

BASIC HISTORY WALL EXERCISE

OVERVIEW

A participatory activity that generates a shared picture of the past of the community and the assets contained in history

OBJECTIVES

- To create a shared picture of the history of the community
- To identify both the gifts and challenges from the past that may affect the future of the community

TIME REQUIRED

After set-up, about 1.5 hours for the entire activity

PREPARATION

Work with a few members of the larger group to answer the following questions:

- How far in the past do you want to go back? To the time when the oldest person was born? To a time in early history that is significant?
- What is the overarching question?
- What are the "divisions" on the wall (e.g., society, community, individual)?
- What do we want to do with the finished product?
- What materials besides written notes do we want to use? If people want to use pictures, sound recordings, or other media, make sure they bring these.

This activity requires a sticky wall (a large piece of nylon sprayed with adhesive). You may make your own or purchase one through the Institute of Cultural Affairs, at www.ica-usa.org.

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
Step 1: Set-up	30 min. before the session starts	Split one wall of fabric into 3 horizontal sections. On the far left side of each section, put up a half sheet labeled "in society," "in the community," and "in youth's lives in the community." Along the top of the wall, put a set of half sheets with dates on them. (See Figure A)	Half sheets of paper Sticky wall Markers Tape/thumbtacks
Step 2: Setting the con- text	15 min.	Say to the group, "We are going to look at the history and journey of this community by recalling key events, people, and actions which have affected our community, its spirit, and especially its young people." "Every neighborhood or community has a richer and more powerful history than just one person can be aware of. We want to take the next hour to hour and a half to quickly develop a shared picture of the history and journey of our community. In this way, we can come to a new appreciation of our shared past."	

continued on page 31

WHAT	TIME	HOW	MATERIALS
		<p>Ask some “warm-up” questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ When did you first become connected with the community? ■ What is one key event that you remember happening in the community? ■ Who were the key people involved in the events? ■ Why is it useful to look at our history? ■ Why is it dangerous if we do not look at our history? <p>Explain how the wall is set up: A timeline runs along the top. On the sides are the different groups whose history we are examining (society, community, youth). Explain what each category is and get the group to provide examples of events that could go into each category.</p> <p>Explain the purpose of the activity: “We will be doing this to answer the question, What are the resources and challenges that come from the past related to _____ (complete sentence with the overarching question decided with the group beforehand—e.g., youth in the community).”</p> <p>Explain the process that will be used: “First we will brainstorm individually, and then we will share our ideas in teams. When all the events are on the timeline, we will step back and reflect on our community journey.”</p>	
Step 3: Brainstorming	45 min.	<p>Say to the group, “To start our brainstorming, take 3 to 5 minutes working alone to jot down about 3 events for each of the 3 categories. Try to include events from different time periods, and write the approximate date in the corner of your paper.”</p> <p>“In groups of 3, share ideas and eliminate duplicates. Write each event on the half sheets of paper that are in front of you. Write one event per sheet, and write in large, easy-to-read letters. Be sure you have some cards for each category. Take about 10 minutes to do this, putting your cards on the wall as you go along.”</p> <p>NOTE: If a lot of people are present, consider asking for cards that are unique and clear and have a few volunteers from the group put about 50 of them up on the wall.</p> <p>When all the cards are posted, the wall will look like Figure B. Read through all the cards in one category, from left to right. Let people tell stories that others want to hear. Ask if anything is missing. Do the same for the other categories</p>	<p>Markers</p> <p>Sticky wall</p> <p>Half sheets of paper</p>

