



Mom & Pop Culture

Creating A Culture of Family History in Your Family and Your Home.

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*Since writing my books I've observed that you can use a successful **THREE PRONGED APPROACH** to teaching your family members about their heritage.*

1. Surround them with visuals.

- a. Pictures are always good to spark interest and further questions and stories.
 - i. Who do I look like? What are family traits?
 - ii. Use pictures of the same age, report cards, driver's licenses, hobbies
- b. Displaying your family history can create interest and curiosity.
 - i. Display your pictures, family history charts, maps, timelines, calendars,
 - ii. Make sure they have geographical, time and visual references.
 - iii. Books about family history in general, books about your family's history, collections of letters, pictures, copies of the items you've collected, computerized information, videos.
 - iv. Heirlooms
 - v. Family History Decorating projects (see youtube.com/janethovorka)

2. Live it. Mention the little things that come up.

- a. Share Traditions
 - i. Holidays had traditional foods and traditional activities. Celebrate the religious holidays of your heritage as well as the cultural holidays. Tell them about who and why.
- b. Practices of your ancestors
 - i. Hobbies such as hunting, woodworking, macrame, tatting, gardening...
 - ii. Talents such as quilting, sewing, lace making, harmonica...
 - iii. Games they played such as paper dolls, rolling a hoop, cat's cradle...
 - iv. Skills they had such as building, car maintenance, gardening, ironing...
 - v. Music they sang such as the songs your grandparents taught you or music from the time period
 - vi. Recipes. Make a recipe book of your grandmother's cooking. Share in the preparation and the circumstances of when it was used. Make sure you include your patriarchal and matriarchal lines.
- c. Use social networking.
 - i. Use social networking in a family history way. Keep it short and sweet.
 - ii. Tell the funny stories, use pictures and the engaging anecdotes.
 - iii. Blog first and then Facebook, Google+ Twitter, Instagram, Pinterest. Find out where your family members are most involved. Check out zapthegrandmagap.com/social.html for ideas.

3. Give it some depth with projects about certain people.

- a. Look for the heroes you really want the next generation to know.
- b. Have an event.
 - i. Guess Who's Coming to Dinner. Enjoy the culture of that ancestor for dinner, food/music/decorations, share pictures, heirlooms, etc. Form questions about the person, and have family members guess who the dinner is about. Tell stories about that person during dinner.
 - ii. Celebrate an Ancestor's Birthday. It can be as easy as just be stories and cake. Or you could go someplace or do something they liked to do.
 - iii. Celebrate your family with a Culture Night. Organize the night around a culture or a time period. (German Christmas in July, England in World War II.) Act out skits around a family story or a person.
- c. Games
 - i. Matching Cards with pictures, names, places, a personal quality, old/young pictures. You can play go fish or memory games with the cards.
 - ii. Guess the heirloom, thingamajig. If you have an heirloom that the younger generation wouldn't know about you might take guesses as to what it is, what it was used for and whose it was.
 - iii. Puzzles out of family pictures or pedigree charts.
 - iv. Most any game can be applied to Family History: jeopardy, charades, boggle, scrabble, trivial pursuit, bingo, pictionary
 - v. For a family event, make a book of paper games for the little children. Include dot to dot, mazes, coloring, crossword puzzles.
- d. Take them with you
 - i. Tour places in your history. Record places with pictures and video, and compare changes
 - ii. Visit places of re-enactment such as This is the Place State Park, Williamsburg, Virginia, Plymouth, Massachusetts, Gettysburg, Pennsylvania
 - iii. Visit Historical Sites/Visitors Centers/Museums dealing with the time period or an event in your ancestor's life.
 - iv. Take advantage of classes to learn the skills and games at the time.
 - v. Visit Heritage Festivals or Community Holiday gatherings that celebrate your heritage.
 - vi. Cemeteries can even be fun if you make a party out of it. Take a picnic, have a treasure hunt with a prize for finding the right stone, make maps, make rubbings, take a cemetery kit with treats, water, cleaning supplies, etc. Tell them about the person as you are traveling, cleaning headstones.
 - vii. At archives and repositories let them touch the past and see the actual sources of your ancestors.
- e. Encourage record keeping.
 - i. Audio or video interviewing
 - ii. Personal journals or diaries, blogs etc.
 - iii. Or short records like a timeline, story of an event or a day in the life, feelings about a historical event, map of the neighborhood or floorplan of the house, a letter to posterity (see free .pdf at zapthegrandmagap.com)
 - iv. Communications with family members. Emails, letters, video, facebook, recorded skype with: cousins, nieces and nephews, children, Grandma and Grandpa

Correlate the interests of your youth with your family history. Take their interests and apply them back to your history to make those connections, not the other way around.

Further Reading

Zap The Grandma Gap: Connect With Your Children By Connecting Them To Their Family History, by Janet Hovorka
Book and workbook available at zapthegrandmagap.com.

My German Ancestor, My British Ancestor, My Civil War Ancestor, My Swedish Ancestor activity books for youth by
Janet Hovorka and Amy Slade available at zapthegrandmagap.com.