifeboat (you/he/she) could see leaving the ship."
- **When a negative is better than a positive approach.** Ask about the negative aspects of a situation. For example, in asking about a person, do not begin with a glowing description. "I know that Uncle Larry was a very generous and wise person. Did you find him so?" Few interviewees will quarrel with a statement like that even though they may have found the uncle a disagreeable person. You will get a more lively answer if you start out in the negative. "Despite Uncle Larry's reputation for good works, I hear he was a very difficult man for his employees to get along with." If your interviewee admired Uncle Larry greatly, (you/he/she) will spring to his defense with an apt illustration of why your statement is wrong. If (you/he/she) did find him hard to get along with, your remark has given her a chance to illustrate some of the mayor's more unpleasant characteristics.
- **Keep the recorder running.** While you are recording, try not to turn off the recorder. You will obviously not want to keep it running if you are interrupted by something such as a telephone call, but leave it running during pauses while people think.
 - If your mike has such a switch, tape it to the "on" position--then forget it.
- **The last two questions you should ask.** In concluding the interview, ask
 - "Is there anything I haven't asked that you think I should know?"
 - "Do you have any questions for me?"
- **Say thank you.** At the end of an interview, it is helpful to say thank you while still recording so that listeners know the interview has finished.
- **Don't switch the recorder off and on.** It is much better to waste a little tape on irrelevant material than to call attention to the tape recorder by a constant on-off operation. For this reason, I do not recommend the stop- start switches available on some mikes.
- **If you are using interview agreements.** At the end of the interview, ask your interviewee to sign the agreement form.

After the Interview

- After the interview is finished don't rush away.
- Take time to thank them and talk about yourself.
- It is also the time to discuss the copyright and clearance form (if you're choosing to use one) and have them sign the form.
- You will often be shown some interesting old photographs or documents.
- Before you leave, provide an address or phone number where you can be contacted and make clear whether you will be returning for a follow up interview or not. This can avert any unnecessary worry.
- Remember that your visit will often have a major impact on someone who has perhaps never told anyone their memories before.

- When you arrive home,
 - Write a letter of thanks to the interviewee.
 - Enclose a copy of the agreement form for their records, if used.
 - Think critically about your interview. Give consideration to what was good about it and what could be improved next time.
- Prepare a listing of proper nouns, places, and jargon words or phrases for each interview tape. Examine an appropriate authoritative source to double-check spellings.

Personal Experience: My First Ten Interviews—What I experienced.

The first 10 interviews were more than people answering my questions. They were individuals who had respect, love, and insight into Mary Jones, mother, friend, and sister. I was discovering the Mary Jones I was never privileged to fully know. I loved my mother before. I loved her even more following the interviews. This group of ten persons held the keys to every stage of my Mother's life. They answered my questions honestly, directly, and without any reservation. As a result of the interviews, I learned about

- Cherished experiences they shared of Mary.
- Traits they admired about Mary.
- Innermost thoughts Mary shared with them about her life and family.
- Her dreams that were dashed by choices in marriage.
- Dark troublesome times of pain and sorrow that were triumphantly overcome.
- My heritage and roles of progenitors in preparing a path for me.
- Family rifts that were three generations deep
- Identification of photos and other artifacts.
- Individuals and families from my heritage whom I should learn more about.
- Skeletons long since buried.
- Precious artifacts (photos, cards, letters, scrapbooks, journals) that were given to me or allowed to scan).
- Artifacts that existed and where I could find them.

These ten interviews were the beginning of what has yielded over:

- 160 hours of oral interviews spanning 100 years.
- 7,500-plus individual artifacts representing 350 years of my heritage.
- On-going genealogy research on both Jones and Ewell lines.

Taking Care of the Recorded Interview

Digitize interview. If you are using a cassette/mini cassette recorder to record the interview, seriously consider digitizing the interview. Digitizing the interview will allow you to:

- Backup the interview on CD.
- Use audio editing software like Sony SoundForge to cut your favorite stories from the interviews and use them to augment family histories that are placed to the web/CD.
- Cut out problems like phones ringing, dogs barking, or small talk.
- Easily transcribe and edit the interview.
- Ability to easily share interviews. For example, I recently interviewed a person for a personal history. Shortly following the interview, the individual passed away. This was the only voice recording the family had of the person. It was easy to make an MP3 file of the recording and share it with the family.

Save Cassette Tapes. If you are using a cassette/mini cassette recorder,

- Make sure that you make a copy before using them.
- You will then have an original copy which should be put aside and used for no purpose other than making further copies.
- When you wind and rewind your tapes, especially if you are transcribing them, this can stretch the tape and result in distorted sound.
- Snap out the plastic tabs on the top of the cassette to prevent them being recorded over.
- Do not reuse the tape on other interviews.
- Place it in an envelope and store in a safe place. I write on the envelope the/tape date and who was interviewed. I also include the equipment used, date, place, time, and any additional notes.

Transcribe your interviews. A transcript or transcription is a word-for-word written copy of a taped interview. Transcribing an interview provides several important benefits,

- There is no misunderstanding what was said in an interview.
- The ability to see where clarification is needed for the interview.
- Creating a word processing document allows you to
 - Search on key words.
 - Cut and paste sections of interviews with other relevant information under topics you have designated for your life history.
- Saves the wear-and-tear of the audiotapes and videocassettes.
- Provides for easy searching on a key word in word processing.
- Provides an easily accessible reference substitute for the recordings, and they require no special play-back equipment or listening booth.

Tip: Highlight the high potential quotes in another color (e.g., blue, red) by using the highlighting icon on the formatting toolbar or by highlighting with a highlighter on the hard copy. It will save you time later on.

How complete should the transcript be? The purpose of the transcript is to provide you access to key details from the interview. On an average I will transcribe from 40 to 70 percent of the interview. I will focus on the question and the key answers to the questions. In my transcription, I will list the name of the interviewee, equipment, date, time, and place of interview, and key highlights of the interview.

- There are portions of the interview where “Abstracting” is a great choice. Abstracting is where you will briefly tell what is being discussed and then insert word for word transcription as needed. For example:
 - “Recalls where he was when WWII was declared. Describes atmosphere at home. (Now transcribe detailed explanation of feelings, etc.)
- Use words like 'explains,' 'describes,' 'mentions,' 'recounts,' and 'recalls' to give the researcher an idea of what is included and how much material there is on a particular topic. 'Mentions how traveled to school,' for example, means that there is less information than if you had written 'Describes how traveled to school.' It is important to choose your words carefully.

How much time does it take to make a transcript? Word processing software and other computer programs have made the task easier than before, but it can be a 1:3 to 1:12 ratio. In average about 1:3 or three hours for every 1 hour of transcribed interview.

What are some tips for creating and editing transcripts?

- Listen to about ten minutes of the interview before starting to transcribe.
- Transcribe what you hear. Do not put words or phrases into the interviewee's mouth, even if what they say is awkward or ungrammatical. Do not change word order.
- It will help if you have special transcribing equipment, such as good headphones and a transcribing machine that can be operated by foot pedals so you can stop and rewind the tape during playback, freeing the hands for transcribing. They also play at variable speeds to enable muffled or garbled portions to be intelligible. Using an ordinary recorder will take longer. If you have access to a personal computer, it will be easier to correct mistakes, although making a first draft by hand works quite well. Manufacturers of transcribers are Sony, Panasonic, and others.
- At the beginning of the transcript, identify who transcribed the tape, who edited the transcript, and the date(s) these tasks were done.
- Include a title page with the name of the interviewee, the interviewer and the date of the interview. State clearly whether restrictions have been placed on any parts of the interview.
- When formatting the text on the page, use one-inch margins on each side of the paper, number the pages, and double-space the text.
- Identify all speakers at the start of their comments, by typing their name in bolded capital letters, followed by a colon, e.g., SMITH:
- Create a verbatim transcript, but omit such expressions as "um" or "ah." Include expressions such as "umhum" or "huh-huh" when used to mean "yes" or "no" in response to specific questions.
- Put in full stops at what seem to be natural sentence breaks. Transcripts with little punctuation are very difficult to read, let alone understand.
- Do not revise the narrator's words to force them into standard written prose. Leave untouched any sentence fragments, run-on sentences, and incorrect grammar. Commas and dashes may be used to reflect pauses in the spoken words.
- Punctuate so that the transcript makes sense of the words as they were spoken. Be consistent in your punctuation; don't, for example, indicate a pause by a dash (-) in some transcripts and three dots (...) in others.
- If changes are made, clearly indicate when and how the transcript differs from the original tape recording.
- Use 'stage directions' with care. Some may be useful to help understand what is happening, for example '[reading from newspaper]' or '[interruption for telephone call]', but those which make interpretations - '[laughs sarcastically]' - should be used with caution.
- Include word contractions as they occur, for example, 'don't' and 'wouldn't.'
- Place a question mark before and after a word or phrase to indicate any uncertainty about it, e.g., (?destroyed?).
- Indicate the end of a side of the tape in capital letters, e.g., END OF SIDE ONE, TAPE ONE; BEGIN SIDE TWO, TAPE ONE.
- Identify garbled or inaudible portions of the tape. If one word is inaudible, indicate the gap with a ____ . When multiple words are inaudible, insert ____+ or estimate the elapsed time using the indicator ____ (____seconds).

- When you are satisfied that what is on the page accurately reflects what is on the tape, type a final copy and assemble the interview file.

Personal History Documentation

As the individual writing the personal history, it becomes your responsibility to collect documentation that is complete, accurate and reliable, especially if you intend to incorporate the information into a book or article for distribution.

If written and oral and information contradict each other, then you must go deeper to determine which is more accurate, unless contradiction is the key to the issue.

Sometimes, interviewees will recall events in the form of past conversations (“...so, she said to me...”). People reconstruct dialogue not only in oral histories, but, in letters and diaries and the results can be treacherous for those wanting to publish the “truth.” When you as the researcher/interviewer, hear such dialog, measure the conversation with what they already know (or don’t know) about the subject and even the interviewee. Most often you are going to need to do further research.

Sorting Fact from Hearsay

The interview is the cornerstone to writing the personal histories, yet it’s an opinion, a perception that is presented as fact. As a genealogist and family historian, I understand the importance of documentation and doing the extra research to confirm and effectively tell the story.

During my interviews about Mary Jones, I received multiple pieces of information that were suspect and yet were an important part of family history. For example: Four different interviews said that a relative had “stolen” land and water rights from other family members. When I pressed for more information there was non given. Do I take that at face value? If so, do I include it in the personal history or leave it out? I chose to do research to see if I could get to the root of the statements and let the facts support or dispel the perception. Only at that time are you in a position as the author of the history to decide how to treat what you have been told. Concerning the land and water rights, this is what I did:

Interviews	Information	Fact or Perception
Four persons interviewed stated:	A relative had stolen the family land and water rights from his father and family corporation.	Perception
Further Research	Information	Fact or Perception
Interviewed family decedents of the accused son.	The land was purchased by a relative after it was lost by the family organization during the depression.	Perception
Followed the purchase and sell of land in county records.	Family continued to purchase land from 1890's through the early 1920's.	Fact
	During the 1920's, the family organization was continually delinquent in paying taxes on land facing foreclosure annually. Taxes were eventually paid and cleared from further action.	Fact
	In 1928 taxes become delinquent and were not paid.	Fact
	A relative is shown purchasing land and paying taxes.	Fact
Searched newspaper for Legal Notices.	In 1929, The Notice of Sheriffs Sale was printed denoting the sale of all family origination land. All members of the family including accused son were listed as members of the organization.	Fact
Drawing Conclusions	Information	Fact or Perception
Conclusion.	The family lost land in the depression. The son legally purchased the land.	Fact
Barry's opinion.	The family organization worked and pooled their money and efforts to build and expand property holdings. Depression era conditions created a situation where the family lost the land like many other families around them. A son saw an opportunity to purchase the land for a few cents on the dollar for himself and did so. What had taken three generations to build was now his because of economic conditions. A rift in the family ensued lasting four generations.	Perception
How to treat in family history	The family organization had worked four generations to build land holdings and expand cattle business, but like so many, they lost it all during the depression.	Discussion in family history

Adding Background Information to Your Personal History

During the research and writing of your personal history you will have the opportunity to expand and provide background to help make the history richer and inviting. Depending on your needs consider

- Taking advantage of your public library and libraries in the areas where your ancestors lived. Many libraries have extensive genealogical departments with staff knowledgeable about the history and people of the region or state.
- Joining genealogical societies and historical associations in the locales you are researching. Even if you live too far away to participate in local meetings, you can access valuable records and dedicated genealogists who are familiar with the history of the region.

- Using online resources: archives of source documents; places to search for ancestral information; discussion forums to share with other researchers; and blogs that offer advice, links to other resources, and opportunities to make contacts.
- Being as eager to share information as you are to obtain it. You may have a piece of information that fills a gap for someone else, and the more gaps that are filled in genealogical records, the more information is available to everyone.
- Gathering enough information to work with before you start writing, but expect to continue to research throughout the writing process.

For example: As part of my Mother’s research I expanded where I could.

Information	Sample questions to answer?	Sample of resources.
(Name) dies of black widow bite.	What does obituary say? Find photo.	Found obituary in newspaper. Received photos from family historian.
	Were black widow bites common?	Found news story in Salt Lake Deseret News about black widow danger for the time period.
(Name) worked with CCC during depression, shipyards during WW II. After war worked at Ironton and Geneva Steel works as Pipe Fitter till his retirement.	What are the CCC? What work did they do in Utah, Spanish Fork? Find photos.	Found information online, Spanish Fork (Daughters of the Utah Pioneers), Utah county history, and Spanish Fork Press. Found photos at BYU archives.
	What are the shipyards in LA during WW II? What did they build? Find photos.	Found information pictures and history online.
	What is Ironton? Its history? Find Photos.	Found information in Utah County history, Springville and Provo Herald. Found photos at BYU archives.
	What is Geneva? It history? What is a pipe fitter at a steel mill?	Spoke with coworker of Grandfather to understand the role of pipe fitter and stories of Grandpa at work., Found information in Utah county history, and Utah State History, and Provo Herald.

Phase III: Writing and Publishing

A Story Worth Writing Begins with an Outline

“Why do you need an outline? I already know what I want to say.” These were the words I remember saying in 10th grade as I started my English creative writing course. As I discussed the first writing assignment with my teacher, I assured her that I could finish the story without writing the required outline. She allowed me the opportunity to prove her wrong. After several drafts, I reluctantly told the teacher I was not able complete the story in the assigned time. I found myself writing and rewriting. I found myself expanding and deleting sections of each paragraph. It was never completely what I wanted to say.

The teacher offered me a second chance. This time I was to use an outline and then write the story. With a new topic, I wrote the outline and finished the story. I don’t remember my grade, but I remember the lesson. A story worth writing begins with an outline.

The outline is a blueprint of your final personal history. It represents the content of your story organizing your memories, lessons learned, and supporting details. The outline is all about organization providing a visual and conceptual design of your writing.

How does the outline help? The outline helps you expose gaps in your story early and gives you time to fill them in so you don’t leave out any important events, stories, and ideas that you will be telling. You will

- Understand the full breath of the story you write.
- Have a clear focus on the detail you want to include with each topic.
- Always have a reference point from which to add, rearrange, and delete.

How to Use the Outline to Write the Story

Remember, the outline is a blueprint. Just as plans help a builder create a structure, your blueprint can form the foundation or frame for the first draft.

- **Writing experience by experience, topic by topic:** If your outline is on computer, you can just click your cursor at any part of the outline you have created, and fill in the details. This can help you overcome writer's block. That is, write the third section first, if you want. When you revise you can make sure all the pieces fit together.
- **Modifying the design.** Outlines are not set in stone. As you write, you may discover that you've left out essential information. If you keep a printed copy of your outline handy, you can figure out where in your outline the new information belongs and insert it (don’t be formal about it -- just pencil it in). This way you can see how the addition alters the rest of the story.
- **Starting Again.** Sometimes your original outline simply needs to be restructured. If you are careful this is not a problem and can be reworked from the original outline. Focus on your purpose and who you are writing to and create the new outline (even if it’s simply a sketch). Focus again on your purpose statement and audience, and create a new outline (even if it is just a brief sketch).
- **Using the Outline to Cross-check the Final Draft.** Finally, if you update your outline as you work, rather than abandon it after it has been created, you'll have a handy reference

to double check the organization of the final story. For a larger story, the outline can also provide your section headings and subheadings, and can become the table of contents.

Structure of a Personal History Outline

Like any good story there are three sections: introduction, body, and conclusion. The outline is designed to indicate levels of significance using major and minor headings. You will organize your information general to more specific. For example the general headings could be:

- Childhood (0-11)
- Adolescence (11-18)
- Early Adulthood (18-25)
- Prime Adulthood (25-45)
- Middle Adult Years (45-65)
- Senior Adulthood (65-present)

And subordinate headings/topics could include:

- Memories of your children
- Community Service
- Health Record
- Physical Characteristics
- Social Life
- Religion
- Memorable World Events
- Military Service
- Education
- Vocation
- Counsel to Posterity

As you create your subheadings, make sure there is a clear relationship between the subheadings and their supporting elements.

For example:

- A. Computers
 - 1. Mainframe
 - 2. Micro
 - a. Floppy Disk
 - b. Hard disk
- B. Computer Uses
 - 1. Institutional
 - 2. Personal

The most important rule for outlining is to be consistent! An outline can use topic or sentence structure.

- **Sentence Structure.** A sentence outline uses complete sentences for all entries and uses correct punctuation.

- **Advantages:** presents a more detailed overview of work including possible topic sentences and is easier and faster for writing the final paper.
- **Topic Outline.** A topic outline uses words or phrases for all entries and uses no punctuation after entries.
 - **Advantages:** Presents a brief overview of work and is generally easier and faster to write than a sentence outline.

There are two simple formats that seem to work well with creating the personal history. They are as follows:

Roman numeral

- I. Major Topic
 - A. Main Idea
 - B. Main Idea
 - 1. Detail of Support
 - 2.
 - a. Broken down further
 - b.
 - (1)
 - (2)
 - (a)
 - (b)

Decimal

- 1.0
 - 1.1
 - 1.2
 - 1.2.1
 - 1.2.2
 - 1.2.2.1
 - 1.2.2.2

Regardless of simplicity or complexity, an outline is a pre-writing tool to help you organize your thoughts & create a road-map for your paper.

Remember the outline is for you. It exists to help orient you within the personal history and to help ensure a full answer. You can deviate from it if you wish, and you may find as you write you have more and more ideas. Stop and take the time to brainstorm and write them down, then reassess. Adjust your plan!

Creating the Personal History Outline

If you took the time to create the Profile Storage Container or “The Box,” you will find the outline becomes very easy. Start with the first folder and move your way back through the folders whether you have them in chronological or topical order. If you didn’t take time to create “The Box,” start at the beginning and outline the major events of your life. Start with the childhood years and continue through to the present. For example, the following is a very rough outline of the Roman Numeral Format using the childhood years life stage for Mary Jones.

II. Childhood (0-11) (0000-0000)

A. Birth

1. Detail

B. Death of Mother

1. Detail

2. Detail

a. Detail of Detail

b. Detail of Detail

C. Life with Uncle Irv and Aunt Minn

1. Detail

2. Detail

a. Detail of Detail

b. Detail of Detail

D. Remarriage of Ora to Faye

1. Detail

a. Detail of Detail

b. Detail of Detail

2. Detail

a. Detail of Detail

b. Detail of Detail

Some individuals prefer to use the method of picking topics or life stages and simply answer a set of predetermined questions from each stage of life to help prompt them through.

Overview of Writing the Personal History

- Get a “second opinion” or several other opinions after you’ve written part of the story — from people you interviewed to be sure you understood their meaning, from people who don’t know anything about your family to see if they understand, from people who know something about writing.
- Decide whether you agree with the feedback you get from early readers; use the input you find helpful to improve the story as you continue writing.
- Make any needed revisions, then, in the final edit, read the manuscript aloud, preferably with someone else. You’ll be amazed at how many problems show up when you’re reading aloud that you missed when reading silently.
- Put the person’s name of the history on each page and number each page (page 1 of 10). This keeps each history in order and all pages are accounted for. For example, if the history is scanned, pages may get out of order and different histories mixed up.

Writing the Personal History—Draft 1

By now you should be ready to start writing. Whether you are writing about yourself or someone else be honest. I have read many histories over the years and those that have the most meaning include true stories about real life. The stories range from the sad and tragic to the exciting, funny, and simple day-to-day.

Gather your resource materials and find a place to write. Gather your outline and any other resource materials like “The Box” near you for easy reference. Now that you are ready, sit down

and start writing. When you open the doors of memory, you will probably be eager to capture everything just right. Sit in a comfortable place, relax, and take it one page at a time.

Write your first draft as fast as you can without concern for style and grammar. You may think this contrary to practical writing style, but write your first draft as rapidly as you can. The focus of the first draft is to put your thoughts to paper/keyboard as quickly as you can. Be yourself--you'll write faster and more naturally. Don't think that the first draft has to be perfect — you'll probably think it's awful — but if you worry about writing a great first draft, you'll never finish.

Don't spend too much time thinking about style and grammar, just write. Let yourself explore the ideas as you go. If you change your mind about how to say something, don't stop to cross it out, just write an improved version. You may have a lot of repetition in your first draft. That's fine. Only if you find you've veered far off-course should you revise what you've written before moving on. Otherwise, wait until the second draft to make changes in the first part of the book.

Where should you begin? Remember you have an outline, start wherever you like. Start in the beginning, middle, and end. Just start writing. Start writing with the intent of getting some ideas down.

Use your memory triggers. A memory trigger can be a question, photograph, letter, or a discussion with a friend with whom you shared an experience. Think about the times you have looked through the photo album and come across pictures and you are able to experience a time past as though it was just yesterday. All your memories are still in safe keeping, it's simply a matter of finding them, thus the use of memory triggers.

Write your first draft in the way that's best for you. If you are a good typist you will probably use the keyboard. If you write long-hand, you can write with pen and paper. If you have a computer and you are using a voice recognition software like Nuance Naturally Speaking, then use this software to write your first draft. It is important to write your first draft as quickly and easily as possible, focusing on the words but not the way you produce the words. Assume you will be revising anyway.

Use descriptive words. Think about who, what, where, when, how and why of each memory. Use your senses to help describe your stories.

Make note of any and all ideas. One experience you will have is as you are writing about one topic, you will receive inspiration and ideas. Your thoughts will range from a new topic to add to the outline or a piece of information to add to a topic that you just finished. You may get an idea to call Aunt Peggy to ask a specific question or to go look for a photograph in the scrapbook. Whatever the thought, write it down or capture it electronically. When I am writing, I will keep a micro cassette recorder with me and/or pocket notebook and pen so as not to miss those moments.

Put brackets around those sections that are tough to write. When you are writing your first draft, it's not uncommon to either not have all the information you need or are simply stumped. You may be writing about a specific memory and think to put in a text from an obituary. Simply use brackets to denote that more information is needed and keep moving. For example: [Need text from Mary Jones Obituary] or [Need to confirm statement made by Uncle George on Spanish Fork city project during depression.] By using brackets you will save a lot of time and keep your train of thought moving. When you move on to the revision phase of the writing, you can go back and work through the [bracket] marks one at a time.

Need help writing? If you are not confident of your writing ability, join a local or online writers group to learn about the craft of writing or take a writing class at a community college.

Need More Help with the Outline or Story? Try the Mapping Technique

Whenever I need a little or a lot of extra help developing ideas that I am going to write about, I use what is called “Mapping.” Mapping refers to laying ideas visually to find connections and to branch out and make new ideas and connections. Eventually mapping will lead you to a list of ideas and a sequence to use them in.

How to use mapping to generate ideas.

1. Write the topic in the middle of the page.
2. Draw branches out from that topic and write keywords or phrases that you associate with that topic.
3. Draw more branches out from each of those keywords (sub-topics) to develop each of those ideas.
4. Look at which of the sub-topics go together and if any of the extended ideas can link to each other.
5. Draw branches and lines between the ideas that could work together.
6. Decide if you would like to regroup your ideas.

If yes,

7. Write the topic in the middle of the page again and go through the first steps again with the new groupings.
8. Do this as many times as you like until you have clear responses and ideas that you can now form into the parts of your story or experience. With the bubbles and branches you can see how they interrelate and work together as a whole.

How to use mapping to sort out stories/experiences/ paragraphs.

1. Write your topic in the middle of a large piece of paper.
2. Take your brainstorming list and with a pen circle the central ideas.
3. Which of those ideas link to other ideas on your page? What would be the main idea? What would be subsidiary or linked ideas?
4. Transfer the main ideas to the mapping page. Make each idea its own bubble, then attach the linked ideas as branches.
5. Use lines and branches to show how any of the large or linked ideas interrelate. Don't be afraid to add bubbles or branches that weren't in your original preparation writing. Keep those ideas growing!
6. Once you can see how all of the ideas work together, you are ready to make a list or plan of which ideas to use in your writings.

Need Help Writing the Paragraph?

Sometimes the paragraph you are writing, just doesn't want to seem to flow. The following is a simple look at the construction of a paragraph that may help grow the ideas.

A paragraph begins with the topic sentence/statement, followed by supporting details and ends with a closure.

- **Topic sentence/statement.** State in one sentence somewhere in your paragraph what the intent of your paragraph is. What is its point? How does it help your answer? It is easiest for the topic statement to go at the beginning of the paragraph and then it will direct the rest of the paragraph; however, it doesn't need to go first. You could come to it at the end or have it in the middle.
- **Supporting details.** There are several kinds: explanation, examples, stories, facts, and a combination of these things. Use your supporting details to develop your topic statement and show your idea. It is good to use more than one kind in a paragraph and not to use exactly the same ones in each paragraph. Mix it up a little!
- **Closure.** You need to wrap the paragraph up. You could come to a conclusion about that point. Another way is to make a link to the next point. If your ideas are in a logical order it will be fairly easy to find a connection.

Planning (making an outline)

So, you have all of these ideas, you kind of know what to say, you know the basic structure of an essay.... so.... what do you do now? You need to work out what goes where. Look at all your ideas and look for logical sequence.

- What is the first part of the answer a reader should know? Sometimes this is obvious and sometimes it isn't.
- If all of the ideas look equally relevant, choose the one you feel will immediately hook the reader. Don't choose the most dramatic one - build up to that. Choose one that will pull the reader in and orient them to your thinking and answer.
- Then, which one should go second? Which one would come naturally? Is there an idea which is really a partner to or extension of that first one?
- Do you have any ideas that are so closely linked that they need to go next to each other? Where in the overall scheme could they go?
- Do you have one big idea that can't be understood until other things are explained? It is probably best to save that until last.
- If you don't have a big dramatic idea like that, choose the one that is the last, logical part that the reader should know. What part of the argument do you want to leave them with?

Making the actual plan

- Write down in a list the order you have chosen. It doesn't have to be elaborate. Use one word for each idea.
- Look at it - does there seem to be a flow to the ideas?
- If not - try another order. Play with it until you have a plan that you like.
- Double check that there are enough ideas written down to fully answer the question.

Making a more detailed plan

- By each idea (sub-topic/heading) write the smaller ideas you'll use to flesh it out. Write the examples you may want to use.

Revising/Editing the First Draft

Your first draft is done, Congratulations! That's a good beginning, now its time to revise and edit. The difference between an "OK" personal history vs. a great personal history is often taken

care of in the revision/editing stage. I can't stress this phase of writing your personal history enough. I have personally had the sad experience of having written and printed a newsletter, brochure, or flyer, where thorough editing was not done and had an error such as a misspelling slip by. No matter how great the work, a simple error is like a splash of mud on clean windows. Editing is like hoeing the garden. It may not be pleasant at the time, but the end result is savory to the taste. And it's much cheaper now to catch the error than after you have printed and bound your work.

Towards the end of my Father's life, he began to reflect upon his life and write his memoirs. He wrote well over a 1000 pages in long-hand. It was his desire to have his writings published for all to read. As I read over the lines and pages, I found many wonderful stories, examples, and lessons learned, but it was very, very rough. During this time, I was prepared to work with my Dad to edit and prepare the writings for publication. But to no avail. He was adamant, that the first draft is the way it should be because it was his story. The 1000-plus handwritten pages are now filed away and are on my list of projects.

Plan on at least two edits for your personal history.

- In the first edit, concentrate on the organization and content. Is the story in the right order? Did you include all the characters and events you intended? Is it clear to readers who these people are and why they do what they do?
- In the second edit, flesh out the characters, descriptions, and dialogue (if you have included dialogue). In the next edit, work on grammar, punctuation, sentence structure, and transitions to polish the story. Edit the story as many times as necessary to make it the best you can, but realize it will never be perfect. You have to stop editing and finish at some point.
- After you've edited the manuscript several times, ask one or more other people to read it. A professional editor can make a big difference; if you plan to publish for an audience larger than your family, professional editing is essential.

