

## Get Them Whilst They Are Still Alive!

If you are just starting your Genealogical Research it can be puzzling how to start!

These are questions which from working with members of our Genealogy Websites over the year we have discovered are an excellent starting point for your research. If there is one piece of advice that every genealogist should take to heart it is make sure that you talk to the living members of your family before they become your ancestors!

Here are a whole range of questions that the you can answer for yourself and may be able to use when &ldquo;interviewing&rdquo; family members. Part of the fascination of genealogy is not only finding out &ldquo;where we have come from&rdquo; but also &ldquo;what it was like&rdquo; when our ancestors were alive and the sort of lives they and their families lived.

What do you know about your family surname? Its origin?

What do you know about the meaning of your family names?

Did the family name undergo change over the years and are there stories about the change? Are there any traditional first names, middle names, or nicknames in your family?

Is there a tradition in naming children?

This might be always giving the firstborn son the name of his paternal grandfather or a traditional family name as one of their first names?

Can you determine if there are traditions in different branches of your family?

Does a specific ancestor&rsquo;s name reappear in many branches of your family?

What stories have come down to you from or about your parents and/or Grandparents?

Are there stories from more distant ancestors?

How have these relatives described their lives to you?

What have you learnt from them about their childhood, adolescence, schooling, marriage, work, religion, political activity, recreation?

Do they enjoy discussing their family history or their own past or are they reluctant to?

Do their memories tend to cluster about certain topics or time periods and avoid others?

Are there things in your family history that you would like to know, but no one will tell you? Do various relatives tell the same stories in different ways and how do these versions differ?

Do you have a notorious, famous or indeed infamous character in your family&rsquo;s past?

Do you relish stories about him/her?

Do you feel that the their fame or infamy may have grown as stories passed down about him/her have become elaborated?

How did your parents, grandparents, and other relatives come to meet and marry?

Are there family stories of lost love, jilted brides, unusual courtships, arranged marriages, elopements, runaway lovers?

Have your family played a part in the bigger historical picture?

With the answers to these questions from various relatives and your own answers to them you have the start of a great Family History and a very personal and living one!

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