

Life History
Books



WELCOME PACKET



Welcome to... your life! At Life History Books, we're thrilled to embark on this journey with you. We promise to respect the cherished memories you share and look forward to getting to know you better as we create a beautiful book of your life. In this Welcome Packet, you'll find all the information you need to prepare to tell your story.

At the end of this document, you will find a list of questions we aim to cover during the interviews. It may help to jot down your ideas. We will only talk about subjects of your choosing, and if there are topics not in the question list, we will adjust the interview to focus on your specific interests. Please don't be nervous about the interview; it's really just a relaxed, fun opportunity to talk about all of your favorite topics and tell your story.

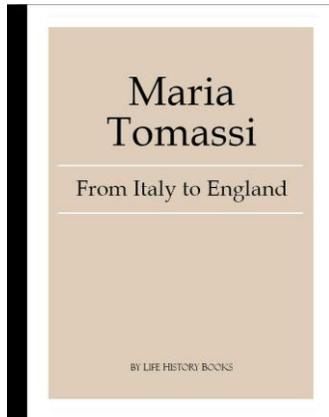
Each book is fully customizable. The cover, the font within the book, any colors that crop up within the book – absolutely everything is personalized to your tastes, preferences, and individual style. However, some clients prefer to pass those choices onto us. If you would rather we handle design specifics, simply skip page 4.

1. COVER

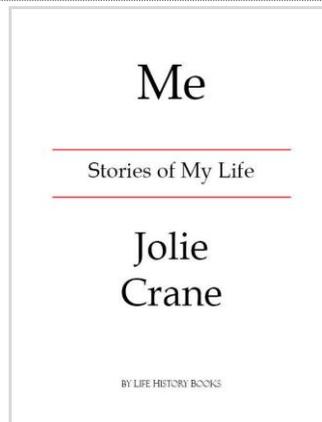
Please select from the following two sample covers. Of course, your own photos will be used and all fonts/colors can be customized to suit your preferences. We will customize both for you and let you choose your favorite.

First choice is Cover # _____

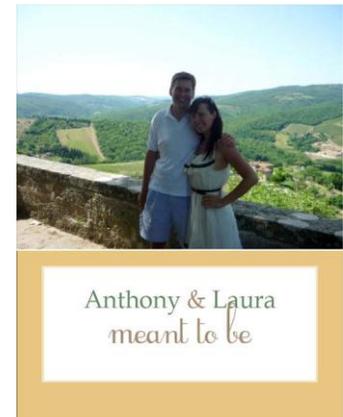
Second choice is Cover # _____



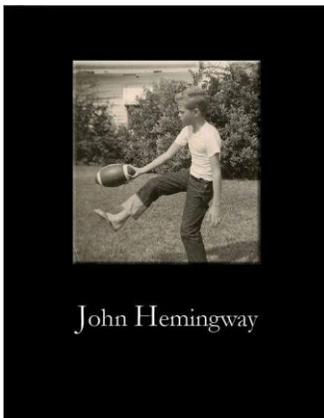
Cover #1



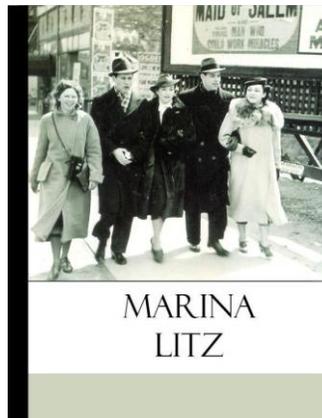
Cover #2



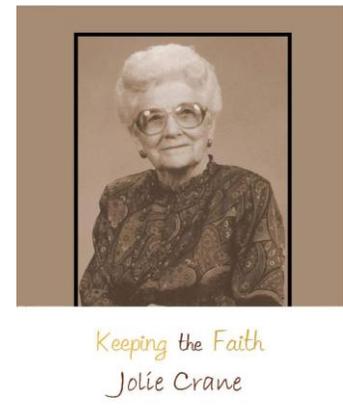
Cover #3



Cover #4



Cover #5



Cover #6

2. TITLE

A title incorporating your name may be printed along the book's external binding. Some examples: "A Living History: John Doe" or "In My Words: John Doe." When you decide on your title, please write it here:

3. PHOTOS

Please collect all photographs and mementos you'd like to include, and think about the captions (words explaining each photo). Here are some samples of different caption styles:

Jane Doe, Age 4, Virginia
Jane at 4 years old, Virginia, 1955
Cousin Jane, Virginia, circa 1955. We always played around that tree!