Also be aware that if you wanted to, you could continue to edit and tweak your writing from now until..... you will not achieve the "perfect" personal history (there will always be something to add and tweak), but you will be able to have the story you want. Remember you can always add additional volumes. Complete the personal history and share it.

Who does the editing? Editing is a team exercise. Of course you probably do most of the writing and editing. However, plan on at least two other persons to review and assist with the editing. If you are not interested or don't have the skills for editing, then by all means elicit the help of others. Editors can also be for hire.

During this next section we are going to explore some very important techniques associated with editing a personal history which will dynamically improve and create a history your ancestor's will want to read.

Three Types of Edits

During the revision/editing process you will engage in three types of editing:

- Restructuring/reorganizing this is reflecting on what has been written and making major improvements in the way parts fit together.
- Acquiring new information.
- Sharpening or adding clarity by going over what is written and smoothing it out.

Restructuring and reorganizing is the most important part of the revision stage. It requires that you step back and look at your writing with a fresh eye as if you were the person 50 years from now who was reading your history for the first time. The following are a few ideas that will help you in the editing/revision process.

Read Your Personal History Aloud and Make Notes. One of the hardest things you will do as a writer is seeing exactly what you have written or being too close to the forest to see the trees, is a good idiom to describe what is taking place. When I read my own writing, I have misspellings and usage errors. When my wife edits my work, I find it surprising that I missed the errors she finds. A lot of the errors that I overlook are due to me remembering what I meant and not necessarily looking at what I wrote. There are three techniques that will help you to focus on words you have written.

- **Read your essay aloud at every stage of revision.** That is correct, read what you have written “aloud” so you can hear the words. By reading your personal history aloud you force yourself to focus more directly on what you are reading and you bring more of your brain to bear on the task of decoding the words. When you read aloud, you maximize your concentration on the text in front of you and increase your ability to shut out distractions that will dilute your attention. When you first begin your revision, read through the whole draft of a section, start to finish, before you start to revise the parts.
- **Print out a draft of your personal history before you start editing.** If you wrote your first draft on the computer, print it out before you start editing on the screen. By printing out what you wrote, it makes it much easier, for example, to evaluate the lengths of paragraphs and overall flow. You are able to write directly on the draft and make notes and list changes that need to be made. You are able to circle sentences and draw a line to where it might fit better. You are able to denote which passages sound weak, need more evidence or where examples need to be added.
- **Read your essay aloud with a pencil or pen in hand.** As you read aloud make notes about what you think might need to be changed. When you read the draft the first time, make notes in the margins. If you see spelling mistakes or grammatical errors simply circle it so you can come back to it when you start your revision and editing.

Look at Your Writing through a Reader's Eyes. When I first started writing, I found myself becoming very defensive when someone made an edit or comment about the writing. I took it very personal. That filter was keeping me from seeing how my writing was being received by others. Often the editing and suggestions being made were minor, but they really made a difference in how the writing would be received. Even if I didn't agree with the recommendation, it gave me a chance to rewrite and make a sentence or paragraph much clearer. Thus, it becomes very important when you read your writing that you try to see the writing through the “readers eyes.” The following are a few techniques to consider:

- **Read your writing from the perspective of someone who has no interest in what you wrote.** Writing the personal history is something YOU care about. Your first draft is essentially writing to yourself. It is easy to skip important facts because you already know them. When you read your writings from the point of view of one who “has no interest,” you start asking questions or making comments like, “Where’s the proof?”

“That’s a lame statement,” “Why is that important?” “What was the date?” “What was it like to live in the city at that time?” It becomes easy to see the omissions and gives you direction of what to do to strengthen what you have written.

- **Read your writings from the perspective of a “doubter.”** Our personal histories are filled with experiences that are personal, spiritual, and sensitive in nature. When you read your writing as a “doubter,” you find areas where you can add more proof, and expand on details. If you are saying something negative about someone, you take on the opinion of defending the one who is not shown in a greatest light. I have personally found myself toning down or simply presenting the facts and leaving out my “personal opinion” in some instances.
- **Have an individual read your writings who will give you “honest” feedback.** The first two ways above are based on you pretending to be the audience. This suggestion focuses on giving your writing to someone else and having them give you their honest feedback. The first level of feedback that is most important is their reaction to your writings. Were they bored? Intrigued? What did they like the most and why? What do they wish you would have expanded upon or simply left out? When you ask people for their real feedback, do so with the understanding that you will take their feedback seriously. You may not agree with what will be said, but you will listen, not be offended, and view it as an opportunity to write a great personal history that generations will cherish.

Personal History Structure. Your first draft was an exercise of getting your thoughts on paper. One of the first tasks you will address when reviewing the writing is to look closely at the body of the personal history and decide if the reader will be able to see and follow the flow. A good personal history is not a collection of good paragraphs, it doesn’t start and stop at random, it moves in one direction. Structure is about restructure, moving/deleting/adding sentences, paragraphs, even whole sections. When you focus on structure, you are not too concerned about transitions before and after the paragraph or even about detail in spelling and grammar because you are not sure if the writing will even be in the final draft.

Look at the way the main parts of the body are connected. Whether you developed an outline or simply started writing, look at your writings to see how the information flows. One way is write down the topic sentence and see how the information flows and holds together. The main task of this exercise is to see if your paragraphs are in reasonable order. Does one paragraph lead to the next? Or do you seem to be jumping around? Are you missing material? Are questions unanswered?

Look at the way your paragraphs begin and end. Does one paragraph lead to another? Are you answering the questions or providing needed information that was discussed in the previous paragraph? Or are you just changing subjects at random? Does one paragraph lead into another? Look for accidental or unintended breaks in the flow that are distracting and confusing for the reader.

Look for gaps. Look for those places where you seem to jump from one point to another, leaving out the connecting points. Are there explanations and connections that a reader needs but have been omitted because they were obvious to you? Gaps can be between paragraphs or within them.

Reorganize and Rewrite Personal Histories from the Top Down. Look at the overall organization of your ideas first, and then work your way down to the detail work. If your paragraphs need to be moved around, settle on the order you are going to put them in before you rewrite them. If you need to add new material, decide where it will go before you begin to write it. Do not waste your time revising and inserting sentences until you know where every paragraph for a section of your personal history belongs. It is easier to start revising by inserting a sentence where you see you need one and correcting errors in your paragraphs.

Support Your Claims. As you write personal histories, most individuals will take your word on what you write concerning experiences and stories or about instances that are “common knowledge.” If your personal history is going to be interesting, you will be telling the reader something they don’t already know. When you write about other people, beyond yourself you will need additional backup to help develop and support what is being said. This type of backup would include newspaper articles, photos, certificates, letters, and history books. Evidence is providing information that answers the question “How do you know?” of the claim you have made. It is important that you take that question very literally. It is often hard to tell the difference at first between telling readers what you know and telling them how you know it. An effective personal history repeatedly answers the test by the answers you give.

Discover what claims in your essay need supporting evidence. You can assume that readers will accept claims about your own personal experience--assuming they sound reasonable--without further evidence. But when you make a claim that is not common knowledge, then you need to support it. In reviewing your writing, keep in mind not everyone knows everything you know.

Tell your readers how you know the claim is true. The writings of your personal history are devoted to answering the question "How do you know?" When revising your essay, take that question very literally. If you do believe that a claim you are making is true, let your readers know what you saw, read, or heard that convinced you it was true. In many cases, of course, you may not be able to answer that question without doing further research, because you may not remember how you learned something. That means you will have to, in effect, learn it again. There are several ways of telling readers how you know.

- **The experience you relate is based on personal experience.** Tell your readers about the experience, so they can see how you learned what you know. If your description of a child with attention deficit disorder is based on your observation of your younger brother, who was diagnosed with the disorder, then tell us that. And describe what you observed. If you conceal your experience and just give us your conclusions we have no reason to accept the conclusions.
- **The experience you relate is not your own direct experience.** The experience you relate doesn't have to be your own direct experience. You may have read about an example in a book or even seen a documentary on television that illustrated the point you are making. That's fine. Tell your readers whose experience illustrates your point and how you found out about it.
- **The experience and claims you are making are about a larger group of people or family.** In that case, you need to show your readers not that the claim you make was true once but that it is true often. How do we know that most students who attended private schools in high school had an experience like yours? To generalize beyond examples like this usually requires either statistical evidence or the testimony of experts.

Explain your sources and cite them where necessary. In order to tell us how you know something, you need to tell us where the information came from. If you personally observed the case you are telling us about, you need to tell us that you observed it, and when and where. If you read about it, you need to tell us where you read about it. If you are accepting the testimony of another person, you need to tell us who the person is and why/how she has the information you are providing.

As you do additional research on various topics that are presented in your personal history, keep in mind that it is the person, the individual human being, who wrote an article or expressed an idea who brings authority to the claim. Sometimes that authority may be reinforced by the publication in which the claim appeared. Sometimes not. But when you quote or paraphrase a source you are quoting or paraphrasing the author, not the magazine or journal.

Apply the tests of evidence to your supporting material. The key question for you, because it will be a key question for your readers, is whether the evidence is true, whether you can trust it. How do you tell? Unless you are reporting your own personal experience directly to us, your evidence comes from somebody else. If you use the word of some other person or group to answer the question "How do you know?" it just moves the question back a step: How do they know? If you really care about the truth of what you are writing, then you have to have some way of checking the reliability of your sources. Evidence tests fall into two broad categories: 1) Source tests, tests that apply to the credibility of the source of the evidence. 2) Direct tests, tests of the evidence itself.

Source Tests.

Specific Reference to Source:

- Does the writer indicate the particular individual or group making the statements used for evidence?
- Does the writer tell you enough about the source that you could easily find it yourself?

Qualifications of the Source:

- Does the writer give you reason to believe the source is competent and well informed in the area questioned?

Bias of the Source:

- Is the source likely to be biased on the question?
- Could we easily predict the source's position merely from knowledge of his job, religion, family, political party, or organization she works for?

Factual Support:

- Does the source offer factual support for the position taken or simply state conclusions?

Direct Tests

- Is the evidence too old to be of current relevance to the issue?
- Is there enough evidence to justify all of the claims being made from it?
- Can you reasonably draw the conclusion being urged based on what the evidence says?

- Does this source make claims that are contradicted by other claims from the same source?
- Are the claims made by this source consistent with general knowledge and other evidence? If not, how will you account for this discrepancy?

Use concrete, specific language. Concrete language refers to things that we can experience directly through the senses. Whenever possible, use concrete, specific language. The best way to do this is to write about individuals wherever possible, and concrete things rather than abstract concepts. Write about teachers, students, and schools rather than education and learning. Or say what you want to get across about education or learning by showing us what teachers and students do in schools or what apprentices do in learning plumbing. Specifics are almost always clearer than generalizations--it's easier to tell exactly what you are saying. And the concrete is almost always easier to follow than the abstract. It may not be easier to write specifically and concretely, but it produces writing that is easier to read.

Use Examples. The easiest and usually the best way, to keep your readers attentive to your writing is to use examples. An easy rule of thumb to test the specificity of your writing is to ask whether you write about individual people. All other things being equal, examples are more entertaining and involving than generalizations.

In almost every case, the thing that readers remember best from a personal history is an example, usually a detailed and fully developed one. A well written example lets us see and hear something that really happened, shows us people (or animals or machines) acting as we see them act all the time. It's like being there. It relates to us a personal experience that we have not had, but that we might have had, if we had been in the right place at the right time.

Dates and Places Don't Have to Be Dull. Land records may be pretty dull reading, but the information can add a lot if you say that when a person was 23 he bought a 160 acre farm located 12 miles from town on the banks of the river. Dates can tell stories, but most readers will not stop to figure them out, so explain in words when the dates are significant: "At the age of 35 she was left a widow with 9 children ranging in age from 2 to 16," or "He lived to the age of 87," or "Within a year of his first wife's death, he married a widow with 4 children." These phrases are much more interesting than "She was widowed in 1879," or "He died in 1959," or "He remarried in 1924."

Words about Copyright

Copyright is basically the legal exclusive right of the author of a creative work to control the copying of that work. The following is a summary about copyright which is taken from the article "10 Big Myths about copyright explained," by Brad Templeton.

<http://www.templetons.com/brad/copymyths.html>

- These days, almost all things are copyrighted the moment they are written, and no copyright notice is required.
- Copyright is still violated whether you charged money or not, only damages are affected by that.
- Postings to the net are not granted to the public domain, and don't grant you any permission to do further copying except perhaps the sort of copying the poster might have expected in the ordinary flow of the net.

- Fair use is a complex doctrine meant to allow certain valuable social purposes. Ask yourself why you are republishing what you are posting and why you couldn't have just rewritten it in your own words.
- Copyright is not lost because you don't defend it; that's a concept from trademark law. The ownership of names is also from trademark law, so don't say somebody has a name copyrighted.
- Fan fiction and other work derived from copyrighted works is a copyright violation.
- Copyright law is mostly civil law where the special rights of criminal defendants you hear so much about don't apply. Watch out, however, as new laws are moving copyright violation into the criminal realm.
- Don't rationalize that you are helping the copyright holder; often it's not that hard to ask permission.
- Posting E-mail is technically a violation, but revealing facts from E-mail you got isn't, and for almost all typical E-mail, nobody could wring any damages from you for posting it. The law doesn't do much to protect works with no commercial value.

Adding Photos and Scanned Images to Your Personal History

As part of the process of preparing your writing for publication and/or distribution, adding photos and scanned images are a very important consideration. What images will you choose to help tell the story? In addition to photos of people, include photos of significant buildings or other locations including homesteads, churches, family cemeteries, or places of business. Images of certificates (i.e., birth, marriage), letters, etc., will add great value in telling the personal history.

I have found the most difficult part of using images is choosing which one to use. It is a common desire to want to use as many images as possible. You should choose the images that are the "BEST" to help you tell the story. If you are talking about the "family," try to find a photo about family rather than individual photos about each person. Consider the following checklist when choosing images for your family history.

1. With your personal archive or the archive you created like "The Box" in front of you, review each folder in relation to the story you have written. I personally organize all my images into electronic folders that match up to my physical box and sort the images to consider for use.
2. Place a post-it-note "sticky note" on each item that fits the text of the history you have written.
 - Mark on the sticky note the section/paragraph title that you believe the image would be good for.
3. Review each item you have tagged with a sticky note and ask the following questions:
 - Would I find that item useful or interesting if it were in someone else's history?
 - Would it be as effective to simply describe the item rather than include it in the book?
 - Is the item representative of the time period in which it will be included?

Note 1: If the answer to any of these questions is "no," remove the sticky note and place the item back into the personal history archive. Only those items that still have a sticky note will be considered for use in the final history.

Note 2: If you are using photos of persons who are still living, it is important to gain their permission for use.

4. Choose the best quality and most typical images to use in a personal history. Often you won't have the opportunity to choose the photo because it's the only one you have. BUT if you do have a chance consider the following when choosing photos:
 - **Get Close.** Choose photos that get close. The subjects that fill the frame with only the most important image are just better.
 - **Are not Centered.** Choose photos that do not have your subject right in the center of the photo. The photographs are simply uninteresting and static when they are centered.
 - **Aren't rushed.** Choose from photos where you have a series to choose from. You can choose where the photo will be on the page and then look for the one that best fits the space and that are composed well.
 - **Explore all of the angles.** Choose photos that give you a change in perspective (e.g., shooting up from an angle or down from a higher angle). The photos help to eliminate distracting backgrounds, telephone poles, or other obstacles that would otherwise have a negative affect on your photo.
 - **Focus on the eyes.** Choose photos that have the subject looking directly at the camera. There is nothing more inviting then looking into the eyes of our friends and loved ones.
 - **Use the richness of the sunrise and sunset.** Some of the best photos are taken during the first and last hour of sunlight each day. During these times, the light is warm and soft, lending a beautiful quality to the photograph. Choose photos that are taken during these hours.
 - **Shoot photos on overcast days.** The photos taken on overcast days are great to use because you don't have harsh shadows, and the colors are overall better.
 - **Don't use direct flash.** Choose photos taken without flash. Direct camera flash causes flat lighting and red-eye.
 - **Use window light.** Choose photos that take advantage of soft light.
 - **Don't have the midday look.** Midday photos are among the worst photos because the sun is bright which creates harsh shadows on faces and objects, squinting eyes, less appealing skin tones, and overall muted colors.
5. Stay away from the scrapbook look.
6. When you have more than one photo for a specific section and you can't decided, ask others for their opinions about your final selections.

Using Maps, Documents, Letters, and Other Artifacts in Your Personal History

In addition to photographs, you can effectively use a wide variety of artifacts to help expand and bring meaning to your writings. For example:

- Use maps to show current boundaries for counties, states, or other areas and the boundaries that existed at the time your family lived there. Use a map to show the migration path of your ancestors. Use different styles of lines and a legend to show historic and current boundaries and routes of migration.
- When using photocopies of actual historic family documents, also include a typed translation.
- The use of documents and maps usually fit into the same grid format that you use for your photographs.
- In addition to historic documents, consider including drawing or handwritten stories by some of the youngest generation, newspaper clippings or notations about current activities of living family members.
- Add a few blank or lined pages for future family members to make additional notes as the family grows.
- Scanned signatures (taken from wills, letters, etc.) and placed next to photographs can be a nice addition.
- Any works published more than 75 years ago are no longer covered by copyright so you can use the pictures, but you should give credit. When using maps, illustrations and other material not your own, be aware of the copyright rules.

Photo/Image Layout for Personal Histories

As you begin to combine your writings with images, the following are a few lessons learned that will improve the layout and readability of your personal history.

- Develop a layout grid for your personal history. A layout grid denotes where you will put images vs. text on the pages and help to maintain a visual consistency through the book.
- Where possible, place photos near the text (narrative or charts) describing the individuals in the picture.
- Group photos from the same branch of the family tree on the same page or group of pages.
- Accompany narratives with photos of the key people in that story.
- Create a photographic timeline such as a series of group shots from a family reunion taken over successive years.
- Pair a wedding photo of a couple with a photo from their 50th anniversary.
- Enhance an otherwise dull chart with a headshot of the "head" of each primary branch of the family.

- Instead of an initial cap, cut in a photo at the start of a narrative rather than placing it "tombstone" style over the top of the story.

Preparation of Photos and Images

You will most likely be using digital images in the final preparation of your family history. Take the time to enhance your photographs using editing software. The following are a few thoughts about editing. I encourage you to seek more detailed "how-to" advice for your specific needs.

1. Remember - your original photos are your negatives.
 - Never make changes to these – always work with a copy of the photo.
 - When you load a photo into your image manipulation program ALWAYS do a 'save as' to make a copy of the photo and then work with that copy.
 - If you make a mistake, you can always go back to the original and try again.
2. Most common editing tasks you will perform are:
 - Reassemble large documents that have been photographed in sections.
 - Correct the effects of poor lighting conditions and/or remove shadows from your photos.
 - Compensate for distortion of the document photo caused by a poor shooting angle or curled pages.
 - Enhance the quality of document photos suffering from low contrast and/or hard to read text.
3. An example of editing a document with poor lighting. This is a simple process that has worked well for me. (Using Adobe Photoshop or Elements).
 - a. Import image.
 - b. Create duplicate image.
 - c. Rotate image.
 - d. Use cropping/editing tools trim image.
 - e. Use auto level, auto color, auto contrast. Use manual if needed.
 - f. Save as: Name the file.

Artifacts, Photos, and Images by Life Style

As you write, edit, and prepare your personal history for publication, you will continually be referring or looking to include images in your writing. The following is an overview of the types of artifacts, photos, and images you will want to consider in helping to write and tell the personal history.

Personal History Organization & Memory Prompts		Birth	Childhood	Teenage Years	Early Adulthood	Prime Adulthood	Middle Adulthood	Senior Years
1	Announcement Cards							
2	Baby Book							
3	Bank Statement							
3	Bills/Statements							
4	Birth Announcement Cards							
5	Birth Certificate							
6	Birthday Cards							
7	Books you Read							
8	Car Registration Documents							
9	Certificates							
10	Christening Favors							
11	Clothes and Toys							
12	Clothes you Wore							
13	Congratulation Cards							
14	Death Certificates							
15	Deeds							
16	Dental Records							
17	Diary/Journal							
18	Discharge Papers							
19	Divorce							
20	Drawings & Paintings							
21	Engagement/Wedding Cards							
22	Engagement/Wedding Gifts							
23	Enlistment Papers							
24	First Tooth							
25	Garter							
26	Gift Tags							
27	Gifts Given to you							
28	Graduation Books and Videos							
29	Graduation Certificate/Diploma							
30	Graduation Photos							
31	Hand/foot Prints							
32	Health Records							
33	Honeymoon Postcards & Souvenirs							
34	Hospital Tags							
35	Insurance Papers							
36	Invitation & Acceptance cards							
37	Items you made Stickers							
38	Leases							
39	Legal							
40	Lecture Notes							
41	Letters							
42	Letters from Family & Friends							
43	Lock of Hair							
44	Marriage Certificate							
45	Medals & Awards							

Personal History Organization & Memory Prompts		Birth	Childhood	Teenage Years	Early Adulthood	Prime Adulthood	Middle Adulthood	Senior Years
46	Medals/Awards/Ribbons							
47	Medical Records							
48	Military Orders							
49	Military Records							
50	Military Tags							
51	Movies from that time							
52	Movies you saw							
53	Music (records, tapes)							
54	Newspaper clippings							
55	Obituaries							
56	Paintings							
57	Passport/ID							
58	Paychecks							
59	Pension Documents							
60	Photographs							
61	Photos of Fellow Students and Friends							
62	Postcards							
63	Prints Baby Books							
64	Purchase Receipts							
65	Rank Insignia							
66	Receipts Bills/Statements							
67	Registration Documents							
68	Resume							
69	Resume Passport/ID							
70	School Report Cards							
71	School Uniform							
72	School Uniform (tie, badge)							
73	Scrapbooks							
74	Souvenirs Postcards							
75	Special Awards							
76	Tax Return							
77	Textbooks							
78	Thesis/Dissertation							
79	Things they made							
80	Tickets (theater, cinema, etc.)							
81	Toys & Games							
82	Toys/Dolls							
83	Trophies & Souvenirs							
84	Ultrasound Pictures							
85	Umbilical Cord Clamp							
86	Vacation Souvenirs							
87	Video Footage							
88	Voice Recordings							
89	Voter Registration Cards							
90	Voter Registration Documents							
91	Wedding Book							
92	Wedding Dress/Suit							
93	Wedding Favors							
94	Wedding Photo Album							

Personal History Organization & Memory Prompts		Further Education	Military	Marriage	Children	Grand-children	Great Grand-children
1	Announcement Cards						
2	Baby Book						
3	Bank Statement						
3	Bills/Statements						
4	Birth Announcement Cards						
5	Birth Certificate						
6	Birthday Cards						
7	Books you read						
8	Car Registration Documents						
9	Certificates						
10	Christening Favors						
11	Clothes and Toys						
12	Clothes you wore						
13	Congratulation Cards						
14	Death Certificates						
15	Deeds						
16	Dental Records						
17	Diary/Journal						
18	Discharge Papers						
19	Divorce						
20	Drawings & Paintings						
21	Engagement/Wedding Cards						
22	Engagement/Wedding Gifts						
23	Enlistment Papers						
24	First Tooth						
25	Garter						
26	Gift Tags						
27	Gifts Given You						
28	Graduation Books and Videos						
29	Graduation Certificate/Diploma						
30	Graduation Photos						
31	Hand/foot Prints						
32	Health Records						
33	Honeymoon Postcards & Souvenirs						
34	Hospital Tags						
35	Insurance Papers						
36	Invitation & Acceptance cards						
37	Items you made Stickers						
38	Leases						
39	Legal						
40	Lecture Notes						
41	Letters						
42	Letters from Family & Friends						
43	Lock of Hair						
44	Marriage Certificate						
45	Medals & Awards						

Personal History Organization & Memory Prompts		Further Education	Military	Marriage	Children	Grand-children	Great Grand-children
46	Medals/Awards/Ribbons						
47	Medical Records						
48	Military Orders						
49	Military Records						
50	Military Tags						
51	Movies from that time						
52	Movies you saw						
53	Music (records, tapes)						
54	Newspaper clippings						
55	Obituaries						
56	Paintings						
57	Passport/ID						
58	Paychecks						
59	Pension Documents						
60	Photographs						
61	Photos of Fellow Students and Friends						
62	Postcards						
63	Prints Baby Books						
64	Purchase Receipts						
65	Rank Insignia						
66	Receipts Bills/Statements						
67	Registration Documents						
68	Resume						
69	Resume Passport/ID						
70	School Report Cards						
71	School Uniform						
72	School Uniform (tie, badge)						
73	Scrapbooks						
74	Souvenirs Postcards						
75	Special Awards						
76	Tax Return						
77	Textbooks						
78	Thesis/Dissertation						
79	Things they made						
80	Tickets (theater, cinema, etc)						
81	Toys & Games						
82	Toys/Dolls						
83	Trophies & Souvenirs						
84	Ultrasound Pictures						
85	Umbilical Cord Clamp						
86	Vacation Souvenirs						
87	Video Footage						
88	Voice Recordings						
89	Voter Registration Cards						
90	Voter Registration Documents						
91	Wedding Book						
92	Wedding Dress/Suit						
93	Wedding Favors						
94	Wedding Photo Album						

Other Elements to Include in Your Personal History

Ancestry/Family Tree Charts. Charts provide the means to show family relationships. Careful consideration should be used when deciding to include them in the personal history because they can take up too much space or their format does not fit the layout of the book. Most individuals will start with a common ancestor and show all descendants or start with a current generation and show linkage to the common ancestor. Charts do not have to be extensive. A 2-5 generation chart can be a nice addition. There really is no right or wrong way. As a rule of thumb use standard commonly accepted genealogy formats. While genealogy publishing software may automatically format charts and other family data in a suitable fashion, when formatting data from scratch consider these tips:

- Use indentation with bullets and/or numbering to list successive generations of descendants. The indents help to maintain readability when compressing chart information to save space.
- When listing birth, marriage, death, and other pertinent dates, be consistent in your format throughout the book.
- When continuing information to another page, end on one individual and start the next page with a new individual.
- As with narratives, use small caps (rather than standard all caps) for surnames.
- If making boxes or drawing lines on charts that connect family lines, be consistent in the line style used.

Chronology Sheets. These sheets allow you to detail, in date order, the schools you attended, the jobs you have had, homes you've lived in, etc., and any other details you may wish to include. Remembering exact dates can be difficult so the year is sufficient.

Dedication. You may have decided before you start writing your autobiography who you want to dedicate your work to. We would advise that you wait until you have completed it until you decide this. Working on your autobiography will stir up many old memories, feelings and emotions and you may change your mind about your dedication by the time you are finished.

Documentation. The first rule of genealogy is “document your resources.” Should you use documentation in your personal history? Many prefer not to use footnotes or endnotes because they find them distracting. Without hesitation, it is my belief that you should include documentation in your personal history.

You include documentation because:

It provides the reader with important information about your source and credibility in your writings. If readers have conflicting information, it becomes very easy for them to compare their notes with yours and correct their data. When you are talking about families and what they did or did not do, having the source of the information makes the “truth” easier to understand. Or when you expand your research about separate topics, you give readers a place to go for further reading such as a book, website, or article. Documentation will save you a lot of argument and time.

Epilogue. Once you have completed writing your autobiography take some time to reflect on the completed project. Write down your thoughts and feelings about the experience in an Epilogue.

Foreword. The Foreword is a place for you to put a few of your thoughts before you start your

Autobiography, e.g., why are you writing your autobiography, what you hope to achieve by writing it, what you hope others will get out of it, any worries, fears or concerns about reliving the past, etc.

Index. The index is the most important addition to your personal history. The index provides the listing of where to find the mention of topics, people, and images. If you are using a genealogy program to assist with the production of your book, you can also do indexing or use your word processing program to develop and edit it.

Note about indexing. Most indexes will list a woman only under her maiden name. Ideally a woman should be indexed under her maiden name and all married names. If your program doesn't index under both married and maiden names, as a finding aid, you might be able to print a marriage list in alphabetical order by husband with the wife on the right so people could at least scan the list for a woman who they only know by the married name. Or, you might be able to take this list into a word processor and by using macros edit it into an even more useful list.

Table of Contents. Next to the index, the table of contents is a necessary element of your writing. The table of contents helps others understand how the writings are organized and provides them a map of your work. Use the table of contents to show general sections such as chapters and subheadings.

Vital Statistics. Listing your vital statistics such as your name, address, and age, etc., is the information needed to identify the work as your own and serves as a point of reference later on. Anyone who reads your history will also know who the writer is.