continued on page 32

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continued on page 32

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		<p>NOTE: It is possible that there will be many negative events as well as positive ones. As a facilitator, keep an eye out for this, and solicit more positive cards during the brainstorming as a way to move people into a more future-oriented frame of mind.</p>	
Step 4: Trends and phases	10 min.	<p>Ask the group, “Think of our history as a story—if you were to divide it into chapters, where would the turning points be?”</p> <p>Mark the turning points on the timeline with a colored arrow. Then draw arches between points.</p> <p>Ask, “What would each chapter be called?” Label those chapters or eras.</p> <p>Ask, “If you were to describe the whole journey, how would you fill in the blank: ‘The Great Journey of _____?’”</p> <p>Write the answer across the top of the butcher paper.</p> <p>See Figure C & D to see what the above looks like.</p>	<p>Butcher paper across top of wall</p> <p>A set of colored arrows</p>
Step 5: Reflection	10 min.	<p>Ask a series of reflection questions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ What were some of the key things that you heard in the stories? ■ What are some of the feelings that this raises for you about your community? ■ How was it to be one of the youth (or elders) and tell your story? ■ What does this tell us about this community? ■ What have our challenges been over time? (Note these on a flip chart.) ■ What gifts from the past might help us as we move into the future? (Note these on a flip chart. See Figure E for an example.) 	<p>Flip chart paper</p>

