



What is My Caseyville Story?

My Caseyville Story is an oral history project which aims to explore the past and present of Caseyville by documenting stories of its residents. The main goal of this project is to record, preserve, and share audio interviews with the Caseyville community to connect residents with the history of their neighbors. This project will present Caseyville residents with an opportunity to share their story, and for all patrons- a chance to learn about the diverse community of Caseyville.

About the Project

To recognize and honor the Caseyville Library's 60th Anniversary, we wanted to create a project that would provide residents with meaningful opportunities to engage with the Caseyville community. Our hope is that the **My Caseyville Story** Oral History Project will allow people to document history, capture memories, share perspectives, and gain understanding. Whether community members contribute their stories to the project or listen to the recorded interviews, this project will connect people to their community, and most importantly to one another.

Oral History Kits are now available to check out at the library and the request forms are available in person and on the library's website. Keep up with the project online at caseyvillelibrary.org/history, where you'll have access to all interviews, photos, and videos.

How Will It Work?



Think of a story you would like to tell or find a friend or a family member to interview (or be interviewed by). We highly recommend this arrangement as it will allow for a more dynamic and personal conversation.



Fill out a **My Caseyville Story Kit Request Form** and return it to the front desk in order to check out an Oral History Kit.



If you prefer to be interviewed by a library staff member please contact Ashley Stewart, Director, at acstewart@caseyvillelibrary.org. You may also fill out a **My Caseyville Story Kit Request Form** and return it to the front desk.

Do you have photographs or artifacts?

Photographs and artifacts can greatly enhance and enrich your story. We would love to include any relevant items you have along with your recording. Feel free to bring any items along to your interview, we will photograph or scan the original(s) and return them to you right away.

Who is Eligible?

The goal of this project is to focus on Caseyville residents, past and present. If you don't currently live in Caseyville, but grew up here or raised your family here, we would love to hear your story.

Do you currently own a business? Did you family own a business? Volunteered in the community? What memories do you have of Caseyville?

Are you new to Caseyville? Welcome! You are part of our community, and we welcome you to share your story with us!





How to Prepare for the Recording | Interview

Think of somebody you'd like to interview. A parent. A grandparent. A neighbor. A close friend. Your spouse. What makes this person interesting to you? What have you always wanted to ask them?

Once your subject has agreed to an interview, think about these questions as you prepare. Create a list of questions you would like to ask. Create your own, or use the **Oral History Questions List**, available on the back cover.

As the storyteller, think about what story you want to communicate. What perspectives, memories, or learning experiences would you like to share?

Whether you're the interviewer or the storyteller, let the conversation flow. Don't have a preconceived idea of how the interview will turn out; be open to it taking an unexpected turn. Listen to each other, and have fun!

While being prepared with a list of questions is recommended, if you hear something that interests or moves you, feel free to ask follow up questions. There is nothing wrong with deviating from your list of prepared questions, especially if the conversation is flowing and is meaningful to you- you've hit the sweet spot. Real moments are the best moments. It's ok if your partner goes off topic; you can always redirect them to your original question later.

Interview Process

1. Welcome

When you are ready to start your recording session, allow time to get everyone in place and everything set up to ensure you are comfortable for the recording. Review any of the topics that you would like to discuss and any stories you would like to share.

2. Sound Check

Once you're all set to start recording, we recommend that you do a brief sound check and make sure you are positioned well for the recording.

3. Recording

Each recording should last no longer than 60 minutes. If you have opted to be interviewed by a friend or a family member, the facilitator will keep track of time and monitor the recording and will let you know when you have five minutes left to make sure the interview doesn't go over time. You will receive a copy of your recorded interview after the recording is complete.

4. Paperwork





Please sign the interview release form and turn it in to the front desk at the library. This form will allow the Caseyville Library to use the interview on our website or in any promotional material.




5. Photos

Please submit a photo of yourself and any relevant topics that were discussed during your recording. These photos will be for use with your recording and kept with the library's history collection.

Think of yourself as an oral historian.

Allow others to get to know you. If you are the interviewer, ask questions that require the other person to think about their answers and give you a glimpse into who they are. This information is much more interesting than dry names and dates. **Here are some tips** that may help the recording process:

-  Try not to interrupt the person you're interviewing.
-  Don't be afraid to ask emotional questions.
-  Look at your partner, not at the microphone.
-  Ask for examples or details to get more complete stories.

-  Stay engaged, and be yourself. If the conversation elicits laughter or tears- it's ok!
-  Be curious!
-  Ask open-ended questions versus "yes" or "no" questions. ("Tell me about..." or "Can you describe...")

Oral History Questions List

These questions are only suggestions. Think of them as jumping off points. Choose the most meaningful ones to you or create your own.



About Caseyville

- How long have you lived in Caseyville?
- How did you/your family come to live in Caseyville?
- How has Caseyville changed while you've lived here?
- What do you like most about Caseyville?
- Do you have any funny stories, memories, or anecdotes you'd like to share about growing up or living in Caseyville?
- What would you like to change about Caseyville?
- Where did you go for fun? Where did you shop/eat?

Family History

- What is your ethnic background?
- Where is your mom's family from? Where is your dad's family from?
- Have you ever been there? What was that like?
- What traditions have been passed down in your family? What traditions have you created with your own family?
- Who were your favorite relatives?
- What are the classic family stories? Jokes? Songs?
- Greatest lesson(s) you learned from your family

Childhood | Growing Up

- When and where were you born?
- Where did you grow up? What was it like?
- Who were your parents/guardians?
- What were they like?
- How was your relationship with them?
- Did you get into trouble? What was the worst thing you did?
- Do you have any siblings? What were they like growing up?
- How would you describe yourself as a child?
- What is your best memory of childhood? Worst?
- Did you have a nickname? How'd you get it?
- Who were your best friends? What were they like?
- How would you describe a perfect day when you were young?
- What did you think your life would be like when you were older?
- Do you have any favorite stories from your childhood?

Working

- What do you/did you do for a living?
- Tell me about how you got into your line of work.
- Do you like your job? Why?
- What did you think you were going to be when you grew up?
- What did you want to be when you grew up?
- What lessons has your work life taught you?
- If you could do anything now, what would you do? Why?
- What does retirement look like for you?
- Do you have any favorite stories from your work life?

Questions for Anyone

- Who has been the most important person in your life?
- What was the happiest moment of your life? The saddest?
- Who has been the biggest influence on your life? What lessons did that person teach you?
- Who has been the kindest to you in your life?
- What are the most important lessons you've learned in life?
- What is your earliest memory?
- Are there any funny stories your family tells about you that come to mind?
- Are there any funny stories or memories or characters from your life that you want to tell me about?
- What are you proudest of? Greatest Accomplishment?
- When in life have you felt most alone?
- If you could hold on to one memory from your life forever, what would that be?
- How has your life been different than what you'd imagined?
- How would you like to be remembered?
- Do you have any regrets?
- What does your future hold?
- What are your hopes for what the future holds for me? For my children?
- If this was to be our very last conversation, is there anything you'd want to say to me?
- For your great-great grandchildren listening to this years from now: is there any wisdom you'd want to pass on to them? What would you want them to know?
- Is there anything about me that you've always wanted to know but have never asked?
- Tell me about the most significant historical event in your life time.

