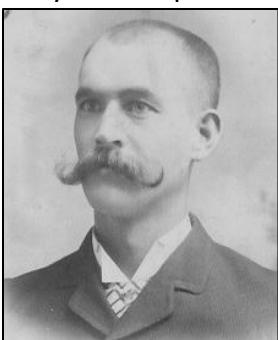


Seven Family History Activities for All Ages

One of the most important purposes of doing family history work is to connect the generations, and link our hearts with family members around us now, and those who have gone before. Knowing our family's story in the broader sense helps ground us in who we are and what we can accomplish, and is fun.

It's a good idea to make a family memory binder or folder, to save the things you find out or write while doing these activities, in addition to saving them digitally in a family history folder on your computer and on FamilySearch.org.



1. Where do I get my good looks?

Log in to FamilySearch.org. You need to be signed in so they can link you to your own family photos.
(It's easy to set up a free account if you don't have one.)

On the top bar, click on "Activities" and then choose "Compare a face." Follow the instructions and family search will match your photo taken from your computer on the spot to an ancestor that looks most like you.

You can take this activity one step further. Together sort through the old shoebox of photos, or the family scrapbook and find a photo of a grandparent or other deceased relative to scan and upload into the memories section for that individual on FamilySearch. Call a ward family history consultant if you would like help by phone, Facetime or zoom in learning to upload a photo to Family Search.

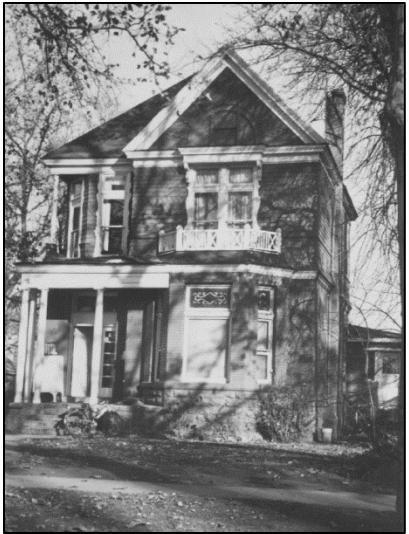


2. Food brings family together!

Talk about everyone's favorite meal of the year and what each person likes about that particular meal. Is there one favorite recipe that people look forward to?

Arrange ahead of time to call, Facetime, or Zoom with an older relative and ask what was for dinner when they were a child, or what was the favorite recipe their mother used to make. How was a family meal in the house where they grew up? Write down what you learn. Cook together a favorite family recipe for Grandma's gingerbread men or Grandpa's pancakes. Save the recipe in your memory collection and post it to FamilySearch memories.

Or, have prepared a favorite food of your childhood to eat while you talk about each person's favorite food, and then write it down for your family memory book. A photo of a handwritten recipe of Grandma's is a fun photo to post on FamilySearch.



3. 1940 – What was my family doing back then?

If someone stood on your ancestor's front porch in April of 1940 and asked them questions about their family, would you be curious to know what that person wrote down?

That's what you will find when you read a census record. You will read the name of the street they lived on, and maybe the house number. Someone asked for the names and ages of everyone living in the house, and what their occupation was. Some census records report who could read, about the value of their property and a variety of other things.

The United States has gathered census records since 1790, and every ten years after that. The census records are made public

only after 72 years from when they were taken. The last census made available was 1940, released in April 2012.

Find a census record and see what you learn:

Log into FamilySearch and chose an ancestor who was alive in 1940. On the family tree find the full name of the person, their birth year and birthplace. Note if the details about the person show where he or she lived in 1940.

Look at the bar across the top of the page and click on "Search" and then on "Records." A page will come up asking about the person for whom you want to find records. Fill in the blanks, and click on residence and put in that detail as best you know for 1940, because that will help pull up a census record. Click Search.

You will see a list of records about that individual. It might be military records, social security death index, and almost always, a census record. Look to the far right side of the page, and click where it will allow you to view the original record. You will see the handwriting and report of someone who stood on great-grandma's front porch.

If the ancestor lived close by, **take a field trip to see where the house is or was.** (This can also be a fun part of a family vacation if you plan ahead to be near old family homes.) You can use Google earth to see if the house is still there, or what the neighborhood looks like now.

And remember to go outside and take a photo of your own house to put in your memories book! Some day someone will be looking for you.



