



# Clan Forsyth Oral History / This is your Life

## FULL Life Event Questions & Conversation Prompts

### Not ready for a book but want to capture your story?

We're often asked this question: *"We're not ready for a book but we want to make sure we capture our story. What should we do?"*

An oral history (a planned interview program with a range of Clan members, past committee and executives, selected associated individuals) is an ideal way to capture the history of the Clan Society and its membership. In fact, we believe the real history of any group resides in the memories and experiences of the people who have lived through these times.

Your personal oral history can be as small or as extensive as you like, and you can control the timeframe you want it cover.

So, become a part of the Clan Forsyth Oral History program today and capture your past before it is lost!

Then, when you're ready for your own book, you will have a great base from which to start.

### PLEASE READ

**Special Note:** The general categories that provide a common framework for these interviews are listed below in bold type. Within each of these categories are listed multiple questions, that have been designed to causally inform listener of the life events that span the interviewees lifetime.

They are intended more so as topic prompts to provide an insight into the events that have added colour and dimension to the fabric of their life's journey, in a fun and entertaining manner.

### **SUGGESTED INTERVIEW CONDUCT**

1. In order that the interview does not take on all the appeal of an interrogation, it would be most strongly suggested that only a selection of these question be covered.
2. It is further suggested that the this list should be provided to the interviewee together with these instructions and any other instructions required, so that they are clear about there not being an expectation that the have to answer every question on this list.
3. The best results for this type of interview come from a conversational style of interview. Therefore it is vital that the interviewee should feel both comfortable and relaxed with all questions being asked.
4. It is similarly MOST STRONGLY suggested that when you provide the interview with these questions these should be provided well in advance of the interview recording. – A "check box" is provided besides each question for the interviewee use, to help them select the content and questions from each framework category, they are most comfortable to answer questions with you. By providing these questions in advance, they made can prepare their responses in advance and provide with better considered responses.

*Len Forsyth*

## What Is Oral History?

Oral history is the systematic collection of living people's testimony about their own experiences. Oral history is **NOT** folklore, gossip, hearsay, or rumour.

In oral history projects, an interviewee recalls an event for an interviewer who records the recollections and creates a historical record.

Oral history depends upon human memory and the spoken word. The means of collection can vary from taking notes by hand to elaborate electronic aural and video recordings.

The human life span puts boundaries on the subject matter that we collect with oral history. We can only go back one lifetime, so our limits move forward in time with each generation. This leads to the Oral Historian's Anxiety Syndrome, that panicky realization that irretrievable information is slipping away from us with every moment.

Oral history, well done, gives one a sense of accomplishment. Collecting oral history, we have a sense of catching and holding something valuable from the receding tide of the past.

### Interview 12 Point - Common Framework Categories.

In order for there to be common format for the benefit of future listeners of your life story, it is suggested that the following questioning structure should be observed. This question framework will progress along the following 12 point general timeline.

1. Childhood
2. Tell me about your parents and grandparents.
3. Early Childhood Memories
4. School Life
5. Memorable Childhood Holidays
6. Your world from the eyes of a young person
7. Adulthood, Identity
8. Marriage and family
9. Family Attributes
10. General Outlook on Life
11. The Present, Aging, Life Lessons and Legacies
12. Your Closing Message to future generations.

Should you have any further suggestion you are urged to discuss these with the interviewer.

### **1. Childhood**

*Please indicate which questions you are happy to answer by placing a "tick box" in front of each question you feel comfortable answering. You do **NOT** have to answer ALL of these questions provided. They are provided as conversation prompts only. Please feel free to provide the interviewee with any alternate or additional topic to would prefer to be covered.*

- ☐ What year were you born?
- ☐ On what date?
- ☐ What day of the week was it?
- ☐ Did your parents tell you anything about the day you were born?
- ☐ Where were you born?
- ☐ Why were you given the first (and middle) name(s) that you have?