FIGURE A: SET-UP FOR THE HISTORY WALL

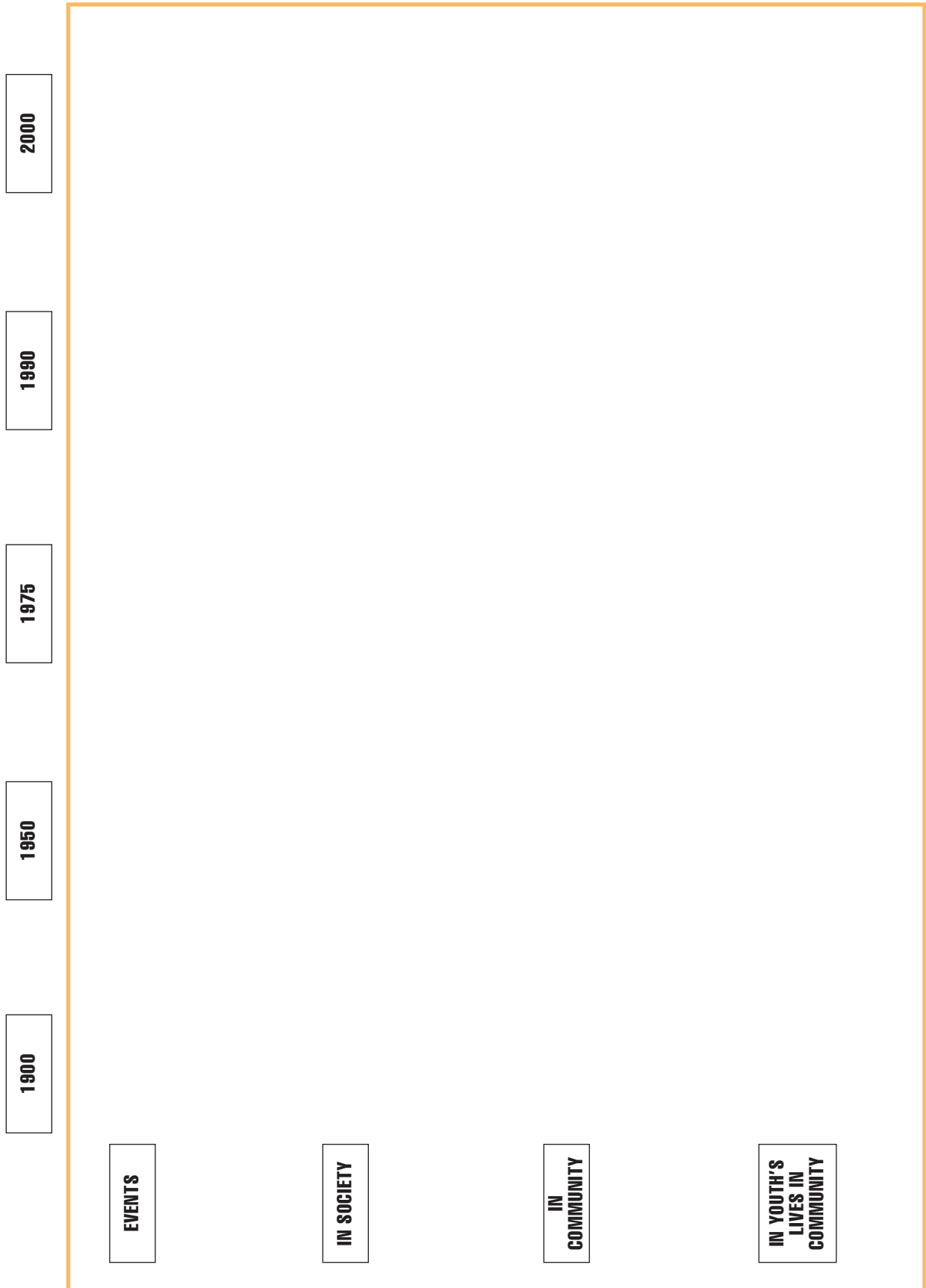


FIGURE B: THE HISTORY WALL AFTER BRAINSTORMING

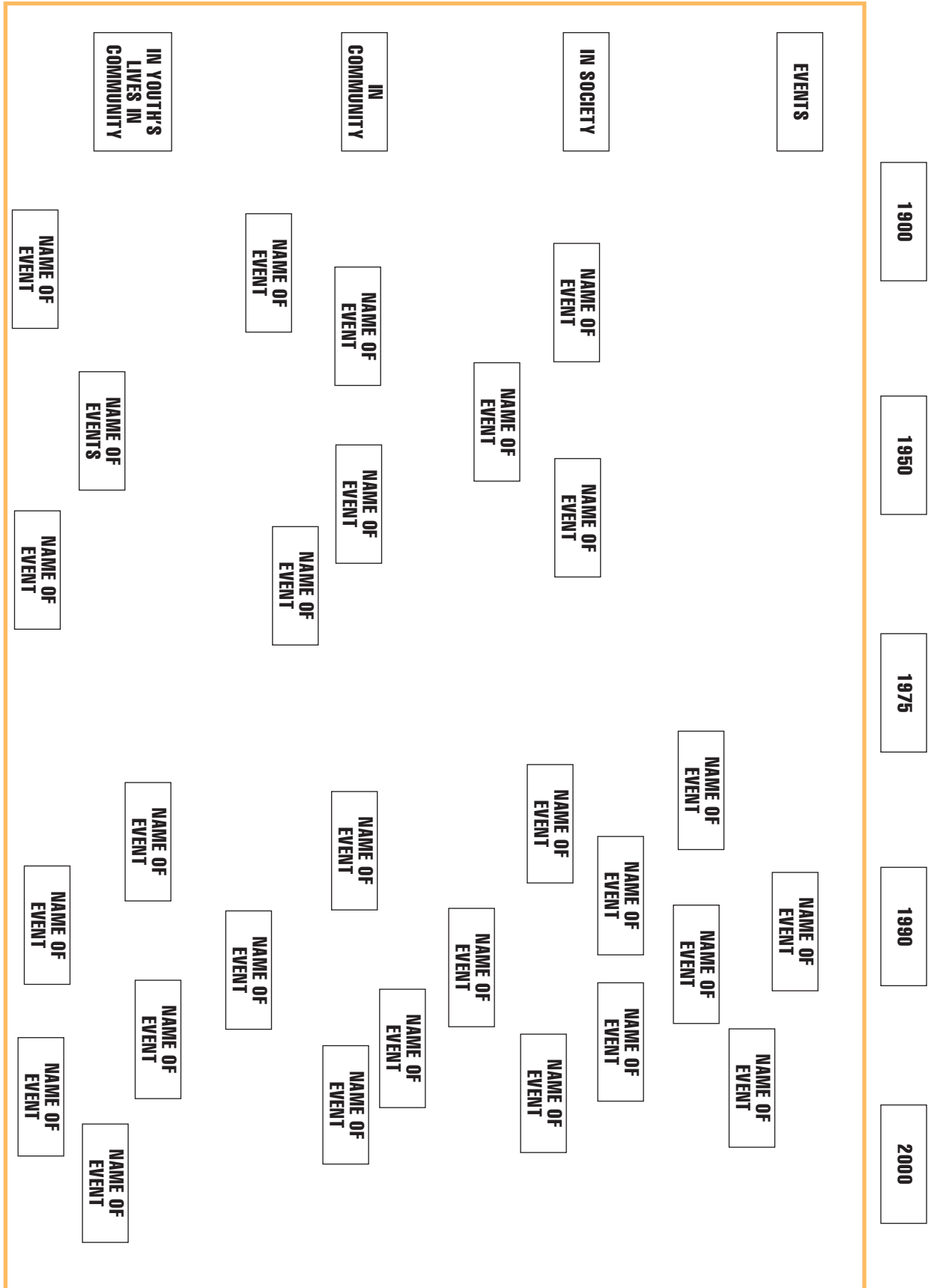


FIGURE C: THE HISTORY WALL WITH TRENDS AND PHASES

THE GREAT JOURNEY OF

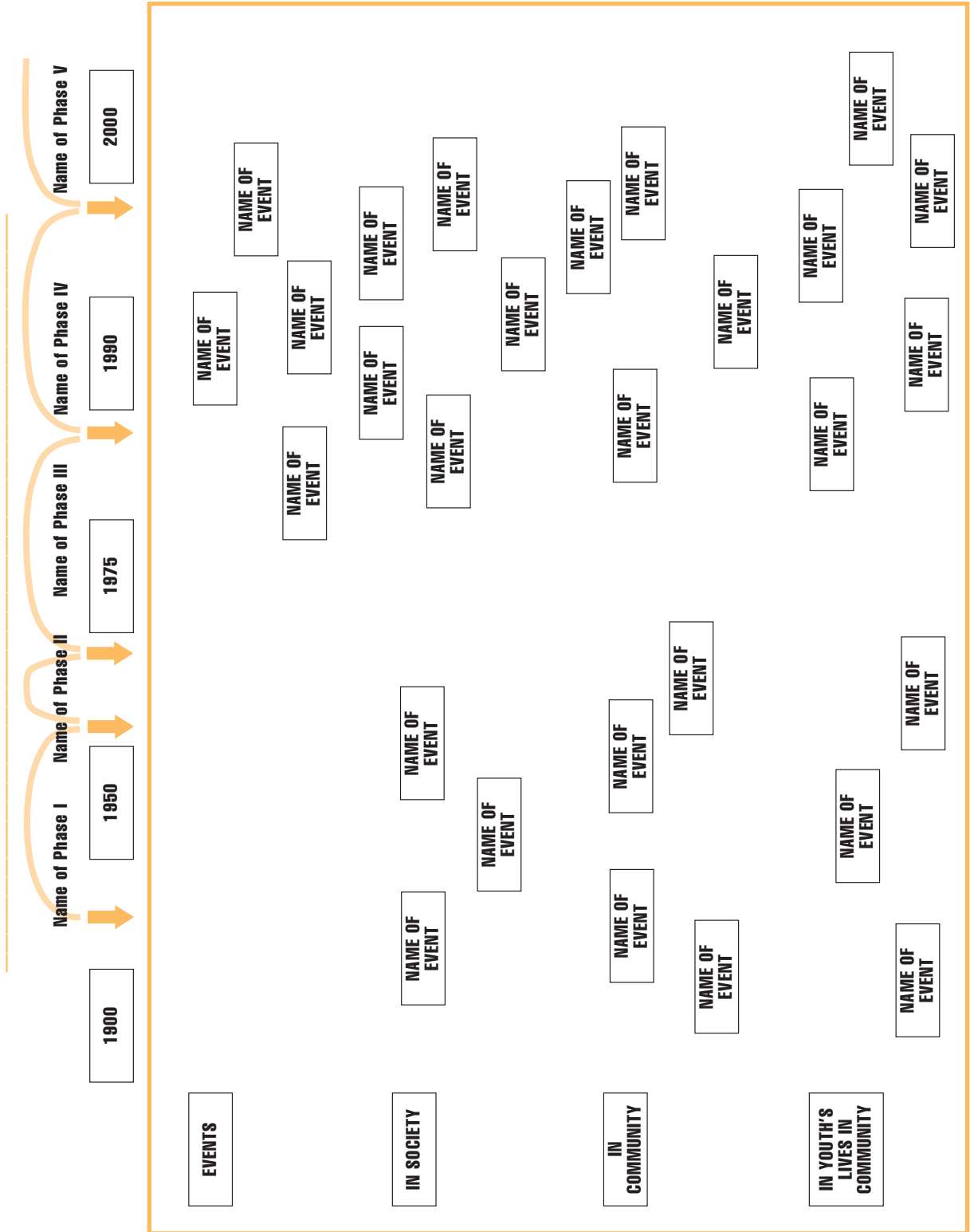


FIGURE D: DOCUMENTATION OF A HISTORY WALL

	The Beginning of a Modern History 1914	A New War Between Modern and Traditional Ways 1930	1950	A Growing Interest in Tradition 1960	1970	1980	1990	Accepting New Ways and Restoring Old Ways 1995	2000
Events in the Village		General Store was built (1930) Cars were first driven around the village (1940)		Roads were paved Electricity for homes at the mid-level (1962) Community center built (1962)	Drilled Water in Villages (Mishongnovi and Shipaulovi) (1979) Free Coal for Village from Peabody (1976)—broader Wall was built for all to enjoy (1978)	Futures for Children started a program (1985) Running water (1989) New houses built with cinder blocks (1988) Hopi J/R/SR High school (1987) Water for lower village (1989)	Rebuilding of Kivas in Village (1992)	Port-a-Jon for the village (1999) Electricity in the Upper Village (1992) Kachina Resting area was fixed up (1998) Renovation of Kivas (1991-1992) Formation of Hopi Pu'tavi Project (1997)	New Hospital being built (Feb. 2000)
