

INVOLVING THE WHOLE FAMILY IN FAMILY HISTORY

Some activities may work better than others for your family. Activities should be modified to be age-appropriate

Interviewing Older Members of the Family .

Ask about:

- ┌ names, dates, places and family relationships
- ┌ their life and times
- ┌ how they felt about various things
- ┌ what they did, school, work, leisure, church, etc
- ┌ any photos, papers, letters, documents that they will share
- ┌ help in identifying old photos
- ┌ hobbies, sports, special skills,
- ┌ where they lived, what the house was like
- ┌ family stories, folklore and memorabilia
- ┌ how they celebrated holidays
- ┌ pets they had

Things to Do At Home

- ┌ cook something using an old family recipe
- ┌ have your child interview you
- ┌ interview your child (they **do** have things to tell us!)
- ┌ create a time-line of the life of a parent/ grandparent
- ┌ share family stories and traditions
- ┌ create scrapbooks (holidays, where relatives live (lived), schools, etc.)
- ┌ have your child help you with computer searching/ data entry, etc
- ┌ create a time capsule of things children want to keep (report cards, baby picture, art work)
- ┌ create a time capsule as ancestors might have
- ┌ start a family WEB site
- ┌ create a family calendar (pictures/birthdays/anniversaries, etc).
- ┌ create a heritage gift (frame an old picture, make a quilt, etc.)
- ┌ research and record the history of an heirloom
- ┌ have a dress-up party (“I am my Grandpa” or other ancestor)

Visit Grandma’s Attic or Basement

Look for

- | | |
|-----------|----------------------|
| ┌ dolls | ┌ games |
| ┌ clothes | ┌ Halloween costumes |
| ┌ hats | ┌ letters |
| ┌ toys | ┌ photos |
| | ┌ school papers |
| | ┌ school books |

It is fun to look at these things, handle them, see how they work, play the games, etc. ..but there are other activities as well

- ┌ Identify object
- ┌ Whose was it?
- ┌ How did they get it?

- ┌ Time frame? When was it used?
- ┌ Is something like this still used?
- ┌ If not, what do we use now?
- ┌ Write a story about the object
- ┌ Make a label that answers the “whose, what, when”

Trips and Such

A “family outing” to these sort of places near where you live is a great way to “get your feet wet” and develop an interest in visiting such sites, even though you may have no particular connection to that place

- ┌ historical museum
- ┌ historical society
- ┌ battlefield
- ┌ cemetery
- ┌ rural area, town or city similar to where ancestors lived
- ┌ library, especially one with historical collection

If your ancestors are from the local area or if there are nearby sites that have family connections.... **GO VISIT THEM** early trips might be

- ┌ to a cemetery to locate an ancestor’s grave site
- ┌ visit the area where an ancestor grew up, went to school, vacationed or some other event with family connections

Planning trips is a great way to engage your children or other members of the family.

As skill increases...extend the distance from home and seek locations and sites with specific family connections. Add genealogy specific sites.

- ┌ archives and special repositories
- ┌ courthouses
- ┌ town halls
- ┌ and someday...perhaps the trip across the seas!

As genealogical research progresses....there are many things that the young family members will enjoy

- ┌ reading county histories, “mug books”, about the locality where ancestors came from
- ┌ comparing estate inventories of ancestors with what we own today
- ┌ using age appropriate maps, identifying route ancestors might have taken as they migrated from one place to another
- ┌ learning to use the census records. Older children enjoy locating famous people in census records as well as their own ancestors
- ┌ as children become interested, they can help you with your research. A great deal of searching on the Internet is well within the skills of to-day’s kids.

Have fun and learn about genealogy.

Virginia Banerjee © September 2012