Mark the back of each photo with a number and write captions that correspond to each photo's number on a separate sheet of paper. If you would like to include other mementos, please write captions for them, as well, clearly referring to the object you are describing. We have included birth certificates, poems and newspaper clippings.

If you would like recipes included, you may include hard copies as photos or email them to materials@lifehistorybooks.com.

4. DEDICATION

We can include a dedication page for a message to your loved ones. If you would like one, please write it here:

5. FAMILY TREE

If you'd like a family tree included, please sketch it out on one or two sheets of paper. We will scan in your sketch and turn it into a lovely family tree graphic, as seen below.



6. FONTS

You can select fonts for two different uses. One will be used on the book cover, and in special headings throughout the book. Another will be the body text, which should be extremely easy for you to read, as it is the most prevalent.

SPECIAL HEADINGS FONT

Avenir

Bookman

Garamond

Edwardian

FELIX

Your Special Headings Font Choice _____

BODY TEXT FONT

Avenir

Garamond

Your Body Text Font Choice _____

FONT SIZE

Captions and the body text will be done in size 10 font (which is the size of this text) by default.

If you want the body text in large type font (size 13, seen here) please write YES _____.

7. COLORS

There are opportunities to include color throughout the book, so indicate your favorite color codes below (*i.e.* A, F).

Colors you like: _____, _____



QUESTIONS TO REVIEW BEFORE THE FIRST INTERVIEW

Remember, the following questions are meant only as a guide to get you thinking about the stories you wish to tell. You are neither confined to these questions alone, nor should you worry if some of the answers may have slipped your mind, or if that part of your life is not what you wish to focus on. After all, it's your life, and it's your Life History Book!

Family Background

1. Please tell me what you know about your family history, as far back as you know.
2. Do you know any stories about how your family first came to the U.S.? Where did they first settle? How did they make a living? Did your family stay in one place or move around? How did they come to live in this area?
3. What do you know about your family name? Are there stories about its history or origins?
4. What stories have come down to you about your parents and grandparents? More distant ancestors?
5. What were your grandparents like when you were young? Do you know any courtship stories? How did your grandparents or other close relatives come to meet? Please share any important stories they've told you.
6. What were your parents like? Where did they grow up, and how did they meet? Do you know stories from their youth? Were they religious or political? What were the major factors in their lives and what were their interests?
7. Does your family have any special sayings or expressions? What are they? How did they come about?

Your Childhood

8. Where and when were you born? Do you know if your childbirth was easy or difficult or any stories from it?
9. Do you know any stories about when you were a baby?
10. Do you have any siblings? What is your relationship with them, and how has it changed over the years? Any close relatives you have memories of that you'd like to share?
11. Do you know why your name was picked? Are there any traditional names in your family? Are there any nicknames in your family? If so, do you know how they came about?
12. Were your parents strict with you, or was it a more relaxed household? What do you think their main goals were as parents? Tell me some memories from your childhood.
13. What kinds of toys did you play with? What kind of home entertainment was there? Was there storytelling? Music? What sorts of hobbies and activities did you like when you were young?
14. What are some of your childhood memories? Who were you closest to, and how did you spend most of your time?
15. What did you like most about your parents, grandparents, and close relatives (*we'll go one by one*).
16. What are some of your favorite memories from when you were a child? Did you have any worries or stresses?
17. Do you remember any teachers? How did you feel about education when you were young, and did that change?
18. When you were a child, what aspirations did you have for the future? What did you want to be when you grew up?
19. What was the house like that you grew up in?

20. Describe the place where you grew up. What was it like? How has it changed over the years?
21. What were some of the benchmark events of your childhood?
22. What are some memories you have of your entire family together?