- ☐ What's your first, most vivid memory?
- ☐ What was the house like that you grew up in?
- ☐ How many bedrooms did it have?
- ☐ Bathrooms?
- ☐ What was your bedroom like?
- ☐ Can you describe the neighbourhood you grew up in?

## 2. Tell me about your parents and grandparents.

*Please indicate which questions you are happy to answer by placing a "tick box" in front of each question you feel comfortable answering. You do **NOT** have to answer ALL of these questions provided. They are provided as conversation prompts only. Please feel free to provide the interviewee with any alternate or additional topic to would prefer to be covered.*

- ☐ Where were they born?
- ☐ When were they born?
- ☐ What memories do you have of them?
- ☐ Who was stricter: your mother or your father?
- ☐ Do you have a vivid memory of something you did that you were disciplined for?
- ☐ Did your parents have a good marriage?
- ☐ How did your family earn money?
- ☐ How did your family compare to others in the neighbourhood – richer, poorer, the same?
- ☐ What kinds of things did your family spend money on?
- ☐ How many brothers and sisters do you have?
- ☐ When were they born?
- ☐ What memories do you have of each of them from when you were growing up?
- ☐ Did you have grandparents?
- ☐ Where were they born?
- ☐ When were they born?
- ☐ What do you remember about them?
- ☐ When did they die?

## 3. Early Childhood Memories

*Please indicate which questions you are happy to answer by placing a "tick box" in front of each question you feel comfortable answering. You do **NOT** have to answer ALL of these questions provided. They are provided as conversation prompts only. Please feel free to provide the interviewee with any alternate or additional topic to would prefer to be covered.*

- ☐ Did you have any pets?
- ☐ What were you like as a child?
- ☐ What did you like to eat?
- ☐ What did you do for fun?
- ☐ What were your favourite toys or games?
- ☐ Did you ever have a secret place or a favourite hiding spot?
- ☐ What did you wear?
- ☐ Did you get any pocket money or not?
- ☐ How much?
- ☐ Did you spend it right away, or save it?
- ☐ What did you buy?

- ☐ What responsibilities did you have at home when you were young?

#### 4. School Life

*Please indicate which questions you are happy to answer by placing a “tick box” in front of each question you feel comfortable answering. You do **NOT** have to answer ALL of these questions provided. They are provided as conversation prompts only. Please feel free to provide the interviewee with any alternate or additional topic to would prefer to be covered.*

- ☐ What kind of school did you go to?
- ☐ Were you a good student?
- ☐ What was your favourite subject?
- ☐ Least favourite?
- ☐ Who were your friends?
- ☐ Who was your favourite teacher and why?
- ☐ Did you have any heroes or role models when you were a child?
- ☐ How did you spend your school holidays?
- ☐ What were your favourite holiday activities?

#### 5. Memorable Childhood Holidays

*Please indicate which questions you are happy to answer by placing a “tick box” in front of each question you feel comfortable answering. You do **NOT** have to answer ALL of these questions provided. They are provided as conversation prompts only. Please feel free to provide the interviewee with any alternate or additional topic to would prefer to be covered.*

- ☐ Where did your family go on vacations?
- ☐ How did your family celebrate holidays (e.g. Christmas, New Year, Easter, Australia Day or Anzac Day)?
- ☐ Did lots of relatives get together?
- ☐ What traditions did you have year after year?
- ☐ What food was served?
- ☐ What was the best gift you remember receiving as a child?

#### 6. Your world from the eyes of a young person

*Please indicate which questions you are happy to answer by placing a “tick box” in front of each question you feel comfortable answering. You do **NOT** have to answer ALL of these questions provided. They are provided as conversation prompts only. Please feel free to provide the interviewee with any alternate or additional topic to would prefer to be covered.*

- ☐ What did you want to be when you grew up?
- ☐ What big world events do you remember from the time you were growing up?
- ☐ What inventions do you most remember?
- ☐ What’s different about growing up today from when you were growing up?
- ☐ When you were a teenager, what did you do for fun?
- ☐ Did you have a favourite spot to “hang out”?
- ☐ What time did you have to be home at night?
- ☐ Did you ever get into any trouble?
- ☐ Were there any phrases that were popular when you were a teenager?

