

## Personal History Form

(attach more paper if necessary)

Date: \_\_\_\_\_

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

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Spouse: \_\_\_\_\_ Birthday: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Marriage: \_\_\_\_\_

List your children:

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Your parents: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth/death dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Mother: \_\_\_\_\_ Birth/death dates: \_\_\_\_\_

Marriage date: \_\_\_\_\_

What are your fondest memories of them? What kind of people were they? What work did they do?

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Write down memories of your grandparents: (where they were from, what they did, where they are buried, what kind of people they were)

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List your brothers and sisters:

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What is your earliest memory?

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Tell about your childhood: (where you lived and went to school, your friends, games you played, places you went, etc.)

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Tell about you as an adult: (where you have lived, college, where you have worked, where you went to church, important events in your life, etc.)

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What would you like your descendents to know about you?

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A long time ago, one of my history teachers gave me a definition of the word “history” that I have never forgotten. She said the word should really be considered as two words: “his story”, because that’s really what history is: stories of men (and women) which make up our historical record. Without those stories, there would be no history.

What we sometimes consider unimportant, and for that matter, uninteresting to others, is our own personal history. But our personal histories are important, because there will always be someone who is interested in the things each of us know. Today it may be a grandchild, or it may be a researcher many years from now who will want to know who we were and what kind of person we were. It is up to us to insure that there will be more to share than a few simple dates and faded pictures.

We forget that we hold memories and experiences that are unique to us, and unless we share those memories they will pass away with us. In interviewing family members to preserve my own family history, I came up with a questionnaire that helped me gain the information I needed. More than just names and dates, I want to know about people’s memories of themselves and of people they knew who died long before I was born.

This “Personal History Questionnaire” may be used in several ways: as an interview tool in a conversation with someone we want to get information from or as a personal history tool for ourselves to present to those family members who are interested in such things. Feel free to add more questions as you see fit, so that the form can work better for you. It is also handy to use with a video camera or tape recorder.

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