Example of How to Organize the Sections of Your History

The following is an example of how to organize your history into chapters and sections for a cohesive presentation.

- Title Page
 - First page after cover
 - Contains the title (and sub-title) in as few words as possible
 - The edition number (if more than one edition)
 - Your name and the names of other authors and editors
 - The place and date of publication
- Copyright Statement
 - Usually on back of the title page
 - Includes information on publishing date and who to contact for more information
 - Example: Copyright 2006 by Barry J. Ewell. All rights reserved.
- Table of Contents
 - List of chapters and sections with page numbers
 - An outline and guide for readers to find sections of most interest
- Dedication
 - Contains the name of the person/persons to whom you are dedicating the history and why
 - Usually written on the page after the copyright page
- List of Illustrations

- Contains the name and page number of each picture, map, or illustration in the family history
- Foreword
 - A statement about the history written by someone other than you or the editor
- Preface
 - A statement written by you
 - Describe why you wrote the history
 - Provides an overview of the history's scope, content, and organization
 - Outlines the research methods used
 - Provides an address for readers who wish to contact you
- Acknowledgments
 - Shows gratitude to persons or institutions who helped
- List of Abbreviations
 - Contains the abbreviations you have used in your family history and their meanings
- Introduction
 - Contains background or historical information that may be needed to understand the family history
- List of Contributors
 - Lists the names of people who helped write the family history
- Chronology
 - Provides dates and descriptions of key events in a family history
 - It give readers an overview of the events that shaped the person's life
 - Provides a quick reference to important events
 - Particularly useful if your history is not arranged chronologically
- Main Body
 - Usually divided into several sections or chapters
 - Can be divided according to time period
 - Can use divider pages to separate the chapters
 - May contain footnotes, endnotes, and etc.
 - Should include illustrations, photographs, maps, or copies of records and certificates.
- Appendices
 - Contains information that is not essential to the main body of text
 - May be useful to readers who want more specific information about a topic
Examples: family group sheets and pedigree charts, and similar items
 - Bibliography
 - Lists the sources used in writing your history
- Index
 - A list of individuals, place-names, and subjects mentioned your history

Publishing Your History

When you write your history there are many options of how to publish the writings. Before you even start talking about publishing you need to ask yourself a few questions. They include:

How good is my material?

- First, how thorough has your research been?
- Are you satisfied with the accuracy of the information you have acquired, and have you documented your sources?

- If your research contains hypotheses or conclusions that are based only on conjecture, are you willing to state them as such? This will help other researchers put your work in context and, hopefully, encourage additional research.
- If there are gaps or if there is questionable data, you should probably conduct additional research to make your publication the best it can be.

Does the information compiled present a cohesive picture of the family?

- Are there large chronological gaps in your research, missing individuals, and/or missing vital dates?
- Do the family stories relating to historical events fit with documented historical facts?
- Can you prove them?

Are you a good writer?

- You may want to enlist the writing and/or editorial assistance of someone who is good with words, sentence construction, punctuation, and who can also write engaging text.

Are you sure you want to share your research with others?

- If you plan to publish material on the Internet (see below), are you ready to extend your research range and invite other researchers and family members to contribute more material or challenge what you are publishing?
- You are always certain to receive feedback in some form or another. If you receive corrections to your data and/or additional data, are you prepared to publish a revised edition of your work?

All of these issues influence your decision about when to publish. As you proceed with the desire to publish you will have multiple options, among which include:

Blog. Blog is short for weblog. Individuals will sometimes use a blog to publish their history or the histories of their family. The format is much like that of an online journal. The process of posting to a blog is fairly simple. It becomes an easy and inexpensive way of sharing your history. A typical blog includes:

- Short, informational entries - generally arranged in reverse chronological order
- A time and/or date for each post
- Links to other blogs or web sites for additional content
- Archives of all previously posted content, sometimes arranged into categories

Family Newsletter. Family newsletters usually focus on happenings of the family that are usually spread far and wide. Many family newsletters also become a medium to share family histories and include: documents, stories, photos, and newly discovered facts with all interested researchers. Newsletters are usually 2-4 times a year either by printing, photocopying, or electronically posting.

Family History CD. A family history CD has the ability to hold large amounts of data in a small space, and includes photos, sounds, scanned document images, and even video - something a printed family history just can't equal. And since a CD is compact and relatively inexpensive, you can easily share it with other family history researchers at family reunions, genealogical

conferences, or through the mail. One of the biggest challenges in creating a family history CD is to decide what information you'd like to present and how to organize the information on your CD. If you've spent years studying the genealogy of a particular family or surname, you probably want to include the results of that research in the form of lineage-linked family trees or register reports. You may also want to include a written family history, or photographs of your ancestors, their houses, headstones, etc. Or, perhaps, you have video or sound recordings of ancestors or family members that you would like to showcase.

Printing and Publishing.

Of all the options, printing and publishing is the usually the first option you think about when it comes to sharing your research and history. Self-publishing your history is a relatively simple process with the available technologies. Options range from a simple print out of a word-processing document to layout in desktop publishing which is printed at a quick-copy and bound with a spiral ring or printed at an off-set press and bound. You can print a few and distribute to a few families or publish and sell to the public. The following are a few lessons learned by others.

- **Quick Copy vs. Book Publisher.** If you are planning under 200 copies, you are probably better off to go to a quick copy although there are specialty publishers that take on short run projects. Most commercial publishers prefer 500-plus books. Printed books are usually well designed and of good quality.
 - If you're publishing a few copies of the book for your family only, you can lay the book out in a word processor and have it printed at a local printer or even print the pages on your computer printer and insert them in loose-leaf binders.
 - If you're publishing for a wider audience, you'll need to hire professionals for the interior and cover design and printing. You can contract with individual vendors for the various services you need or hire someone to handle everything. Be wary of publishing companies that charge you large fees to "publish" your family history, and then require you to purchase the copies of the book. Check the credentials and references of professionals you use and interview them to be sure you're comfortable working with them.
- **Talk to Publishers Before You Start.** Start talking to publishers during the time you start writing your history. They will help walk you through options that include design and formatting that will affect what you write and format.
- **Review Other Histories to Gain Ideas.** Take the time before you start writing your book to browse through other family history books to see how others have done it. Photocopy pages from the book that you like so you have them as a reference when planning your own book. Features include paper type/quality, print size and style, number of photos, and binding. A little extra time and money can go a long way to making your book as attractive as possible – and keep it within your budget parameters.
- **Compare Costs.** Call a few potential publishers and printers to compare costs and quality of service and to find out their requirements for publishing a personal history. To obtain an estimate for a full life story, plan for a book of 200 pages including images with enough copies to distribute to your parents, siblings, children, and grandchildren (and a few extras). If you want to be more exact, provide the publisher exactly how many pages are in your manuscript. You should take the finished manuscript with you, including

mock-ups of picture pages, introductory pages, and appendixes. If you want to spend more, you can have your history printed by an offset publisher. The quality will be better, but the additional quality may not be justified by the significant additional cost.

- **How to Fund Publishing.** It is not necessary to spend a lot of money completing a personal history, but if you are going to do it, it should look good and read well. It's not uncommon for individuals writing family histories to have the total project funded by family members, provided you are doing the work.
- **Ask for Samples.** Ask your publisher to see samples of the types of binding they offer. Most publishers will show you a variety of bindings. Having your history hard bound with a sewn binding is not a requirement, however, it will last longer than other types of binding. Your goal is to publish and distribute your history, regardless of how it is bound.
- **Work with the Publisher.** If available, have your publisher archive your history for you. Many publishers will offer a one-time storage fee and keep it for you in digital form, which you may use later to make additional copies. Or, if you prefer, save it to a CD and store in your safety deposit box.
- **Use Electronic Files.** Use a publisher that prints copies from a file you've saved to a disk. Each copy will then be as good as the original. Contact your publisher to find out what file format they prefer. Most publishers will accept files in recent versions of Microsoft Word, Corel WordPerfect and other widely used word processing programs. Extra care should be taken to ensure that the end product is acceptable and correct.
- **Paper Makes A Difference.** Always have your history printed on acid-free paper. 20 lb. paper is acceptable (but too thin to print on both sides of the page), but 24 lb. is better, 60 lb is best. Double-sided printing is preferable. Standard paper will discolor and become brittle within fifty years.
- **B&W Photos Are Best.** All photographs and images should be copied into black and white images. Black and white images will preserve much longer than color images.
- **Layout Considerations and Options.** There will be many details to remember when defining how your history will appear on the page. For example:
 - The basic printing decisions will require some thought and experimenting. First is the physical size of the book. The standard paper size, 8.5" x 11," will be cheapest to duplicate, but you might want to consider putting the text in columns. Smaller page sizes may be more attractive, but will require more pages and will be more expensive as the pages will have to be cut to the smaller size.
 - Use a larger typeface and normal margin widths, or prepare your final text in two columns.
 - You can align your text on both sides (justify) or only on the left side.
 - The title page and table of contents are always on the right-hand page – never on the left. In most professional books, chapters also start on the right page.
 - There are many different types of binding available for your personal history.
 - No matter how you space the text on the page, if you plan to do double-sided copying, be sure that the binding edge on each page is 1/4" inch wider than the outside edge. That means the left margin of the front of the page will be indented 1/4" extra, and the text on its flip side will have that extra indentation from the

right margin. That way, when you hold the page up to the light, the blocks of text on both sides of the page match up with one another.

- Headers are not obligatory on every page, but make a book look more professional. The header style and page numbering system also have to be decided on. If you have a choice of font, you might consider a slightly larger font to make reading easier on older people whose eyesight isn't as good as it used to be. Or, you might want a smaller font to fit more words on a page! The index and possibly some other charts can be in a smaller font.
- Captions are especially important in a family history book. Attempt to identify each person in a photo. For very large groups of people where identification of everyone is impossible, at least caption the photo with information about when and where the photo was taken. Use a consistent style for captions throughout your book.

Sharing Your History

Throughout the preparation of your history, keep your eyes focused on the completion and distribution. The following are a few ideas to consider:

- Publishing several extra books for future generations. Posterity should have easy access to your history.
- Selling it.
- Donating copies to libraries or other institutions.
- Posting it on the internet.
- Donate a copy to the Salt Lake Family History Library
 - Give permission to microfilm using a Permission to Duplicate form
 - Send a letter of permission with your manuscript
 - Send an unbound copy as it's easier to microfilm
- Plan ahead for the publishing and marketing of your book.
- Be alert for contacts and opportunities for promotion as you research and write.
- Keep contact records of anyone who might be potential book buyers or who could help publish and distribute your family history book.
- Even if you are publishing only for family members, include all the relatives you interview or come in contact with during your research.

Questions, Questions, Questions

Throughout the discussion on writing personal and family histories, there is nothing more important than the questions you will ask. The questions elicit answers; answers provide the stories that will become the history you write. Some questions are very general, others probing. There are lists of questions one can acquire that are as few as 10 or as many as 1000 questions. Rather than simply giving you the top 20 questions for each life stage, I have provided several different lists from which you can pick, choose, and develop your own questions. There are the questions asked in interviews. Then there are questions asked as I write and compile interviews, research, and artifacts together to not miss details that will make a great story.

The following are sets of questions to review:

Questions for LDS

Story Themes and Ideas

150-plus Questions to Ask your Family

“No Stone Unturned” Questions

Questions for the LDS

Ancestry

1. Who was the first of your ancestors to come to America? (Or the country of your residence?)
2. Write about your father’s heritage.
3. Write about your mother’s heritage.
4. Write about your pioneer heritage. (If you don’t have any, how do you feel about being the "pioneer" in your family?)
5. Write about the oldest relative you remember.

Home and Childhood

1. Write about your father. (Birth, upbringing, talents, education, occupation, appearance, church and community service)
2. Write about your mother. (Birth, upbringing, talents, education, appearance, daily schedule, occupation, church and community service)
3. Draw a detailed floor plan of your home.
4. Write about your brothers and sisters.
5. Write what you know about your birth and first year.
6. Write about your elementary school. (Teachers, first day of school, bomb drills, favorite activity at recess, etc.)
7. Who was your best friend in elementary school?
8. Did you have a pet?
9. How did you do laundry? (By hand, wringer washer, clothes line, automatic)
10. What radio programs, TV shows, cartoons, and movies do you remember?
11. Tell about family vacations and visits to Grandma.
12. What ward did you live in? Who was your Bishop? Tell about Primary activities. (If you weren't a member at the time, write about spiritual aspects or traditions from your childhood and family life.)
13. Do you have a favorite Primary or Sunday School teacher or favorite lesson?
14. Write about your baptism.

Teen Years

1. Write about your Junior High/Middle School. Who was your favorite teacher and class?
2. Write about your best friend.
3. Who/what was popular in fashion, music, TV, Movie star?
4. What high school did you attend? (Size of school, favorite teacher, class, activities, student government)
5. Did you participate in YW/YM (MIA) girls camp, scout camp?
6. Tell about stake conference.
7. Have you ever met a general authority or a prophet?
8. Did you participate in a dance festival?
9. Did you attend General Conference?
10. Did you attend seminary?
11. Write about your first boy/girl friend, first kiss.
12. Did you work during your teen years?
13. Were you in school plays or musicals?
14. Did you take private lessons for music, singing, and sports?
15. Tell about your senior prom.
16. How was your testimony then?
17. Write about your most traumatic experience.

Continuing Education

1. Did you go to college or a trade school?
2. Were you active in church during your college years?
3. Did you have roommates? What were they like? Do you still keep in contact?
4. Write about your first real job in your career field.
5. Did you continue education to a masters or PhD?
6. Do you have any published works?

Love and Marriage

1. Tell about meeting your future mate. Describe him/her.
2. What kind of dates did you have?
3. Was it love at first sight?
4. Write about your engagement. (Proposal, parties, showers, wedding plans)
5. Write about your wedding day, marriage/sealing and reception.
6. Write about your honeymoon.
7. Draw a floor plan of your first apartment.
8. Was your match made in heaven or did you work toward blissful peace?
9. Were there subsequent marriages?
10. What was your spouse's most important quality then and now? Is it different?
11. Were there years of sacrifice? How did you get through them?
12. Did you travel or take vacations?
13. Draw a floor plan of subsequent homes.

Children (Answer these 5 questions for each child)

1. Tell about your (or your wife's) pregnancy. (Sickness, spiritual experiences, food cravings, etc.)
2. How was the delivery? Quick or bad, was your husband (or you) there? Did you/your wife breast feed or use a bottle?
3. Write about your baby's blessing, first word, step, and tooth.

4. Experiences with: primary, school, baptism, blessings, priesthood, mission, college, marriage, work.
5. Write of other important experiences about your child.
6. What are they doing now, their special talents, and skills.

Employment and Leisure

1. Tell about your day job. Have you moved up the ranks? Do you still have passion for your work?
2. What do you enjoy the most? The least?
3. Do you have plans for retirement? Or are you retired?
4. What are your favorite hobbies and pastimes?
5. What is your favorite book and why?
6. What is your favorite movie and why?
7. Have you traveled abroad?
8. If you had a free day to spend on yourself what would you do?

Church Service

1. What was your first calling?
2. Subsequent callings?
3. Did you serve a mission?
4. Who did you teach?
5. Who did you serve with?
6. Who was your mission president and his wife?
7. What were your most spiritual experiences?
8. What was your hardest trial?
9. Write about the people, culture and customs of the area you served in.
10. Write your testimony about missionary work.
11. How was your testimony at 25?
12. Have you witnessed miracles?
13. When did you receive your testimony of the Church?
14. When did you first read the Book of Mormon?
15. Have you seen prophecy fulfilled?
16. Write down the spiritual experiences you want your family to know about.

Community Service

1. Did you participate in PTA, booster clubs or other community service?
2. Have you ever run for a government office?
3. Did you serve in the military, air force, etc.?
4. What is your view on politics including Iraq, cold war, Vietnam, WWII?

Grandchildren

1. Write about your first grandchild. Did you attend the birth?
2. Tell about him/her: healthy, happy, appearance, talents. (Write about each grandchild.)
3. What do you do to be a good grandmother/grandfather?
4. How is it different than being a mom/dad?

Memories of Significant Events (Write about any of the following.)

1. The depression, WWII, Korea, Vietnam.
2. The release of POW's , Pueblo incident, Cuban Missile Crisis.
3. The assassination of JFK, RFK, and Martin Luther King.
4. Do you remember the National Guard being called in to integrate schools in the south?

5. Do you remember the first man in space, first man on the moon, Apollo 13, Challenger?
6. The Berlin Wall coming down, Hostages in Iran.
7. Visits to significant historical church sights.
8. Visits to other significant history sights.
9. Fairs, theaters, amusement parks, Disneyland, Disneyworld, or other significant locations.
10. What did you do about food storage and emergency preparedness?
11. 9/11.
12. The loss of your parents and/or other relatives.

Testimony

1. Summarize your patriarchal blessing.
2. Write about other blessings you have received, given, or witnessed.
3. Write your testimony.
4. What do you want your family to know and remember about you?
5. When you meet the Savior on the other side, what do you hope He will say?

Story themes and Ideas

The following themes are some of the many threads that weave through our lives. Think of each theme in relation to the different stages of your life: Early childhood, teen years, young adult, middle age and retirement years. What stayed consistent? What changed? And maybe this is all you write!

What story do you have to tell?

Stories and Themes

Places Lived

- List addresses and descriptions of places you've lived.
- Include unique features you remember about each.
 - The tile in the bathroom.
 - The fabric on the living room drapes.
 - The end table Grandpa made.
 - The chandelier your son broke playing Tarzan.
 - The secret fort up in the tree.
 - The lime green colored cabinets of your first basement apartment together.....

Favorite Anything

- At each age....
 - Favorite color
 - Favorite smells
 - Favorite time of year or time of day
 - Favorite foods
 - Favorite music
 - Favorite holidays
 - Favorite ice cream
 - Favorite flower
 - Favorite chair...

Belongings

- At each age...
 - What were your prized belongings?
 - Favorite toys, favorite clothes (in grade school, as a teen, as a young adult...)
 - Favorite heirlooms, favorite "stuff" (maybe a photo, a fishing lure, your first transistor radio, a piece of bric a brac, a coffee cup, and old thread-bare sweater...)

Pets or Animals

- What do you remember about your pet(s)?
- Their names?
- When and how you got them?
- What did they look like?
- What foods did they like?
- What funny, embarrassing or frustrating things did they do?
- What was special about your pet?

Cars or Other Vehicles

- List the year and model of each car you've owned.
- What was special about each?

Holidays and Vacation Time

- At each stage of your life, how did you spend your vacations?
 - Where did you go? How did you get there?
 - What did you do?
 - Who'd you go with?
 - What special things do you remember?

Hobbies and Leisure Time

- What were your unique pleasures?
- What special memories do any of these hold for you?
- At each stage of your life, what did you like to do?
 - Jump rope
 - Climb a tree house
 - Baseball, stamp collecting
 - Movies
 - Drag racing
 - Hunting
 - Reading
 - Woodmaking
 - Sewing
 - Baking
 - Photography
 - Gardening...

Culture and the Arts

What part did the arts play in your life?

- Music
 - What are your early memories of music?
 - What kind did you/do you prefer?
 - What are your favorite songs, hymns, classical works, and musicals?
 - Who are your favorite performers? Have your tastes changed over the years?
- Literature
 - How important have books been to you throughout your life?
 - What were your most memorable or favorite books?
 - Your favorite authors?
 - Do you like Shakespeare?
 - Mysteries?
 - Gothic romance?
 - Science fiction?
 - What magazines have you subscribed to over the years?
- Radio—Movies--Television
 - What was your first exposure?
 - What were your favorite shows or movies?

- Who were your favorite stars?
- How often and when did you listen to the radio?
- How often did you see movies or television?
- What special memories do they invoke?
- Theater & Concerts
 - How often did you attend?
 - What type of events did you enjoy?

Important Events in Your Life

- At each stage of your life, what were the highs and the lows?

Humorous or Embarrassing Moments

- We all have these. What are yours?

Accomplishments—Failures

- At each state of life...
 - Was it the home run with the bases loaded?
 - The piano recital in 3rd grade?
 - Helping Dad build the boat house?
 - Your first cooking disaster?
 - Signing a major customer?
 - A broken relationship?
 - A beautiful quilt?
 - Any awards or trophies?

Special Moments

- What are the special moments, dates and events that are most special for you?
 - A wedding
 - A birth
 - A special evening out
 - A conversation
 - A speech...
- Describe the moment.
- What happened?
- Why was it important?
- How did you feel, who was there?

Other

- This can include any other interesting, unique experiences.
 - Times you were "in a jam."
 - Times you surprised yourself.
 - Times when you really said and did the right thing.
 - Times you didn't, but wish you had.
 - Opportunities you let get by.

People in Your Life

- At each stage of your life, who were the important people for you and why?
 - What made them special?
 - Who were your friends?

- What did you do together?
- Who influenced you? How?

Private Thoughts and Opinions

- At each stage of your life, what were the things you thought about?

Dreams

- What were your dreams of wanting to do or see or be?
- What did you want to be when you "grew up?"
- Have you accomplished your dreams?
- What are your dreams now?

Fears

- What were your fears?
 - The bogeyman under the bed?
 - Being left alone?
 - Giving a speech?
 - Are you superstitious?

Philosophies

- What are the philosophies you've lived by as a child, a teen, an adult?
 - Have they changed?
 - What are your philosophies now?

Opinions

- Do you feel strongly on specific subjects?
 - Ecology
 - War
 - The value of friends
 - Life after death
 - Unions
 - Honesty
 - Changing technology
 - Changing values?
 - Politics?

Miscellaneous

- These can be lists of anything you might want to record whether serious, whimsical, insightful or just plain unique. Examples:
 - Things I've learned (or didn't learn)
 - Things I think are wonderful, neat, dumb, stupid, scary, silly...
 - Things you know you should throw or give away but can't bear to part with. What are your connections with these
 - People you never liked and why
 - Things you always wanted to do but didn't have the guts
 - Projects you put off
 - Times you were mischievous and got caught
 - Names of fellow students in grade school, buddies in the Army, members of your card club...

- Gifts you remember getting or giving for Christmas, birthdays, Mother's Day, Valentine's Day
- Natural disasters you've survived (blizzards, tornadoes, floods, fires...)
- Things that bugged you about others (your brothers/sisters, friends, bosses, etc.)

Plain Old I Remember When.....

- What are the things that have changed in your lifetime?
- What have been some of the important inventions you've seen?
- How did they do things in "the olden days"
 - What was it like going to the dentist, the doctor, the barber, the tailor?
 - What was mass transit like and what kind of street maintenance was common?
 - What were the police and fire departments like?
 - How were things delivered, like the mail, groceries, milk, newspaper, and ice?
 - How was the family laundry or housekeeping done?
 - How have clothing styles changed such as bathing suits?
 - How have things changed in the kitchen? (Ex: How was toast made before the electric toaster was invented?)
 - How much did things cost like eggs, stamps, newspaper, and milk?
 - And on and on

Lifelong Themes

There are four other main themes that run continuously through a person's life:

- World Events
- Holidays
- Family Members and...
- You—Your Personal Growth

Again, think of each theme in relation to the different stages of your life: Early childhood, teen years, young adult, middle age and retirement years. What stayed consistent? What changed?

World Events

- When does your memory and awareness of certain events (i.e., stock market crash, World War II, the first man on the moon, etc.) kick in?
 - How did you respond?
 - Do they trigger memories of what life was like then?
 - What was society like?
 - What values and principles were important then?
- Think of the inventions you've seen in your life time.
 - What was life like before them? (How was toast made before toasters were invented? Was there really life before television?)
 - Are there "old-fashioned" ways of doing things that you miss?
- Think of yourself as a child or a teenager or a young adult landing your first job —
 - What was going on in the world then?
 - How did it affect you?
 - How did you feel about it at the time?
 - To trigger some memory, check our Historical Events, a listing of over 500 world and national events including a listing of U. S. presidents in office in the 20th century.

Holidays

- Take any of the major holidays or celebrations and follow it through from childhood to adulthood. How did they change as you matured?
 - Did you start your own traditions as you got older?
 - The following are sample questions to get you started.
 - How did your family celebrate holidays?
 - Memorial Day
 - 4th of July
 - Other holidays and family get-togethers

- Thanksgiving
 - How was Thanksgiving celebrated?
 - Where was dinner held?
 - Who was usually there?
 - Who did the cooking?
 - What kind of food did you eat?
 - Who did you play with?

- Christmas
 - How was Christmas celebrated?
 - Did you always have a tree?
 - Where did you get it?
 - How was it decorated?
 - What did the ornaments look like?
 - How was the house decorated?
 - Did you have any manger scenes or religious statues?
 - Did you have Christmas stockings?
 - Where were they hung?
 - What was in them?
 - What kind of presents did your family give to each other?
 - Did Santa Claus come?
 - Did you leave him treats?
 - How did he get in?
 - When did you find out Santa Claus was a myth?
 - Who told you? How did you react?
 - What kind of Christmas dinner did you have?
 - Did your family have traditions (going to church, baskets to the poor, singing carols, sleigh rides?)

Family Members

- Think of family members who have been part of your life, perhaps for a short time (like a grandparent) or maybe many, many years (like a sibling).
 - Who are they?
 - What kind of relationship did you have with them?
 - How have they changed over the years and how has your relationship with them changed?

Parents

- What kind of relationship have you had with your parents over the years?

- Has it changed in many ways?
- What kinds of lessons did you learn from them?
- What do you think of your father or mother?
- What kind of people were they? What qualities, values, advice did they give you?
- Did you see changes in your parents over the years? What were you most proud of? Least?
- What traits in your parents do you see in yourself?

Siblings

- NOTE: Use the same questions as listed above for your brothers and sisters. You might also think how they would respond if you asked any of the following questions:
 - What did we do together that you especially liked?
 - What was the nicest thing I ever did for you? The meanest?
 - What was my most annoying habit? What did I do that secretly tickled you? That you were envious of?
 - How did you feel about my boyfriend/girlfriends?
 - How has our relationship changed over the years?

Your Personal Growth

- This is the time to ask:
 - Who was I then?
 - How have I changed?
 - What's unique about me?
 - What have I learned about myself?
- Think of your life cycles, the ups and downs, the growths, the pains.
 - How healthy was your emotional and mental state at different times in your life?
 - When did you feel the surge of independence?
 - The fear of not fitting in? Anxiety about the unknown?
 - Did you get happier as you grew older? Did you lose your sense of humor through adulthood?
- Did your personal taste change?
 - In food, music, entertainment, clothing?
 - Did your values change as you got older?
 - Religion, politics, family, honesty?
 - Awards and achievements
 - Career
 - Community involvement and & organizations
 - Early childhood & family
 - Favorite stories
 - Favorites
 - Friends & neighbors
 - Health & medical
 - Historical events
 - Hobbies & leisure activities
 - In retrospect
 - Labels
 - Marriage and children
 - Military service

- Pets
- Political believes
- Residences
- Retirement years
- School years and education
- Vacations & travel

150-plus Questions to Ask your Family

The following are an outline of questions you may want to consider when interviewing family. By asking the right, open-ended questions, you're sure to obtain extensive family information. Take time to personalize the questions to the person you're interviewing.

When you are ready to conduct an interview, have the questions in front of you to make sure you're getting the information you desire. Conversations about family can go many directions. When possible, record the interview on tape or video.

1. What is your full name and why were you named that? (Maiden name for females)
2. Were you named after someone else?
3. Did you have a nickname as you were growing up?
4. If you did, what was it and why did they call you that?
5. Have you had any other nicknames as an adult?
6. What do your family members call you now?
7. When and where were you born?
8. When were you baptized, and what was your religion?
9. What was the religion of your parents and your grandparents?
10. What church if any do you attend?
11. Your parents and your grandparents?
12. Where was your first home?
13. Other homes/places you have lived?
14. What were your earliest memories of your home?
 - a. Your parents? Please give full names.
 - b. Your grandparents? Please give full names.
15. Could you tell me a story or any memory of your brothers and sisters?
16. What are the full names of brothers and sisters?
17. What did your family do for fun when you were a child?
18. Was there a chore you really hated doing as a child?
19. What kind of books did you like to read?
20. Do you remember having a favorite nursery rhyme or bedtime story?
What was it?
21. Do you remember not having enough food to eat because times were hard for your family?
22. What were your favorite toys and what were they like?
23. What were your favorite childhood games?
24. Were there any fads during your youth that you remember vividly?
25. Where did you attend grade school(s)?
high school?
26. What were your schools like?
27. How did you like school?
28. What was your favorite subject in school and why?
29. What subject in school was the easiest for you?
30. What was your least favorite subject in school and why?
31. Who was your favorite teacher and why were they special?
32. How do your fellow classmates from school remember you best?

