

ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW KIT

script written by

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(716) 366-0007

Person interviewed _____

Date of birth: _____

Interviewed by: _____

All you need is a tape recorder or a video camera. [or pen or pencil]

Being a big advocate of oral histories, I have compiled a list of questions to help you interview family members.

My strong belief in the importance of doing oral histories lies in the fact that because we are such a young country, we don't tend to think in terms of history. I feel that every family's history is unique and should be documented using video cameras and/or tape recorders. It is very easy and fun to do, and duplicate copies are easy to make for backups and/or as gifts for other family members .

We all spend many hours reading about the lives of other people or viewing biographies on TV and in movies, and yet, we easily overlook our own. My personal experience over the past 20 years has taught me that these interviews will eventually become family heirlooms. They will also be invaluable to others who may be researching your family genealogy. I have also found that unfortunately, some of you will put off doing this until it is too late. Family members may pass away and then all this valuable information would be lost forever.

So, here are some tips:

1. Don't put it off! Do it now.
2. Have fun doing it, but do take breaks. You won't believe how much information can be recorded on a 2 hour tape, but don't necessarily stop at 2 hours.
3. Go with the flow. Ask a million questions beyond my starter questions. Be specific. Ask who, what, where, when, how.
4. Bring out old photos and use them as prompts to get the dialogue going. Also, take advantage of this opportunity to write down who, what, where, when on the back of the pictures. Use pencil only because over time, the ink from any other type of pen will bleed through onto the picture.
5. Frame your subject in the viewfinder so as to allow room for any movement.

With this questionnaire, I may be including a form which is being used to honor all veterans (back to the Civil War) who resided in Chautauqua County at the time they ENTERED the service, regardless of where they were born or resided prior to that time. This is the only criteria required. This information will then get downloaded into a computer that is housed in a kiosk in the lobby of Jamestown City Hall and which the public can access. Honoring the veterans is an important, worthwhile cause. The kiosk that houses this information, and the monuments at Tracy Plaza are impressive and should be seen.

So, if you have any family member or acquaintance, living or deceased, who served during PEACE TIME OR WAR, please fill out this form to the best your ability and send it to the address at the bottom of the form.

ADDITIONAL REQUESTS:

I am also involved in personal research of the following:

1. The Halicki family, (photos of family members) and business (it's garage, towing and film making)
2. The East Town of Dunkirk Fire Hall
3. St. Hedwig's school and church in Dunkirk
4. The history of the automobile in Chautauqua County, going back to 1900.

As such, I am seeking to borrow and laser print (and/or copy on CD) any photos, film footage (8 mm or video), or information on the topics above, including your personal stories. I would be more than willing to pick up any of these items from you and return them within several days. If you'd prefer not to release your photos to me, I would greatly appreciate your taking them to Copy Boy in Dunkirk or Fredonia, or to Arkwright Printing in Fredonia. They will copy the photos and data for me AT NO COST TO YOU. Just tell them they are being copied for Ron Halicki and they will bill my account. PLEASE LEAVE YOUR NAME WITH THEM SO I MAY CONTACT YOU ABOUT THE PARTICULARS OF THE PHOTOS AND TO THANK YOU.

Regarding #4: This includes items from the past up to the present (anything involving garages, dealerships, gas stations, wrecks, race cars and race tracks, custom cars, sports cars, and drag races at the Dunkirk Airport, just to name a few). Anything relating to the automobile within Chautauqua County would be of great value to me.

When I complete compiling this information, it will be donated in CD format to the historical societies of Chautauqua County. So if someone you know ran a garage or raced, took photos of accidents, or just had a great car, please contact me.

Finally, please keep your historical societies in mind before discarding photos, film, articles, pamphlets, family histories, etc. that may be of interest to them. When in doubt, contact the historical society first and tell them what you have before doing any discarding

Please feel free to make copies of the oral history and/or veteran questionnaires and pass them along to others who are interested.

Have fun... and don't put it off!

Ron Halicki
3816 Franklin Ave.
Dunkirk, NY 14048
(716) 366-0007

SCRIPT FOR ORAL HISTORY INTERVIEW

[Feel free to adlib. Go with the flow.]

A. Early Childhood and Family

1. When you think back to your childhood, what is your first memory?

2. Where did you live as a child?

3. Why did your parents settle there?

4. Did you know your grandparents?

a. Did your parents talk about your family history?

b. Where did your grandparents come from?

c. Why did they settle in the area?

d. What did you learn from your grandparents? What influence did they have on you?

