

**PLANNING YOUR FAMILY REUNION:  
CELEBRATING OUR PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE**

**Nancy M. Huebotter**

**Writer/Editor, Instructor, Genealogist, Lecturer**

**2634 Associated Road, Apt. #A110**

**Fullerton, CA 92835**

**714-990-5946**

**[nhuebotter@roadrunner.com](mailto:nhuebotter@roadrunner.com)**

A family reunion is a great opportunity for collecting family information, sharing the exciting results of your genealogical passion, and gathering additional information. Because our families define us, we feel the periodic need to reconnect to those near and far. This is no trivial undertaking. It takes time and a considerable amount of planning. However, a well-planned, exciting reunion will leave everyone looking forward to the next opportunity for another reunion.

**I. The Planting of an Idea**

- a. Write a letter soliciting interest, ideas, and assistance
- b. Deciding on the 5 Ws and H
  - i. Who
  - ii. What
  - iii. When
  - iv. Where
  - v. Why
  - vi. How

**II. The Developing of the Idea**

- a. Organizing the 5 Ws and H
  - i. Who
  - ii. What
  - iii. When
  - iv. Where
  - v. Why
  - vi. How
- b. Begin a checklist and work from it
  - i. Things to do
  - ii. Things to purchase
  - iii. People to talk to

**III. Cost Factors – How much will this idea cost?**

- a. Personal Costs
- b. Defrayed Costs

**IV. The Day of the Reunion**

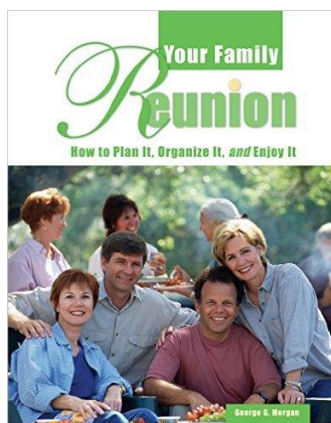
- a. What to have on hand
- b. What kind of activities

**V. What to do after the Reunion**

- a. Plan for the next reunion
- b. Photo Exchange
- c. Newsletter
- d. Elect family organization officers
  - i. President
  - ii. Chairmen
  - iii. Historian

## Planning and Organizing a Family Reunion

### Bibliographic References



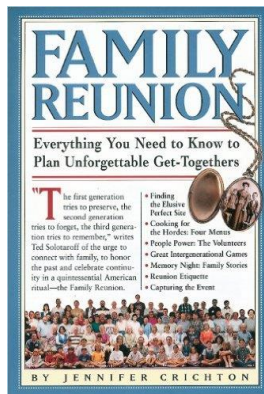
#### **Your Family Reunion: How to Plan It, Organize It, and Enjoy It** **By: George G. Morgan**

This book is a guide for organizing a successful and exciting family reunion, from a casual backyard barbecue to a week-long deluxe cruise. No matter whether this is your first family reunion or your tenth, the keys to a successful event are to plan and organize a structure for it, get the people together, and provide opportunities for a variety of memory-making activities. Among the topics covered are getting started with the organization process, determining how to finance the event and work with vendors, deciding where and when to hold it, and creating a simple and effective record keeping system.

- **Series:** How to Plan It, Organize It, and Enjoy It
- **Paperback:** 188 pages
- **Publisher:** Ancestry.com (September 1, 2001)
- **ISBN-10:** 1681620146
- **ISBN-13:** 978-1681620145
- **Price:** \$14.95

#### **Family Reunion**

**By: Jennifer Crichton**

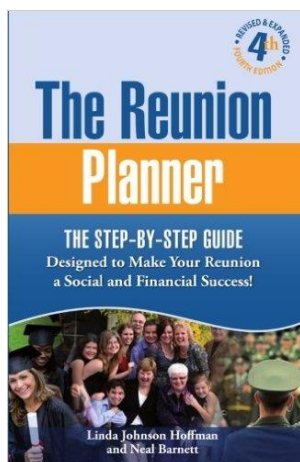


Today more than ever, American families are scattered to the wind. Yet perhaps for this very reason, families have also been getting together for reunions in unprecedented numbers.

Planning a reunion is a pleasurable but complicated undertaking that requires foresight and planning, and here to assist is *Family Reunion*, an indispensable guide and sourcebook that shows how to organize and conduct four basic reunions: a Backyard Barbecue for siblings and cousins, a Homecoming Weekend, an Extended Family Reunion, and a Family Camp, which typically lasts a week and gathers up to 100 participants.

Accessible and packed with ideas and information, the book shows how to create a workable timetable (18 months before a large reunion is not too soon to start planning), organize a committee, and set up a fund for expenses (and to help less-well-off members attend). There are chapters on location, including little-known church camps and family resorts; on scheduling activities for kids and adults, day and evening; on genealogy; on recording the event; and even on etiquette, including how to handle black sheep, in-laws, and stepchildren. With case studies of real-life reunions and duotone photographs throughout, this is the book that helps us connect.