33. Did you get good grades?
34. Did you like school?
35. What did you wear to school?
Describe it.
36. What school activities and sports did you participate in?
37. Did you and your friends have a special hang-out where you liked to spend time?
38. Where was it and what did you do there?
39. Were you ever given any special awards for your studies of school activities?
40. How many years of education have you completed?
41. Describe yourself as a young adult.
42. Did you attend any school or training after high school?
43. Do you have a college degree(s)?
 - a. From where?
 - b. If so what was your field of study?
44. As a child, what did you want to be when you grew up?
45. What was your first job?
46. How did you decide on a career?
47. What jobs have you had?
48. Did you make enough money to live comfortably?
49. How long did you have to work each day at your job?
50. How old were you when you retired? Or when do you want, or can retire?
51. If you served in the military, when and where did you serve and what were your duties? Rank?
52. Were you ever injured in the line of duty?
 - a. What were the circumstances?
53. How old were you when you started dating?
54. Do you remember your first date?
 - a. Who was your first date?
55. Could you tell me something about it?
56. When, where and how did you first meet your present spouse?
 - a. Describe them.
57. Do you remember where you went on the first date with your spouse?
 - a. Describe it.
58. How long did you know them before you got married?
59. Describe your wedding proposal.
60. Where and when did you get married? (Include date, place, church, etc.)
61. Describe your wedding ceremony.
62. Who was there? Best man, bride's maid, other wedding party members?
63. Did you have a honeymoon?
 - a. Where did you go?
64. How would you describe your spouse(s)?
65. What do (did) you admire most about them?
66. How long have (were) you married?
67. When and where did your spouse die?
 - a. How died?
 - b. Where buried?

68. What advice would you give to your child or grandchild on their wedding day?
69. How did you find out you were going to be a parent for the first time?
70. How many children did you have all together?
71. What were their names, birth dates and birthplaces?
72. Why did you give them the names that you did?
73. Do you remember anything that your children did when they were small that really amazed you?
74. What is one of the most unusual things that one of your children did regularly when they were small?
75. What was the funniest thing you can remember that one of your children said or did?
76. If you had to do it all over again, would you change the way you raised your family?
 - a. How?
77. What did you find most difficult about raising children?
78. What did you find most rewarding about being a parent?
79. Did you spoil any of your children?
 - a. How?
80. Were you a strict or lenient parent?
81. Did you find that you had to treat each of your children differently?
If so Why?
82. How did you feel when the first of your children went to school for the first time?
83. How did you first hear that you were a grandparent and how did you feel about it?
84. What advice do you have for your children and grandchildren about being a parent?
85. Where did your spouse's parents live?
86. When and where did your parents die?
 - a. What do you remember about it?
 - b. How they died, where hospitalized, buried?
87. What do you remember about the death of your spouse's parents?
88. Do you remember hearing your grandparents describe their lives?
What did they say?
89. Do you remember your great-grandparents?
 - a. What do you know about them?
90. Who was the oldest person you remember as a child?
91. Did you have any of the childhood diseases?
92. Do you have any health problems that are considered hereditary?
 - a. What are they?
93. What do you do regularly for exercise?
94. Do you have any bad habits now or in the past?
 - a. What were they?
95. Have you ever been the victim of a crime?
 - a. What happened?
96. Have you ever been in a serious accident?
97. Has anyone ever saved your life?
 - a. Describe.
98. Have you ever been hospitalized, if so, what for?
99. Have you ever had surgery?
 - a. What for?

100. What would you consider the most important inventions made during your lifetime?
101. Do you remember the first time you saw a television, a car, a refrigerator?
102. How is the world different from what it was like when you were a child?
103. Do you remember your family discussing world events and politics?
104. How would you describe yourself politically?
105. Are you Conservative or Liberal and why?
106. Do you remember what you or your parents thought about income tax when it began in 1913?
107. Do you remember anything of the days of prohibition?
 - a. How did it affect you and yours?
108. How did the depression affect you?
109. What U.S. President have you admired the most and why?
110. What did you think of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt?
111. How did you react to the death of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt?
112. How did you react to the death of President Kennedy?
113. What wars have been fought during your lifetime?
 - a. How did you feel about them?
114. What were you doing when you heard the news of the Pearl Harbor bombing?
115. How did World War II affect you?
116. How did the Korean War affect you?
117. How did the Vietnam War affect you?
118. Name a good friend that you have known for the longest period of time?
119. How many years have you been friends?
120. Has there ever been anyone in your life that you would consider to be your kindred spirit or soul mate?
121. Who were they and why did you feel a special bond with them?
122. What were the hardest choices you ever had to make?
 - a. Do you feel like you made the right choices?
123. Who was the person that really changed the course of your life by something they did?
 - a. Who were they and what did they do?
124. Do you remember someone saying something to you that had a big impact on how you lived your life?
 - a. What was it?
125. If you could change something about yourself, what would it be?
126. What was the most stressful experience that you ever lived through?
 - a. What helped you get through it?
127. What is the scariest thing that has ever happened to you personally?
128. What kinds of musical instruments have you learned to play?
129. Would you consider yourself to be creative?
130. What things have you made that others have enjoyed?
131. How would you describe your sense of humor?
132. What is the funniest practical joke you ever played on someone?
133. What activities have you especially enjoyed as an adult?
134. What are your hobbies?
135. What did you like to do when you were not working?

136. What is the most amazing thing that has ever happened to you?
137. Have you ever met any famous people?
 - a. Describe what happened.
138. What organizations or groups have you belonged to?
139. Have you ever won any special awards or prizes as an adult?
 - What were they for?
140. Describe a time and a place you remember feeling truly at peace and happy to be alive. Where were you and what were you doing?
141. What is the most beautiful place you have ever visited and what was it like?
142. What is the longest trip that you have ever gone on?
 - a. Where did you go?
143. What has been your favorite vacation?
 - a. Where did you go and why was it special?
144. What was the favorite place you ever visited and what was it like?
145. What pets have you had?
146. Do you have a favorite story about a pet?
147. Is there anything you have always wanted to do but haven't?
148. Have you ever been to the world's fair?
149. What is the single most memorable moment of your life?
150. What or who is your favorite:
 - Animal?
 - Artist?
 - Athlete?
 - Author?
 - Board game?
 - Book?
 - Candy?
 - Card game?
 - Color?
 - Cookie?
 - Drink?
 - Flavor of ice cream?
 - Flower?
 - Fruit?
 - Holiday?
 - Meal?
 - Movie star?
 - Movie?
 - Musical group?
 - Musical instrument?
 - Painting?
 - Poem?
 - Poet?
 - Restaurant?
 - Season?
 - Singer?

Song?
Sport?
Style of music?
Tree?
TV program?
Vegetable?

152. If you had to pick a label for your family members (spouse, children, mother, father, brothers, sister...) who fits the following descriptions?

Animal lover;
Best cook;
Best gardener;
Best housekeeper;
Best looking;
Best memory;
Best story teller;
Biggest tease;
Calmost;
Funniest;
Hardest worker;
Most athletic;
Most colorful;
Most creative;
Most frugal;
Most generous;
Most mischievous;
Most politically active;
Most reclusive;
Most relaxed;
Most sociable;
Quietest;
Shortest;
Tallest;
Wildest lifestyle.

“No Stone Unturned” Questions

There are 37 topics covering the sub-topics and stages of life encompassing over 950 questions. These questions are designed to help develop depth in your history by exploring, discovering, and evaluating information. The topics include:

1. Ancestry	100
2. Birth/Adoption of Children	102
3. Death of the Person You Are Writing About	104
4. Demonstrations and Protests	105
5. Discrimination & Issues of Race	106
6. Divorce	107
7. Driving (w/sub topics)	108
• Driving	
• Driving Accident	
• Driving Ticket	
• Driving Under the Influence	
8. Education (w/sub topics)	112
• Preschool	
• Kindergarten	
• Elementary School	
• Jr. High School	
• Sr. High School	
• High School Reunion	
• Trade School	
• University/College	
• Advance Degree	
• Education Later in Life	
9. Entertainment and Pop Culture (w/Sub-topics)	121
• Youth	
• Adult	
• Sr. Adult	
10. Family Relations (w/sub topics)	122
• Single Child	
• Family	
• Step Brothers & Sisters	
• Half Brothers & Sisters	
• Adopted	
• Antidotes with Parent	
• Parents Divorced	
11. Family Traditions (w/Life Stages)	127
• Childhood	
• Teenager	
• Young Adult	
• Adult	
• Sr. Adult	
12. Friendships (w/Life Stages)	129
• Childhood=C	

• Teenager=T	
• Young Adult=YA	
• Adult=A	
• Sr. Adult=SA	
13. Foreign Events	131
14. Hometown	132
15. Immigration	133
16. Legal Matters (w/Life Stages)	134
• Youth	
• Adult	
17. Looking Over A Lifetime	135
18. Natural Disasters	136
19. Marriage (w/sub topics)	137
• Married	
• Not Married	
20. Medical History	140
21. Moving (w/Life Stages)	142
• Childhood	
• Teenager	
• Young Adult	
• Adult	
• Sr. Adult	
22. Occupation (w/Life Stages and Sub-topics)	143
• Child	
• Teenager	
• Adult	
• Stay at Home Parent	
• Working Parent	
• Own Business	
• Retired	
• Did Not Retire	
• Change Jobs as Adult	
23. Personal Finances (w/Life Stages)	150
• Child	
• Young Adult	
• Adult	
• Sr. Adult	
24. Pets	151
25. Physical Characteristics (w/Life Stages)	152
• Teenager	
• Adult	
• Senior Adult	
26. Personality and Values	153
27. Raising a Family	155
• Had Children	
• Did Not Have Children	
28. Recreation	157
29. Relationships and Dating	158
30. Religion	159

31. Settling the Great Plains (w/sub topics)	161
• Native American	
• Settler	
32. Subsequent Marriages	163
33. The Great Depression	165
34. The New Deal	167
35. U.S. Expansion and Exploration	168
36. WW I (w/sub topics)	169
• Joined Military	
• Stayed Home	
37. War Years (e.g., World War I, WW II, Korean War, Vietnam) (w/sub topics)	172
• Joined Military	
• Stayed Home	

Ancestry

1	How far back could (your/his/her) family trace its roots? From where was the information collected? Who gathered the information together?
2	What details were collected about (your/his/her) past family members? Was a lot of information available, or just names and dates?
3	Do any family trees exist on (your/his/her) ancestry? If yes, do you know who created them? How large are they?
4	What did (your/his/her) ancestors look like? Are there any pictures of (your/his/her) ancestors? Which ones? How old are these pictures? Where are they kept?
5	What nationalities did (your/his/her) family include? Just one, or several? What languages did her ancestors speak? Did (you/he/she) learn to speak these languages as a child?
6	Did (your/his/her) family have a strong sense of their ethnic background? What ethnic traditions did her family carry out? Did (you/he/she) celebrate specific holidays, eat special foods, or dress in a particular way?
7	Who were the first members of (your/his/her) family to come to the U.S.? Where did they come from? Why did they leave their homeland? When did they arrive? Where did they settle? Why? How did they get there?
8	Did (you/he/she) ever live in or visit (your/his/her) family's country of origin? If yes, describe the experience. Did (you/he/she) feel at home there?
9	What level of education did (your/his/her) ancestors receive? Where did they learn-- in the home or at school? Was education always important in (your/his/her) family or not?
10	Was (your/his/her) family religious? What religions did (your/his/her) ancestors practice? Did (you/he/she) grow up practicing this religion too?
11	Was there a traditional occupation in (your/his/her) family? What did (your/his/her) ancestors do?
12	What size were (your/his/her) ancestors' families? Large or small? Was this common for the time period?

Ancestry

13	What were (your/his/her) ancestors' finances like? Were they well off? Were any assets passed down from generation to generation?
14	What kind of medical history did (your/his/her) family have? Did any illnesses run in the family? Were people in the family generally heavy? How long did (your/his/her) ancestors live?
15	What heirlooms were in (your/his/her) family? Where did they come from? To whom did they belong in the past? Where are they now?
16	Describe (your/his/her) parents. What did they look like? What were their personality traits? Did (you/he/she) inherit any of this from them?
17	Give a brief description of what (your/his/her) parents did with their lives. Did (you/he/she) follow in their footsteps? What did (you/he/she) learn from them?
18	Describe (your/his/her) grandparents. What did they look like? What were their personality traits? Did (you/he/she) inherit any of this from them?
19	Give a brief description of what (your/his/her) grandparents did. What did (you/he/she) learn from them?
20	Are there any other relatives you want to write about? Did (you/he/she) have a favorite or least favorite relative? Describe this person. Were there any relatives (you/he/she) looked forward to seeing? How often did (you/he/she) get to see them?

Birth/Adoption of Children

1	When and how did (you/she) find out (you/she) was pregnant? Was (you/she) in the doctor's office? Was it at home? Had (you/she) suspected that (you/she) was pregnant, or was it a surprise?
2	What was (your/his/her) reaction when (you/she) found out (you/she) was pregnant? Was (you/she) excited? Was this something (you/she) had been looking forward to for a long time? Did (you/she) have mixed feelings at first about being pregnant?
3	If (you/she) was planning to have a baby, for how long had (you/she) been trying to get pregnant? Did (you/she) have difficulties getting pregnant? Did (you/she) ever consider adoption?
4	How many children did (you/she) plan to have? Did (you/she) want a big family or a small one? Did the number of siblings that (you/she) had influence this?
5	Who did (you/she) tell about the expected baby? What was their reaction? How did (you/she) celebrate the event?
6	Did (you/she) have a career or was (you/she) in school at the time? Did her pregnancy change (your/his/her) career plans or goals?
7	Was (you/she) single or married at the time? How old was (you/she)?
8	Was (your/his/her) family excited? Why or why not? Did (you/she) feel as if (you/she) could depend on (your/his/her) family for support? Did (your/his/her) family try to coach (your/his/her) on how to care for a child?
9	Did (you/she) have any problems during (your/her) pregnancy, or was (your/her) pregnancy healthy? Some say that being pregnant was the best time of their life. Was this true for (your/her)?
10	Was (your/his/her) hoping for a boy or girl? Why? Did (your/his/her) wonder what the baby would look like? Did (your/his/her) have a name picked out for (your/his/her) baby before it was delivered? What did (you/he/she) look forward to most about this baby?
11	When was (your/his/her) baby's first kick? How did this make (your/her) feel? Excited? Did (you/he/she) look forward to bringing the baby home? Did (you/he/she) feel like (you/he/she) would deliver on time? Why or why not?
12	Where was (you/he/she) when (you/he/she) went into labor? How did (you/he/she) feel? Was (you/he/she) frantic? Elated?

Birth/Adoption of Children

13	Was the baby born on schedule or was it premature? If so, how early was it? What size was the baby?
14	Had (your/her) partner been helpful during her pregnancy? What did this person do to make (your/her) pregnancy easier? How did her partner react when (you/he/she) went into labor?
15	How many hours was (you/he/she) in labor? Did someone assist (your/her) during the birth? A midwife or nurse? (your/her) partner? Was (you/she) sedated during the birth?
16	Did (you/she) give birth at home or in a hospital? If (you/she) was planning to give birth in a hospital, did (you/she) make it there on time?
17	How was (your/her) baby delivered? Through a c-section or naturally? Did (your/her) labor run smoothly, or were there complications? How did (you/she) feel afterwards?
18	What was it like bringing (your/her) baby home for the first time? Was it enjoyable to have a tiny, new addition to the family?
19	How much did the baby weigh? How long was it? What did it look like? Did it sleep a lot or cry a lot when it first came home? Was it a good baby?

Death of the Person You Are Writing About

1	What were the circumstances in which (your/his/her) life was taken? Was it an accident or a medical problem? Was it expected or unexpected?
2	When did it happen? How old was (you/he/she)? What was (you/he/she) doing at that point in (your/his/her) life?
3	Where did (you/he/she) die? Who was there when it happened? How did everyone react? Were medical personnel called to the scene?
4	Did (you/he/she) have a spouse or children that (you/he/she) left behind? How did they take the news? How did they cope with such a tragedy?
5	Was there a ceremony held for (your/his/her)? Where was it? Was it open to everyone who knew (your/his/her) or just for close family and friends?
6	What type of ceremony was it? Was it religious? Was it a way to say good-bye? Was the casket or urn present? Were there flowers?
7	Did someone say a eulogy? Who was it? A family member, friend, or religious leader? What did they say about (your/his/her)?
8	Was there a gathering of family and friends after the ceremony? Where? Who attended? What happened?
9	Did (you/he/she) leave a will or trust for family or friends? Was this important for supporting surviving family members? What was given to whom? Was the will contested?
10	What was done with (your/his/her) remains? Was (you/he/she) buried or cremated? Where? If (you/he/she) was cremated, what was done with the ashes? Were they kept by a family member, buried in the ground or strewn into the sea?
11	What effect did (your/his/her) death have on family and friends?

Demonstrations and Protests

1	What was the cause that (you/he/she) was supporting at this demonstration or protest? Was it a racial, health, war, environmental, or labor related issue? Why did (you/he/she) believe in this cause?
2	What happened at this particular protest? Did the police get involved? Did anyone try to break it up? Was the news media present?
3	Was it a peaceful demonstration or did people on either side of the issue get violent? If so, was anyone injured? Was property damaged?
4	What was (your/his/her) role in the protest? Did (you/he/she) shout slogans or hold up signs? If so, what did (you/he/she) and the signs say?
5	Did the protest help (your/his/her) and the other supporters meet their goal? In what way? Did it call more attention to the issue? Did any changes come about because of the protest?
6	Was this the only cause that (you/he/she) supported, or did (you/he/she) support several throughout (your/his/her) lifetime? If so, what were they?

Discrimination & Issues of Race

1	Was (you/he/she) ever discriminated against? Describe the situation. What was the issue behind it? Race, gender, religion, age?
2	How did the situation make (your/his/her) feel? Was (you/he/she) angry, hurt, or discouraged? Did (you/he/she) feel violated?
3	What actions, if any, did (you/he/she) take in regards to the discrimination? Did (you/he/she) lash out physically, file a lawsuit, stage a protest, or try to educate those around (your/his/her)? What were the results of (your/his/her) actions?
4	Was this type of discrimination prevalent in (your/his/her) society? How did it affect her lifestyle? Was it hard for (your/his/her) to do things such as find a job, go out in public, practice (your/his/her) religion, or make friends?
5	What changes did (you/he/she) see in (your/his/her) lifetime regarding the problem of discrimination? Did (you/he/she) see any major improvements? Were they encouraging? What were the milestones?
6	Did a certain kind of discrimination increase during (your/his/her) lifetime? What was the situation? What was (your/his/her) reaction to this?
7	Did (you/he/she) ever discriminate against anyone? What was the reason? Was it on purpose, or did (you/he/she) not realize what (you/he/she) was doing at the time? Was it against a certain race, religion, or age? How did the situation come about?

Divorce

1	How long was (you/he/she) married? When did the divorce take place? Were they separated for a time before it took place?
2	Was there a specific cause for the divorce or were there many different reasons? Who initiated the divorce? Was the divorce a joint decision or did one of them not agree to it?
3	Did (you/he/she) go through counseling with (your/his/her) spouse or try to work out their differences?
4	Did (you/he/she) tell anyone about (your/his/her) plans for divorce? Why or why not? If yes, what was their reaction? Were they surprised or had they expected it?
5	When going through the divorce, were there any major disputes? If yes, what problems did (you/he/she) face? What type of settlement did they finally agree upon? Were alimony payments or visitation rights involved?
6	Did (you/he/she) have a friendly divorce? If no, why not? If yes, did they speak to or see each other after the divorce? Afterwards, what type of relationship did (you/he/she) have with (your/his/her) ex-spouse's family?
7	What were the best and worst parts of being single again? Was anything difficult to adjust to? Did (you/he/she) miss having a companion, or was (you/he/she) happy to have (your/his/her) freedom?
8	How was (your/his/her) social life after the divorce? Did (you/he/she) lose any of (your/his/her) friends because of the divorce? Did (you/he/she) find it difficult to meet new people?

Driving

Key	1. Driving=D 2. Driving Accident=DA 3. Driving Ticket=DT 4. Driving Under the Influence=DUI	D	DA	DT	DUI
1	How old was (you/he/she) when (you/he/she) first drove a car? Where did (you/he/she) go the first time (you/he/she) drove? Was there anyone in the car with (your/his/her)? How did (you/he/she) feel--scared, excited?	X			
2	How did (you/he/she) learn to drive a car? Did someone teach (your/his/her) or did (you/he/she) teach herself? Did (you/he/she) take any courses to help (your/his/her) learn how to drive? Describe these experiences.	X			
3	What type of car did (you/he/she) first learn to drive? Was it an automatic or standard shift? Whose car was it? A relative's? A friend's?	X			
4	Did (you/he/she) have to get a driver's license? Were there any requirements (you/he/she) had to meet before (you/he/she) could apply for a driver's license? Did (you/he/she) have to complete a specific amount of training hours?	X			
5	If (you/he/she) had to get a license, did (you/he/she) have to take a test? What kind of test was it--written, oral, behind the wheel? What was (your/his/her) score? Did (you/he/she) pass on (your/his/her) first try? Did (you/he/she) have to take an eye test?	X			
6	How old was (you/he/she) when (you/he/she) received (your/his/her) first license? At the time, was this the legal age limit? If not, why did (you/he/she) wait to get (your/his/her) license?	X			
7	On the day (you/he/she) got (your/his/her) license, how did (you/he/she) feel? Did (you/he/she) do anything special? When (you/he/she) first started driving on (your/his/her) own, without a teacher or parent, how did (you/he/she) feel? Mature? Responsible? Reckless?	X			
8	What did being able to drive open up for (your/his/her)? What was (you/he/she) able to do that (you/he/she) couldn't do when (you/he/she) wasn't driving? Did (you/he/she) start dating at this time? Did (you/he/she) take a drive to anywhere special?	X			
9	Why did (you/he/she) want or need to drive? Did (your/his/her) job require it? At the time, was it something everyone did, or was (you/he/she) part of an elite crowd? Did this change over time?	X			
10	When (you/he/she) started driving regularly, whose car did (you/he/she) use? What kind of car was it? What color was it? Was (you/he/she) able to drive it whenever (you/he/she) wanted to? Did (you/he/she) have to pay for gas or upkeep?	X			
11	When did (you/he/she) get (your/his/her) first car? Did (you/he/she) buy it herself or was it a gift? Describe it. What were (your/his/her) feelings about the car? Was it (your/his/her) dream car or just something to get around in?	X			

Driving

Key	1. Driving=D 2. Driving Accident=DA 3. Driving Ticket=DT 4. Driving Under the Influence=DUI	D	DA	DT	DUI
12	What other cars did (you/he/she) own over the years? How many cars did (you/he/she) own at one time? What made (your/his/her) purchase the cars (you/he/she) did? Was it because of where they were made? Money? Looks? Brand?	X			
13	What about driving changed since (you/he/she) first drove? The speed limit or seat belt laws, for example? How are cars, roads, gas, or traffic lights different?	X			
14	Did (you/he/she) ever have (your/his/her) driving privileges taken away? If yes, describe the situation and how (you/he/she) handled it.	X			
15	In (your/his/her) opinion who or what caused the accident? Did the police and insurance company agree with (your/his/her) opinion?		X		
16	Was anyone injured in the accident? How seriously? Was anyone taken to the hospital? If (you/he/she) was, was (you/he/she) taken in an ambulance? What happened at the hospital?		X		
17	Was any damage done to the car (you/he/she) was in? Describe it. Who paid for the damage?		X		
18	Was there a lawsuit because of the accident? What was the charge? How involved did it get? Did (you/he/she) settle in or out of court? What was the outcome?		X		
19	Did everyone involved have insurance? At the time was it mandatory to have insurance?		X		
20	If (you/he/she) received a ticket, what was it for? Speeding or running a red light? Did (you/he/she) feel (you/he/she) deserved the ticket?			X	
21	Did (you/he/she) go to court for the ticket? What was it like? Did (you/he/she) fight the ticket? What was the outcome?			X	
22	Did (you/he/she) have to pay a fine for the ticket or was it just a "fix it" ticket? If (you/he/she) had to pay, how much did it cost? Was attending traffic school an option? Did (you/he/she)?			X	
23	Did (you/he/she) ever drive under the influence of alcohol or drugs? Why did this happen? At the time was it against the law? Did (you/he/she) get caught? What happened? Did (you/he/she) do it again?				X
24	Did (you/he/she) ever try to prevent someone who was under the influence from driving? What happened? Were they angry with (your/his/her)? Did they thank (your/his/her)? Did anyone ever try to prevent (your/his/her) from driving while intoxicated? What happened?				X

Education

Key	1. Preschool =PS 2. Kindergarten=Kd 3. Elementary School=ES 4. Jr. High School=JrHS 5. Sr. High School=SrHS 6. High School Reunion=HSR 7. Trade School=TS 8. University/College=Uni 9. Advance Degree=AD 10. Education Later in Life=EdL	P S	K D	E S	J r H S	S r H S	T S	U n i	A D	H S R	E d L
1	How old was (you/he/she) when (you/he/she) first went to preschool?	X									
2	Describe the school. What was its name? How many students attended? What did it look like inside and out?	X									
3	What were a typical day's activities? Painting? Singing? Were there nap times or snack times? What did children learn in preschool when (you/he/she) attended?	X									
4	Who were (your/his/her) favorite playmates? What did they do together? Did (you/he/she) have a favorite teacher? Did (you/he/she) keep in touch with these people in later years?	X									
5	Did (you/he/she) or (your/his/her) parents save any memorabilia from preschool? Art projects or class pictures? What memories and feelings did these items bring back after (you/he/she) had grown?	X									
6	Was attending preschool a good experience for (your/his/her)? Did (you/he/she) send (your/his/her) own children or grandchildren to preschool?	X									
7	Was there one specific event from (your/his/her) preschool years that (you/he/she) remembered vividly in later years? What happened that was so memorable?										
8	Describe (your/his/her) kindergarten. Where was it located? Was it part of an elementary or grammar school? What was in (your/his/her) kindergarten classroom that might not be found in today's classrooms?		X								
9	Describe a typical kindergarten day. What did children of (your/his/her) age learn? Did (you/he/she) have a favorite activity?		X								
10	What kind of a pupil was (you/he/she)? Did (you/he/she) like kindergarten and the idea of being in a classroom? Would (you/he/she) have preferred to be outdoors playing?		X								
11	Who were (your/his/her) friends in kindergarten? What did they do together? Did they play together after school? Who was (your/his/her) teacher? Did (you/he/she) keep in touch with these people in later years?		X								
12	Did (you/he/she) or (your/his/her) parents save any memorabilia from (your/his/her) kindergarten years? Art work or class pictures? In later years, what feelings did these items bring back?		X								

Education

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13	How did (you/he/she) get to school each morning? Did (you/he/she) walk with a sibling or adult or take some other means of transportation?	X								
14	What did (you/he/she) wear to kindergarten? Was there a favorite outfit that (you/he/she) had? What did children of (your/his/her) age wear at the time?	X								
15	Did (you/he/she) bring (your/his/her) lunch to school? What did (you/he/she) take? Did (you/he/she) carry a lunch box or lunch pail? Were surprises ever packed in (your/his/her) lunch?	X								
16	Did (you/he/she) do anything special at school on holidays? Dress up for Halloween or have a St. Valentine's Day party? Did people bring in special treats to eat on these days?	X								
17	What kinds of games did (you/he/she) play at recess? Are these games that children still play?									
18	Describe (your/his/her) elementary school. Where was it located? What did it look like? About how many students attended? Was it a public school or private?		X							
19	Did (you/he/she) have siblings at the same school? How many grades ahead of (your/his/her) or behind (your/his/her) were they? Did (you/he/she) play with them at recess or eat lunch with them?		X							
20	Who were (your/his/her) best friends in elementary school? What did they do together? Was there a bully in (your/his/her) school?	X	X							
21	What kind of a student was (you/he/she)? Was school easy for (your/his/her) or did (you/he/she) struggle? Did (you/he/she) like school?		X	X						
22	What subjects did children of (your/his/her) age study when (you/he/she) went to elementary school? For example, reading, geography, or history? Did (you/he/she) have a favorite subject?		X							
23	Did (your/his/her) school have activities such as plays, choral concerts or spelling bees? What part did (you/he/she) play in these kinds of activities?		X							
24	How did (you/he/she) get to school each day? Were there days when (you/he/she) couldn't go to school because of the weather?		X							

