

Jewish Family Memory & Continuity

For Jewish family stories carried through migration, language, ritual, neighbourhood and inherited memory.

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

- List Hebrew/Yiddish/Ladino names and ordinary nicknames.
- Record synagogue, landsmanshaft, school, camp and neighbourhood connections.
- Separate family tradition from documentary fact without treating either as disposable.
- Think about what changed between the old country, first Canadian/American/Israeli generation and today.

Gather only if it is easy

- Ketubot, siddurim, yahrzeit records and synagogue material
- Immigration papers and old-country addresses
- Holiday and simcha photographs
- Recipes, letters and objects with Hebrew/Yiddish inscriptions

Prompts worth thinking about

- Which Jewish practice survived even when others disappeared?
- Who taught the family its songs, recipes or blessings?
- What town name was repeated without explanation?
- What did antisemitism change?
- What does Jewish continuity mean in this family 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.

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