Events of the Tribe	War with the Apaches (1900?) In 1914, the Dawa put people into groups Children were sent off to boarding schools (1914) Famous Runner in Olympics (Louis Tewanimma) (1912)	Navajo started to encroach on Hopi land (1930s) Tribal Constitution written and adopted—Tribe Government formed (1936) Turva Clinic (1935) Highway 264 built (1934-35)	Cut down grade level from 10th to 7th at Kykotsmovi school. Students had to leave the reservation to finish school (1957)	Hopi Cultural Center was built (1969) Television brought to village (1960) Men sent off to war (1962) Hospital opened in Keams Canyon (1962) Hopi people went to war (1968)	Taos to Hopi Run (1977)	Indian Day at school every year Tribe was allotted Village money—Village allocations (1983) Civic/Veterans center built (1985) Debra Baker crowned Miss Indian America (1989)	Gathering of Nations (Dancing) (1991) Second Mesa Day School was torn down/the old Building (1993)	Clan Runs (1996) Navajo-Hopi Land Treaty (1998) Hopi Youth Council was established (1999)	

FIGURE E: DOCUMENTATION OF ASSETS AND CHALLENGES

These are challenges and gifts that a community identified during step 5 of the history wall activity on page 32. Note that they do not correspond with the history wall on the previous page.

Challenges Evident in Our History

- Overcoming debilitating core beliefs and stereotypes
- Alcohol/substance abuse
- Greed, selfishness, self-esteem
- Cultural preservation/practices/identity
- Environmental protection, land preservation
- Resource management
- Racism
- Highway 93

Gifts in Our History

- Land base
- Water, air
- Heart, will, resiliency, tenacity of our people
- Private sector businesses
- Sense of belonging
- Leadership and vision for the future
- Education structures
- Our children

ADAPTATIONS

On page 31 are facilitators' notes for the basic history wall activity. Like all the activities in this kit, this activity can be adapted in many ways.

Pictorial Histories

- Research the history of your community at your public library or archives. Make copies of historical pictures, and arrange a pictorial history of your community. Ask community members to contribute pictures to add to your history wall. This method is a great way for your community to "see" history.
- Ask community members to draw pictures of events that have happened to them in the community. Make sure to label each picture. Your team can use the pictures to create a wall collage in a community meeting place for everyone to enjoy.