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25	Did (you/he/she) accomplish anything in elementary school that (you/he/she) was particularly proud of? Did (you/he/she) get first prize in a competition? Did (you/he/she) have especially good grades on one report card?			X							
26	Did (you/he/she) ever have to stay after school? What did (you/he/she) do to get into trouble? Did (you/he/she) have to clap erasers or clean the classroom as punishment?			X							
27	Did (you/he/she) have a favorite teacher? Was there something important that this person taught (your/his/her)? Was there a teacher that (you/he/she) disliked? Why?			X							
28	Did (you/he/she) have any favorite songs or games? Did (you/he/she) pass them on to (your/his/her) children or grandchildren?			X							
29	Describe (your/his/her) junior high school. What was it called and where was it located? Was it separate from (your/his/her) elementary school? How many grades and students were in the school? Was it a religious or single sex school?										
30	Did (you/he/she) have a favorite teacher in junior high? How did this teacher influence (your/his/her) and what did (you/he/she) learn from him or (your/his/her)?				X						
31	Was (you/he/she) involved in any extra-curricular activities at school? Glee club, the school newspaper, or sports, for instance? What part did (you/he/she) play in these activities?				X						
32	Did (you/he/she) have any nicknames? How did (you/he/she) get them? What about nicknames for (your/his/her) friends or teachers?										
33	Did (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) friends ever pull any pranks? On whom? Did (you/he/she) get in trouble for any of the jokes? What kind of punishment was (you/he/she) given? Was (you/he/she) glad that (you/he/she) did it even though (you/he/she) was punished?				X						
34	Did (you/he/she) save any memorabilia from junior high? What memories did these items bring back after (you/he/she) left school?										
35	If (you/he/she) didn't have to wear a school uniform, what kind of clothes did (you/he/she) wear to school? Was (you/he/she) worried about being fashionable? What hairstyles were popular at the time?				X						
36	Who were (your/his/her) junior high buddies? Were they the same friends that (you/he/she) had in elementary school or did (you/he/she) meet new people? Was (you/he/she) a part of the "in" crowd?				X						

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37	Did (you/he/she) graduate from junior high school? Why or why not? Was (you/he/she) sad to leave (your/his/her) friends and teachers? What happened on the day that (you/he/she) left?				X						
38	Years later, what event, place, or person from junior high was the most memorable? Did something embarrassing happen to (you/his/her)? Did (you/he/she) accomplish something that (you/he/she) was particularly proud of?				X						
39	What was the name of the school (you/he/she) attended? Where was it located? How many people attended (you/his/her) school? What did the building look like inside and out? Did (you/he/she) have a school mascot or school colors? How about a rival school?				X	X					
40	Did (you/he/she) go to a private or religious school? If so, why? In what ways was it better or worse than going to a public school?					X					
41	Was (you/his/her) transition from junior high to high school smooth or rocky? What made it easy or difficult? Did (you/his/her) friends or family members make a difference?					X					
42	What did (you/he/she) wear to school? Did (you/he/she) have to wear a uniform? What were the latest styles for students at the time? Looking back after (you/he/she) had grown, did (you/he/she) laugh at what (you/he/she) wore?					X					
43	Who were (you/his/her) best friends? What did they do together? Did any of them have nicknames? Did they keep in touch after leaving school?					X					
44	Did (you/he/she) have any "crazy" friends? People who did things that (you/he/she) wouldn't risk (you/his/her)self? Describe them and what they did. What's the craziest thing (you/he/she) ever did during high school? Why did (you/he/she) do it?					X					
45	Did (you/he/she) and (you/his/her) friends play practical jokes on others? What kinds of jokes did (you/he/she) play? On whom did (you/he/she) play the jokes? Friends? Teachers? The principal?					X					
46	Did (you/he/she) ever get into trouble? Often or rarely? What did (you/he/she) do and why did (you/he/she) do it? How did (you/he/she) get caught? What kinds of punishment did (you/he/she) receive?					X					
47	Were there any "groups" in school other than (you/his/her) own? Did they have nicknames? What were they like? Tough? Brainy? Was there tension between (you/his/her) group and other groups? What caused it?					X					
48	Did (you/he/she) feel like a member of the "in" crowd? Why or why not? How did that make (you/his/her) feel? Did they have a certain way of dressing or a special place to "hang out"?					X					

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49	Who were (you/his/her) favorite teachers? Why? How did they influence (you/his/her) or what did (you/he/she) learn from them? With which teacher did (you/he/she) have the most trouble? What caused the problem?					X					
50	Did (you/he/she) spend much time doing school work? Why or why not? Was school easy for (you/his/her) or did (you/he/she) really have to work hard? What were (you/his/her) least and most favorite subjects? Why?					X					
51	How were (you/his/her) grades? Did (you/he/she) ever try to cheat to get a better grade?					X					
52	Did (you/he/she) ever flunk anything? Did (you/he/she) not try hard enough or was that subject just not (you/his/her) cup of tea? How did (you/he/she) feel about flunking? How did (you/his/her) parents feel about it?					X					
53	Did (you/he/she) participate in any extra-curricular activities? Drama or debate club? School band or cheerleading? Why did or didn't (you/he/she) join? What did (you/he/she) get from these activities that (you/he/she) didn't get in regular classes?					X					
54	Did (you/he/she) participate in school athletics? Which sports? Did (you/he/she) earn a letter for any sports? What did this letter mean to (you/his/her)? Did (you/he/she) continue playing this sport after leaving school?					X					
55	Did (you/his/her) school have a prom? If not, why? If yes, did (you/he/she) go? Why or why not? Where was it? What kind of music was played? With whom did (you/he/she) go? What did (you/he/she) wear? Did (you/he/she) have a good time?					X					
56	Did (you/he/she) earn any special honors in high school? For what? Academics? Industrial arts? Sports? Describe them and what they meant to (you/his/her).					X					
57	In later years, how did (you/he/she) feel about high school? What were (you/his/her) happiest and saddest memories from this time period? What was the funniest thing that happened to (you/his/her)? Did (you/he/she) wish (you/he/she) had done anything differently?					X					
58	What sort of memorabilia did (you/he/she) save from high school? Yearbooks or autograph books? What's written in them? How about essays or school books? Over the years, what kinds of memories and feelings did these items bring back?				X	X					
59	What did (you/he/she) learn during this time that wasn't specifically taught in books or in the classroom? Where and from whom did (you/he/she) learn these things? How did these lessons help (you/his/her) later?					X					
60	In what ways did (you/he/she) grow during this time? Did (you/he/she) become more open to new ideas and different people? More independent and mature?					X					

Education

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61	Looking back in later years, did (you/he/she) agree with the views that (you/he/she) held at the time? For example, did (you/he/she) have the same ideas about money, race, or work ethics? Why or why not? Did things (you/he/she) learned change (you/his/her) ideas?					X					
62	What did (you/he/she) do during the summers of (you/his/her) high school years? Work? Stay at home and relax? Why?					X					
63	High School Graduation					X					
64	Did (your/his/her) school have a graduation ceremony or was it not a tradition? If yes, describe the ceremony. Was anything about it especially memorable? If there wasn't a ceremony, did (you/he/she) do anything special on that day or was it much like any other day?					X					
65	Was there a big graduation party? Where was it and who was there? Did (you/he/she) get a special graduation gift? What? From whom?					X					
66	What were (your/his/her) plans before graduation? What actually happened? What kept (your/his/her) plans the same or why did they change?					X					
67	Did (you/he/she) go to any of (your/his/her) high school reunions? Why or why not? Did (you/he/she) not have the time to go? Did (you/he/she) look forward to them?									X	
68	Was it fun to see (your/his/her) old friends after so many years? How had they changed? Who changed the most? Did seeing them make (your/his/her) realize that (you/he/she) had changed in ways (you/he/she) hadn't thought of?									X	
69	Who lived up to (your/his/her) expectations? Who didn't? Who was the biggest success? Did anyone in (your/his/her) class become famous?									X	
70	After (your/his/her) reunion, how did (you/he/she) feel about (your/his/her)self? Was (you/he/she) proud of (your/his/her) accomplishments? Was there anything that (you/he/she) regretted?									X	
71	Did (your/his/her) school have a graduation ceremony or was it not a tradition? If yes, describe the ceremony. Was anything about it especially memorable? If there wasn't a ceremony, did (you/he/she) do anything special on that day or was it much like any other day?									X	
72	Was there a big graduation party? Where was it and who was there? Did (you/he/she) get a special graduation gift? What? From whom?									X	

Education

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73	What were (your/his/her) plans before graduation? What actually happened? What kept (your/his/her) plans the same or why did they change?									
74	Did (you/he/she) go to any of (your/his/her) high school reunions? Why or why not? Did (you/he/she) not have the time to go? Did (you/he/she) look forward to them?									
75	Was it fun to see (your/his/her) old friends after so many years? How had they changed? Who changed the most? Did seeing them make (your/his/her) realize that (you/he/she) had changed in ways (you/he/she) hadn't thought of?									
76	Who lived up to (your/his/her) expectations? Who didn't? Who was the biggest success? Did anyone in (your/his/her) class become famous?									
77	After (your/his/her) reunion, how did (you/he/she) feel about (your/his/her)self? Was (you/he/she) proud of (your/his/her) accomplishments? Was there anything that (you/he/she) regretted?									
78	What did (you/he/she) learn in trade school? Were the classes easier or more difficult than (you/he/she) had expected? Did (you/he/she) have to spend long hours studying?									
79	Where did (you/he/she) go to school? Was it a local school or did (you/he/she) have to commute or live away from home?									
80	What was the best part about trade school? The classes and skills (you/he/she) learned? Friends (you/he/she) might have made?									
81	How long did it take for (your/his/her) to finish the program? Did (you/he/she) find a job right after finishing? Did trade school increase (your/his/her) earning potential?									
82	Why did (you/he/she) decide to attend trade school? What subject was (you/he/she) interested in studying?									
83	Why did (you/he/she) decide to attend college? Was it expected in (your/his/her) family, or was (you/he/she) the first to go?									
84	How many different colleges did (you/he/she) apply to? Did (you/he/she) pick just one or two favorites or did (you/he/she) apply to several?									

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85	Were the applications difficult to fill out? Did (you/he/she) work on them for hours or complete them all at the last minute? Did (your/his/her) efforts pay off?							X		
86	Which school did (you/he/she) attend? Describe it. Was it big or small? Liberal arts or a technical school?							X		
87	Where was it located? Did (you/he/she) go away to college or stay close to home?							X		
88	If (you/he/she) went away, how did (you/he/she) feel when (you/he/she) left for college? Did (you/he/she) feel mature and independent? Was (you/he/she) scared of what was ahead of (your/his/her)? Did (you/he/she) have any expectations about how (you/he/she) would perform academically?							X		
89	Did (you/he/she) "go wild" when (you/he/she) first arrived at college, knowing that (your/his/her) parents weren't looking over (your/his/her) shoulder? Did (you/he/she) enjoy being (your/his/her) own keeper or was it scary for (your/his/her)?							X		
90	What kind of a schedule did (you/he/she) have at school? Did (you/he/she) take a heavy load of courses and have a job too, or did (you/he/she) find (your/his/her)self with a lot of free time? Was (you/he/she) most likely to be found in the library? In the pub? In the gym?							X		
91	Did (you/he/she) have a favorite class or professor? What did (you/he/she) learn from this class or person? Was anyone (your/his/her) mentor at school?							X		
92	How did (you/he/she) decide what subject matter to study? Was there an area of study that was particularly popular among students of (your/his/her) age?							X		
93	Who were (your/his/her) friends in college? How did (you/he/she) meet them? Through classes or the place that (you/he/she) lived? Were they friends that (you/he/she) had in high school or did (you/he/she) meet new people?							X		
94	Where did (you/he/she) live at college? In a dormitory, rooming house, or at home? If (you/he/she) didn't live at home, what did (your/his/her) room look like? Where did (you/he/she) get (your/his/her) meals? How was the food?							X		
95	What was most surprising about college? The difficulty of classes? The variety of people who attended? The ideas that they had?							X		
96	Was (you/he/she) a participant in any extra-curricular activities? Clubs, sports, or the newspaper staff, for example? Why did (you/he/she) become involved in these activities? Was it a way to meet new people?							X		

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97	What types of campus events did (you/he/she) attend, if any? Were there plays or concerts? Did the school have a football team? Were there school dances? With whom did (you/he/she) go to these events?									
98	Did (you/he/she) play any college pranks? What did (you/he/she) do? Was (you/he/she) ever disciplined for any of these pranks?									
99	Did (you/he/she) ever have the chance to travel abroad during (your/his/her) studies? Where and why did (you/he/she) go? What did this experience add to (your/his/her) education?									
100	Did (you/he/she) ever transfer between colleges? Why? Where did (you/he/she) go? Was it easy or difficult to make the transition? Which school did (you/he/she) like better and why? Did (you/he/she) think that transferring was a positive part of (your/his/her) education?									
101	Did (you/he/she) save any memorabilia from (your/his/her) college years? Papers that (you/he/she) wrote or books that (you/he/she) used? A scrapbook? What feelings or memories did these items bring back in later years?									
102	Overall, how was (your/his/her) college experience? Later in life, was (you/he/she) glad that (you/he/she) went? Was it an experience that (you/he/she) would want (your/his/her) children or grandchildren to have? Or, did (you/he/she) find that college wasn't (your/his/her) cup of tea?									
103	If (you/he/she) graduated, did (you/he/she) attend (your/his/her) graduation ceremony? Why or why not? Did (you/he/she) wear a cap and gown? Who spoke and who attended?									
104	If (you/he/she) graduated, how did (you/he/she) feel about leaving school? What kinds of life expectations did (you/he/she) have as a graduate? Did (you/he/she) think that as a college graduate (you/he/she) had a head start on life? Was (you/he/she) overly optimistic?									
105	If (you/he/she) didn't graduate, what happened that (you/he/she) wasn't able to? Were there monetary problems or family needs? Did (you/he/she) find a career that didn't require a college education? Did (you/he/she) not like the college atmosphere?									
106	If (you/he/she) didn't graduate, how did (you/he/she) feel about leaving? Was (you/he/she) glad to be moving on? Was (you/he/she) sad to leave friends and school? A little bit of both?									
107	What made (your/his/her) decide to continue (your/his/her) schooling after completing (your/his/her) undergraduate degree? Was it a difficult decision? Why or why not?									
108	Did (you/he/she) go back to school right after graduating from college or did (you/he/she) do something else for a few years?									

Education

Key	1. Preschool =PS 2. Kindergarten=Kd 3. Elementary School=ES 4. Jr. High School=JrHS 5. Sr. High School=SrHS 6. High School Reunion=HSR 7. Trade School=TS 8. University/College=Uni 9. Advance Degree=AD 10. Education Later in Life=EdL	P S	K D	E S	J r H S	S r H S	T S	U n i	A D	H S R	E d L
109	It usually takes several years to get an advanced degree. Did it seem like an overwhelming project when (you/he/she) first began?								X		
110	Did (you/he/she) have any special professors or mentors? What did (you/he/she) learn from them?								X		
111	Did (you/he/she) have children or a spouse when (you/he/she) went back to school? Did continuing (your/his/her) education create any problems for (your/his/her) family?								X		
112	What area of study did (you/he/she) undertake when (you/he/she) went back to school? What level of degree was (you/he/she) aiming for? Why did (you/he/she) choose this level and area of study? Did (you/he/she) have a specific job in mind?								X		
113	What differences did (you/he/she) find between (your/his/her) graduate and undergraduate education? Which of (your/his/her) schooling experiences did (you/he/she) enjoy more, graduate or undergraduate?								X		
114	After beginning (your/his/her) studies, did (you/he/she) ever regret (your/his/her) decision to undertake them? Why? Was (you/he/she) able to overcome (your/his/her) doubts?								X		
115	How did (you/he/she) finance (your/his/her) graduate studies? Was earning the money or getting a loan difficult? Did (you/he/she) get a scholarship? Did (you/he/she) teach at the undergraduate level to defray the costs?								X		
116	Did (you/he/she) write a thesis? What was the topic? How long did it take to finish it? Did (you/he/she) enjoy writing it?								X		
117	Did (you/he/she) work while earning (your/his/her) advanced degree, or was (you/he/she) a full-time student? If (you/he/she) worked, was (you/he/she) able to manage (your/his/her) time well?								X		
118	How did it feel to leave school behind (your/his/her)? Was (you/he/she) sad to go or did (you/he/she) look forward to facing the "real world"? Did (you/he/she) have a job lined up? Was (you/he/she) getting married? Did (you/he/she) think that (you/he/she) would ever return to school?								X		
119	If (you/he/she) didn't graduate, what happened that (you/he/she) was unable to finish (your/his/her) degree? Were there monetary problems? Did (you/he/she) find a job that (you/he/she) preferred to school? Was (you/he/she) just not cut out for grad school?								X		
120	If (you/he/she) finished (your/his/her) degree, how long did it take (your/his/her)? Did it take (your/his/her) longer than the norm? Did (you/he/she) have a celebration on the day of (your/his/her) graduation? Who attended? Did (you/he/she) receive any special gifts?								X		

Education

Key	P S	K D	E S	J r H S	S r H S	T S	U n i	A D	H S R	E d L
121								X		
122		X						X		
123										X
124										X
125										X
126										X
127										X

Entertainment and Pop Culture

Key	Youth= Y Adult=A Sr. Adult= SA	Y	A	SA
1	What was the most popular kind of entertainment at this time? Radio? Theater? Dancing? Family sing-along? What did (you/he/she) like to do for fun? Who did (you/he/she) do it with?	X	X	X
2	Who were the celebrities at this time? Movie, radio or television stars, comedians, singers or stage actors? Did (you/he/she) have a favorite? What did this person do? Did (you/he/she) try to emulate this person?	X	X	X
3	What did young people read in this era? Was reading something that young people did at this time? Who were the popular writers? What did (you/he/she) like to read?	X		
4	Were there any fads at this time? Playing with hula hoops? Did (you/he/she) go along with any of them?	X		
5	What were the fashions of the day? Did young people have different styles of their own? Did (you/he/she) like to keep up with the fashions? What did (you/he/she) wear? What were the popular hair styles?	X	X	X
6	Were there any popular theater productions at this time? What were they? Did (you/he/she) see any?	X	X	X
7	What type of music was popular at this time? Classical? Folk music? Big Band? Rock? Who did (you/he/she) listen to when (you/he/she) had the chance? Did (you/he/she) listen to different music than (your/his/her) parents? Was this music that (you/he/she) could dance to?	X	X	X
8	Were there any folk (your/his/her) lores during this period? Real people who did daring or great things? Amelia Earhardt or Jesse Owens, for example? Was there anyone famous that (you/he/she) looked up to? Were there any villains?	X	X	X
9	What sports were popular at this point in time? What about famous athletes? What sports did they play? Did (you/he/she) have any favorites?	X	X	X
10	As (you/he/she) matured, did (you/he/she) ever feel that (you/he/she) was behind the times? In what ways?		X	
11	Was there a popular style of art? Art Deco? Folk art? Which artists did (you/he/she) like? Were any artists "ahead of their time"?		X	X
12	Were there any popular words or phrases at the time? What were they? What did they mean? Where did they come from?	X	X	X
13	What type of literature did people read? Were religious works the mainstay of most people's reading? What magazines or newspapers did (you/he/she) read? Was this where (you/he/she) got most of (your/his/her) news? Were there any popular authors at the time? What did (you/he/she) like to read?		X	X

Family Relations

Key	1. Single Child=SC 2. Family=F 3. Step Brothers & Sisters=SBS 4. Half Brothers & Sisters=HBS 5. Adopted=A 6. Antidotes with Parent=AwP 7. Parents Divorced=PD	SC	F	SBS	HBS	A	AwP	PD
1	Did (you/he/she) wish (you/he/she) had a brother or sister? If yes, why? Would (you/he/she) have wanted a younger or older sibling?	X						
2	Did (you/he/she) ever ask (your/his/her) parents why they chose to have only one child? Did (you/he/she) agree with their decision? Why or why not? If they didn't choose, what were the determining circumstances?	X						
3	As an only child, was (you/he/she) close to a certain friend, parent, or other relative? Was (you/he/she) lonesome when growing up, or did (you/he/she) feel (you/he/she) got extra attention?	X						
4	Did (you/he/she) feel (you/he/she) was spoiled? How did it affect (your/his/her) personality?	X						
5	How many children were in (your/his/her) family? How many boys? How many girls?		X					
6	What did (you/he/she) do with (your/his/her) siblings? Did (you/he/she) play together when they were young? Did (you/he/she) talk about friends, school, or other matters as they grew up?		X					
7	Did (you/he/she) have to share a room with any of (your/his/her) brothers or sisters? If so, what was it like? Did (you/he/she) enjoy having the company, or did it seem like (you/he/she) never had any privacy?		X					
8	Did (you/he/she) fight with (your/his/her) brothers or sisters a lot? If yes, what did they fight about? Attention? Friends? Chores? Clothes? What did (your/his/her) parents do when they fought?		X					
9	Was there ever any teasing among (your/his/her) and (your/his/her) siblings? Did any of the jokes continue throughout their lives?		X					
10	Was there one brother or sister (you/he/she) always felt (you/he/she) could count on? Someone (you/he/she) could always talk to? Did they always seem to be there when (you/he/she) needed protection? Did (you/he/she) think of this person as (your/his/her) best friend or guardian?		X					
11	Did they borrow each other's clothes? If yes, with or without permission? Did anything ever get ruined or stained when it shouldn't have been worn? If yes, what happened?		X					
12	What was the best part about having brothers and sisters? What was the worst?		X					

Family Relations

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13	Did they go to school together? How many years apart were they? Did they do things with the same crowd? If so, did it ever cause any kind of conflict? What was it? Whom with?		X					
14	Did (you/he/she) ever date a brother's or sister's friend? If so, how did they feel about it? Did it cause problems between them? What kind? How did it all turn out?		X					
15	Did the baby of the family seem to get away with murder? Was it (you/he/she) who was the baby?		X					
16	Did (you/he/she) always seem to get blamed when something bad happened? Did (you/he/she) ever try to blame things on (your/his/her) siblings? If so, what were some of the incidents? Were (your/his/her) parents good about letting everyone tell their side of the story?		X					
17	Was (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) siblings often asked to watch each other? What happened during these times? Was anyone bossy? Could (you/he/she) do anything (you/he/she) wanted?		X					
18	Did (you/he/she) look up to one of (your/his/her) siblings with admiration? Did (you/he/she) want to be just like them? Did (you/he/she) turn out with similar or completely opposite personalities?		X					
19	Did (you/he/she) feel (your/his/her) parents favored one of the children more than the others, or was everyone treated equally? Did (you/he/she) ever wonder what it would be like to be an only child? Did (you/he/she) ever wish (you/he/she) was? Why or why not?		X					
20	If (you/he/she) was a middle child, did it seem like (you/he/she) was always too young but not old enough? Did the older ones always pick on (your/his/her) and leave the youngest alone? Did the youngest always blame (your/his/her) instead of the oldest?		X					
21	Once they were grown, how did the relationship between (your/his/her) and (your/his/her) siblings change? Did they see each other very often?		X					
22	Did (you/he/she) have a twin? Was it a brother or sister? Were they identical? What was (your/his/her) twin's name?		X					
23	If (you/he/she) had a twin, did they ever play the switching game? Whom did they try to convince? Did they succeed? Did they do this often? How did this affect (your/his/her) relationship with (your/his/her) twin?		X					
24	Did (you/he/she) feel like they were always competing? How did they compare to each other in different aspects of life? In sports, musical talents, academics, friends, and character, for example?		X					

Family Relations

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25	If (you/he/she) had other siblings, was (you/he/she) closer to (your/his/her) twin? Did they share everything like best friends or did they fight and compete over everything?		X					
26	What were the circumstances under which they became "related"? When did they first meet? What was it like? What were (your/his/her) thoughts? Was (you/he/she) excited, upset, or scared?			X				
27	Was it at all hard to adjust to having new siblings? What did (you/he/she) or (your/his/her) parents do in order to make the transition easier?			X				
28	Was (you/he/she) glad to have new siblings? Did (you/he/she) get the brother or sister that (you/he/she) always wanted?			X				
29	Did (you/he/she) consider everyone part of one family or was someone looked upon as an outsider? Did this change as time went on? Did (you/he/she) feel like anyone was favored over (your/his/her) or visa versa? What problems came about because of these feelings?			X				
30	What were the circumstances under which they became "related"? Did they have the same mother or father? Did (you/he/she) feel like an outsider or were they like one family? If (you/he/she) had other full siblings, was (you/he/she) closer to them than to the half-siblings?				X			
31	Was (you/he/she) glad to have new siblings? Did (you/he/she) get the brother or sister that (you/he/she) always wanted?				X			
32	Did (you/he/she) live with (your/his/her) mother, father, or both? What were (your/his/her) feelings on the situation?				X			
33	If there were other children in the family, did (you/he/she) feel like (you/he/she) was treated any differently from them? Was (you/he/she) the only adopted child?					X		
34	Did (you/he/she) live in an orphanage or foster home or was (you/he/she) adopted from birth?					X		
35	If (you/he/she) was adopted when (you/he/she) was older, did (you/he/she) go through an uncomfortable transition period as (you/he/she) adjusted to (your/his/her) new family?					X		
36	Did (you/he/she) always know (you/he/she) was adopted or did (you/he/she) find out later in (your/his/her) life? How did it feel when (you/he/she) found out?					X		

Family Relations

Key	1. Single Child=SC 2. Family=F 3. Step Brothers & Sisters=SBS 4. Half Brothers & Sisters=HBS 5. Adopted=A 6. Antidotes with Parent=AwP 7. Parents Divorced=PD	SC	F	SBS	HBS	A	AwP	PD
37	Did (you/he/she) ever try to find (your/his/her) birth parents? Did (your/his/her) adoptive parents oppose this? What happened?					X		
38	How did (you/he/she) get along with (your/his/her) parents? Did (you/he/she) spend a lot of time with them while growing up? Why or why not?						X	
39	What was special about (your/his/her) relationship with (your/his/her) parents? Was (you/he/she) close to them? Did (you/he/she) feel that (you/he/she) had the best parents?						X	
40	What did (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) parents disagree about? House rules? Curfews? Did (you/he/she) think they were too strict?						X	
41	What did (you/he/she) do with (your/his/her) parents? Did they have family outings? Did they spend evenings together?						X	
42	Did (you/he/she) talk to (your/his/her) parents much? Could (you/he/she) discuss anything with them?						X	
43	After (you/he/she) had grown up, what was (your/his/her) favorite memory about (your/his/her) parents?						X	
44	What influence did (your/his/her) parents have on (your/his/her)? What did they teach (your/his/her)?						X	
45	Did (you/he/she) have any ongoing family problems? What were they? Did it bring (your/his/her) closer to (your/his/her) family or push the family apart? Were the problems ever resolved?						X	
46	Did (you/he/she) spend a lot of time with (your/his/her) grandparents when (you/he/she) was growing up? Did (you/he/she) see one set more often than the other? Why? What kind of relationship did (you/he/she) have with them?						X	
47	What did (you/he/she) do with (your/his/her) grandparents? Were they still fairly young and active when (you/he/she) knew them, or did they just spend quiet times together?						X	
48	After (you/he/she) had grown up, what was (your/his/her) favorite memory about (your/his/her) grandparents?						X	

Family Relations

Key	1. Single Child=SC 2. Family=F 3. Step Brothers & Sisters=SBS 4. Half Brothers & Sisters=HBS 5. Adopted=A 6. Antidotes with Parent=AwP 7. Parents Divorced=PD	SC	F	SBS	HBS	A	AwP	PD
49	Was there a special relative in (your/his/her) family that (you/he/she) got along with well? Maybe an aunt or cousin? Why was that person special to (your/his/her)? How often did (you/he/she) get to see this person? What did they do together?						X	
50	How old was (you/he/she) when they divorced? Did (you/he/she) understand what was happening? Did (you/he/she) blame the problems on (your/his/her)self?							X
51	Was the divorce unexpected or not? Had they fought often beforehand? Did it always seem that they got along well? Did (you/he/she) know why they were divorcing?							X
52	Did (you/he/she) have to decide with whom (you/he/she) wanted to live, or was one of them given custody? If (you/he/she) had siblings, did they all live with the same parent? Did (you/he/she) see the other parent very often after the divorce?							X
53	Did (you/he/she) miss having the whole family together after the divorce? What did (you/he/she) miss the most? Was there any reason why (you/he/she) was glad they were divorced?							X
54	Did (you/he/she) ever think or hope that (your/his/her) parents would get back together? Did (you/he/she) try to do anything that would make them fall in love again? What was it?							X
55	Did (your/his/her) parents ever remarry? If so, how old was (you/he/she)? How did (you/he/she) feel about having a new parent or new siblings? Did (you/he/she) resent the new family members?							X
56	Did the fact that (your/his/her) parents were divorced make (your/his/her) shy of marrying when (you/he/she) was older? Did it affect (your/his/her) emotionally in other ways?							X

