

Family Gathering Stories

A Thanksgiving Oral History Questionnaire



Choose the questions that spark a memory - you do not need to answer every one.
Listen for names, places, sayings, recipes, and small details. Follow-up questions such as: “What happened next?” or “How did that make you feel?” can often lead to the best stories.

Person sharing the stories		**Date**	
Interviewer		**Place**	

Recording permission (optional): [ ] Yes, this conversation may be recorded. [ ] No recording, please.

Growing Up

1. What is your full name, and were you ever called by a nickname? How did you get it?

2. Where and when were you born? What do you remember about the home or neighborhood where you grew up?

3. What is one of your earliest memories?

4. What was your favorite book, story, poem, or song as a child? Why did you love it?

5. What did you enjoy doing after school or during the summer?

6. What were meals like in your childhood home? Was there a dish you especially loved - or disliked?

7. What family pet do you remember most clearly? What made that animal special?

8. What was a favorite childhood holiday, birthday, or family celebration?

Parents, Grandparents, and Family Stories

9. **How would you describe your mother? What do you remember most?**

10. How would you describe your father? What do you remember most?

11. What do you remember about your grandparents - their homes, personalities, work, habits, or sayings?

12. Did your parents or grandparents tell a story that has stayed with you? Please tell it in your own words.

13. What family lore or mystery was passed down - perhaps about an ancestor, an old home, an heirloom, or where the family came from?

14. Is there a family recipe, photograph, letter, object, or piece of jewelry with a story behind it?

15. What values, beliefs, skills, or traditions did an older relative pass down to you?

16. Who in the family was especially funny, adventurous, musical, artistic, practical, or memorable? What story captures that person best?

Traditions, Adventures, and the Stories to Keep

17. **What was Thanksgiving like when you were young? Who gathered, where did you go, and what was always served?**

18. Which holiday traditions have continued in the family?

19. What family vacation, day trip, or special outing do you remember most fondly?

20. What is one funny or unexpected family memory that still makes you smile?

21. What historical event or major change do you remember experiencing personally? How did it affect everyday life?

22. What accomplishment, decision, or season of your life are you most proud of?

23. What lesson about family or life would you most like younger generations to remember?

24. What story have I not asked about that you hope our family will continue to tell?

Preservation note: Date your notes or recording, identify everyone speaking, and save a copy with your family photographs or genealogy files.