

Personal History Interview Questions and Ideas:

1. Write a list of topics you would feel comfortable talking about and divide them among living descendants, by families.

Have each person in that family group ask four questions about the topic their group has been assigned. For example, the topics listed below might be the life experiences the families could choose from:

- early years
 - childhood memories
 - school years
 - how I met my spouse
 - marriage
 - favorite vacations
 - life work, occupation
 - beliefs
2. Bring someone, if you would like, to ask you questions and visit about the items you have chosen. Suggestion: If two people are asking questions have them rotate every other question. The missionary will be there to operate the equipment and will not be asking the questions.
 3. Include a talent in your life story.
 - Bring an example of your art or hand crafted item to share
 - Bring in a harmonica or other musical instrument and perform a bit
 - Share a poem you wrote
 4. Another way to approach your life story would be to choose from the list of questions below, or make up your own list of questions:

I. Early Childhood and Family Background

A. Parents and Family

- What is your full name?
- Did you have a nickname? How did you get it?
- When and where were you born?
- Tell about your parents or your family background.
- Where was your family originally from?
- What did your parents do for a living? Did you contribute to the family income or help parents in their work in any way?
- What was your parents' religious background? How was religion observed in your home?
- What were your parents' political beliefs? Were they involved in any political organizations?
- What other relatives did you have contact with growing up?
- Do you remember any of the classic stories? Jokes? Songs?
- What do you remember about your grandparents?
- What stories do you remember about earlier ancestors?
- How many children were in the family, and where were you in the line-up?
- Describe what your siblings were like. Who were you closest to?
- Describe the house you grew up in. Describe your room.
- What were your family's economic circumstances? Do you remember any times when money was tight? Do you remember having to do without things you wanted or needed?
- What were your duties around the house as a child?
- When did you learn to cook and who taught you? Were there any special family foods or recipes?
- What activities did the family do together?

- What did you do on Christmas? Thanksgiving? Birthdays? Other holidays?
- What is your earliest memory of home/family?

B. Community You Grew Up In

- Describe the community you grew up in
- Describe your neighborhood
- Where did you shop? How far away were the stores and how did you get there?
- What's the largest town you remember visiting when you were young? Can you describe your impressions of it?

C. Early Schooling

- Where did you go to elementary school?
- What was school like for you? What did you like about it? What was hard for you?
- Who were your favorite teachers? Why?

D. Friends and Interests

- What did you do in your spare time?
- Who were your best friends and what did you do when you got together? Do you still keep in touch with any of them?
- Did you have any hobbies or special interests?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?

II. Teenage Years

A. Changes in Family

- How did your relationship with your parents change when you became a teenager?
- If you had conflict with them, what was it over?
- Did you have chores around the house? What were they?

B. School

- What were your favorite subjects? Particular interests?
- What were your least favorite subjects?
- Did you have any memorable teachers? Describe their teaching style. How did they influence you?
- What were the different groups at your school? Which did you belong to?
- How do you think you were perceived by others?
- Were you involved in any extracurricular activities? What were they?
- What were your plans when you finished school? Education? Work? Military?
- What did your parents think of your plans? What did your friends think? What did your friends plan to do?
- Did the boys and girls in the family have different plans/expectations?

C. Work

- Did you have jobs during your teenage years? Doing what?
- Did you contribute to the family income? If not, how did you spend your money?

D. Social Life and Outside Interests

- Who were your friends? What did you do together? What individuals did you spend the most time with during this period?
- Did your group of friends include both boys and girls?
- At what age did you begin dating? What kinds of activities did you do on dates? Describe your first date.
- What was the advice your parents gave you related to dating? Did you get teaching on this in church or school? What was it?
- What were your hobbies/interests? What books did you read? What music did you listen to? What sports did you play? What crafts did you participate in?

III. Adulthood

A. Further Education

- Did you continue your formal education after high school? If so, where?
- What course of study did you pursue?
- How did you fund your higher education courses?

B. Work and Career

- What was your first job?
- What kinds of jobs have you had?
- How did you decide on your career?
- If you served in the military, when and where did you serve and what were your duties? Were you ever injured in the line of duty?
- Did you serve during wartime? How did the war change you?
- What lessons has your work life taught you?

C. Marriage or Formation of Significant Relationships

- When and where did you meet? What drew you to him/her?
- When and how did you decide you were right for each other?
- What was originally the most difficult for you about being married/being in a relationship?
- What advice would you give to someone today who is contemplating a serious relationship?

D. Children

- Describe the birth of your children.
- What were they each like when they were young? How have they changed or not changed?
- What were their relationships like with each other and with you when they were young? Now?
- What activities did the family do together?

- What family traditions did you try to establish?
- Does your family have any heirlooms or objects of sentimental value? What is their origin, and how have they been passed down?
- What was the most satisfying to you about raising children? What was most difficult?
- What values did you try to raise your children with? How did you go about doing that?
- What forms of discipline did you use and why?
- How has being a parent changed you?

E. Ongoing Interests and Hobbies

- What are your current interests and hobbies? How did you become involved in them?
- Are there any you would like to pursue in the future?

F. Travel/Vacation

- What is the most beautiful place you have ever visited and what was it like?
- What is the longest trip you have ever gone on? Where did you go?
- What was your favorite vacation? Where did you go and why was it special?

G. Health

- What major illnesses or health problems do you remember having?
- Do you have any health problems that are considered hereditary in nature? If so, what are they?
- Are you aware of other health issues that would be important for the family to know about?

IV. Overview and Evaluation

A. Historical

- Was your family affected by the War? Depression? Natural disasters?
- How is the world different now from when you were a child?
- What would you consider to be the most important inventions during your lifetime?

- As you see it, what are the biggest problems that face our nation and how do you think they could be solved?

B. Reflections

- What has provided you the greatest satisfaction in life?
- What was the happiest moment of your life?
- What are the most important lessons you've learned?