

Belmont Story Project

Recording and preserving the oral history of Belmont across generations



The Belmont Story Project encourages Belmont residents to share stories about the experiences and relationships most important in their lives. Children can interview parents or grandparents, friends and partners can reminisce about meaningful experiences they have shared, long-time Belmont residents can recall what Belmont was like many years ago. Everyone's story matters – add your voice to our collection.

Get Involved!

1. Listen to our recordings at <https://soundcloud.com/belmont-story-project> to hear interviews with Belmont residents.
2. Contact Joanna at jtzouvelis@wickedlocal.com or 781-674-7723 to sign up to record *your story* with an interested family member, friend, or neighbor at the Belmont Media Center or Belmont Public Library. Ask Joanna if you would like help finding an interviewer or someone to interview. We'll cover the technology for you so you can focus on having a conversation.

You can also volunteer to help the Belmont Media Center record stories! Training is provided, please contact Patty at 617-484-2443 or access@belmontmedia.org

This project is a collaborative of the Belmont Media Center, Belmont Public Library, Belmont Citizen Herald, Belmont Historical Society, and Belmont Council on Aging. For more information, contact jtzouvelis@wickedlocal.com or 781-674-7723.

Belmont Story Project Recording Cover Sheet

Time and date of recording: _____

Location of recording: _____

Storyteller name: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Interviewer name: _____

Relationship to storyteller: _____

Phone number: _____

Email address: _____

Brief description of interview for the podcast listing: _____

(examples: the speakers reminisce about 70 years of marriage; or, the speaker describes the culture shock of moving from Lebanon to a US college in 1947)

Preparing for Your Interview

Step 1: Schedule a Time

Choose a friend or family member whose story is important to you, or someone who you'd like to share your own story with. Interviews are usually focused on one person's story but can also be two people reflecting together. Contact Joanna at jtouvelis@wickedlocal.com or 781-674-7723 to schedule an interview time at the Belmont Media Center or Belmont Public Library.

Step 2: Choose Your Questions

Visit <https://storycorps.org/great-questions/> and choose 5-10 questions that you would like to discuss during your interview. Write them and bring them with you. If you are the primary storyteller, you can guide your interviewer to ask questions that you are comfortable with. Writing answers ahead is not recommended – stories start best from good conversation!

Step 3: Arrive Early

The Belmont Media Center is located at 9 Lexington St at Waverley Square. Several 2-hour parking spots are available on the street, and there is a paid municipal parking lot nearby.

The Belmont Public Library has limited time slots available to record interviews in the Claflin Room. The Library is located at 336 Concord Avenue and off-street parking is available.

Please arrive early to see the recording equipment, meet your facilitator (trained staff who can answer questions about the project), and sign consent forms for your interview to be shared. Take a photo to share to be posted with your story online.



Belmont Media Center Studio B

Step 4: Get Comfortable

Belmont Media Center Studio B has space for 2 people across a table from one another, each with their own microphone. Belmont Library uses a laptop with omni-directional microphone. Its Claflin Room hosts the Belmont Historical Society's collections.

Bring a water bottle with you to keep hydrated. Begin the recorded interview by introducing yourselves and saying today's date.



Historical Society Claflin Room

Step 5: Listen and Lead

As the interviewer, you can help the storyteller by listening and encouraging them to tell you more. Their answer to your first question might lead you in a new direction! Go with your instincts about what is interesting and what your storyteller is excited to talk about. You may or may not get to all the questions you prepared. At the end, thank your storyteller for sharing their stories with you!

Step 6: Check In with Facilitator

Please complete a cover sheet to accompany your recording. See page 2 of this packet.

Let your facilitator know how the interview went, and if there are particular parts you would like cut or included in your final edited recording. You will likely need to wait 2-3 weeks for the edited recording to be available. Interviews will be posted to <http://soundcloud.com/belmont-story-project>. You may also be asked about sharing your interview on Belmont Cable.

Suggested Questions for Recording Belmont History

You don't need to ask or answer all of these questions- pick the ones that are most meaningful to you, or create ones that allow you to share your most significant stories.

1. What are your earliest memories of Belmont? About what year was that?
2. What did Belmont look like then? How does it look different now?
3. What neighborhood did you grow up in? How is that neighborhood different now?
4. What were your favorite places in Belmont to visit when you were a child?
5. What were your favorite places in Belmont to go on a date?
6. What are your favorite places in Belmont to visit now?
7. What schools did you attend in Belmont? What are your most powerful memories of school?
8. Which people in Belmont influenced you the most, and how did they affect your life?
9. Do you have any funny stories, memories, or anecdotes you would like to share about growing up or living in Belmont?
10. What do you like most about Belmont?
11. What would you like most to change about Belmont?
12. What are your hopes for the future of Belmont?