

Family History Interview Questions

note: I interviewed my grandmother

1. What country did our family immigrate from?
We immigrated from Posen, Germany. However, this town is now a part of Poland. But we're German. No one can say differently!
2. Do we know when?
1895 - Gunnersons; 1871 - Radkes; 1882 - Griemes
3. How many generations ago was that?
6 Generations
4. What did our family do when we lived in that country?
Farmers
5. What other history is known about that time?
Ellis Island had not yet opened so the station that we went through was an itty bitty one in upstate New York.
6. Where did we move to when we got here?
We moved to Alta, Iowa in 1874
7. What kind of business was our family involved in?
We first began buying farmland in 1880. Soon, we became very successful and had large farms. The Radkes are well-to-do kinds of people in Alta. They also owned the town store down the street from the Hanover Church.
8. Are there any objects that are from this time?
Great Great Grandma Menke's wedding dress is on display in the town's museum. It is actually quite the attraction.
9. Is there any other interesting information about this time?
Our family also has Indian blood in the Menke section. The famous Cherokee chief Coche is a forefather of our family.
10. In which areas of the country has our family lived?
11.
Up until recently, mostly Northern Iowa.
12. Do we generally stick to the places we've been or spread out?
We've stayed in Iowa for the most part up until recently.
13. What are the different sections of our family?
Menkes, Radkes, Griemes, Gunnersons
14. What kinds of things has our family been involved in?
Great Great Grandma Menke helped with the collaboration of a book that tells the entire history of the town of Alta and the Hanover church. She was one of the few remaining who remembered so much about that time.
15. Are there any patterns that can be found?
For the longest time, everyone was involved in agriculture and farming. Recently, more and more are becoming engineer-type peoples.
16. Are there any genetic things that are frequently found?
The base of the pinky toe sticks out a bit. We are also pretty tall for the most part.

17. What are the names of my grandparents' parents and siblings?

Sandy: Parents are Della and Lester Grieme and she has one brother, Jim.

Jerry: Parents are Grover and Marjorie Gunnerson and he has one brother, also named Jim.

18. What is known about them and their families?

Grover and Marjorie both died before any of the grandchildren were born. Jim Gunnerson lives in Iowa as well but not near anyone else in the family. Della and Lester just died recently. Lester in 2005 and Della in 2013. They were both loving people who adored cats, especially their Persian. Jim Grieme lives in Colorado and spends a lot of his time either in the mountains or travelling.

19. Do I have any second cousins?

Technically, I believe Jessica and Nathan Grieme and then Tyler and Jake Dickerson are my second cousins.

20. What are they like?

All four of them are adults. Both Tyler and Jake are engaged, Nathan is married, and Jessica is recently remarried and she has a daughter, Amber, from a previous marriage.

21. Is it more likely to have a male or female child?

There are definitely a lot more males in this family. The ratio is 1:3

22. Where in the country do different family members live?

Denver, Colorado; Clear Lake, Iowa; Murfreesboro, Tennessee; Ames, Iowa; Carroll, Iowa; Overland Park, Kansas; Omaha, Nebraska

23. Is there anything else interesting that I need to know about?

Steve's ex-wife, Cindy, married back into our family via the Menkes. That's weird and interesting.

24. What impact did the Hanover church have on our family?

The church has always been there and the house that my grandmother grew up in was located right next to it. They have always been very involved and we've been going to that church for many generations.

25. What role did farming play in the lives of family members?

Farming has always been huge. When we first moved to Iowa, we were farmers. That has been the case for quite some time. The same can be true about now. Grandpa Jerry works for the Northern Iowa Co-Op and when they were younger, Brian, Steve, and Mike all worked on local pig farms to earn some extra money.

26. I don't know as much about Grandpa Jerry's side. Can you tell me more about that?

There really isn't much known. They didn't do as great of a job of detailing it all. The did come to America from Germany, the town isn't known, in 1895.