
Because temple and family history work is done *for* families, it is often done most efficiently *by* families. The blessings of temple and family history work increase when families work together to identify their ancestors. If you do not have immediate family members who are able and willing to assist you, you may discover others, including friends and extended family members, who can help.

Family members will often have information to share, or they may be willing to help you look for information. Your relatives and others who knew your ancestors may remember important events and dates that have not been recorded. They may have family heirlooms, records, mementos, photographs, and other valuable items. They may have interesting family stories to tell, and they can sometimes direct you to others who knew your ancestors or to other relatives you may not know.

A personal interview may be the best way to glean family history information from your relatives. Conduct the interview in person if possible. If you cannot do this, contact relatives by phone, by letter, or by e-mail. Use the following information to help you conduct the interview.

When you first contact the family member, do the following:

1. Tell the person who you are and how you are related to him or her.
2. Explain that you are doing family history or genealogical research. Tell the person which families or family members you would like to learn about and what you would like to know. If the person is not a member of the Church and asks why you are gathering family history information, you may want to share your belief that family relationships can last forever, not just for this life. You could explain that Latter-day Saints try to identify their ancestors and bless them through work done in temples, which joins families together forever.



Notes

3. Set a time when you can conduct an interview with the person. Allow the person sufficient time to find papers or records or to think about what he or she can remember.

Prepare for the Interview

Make preparations for the interview in advance:

1. Write down the questions you want to ask. Questions that require more than a “yes” or “no” response are usually most effective. See appendix B for sample questions.
2. Gather the information you already have about the family or person you want to learn more about, such as completed family group records and pedigree charts. Share this information and ask if it is correct.
3. If you plan to visit in person, prepare any supplies or equipment you might need. Plan to record what you learn using pencil and paper, a tape recorder, a camera, or a video camera.
4. If you are interviewing an oral historian or a village elder, learn the proper ways to work with him or her.

Conduct the Interview

Use the following guidelines to help you make the interview most effective:

1. Bring or send family photographs, and ask the person if he or she can identify any people in the pictures who are unfamiliar to you.
2. Don’t be in a hurry. Give the person time to think about what he or she wants to say. Let the person respond at his or her own pace.
3. Ask about family records, certificates, or photographs. As you are told about them, write down the information. Ask for permission to make copies of records. Take photographs or video footage of the items if you can.
4. If the person is the closest relative of any of your deceased ancestors who were born in the last 95 years, ask the person’s permission for the ancestors to receive temple ordinances.
5. Express appreciation for the information you have received. Be prepared to come back later or to send additional correspondence.

Use the Information

After the interview, be sure to use the information you have gathered:

1. Update your records with any new information.
2. Make a transcript or report of your interview, being sure to record the date and place of the interview. Ask the person you interviewed to read the report and make corrections. Ask for permission to copy the report

3. Contact other relatives you learned about.
4. See if you have enough information to perform temple ordinances.



- **Make a list of family members** who might have information about your ancestors. Contact one or more of them during the coming week and see if they have information that could be added to your records.
- **Record new information** in new.familysearch.org or on paper forms.
- **If you are taking the Temple and Family History course**, prepare for the next class by reading chapter 6.



- Lorie Nicoles-Davis, "That Happened to You?" *Ensign*, Aug. 2003, 26–29.
- Barbara Jean Jones, "Idea List: Making History," *New Era*, May 1999, 15.
- James E. Faust, "The Phenomenon That Is You," *Ensign*, Nov. 2003, 53–56.

This image shows a single sheet of cream-colored paper with horizontal ruling lines. The lines are evenly spaced and run across the width of the page. There is no handwriting or other markings on the paper.