

Family Archive and Oral History Kit

Printable worksheets for collecting family stories, photographs, records, and reunion history responsibly

GATHERKIN

Use this kit to document what an item is, who contributed it, what may be shared, and how the family will preserve it. The forms are designed for a reunion archive table, interview station, or follow-up history project.

Before collecting anything

- ☐ Name the family archive lead and at least one backup steward.
- ☐ Explain whether materials are being scanned, recorded, displayed, archived, or published.
- ☐ Ask permission before recording people or sharing materials beyond the family.
- ☐ Return original items promptly unless the owner documents a donation.
- ☐ Keep private information, living addresses, and sensitive records out of public displays.

Family or reunion name: _____

Archive lead: _____ Date: _____

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1 Archive Project Plan

Define the purpose, access, ownership, and handoff before the reunion

Decision	Family plan
Purpose of this collection	_____ _____
Materials accepted	Photos / documents / recipes / programs / interviews / other
Who may view the archive	Family only / invited researchers / public / item-specific
Where preservation files live	_____ _____
Primary and backup steward	_____ _____
How corrections are submitted	_____ _____
When access is reviewed	_____ _____

Reunion setup checklist

- ☐ Quiet interview area
- ☐ Scanning or photography station
- ☐ Intake forms and temporary item numbers
- ☐ Power, chargers, and backup storage
- ☐ Return envelopes or folders
- ☐ Visible consent and privacy explanation

2 Item Intake and Identification Form

Complete one record for every photograph, document, object, recipe, or program

Field	Response
Temporary item ID	
Contributor and contact	
Original owner	
Item type	Photo / document / program / recipe / object / other
Approximate date	Confidence: confirmed / estimated / unknown
Place	
People shown or named	
Family branch	
Story or significance	
Evidence or source	
Return status	Returned / donated with documentation / pending

Additional description and corrections

3 Sharing and Recording Permission

Let the contributor choose how an item or interview may be used

Contributor or interviewee: _____

Item IDs or interview date: _____

I permit the family archive team to

- ☐ Create preservation and access copies.
- ☐ Share the material only with family members.
- ☐ Display the material at family reunions or private family events.
- ☐ Use selected excerpts on a password-protected family site.
- ☐ Use selected excerpts publicly with my name or requested credit.
- ☐ Provide the material to a named library, archive, museum, or historical organization after separate review.

Restrictions, expiration, credit wording, or people who should not receive access:

Signature: _____ Date: _____

Archive representative: _____ Date: _____

This worksheet records family permission and is not a substitute for legal advice or an institution's required release form.

4 Elder and Family Story Interview Sheet

Capture consent, context, and the information needed to preserve the recording

Interview record	Details
Interviewee	
Interviewer and recorder	
Date and location	
File name or ID	
Permission confirmed	Family only / reunion playback / public excerpt / other
Transcript reviewed by	

Conversation prompts

- ☐ What is your earliest memory of the family or neighborhood?
- ☐ Who helped relatives move, find work, attend school, or establish a home?
- ☐ Which church, school, business, organization, or place shaped the family?
- ☐ Which recipes, sayings, songs, celebrations, or responsibilities should continue?
- ☐ What story has been misunderstood or left out?
- ☐ What should younger relatives understand about this family?

Names, dates, places, and follow-up records mentioned

5 Photograph Identification Worksheet

Invite relatives to identify people without turning guesses into facts

Photo ID: _____ Contributor: _____

Position	Name	Relationship or branch	Confidence / source
1	_____	_____	confirmed / probable / unknown
2	_____	_____	confirmed / probable / unknown
3	_____	_____	confirmed / probable / unknown
4	_____	_____	confirmed / probable / unknown
5	_____	_____	confirmed / probable / unknown
6	_____	_____	confirmed / probable / unknown
7	_____	_____	confirmed / probable / unknown
8	_____	_____	confirmed / probable / unknown

Approximate year: _____ Place or occasion: _____

Clues visible in the photograph: _____

Who supplied or confirmed this information: _____

Unresolved questions: _____

6 Source and Research Log

Keep enough detail for another relative to locate the evidence again

Date	Person or record	Repository or source	Finding and next step
_____	_____	_____	_____ _____
_____	_____	_____	_____ _____
_____	_____	_____	_____ _____
_____	_____	_____	_____ _____
_____	_____	_____	_____ _____
_____	_____	_____	_____ _____
_____	_____	_____	_____ _____
_____	_____	_____	_____ _____
_____	_____	_____	_____ _____

Evidence labels

Confirmed means supported by reliable evidence. Probable means evidence points in one direction but is incomplete. Family recollection means the account is preserved with the storyteller's name and has not yet been independently verified. Unknown means the family is still researching the question.

7 File Naming and Backup Plan

Make the archive understandable and recoverable without relying on one person

Recommended filename pattern

FAMILY_YYYY-OR-ESTIMATE_LOCATION_PEOPLE-OR-SUBJECT_ITEM-ID.ext

Example: ROBINSON_1954_EST_STLOUIS_CHURCH-PICNIC_PH023.tif

Copy	Location	Responsible person	Last verified
Preservation master	_____	_____	_____
Local backup	_____	_____	_____
Off-site backup	_____	_____	_____
Family access copy	_____	_____	_____

- ☐ Original files remain unchanged
- ☐ Access copies are smaller and clearly labeled
- ☐ Restrictions are stored with the item record
- ☐ Two stewards know the recovery process
- ☐ Accounts and storage costs are reviewed annually

8 Archive Handoff and Annual Review

Give the next steward a usable system rather than an unexplained drive

Handoff item	Location or decision	Complete
Collection catalog	_____ _____	☐
Permission and restriction records	_____ _____	☐
Preservation masters	_____ _____	☐
Backup recovery instructions	_____ _____	☐
Institutional contacts	_____ _____	☐
Unresolved research questions	_____ _____	☐
Next annual review date	_____ _____	☐

Stewardship agreement

Outgoing steward: _____ Incoming steward: _____

Backup steward: _____ Handoff date: _____

Next steps

- ☐ Schedule the archive table or interview station in the reunion itinerary
- ☐ Tell households what materials to bring
- ☐ Recruit and train the intake and interview team
- ☐ Test recording and backup equipment
- ☐ Return copies and corrections to contributors after the reunion

More culturally grounded reunion guides: <https://gatherkin.app/heritage>

Plan household registration, schedules, assignments, travel, and family updates: <https://gatherkin.app>