



## **PLANNING A FAMILY REUNION**

Give yourself plenty of time. Plan at least 12 - 24 months in advance. Talk to other family members about their ideas and potential dates. Consolidate ideas and advise everyone of the event. Planning this far out will give everyone ample time to make travel plans. Each set of family members should designate one person to be their point of contact. The key to success is to ask for help; who could be the business manager, who could help with setting up at the time of the event?

### **Choose a Location:**

"Coming home" can be very exciting. If there is a relative near your hometown and has the space, would they be willing to host? Other options could include a park or a facility with a meeting / banquet room. The weather would be a key factor if holding your event outdoors; have a backup plan for an inside location. Check with hotels nearby for availability of rooms for those coming from out of town. The Leavenworth Convention and Visitors Bureau (913) 775-2948, can assist you with finding a venue and checking hotel availability.

### **The length of the reunion:**

The gathering can be a solitary day occasion (or even only a couple of hours), or it can go throughout a weekend. Regardless of whether the focal point is just a couple of hours on Saturday, you may interest relatives from further away if there are some extra, discretionary activities - perhaps a Dutch treat supper at a neighborhood eatery on Friday night, or a cemetery visit on Sunday. Contact Leavenworth Convention and Visitors Bureau (913) 775-2948, for guidance on restaurants and things to do in the area.

### **Contacting relatives:**

Invite everyone, even those who may not care for one another. Individuals can make their own decision on whether or not they want to attend. When you send the invitation, include a form to indicate the number of people attending. Always include a self-addressed, stamped envelope for a better response rate. A second mailing may be necessary to confirm final details and request meal / event fees. You may consider setting up a family web site through [MyFamily.com](http://MyFamily.com) or [FamilyLobby.com](http://FamilyLobby.com) with further details. The web site would also be a great way to share event photos.

### **Setting a budget:**

If you request a fee to be paid, be very specific about what the fee includes or does not include. You may also ask for donations.

### **Possible Expenses:**

**Food:** A potluck or cookout works well. Catered meals is an easier option but will raise the costs and will mandate an accurate head-count in advance. Other items to consider are beverages, and paper products. If people are arriving early, you may want to provide snacks.

**Facility Rental:** Get pricing for community centers, park facilities, and banquet rooms. Many of them require an advance deposit.

**Equipment Rental:** Tables, chairs, tent, sound system

**Postage and Reproduction:** Mailings, newsletters, signs, banners, genealogical charts, programs, and photos

**Prizes and mementos:** Some families have T-shirts, caps, mugs, pens, keychains or miscellaneous items made with a family logo. You can do an internet search for personalized reunion gifts. If you plan to have games, some small prizes may be appropriate that fits your reunion theme. Contact the Leavenworth Convention and Visitors Bureau (913) 775-2948 for Welcome Bags.

**Activities:** Photo swap - Treasure Hunt - Horseshoes - Softball - Story-telling - Group Photo -Campfire - Golf - Fishing - Swimming – Prizes for oldest, youngest, traveled the most distance, least distance, married longest – Family Heirloom Display – Cemetery Tour – Leavenworth City Tour – Fort Leavenworth Tour – Ghost Tour – Family Cookbook



## **Checklist:**

### **18 – 24 months before event:**

- Make a list of contacts and attendees
  - Prepare a mailing list
  - Set up website and social media sites
  - Develop a budget
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### **12 months before event:**

- Set a date and time
  - Choose a location (Contact Leavenworth CVB (913) 775-2948 for a venue guide) (CVB)
  - Select and contract facility
  - Create mailing for guests with reunion information
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### **6 to 9 months before event:**

- Contact CVB to reserve hotel rooms at a discounted rate
  - Select a theme
  - Email announcement
  - Schedule events and activities
  - Begin souvenir directory / guest list / memory book
  - Send second mailer: registration forms, cost, & hotel information
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### **5 months before event:**

- Confirm hotel reservations room block with CVB
  - Confirm details with the venue manager
  - Discuss menus and pricing; ask CVB for vendor guide for catering and entertainment
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### **4 months before event:**

- Select decorations for the venue (lights, banners, floral, rental equipment if needed)
  - Print materials for directory, family newspaper / memory book
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### **6 weeks before event:**

- Make checklist of activities to do during the event
  - Complete directory, family newspaper / memory book
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### **2 weeks before event:**

- Order Welcome Bags from CVB
  - Shop for any last minute supplies and décor
  - Review final checklist, location, overnight stays
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### **7 – 10 days before event:**

- Meet with CVB to assist in the finalization process regarding hotel accommodations
  - Pick up Welcome Bags from CVB
  - Meet with venue manager on reunion day details
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**Reunion Day(s):**

Decorate venue, set up displays and rental equipment

Enjoy your unforgettable family get together!

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**Afterward:**

Evaluate and reflect on the event

Write thank you notes

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