

## **THE JOURNAL**

Read through the **JOURNAL** completely. Get a feel for how it is organized and do a rough draft on ordinary paper, either from start to finish or skip around as you choose. Then go back and enter your information. Be patient. Don't try to do too much in any one sitting.

You will want to gather some photographs next. The following is only a suggestion of some photos you might like to include. They follow the story line and you will find that they help stimulate memories.

1. You as an infant.
2. Perhaps the first home you lived in that you remember.
3. You as a child at various ages.
4. A favorite family pet from your youth.
5. Parents.
6. Maternal Grandparents, great grandparents, etc.
7. Paternal Grandparents, great grandparents, etc.
8. A favorite friend from your youth.
9. Siblings at various ages.
10. You from school days.
11. A favorite vacation from your youth.
12. One very special relative
13. You as a young adult.
14. Courting, engagement, wedding. (if applies)
15. Military service if applicable.
16. Children at various ages if applicable
17. Grandchildren (great grandchildren if applies)
18. Activity photos, gatherings, social events, religious, etc.

This list is only a suggestion and you will find that it quickly can grow, but try to limit it to 20 or less. The latest digital or non-linear editing allows the insertion of these photographs during the editing of your Legacy Biography and will enhance your story greatly.

The margins of this journal will easily accommodate punching for a three ring or spiral comb type binder. Simply add blank pages to facilitate your thoughts on any given subject. You might also elect to include the photographs dealt with in the same binder. Supplies to accommodate that are readily available from most office supply stores.

Don't be reluctant to tell a story that you think you've told a "million times". There's a pretty good chance that you'll remember some details that you've excluded when you write it down. If one story stimulates another memory, just keep writing!

An excellent example of this comes from my own family. When interviewing my father about the family origins, I mentioned that "grandpa Charlie" had the last name Wells and must have been British originally.

Well, like so many families, his ancestors "Anglicized" the family name when immigrating to the U.S. The ancestral name was German, Welz. The war department was apoplectic when they discovered this information and my dad was in limbo for almost a year when he enlisted during WWII.

He didn't get paid during all that time, either. It was finally cleared up but his older brother went through the same thing six or seven months later when he enlisted. I heard this for the first time when I was 49 years old! Every family has stories just as fantastic and regularly overlooked.

This "journal" is the storyboard for the interview we will have. During the interview, you may find it helpful to refer to it. If you never do have an interview filmed, it will make a great keepsake for your family.

This enterprise should also be looked at as a way to share your philosophy of life as much as its remembrance. There's no better guide through the thickets than the voice of experience.

\* Note: Remember that family Bibles are an important source of names, dates and details that we sometimes forget.

SECTION I

# HERITAGE

- Your Mother and Father: Tell about them, their names, dates of birth (passing if applicable), circumstances of their youth, adulthood, occupation(s), interests, faith, politics, hobbies, military service (if applicable) health issues, etc.



SECTION II

# YOUTH



- Talk about your siblings. Illustrate your relationship with each as children and as adults.

- Tell about growing up in your family, perhaps a favorite activity or vacation, the circumstances of your youth.



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- Who had the greatest impact or influence on your life growing up? This might be a immediate family member, teacher, clergy, relative, friend, etc.

- Tell about a Favorite relative.

- What was the worst or most embarrassing thing you remember growing up? This may have happened to you or you may have done something to a friend or family member. Oh, go ahead and tell. We won't tell anyone!

- What was the best or single most exciting thing you remember growing up?

School days

- name of school/s attended:
- highest grade completed: (major/minor if college)
- favorite subject(s):
- least favorite subject:
- favorite instructor:
- school activities, clubs, groups, etc.
- first love



SECTION III

# FAMILY LIFE



- Tell about your mate. What of the family? Talk about your relationship with your in-laws.

- Where was your first family home? Talk of the first year of marriage. Were there any surprises? Describe the circumstances of that year. Did your relationship with your parents change after you were married?

- Talk about your children and tell something that captures the spirit of each, some of the joys, disappointments, anxieties, surprises. Also give the dates of birth (and passing where applicable). What was the most embarrassing thing they ever did to you? (did you do to them?)

SECTION IV

# WORK



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- Describe your notion of the work ethic. Do you perceive a difference between the ethic of yesterday and today?

- What advice would you give future generations about career?

SECTION V

# COMMUNITY

- Do you believe, and if so to what extent, that we are our brothers' keepers? Relate that to notions of social support both public and private.

- What part has faith played in your life, and or in the life of your immediate family, generations before and after?







SECTION VI

# REFLECTIONS







- What has been the biggest surprise in your life?

- what was your life's "most embarrassing moment"?

- Describe your greatest joy(s) in life

- Talk of your greatest sorrow, disappointment, or loss in life

- Has life turned out pretty much the way you expected and did you plan correctly?

- **Favorite:**
  - a. Music
  - b. Musician/singer
  - c. Composer
  - d. Artist/art type
  - e. Type of literature and favorite book
  - f. Author
  - g. Movie
  - h. Actor/Actress and movie they played in
  - i. Type of food

Who was/is the best cook you ever knew and what did they prepare that you particularly enjoyed?

- This is your time capsule. When your future descendants read this, what would you like them to remember most about you?

- What are you most curious about in the future and what question would you like to ask them?

# Etcetera

## About Childhood

### Describe:

- What was your favorite toy?
- What was your favorite thing to do in summertime
- What was your favorite song in your youth?
- Who was the subject of your first crush? Describe him or her.
- What was your favorite game during your youth?
- Were there any fads you remember from your youth that you liked or didn't like?
- What personality trait did you carry from childhood into adulthood? Does that bother you or do you consider it good?
- What bad or good habits did you have as a child?
- Did you have a favorite "hang out" in your teen years?
- Do you remember any slang words or phrases from your teen years?
- Do you remember what you could buy "for a buck" during your childhood?
- How has adulthood been different from what you imagined it would be like when you dreamed of growing up"?
- What do you think is the key for a successful marriage?
- What's the best advice you ever received? Offered?
- Is your work different from what you thought it would be or planned for?
- If I were rich, I would .....

- What is the greatest trip you've ever taken or want to take?
- If you could wave a magic wand and solve one world problem, what would it be?
- Name your life's greatest blessing/
- Name your life's greatest curse.
- How are you like your mother?
- How are you like your father?
- How are your children like you and or your spouse?

