

*A Palmer oral history and personal story project,
to help preserve the amazing past of its villages and residents.*

Through the collaboration of the following local organizations:



Palmer Public Library
Palmer Cultural Council
Mass Cultural Council
M-PACT TV
Palmer Historical & Cultural Center
Palmer Historical Commission
Elbow Plantation Historical Society



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by a grant from the Palmer Cultural
Council, a local agency which is
supported by the Mass Cultural
Council, a state agency.*

At-Home Recording Kit

1. Find someone with a strong connection to Palmer that you would like to interview, or find someone to interview you (or both). This can be an old school chum, neighbor, colleague, relative, or someone from a different generation (like a grandparent or a teacher).
2. Gather up to 10 personal items that are specific to your life in Palmer and that you'd like to talk about during the interview. These can be just about anything, so be creative! There are some examples below to help you get started. Once you've picked your ten items, organize them into approximate chronological order and number them one through ten so your interviewer can ask you about them easily. (For example, "Please describe item number three." "This is my nana's apron, which she wore every Sunday when we baked cookies together.")

The suggestions listed below are a starting point. ANY item that helps you tell your personal history is welcome (it does not need to fit in a category listed below):

CLOTHING/ACCESSORY- work uniform, scout uniform, Palmer t-shirt, era-specific fashions, leg warmers, Velcro wallet, grandmother's pin, handmade items

COVID- quarantine activities (sidewalk chalk, virtual gatherings, etc.), family memories & struggles

CULTURE- Operation Friendship activities in Palmer, heirlooms or other items from your family traditions

FOOD- restaurant menu, typical Sunday meal, recipe, community picnic, ice cream treat

HOUSE- your own home or one you visited frequently, other buildings like the train station or a local business, Then and Now photos (if you have an old photo of a building, add a new photo taken from the same perspective for comparison)

INDUSTRY- Palmer trains, mills, airport, Main Street, Cascella Springs Soda Company, your first job

LIBRARY- puppet show, craft, Box City, Silhouette Search, Summer Reading, 1977 "Bookworm"

MUSIC- Polka, school dance, band, music of the era

RECREATION- roller skating, drive-in movie, bowling, Hemlock Hill skiing, a favorite outdoor Palmer location

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SCHOOL- Locations and experiences have varied quite a bit during the past 100 years. Share memories of your school days, such as a favorite teacher or class. How did your school day differ from today?

TOWN EVENT- parades, festivals, Santa Train

WEATHER- blizzard, flood, tornado, hurricane

3. Prior to your interview, please:

- Scan or take close-up photos of your items and name the files using your first and last name and the item number. (For example, JoanSmith7.jpg)
- Read the Interview Tips included in this packet.
- Review and sign the release form included in this packet. Share to Google Photos, email to RegisterPalmerLibrary@gmail.com, or drop it off at the library
- Record both audio and video of the interview, if possible. If you do not have video recording capabilities, we will create a video by adding the photos of your items to your audio recording.
 - If you need audio or video recording equipment (e.g. webcam, microphone, ring light), the library may be able to loan them to you. Please call the library at 413-283-3330, ext. 109, and ask for Helene or Amy if you have any questions or to see what's available.
- Once you've taken photos of your items and recorded your interview, please either:
 - Upload your photos, your audio/video recording files, and your signed release form to [Google Photos](#). To do this, you will need to sign into your Google account, or create an account if you don't already have one. Once your files are uploaded, please share them with RegisterPalmerLibrary@gmail.com. OR-
 - Email your photos, your audio/video recording files, and your signed release form in small batches to RegisterPalmerLibrary@gmail.com.
 - If you cannot scan/photograph your items yourself or if you can't upload/email the images, please arrange to drop your items off to the library for scanning by calling 413-283-3330, ext. 109, and asking for Helene or Amy.
- Use the following file formats, if possible:
 - Photos or scans of items: JPG, TIFF, PNG, or BMP
 - Photo or scan of signed release form: JPG, TIFF, PNG, or BMP
 - Video of interview: MPEG or MOV
 - Audio of interview (if no video): WAV, MP3, MP4

Interview Tips

Important! Speak in the direction of the microphone. Please record and play back a short sample of a practice conversation to check the volume of both parties and the video quality. Adjust lighting, camera position, and microphone volume, if necessary.

