

INITIAL AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

INTRODUCTION

Depending upon the age that you are when you first start this questionnaire, you may find that some of the later sections are not yet relevant to you. However, the earlier you start to record your life's history, the more likely it is that you will remember those key events and experiences that you would like to be remembered for. It is also useful to complete this questionnaire over multiple sessions – as memories come back to you - and to update your biography with more stories of your life as they unfold.

This process is intended to be enjoyable not intrusive. You may choose to answer (or avoid) any question you like.

When writing (or dictating) your responses to the proposed questions below, we would encourage you to consider responding with your great-grandchildren in mind as your target audience. To put it another way, try to think about the type of information that you would have liked your grandparents or great-grandparents to have left for you. This should serve to encourage you to be forthcoming with the details about your life that future generations of your family will really want to know.

Completing this questionnaire is a great way to jog your memory and to start the process of recording your personal history. We envisage that this, in itself, is a very useful tool to record key details about your life. Even if this is the *only* record that you leave of your life, it will offer an insightful picture of the life you have lead and will provide colourful and interesting information for your children, grandchildren and descendants to follow.

So stop procrastinating and start recording your history now. Enjoy!

QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Family history/roots

- a) Where is your family from/what is your heritage?
- b) What is your mother's name, and when and where was your mother born?
- c) What is your father's name, and when and where was your father born?
- d) What do you remember of your parents?
- e) What do you remember of your grandparents? Your great-grandparents? Where were they from? What did they do with their lives?
- f) Provide the names of any other ancestors that you can recall (e.g. great-grandparents; grandparents; parents; uncles; aunts) and any other relevant details about their lives (e.g. when and where they were born, list their descendants (if any).
- g) If your family is from a country/region other than where you live now, what was that country/region, and when and why did you (or your family) leave?
- h) Describe your favourite or most influential ancestor(s).
- i) Are there any heroic or notorious family members in your family tree (i.e. a celebrated war hero or a convicted criminal)?
- j) Do you remember any family stories that were passed down from your ancestors?
- k) Did your family have any secrets or skeletons in the closet?

2. Childhood

- a) What is your birthday? Where were you born?
- b) What was your *first* memory as a child?
- c) What was your *best* memory as a child?
- d) What was your *worst* memory as a child?
- e) What do you recall of your early education? Where? When?
- f) Did you spend much time with your parents during your childhood?
- g) What did your parents do for a living?

- h) Did your family have much money?
- i) Do you have any siblings? What are their names? Are they older or younger than you?
- j) Did you have any pets?
- k) What was your favourite pastime as a child?
- l) What did you want to be when you grew up?

3. The “Teenage Years”

- a) Did you undertake any continuing education? Where? When? Do you have fond memories of this time? What qualifications did you receive?
- b) What were your favourite pastimes as a teenager?
- c) What sports (if any) did you play? Describe any notable achievements.
- d) Who were your best friends? What did you do together?
- e) Did you spend much time with your siblings (if any) or any other relatives?
- f) Did you get along with your parents?
- g) Were your teenage years a happy period? If so, what are your fondest memories? If not, why not?
- h) What accomplishments are you most proud of?
- i) What did you want to do with your life when you first became an “adult”?

4. The “Middle-Years”

- a) Where did you live?
- b) Were your siblings (if any) or any other relatives living nearby?
- c) Did you marry? If so, describe your courtship and wedding.
- d) Who were your closest friends?
- e) Do you have any children? How many? What are their names?

- f) Describe how having children (if any) changed your life and provide details of notable events or periods involving your child (or children).
 - g) Name and describe the most influential person (or people) in your life.
 - h) What is (or what was) your primary occupation? Do you (or did you) enjoy it?
 - i) Where have you lived in the world? What took you to each destination?
 - j) Have you travelled much for leisure? If so, where?
 - k) Where is your favourite place in the world, and why?
 - l) Did you experience a mid-life crisis? If so, what prompted it and what happened as a result?
5. **Retirement / the “Golden Years”**
- a) When and why did you decide to retire?
 - b) What were your retirement plans? Did you achieve them?
 - c) Did you travel during your retirement?
 - d) What are your favourite pastimes?
 - e) What else do you wish to achieve during your retirement?
6. **Reflections on your Life**
- a) With the benefit of hindsight, what advice would you give your 18-year-old self?
 - b) Who is (or was) the love of your life? How did you meet? What caused you to stay together/separate?
 - c) What do you consider to be your greatest achievement?
 - d) What do you consider to be your favourite material possession, and why?
 - e) Who is/are your best friend(s)? How did you meet and what do you have in common?
 - f) What have been the best days of your life / what are your happiest memories?
 - g) What are you most proud of?

- h) Do you have any regrets? If so, what are they and what would you like to have done differently?
- i) Have you ever been seriously ill? If so, what was the cause? Did it impact your life in any way?
- j) How has the world changed during your lifetime?
- k) What upsets you about the current state of the world?
- l) If you could have one wish, what would it be?
- m) If you knew you only had one day left on Earth, what would you say to:
 - Your spouse or partner?
 - Your children or grandchildren?
 - To everyone else you loved?

NEXT STEPS

Contact writers@BiographyWriter.net to transform your answers to this questionnaire into the story of your life.