Family Traditions

Key	1. Childhood=C 2. Teenager=T 3. Young Adult=YA 4. Adult=A 5. Sr. Adult=SA	C	T	YA	A	SA
1	What traditions did (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) family have? Did they eat special foods on special days? Did they make a point of spending time together on certain days?	X	X	X	X	X
2	Were there family customs that (you/he/she) disliked? If yes, what were they and did (you/he/she) have to go along with them anyway?	X				
3	As a child, was there a special holiday on which (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) family carried out family traditions? Religious or state holidays, for example? What did (you/he/she) do on these days?	X				
4	How were birthdays or anniversaries special in (your/his/her) family? What did they do differently from what other families do?	X		X	X	X
5	Describe (your/his/her) everyday family routines. Did they always eat together at the table? Did they play games or spend time together in the evenings? Did these later become customs in (your/his/her) own family?	X	X			
6	Did (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) family get together regularly to take family portraits? Did (you/he/she) like to do this or did (you/he/she) dread it?	X	X	X	X	X
7	Did (you/he/she) have family reunions when (you/he/she) was a child? How often? What did (you/he/she) do at them? Were these times to revive family customs? Whom did (you/he/she) look forward to seeing?	X				
8	Of the customs that (you/he/she) shared with (your/his/her) family while growing up, which ones did (you/he/she) introduce to (your/his/her) own family?	X	X	X	X	
9	Many years later, what family tradition from this time was most memorable to (your/his/her) and why? Did it bring back memories of loved ones or the way life was in "yesteryear"?	X	X	X		
10	As a teen, was there a special holiday on which (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) family carried out family traditions? Religious or state holidays, for example? What did (you/he/she) do on these days?		X			
11	How were birthdays or anniversaries special in (your/his/her) family? What did they do differently from what other families do? Was anything special done for (your/his/her) fifteenth, sixteenth, or eighteenth birthdays?		X			
12	As (you/he/she) grew older, were there family customs that (you/he/she) came to dislike? If yes, what were they, and did (you/he/she) have to go along with them anyway?		X	X		X
13	Did (you/he/she) have family reunions when (you/he/she) was a teen? How often? What did (you/he/she) do at them? Were these times to revive family customs? Whom did (you/he/she) look forward to seeing?		X			

Family Traditions

Key	1. Childhood=C 2. Teenager=T 3. Young Adult=YA 4. Adult=A 5. Sr. Adult=SA	C	T	YA	A	SA
14	As a young adult, was there a special holiday on which (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) family carried out family traditions? Religious or state holidays, for example? What did (you/he/she) do on these days?			X		
15	Did (you/he/she) have family reunions when (you/he/she) was a young adult? How often? How had these changed from when (you/he/she) was younger? Whom did (you/he/she) look forward to seeing?			X		
16	As a young adult, had (you/he/she) moved away from (your/his/her) family? If yes, did (you/he/she) miss the everyday family routines from the past, such as eating together or playing games in the evenings? Did these later become customs in (your/his/her) own family?			X		
17	At this point, (were/was) (you/he/she) raising (your/his/her) own family? If so, had (you/he/she) started (your/his/her) own family traditions? Did (you/he/she) return to (your/his/her) family's home to carry out certain traditions?			X		
18	As an adult, had (you/he/she) moved away from (your/his/her) family? If yes, did (you/he/she) miss the everyday family routines from the past, such as eating together or playing games in the evenings? Did things like this later become customs in (your/his/her) own family?				X	
19	As an adult, was there a special holiday on which (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) family carried out family traditions? Religious or state holidays, for example? What did (you/he/she) do on these days?				X	
20	At this point in time, was (you/he/she) raising (your/his/her) own family? If so, had (you/he/she) started (your/his/her) own family traditions? Did (you/he/she) still return to (your/his/her) family's home to carry out certain traditions?				X	
21	Did (you/he/she) have family reunions when (you/he/she) was an adult? How often? How had these changed from when (you/he/she) was younger? Whom did (you/he/she) look forward to seeing?				X	
22	Many years later, what family tradition from this time in (your/his/her) life was most memorable to (your/his/her) and why? Did it bring back memories of loved ones or the way life was in "yesteryear"?				X	
23	Did (you/he/she) have family reunions when (you/he/she) was a senior? How often? How had these changed from when (you/he/she) was younger? Whom did (you/he/she) look forward to seeing?				X	X
24	As a senior, had (your/his/her) family moved away from (your/his/her)? If yes, did (you/he/she) miss the everyday family routines from the past, such as eating together or playing games in the evenings?					X
25	As a senior, was there a special holiday on which (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) family carried out traditions? Religious or state holidays, for example? What did (you/he/she) do on these days? Were any special days forgotten by the younger generation?					X

Friendships

Key	1. Childhood=C 2. Teenager=T 3. Young Adult=YA 4. Adult=A 5. Sr. Adult=SA	C	T	YA	A	SA
1	Where did (you/he/she) meet most of (your/his/her) friends? In (your/his/her) neighborhood, school, or church? Did all (your/his/her) friends associate together or were there separate groups?	X	X			
2	What did (you/he/she) typically do with (your/his/her) friends? Did they ever get into trouble? If so, was there one person who tended to make more trouble than the rest?	X	X	X	X	X
3	Did (you/he/she) ever have any fights with (your/his/her) friends? What about? Did they ever get into a physical fight?	X	X	X	X	
4	Was there one friendship in particular that (you/he/she) cherished the most during this period of (your/his/her) life? What made it more special than the rest? Did (you/he/she) ever lose touch with this person? If so, under what circumstances?	X	X	X	X	X
5	At what age did (you/he/she) first think about the term friendship? Did (you/he/she) look at it as being a special relationship or were (your/his/her) "friends" just other people in the world?		X			
6	Where did (you/he/she) meet most of (your/his/her) friends? In (your/his/her) neighborhood, school, or church? Did all (your/his/her) friends associate together or were there separate groups? Where did they hang out?		X			
7	Describe some of the times they spent together. Did they go to games, concerts, or parties? What else might they have done together?		X			
8	For many people, teenage years are a difficult time. Did (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) friends help each other through this period? Did (you/he/she) feel that (you/he/she) could tell (your/his/her) friends anything?		X			X
9	Did (you/he/she) ever lose any friends? Under what circumstances? How did it make (your/his/her) feel?		X	X	X	X
10	Was there ever any competition between (your/his/her) and (your/his/her) friends? In what areas? Sports, academics, attention, girlfriends, or boyfriends?		X	X	X	
11	Where did (you/he/she) meet most of (your/his/her) friends? In (your/his/her) neighborhood, school, church, at work, or social events? Did all (your/his/her) friends associate together or were there separate groups?			X		

Friendships

Key	1. Childhood=C 2. Teenager=T 3. Young Adult=YA 4. Adult=A 5. Sr. Adult=SA	C	T	YA	A	SA
12	What qualities did (you/he/she) look for in a friend? Why did (you/he/she) become friends with the people that (you/he/she) did?			X	X	X
13	Did (you/he/she) find it harder to spend time with friends as (you/he/she) grew older? Did family, work, or other commitments get in the way?			X	X	X
14	As (you/he/she) matured, were there any friends that (you/he/she) grew apart from? If so, why?			X		
15	Where did (you/he/she) meet most of (your/his/her) friends? In (your/his/her) neighborhood, at school, church, work, or social events? Did all (your/his/her) friends associate together or were there separate groups?				X	
16	Where did (you/he/she) meet most of (your/his/her) friends? In (your/his/her) neighborhood, at church, work, or social events? Did all (your/his/her) friends associate together or were there separate groups?					X
17	Did (you/he/she) ever have any fights with (your/his/her) friends? What about?					X
18	If (you/he/she) lost (your/his/her) spouse or any children later in life, were (your/his/her) friends a good support system for (your/his/her)? Did they help (your/his/her) get through the difficult times?					X
19	Throughout the years, were there any friends that (you/he/she) grew closer to? If so, why?				X	X
20	Was there ever any competition between (your/his/her) and (your/his/her) friends? In what areas? Money, knowledge?					X

Foreign Events

1	What major foreign events took place in (your/his/her) lifetime? Were any specific countries or issues in the news persistently?
2	What event was it that affected (your/his/her)? A war? The formation of a country? The change of a regime? Were family or friends directly involved? How did these factors affect (your/his/her) reaction to the event?
3	If (you/he/she) could have been there, what would (you/he/she) have done? Why? In what ways could (you/he/she) have affected the event, if, at all?
4	What did (you/he/she) think were some important results from this event? What impact, if any, did it have on other countries?
5	At the time, did (you/he/she) feel it was handled well by the people and government of the country, as well as by other countries? How did (you/he/she) think the event could have been handled differently?
6	Did (you/he/she) foresee the occurrence of this event? What caused (your/his/her) to think it would happen?

Hometown

1	What was the name of the town or city where (you/he/she) grew up? What state or country was it in?
2	Describe it. Was it a big city, a small town, or rural? What was the surrounding terrain like? Was it flat? Hilly?
3	What was the climate of the place that (you/he/she) grew up in? Did it have seasonal changes with hot summers and cold winters?
4	What was the population of (your/his/her) hometown? Was it small enough so that everyone knew each other? Did (you/he/she) like its size?
5	In later years, what special memories did (you/he/she) have about the town that (you/he/she) grew up in? Did (you/he/she) like to reminisce about (your/his/her) favorite place to play or favorite shop to visit?
6	Was the home that (you/he/she) lived in special to (your/his/her)? What did it look like? Where was it located? What made it unique?
7	Did (your/his/her) town have any special landmarks? Was there a big park? A river? A statue? What made (your/his/her) town different?
8	Was (your/his/her) hometown famous for anything? What? Did an important person live there? Is there a food that is (your/his/her) town's specialty?
9	What kinds of people lived in the town that (you/he/she) grew up in? Were they all of a certain ethnicity or was there a wide variety?
10	Were multiple languages spoken in the town where (you/he/she) grew up? What were they? How did this affect the atmosphere of the town? Did certain sections of the town reflect the nationalities related to these languages?
11	Did (your/his/her) town have any special yearly events? Was there an Independence Day celebration? A winter or harvest festival? What happened on these days?
12	Did (your/his/her) town have a main street? Describe it. Did it change over time?
13	Did (your/his/her) hometown have "good" and "bad" areas? What made them this way? Where did (you/he/she) live? How did (you/he/she) feel about that?
14	What was the best part about growing up where (you/he/she) did? What was fun to do on evenings and weekends? Were the people especially friendly?
15	What was the worst thing about the town that (you/he/she) grew up in? Was it too small or too big? Did (you/he/she) feel like there was nothing to do?
16	How long did (you/he/she) live in this town? Did it change while (you/he/she) was there? What changed? Did (you/he/she) like the changes or not?
17	If (you/he/she) moved away from this town, did (you/he/she) ever go back? Why or why not? Was it the "perfect" place to grow up? Is it still? In your opinion would (you/he/she) want to raise a family there today?

Immigration

1	Why did (you/he/she) leave (your/his/her) homeland? Was it something that (you/he/she) wanted to do or did (you/he/she) leave out of necessity?
2	What was (your/his/her) destination in the United States? Why did (you/he/she) want to go there? Did relatives already live in that area?
3	Did (you/he/she) have to leave anyone special behind? A best friend, (your/his/her) family, or pets? Did (you/he/she) try to keep in touch with them?
4	Did (you/he/she) come with (your/his/her) family or friends, or by (your/his/her)self? Was (you/he/she) excited to come to a new country?
5	When (you/he/she) arrived in the United States did (you/he/she) change (your/his/her) name? If yes, why? To what did (you/he/she) change it?
6	How did (you/he/she) get to the United States? What were some of (your/his/her) experiences during the trip? How long did it take?
7	During what year did (you/he/she) arrive in the U.S.? How old was (you/he/she)? Was adjusting to (your/his/her) new environment difficult? What was particularly strange or new to (your/his/her)?
8	Did (you/he/she) know English? If no, did (you/he/she) learn the language quickly? Why or why not?
9	How did it feel to be in a country with so many different nationalities? Did (you/he/she) feel that (you/he/she) fit in? Why or why not?
10	Did (you/he/she) have family (your/his/her)e? If yes, did they help (your/his/her) get accustomed to (your/his/her) new environment?
11	Did (your/his/her) lifestyle change dramatically? Did (you/he/she) change (your/his/her) clothing, appearance, living standards, or job? Why or why not?
12	Once (you/he/she) arrived in the United States did (you/he/she) feel (you/he/she) was treated differently from someone who was born in the United States? Why or why not?
13	Did (you/he/she) apply for citizenship? If yes, was this an easy process? Why or why not?
14	Did (you/he/she) ever go back or want to go back to (your/his/her) country of origin? Why or why not?
15	What did (you/he/she) miss about (your/his/her) homeland? What didn't (you/he/she) miss?

Legal Matters

Key	1. Youth=Y 2. Adult=A	Y	A
1	Was it a legal matter of (your/his/her) own or of (your/his/her) parents'? For example, was it a divorce or a custody battle? Was (you/he/she) accused of committing a crime or was (you/he/she) the victim of a crime? How did the situation come about?	X	
2	Was (you/he/she) old enough to understand what was happening? Did anyone try to explain it to (your/his/her)?	X	
3	Did (you/he/she) have to go to court? If so, what was the outcome? What was it like in court? Was (you/he/she) scared? Describe the experience. Who represented (your/his/her)?	X	
4	Were the police involved? If so, what was their role? Was an arrest made?	X	
5	If (you/he/she) committed a crime, was (you/he/she) sentenced? Did (you/he/she) have to pay a fine, do community service, or spend time in juvenile hall or jail? What was the reaction of (your/his/her) parents or guardians when they were notified? Were they surprised, angry, or disappointed?	X	
6	How old was (you/he/she) when (you/he/she) had legal problems?		X
7	Did (you/he/she) personally have a legal problem? Was (you/he/she) accused of committing a crime? Was (you/he/she) the victim of a crime? How did the situation come about?		X
8	Were the police involved? If so, what was their role? Did they arrest someone?		X
9	Did (you/he/she) have to go to court? If so, what was the outcome? Did going to court intimidate (your/his/her)?		X
10	If (you/he/she) committed a crime was (you/he/she) sentenced? Did (you/he/she) have to pay a fine, do community service, or spend time in jail?		X
11	Was (you/he/she) ever involved in a lawsuit? If so, what were the circumstances? Was it a long or short process? Did it affect (your/his/her) emotionally?		X

Looking Over A Lifetime

1	What did (you/he/she) accomplish during (your/his/her) lifetime? Looking back, was there any one thing that (you/he/she) was particularly proud of? Did (you/he/she) invent something? Manage (your/his/her) family well? Purchase something that (you/he/she) didn't think (you/he/she) could ever afford?
2	Did (you/he/she) ever have any regrets? What did (you/he/she) wish (you/he/she) had or hadn't done? What did (you/he/she) wish that (you/he/she) could change? Did (you/he/she) feel that (you/he/she) had missed out on anything? What was it and why?
3	How would (you/he/she) have characterized (your/his/her) family? Over the years, were they close-knit? Did everyone get along well? Was (you/he/she) happy with the contribution that (you/he/she) made to (your/his/her) family?
4	How would (you/he/she) describe (your/his/her) philosophy of life? Was (you/he/she) an optimist? A cynic? Did (you/he/she) worry about the future or take things one day at a time?
5	What did (you/he/she) learn during (your/his/her) lifetime? Did (you/he/she) pass anything on to others? What was "life's greatest lesson"? When did (you/he/she) learn it? In what ways did it change (your/his/her) life?
6	What was the best advice that anyone ever gave (your/his/her)? How did it help (your/his/her)?
7	Did (you/he/she) ever feel that (you/he/she) had failed at anything? What was it? Why did (you/he/she) feel that (you/he/she) hadn't succeeded?
8	Overall, what was the most important event in (your/his/her) life? Marriage? The birth of (your/his/her) children? A graduation day? What made it special?
9	What was most important in (your/his/her) life? (your/his/her) family? Work? Money? A talent? Religion? Why did (you/he/she) feel this way about it?
10	Who had the greatest influence in (your/his/her) life? A relative, co-worker, teacher, celebrity or perhaps an author? Why did (you/he/she) look up to this person? How did he or (you/he/she) influence (your/his/her)?
11	If (you/he/she) was religious, did (you/he/she) feel (your/his/her) faith grew stronger over the years? Or was it stronger when it was new? As (you/he/she) matured, did (your/his/her) faith change from when (you/he/she) first committed to (your/his/her) religion? In what ways?
12	Looking back, would (you/he/she) say that (you/he/she) was satisfied with (your/his/her) life? Did (you/he/she) reach the goals that (you/he/she) set out to achieve?
13	Over the years, how did (your/his/her) personality change? As (you/he/she) matured, did (you/he/she) become more wise, more conservative, or maybe more adventurous?
14	How did the world change during (your/his/her) lifetime? Were these changes for the better or for the worse? How did they affect (your/his/her)?

Natural Disasters

1	What kind of natural disaster took place? Where and when did it take place? What was the outcome?
2	Who was affected by the disaster? Was he or someone he knew involved?
3	If (you/he/she) was/were in the disaster, what were his feelings at the time? Did (you/he/she) know it was coming or was it unexpected? Was/were (you/he/she) prepared? What were (your/his/her) actions? Describe the situation before and after the event.
4	If he wasn't in the disaster, how did (you/he/she) first find out about it? What was his reaction? Why was it of interest to him?
5	Was there anything (you/he/she) did to help out? Volunteer his time or money? Describe what (you/he/she) did. How did it feel to be involved?
6	What damage was done? Did he see the damage in person? Was there any insurance involved? Did the government help?
7	Did any injuries or deaths result from the disaster?
8	How long after the event occurred did life get back to normal? Or did it ever get back to normal?
9	Did anything (you/he/she) learned from this event make him change his lifestyle?

Marriage

Key	1. Married=M 2. Not Married=NM	N	NM
1	How and where did (you/he/she) meet (your/his/her) spouse? Describe the situation. Did (you/he/she) know that this was the person (you/he/she) would marry?	X	
2	Describe (your/his/her) engagement. Who proposed? Was it traditional? Was the proposal a surprise or was it expected? What was their reaction?	X	
3	Did (your/his/her) parents approve of their engagement? Why or why not? What effect did it have on (your/his/her) and (your/his/her) sweetheart? Did (your/his/her) parents' opinion change after the wedding?	X	
4	How long was (your/his/her) engagement? Did it seem to last forever or did time just fly by?	X	
5	What was their wedding like? Did they have a large ceremony, a small ceremony, or did they elope? Was it a religious ceremony? Where was the ceremony held? In a church, garden, or home? Did anything out of the ordinary happen during the ceremony? What was it?	X	
6	Who attended the wedding? Were their family and friends present? Did anyone participate in the ceremony? How did they choose them? Did they have a flower girl or a ring bearer? Who?	X	
7	Was the reception memorable? Was food served, or just cake? Was there dancing? How many people did they invite?	X	
8	Did they have any traditional customs or rituals at the reception? What?	X	
9	Did they go on a honeymoon? Where did they travel? Describe the vacation. What was most memorable?	X	
10	What expectations did they have regarding marriage? For example, did they think they wouldn't argue after they got married, because they never saw their parents argue? How did their expectations change as their marriage matured?	X	
11	Did they go into marriage thinking they could change something about the other? What were some of those things and how did it work out? Did they change or did they learn to live with each other?	X	

Marriage

Key	1. Married=M 2. Not Married=NM	N	NM
12	Did they go through any major adjustments when they were first married? How did they work through the issues of joint finances, housing, and living with another person?	X	
13	Describe the various stages of their marriage. Were there any high points that stand out? What about any low points? In what ways did their marriage grow stronger or weaker from these times?	X	
14	When did (you/he/she) first meet (your/his/her) in-laws? Were they accepting? Did they welcome (your/his/her) into the family? Describe the adjustment of entering into a new family. Was it easy or difficult?	X	
15	How did they spend their holidays? Did they trade off between families? Was their time divided equally?	X	
16	Did (you/he/she) feel (you/he/she) had to give up anything when (you/he/she) got married? (your/his/her) home, career, independence, or friends?	X	
17	What did (you/he/she) think (you/he/she) gained from getting married? A lifetime companion, more time with the one (you/he/she) loved, or financial security?	X	
18	Describe (your/his/her) spouse. Was (your/his/her) spouse romantic, considerate, or stubborn?	X	
19	What were the roles in their marriage? Was one person the breadwinner, the homemaker, or the decision-maker? Were the roles intertwined? Did they change over time? In what ways?	X	
20	What did they have in common? What were their differences? In what ways did they make them compatible and incompatible?	X	
21	What issues did they argue about when they were first married? Money, politics, child rearing, religion? As their marriage matured, did they argue about the same issues?	X	
22	If they never divorced, what was their secret? How were they able to stay together? What advice could they give to others?	X	

Marriage

Key	1. Married=M 2. Not Married=NM	N	NM
23	If (you/he/she) had it to do all over again, what changes would (you/he/she) make? Why?	X	
24	Why didn't (you/he/she) marry? Was it a deliberate choice? Did (you/he/she) not meet the right person?		X
25	In what ways did being single affect (your/his/her) life? Was (you/he/she) more independent, self-reliant, responsible, or was (you/he/she) more lonely, maybe irresponsible, or carefree?		X
26	What did (you/he/she) like most about being single? Was there anything that (you/he/she) found difficult about being unmarried?		X
27	As (you/he/she) matured, did (you/he/she) have a hard time socializing? Were all of (your/his/her) friends married?		X
28	Because (you/he/she) was single, were people always trying to play matchmaker with (your/his/her)? Did (you/he/she) like this or did it bother (your/his/her)?		X
29	Did (you/he/she) ever consider marrying someone and then have the engagement break off? What was the situation? Was it (your/his/her) choice not to marry or the other individual's choice?		X
30	Was (you/he/she) involved with someone who was (your/his/her) life companion but whom (you/he/she) never married? Describe the relationship. Why did they choose to remain unmarried?		X

Medical History

1	Throughout (your/his/her) lifetime, did (you/he/she) feel (you/he/she) was in good or bad health? Did (you/he/she) take extra measures to stay healthy? Was the rest of (your/his/her) family healthy?
2	Was (you/he/she) active? Did (you/he/she) eat well? Did (you/he/she) see a doctor regularly?
3	Did (you/he/she) have a weight problem? Was (you/he/she) overweight or underweight? Did (you/he/she) try to overcome it? Did (you/he/she) diet or exercise?
4	Did (you/he/she) ever have any broken bones? What about mobility problems? Did (you/he/she) have knee, foot, leg, arm or back problems? What was the cause?
5	Did (you/he/she) ever have any common illnesses such as the chicken pox or measles?
6	Did (you/he/she) ever have problems with (your/his/her) eyesight or hearing? Did (you/he/she) wear glasses or contact lenses? A hearing aid?
7	How were (your/his/her) teeth? Did (you/he/she) get many cavities or have teeth pulled? Did (you/he/she) go to the dentist much?
8	Was (you/he/she) ever seriously injured? Was it a sports injury? A car accident? Was it another type of accident? Did it happen on the job?
9	Did (you/he/she) ever have allergies? To what? Did (you/he/she) get migraines?
10	Was (you/he/she) ever hospitalized? What were the circumstances? How long was (your/his/her) stay?
11	Did (you/he/she) ever have a serious illness? What was the illness? Cancer? Multiple Sclerosis? Diabetes? H.I.V.? Was (you/he/she) treated? What type of medications, if any, did the doctors prescribe?
12	Did any illnesses run in (your/his/her) family? Heart disease? Diabetes? If so, when did (you/he/she) find out that this illness ran in the family? Did this knowledge change (your/his/her) lifestyle? How?
13	Did (you/he/she) have a mental illness? Did (you/he/she) seek any treatment? Did (your/his/her) family have a history of mental illness?

Moving

Key	1. Childhood=C 2. Teenager=T 3. Young Adult=YA 4. Adult=A 5. Sr. Adult=SA	C	T	YA	A	SA
1	Under what circumstances did (you/he/she) move? Whose decision was it to move? Was (you/he/she) happy with the decision? Why or why not?	X	X	X	X	
2	Was (you/he/she) attending school at the time? If so, did (you/he/she) have to switch schools once (you/he/she) moved? How did (you/he/she) feel about this? How did (your/his/her) friends react? Was it hard for (your/his/her) to adjust to a new school?	X				
3	Were there other children on (your/his/her) block who (you/he/she) was friends with? How did (you/he/she) react to moving away from them? Did (you/he/she) get upset, or was (you/he/she) only moving a short distance so that (you/he/she) could still visit?	X				
4	Describe (your/his/her) feelings on the night before (you/he/she) moved. Was (you/he/she) excited or, maybe, depressed about leaving (your/his/her) home?	X	X	X		
5	How far did (you/he/she) move? Around the block, to the next town, or to a different state? Was it easy for (your/his/her) to adjust to (your/his/her) new surroundings? Why or why not?	X	X	X	X	X
6	Describe the home into which (you/he/she) moved. Was it a house, a condominium, or an apartment? Did it have a yard? Was it an improvement in (your/his/her) living conditions?	X	X	X	X	X
7	Was the move a significant change? If so, did (you/he/she) have to make any adjustments? What did (you/he/she) find to be the biggest difference between the two areas?	X	X	X	X	X
8	Was (you/he/she) able to meet new people quickly in (your/his/her) new area? What did (you/he/she) think of (your/his/her) new neighbors?	X	X	X	X	
9	Did (you/he/she) lose touch with anyone because of the move? With whom? Did (you/he/she) regret not keeping in touch? Why or why not?	X	X	X	X	X
10	Were/was there anything that (you/he/she) always treasured about this experience? If so, explain.	X	X	X	X	X
11	Was (you/he/she) involved in any activities that (you/he/she) had to give up? Clubs or after-school activities, for example?		X			
12	How long did it take (your/his/her) to settle in? Was (you/he/she) familiar with the area or did (you/he/she) have to go sightseeing in order to find out what was in the town or city?		X			
13	Did (you/he/she) move during the school year? If so, did (you/he/she) have to switch schools once (you/he/she) moved? How did (you/he/she) feel about this? How did (your/his/her) friends react? Was it hard for (your/his/her) to adjust to a new school?		X			

Moving

Key	1. Childhood=C 2. Teenager=T 3. Young Adult=YA 4. Adult=A 5. Sr. Adult=SA	C	T	YA	A	SA
14	Was this a move to leave home? If so, how did (your/his/her) parents feel? Did (you/he/she) want to be on (your/his/her) own, get married, go away to college or join the service?			X		
15	How long did (you/he/she) plan to stay at this location? Permanently or temporarily? Did (you/he/she) go through with (your/his/her) plans or did they change as time went on?			X	X	X
16	How long did it take (your/his/her) to move? Was it organized or chaotic? Did other family members or friends help (your/his/her) move and get situated in (your/his/her) new home?			X	X	X
17	Was (you/he/she) married at the time of the move? Did (you/he/she) have any children? Were there disagreements about moving? Who was for it and who was against it?			X	X	X
18	How long did it take (your/his/her) to settle in? Was (you/he/she) familiar with the area, or did (you/he/she) have to go sightseeing in order to find out what was in the town or city?			X		
19	How long did it take (your/his/her) to settle in? Was (you/he/she) familiar with the area or did (you/he/she) have to go sightseeing in order to find out what was in the town or city?				X	X
20	Describe (your/his/her) feelings on the night before (you/he/she) moved. Was (you/he/she) excited or, maybe, depressed about leaving (your/his/her) home?				X	X
21	Did (you/he/she) have a job at the time? Was it hard to give it up or was (you/he/she) happy to look for something new?				X	
22	Describe the home into which (you/he/she) moved. Was it a house, a condominium, a retirement home, or an apartment? Did it have a yard? Was it an improvement in (your/his/her) living conditions?					X
23	Under what circumstances did (you/he/she) move? Was (you/he/she) unable to live on (your/his/her) own anymore? Was (you/he/she) moving closer to family? Whose decision was it to move? Was (you/he/she) happy with the decision? Why or why not?					X
24	Was/Were (you/he/she) able to meet new people quickly in (your/his/her) new home? What did (you/he/she) think of (your/his/her) new neighbors?					X

