



FAMILY HEIRLOOMS

An **heirloom** or **keepsake** is something that has been in the family for a generation or more. It can be an object such as jewelry, military medals, silver, dishes or a household item, a piece of clothing, a painting, a book such as a Bible or a paper that has particular significance. It might be a tool that an ancestor made and used, or a wedding dress, or a special ring, or a prized piece of furniture.

WHAT TO DO

Choose an heirloom or keepsake that your family has kept. If it is too valuable, too large or too fragile to bring with you, take a photo of it.

Write a short report about your chosen heirloom. The following questions and suggestions can be used as a guide. You should talk to your family to find the information. If there is a family story about the heirloom, tell the story.

Describe the item and explain what it was used for. How old is it? Where did it come from? If you know who first obtained or made the item explain how they are related to you.

Are there photos showing the object in the homes of your family members? If it is a piece of clothing is there a painting or photo showing someone wearing it? These could be included in your report.

What does it tell you about your ancestors?

Why was this item important enough to be kept by members of the family?

What items from your life today do you think might become keepsakes?

Then show the item or the photo of it and read the report you have written about it.

WHAT'S NEXT?

Once you are have finished writing and sharing your report about your family heirloom, you are ready for the next genealogy activity in this "My Family! My Story!" series - [**Family Photos!**](#)