- ☐ What did you like to wear?
- ☐ How did your parents feel about the way you talked and what you wore?
- ☐ When did you learn how to drive?
- ☐ Who taught you?
- ☐ What was your first car like?
- ☐ What was the completion of your schooling like?
- ☐ Was there a ceremony at your final school?
- ☐ What was it liked?
- ☐ What dreams and goals did you have for your life when you graduated?

## 7. Adulthood, Identity

*Please indicate which questions you are happy to answer by placing a “tick box” in front of each question you feel comfortable answering. You do **NOT** have to answer ALL of these questions provided. They are provided as conversation prompts only. Please feel free to provide the interviewee with any alternate or additional topic to would prefer to be covered.*

- ☐ After Your Schooling did you complete any further education or study?
- ☐ Did you go to university or trade or agricultural college?
- ☐ How did you decide what you wanted to study?
- ☐ Did you serve in the military? What did you do and what kind of experience was it?
- ☐ How did you decide what you wanted to do with your life?
- ☐ How do you feel about that choice?
- ☐ What was your first job?
- ☐ What did you like or not like about it?
- ☐ What job did you do most of your life?
- ☐ What did you like most about it? Least?

## 8. Marriage and family

*Please indicate which questions you are happy to answer by placing a “tick box” in front of each question you feel comfortable answering. You do **NOT** have to answer ALL of these questions provided. They are provided as conversation prompts only. Please feel free to provide the interviewee with any alternate or additional topic to would prefer to be covered.*

- ☐ How did you meet your spouse?
- ☐ What did you like about him/her?
- ☐ How and when did you get engaged?
- ☐ When did you get married?
- ☐ How old were you?
- ☐ Where did you get married?
- ☐ What was your wedding like?
- ☐ What was the first big purchase you made with your spouse?
- ☐ What makes your spouse special or unique?
- ☐ How many children do you have?
- ☐ When were they born?
- ☐ How did you decide what to name each?
- ☐ What’s your favourite story about each of your children?

- ☐ What is something funny or embarrassing one of your children said at an early age that you'll never forget?
- ☐ What's the most memorable family vacation you took?
- ☐ What do you remember about holiday celebrations?
- ☐ Is there one holiday memory that stands out for you?
- ☐ How did you feel about raising your children?
- ☐ What was the best part?
- ☐ The hardest part?
- ☐ What makes you proud of your children?

## 9. Family Attributes

*Please indicate which questions you are happy to answer by placing a "tick box" in front of each question you feel comfortable answering. You do **NOT** have to answer ALL of these questions provided. They are provided as conversation prompts only. Please feel free to provide the interviewee with any alternate or additional topic to would prefer to be covered.*

- ☐ How is my father/mother like me? Unlike me?
- ☐ What do you remember about me when I was born? What about when I was younger than I am now?
- ☐ What the best thing about being a parent? A grandparent?
- ☐ Do you know the meaning of your family name?
- ☐ Are there stories about the origins of your family name?
- ☐ Have you ever had any nicknames as a child or as an adult?
- ☐ Where did they come from?
- ☐ How are you like your mother? Unlike her?
- ☐ How are you like your father? Unlike him?
- ☐ What was most important to your parents?
- ☐ Do you feel you're like any of your grandparents? In what ways?
- ☐ How are your children like you? Unlike you?
- ☐ What do you think are your three best qualities? Your three worst?

## 10. General Outlook on Life

*Please indicate which questions you are happy to answer by placing a "tick box" in front of each question you feel comfortable answering. You do **NOT** have to answer ALL of these questions provided. They are provided as conversation prompts only. Please feel free to provide the interviewee with any alternate or additional topic to would prefer to be covered.*

- ☐ Which do you think you have the most of: talent, intelligence, education, or persistence?
- ☐ How has it helped you in your life?
- ☐ Do you have any special sayings or expressions?
- ☐ What's your favourite book and why?
- ☐ What's your favourite movie and why?
- ☐ Who are three people in history you admire most and why?
- ☐ What have been the three biggest news events during your lifetime and why?
- ☐ If you could travel into the future, would you rather see something that specifically relates to you, or something that relates to the future of the country in general?
- ☐ Why?

