

Questions to ponder

Don't worry if you're not sure of this information. Genealogy is often the process of putting together family stories with documentation, and there are almost always discrepancies between memories and dates.

Names & nicknames

- Is your name Anglicized? If so, what might be the original surname?
- What is your full legal name? Nickname?
- Do you have children? (It's not necessary to build a family tree, but some like to include their children for completeness, and to show their children the family tree.) (Names and ages)
- What is your father's full name? Nicknames?
- What is your mother's full maiden name? Nicknames?

Siblings, aunts, uncles, cousins

- Do you have siblings? (Names & ages)
- Does your father have siblings? (Names & ages)
- Does your mother have siblings? (Names & ages)
- Do you have cousins? (Name - age - relationship)

Places

- Where were you born, e.g., hospital, town, city, province.
- Where was your mother born, e.g., town, hospital, city, province.
- Where was your father born, e.g., town, hospital, city, province.
- Where did your maternal grandparents live, e.g., address, LSD, township.
- Where did your paternal grandparents live, e.g., address, LSD, township.
- Where did your great-grandparents live?
- From what country did your forebears originate?

Dates

If you're not sure, a guess, a decade, or even an era (ex: the Depression) is very helpful!

- What year were you born?
- What year was your mother born?
- What year was your father born?
- What year was your maternal grandmother born?
- What year was your maternal grandfather born?
- What year was your paternal grandfather born?
- What year was your paternal grandmother born?
- (For non-Indigenous families) When did your family immigrate to Canada?

What did your people do?

You can be very general, e.g., agriculture, merchant. Don't forget volunteering, committees, boards, social clubs, pastimes and hobbies.

- What did your maternal grandparents do?
- What did your paternal grandparents do?
- What jobs did your mother have?
- What jobs did your father have?

Religion

- What is your maternal family's denomination, i.e., Catholic, St. Mary's Parish)
- Where did they worship?
- What is your paternal family's denomination?
- Where did they worship?

War & conflict

- Are any members of your family veterans? Which war?
- Where did they serve?
- Name, rank and serial number?
- Do you have any memorabilia, i.e., medals, certificates, letters?

Travel (Chinese only)

The Chinese were subjected to huge restrictions on travel with the Chinese Immigration Act. As a result, it may be possible to find your family's detailed immigration records, which are unique to the Canadian Chinese.

Those who have passed on

- Please tell me if any of your parents or grandparents are deceased.
- In what city / province did they pass away?
- Approximately what year did they pass? (Your best guess is very helpful here.)

Family stories

In this section, think back on any family stories you've heard over the years. Sometimes the most innocuous stories yield rich clues about your family's past.

Where did grandma go to school?

Was grandpa in the war?

Was your father a star soccer player?

Did your mother win a prize in science?

What were their hobbies?