Oral Histories

- Ask community members to share their most memorable stories about the community. Record the stories on audio or videotape. Then catalogue the tapes for other community members to listen to them.
- Eliminate the part of Step 3 that has people do individual brainstorming, and move right into small-group brainstorming and storytelling. This adaptation was used in Macy, Nebraska, and fit well with their more oral, group-minded tradition.

SAMPLE HISTORY WALLS FROM COMMUNITIES



A written history



A history in pictures

A history of decades



YOUR LOGISTICAL QUESTIONS ANSWERED!

How Far Back in Time Should We Go?

This is a decision that is going to be unique to your community. You may have a past of a century or of many centuries. The recent past may be more significant for people to talk about than the not-so-recent past. Following are some examples of how communities have made this decision and why their decision was important.

In a community that originated as a settlement of freed slaves at the end of the Civil War, the history wall focused on the past back to the point of settlement. Community members felt that remembering and talking about the origins of the community offered a powerful story that would provide strength to their current community situation.

A Native American community with a past that could be traced for centuries decided to focus on the past 50 years or so. This was a way of examining the events in the recent past that were breaking down the community togetherness, traditions, and culture. Focusing on this history was most important in order to help the community think about directions for future work and regaining some of the spirit of the past.

When Should We Create a History Wall?

Since history is about the past and vision is about the future, it flows nicely to think about history first and vision second. In fact, when people reflect on the history of the community it often leads right into what they dream about for the future. It's interesting—sometimes what people would like to see in the future is a return to some element of the past. For example, during the history part, adults might reminisce about a café where they all hung out on weekends when they were young. Since then, the café has closed. During the vision, both youth and adults talk about how great it would be if there were a place like a café for youth to hang out in now.

The process can help bring the community together early in the process. The town of Tryon, Nebraska, created its history wall by placing newsprint in the local café and asking patrons to add past community happenings to the wall. Because the café was a meeting place for the entire community, nearly everyone had a chance to add something to the wall. The Tryon community became aware of the efforts of community groups through the history wall.

Working on the history wall early in the process will allow the team to identify trends that can be researched further using the tools in the Gifts of Place and Relations parts of this section of the tool kit.

How Can Looking at Gifts from the Past Help Build Youth–Adult Partnerships?

Building a history wall is an excellent opportunity for the youth, adults, and elders of your community to collaborate. Each group has specific gifts and memories to bring to the table for the completion of the project. Elders and adults are more familiar with the events that happened in the community 30 or more years ago. Since many of them have lived in the community longer than most youth, they can contribute to that part of the history wall. Moreover, it is interesting for adults to see which key events youth see as part of their history. Most important, thinking about history together allows youth and adults to identify the strengths and challenges of the past that can be drawn on to think about future directions.

Here are some things to keep in mind:

- *Youth:* Even though you have lived in the community for less than 20 years, you still know about important community events. In fact, you probably have a better memory of recent events than lots of adults. You are bringing a valuable perspective on the events of your community. You also might know about significant events that affected the lives of young people that adults do not know about.
- *Adults:* Enjoy thinking about your memories of past events—but also look at the value of the perspective that young people can add. Remember things that happened to you as a young person.

How Can Technology Be Used in Creating a History Wall?

Technology can save time during the history process, and it will improve your final product. Think about ways you might incorporate technology in your work. Some ideas are as follows:

- Create a computer presentation of the history to show to community members. You might publish it on the Web or use presentation software to show it at community gatherings.
- Publicize your history gathering with flyers and brochures made with desktop publishing software.
- Gather information from community members using electronic mail.
- Use audio or video recorders to track your progress.
- Compile your historical information in timeline software or a database.

How Do You Share the History Wall?

Teams have found that one of the best methods of sharing their history wall is to put the completed wall in a place that is visible and to involve members of the community in the history wall process. Because everyone in your community remembers important or special events, you will want to involve as many people as possible in the creation process. They will have the chance to share their experiences with the group, which in turn will make them feel that the team values their ideas. Your team will also gather more information for the community's history.