

Federation & Community-Wide Memory

For multi-family, multi-agency or city-wide Jewish memory projects that need scale without flattening individual voices.

This is preparation, not homework. You do not need complete dates, perfect memory, or a box of scanned records. Circle what helps. Leave the rest. Uncertainty is part of an honest history.

Before we speak

- Define the community slice: era, neighbourhood, institution or theme.
- Build a witness map before booking interviews.
- Include peripheral and dissenting voices as well as office-holders.
- Set archival, consent and ownership rules at the beginning.

Gather only if it is easy

- Existing oral-history indexes
- Agency and federation records
- Community newspapers and directories
- A candidate witness list with ages and roles

Prompts worth thinking about

- Whose voice is always represented?
- Whose is missing?
- What changed the community's geography?
- Which institutions connected generations?
- What should the archive make findable 50 years from now?

Set your boundaries first

Before the interview, decide what may be explored, what should be handled carefully, and what is off limits. You can change those boundaries later. A useful history does not require surrendering privacy.

After the first conversation

No quotation is given before the first conversation. If the project is a fit, use the Story Mixer to show the balance you want - emotional depth, humour, intimacy, historical context, voice and boundaries. I then assess the actual scope and normally send a written quotation within 24 hours.