CAPTURING FAMILY STORIES *in* VIDEO INTERVIEW CLIPS

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INTRODUCTION

When it comes to video interviews, shorter is often better than longer. Segmenting a video into short clips makes family stories easier to record, find, and share. Viewers will be more likely to watch a series of short stories than make time to sit and view an hour-long video history interview.

Video clips are smaller and easier to upload to YouTube or FamilySearch, making them ideal for sharing your family stories.

Filming or cutting your video interview into short segments requires a bit of preparation. Preparing your subject to tell one story at a time can help keep the subject on point rather than rambling from topic to topic.

Properly storing and sharing your video clips is just as important. Make sure that your potential audience can find and enjoy these video clips.

TEN STEPS TO CREATING VIDEO INTERVIEW CLIPS

1. Find the best stories.
- Brainstorm. Consider "all" the possibilities.
- People, places, events, challenges. What did you learn?
- Consider your audience.
- Prioritize and choose which story to tell.

2. Keep your interview subject on topic.
- You may choose to record an open exploratory conversation, which could require lots of editing to isolate a unique story clip, or record one select story at a time.
- Planning and preparation to tell the story.
- Making notes, gathering pictures or other resources.
- Is practice helpful? "Take 2, 3?"
- Focus. What is the point of this story? Why tell this story?
- Using visual cues (or not): notes, pictures.

3. Choose your equipment (whether a dedicated video camera or an iPhone).
- Advantages and disadvantages of each—technical and practical.
- Comfort/intimidation factor.
- Set-up considerations. Tripod/stabilization. Framing the subject.
- Know your equipment and how to use it. Focus, batteries, record, …?

4. Evaluate your environmental setting.

- Comfort and convenience for interview subject.
- Ambient light (windows & natural light, artificial lighting, shadows)
- Ambient sound (fans, refrigerator, traffic, Grandma's clock, chickens, etc.)
- Backgrounds and camera positions (see lighting and sound).

5. Lighting.

- Existing light. Is it adequate to show your subject on your equipment?
- Adding, subtracting, or changing lighting conditions. (on or off camera)
- Understanding white balance and why that may be important.

6. Sound and microphones.

- Most critical element of video is the audio—must be clear & understandable.
- Built-in on-camera microphones vs. external microphones.
- Positioning microphones. Isolate the speaker.

7. Interview techniques.

- Deliberate disciplined preparation precedes a comfortable flowing interview.
- Start a conversation with a good question, then pay attention. Eye contact.
- Authentic, natural conversation. Voice. Who is/will be listening?
- You'll likely have no crew, so be prepared with all the technical issues, but be prepared to listen.

8. Editing principles.

- Finding the point and trimming the "fat."
- Making and using a transcription.
- Overlaying pictures, "B-roll," second camera angles,
- Software/app tools: simple inexpensive smart phone tools to high-end video editing systems.

9. Indexing, organizing, and naming principles.

- Make the name descriptive, informative, and computer friendly. You may include names, dates, places, and subject matter.
- Create a physical printed index in addition to digital indexing.
- Make sure there are "flags" or other physical opportunities for the video to be found. Build awareness and set "landmarks" such as packaging with a book, sharing on social media, contributing to archive libraries, referring to in other projects and histories. Think about how to share this recording with your family now and how they will find it 50 years from now.
- Metadata, keywords, etc., for the digital world.

10. Best ways to save and share media.

- We suggest a physical printed, hardbound book listing each video with name and descriptive data along with a thumbnail image paired with the digital video files on Milleniata M-disc (BlueRay or DVD depending on amount of material) and accompanying printed and laminated bookmark with attached USB flash drive containing the same digital video files.
- Use preeminent current digital video formats.
- Formats & "containers," which to use and what do they mean? H.264, DV, mp4, AVI, mov, m4v, …
- "3-2-1" Rule — At least 3 copies, on at least 2 different types of media, using at least one off-site location. The more people and places it is shared, the greater the possibility of "survival."
- DVD, USB flash drive, hard drive, Milleniata M-disc, …
- Cloud services: Google Photos, Apple iCloud, Facebook, YouTube, Dropbox, Family Search Memories...
- Contributing to archive libraries such as city, county, university, church, British Library, etc. (certain conditions may apply to each)

Final words of advice: have fun with it!
Don't let the process overwhelm you. Even one small recorded personal experience is better than none! If you think you should record an interview of yourself, or someone else, don't wait.