



retrospectives
PERSONAL HISTORIAN SERVICES

Preparing for Your Interview

My goal is to help you get the most from your interview session(s) so that together we can capture the memories that are most important to you. Please take a few minutes to read these preparation guidelines prior to our first appointment.

Before the Interview...

- Inform me of the major topics and themes that you want to be sure to cover during our conversation. If there are any topics that you wish to avoid, let me know about those, too.
- Keep in mind that it's perfectly acceptable to talk about difficult memories as well as joyous ones. In fact, the most meaningful stories include elements of both.
- Don't rehearse your answers! The best responses are those that are spontaneous and come from the heart. Don't worry if you pause or stumble over a word from time to time. The point is to let your authentic voice come through on the recording.

Preparing the Interview Site...

- If the interview will take place in your home, choose a quiet space, preferably away from ambient noise like a refrigerator.
- Unplug your telephone or turn off the ringer during the session.
- Interviews are most successful when there are no outside observers. Let family members know that they will not be permitted to listen in during your session—it will be worth it when they get to hear the recording later!
- Post "Do Not Disturb—Audio Recording in Progress" signs to help avoid interruptions like doorbells, etc.
- Most sessions run approximately one hour. Be sure to select a chair that you'll be comfortable in during that time.
- Position chairs at a table that is within 8-10 feet of an electrical outlet so that I can plug in my equipment and record the best sound possible. Please notify me in advance if your outlets are not grounded.

During the Interview...

- These are your stories. Don't worry about forming perfect answers; instead, let your words flow freely. There is no need to rush your responses. Take your time and think about what you want to say.
- If you prefer not to answer a question, simply say so and we'll move on.
- If you need to stop at any time, let me know.
- Although I may not provide a verbal response to your remarks, I am listening. Keep talking even as I jot notes, adjust equipment, etc.
- Keep your hands away from your mouth and the microphone.

After the Interview...

- If for any reason you decide that a comment you made should be excluded from the final recording, please notify me as soon as possible and I will edit it out.