

Video Memoirs and Family Trees[©]

Why Video Memoirs?

Both my parents died several years ago, before making videos were possible. Now that I am older, I really regret not knowing more about their lives. The greatest gift one can give a **family is a sense of belonging, of knowing where you have come from.** Having memoirs of the seniors in your life creates a link from the past, into the future, and beyond to generations yet to come—and with modern digital video it is now possible in an exciting new way.



The Process

The objective is to interview your parents or other senior relatives and capture their stories on video. After editing, the resulting video is put on DVD and shared with family and friends.

Usually one member of the family takes the lead and acts as “project manager”. She or he promotes the project, organizes when and where the video shoots will take place, and manages the finances, The project manager often is also the one who does the actual interviews.

How long is a video memoir? A typical video memoir is between one and two hours long after editing which would allow it to fit on a standard DVD. The actual interview is much longer, and can be done in several sessions, especially if the person being interviewed is frail.

Editing

It is possible to put the raw video footage, warts and all, onto the DVD and it might even be desirable some times. In most cases however it is better to edit the video first. In fact, many interviewees will insist on certain portions to be cut out.

Editing is a very time consuming part of the project and can easily take up to ten times as long as the actual video shoot. The end result will be a much more attractive and viewable video memoir and well worth the effort.

Video Family Trees

A video family tree is a collection of video memoirs of all your family members. To keep the project manageable, the memoirs tend to be shorter, more like short 5 - 10 minute video vignettes. The emphasis here more on having a visual memory of each of the family members, capturing their personality rather than full stories.

Do You Need a Videographer?

It would be very difficult to do such a project on your own. You could contract a videographer to do the entire project from start to finish. The end result would be very professional but it is a costly option. A pragmatic solution might be to contract a videographer to do the filming and editing while you do the rest.



If you are on a budget and already have the equipment, or plan to rent/borrow the equipment, then H Mueller Design could run our Video Memoirs training workshop for your team which would cover how to use the equipment, interview techniques, and pitfalls to watch out for..