- ☐ If you could have three wishes, what would they be?
- ☐ If you won \$1 million tomorrow, what would you do with the money?
- ☐ What's the highest honour or award you've ever received?
- ☐ What's the most memorable phone call you've ever received?
- ☐ What's the best compliment you ever received?
- ☐ What kinds of things bring you the most pleasure now?
- ☐ What kinds of things bring you the most pleasure when you were a younger adult?
- ☐ What kinds of things bring you the most pleasure as a child?
- ☐ What things frighten you now?
- ☐ What frightened you when you were a younger adult?
- ☐ What frightened you when you were a child?
- ☐ What's the one thing you've always wanted but still don't have?

## 11. The Present, Aging, Life Lessons and Legacies

*Please indicate which questions you are happy to answer by placing a "tick box" in front of each question you feel comfortable answering. You do **NOT** have to answer ALL of these questions provided. They are provided as conversation prompts only. Please feel free to provide the interviewee with any alternate or additional topic to would prefer to be covered.*

- ☐ Do you feel differently about yourself now from how you felt when you were younger?  
How?
- ☐ What do you think has stayed the same about you throughout life?
- ☐ What do you think has changed?
- ☐ Do you have any hobbies or special interests?
- ☐ Do you enjoy any particular sports?
- ☐ What's your typical day like now?
- ☐ How is it different from your daily routines in the past?
- ☐ Is the present better or worse than when you were younger?
- ☐ What do you do for fun?
- ☐ Who do you trust and depend on?
- ☐ What things are most important to you now? Why?
- ☐ How have your dreams and goals changed through your life?
- ☐ What do you see? (Hold a mirror up to the person)
- ☐ What do you remember about your 20s? 30s? 40s? 50s? 60s?
- ☐ What events stand out in your mind?
- ☐ How was each age different from the one before it?
- ☐ There are some ages we don't look forward to. What birthday were you least enthusiastic about?
- ☐ Why?
- ☐ If you could go back to any age, which age would it be and why?
- ☐ How do you feel now about growing old?
- ☐ What's the hardest thing about growing older?
- ☐ The best thing?
- ☐ What were your parents like when they got older?
- ☐ Did you have any expectations at points in your life about what growing older would be like for you?
- ☐ How should a person prepare for old age?
- ☐ Is there anything you wish you'd done differently?
- ☐ Do you think about the future and make plans?

- ☐ What are your concerns for the future?
- ☐ If you live another 20-30 years, what will you do?
- ☐ Do you want to live another 20-30 years?
- ☐ What do you look forward to now?
- ☐ What's your most cherished family tradition? Why is it important?
- ☐ What have you liked best about your life so far?
- ☐ What's your happiest or proudest moment?
- ☐ What do you feel have been the important successes in your life?
- ☐ The frustrations?
- ☐ What's the most difficult thing that ever happened to you?
- ☐ How did you deal with it?
- ☐ What do you think the turning points have been in your life?
- ☐ What were you like then?
- ☐ Are there times of your life that you remember more vividly than others? Why?

