

Preparing for a Legacy Interview

For one conversation with a parent, grandparent, elder, or anyone whose voice you do not want to lose.

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

- Think of three scenes you can still see clearly.
- Write down names, places and approximate dates without worrying about perfect chronology.
- Choose one ordinary day that says something about the person: a kitchen, commute, school morning, shop, service, or family meal.
- Decide what you most hope a grandchild will understand after reading the finished piece.

Gather only if it is easy

- A few photographs with names written down
- One or two letters, cards, certificates, recipes or clippings
- A rough family tree if relationships are complicated
- Any names or spellings that are easy to get wrong

Prompts worth thinking about

- What did home sound like when you were ten?
- Who made you feel safe?
- What did your family never have enough of?
- What ordinary habit would your grandchildren recognize immediately?
- What do you wish somebody had asked your parents?

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.