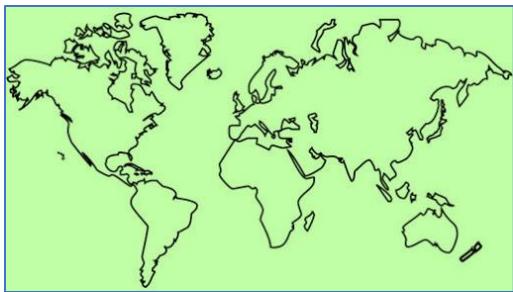
4. Write Grandma a Valentine

Have you ever written down what you especially loved about your grandmother? Like the way she gave hugs, or noticed when you got new shoes or a haircut, or had a nickel in her apron pocket to spend on penny candy after you walked together to the corner drug store. Maybe Grandma or Grandpa are still alive and you can give or mail them your note of treasured memories.

Maybe they have passed on. There is still a way to write them a valentine.

Every member of the family can write down special memories of a beloved relative, or draw a picture of the person or make an actual hearts and flowers Valentine where someone older helps write down what they love about their special relative.

Post your memories on FamilySearch so the next generation will know the wonderful people who are part of their family's past. You can scan a hand written or typed note, or drawing, and upload it to the memories of a particular person. You can use the "Write a story" feature in memories and write it on the spot, or cut and paste from a computer digital page or file. If you need help, call a ward Family History consultant.



5. Where did our family come from?

Everyone came from somewhere, and it's probably not where you are living right now. You may already know the story of when your ancestors in the last year or the last century, came from Ireland or Australia, or Brazil. But your children need to hear about it, too. If you don't know, call a relative, or check FamilySearch records for help in finding the details.

Make it far more interesting: use an atlas, a world globe, or Google Earth maps, and look at where your ancestors lived in. You can find countries, cities, villages, and sometimes even the very house. See if you can find different ancestors who came from different places. What ancestor came the furthest?

Google the name of the town, city or county where the ancestor lived. Learn more about the place where your relatives once called home. If you have several family members with internet connected devices, each person can find details about the birth place of a different ancestor and share details with the group.

Talk about why they moved, and how they got to a new place. Children can draw a map of where they left and where they went, or a picture what means of travel they used, train, boat, airplane, wagon or horseback.



6. Take a family field trip to a cemetery

Cemeteries are great places to remember the dead, and a visit can be a great outing, and it doesn't even need to be Memorial Day! If you don't know where your grandparents or great-grandparents are buried, check it out on FamilySearch. You might also look it up on Find A Grave, a national data base that has records on the locations of millions of graves.

- Decide who you want to visit and prepare ahead.
Do you want to visit the grave of someone dear to you or find the grave in our area that is the oldest, or who was a pioneer. Maybe you want to visit a Veteran on Veteran's Day and leave a little flag, or go to Dad's father's grave on Father's Day, etc.
- Gather some photos to bring along. Photos will help make the visit more personal
For everyone. You can print a paper copy of photos posted on FamilySearch, or put personal snapshots in an envelope to take along.
- Take a picnic blanket to sit on near the grave while you talk and visit.
- Children particularly like to take something for the grave, like a dollar store flag or artificial flower. Take along a hand broom, small garbage bag and lawn clippers to sweep, trim the grass, or do something to make the grave clean and nice.
- Think of a story to tell while you are there, or print out a story from a scrapbook, or from FamilySearch different family members can take turns reading while there.
- You can make it a treasure hunt sort of game, and see who can find the grave of a certain ancestor in a various section, with a treat hidden near the gravestone.
- Take a snack, pack a lunch, make it an outing.
- While you are there, notice if there are other family members nearby. Family groups are often buried near each other, and it's a nice time to talk about who is who in the family.

This is a good time to teach children about respecting graves, and not playing on tall headstones that sometimes dangerously tip over.

7. Music makes the season! Make a family play list.

One of the happy parts of Christmas is the wonderful music that helps us celebrate the season.



As a family talk about your favorite Christmas carols or songs, and make a family play list of favorites. Get on your devices and call, text or email your extended family about their favorites, too. Make sure you ask Grandma and Grandpa – maybe Bing Crosby's "White Christmas" will become everyone's new favorite. Consider using the internet or an older relative as a source to find out if there is traditional Christmas song popular in the country ancestors may have come from. Take time to sing some carols together, or share a song on an instrument someone in the family plays.

By Diane L. Mangum -December 2020