Occupation

KEY	1. Child=C 2. Teenager=T 3. Adult=A 4. Stay at Home Parent=SHP 5. Working Parent=WP 6. Own Business=OB 7. Retired=R 8. Did Not Retire=DNR 9. Change Jobs as Adult=CJA	C	T	A	SHP	WP	OB	R	DNR	CJR
1	What kind of tasks did (you/he/she) have to do? Did (you/he/she) get an allowance or wage for what (you/he/she) did? What did (you/he/she) spend (your/his/her) money on?	X								
2	Did (your/his/her) parents own a business that (you/he/she) helped out with? What did (you/he/she) do for them? Was it hard to have (your/his/her) parents as a boss?	X								
3	What did (you/he/she) want to be when (you/he/she) grew up? Why?									
4	What was (your/his/her) first job as a teenager? Did (you/he/she) wait tables, pump gas, or take care of children? Did (you/he/she) like it? Did (you/he/she) like (your/his/her) boss?		X							
5	How did (you/he/she) find (your/his/her) first job? Did (you/he/she) look in the newspaper? Did (your/his/her) parents help (your/his/her) out?		X							
6	Did (your/his/her) parents own a business where (you/he/she) worked? What did (you/he/she) do for them? Was it hard to have (your/his/her) parents as a boss?		X							
7	Why did (you/he/she) have a job? Was it to earn spending money? Did (you/he/she) need to help (your/his/her) family out? Did (your/his/her) parents want (your/his/her) to learn to be responsible?		X							
8	How much did (your/his/her) first job pay? Did (you/he/she) think that this was a lot of money? Did (you/he/she) ever get a raise?		X							
9	How did (you/he/she) deal with the responsibility of a first job? Was (you/he/she) dependable? Did (you/he/she) take (your/his/her) job seriously?		X							
10	Did (you/he/she) change jobs as a teenager or did (you/he/she) stick with the same one? Why?		X							
11	What did (you/he/she) want to do when (you/he/she) was older? Did (you/he/she) take steps to get experience in this area?		X							
12	Was balancing (your/his/her) work and (your/his/her) studies an issue for (your/his/her)? If so, how did (you/he/she) do it?		X							

Occupation

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13	What expectations did (you/he/she) have about the working world and (your/his/her) first full-time job? Did (your/his/her) expectations turn out to be true?			X						
14	How did (you/he/she) go about finding (your/his/her) first job? Did (you/he/she) send letters to several businesses or fill out applications? Did a parent or friend have connections?			X						
15	Many people find that it takes a long time to find a job. How long did it take (your/his/her)? Did (you/he/she) do part-time or temporary work while (you/he/she) was searching for a full-time job?			X						
16	After (you/he/she) left high school or college, what was (your/his/her) first full-time job as a young adult? Why did (you/he/she) choose this job? Did (you/he/she) like it? Did (you/he/she) like (your/his/her) boss?			X						
17	Describe the company where (you/he/she) worked. What was its name and purpose? Where was it located? Did (you/he/she) have to move to work there?			X						
18	Was this job the first step in a particular career path? Did (you/he/she) know what (you/he/she) wanted to do with (your/his/her) life? Did (you/he/she) just take a job that was available in order to pay the bills?			X						
19	What were (your/his/her) responsibilities at this job? Did (you/he/she) begin at an entry-level position and work (your/his/her) way up? Did (your/his/her) responsibilities change over time?			X						
20	How much was (you/he/she) paid? Did this seem like a lot of money to (your/his/her)? Did (you/he/she) have benefits? What were they?			X						
21	With whom did (you/he/she) work? Were they the same age as (you/he/she) was? Did (you/he/she) feel like (you/he/she) fit in or did it take a while to feel comfortable with them? Did (you/he/she) become close friends with anyone?			X						
22	What type of work environment was (you/he/she) in? Did (you/he/she) work indoors or outdoors? Was it a desk job or otherwise? Did (you/he/she) have a lot of contact with other people?			X						
23	Did (you/he/she) have to learn how to operate any new equipment in this job? Tools? Office machines? Did (you/he/she) have any mishaps while (you/he/she) was learning?			X						
24	What was the hardest thing about (your/his/her) new job? Did (you/he/she) dislike working 40 or more hours each week? Was the work challenging or were some people difficult to get along with?			X						

Occupation

KEY	1. Child=C 2. Teenager=T 3. Adult=A 4. Stay at Home Parent=SHP 5. Working Parent=WP 6. Own Business=OB 7. Retired=R 8. Did Not Retire=DNR 9. Change Jobs as Adult=CJA	C	T	A	SHP	WP	OB	R	DNR	CJR
25	Was anyone (your/his/her) mentor in the workplace? What did (you/he/she) learn from him or (your/his/her)? Why did (you/he/she) look up to this person?			X						
26	What was the most important thing that (you/he/she) learned from this job? Did (you/he/she) become more responsible? Did (you/he/she) learn a specific skill? How did it help (your/his/her) in life?			X						
27	How long did (you/he/she) keep (your/his/her) first job? Did (you/he/she) stick with one company for a long time or not? Why?			X						
28	Why did (you/he/she) stay home instead of work? Was (you/he/she) not expected to work? Did (you/he/she) need to take care of the children?				X					
29	Did (you/he/she) ever feel pressure from others to go to work? Did (you/he/she) think that people looked down on (your/his/her) because (you/he/she) didn't have a "career"?				X					
30	How did (you/he/she) spend (your/his/her) time at home? Was there a routine or was each day very different?				X					
31	When (you/he/she) was first at home, was (you/he/she) unsure of (your/his/her) skills? For example, was (you/he/she) nervous about taking care of young children? Did (your/his/her) skills improve over time?				X					
32	Did (you/he/she) feel lonely at times? Did (you/he/she) have enough interaction with other adults during the day?				X					
33	What did (you/he/she) like about being home? Was there anything that (you/he/she) disliked? Would (you/he/she) have worked outside the home if (you/he/she) could have?					X				
34	Why did (you/he/she) work outside the home? Was it expected? Did they need the money?					X				
35	Did (you/he/she) ever feel guilty for working outside of (your/his/her) home? If (you/he/she) had children, did (you/he/she) feel that (you/he/she) didn't spend enough time with them?									
36	What jobs did (you/he/she) have as a young adult or adult? How long did (you/he/she) hold each of them?									X

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37	How did (your/his/her) responsibilities change as (you/he/she) gained more experience in the workplace? Did (your/his/her) salary change too?									X
38	Did (you/he/she) become close friends with any people at work? Whom? Did (you/he/she) spend time with them outside of work?									X
39	Did (you/he/she) ever work with an "office clown"? What did this person do? Was it a good way to keep the tension level down?									X
40	Was anyone at any of (your/his/her) jobs a mentor to (your/his/her)? What did (you/he/she) learn from them? Why did (you/he/she) look up to them?									X
41	Which job did (you/he/she) like the least and which the most? Why? What about (your/his/her) bosses?									X
42	Did (you/he/she) ever have any disappointments in the workplace? Were there any projects that failed? Was (you/he/she) passed up for any promotions? What did (you/he/she) learn from these experiences?									X
43	What were the most rewarding aspects of (your/his/her) jobs? Did (you/he/she) make a difference in some way? What accomplishments was (you/he/she) proud of?									X
44	Did (you/he/she) ever change (your/his/her) line of work? If yes, what made (your/his/her) decide to switch? Were the job opportunities better? What about the pay?									X
45	Did (you/he/she) ever take a significant amount of time off of work? Why? Was (you/he/she) ill? Did (you/he/she) travel? Did this affect (your/his/her) employment?									X
46	Was (you/he/she) ever fired or laid off from a job? If yes, what caused it? Was (you/he/she) glad to be rid of the job or not? Did the loss of (your/his/her) job cause monetary problems?									X
47	Did (you/he/she) do a lot of traveling because of (your/his/her) job? How much time did (you/he/she) spend away from home? Did this cause family problems? Where did (you/he/she) go? Did (you/he/she) have time to sightsee? Describe some of (your/his/her) experiences.									X
48	Did (you/he/she) ever receive an award or special recognition for (your/his/her) job performance? What was it for?									X

Occupation

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49	Did (you/he/she) ever have to relocate because of (your/his/her) job? If so, how far did (you/he/she) have to go? What was (your/his/her) new home like? Did it cause any problems for (your/his/her) family or was it an exciting change?									X
50	How did the workplace change after (you/he/she) first started out? Did the ratio of females to males change? What kinds of machines or procedures went by the wayside? Were any of these changes for the better?									X
51	Why did (you/he/she) decide to go into business for (your/his/her)self?						X			
52	What type of business was it? A service, retail shop, or farm, for example? Where did the idea for this business come from? Was it a new or an established business?						X			
53	What was the hardest part about owning (your/his/her) own business? Were the hours too long? Was it hard to "get away" from work? Was it difficult to find good people to help?						X			
54	What was most rewarding about running (your/his/her) own business? Did (you/he/she) enjoy being (your/his/her) own boss and having control over all aspects of the business?						X			
55	How did (you/he/she) finance (your/his/her) business in the beginning? Was (you/he/she) able to get a loan or did (you/he/she) not need much capital to start it up?						X			
56	Was there ever a time when (you/he/she) feared that (your/his/her) business wouldn't succeed? What caused the difficulties? Was (you/he/she) able to get through this time or did (your/his/her) fears come true?						X			
57	How did (your/his/her) business change over the years? Did (you/he/she) start out struggling and then become successful? Did the purpose of (your/his/her) business change at all?						X			
58	Did (you/he/she) ever feel as if (your/his/her) business had "made it"? When was this? What made (your/his/her) feel this way?						X			
59	As (you/he/she) got closer to retirement age, did (you/he/she) look forward to retiring? Was (you/he/she) ready or reluctant to leave the workplace?							X		
60	Did (you/he/she) have a retirement party? Who attended? Did (you/he/she) receive any gifts?							X		

Occupation

KEY	1. Child=C 2. Teenager=T 3. Adult=A 4. Stay at Home Parent=SHP 5. Working Parent=WP 6. Own Business=OB 7. Retired=R 8. Did Not Retire=DNR 9. Change Jobs as Adult=CJA	C	T	A	SHP	WP	OB	R	DNR	CJR
61	Did (you/he/she) feel as if (you/he/she) was financially secure when retirement age came around? Did (you/he/she) think that (you/he/she) had been able to prepare sufficiently or did (you/he/she) worry about what might happen if (you/he/she) became ill?							X		
62	What did (you/he/she) plan to do after (you/he/she) retired? Did (you/he/she) have any special projects that (you/he/she) wanted to work on? Did (you/he/she) want to travel?							X		
63	Was it hard to adjust to being at home so much? Did (you/he/she) ever feel restless without a schedule? What did (you/he/she) do to get over these feelings?							X		
64	Did (you/he/she) decide to work part time or volunteer after (you/he/she) retired? Why or why not? If (you/he/she) did work, what did (you/he/she) do? Was it satisfying to do this kind of work?							X		
65	Was (you/he/she) able to spend a lot of time with (your/his/her) family after retiring? What did they do together?							X		
66	Did (you/he/she) feel as if (you/he/she) lost a lot of friends after (you/he/she) retired? Had many of (your/his/her) friends been in the working world?							X		
67	What was the best part of retirement? The freedom? The chance to do things that (you/he/she) had always wanted to?							X		
68	Was there any part of retiring that wasn't enjoyable? What? Did retirement change (your/his/her) outlook on life? Did (you/he/she) become more carefree?							X		
69	Did (you/he/she) ever have any pressure from others to retire? Who? Why?								X	
70	As you matured, did (you/he/she) ever look forward to (your/his/her) retirement? Why?								X	
71	Did (you/he/she) think about or plan for (your/his/her) financial security after retiring. If so, what did (you/he/she) do?								X	

Personal Finances

Key	1. Child=C 2. Young Adult=YA 3. Adult=A 4. Sr. Adult=SA	C	YA	A	SA
1	How would (you/he/she) describe (your/his/her) family's financial situation during these years of (your/his/her) life? Would (you/he/she) say (you/he/she) was poor, middle class, or rich? Did the situation change during (your/his/her) life? How?	X			
2	During this time in (your/his/her) life, did (you/he/she) understand what (your/his/her) financial situation was? Did (you/he/she) actually know how poor or how well off (you/he/she) was or did it take some years of growing up to realize it? Why?	X			
3	What kind of items was (you/he/she) or (your/his/her) family able to purchase? Could (you/he/she) only afford necessities or could (you/he/she) afford luxury items?	X	X	X	X
4	What did (your/his/her) or (your/his/her) family's monetary assets consist of at this time in (your/his/her) life? Did (you/he/she) have a bank account or any other funds?	X			
5	Was (you/he/she) satisfied with (your/his/her) financial status or did (you/he/she) want more or less money? Was (you/he/she) ever jealous of anybody because of their financial status?	X	X	X	X
6	Did (you/he/she) have to work to improve (your/his/her) or (your/his/her) family's financial situation?	X			
7	Did (your/his/her) family have any debts? Did (you/he/she) or (your/his/her) family worry about being able to pay the bills?	X			
8	Did (your/his/her) financial situation give (your/his/her) special opportunities? For example, did (you/he/she) travel or go to special schools? Did (your/his/her) financial situation deprive (your/his/her) of anything?	X	X	X	
9	How would (you/he/she) describe (your/his/her) financial situation during these years of (your/his/her) life? Would (you/he/she) say (you/he/she) was poor, middle class, or rich? Did this situation change during the rest (your/his/her) life? How?		X		
10	During this time in (your/his/her) life, was (you/he/she) living at home or on (your/his/her) own? If (you/he/she) was on (your/his/her) own, was (you/he/she) able to make ends meet?		X		
11	Did (you/he/she) have any debts? Did (you/he/she) or (your/his/her) family worry about being able to pay the bills?		X	X	X
12	Did (you/he/she) work to improve (your/his/her) or (your/his/her) family's financial situation?		X	X	
13	What did (your/his/her) financial assets consist of at this time in (your/his/her) life? Did (you/he/she) have a bank account or any other funds?		X		

Personal Finances

Key	1. Child=C 2. Young Adult=YA 3. Adult=A 4. Sr. Adult=SA	C	YA	A	SA
14	How would (you/he/she) describe (your/his/her) financial situation during these years of (your/his/her) life? Would (you/he/she) say (you/he/she) was poor, middle class, or rich? Did this situation change during (your/his/her) life? How?			X	
15	What kinds of items was (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) family able to purchase? Could (you/he/she) only afford necessities or could (you/he/she) afford luxury items?			X	
16	Did (you/he/she) have any dependents? Did they contribute to (your/his/her) finances?			X	
17	What did (your/his/her) financial assets consist of at this time in (your/his/her) life? Did (you/he/she) have a bank account or any other funds? Did (you/he/she) invest in the stock market or have other investments?			X	
18	How would (you/he/she) describe (your/his/her) financial situation during these years of (your/his/her) life? Would (you/he/she) say (you/he/she) was poor, middle class, or rich?				X
19	What did (your/his/her) or (your/his/her) family's monetary assets consist of at this time in (your/his/her) life? Did (you/he/she) have a bank account or any other funds? Did (you/he/she) invest in the stock market?				X
20	Did (you/he/she) work to improve (your/his/her) or (your/his/her) family's financial situation? Was (you/he/she) financially independent at this point in (your/his/her) life?				X
21	Did (you/he/she) feel (you/he/she) was financially prepared for retirement?				X
22	Did (you/he/she) create a will at this point in (your/his/her) life? Was money an important part of it?				X
23	Did (your/his/her) financial situation give (your/his/her) opportunities? For example, was (you/he/she) able to travel or retire early? Did (your/his/her) financial situation deprive (your/his/her) of anything?				X

Pets

1	What type of animal was it? Did it have a name? How did it get its name? What did it look like?
2	How did (you/he/she) get the pet? Did someone give it to (you/him/her) as a gift? Did (you/he/she) catch it?
3	How old was/were (you/he/she) when (you/he/she) spent time with it? Was his age a factor in how special the animal was to him? How old was the animal at the time?
4	What did they do together? Take walks, cuddle, go on rides, or just play? Did (you/he/she) teach it to do tricks?
5	Why did this animal mean a lot to him? Was it the way he interacted with it? Did (you/he/she) nurse it through an illness? Was it his pet all of its life?
6	Did he take care of it or did someone else? Who? Was it easy to take care of? How often did (you/he/she) see this animal? Did owning a pet teach (you/him/her) about responsibility?
7	Was there something the animal would do that would make (you/him/her) laugh? What was it?
8	Did the animal die? If so, at what age did (you/he/she) experience this loss, and how did (you/he/she) feel about it? What was the cause of death?
9	If the pet died, what did (you/he/she) do with it afterwards? Was there a funeral? Did (you/he/she) take it to the humane society?
10	If the pet died or was lost, did (you/he/she) try to replace it with another pet? Did it help his healing process? Was it a constant reminder of the lost pet?
11	If the pet died when (you/he/she) was young, did it help prepare him for the death of a human friend or relative in later years?

Physical Characteristics

Key	1. Teenager=T 2. Adult=A 3. Senior Adult=SA	T	A	SA
1	Describe what (you/he/she) looked like in (your/his/her) teenage years. Describe how (your/his/her) physical characteristics changed over these years.	X		
2	If (you/he/she) went through puberty in (your/his/her) teenage years, describe the experience. What changes occurred?	X		
3	Describe (your/his/her) hair. How did (you/he/she) wear it? Was there a particular style name associated with the way (you/he/she) wore (your/his/her) hair?	X		
4	What color was (your/his/her) hair? Did (you/he/she) perm or color it? Did (you/he/she) spend a lot of time fixing (your/his/her) hair for school, work, or other events? What did (you/he/she) have to do to it?	X	X	X
5	Was (you/he/she) happy with (your/his/her) body, or did (you/he/she) wish any part(s) of it could be different? How did (you/he/she) want it to look? Did (you/he/she) do anything to change it? Did (you/he/she) workout or have surgery?	X		
6	Did (you/he/she) have difficulties maintaining (your/his/her) weight? Did (you/he/she) feel (you/he/she) was too small or too big? Did (you/he/she) do anything to change (your/his/her) weight?	X	X	X
7	Did (you/he/she) have any tattoos or ever want to have one? Where were they? What did they look like?	X		
8	Describe (your/his/her) body. Was (you/he/she) tall or short? Thin or stocky? Muscular or not?	X		
9	At this time in (your/his/her) life, if (you/he/she) could have changed (your/his/her) physical characteristics in any way, what would (you/he/she) have done? Why?	X	X	X
10	Did (you/he/she) feel happy with the way (you/he/she) looked? Was (your/his/her) appearance important to (your/his/her)?	X		
11	Describe (your/his/her) face. What was (your/his/her) complexion like? What did (your/his/her) eyes, nose, and other facial features look like? Did (you/he/she) wear glasses or braces? If yes, how did (you/he/she) feel about wearing them?	X		

Physical Characteristics

Key	1. Teenager=T 2. Adult=A 3. Senior Adult=SA	T	A	SA
12	Did (you/he/she) look like or resemble anyone during (your/his/her) teenage years? Did (you/he/she) like looking like this person? Why or why not?	X		
13	Describe what (you/he/she) looked like in (your/his/her) senior years. Describe how (your/his/her) physical characteristics changed over these years.		X	X
14	Describe (your/his/her) hair. How did (you/he/she) wear it? Was there a particular style name associated with the way (you/he/she) wore (your/his/her) hair?		X	X
15	Describe (your/his/her) face. What did (your/his/her) eyes, nose, and other facial features look like? Did (you/he/she) wear glasses? If yes, how did (you/he/she) feel about wearing them?		X	X
16	Was (you/he/she) happy with (your/his/her) body? During these years did (you/he/she) wish any part(s) of it could be different? How did (you/he/she) want it to look? Did (you/he/she) do anything to change it? Did (you/he/she) exercise or have surgery?		X	X
17	Did (you/he/she) have any tattoos or ever want to have one? Where were they? What did they look like?		X	X
18	Did (you/he/she) wear dentures or a hearing aid?		X	X
19	Did (you/he/she) look like or resemble anyone during (your/his/her) senior years? Did (you/he/she) like looking like this person? Why or why not?		X	X

Personality and Values

1	Individuals have common and unique experiences that have the potential to shape personalities and values. What were some of (your/his/her) experiences that affected (your/his/her) personality and values?
2	From where did (you/he/she) get (your/his/her) values? Were they from (your/his/her) parents, friends, school, religion, or family? Was there one significant person or place that influenced (your/his/her)?
3	How would (you/he/she) have described (your/his/her)self? Perhaps good-natured or irritable, responsible or undependable, analytical or creative, funny or serious? Would (your/his/her) description of (your/his/her)self be the same as other peoples' descriptions?
4	Did (you/he/she) have any favorites? What colors, foods, songs, and activities did (you/he/she) prefer over anything else?
5	What was (your/his/her) disposition like? Was (you/he/she) an extrovert--talkative, open, and adventurous? Or was (you/he/she) an introvert--more comfortable by (your/his/her)self, shy, and cautious?
6	Did (you/he/she) have the same traits in public as (you/he/she) did in private? For example, was (you/he/she) as funny or easy going in a crowd of unfamiliar people as (you/he/she) was with small, intimate groups?
7	What things did (you/he/she) strongly approve of or value and why? For example, a good education, strong family ties, freedom, privacy, or the right to choose one's future?
8	What things did (you/he/she) disapprove of? For example, women working outside of the home, political involvement in foreign countries, divorce, or abortion? Why did (you/he/she) have such strong views on these issues?
9	Were there ever issues (you/he/she) thought were worth fighting for? What did (you/he/she) do about them? What were the results?
10	Did (your/his/her) personality resemble anyone in particular? For example did (your/his/her) sense of humor resemble (your/his/her) dad's, or did (your/his/her) sarcasm descend from a grandparent?
11	Did (you/he/she) ever wish (you/he/she) could have changed (your/his/her) personality or values? Why? In what ways would (you/he/she) have changed them?

Raising a Family

Key	1. Had Children=C 2. Did Not Have Children=NC	C	NC
1	Did (you/he/she) start raising a family when (you/he/she) had planned to? Did it come later or sooner in life than (you/he/she) expected?	X	
2	Did (you/he/she) raise (your/his/her) children alone or with someone? Was there a marriage, divorce, or death that ever changed this?	X	
3	Where did (you/he/she) live during this time? Did (you/he/she) think it was a good area to raise a family? Why or why not?	X	
4	Did (your/his/her) family move around very much or did they reside in the same area for a long time? Was this by choice?	X	
5	How did (you/he/she) provide for (your/his/her) family? Was it hard to make ends meet or were they well off?	X	
6	Were there any special measures (you/he/she) took in raising (your/his/her) family? Did (you/he/she) have ways of ensuring their safety or well being?	X	
7	How did (you/he/she) determine what rules (your/his/her) family should abide by? Were they effective? Did they change as time went on? How? Did they stem from the way (you/he/she) was raised?	X	
8	Did (you/he/she) and other family members agree on how children should be raised? If not, how did it work out?	X	
9	What day-to-day activities did (you/he/she) do with (your/his/her) children? Was (you/he/she) with them constantly or did (you/he/she) work during this time?	X	
10	Did (your/his/her) child or children go to nursery school or preschool? What influenced (your/his/her) decision to enroll them? Was (you/he/she) happy with (your/his/her) decision? Was it hard on (your/his/her) to see (your/his/her) child first go to school?	X	
11	What values did (you/he/she) try to instill in (your/his/her) children? Did (you/he/she) succeed?	X	
12	Did (you/he/she) take (your/his/her) family on any special trips? Where did they go? Did they enjoy spending this time together?	X	

Raising a Family

Key	1. Had Children=C 2. Did Not Have Children=NC	C	NC
13	Was (your/his/her) family close or distant? Did (your/his/her) children confide in (your/his/her) or did they keep secrets?	X	
14	What difficult issues did (you/he/she) encounter while raising a family? Performance in school, dating and sex, going to college, alcohol and drugs, or getting married? Did they ever have arguments about these things?	X	
15	Did any of (your/his/her) children go away to college or the service? What emotions did (you/he/she) go through during this time?	X	
16	Under what circumstances did (your/his/her) child or children leave home? Was (you/he/she) happy or sad to see them go? Did their relationship get better or worse after this?	X	
17	After (your/his/her) children had grown, what did (you/he/she) think was the best part about raising a family?	X	
18	For what reasons did (you/he/she) not have children?		X
19	Did (you/he/she) like children? Did (you/he/she) enjoy being around other people's children?		X
20	What did (you/he/she) like most about not having children? Did (you/he/she) enjoy the freedom?		X
21	What did (you/he/she) like least about not having children? Did (you/he/she) ever feel lonely? Later in life, did (you/he/she) wish (you/he/she) had grandchildren?		X

Recreation

1	Did (you/he/she) have any special talents? Did (you/he/she) dance, sing, or play an instrument? Did (you/he/she) draw or paint? How did (you/he/she) develop these skills? What role did (your/his/her) parents play in the development of (your/his/her) skills? Did (you/he/she) perform or exhibit (your/his/her) works in public?
2	Did (you/he/she) have a hobby? How did (you/he/she) become involved with the hobby? Describe it and why (you/he/she) enjoyed it. Did (you/he/she) start a collection? What items did (you/he/she) create because of (your/his/her) hobby?
3	What else did (you/he/she) enjoy doing in (your/his/her) spare time? Did (you/he/she) like listening to music, reading, or playing games with friends?
4	Did (you/he/she) play any sports? What were (your/his/her) favorites? Was (you/he/she) talented at the sports (you/he/she) liked to play? Did (you/he/she) compete in any races or tournaments? Did (you/he/she) ever belong to a recreational sports team? Describe (your/his/her) experiences on the team.
5	Did (you/he/she) spend time outdoors? If so, what did (you/he/she) like to do? Play with friends, swim, or hike?
6	Was (you/he/she) a member of a club or association, such as the boy or girl scouts? Describe the club and why (you/he/she) decided to become a member of it. In what club activities did (you/he/she) participate?
7	Are there any activities that (you/he/she) did with (your/his/her) family on a regular basis? Did they spend time together on the weekends? Did they take special trips together?
8	Did (you/he/she) do any charity or volunteer work? Describe what (you/he/she) did and how it made (your/his/her) feel.

Relationships and Dating

1	When was (your/his/her) first crush? Who was the person (you/he/she) had a crush on? Did (you/he/she) kiss this person? Did (you/he/she) end up dating or going "steady" with this person?
2	When was (your/his/her) first kiss? Whom did (you/he/she) kiss? How old was (you/he/she)? Was (you/he/she) nervous? Excited? Scared?
3	Did (you/he/she) ever play any kissing games when (you/he/she) was young?
4	When was (your/his/her) first date? How old was (you/he/she)? Who was (your/his/her) date? Was (you/he/she) nervous? Where did they go and what did they do? Was the date a success or a disaster?
5	Did (you/he/she) ever go on a blind or double date? Did (you/he/she) ever have a chaperone on a date? Was (you/he/she) ever "stood-up"?
6	Describe (your/his/her) best and worst dates. Describe the most embarrassing thing that ever happened to (your/his/her) on a date. Describe the best thing that ever happened to (your/his/her) on a date.
7	When (you/he/she) was dating, did (you/he/she) consider (your/his/her)self a romantic person? What did (you/he/she) do that was romantic? What was the most romantic thing that ever happened to (your/his/her)?
8	Did (you/he/she) ever attend any school dances or proms? Did (you/he/she) have a date for it or did (you/he/she) or just go with friends? Did (you/he/she) dance with anyone? What songs were popular? Did (you/he/she) go anywhere afterwards?
9	There are a variety of social events in different communities, such as a fireman's ball, church functions, barn dances, or county fairs. Did (you/he/she) ever attend any social events like this?
10	Who was (your/his/her) first love? How did they meet? How long were they together? Did they send love letters to each other? Did they have a special song? Did they have nicknames for each other?
11	Was (your/his/her) heart ever broken by someone? What were the circumstances? Did they grow apart? Was someone unfaithful? Did they move apart?

Religion

1	Did (you/he/she) believe in God or a higher power? At what age did (you/he/she) develop (your/his/her) religious beliefs?
2	Who introduced (your/his/her) to religion? (your/his/her) parents, grandparents, aunt, uncle, or a friend? How was the concept first brought to (your/his/her)?
3	Was (you/he/she) raised to follow or have faith in any particular religion? How did it affect (your/his/her) childhood? Were there any particular traditions or customs that (your/his/her) family followed?
4	Was (you/he/she) involved in any religious movements or revivals that helped (your/his/her) to develop (your/his/her) faith? What were they like? Describe them.
5	How has (your/his/her) spirituality affected (your/his/her) beliefs and values? Did (you/he/she) think they were different from society's values because of (your/his/her) religion? In what ways?
6	Was (you/he/she) ever involved in any circumstances in which (you/he/she) was made to feel uncomfortable because (your/his/her) beliefs or values were not those of society? What was it like?
7	Did religion change at all after (you/he/she) was introduced to it? Has the church or (your/his/her) place of worship changed at all? In what ways? What about people's beliefs and values?
8	Did (your/his/her) religion follow the teaching of the Bible, Koran, Talmud, Book of Mormon, or another book or doctrine? Which one? Who was it written by and what does it teach? Who was the book or doctrine inspired by?
9	Did (you/he/she) have a personal faith that does not involve fellowship or a church? Was (your/his/her) God a personal God that (you/he/she) prayed to?
10	On what day of the week did (you/he/she) worship? Describe what happened on these days. Did (you/he/she) attend a religious service and then do something special with (your/his/her) family or friends?
11	What was (your/his/her) place of worship like? Was it more of a social center or a place to worship and learn? Why? Describe the building. Was it a temple, a church with stained glass, or did (you/he/she) meet with others in someone's home?
12	What was involved in the typical service? A lot of prayer, singing, and preaching?
13	Were there special ceremonies like confirmations, baptisms, bar or bat mitzvahs, or child or family dedications? What were they like?
14	Was (you/he/she) ever involved in a ministry? What was it like? What was (your/his/her) role in the ministry? What did (you/he/she) find most challenging about being in the ministry? What did (you/he/she) find most rewarding?