Before you begin, try to find a location that is conducive to producing a clear recording without background noise. Silence your cell phone.

At the start of the recording, make a brief opening announcement that specifies the date and place of the interview, the names of the interviewer and interviewee, and the general topic of the interview. This is very useful archival information that can be used to identify the basic circumstances of the interview later on.

As a guide, please fill in the blanks of the following introduction at the start of your recording:

Today is _____, and this is the start of an interview with _____ at
(date) (name of interviewee)
_____ in _____. My name is _____ and I'll be the
(location) (name of village, not specific address) (name of interviewer)
interviewer. I have known _____ for _____ years from _____.
(interviewee) (number) (how do you know each other?)
_____ grew up in the _____ and the _____. This interview is recorded in
(interviewee) (decade) (decade)
connection with the Palmer Villages, Palmer Voices project. We'll mainly be talking
about personal items that help _____ tell his/her/their story of life in Palmer.
(interviewee)

After you have listened to your test recording, keep the audio recorder or video camera running throughout the interview. Do not turn the machine on and off except when an interruption requires it.

Be sure to introduce each new item by number to allow us to match them up later. Ask the interviewee to describe each item: what is the item, who was involved, when did it happen, tell us about why this is important to your history.

During the interview, encourage your interviewee by paying attention. Don't interrupt your interviewee's answers. Use non-verbal communication (eye-contact and nodding) to encourage them.

Try to keep your opinions out of the interview.

As a rule, keep your questions short. Avoid complicated multi-part questions.

Use follow-up questions to elicit detailed information. Useful questions include: When did that happen? Did that happen to you? What did you think about that? What are the steps in doing that? Can you give me an example of that? What happened next?

Be prepared to let your interviewee take the discussion off in different directions. This can sometimes lead to unexpected and exciting discoveries.

Add a brief closing announcement at the end of the interview. For example:

This is the end of the _____, interview with _____. **The interviewer was**
(date) *(interviewee)*
_____.
(name of interviewer)



Interviewee Release Form

I, _____, am a participant in the Palmer Villages, Palmer Voices (hereinafter "PVPV") of the Palmer Public Library (PPL). I understand that the purpose of the PVPV is to collect audio- and video-recorded oral histories of Palmer residents, as well as selected related documentary materials such as photographs and scans of personal documents, manuscripts, and artifacts for inclusion in the permanent collections of the PPL.

I understand that PPL plans to retain the digital product of my participation in the PVPV, including but not limited to my interview, presentation, video, scans of documents and photographs, photographs of items, statements, name, images or likeness, voice, and written materials ("My Collection") as part of its permanent collections. **We will not keep your objects**, but will instead use scans or photographs of them.

I hereby grant to PPL ownership of the digital property comprising My Collection. Additionally, I hereby grant to PPL, at no cost, the perpetual, nonexclusive, transferable, worldwide right to use, reproduce, transmit, display, perform, prepare derivative works from, distribute, and authorize the redistribution of the materials in My Collection in any medium. By giving this permission, I understand that I retain any copyright and related rights that I may hold.

I agree to freely share My Collection under the terms of a Creative Commons Attribution NonCommercial ShareAlike 4.0 International License. This means that I retain the copyright to my material, but the public may freely copy, modify, and share these items for noncommercial purposes under the same terms, if they include the original source information.

I hereby release PPL, and its assignees and designees, from any and all claims and demands arising out of or in connection with the use of My Collection, including but not limited to any claims for copyright infringement, defamation, invasion of privacy, or right of publicity. Should any part of My Collection be found to include materials that PPL deems inappropriate for retention with the collection or for transfer to other collections in the PPL, the PPL may dispose of such materials in accordance with its procedures for disposition of materials not needed for PPL's collections.

ACCEPTED AND AGREED:

Signature _____ Date _____

Printed Name _____

Address _____

Telephone () _____ Email _____

Organization affiliation (if any) _____