

Oral History Questions *



1. What is your full name and why were you named this?
2. Where and when were you born?
3. Tell me about your parents... their names, traits, lessons they taught you, your favorite memories about them.
4. What do you remember about school? How did you get there, what did you like/dislike, who were your friends, moments of profound learning?
5. What did you want to be when you grew up?
6. Think about your childhood, do you have any favorite memories? Hobbies, friends, places you went, vacations, regular things that children now would find odd?
7. Did you know your grandparents? Tell me about them. Who was the oldest person you remember as a child? How did he/she affect your life?
8. What were you like as a teenager? What did you do on dates? Who did you date?
9. How did you meet your spouse? What are your favorite memories of courtship? Tell me about the proposal.
10. What do you remember about your wedding day? How did you feel?
11. How many children did you have? What do you remember about their pregnancies, the day they were born, how you felt that day?
12. What do you remember about them as babies? What did they do that reminded you of yourself as a child?
13. Do you remember anything your children did or said that made you happy/laugh?
14. What impressed you about your spouse as a parent?
15. What were your favorite things and biggest challenges of parenthood?
16. What do you appreciate the most about each of your children? What are you proud of them about?
17. How many grandchildren do you have? How do you feel about being a grandparent? What do you love about each of your grandchildren?
18. How did you enter your profession? What did you enjoy the most about your job(s)?
19. What accomplishment(s) are you the most proud of?
20. If you served in the military, what was the catalyst for you joining the service? What did you enjoy about serving? What was challenging? What memories of your service are the most significant to you? What do you want others to know about your time in the service?
21. Where is your favorite place?
22. What is the most beautiful place you have ever been?
23. What are the biggest changes you've witnessed over your lifetime? What do you think about them?
24. What do you miss the most about the "good old days"?
25. Do you remember someone saying something to you that had a big impact on how you have lived your life? Who had the most positive influence on your life? Was there a moment(s) or person that really changed the course of your life?
26. What are some of the most poignant lessons you've learned during your life? Did you have to learn them "the hard way"? What lessons/wisdom that you have gained through your own experience are important to pass on to your progeny?

*Please note that these are broad questions intended to assist the interviewee in thinking about past memories, experiences, stories, etc. Allow him or her to steer the interview. Also be sensitive about questions that may not apply, specifically in reference to spouse and/or children.