Religion

15	If (you/he/she) was involved in a ministry, did (you/he/she) have to travel to foreign countries? What were (your/his/her) living arrangements like? Did (you/he/she) live with other missionaries, or did (you/he/she) have (your/his/her) own home?
16	Were there various stages in (your/his/her) personal faith and growth? Were there times in (your/his/her) life when (you/he/she) felt more spiritual than others? What were those times like?
17	Did (you/he/she) believe in prayer? Did (you/he/she) ever have any prayers answered? What was the situation? Did (you/he/she) think it was just coincidence or did (you/he/she) believe it was truly an answered prayer?
18	Did (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) family differ in religious beliefs? How did the differences come about? In what ways did it affect (your/his/her) relationship with (your/his/her) family members? Did they respect (your/his/her) beliefs?
19	Did (you/he/she) ever have any arguments or discussions over the issue of religion with (your/his/her) family? Describe one. Was the issue ever resolved? Did any family members convert to (your/his/her) religion or (your/his/her) to theirs?
20	Did (you/he/she) or will (you/he/she) bring up (your/his/her) children with the same religion or beliefs that (you/he/she) has, or will (you/he/she) let them choose their own religion and beliefs when they are old enough?
21	What about astrology? Did (you/he/she) believe in it? Did (you/he/she) know (your/his/her) sign? Did (your/his/her) horoscope ever predict anything that came true? What was it?
22	Did (you/he/she) believe in life after death? What did (you/he/she) think happens to someone after they pass away? Has this affected (your/his/her) faith in the (your/his/her) hereafter? Did (your/his/her) views change as (you/he/she) matured?

Settling the Great Plains

Key	1. Native American=NA 2. Settler=S	NA	S
1	There were 31 Plains tribes, what tribe was (you/he/she) from? Was (you/he/she) forced to move from (your/his/her) land when others began to move into (your/his/her) territory?	X	
2	Where was (your/his/her) tribe originally located and to where did it relocate? Did the tribe resist the government's orders to go? How did they resist? Were there any battles with injuries or deaths?	X	
3	As more people moved into the Plains, how did (your/his/her) life change? Was it more difficult to hunt or find food? Were some of the tribe's traditions hard to maintain?	X	
4	How did the tribe adapt to new conditions? Did some adopt aspects of the Caucasian culture? Was the tribe able to stay together or did it disintegrate? Why?	X	
5	Did any diseases plague (your/his/her) tribe during this time? Was smallpox a threat?	X	
6	When the railroad was built, did (you/he/she) expect it to have the impact that it did? The railroad brought immigrant workers, the purchase of more land, and the slaughter of buffaloes. How did this worsen an already bad situation in which (you/he/she) was involved?	X	
7	When the Civil War ended there were 12 million buffaloes on the Great Plains, but by the 1900's there were only 50 left. To (your/his/her), in what ways did this symbolize the devastation of the Plains?	X	
8	Did (you/he/she) believe there was a peaceful way for natives and non-natives to live together in North America? Why or why not? Was there a way to preserve more of the Native American (your/his/her) heritage?	X	
9	What were the feelings of the people in (your/his/her) tribe? Were people thankful to be alive, hateful of Caucasians, sorrowful for the loss of land? How did they express their feelings?	X	
10	Did (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) family follow in the footsteps of many other "gold rushers" and move West to settle on the Great Plains? Why did (you/he/she) go?		X
11	How was the journey? What type of problems arose? Was there enough food and water? Did (you/he/she) have negative encounters with natives or weather?		X
12	Where did (you/he/she) settle? Was it an unpopulated area, or did (you/he/she) move into a town? Did (you/he/she) stake a claim through a land office, or did (you/he/she) buy (your/his/her) land from someone else?		X

Settling the Great Plains

Key	1. Native American=NA 2. Settler=S	NA	S
13	What did (you/he/she) find in the Great Plains? Gold? Freedom? Land? Was it exactly what (you/he/she) were looking for?		X
14	What type of work did (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) family members do at this time? Was (you/he/she) a miner, railroad worker, farmer, or employed by the government?		X
15	Did (you/he/she) or any of (your/his/her) family members have experiences with Native Americans? What happened? How did (you/he/she) feel about the natives? Did (you/he/she) fear them?		X
16	As the railroad was built, its modern advances substantially changed the Great Plains, did (you/he/she) expect it to have such a strong impact?		X
17	Did (you/he/she) and (your/his/her) family live by a railroad? What impact did this have on their lives? Did (you/he/she) have access to more goods? Did (you/he/she) travel? Did it cause any fires or kill livestock that strayed onto the tracks?		X
18	What type of school, if any, did (your/his/her) family members attend? Was there a structured school for children to go to? How many children attended? How many months out of each year was school in session?		X
19	Was there a church for all to attend? Did (you/he/she) attend? Was (your/his/her) community religious?		X
20	What else did the closest town contain? A dry goods store? A hotel? How did the town grow over the years?		X
21	Was there a saloon in town? If yes, did it have noisy fights? Was this a place that (you/he/she) frequented?		X
22	Were there individuals in town that had a bad reputation? What did they do? Did strangers ever come into town and cause trouble? What happened? Was there a (you/he/she)riff or was the town quiet enough that it didn't need one?		X
23	What type of home did (you/he/she) live in? Did (you/he/she) build it (your/his/her)self? What was it made out of? How big was it?		X
24	Were the winters a difficult season? What did (you/he/she) worry about? What hardship did each season bring?		X

Subsequent Marriages

1	How many times did (you/he/she) marry? Had any of (your/his/her) spouses previously been married?
2	Why did (your/his/her) previous marriage end? Was there a divorce? If so, was it amicable or bitter? Was there a death?
3	What did (you/he/she) learn from previous marriages that (you/he/she) brought into the new relationship?
4	Did (your/his/her) expectations of marriage differ after having been married before? Why? In what ways?
5	Was (you/he/she) reluctant to remarry? Why or why not?
6	How and where did (you/he/she) meet (your/his/her) new spouse? What was the initial attraction? How long did (you/he/she) date before (you/he/she) was engaged? Did (you/he/she) live with (your/his/her) spouse before (you/he/she) was engaged or married? Had (your/his/her) spouse been married before?
7	Describe (your/his/her) engagement. Who proposed? Was the proposal a surprise or was it expected? What was their reaction?
8	Did both families approve of the engagement and marriage? Why or why not? When did (you/he/she) first meet (your/his/her) in-laws? Were they accepting? When did (your/his/her) spouse first meet (your/his/her) parents? Did they welcome (your/his/her) spouse?
9	How long was (your/his/her) engagement? Did it seem to last forever or did time just fly by?
10	What was their wedding like? Did they have a large ceremony, a small ceremony, or did they elope? What made them decide to have it this way? What was the preparation like?
11	Describe how (you/he/she) felt. Did (you/he/she) have the same feelings as (you/he/she) did during (your/his/her) first wedding?
12	Who attended the wedding? Were their family and friends present? Did anyone participate in the ceremony? How did they choose them? Did they have a flower girl or a ring bearer? Who were they? Were children from previous marriages present?
13	Was the reception memorable? Was food served? Was there dancing? How many people did they invite? Was it as elaborate as her first marriage?
14	Did they have any traditional customs or rituals at the reception? What were they?
15	Did they go on a honeymoon? Where did they travel? Describe the vacation. What was most memorable?

Subsequent Marriages

16	Did they go into marriage thinking they could change something about the other? What were some of those things and how did it work out?
17	Did they go through any major adjustments when they were first married? How did they work through the issues of joint finances, housing, and living with another person? Were there any children involved?
18	If children were brought into the marriage, how did each spouse adjust and react to having an instant family? If there were initially problems, were they able to overcome them?
19	Describe the various stages of their marriage. Were there any high points that stand out? What about any low points? In what ways did their marriage grow stronger or weaker from them?
20	How did they spend their holidays? Did they trade off between families? If they traded, did it put a strain on the families?
21	Did (you/he/she) feel (you/he/she) had to give up anything when (you/he/she) got married? (your/his/her) home, career, independence, or friends?
22	What did (you/he/she) gain by getting married? A lifetime companion, more time with the one (you/he/she) loved, financial security?
23	Describe (your/his/her) spouse. In what ways was (your/his/her) spouse different from or similar to (your/his/her) previous spouse?
24	Who played which roles in their marriage--breadwinner, homemaker, and decision-maker? Did these roles change over time? In what ways?
25	At the start of their marriage what did they have in common? What about their differences? After being married for awhile, did either person change?
26	What issues did they argue about when they were first married? Money, politics, child rearing, religion? As their marriage matured, did they argue about the same issues?
27	What differences were there in each of (your/his/her) marriages? Did being married before help or hurt (your/his/her) subsequent marriages? How?
28	Did (your/his/her) different spouses ever meet each other? Did any problems arise between (your/his/her) different spouses? Over what issues?
29	Did this marriage end? If yes, why? Was it through a divorce or death?
30	If (you/he/she) had it to do all over again, what changes would (you/he/she) make in any of (your/his/her) marriages? Why?

The Great Depression

1	In later years, what was the first thing that came into (your/his/her) mind when (you/he/she) heard the word "Depression"? What feelings and memories did this word bring back?
2	Did (your/his/her) family or friends invest in the stock market? Did (you/he/she) or anyone (you/he/she) knew lose money in the stock market? What did this money loss mean?
3	How quickly were the effects of the stock market crash felt in (your/his/her) household, if at all? Did (you/he/she) notice what was happening because of the effects it had on (your/his/her) family or because of the effects it had on others?
4	Did (you/he/she) experience bank panics? What happened at these times? Did (you/he/she) lose money or was (you/he/she) unable to get use of (your/his/her) money because of a panic?
5	What did (you/he/she) have to do without during the Depression? New clothes? Money for entertainment? Meat? Or was (your/his/her) family still fairly comfortable?
6	How did (you/he/she) feel when (you/he/she) became aware of the magnitude of the economic difficulties? Was (you/he/she) afraid for (your/his/her)self and (your/his/her) family or was (you/he/she) confident that (you/he/she) would make it through? How did (your/his/her) expectations measure up to reality?
7	About 25% of the work force was unemployed at the height of the Depression. How were (your/his/her) family and friends affected in this aspect? Were they out of jobs for extended periods of time or did they have steady work?
8	Without steady work, what was done to get money? Did (you/he/she) have to sell any of (your/his/her) possessions? How did it feel to do this? Was it hard to part with some items or was (you/he/she) just happy to have the money? What was sold first?
9	Did (your/his/her) family move to find work in another part of the state or country? If so, were they successful? How did it feel to face the unknown?
10	Did (your/his/her) family move in with relatives or did (you/he/she) take in relatives who were having difficulties? What was it like having extra people in the household? Was there any resentment among the different family members?
11	Did (you/he/she) or anyone (you/he/she) knew become homeless? What happened? Did (you/he/she) or they move into a "Hooverville"? What were the conditions there? What was the mood of the inhabitants?
12	What did (your/his/her) family think about accepting or giving charity? Did they not like to accept help from others? Did they think that people should fend for themselves? Were they happy to give or receive what they could?
13	Even during the height of the Depression, many people who could scrape together enough money still went to the movies. Did (you/he/she) do this? Why? Was it a way to escape reality?
14	In later years, what did (you/he/she) remember about the movie stars of the era? Did they seem as glamorous then as we tend to characterize them now? Did (you/he/she) or others resent their lifestyles when so many people were desperately poor?

The Great Depression

15	How were holidays celebrated during the Depression? Did (you/he/she) still eat special foods or give and receive gifts when appropriate? Did they pass by without anyone noticing? How had the mood changed?
16	What did (you/he/she) think were some of the major causes of the Depression? Did (you/he/she) think that it was caused by over-speculation in the stock market or bad bank loans? What else might have added to the problems?
17	Why did (you/he/she) think that it lasted for so long? Were the policies of Hoover and FDR effective or ineffective? What would (you/he/she) have done in the President's place?
18	What were (your/his/her) opinions of Hoover and his policies? What was he doing right and what was he doing wrong?
19	Did (you/he/she) think that FDR would do a better job than Hoover? Why or why not?
20	Before the stock market crashed, were people generally optimistic about the future? How long was it after the Depression before optimism returned?

The New Deal

1	Did (you/he/she) support Roosevelt in the 1932 election? Why or why not? Did he seem like the person who could pull the country out of the Depression?
2	Did (you/he/she) hear Roosevelt's first "fireside chat" in March of 1933? What did he say? Did it inspire confidence and hope in (your/his/her)?
3	Roosevelt's first one hundred days in office are famous because of the numerous programs, acts, and agencies that he created and implemented. Was (you/he/she) affected by any of this activity? Did (you/he/she) get a job, government aid, or a loan because of it?
4	Soon after his inauguration, Roosevelt reformed the banking system in an attempt to make it safe for depositors again. Did (you/he/she) feel that (you/he/she) could trust the banks after Roosevelt's adjustments to the system?
5	One of Roosevelt's agencies, the NRA, was controversial because it granted businesses the right to set prices and control production levels, contradicting anti-trust laws. What was (your/his/her) feeling on this? Was it necessary for industrial recovery?
6	Unions rose in popularity during the New Deal era. Did (you/he/she) belong to one? Did (your/his/her) wages or working conditions improve because of a union?
7	The Social Security System was created in 1935. What did (you/he/she) think of this innovation? Did (you/he/she) feel that it should or shouldn't be up to each individual to provide for themselves?
8	If (your/his/her) family had financial difficulties during the Depression, did life take a turn for the better after the New Deal policies were implemented? When did (you/he/she) notice a change?
9	It was WWII that finally brought the U.S. completely out of the Depression, but did (you/he/she) think that Roosevelt's New Deal helped the recovery along? In what way?
10	What did (you/he/she) learn from going through the Depression and the New Deal years? Did this experience change (your/his/her) character at all? In what way?

U.S. Expansion and Exploration

1	Between 1850 and 1900, 15 states joined the union, including most of the western states and the Great Plains States. The formation of the new states was exciting both to residents and to people in the rest of the country as well. How did (you/he/she) feel about these new additions to the country?
2	Where did (you/he/she) live during this period? If (you/he/she) was living in an area both before and after that area became a state, how did statehood change (your/his/her) life, if at all? Did (you/he/she) attend a statehood celebration? Did governmental services, such as the legal system and law enforcement, improve?
3	Expansion in the West soon prompted the need for a transcontinental railroad. In 1869, the first such railroad was completed and there was great celebration surrounding the event. More railroads followed. Did the construction of the transcontinental railroad have any effect on (your/his/her) life? If so, describe how.
4	America's great expansion resulted in the death and displacement of thousands of Native Americans to make room for white settlements. Today, many people believe that this was an unjust tragedy, but in the late 1800's that belief was not as common. How did (you/he/she) feel about the plight of Native Americans?

WW I

Key	1. Joined Military=M 2. Stayed Home=SH	M	SH
1	Which branch did (you/he/she) serve in? Did (you/he/she) enlist or was (you/he/she) drafted? How did (you/he/she) feel about the draft? Was (you/he/she) opposed to serving in the military or was (you/he/she) proud to serve (your/his/her) country?	X	
2	Describe basic training. Who was (your/his/her) commanding officer? Who were (your/his/her) peers? Where and for how long was (you/he/she) trained? What did (you/he/she) learn?	X	
3	Did (you/he/she) have trouble getting along with anyone in (your/his/her) unit? Why? What became of it? How did (you/he/she) deal with it?	X	
4	Did (you/he/she) have a nickname? What were the memorable nicknames of others?	X	
5	How did (you/he/she) feel about sharing (your/his/her) space with others? Did it feel cramped at first? Was it easy to get used to?	X	
6	What was (your/his/her) most vivid memory of this time? Specific people or places? A certain event?	X	
7	Did basic training build up or cut down (your/his/her) self-confidence? Why or why not? Did (you/he/she) feel as if (you/he/she) was well-prepared for (your/his/her) duties? Did it turn out that (you/he/she) was prepared?	X	
8	Was (you/he/she) especially skilled at one particular task? Did it become (your/his/her) "specialty"?	X	
9	Where was (you/he/she) stationed after basic training? What were the people and the surrounding areas like? How long was (you/he/she) there?	X	
10	How did (you/he/she) keep in touch with (your/his/her) friends and family back home during this time? Did (you/he/she) save any letters (you/he/she) might have written or received?	X	
11	Did (you/he/she) become close friends with any of those (you/he/she) fought with? Did they keep in touch in later years? Did (you/he/she) save any of their lives? Did they save (your/his/her)s?	X	
12	Which battles did (you/he/she) fight in? Describe the time, place, number of participants, and what happened. How did these battles affect the war as a whole? What role did (your/his/her) unit play in this battle?	X	
13	World War I is often described as a war fought "in the trenches." Did (you/he/she) experience this type of fighting? Describe what this was like.	X	
14	World War I introduced many new things to warfare, including tanks, U-boats, poison gas, and aviation. Did (you/he/she) use any of these innovations during the war? What were (your/his/her) experiences?	X	

WW I

Key	1. Joined Military=M 2. Stayed Home=SH	M	SH
15	Was (you/he/she) injured in any way? Describe what happened. What went through (your/his/her) mind when (you/he/she) realized (you/he/she) was hurt?	X	
16	If (you/he/she) was injured, did (you/he/she) heal quickly or not? Did (you/he/she) return home because of the injury, or did (you/he/she) go back to fight? How did it change (your/his/her) in ways that (you/he/she) noticed years later?	X	
17	Did (you/he/she) ever need to take someone's life? Describe the experience and how it affected (your/his/her) both immediately and in the long term.	X	
18	An armistice was declared on November 11, 1918, after 10 million soldiers had been killed. Did (you/he/she) join in any victory celebrations? What was the mood of the soldiers?	X	
19	What did (you/he/she) think of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and his treaty making capabilities? Did (you/he/she) think that this was a peace that would last? What did (you/he/she) think of the League of Nations?	X	
20	Why did (you/he/she) leave the service? Honorable discharge? Injury? End of active duty? Describe the circumstances and how (you/he/she) felt about them.	X	
21	Was (you/he/she) able to return to "normal functioning"? Was it easy to put it all behind (your/his/her) and get on with (your/his/her) life, or did (you/he/she) have to struggle? What was hardest to adjust to once (you/he/she) returned?	X	
22	Was there someone or something that was helpful in getting (your/his/her) through this period of adjustment? Could (you/he/she) suggest anything helpful to someone going through a similar situation?	X	
23	After all was said and done, what did (you/he/she) learn from (your/his/her) experiences in the military? Why were these lessons valuable to (your/his/her)? How did they change (your/his/her) and (your/his/her) ideas or values?	X	
24	How would (you/he/she) be different if (you/he/she) had never had these experiences?	X	
25	What sort of memorabilia did (you/he/she) save from this time? What did it symbolize to (your/his/her)? What memories and feelings did it bring back after the war?	X	
26	Why did (you/he/she) stay home for that time? Was (you/he/she) not called up or was (your/his/her) tour of duty shorter than the duration of the war? Was (you/he/she) too young or too old? Did (you/he/she) wish that (you/he/she) could have gone?		X
27	What was it like at home? How was life different because of the war? What was the biggest sacrifice (you/he/she) had to make because of it?		X
28	What did (you/he/she) do at home to help the war effort? Did (you/he/she) buy "Liberty Bonds"? Did (your/his/her) family observe wheatless Mondays and Wednesdays or meatless Tuesdays so more food would be available to send overseas?		X

WW I

Key	1. Joined Military=M 2. Stayed Home=SH	M	SH
29	Did any friends or family fight in the war? How did (you/he/she) feel when they left? Was (you/he/she) scared? Did (you/he/she) think that (you/he/she) would never see them again or did (you/he/she) feel that they would return? How did it turn out?		X
30	How did (you/he/she) keep in touch with (your/his/her) loved ones who were away during this time? Did (you/he/she) save any letters (you/he/she) wrote or received?		X
31	Did any friends or family die because of the war? Who? Did (you/he/she) know how he or (you/he/she) died? When did (you/he/she) find out about their death?		X
32	During the war years, many minorities and women took jobs that they couldn't get previously. Did (you/he/she) notice these changes? What did (you/he/she) think of them?		X
33	When did the war end for (your/his/her)? Was it when the armistice was declared? Or perhaps it was when a loved one came home. Describe that day.		X
34	An armistice was declared on November 11, 1918, after 10 million soldiers had been killed. Did (you/he/she) join in any victory celebrations? What was the mood of the population?		X
35	What did (you/he/she) think of Woodrow Wilson's Fourteen Points and his treaty making capabilities? Did (you/he/she) think that this was a peace that would last? What did (you/he/she) think of the League of Nations?		X
36	What was it like when (your/his/her) friends and family finally came home? Had they changed in ways (you/he/she) didn't expect? Had (you/he/she) changed in ways they didn't expect? What was hardest to adjust to once they got back? What was easiest?		X
37	Did it take a long time for life to return to normal? Did it ever? Was it easy to put it all behind (your/his/her) and get on with (your/his/her) life or did (you/he/she) have to struggle? Why?		X

War Years (e.g., WW II, Korean War, Vietnam)

Key	1. Joined Military=M 2. Stayed Home=SH	M	SH
1	Which branch did (you/he/she) serve in? Did (you/he/she) enlist or was (you/he/she) drafted? How did (you/he/she) feel about the draft? Was (you/he/she) philosophically or politically opposed to serving in the military or was (you/he/she) proud to serve (your/his/her) country?	X	
2	Describe basic training. Who was (your/his/her) commanding officer? Who were (your/his/her) peers? Where and for how long was (you/he/she) trained? What did (you/he/she) do?	X	
3	Did (you/he/she) have trouble getting along with anyone in (your/his/her) unit? Why? What became of it? How did (you/he/she) deal with it?	X	
4	Did (you/he/she) have a nickname? What were the memorable nicknames of others?	X	
5	How did (you/he/she) feel about sharing (your/his/her) space with others? Did it feel cramped at first? Was it easy to get used to?	X	
6	What was (your/his/her) most vivid memory of this time? Specific people or places? A certain event?	X	
7	Which weapons was (you/he/she) trained to use? How did (you/he/she) feel about using weapons? Was (you/he/she) comfortable with one in particular?	X	
8	Was (you/he/she) especially skilled at one particular task? Did it become (your/his/her) "specialty"?	X	
9	Did basic training build up or cut down (your/his/her) self-confidence? Why or why not? Did (you/he/she) feel as if (you/he/she) was well-prepared for (your/his/her) duties? Did it turn out that (you/he/she) was prepared?	X	
10	Where was (you/he/she) stationed after basic training? What were the people and the surrounding area like?	X	
11	How did (you/he/she) keep in touch with (your/his/her) friends and family back home during this time? Did (you/he/she) save any letters (you/he/she) or they might have written?	X	
12	Did (you/he/she) become close friends with any of those (you/he/she) fought with? Did they keep in touch? Did (you/he/she) save any of their lives? Did they save (your/his/her)s?	X	
13	Which battles did (you/he/she) fight in? Describe the time, place, number of participants, and what happened. How did these battles affect the war as a whole? What role did (your/his/her) unit play in this battle?	X	

War Years (e.g., World War I, WW II, Korean War, Vietnam)

Key	1. Joined Military=M 2. Stayed Home=SH	M	SH
14	Was (you/he/she) injured in any way? Describe what happened. What went through (your/his/her) mind when (you/he/she) realized (you/he/she) was hurt?	X	
15	If (you/he/she) was injured, did (you/he/she) heal quickly or not? How did it change (your/his/her) in ways that (you/he/she) still noticed years later?	X	
16	Did (you/he/she) ever need to take someone's life? Briefly describe the experience. How did it affect (your/his/her) both immediately and in the long term?	X	
17	Why did (you/he/she) leave the service? Honorable discharge? Injury? End of active duty? Describe the circumstances and how (you/he/she) felt about them.	X	
18	Was (you/he/she) able to return to "normal functioning"? Was it easy to put it all behind (your/his/her) and get on with (your/his/her) life, or did (you/he/she) have to struggle? What was the hardest to adjust to once (you/he/she) returned?	X	
19	Was there someone or something that was helpful in getting (your/his/her) through the adjustment of returning home? What was their role? What did they do?	X	
20	According to the history books, when the U.S. dropped 2 atomic bombs on Japan, the war was over. From (your/his/her) personal point of view, was this true? If not, describe what still had to be done.	X	
21	After all was said and done, what did (you/he/she) learn from (your/his/her) experiences in the military? Why were these lessons valuable to (your/his/her)? How did they change (your/his/her) and (your/his/her) ideas or values?	X	
22	How would (you/he/she) have been different if (you/he/she) had never had these experiences?	X	
23	What sort of memorabilia did (you/he/she) save from this time? What did it symbolize to (your/his/her)? What memories and feelings did it bring back?	X	
24	How did (you/he/she) feel about (your/his/her) country? Was (you/he/she) angry? Did (you/he/she) feel like a scapegoat?		X
25	What was a camp like? How were the living conditions? What was the mood of the people there?		X
26	Did this have an affect on how (you/he/she) felt about (your/his/her)self and other people of (your/his/her) ethnicity?		X
27	Describe (your/his/her) feelings on the day that (you/he/she) left the camp. Was (you/he/she) overjoyed? Was it a bittersweet day? How was (you/he/she) able to re-integrate (your/his/her)self into everyday life?		X
28	Many years later, the government tried to repay Japanese families for what they lost. What were (your/his/her) thoughts about this?		X

Resources

1. The Discovering Ideas Handbook
<http://daphne.palomar.edu/handbook/handbook.htm#toc>
2. Desktop Publishing Your Family History Book
http://desktoppub.about.com/od/crafts/l/aa_familybook.htm
3. Regional Oral History Office
<http://bancroft.berkeley.edu/ROHO/>
4. Oral History Association
<http://omega.dickinson.edu/organizations/oha/>
5. UCLA Oral History Program
<http://www.library.ucla.edu/libraries/special/ohp/ohpindex.htm>
6. Conducting Oral Histories
http://www.library.csuci.edu/archives/oral_history/HANDBOOK.pdf
7. On the Record: Collecting Oral Histories
<http://www.ancestry.com/learn/library/article.aspx?article=11173>
8. A Practical Guide to Taping Phone Calls and In-Person Conversations in the 50 States and D.C
<http://www.rcfp.org/taping/>
9. Recording Your Life History
http://www.afhs.ab.ca/events/roots/lee_recording_life.pdf
10. Personal History.com
<http://personalhistoryhelp.com/>
11. Combining Personal History with Video
<http://www.ushmm.org/museum/exhibit/online/phistories/>
12. Recording Telephone Calls
<http://www.fcc.gov/cgb/consumerfacts/recordcalls.html>
13. Writing your Personal Family History
http://lds.about.com/library/bl/familyhistory/personal_family_history.pdf
14. Writing a Personal History
http://www.mormonchic.com/style/personal_history.asp
15. HOW TO WRITE AN *AUTOBIOGRAPHY*
<http://www.treasurechestproducts.com/sitebuildercontent/sitebuilderfiles/howtowriteanautobiographyupdated.pdf>
16. How to Write Your Personal History
<http://www.wikihow.com/Write-Your-Personal-History>

Biography Assistant

http://genealogy.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ/Ya&sdn=genealogy&cdn=parenting&tm=7&gps=135_10_923_808&f=22&tt=14&bt=1&bts=0&zu=http%3A//www.genealogy.com/21_neill.html

Writing and Tutorial Center

http://pratt.edu/~wtc/wtc_index.html

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http://genealogy.about.com/gi/dynamic/offsite.htm?zi=1/XJ/Ya&sdn=genealogy&cdn=parenting&tm=7&gps=135_10_923_808&f=22&tt=14&bt=1&bts=0&zu=http%3A//www.genealogy.com/21_neill.html