Your Adult Life

23. How are holidays traditionally celebrated in your family? What holidays are the most important? Are there special family traditions, customs, songs, foods?
24. Does your family hold reunions? If so, tell me about them.
25. What family heirlooms or keepsakes and mementos do you possess? Why are they valuable to you? What is their history? How were they handed down? Are there any memories or stories connected with them?
26. Do you have any photo albums, scrapbooks, home movies? Who made them? Can you describe/explain their contents? Who is pictured? What activities and events are documented?
27. What special food-based traditions does your family have? Have any recipes been preserved and passed down in your family from generation to generation?
28. Do you like to cook? Are you passionate about food? What are some of your very favorite foods?
29. Do you drink alcohol? Did you ever have a favorite drink?
30. What were some of the benchmark events of your adult life?
31. Do you speak any other languages? Ever tried to learn any?
32. What places have been most important to you and why? What stories and memories come to mind?
33. Do you like to travel? Do you have any favorite destinations or vacation spots?
34. What kinds of special recognition have you received at work, or for a hobby or particular interest?
35. Are you religious? What impact has religion had on your life, and what role does it play?
36. Did you go to college? If so, tell me about your experience there.
37. Did you have any serious romantic relationships? Would you like to talk about them?
38. Were you ever married? How did you meet, what was the early relationship like and was there a proposal? What did you find surprising about marriage? What did you enjoy, what did you find difficult? Any advice?
39. If you divorced, and would prefer for this to not be mentioned, that is perfectly fine. If you would like to discuss it, what led to the divorce, and how did you handle it? Who was your support system?
40. If you did not have children, did you ever want them?
41. If you have children...
 - i. What are their names, and when were they born? How did you pick the names?
 - ii. How were the pregnancies/births?
 - iii. What was each like as a child? How did each change as he/she got older?
 - iv. Do you feel you were you ready to be a parent?
 - v. Was raising children as you expected it to be? What surprised you most about being a parent?
 - vi. Did you raise the child(ren) with a partner? If so, were you given a lot of support and help?

42. Have you generally enjoyed good health throughout your life? If not, what problems have you had?
43. Do you have political opinions you'd like to share – are there any leaders you have admired and why?
44. What community traditions do you celebrate today? Tell me about your involvement and why you participate.
45. How have historical events affected your family and community? For example, what were some of your experiences during World War II, Vietnam, the Civil Rights Movement, JFK being shot, September 11?
46. Is music important to you? What bands/musicians have you enjoyed through the years? Have you ever played music or sang? What is the most challenging aspect of learning, and what is your favorite part of performing?
47. Let's talk about your professional career, if you had one. What jobs have you had, and how did you feel about the major ones? Did your job generally play a large part in your life?
48. Did you stay in touch with friends from when you were younger, or generally make new friends as time passed? Would you like to talk about any friends you've been especially close to?
49. Do you have any favorite movie stars? Any favorite movies? Books?
50. What pets have you had, and what role have pets played in your life? Do you have any pet-related memories?
51. Do you like sports? If so, what kind, and which teams? What role does sport play in your life?
52. If you have children or grandchildren, what are your favorite traits in each? What are your hopes for their future?
53. Do you think who you are, at your core, has changed much in the last 10 years? Have your values changed much? Your interests? What are your priorities now?
54. What are you most proud of doing or achieving in your life?
55. What is your favorite place in the entire world? It could be your bedroom, the woods, or some nook in a foreign land, whatever comes to mind.
56. Have you had any role models or mentors? What involvement have they had in your life?
57. As you've gotten older, what are some of the things you wish you knew, appreciated or understood when you were younger?
58. You've seen the world change so much. What are some of the biggest changes you've seen in the world? Do you think the world is better today, or are you reminiscent of the past?
59. If you could live one day over again, without changing anything, what would it be?
60. Okay, the big question: if you had to pass on some advice to the next generation, what would you say are the most important lessons you've learned in life?

LET'S GET STARTED!

You are now completely ready to begin your interviews. If you are already working with a personal historian, please schedule your first interview. To get started with Life History Books, or if you have any questions, feel free to email info@LifeHistoryBooks.com or call 424.253.5429.