

## Interviewing Your Relatives

*TIP: Mail a list of questions for your relatives before you visit/phone.*

At any time when relatives get together, use the opportunity to ask questions in order to clarify stories as well as data: dates, names, places, occupations, immigration, moves. Most relatives are happy to cooperate, and are interested in their family history. Actually, you may well find that they're particularly happy that someone else is doing the research! Remember that stories, photographs, and other clues will make your history come alive, so get into the habit of asking.

What questions will you need to ask? Take a look at your basic family tree, and notice gaps or limited information. Maybe you know very little about your grandparents or their brothers/sisters. Looking at their birthdates and birthplaces gives you some areas to question Aunt Ethel or Great-Uncle Harry such as the following:

*"Was anyone in our family fighting in WW1 or WW2 or other skirmishes?"*

*"Do you know why Grandma and Grandpa moved to Scotland?" "What can you*

*remember about how they travelled across Canada*

*to BC?" "Has anyone been in touch with relatives*

*who stayed in England?" "What do you remember*

*about how your parents or grandparents celebrated*

*holidays?" "What kinds of jobs did our*

*grandparents or greatgrandparents have, or their*

*brothers/sisters?" "Censuses show that the family*

*lived in one place for over 30 years – did they own*

*the property?" "Do you remember anything about it, or the area?" "Where did*

*the kids play, and what kinds of games?" "What were weddings like?" "Did*

*anyone in the family like to play pranks? tell jokes? tell stories? dance or sing*

*or play an instrument?" "Do you remember what your grandparents [or other*

*direct relatives] died of?" "What was it like growing up as a woman in that*

*time?"*



Starting with *"what do you remember about . . . ."* will help your relatives tell stories and provide many more clues for your research. Go through relatives' photo albums as prompts for questions. Take a recorder, and take notes – you're in for a treat!

Questions? Email [Celia@RootsBasic.com](mailto:Celia@RootsBasic.com)