NAME _____ DATE _____

FAMILY GRIOT

Alex Haley, author of ROOTS, listened to his aunt and grandmother when he was a little boy. He loved the stories they told of his early African relatives. Alex especially liked to hear them talk about Kunta Kinte, who was snatched from his African village by slave traders and brought to America. Listening to these stories made Alex curious about his African homeland and his African ancestors, so when he grew up, he searched for information about his past. He went to Africa and again he listened.

Alex Haley heard a village storyteller, a griot (gree-o), recite the history of his family. The griot's mind was like a computer as he told of important events—births, deaths, wars, slave traders, and so forth. When the griot said the name Kunta Kinte, Alex Haley knew that he had found his roots.

Do you have a griot in your family? Do you listen to people who talk about your family's history? How many things can you remember about family events, celebrations, births, vacations, inventions, surprises, and so on? Become the griot in your family by completing the information below:

MY FAMILY HISTORY AS TOLD BY _____, FAMILY GRIOT

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CHALLENGE: Read Alex Haley's novel ROOTS and discuss emerging family themes with peers. Consider writing your family's history, and use these notes as your first piece of research.