5. Were you born at home? How much did you weigh?

6. Were you named after anyone?

7. Did you have siblings? How much older or younger?

8. How did the siblings get along? Which ones gave your parents the most trouble?

9. What kinds of toys did you have? Did you make them? What games did you play?

10. What did your father (and/or mother) do for a living?

11. What was it like to go shopping for things like clothes or food? Or did you make most of the things you needed?

12. Describe your family's home.

13. Did you have any pets?

14. What was a typical day like when you were a young child?

15. What did you do on holidays? Birthdays?

16. Did you ever travel with your family? Where?

17. What values did your parents try to teach you? Do you think you followed those values in your life?

B. School Years

1. How many years did you attend school?

2. What was your first school like? Describe the classroom.

3. What teachers do you remember?

4. What subjects did you like best? Least?

5. What was your best friend's name? What did you do together?

6. What was the school bully's name? What did he do?

7. Did you play any sports?

8. Were you artistic?

9. Did you ever win any prizes or awards?

10. What did you wear to school on a typical day?

11. Who taught you to dance? Swim? Drive?

12. How old were you when you had your first girlfriend/boyfriend?

13. What did you do together? Did you go to dances, parties?

14. Did you have a summer job? Did you work on a farm?

15. Who did you admire most while you were growing up?

16. What did you want to be when you grew up? What were your ambitions, hopes, dreams?

17. What did you think the world would be like when you grew up? In what were your expectations met? Not met?

C. Young Adulthood and Marriage

1. Did you complete high school? Go on to any higher education?

2. What was your first job like?

a. How old were you?

b. How did you get the job?

c. Describe a workday.

d. What was your salary?

3. What was your best job? Your worst job?

4. When did you get your first car? What kind was it?

5. What was dating like?

a. Where did you go?

b. Were you allowed to be alone together?

c. What did a date cost?

d. What did you most like doing together?

6. Did you serve in the military?

a. Where did you serve?

b. Where did you train? What was it like?

c. Did you serve during a war? Did you go overseas?

d. Did you ever come close to death?

7. When did you meet your spouse?

a. How did you meet?

b. What was your courtship like? (What did you do on dates? How did you correspond?)

c. How did you propose/how did he propose?

d. What did you admire most about your spouse?

8. Did your family approve of your choice?

a. Did your spouse get along with your siblings?

b. Did your spouse get along with your parents?

9. Describe your wedding. Where did you go on your honeymoon?

10. Where did you live after marriage?

11. What was your spouse's occupation?

12. Did you have children?

a. How many?

b. Where and when were they born?

c. How did they get along? Which one was worst in the "terrible twos"?

d. What were their personalities?

e. Did any of them have any serious illnesses or accidents?

f. Were there any unusual events during any of their childhoods?

g. Did they agree or disagree with the family and community values?

13. Did you have any hard times? What did you do to get through them?

14. Did you ever have to spend time away from your family or spouse?

15. What were your goals for your family?

a. Did you and your spouse agree?

b. How did you try to teach these goals?

c. How well do you think you realized those goals?

16. What was the best and the worst part of family life then?

17. When you think back to the way the children were when they were growing up, did you think that they would be like they are now, with the types of jobs they have and the lives they lead?

18. How has family life changed today?

D. Community Values

1. What was your town like?

a. Physically?

b. Population?

c. Climate?

2. What was the prevailing attitude on religion?

3. What was the political climate of the town?

4. What was the attitude on morality?

a. How did young people meet?

b. What did they do with friends? On dates?

5. Was it a cohesive community?

a. What were the strongest community bonds?

b. What were the separators in the community?

c. Were there many people of different races or religions?

6. Was there an interest in art, music, theater? Did you participate?

7. Was there an interest in sports?

8. What did you agree with and disagree with?

9. Were you comfortable in the community? Did you "fit"?

E. World Events, Past and Present

1. Did you live through the Depression? What was it like?

2. Did you live through the First World War?

a. What was it like?

b. Were you frightened?

c. Did you lose anyone close to you?

d. Did you ever think we would lose the war?

3. What do you remember about other wars?

a. How did the community react?

b. Do you remember what you were doing when you heard about Pearl Harbor? D-day? VE-day?

c. Did Vietnam make any sense? Did the Korean War?

4. What was the biggest news event of your lifetime?

5. What was the biggest technological breakthrough?

6. What was the most important medical advance?

7. Did you ever meet any famous people?

8. Who were the most popular performing artists when you were growing up?

9. What do you think of the way our government works today?

10. What do you think the world is like for young people growing up today?

11. What recent world event has excited you? Inspired you? Made you angry?

12. What are the good ways and the bad ways in which the world has changed during your lifetime?

F. Perspective

1. What is the best thing about life at this stage?

2. Is there anything you still haven't done that you are looking forward to doing?

3. What makes you cry?

4. What brings you the greatest joy?

5. What are your pet peeves?

6. What are your fears?

7. What do you think is the most misunderstood thing about you?

8. How old do you feel in your mind?

9. What do you most like to do now?

a. Hobbies?

b. Travel?

c. Entertainment?

d. Family time?

e. What type of books and movies do you enjoy?

f. Are there any performers that you especially like today?

g. Do you like different things now than you used to do?

