



## Recording Family Memories and Stories

We all cherish the precious memories and stories shared by our older family members. Like many people, you may hope to sit down one day to capture these moments, but the hustle and bustle of daily life sometimes gets in the way. Our elders' voices, stories, and unique perspectives can fade with time. Take a few easy steps to preserve and share these memories with future generations.

Recording family stories and memories doesn't have to be an elaborate affair. With the technology we have today, a cell phone, iPad, or tablet can be the tool that bridges generations. Let your loved ones know how much their stories mean to you. Engage them in conversations that focus on personal anecdotes, life lessons, and memories that paint a vivid picture. These unique tales and experiences provide a deep, enriching connection to our roots and give us a greater understanding of our place in the world.



## Three Steps to Begin Recording Your Family

### ● Make a Plan:

- Choose a family member whose stories you'd like to capture.
- Reach out to them, expressing your desire to document their life stories and the invaluable memories they hold about departed relatives.
- Understandably, some individuals may be hesitant to talk about themselves. Including multiple family members, like siblings or cousins, in the conversation can help foster a natural and relaxed storytelling environment.

### ● Prepare for the Interview:

- Ensure your recording equipment is in working order. Test it before the interview. You can record with a mobile device, digital recorders, audio cassettes, or video recorders. Have extra tapes, batteries, or flash drives as needed. Bring a pen and paper to take notes as this may be helpful or serve as a backup if the recording is lost.
- Relatives who might be camera-shy may prefer audio recordings.
- Carry along family tree charts, old photos, or maps to kindle memories and promote conversations.
- For family members far away, consider arranging an interview via phone call or Zoom.

## ● **Craft the Conversation:**

- Before the interview, spend a few minutes chatting casually to set a comfortable tone.
- Discuss how you plan to use and share the recordings to ensure they're at ease.
- Plan open-ended questions that encourage detailed responses. Draft a list of key questions you wish to touch upon during the interview.
- While the resources below offer guidance on framing questions, always aim for a balance between collecting facts and capturing emotions.



## *Resources for Recording Family Memories and Stories*

### ● **FamilySearch Wiki:**

An outline to begin your recordings with detailed tips on creating an oral personal history, interview questions, and transcriptions.

[familysearch.org/en/wiki/Oral\\_Personal\\_History#Have a list of questions to ask](https://familysearch.org/en/wiki/Oral_Personal_History#Have_a_list_of_questions_to_ask) (Free)

### ● **Oral History Society:**

"How to begin." [ohs.org.uk/for-beginners/](https://ohs.org.uk/for-beginners/) (Free)

### ● **Storii.com:**

Unique service with phone call prompts of questions, then records your family member's answers and stories. [storii.com/blog/how-to-record-your-parents-life-story](https://storii.com/blog/how-to-record-your-parents-life-story) (\$)

### ● **The History Hound blog:**

Learn how to conduct oral history. Straightforward and easy to follow from a family historian.

[thehistoryhound.ca/oral-histories/](https://thehistoryhound.ca/oral-histories/) (Free)

### ● **Library of Congress:**

StoryCorps.org at the American Folklife Center is dedicated to capturing and illuminating stories and provides direction on preservation.

[storycorps.org/participate/what-to-expect/](https://storycorps.org/participate/what-to-expect/) and [storycorps.org/participate/great-questions/](https://storycorps.org/participate/great-questions/) (Free)

## **For assistance recording stories, please visit NGS sponsor:**

### ● **Your Legacy Your Story:**

Video capture, editing, and transfers for 15-60 minute projects of family interviews.

[yourlegacyyourstory.com/services/video/](https://yourlegacyyourstory.com/services/video/) (\$)