## **12. Your closing message to future generations.**

*Please indicate which questions you are happy to answer by placing a "tick box" in front of each question you feel comfortable answering. You do **NOT** have to answer ALL of these questions provided. They are provided as conversation prompts only. Please feel free to provide the interviewee with any alternate or additional topic to would prefer to be covered.*

- ☐ What have been the most influential experiences in your life?
- ☐ Describe a person or situation from your childhood that had a profound effect on the way you look at life.
- ☐ If you were writing the story of your life, how would you divide it into chapters?
- ☐ What, if anything, would you have done differently in your life?
- ☐ What do you know now that you wish you'd known when you were young?
- ☐ What have you thrown away in your life that you wish you hadn't?
- ☐ What have you held on to that's important and why is it important?
- ☐ What "junk" have you held on to and why?
- ☐ Over time, how have you changed the way you look at life/people?
- ☐ What advice did your grandparents or parents give you that you remember best?
- ☐ Do you have a philosophy of life? What's your best piece of advice for living? If a young person came to you asking what's the most important thing for living a good life, what would you say?
- ☐ How do you define a "good life" or a "successful life"?
- ☐ Do you think a person needs to first overcome serious setbacks or challenges to be truly successful?
- ☐ In what way is it important to know your limitations in your life or career?
- ☐ If you had the power to solve one and only one problem in the world, what would it be and why?
- ☐ What do you see as your place or purpose in life? How did you come to that conclusion?
- ☐ What would you like your children and grandchildren to remember about you?
- ☐ If you could write a message to each of your children and grandchildren and put it in a time capsule for them to read 20 years from now, what would you write to each?





## INTERVIEW DEED OF RELEASE

### General Information.

Deed of Release for the Personal Account interview for the Clan Forsyth Queensland - Oral History project.

The purpose of this form is to confirm that the interviewee and the creator of the video/audio recording have both given their permission for their video to be used for the Clan Forsyth Queensland - Oral History project. It is **IMPORTANT** therefore that the details on the following page be completed so that this material can be made available by Clan Forsyth Queensland Inc.

When completed they should be sent to either the **Clan Secretary** or **Clan Genealogist/Historian**.

### **The Clan Forsyth Queensland - Oral History project**

The Clan Forsyth Queensland - Oral History project (*see URL below*)

<http://www.clanforythqueensland.com/genealogy/oralhistory> is a not-for-profit project to provide to both members of the public and clan members the opportunity to hear "Living History" from clan members people at various stages of their lives.

The project aims to build a library of video and audio interviews that allow individuals to explain their own life experience and provide an insight for the interviewer and any audience who chooses to review at any point in the future the video or audio online.

The philosophy of the Clan Forsyth Queensland - Oral History project is for individual members' to recruit someone to interview and then independently create a new video interview, made accessible to all the Clan Website (<http://www.clanfrosythqueensland.com/genelogy/oralhistory>) or via YouTube. By building a library of such videos future clan members can capture range of experiences.

A catalogue of finished video interviews is maintained by the Secretary of Clan Forsyth Queensland ([secretartary@clanforythqueensland.com](mailto:secretartary@clanforythqueensland.com)) and Clan Historian and Genealogist ([genealogy@clanforythqueensland.com](mailto:genealogy@clanforythqueensland.com)) but the Project does not belong to any individual or branch of the clan all genuine contributions to the catalogue are much appreciated.

The Clan Forsyth Queensland - Oral History project is in its infancy so we very much thank you for contributing your time as interviewee and the interviewer/video creator.



## ***Deed of Release***

The information that is collected and stored as part of this interview process, will remain the copyrighted and protected property of Clan Forsyth Queensland Inc. This will include all lists of questions, written text, transcripts, scanned images, video and audio recordings.

These may be stored for an indeterminate period and may be reused in the form of both public and private publications in the form of Web Pages, Journal articles and promotion and advertising materials.

As the interviewee for this Clan Forsyth Queensland - Oral History project video interview, I give my permission for the my video likeness and recordings of my voice to be edited and presented via the internet and possibly also played in excerpt.

### **Interviewee Details:**

Print name of interviewee: \_\_\_\_\_

Interviewee signature \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

As the interviewer and creator of the video interview described above I request that my video and or audio recording be added to the catalogue of Clan Forsyth Queensland - Oral History.

### **Creators Details:**

Print name of Video creator Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date of Grant of Deed Release: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_

Received by and filed on behalf of Clan Forsyth Queensland Inc.

Signature: \_\_\_\_\_

Date: \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_ / \_\_\_\_