10. How do your views differ from your family?

11. How do your views differ from the views you held when you were young?

12. What do you think of young people today?

13. What do you think it was about yourself that helped you overcome the bad times of your life (faith, friends, self)?

14. Did you ever have any unusual experiences in your lifetime?

a. Did you ever have a “near death” experience?

b. Did you ever have a “miracle” happen to you?

c. Were you ever in a major natural disaster?

d. Were you ever involved in a serious accident?

15. What is the nicest place you ever visited?

16. Is there anything you would do differently if you could live your life over?

17. What achievement in your life pleases you the most?.

18. What words of wisdom or encouragement, or simple rules of living, would you like to pass on to your grandchildren and your great grandchildren?

Chautauqua County Veterans only. Residence must be in Chautauqua County before or after military service.
please print and use military dating (09Jul1875)

1. NAME _____ 2. WAR _____
last, first, full middle name

3. CEMETERY _____ 4. BRANCH _____

5. LOCATION _____ 6. SEX _____

7. RESIDENCE a. _____
at time of entry
RESIDENCE b. _____
later in life

8. RANK highest rank achieved _____ ORG _____

9. DATE OF ENTRY _____ 10. DATE OF DISCH _____

11. PLACE OF BIRTH _____ 12. DATE OF BIRTH _____

13. PLACE OF DEATH _____ 14. DATE OF DEATH _____

15. CAUSE OF DEATH _____
was it service related?

16. NEAREST RELATIVE _____
not parents, give relationship and name

17. PLACE(S) SERVED _____
foreign

18. TYPE OF DUTY _____
military occupation

19. DISCH RECORDED _____
where locally

20. MISC. _____
POW, MIA, KIA, wounded, veterans organization info

continue on back

FAMILY HISTORY:

21. SPOUSE(s) (1) _____ daughter of _____
use maiden name

(2) _____ daughter of _____
use maiden name

22. FATHER _____

MOTHER _____
use maiden name

23. CHILDREN: only veteran's own children

NAME	BIRTH DATE	PLACE
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

24. SOURCES _____
veteran, veteran's wife, sister, etc., phone #

Please return this form to the: Jamestown Veterans Memorial Commission
Veteran Listing Project 483-7577
Municipal Building
Jamestown NY 14701



FOR LIBRARY USE

date submitted: _____
 Submitted by: _____
 address: _____
 city/state/zip _____

2.

FATHER OF #1

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date married: _____
 where married: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

1.

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date married: _____
 where married: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

3.

MOTHER OF #1

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

SPOUSE OF #1

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

4.

FATHER OF #2

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date married: _____
 where married: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

5.

MOTHER OF #2

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

6.

FATHER OF #3

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date married: _____
 where married: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

7.

MOTHER OF #3

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

8.

FATHER OF #4

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date married: _____
 where married: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

9.

MOTHER OF #4

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

10.

FATHER OF #5

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date married: _____
 where married: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

11.

MOTHER OF #5

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

12.

FATHER OF #6

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date married: _____
 where married: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

13.

MOTHER OF #6

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date married: _____
 where married: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

14.

FATHER OF #7

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date married: _____
 where married: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

15.

MOTHER OF #7

date born: _____
 where born: _____
 date died: _____
 where died: _____

FAMILY GROUP RECORD NUMBER _____

FOR LIBRARY USE

HUSBAND'S FULL NAME _____

NOTES

EVENT	DY/MO/YEAR	PLACE	REF.#
BIRTH			
MARR.			
DEATH			
BURIAL			

HIS FATHER _____

HIS MOTHER _____

WIFE'S MAIDEN NAME _____

NOTES

EVENT	DY/MO/YEAR	PLACE	REF.#
BIRTH			
DEATH			
BURIAL			

HER FATHER _____

HER MOTHER _____

added info/notes (other wives, places of residence, occupation, church affiliation, military record, achievements of all sorts, etc., etc.)

SEX **CHILD'S NAME** **EVENT** **DY/MO/YEAR** **PLACE** **NOTES**

					REF.#
	1.	BIRTH			
		MARR.			
	SPOUSE	DEATH			
		BURIAL			
	2.	BIRTH			
		MARR.			
	SPOUSE	DEATH			
		BURIAL			
	3.	BIRTH			
		MARR.			
	SPOUSE	DEATH			
		BURIAL			
	4.	BIRTH			
		MARR.			
	SPOUSE	DEATH			
		BURIAL			
	5.	BIRTH			
		MARR.			
	SPOUSE	DEATH			
		BURIAL			
	6.	BIRTH			
		MARR.			
	SPOUSE	DEATH			
		BURIAL			

add info/ notes/sources

compiled by (name and address):