- **Paperback:** 280 pages
- **Publisher:** Workman Publishing Company (July 1, 1998)
- **ISBN-10:** 0761105859
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0761105855
- **Price:** \$9.66



## The Reunion Planner: The Step-by-Step Guide Designed to Make Your Reunion a Social and Financial Success!

By: Linda Johnson Hoffman

*The Reunion Planner, How to Make Your Reunion a Social and Financial Success*, is now in its 4th and completely updated Edition. For many years, this guidebook has been helping non-professional planners create reunions that are successful and memorable. The book contains many ideas, resources, and tips for college, family, military and high-school reunions. Since the previous edition, social media has become a major factor in getting the word out about reunions. With its instantaneous capabilities, social media has become a very useful tool in announcing reunions, finding people, stimulating attendance, and keeping the ambiance going by chatting, posting pictures and reminiscing after

the event. This new edition allows contains great references to various websites for advertising your reunion, creating interactive connections with your group, finding people, selecting appropriate venues, and in exploring ideas for displays and mementos. Organized by time frames preceding the event, it walks the planner and/or committee through everything from one year before the reunion, through its fruition, and the aftermath. This new edition also includes examples of invitations, room displays, mementos, name tags, centerpieces, and activities. Having a newly updated companion software program that can be purchased along with the book, included are tips on how to incorporate its features into your reunion plan. Besides the organizational details, the book helps lessen the anxiety of the inevitable hesitations associated with planning such an event or even attending reunions. Not only will readers have all the tools necessary to pull off a successful reunion, they will be able to convince everyone that such landmark events are not to be missed. The Reunion Planner will not only show you how to succeed in having a profitable event, but it will also ensure that your reunion will exceed expectations and maintain cherished memories until the next one takes place.

- **Paperback:** 198 pages
- **Publisher:** Goodman Lauren Publishing; 4 edition (June 21, 2014)
- **ISBN-10:** 0974726583
- **ISBN-13:** 978-0974726588
- **Price:** \$15.95

## Reunion Guide Master Plan

### 18 – 24 Months Prior to Reunion

- Preliminary meetings of reunion organizers; determine level of interest.
- Consider forming a non-profit association.
- Keep records of everything you do.
- If available, read notes from individuals who organized the previous reunion.
- Get advice from someone who has planned a reunion.
- Attend reunion organizing seminar.
- Start locating people.
- Start the mailing list.
- Set date(s).

- Explore the possibility of hiring a reunion planner.
- Choose a location.
- Begin to explore facilities.
- Meet with facility staff.
- Open a bank account.
- Begin fundraising.

### 1 Year Prior to Reunion

- Set up mailing label system.
- Begin to negotiate contract with facility.
- Make a budget and determine cost of reunion (even if only approximate). Set up bookkeeping system.

- Send out first notification mailer including list of missing people, survey, and approximate cost.
- Decide on a program, including Master of Ceremonies, entertainment, speakers, tours, decorations.
- Hire entertainment, photographers, videographers, and/or memory book suppliers.

### **6 – 9 Months Prior to Reunion**

- Form subcommittees: entertainment, tours, registration, food.
- Get people involved.
- Make a “things to do” checklist.
- Make a schedule of events and activities.
- Confirm reservations.
- Begin arranging sleeping accommodations.
- Revise mailing list to include people located.
- Explore and order imprinted mementos to be distributed at the reunion.
- Prepare and send the second mailer to include registration form, exact cost, and revised list of missing people.

### **5 Months Prior to Reunion**

- Begin to layout souvenir directory or list of members or attendees. Decide on decorations, signs, and/or banners.
- Decide on menu.
- Send mailing to any newly located people.
- Contact all committee heads for progress reports and make any necessary reassignments.
- Send announcements to appropriate media.

### **2 – 5 Months Prior to Reunion**

- Subcommittees meet.
- Assign who will bring what.
- Meet with hotel staff or visit facility with committee heads.
- Reserve any rental equipment.
- Send final mailer.

### **6 – 8 Weeks Prior to Reunion**

- Review and revise schedule of events.
- Finalize nametags.
- Organize registration table.
- Create a final checklist, including all tasks.

### **2 Weeks Prior to Reunion**

- Confirm entertainment.
- Purchase decorations.
- Plan schedule for workers at registration table.
- Purchase gifts.
- Assign clean-up duties.
- Stock first aid kit.
- Review final checklist.
- Arrange transportation and drivers, if necessary.

### **1 Week Prior to Reunion**

- Review final details with chair and committee members at reunion location.
- Meet with facility staff liaison, check meeting and sleeping accommodations, and eating/menu arrangement.
- Get change for registration tables.

### **Day of Reunion**

- Decorate.
- Test sound system.
- Set up registration tables, equipment, displays.
- Relax, enjoy, mingle, and meet people!

### **Days After Reunion**

- Reflect.
- Evaluate. Do an honest postmortem, learn equally from triumphs and glitches.
- Gather and organize all notes on organizing the reunion.
- Return rental and borrowed equipment.
- Write thank-you notes to volunteers and others.
- Compile directory and mail to attendees.
- Complete bookkeeping and pay bills.