



Saving Memories Forever

Lisa A. Alzo reviews a new online service that helps families record, save, and share memories “one story at a time!”

WHEN I STARTED MY GENEALOGICAL RESEARCH OVER 22 years ago, I conducted more than 30 interviews with family members and people in the communities where my ancestors lived. I used a mini-cassette recorder to capture each one and then would use my transcriber to meticulously transcribe each tape myself. It was a long and tedious process.



Today's family historian has a plethora of digital tools at his/her disposal to record, preserve, and share memories and stories. Saving Memories Forever™ is one of the newest such tools to help with this important task.

What is it?

Saving Memories Forever (SMF) is an Internet portal where you can upload audio of your family, friends, and even of yourself in a secure environment. This helps to take the concept of family history to a new level. As the site states: “But many realize that limiting stories to the written word can result in “flat” or

“two-dimensional” ancestors. With today's technologies via computers and smart phones, the options are not only limitless, but they can help build a vibrant family story using audio, photos and more.”

How It Works

You can try Saving Memories Forever for free, all you need to do is register at the website to record, listen and share your stories. There are two ways to register. Go to www.SavingMemoriesForever.com and click the **Sign Up** button located at the top right-hand corner of the website, or download the free Saving Memories Forever App from the Apple iTunes App Store on your iPhone, iPad., or iPod Touch (requires iOS 4.3 or later), <https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/saving-memories-forever/id526117837?mt=8>. Sign in as a new user with an e-mail address and password, then you are ready to record your stories. You will only need to register once. A premium version is available (\$3.99 per month or \$40 per year) which gives you greater listening and uploading capabilities and other benefits. To learn more, go to: www.SavingMemoriesForever.com/Free-vs-Fee.

Getting Started

Before you begin, you should read the Quick Start Guide located at www.SavingMemoriesForever.com/How-It-Works/documents/Quick_Start_Guide

[_Website.pdf](#) to learn how to record and upload stories via the App or in MP3 format from your computer to the website. The App leads you through the process, giving you questions to answer, a recording screen and automatic upload. If you choose to record from your computer or other MP3 recorder, there is a list of possible questions at www.SavingMemoriesForever.com/How-It-Works/documents/questionslandscapeonepage.pdf. If you want to record a memory that does not match any of the questions, use the miscellaneous question provided at the bottom of each category and record whatever you want. The full manual, www.SavingMemoriesForever.com/How-It-Works/documents/WebsiteManual622012.pdf, will provide even more detailed instructions.

You may also want to view the “Using Saving Memories Forever in Six Easy Steps” tutorial video, www.SavingMemoriesForever.com/TutorialVideo-Small.mov, that will walk you through the steps on how to begin.

The “Helpful Tips” section of the site gives you tips on recording and tagging stories, www.SavingMemoriesForever.com/Tips.

Once you are in the site, you will add a Storyteller (name and e-mail address) and press Save, then you will be able to add optional information, such as hometown, birthday, and more. Next, click on add an image (your photo) and click Add when finished. Select your Storyteller and then choose a Category. Select Age Range (or

something else like Jokes or Philosophy). This reveals a list of question prompts. On the website, you can upload MP3 audio directly from your computer. However, a better, more portable way is to use the Smartphone App. Clicking on the App and signing in allows you to select your Storyteller, question and the recording screen appears. Click the red record button to begin. You can pause the recording at any time. Click Stop when finished. You have the option to play back, rerecord or upload it. You can also return to the home screen or you can tell your relatives via Facebook that there is a new recording to listen to on the website. Back on the website, you can add photos to a story, tag your stories to make them easier to find and share stories with others. You can listen to your stories at any time. Log in to Saving Memories Forever and you'll see stories on the right and storytellers on the left.

How I Used It

I had fun recording some of my own memories using the iPad App. To be honest, I will probably use the App more often than the website for recording, but I like the ability to upload the MP3 files from my computer. I can also see myself using this site to store audio clips from many of the interviews I conducted back in the 1990s, which I have since converted to MP3 format. I added my mother as a storyteller (and her photo) and then uploaded a clip of one of the interviews I taped with her in 1991. I can see myself adding more storytellers. I would also like to use this at future family reunions to record favorite memories of our past gatherings. I think the premium price is very reasonable for all that it offers. One of the biggest problems I had in the past was trying to remember where I stored all of my audio files from those

Saving Memories Forever™ At-A-Glance

Name: Saving Memories Forever

Function: An Internet portal for recording and uploading audio of family stories; App available iPhone and the iPad.

Where to Purchase: www.SavingMemoriesForever.com;
<https://itunes.apple.com/us/app/saving-memories-forever/id526117837?mt=8>.

Platform Availability: Website and smartphone App for sharing family memories, one story at a time.

Cost: Free; Premium version \$3.99 per month or \$40 per year. (There is a special Holiday Gift Certificate available for one year of service at \$35.)

Website: Saving Memories Forever www.SavingMemoriesForever.com

Blog: <http://blog.savingmemoriesforever.com>

Twitter: [savemem4ever](https://twitter.com/savemem4ever)

Facebook: www.facebook.com/SavingMemoriesForever

interviews I did. With SMF, I can save my favorite clips or those I find most relevant to my genealogy research and share them with the addition of an e-mail address to family members. It is really nice to be able to have the “voices from the past” organized so nicely in one place, especially since so many of the people I’ve interviewed have now passed away — including my parents. Just as with any new product or service, there is usually a learning curve, and it may take you some practice to get familiar with the interface, but I found both the App and website easy to use. While the very simple interface and design may seem a bit basic or too simplistic to advanced tech users or family history writers, I think its simplicity is its appeal and that the average user can easily set up an account and start recording stories within minutes. The guides and tutorials are very easy to follow. The hardest part of telling any story is getting started or “breaking the ice” when you interview someone who doesn’t like to talk or may feel awkward with the interview process. I like the questions and prompts — they

serve as good overall guides.

Additional information

I have been told by the folks at Saving Memories Forever that there is an Android App in the works. To learn more about this or about other updates and features, read their blog, <http://blog.savingmemoriesforever.com>, like them on Facebook and follow them on Twitter.

Summary

Family history does not have to be just a litany of names, dates and places, or simply some boxes and lines. Saving Memories Forever helps you to take your story to the next level and leave an important legacy for your family members. As they write on their blog, they now have “the means to create “3D” ancestors and there’s no reason not to take advantage of these new ways of telling our stories.”



Author, instructor, and lecturer,
LISA A. ALZO, is a frequent
contributor to *Internet Genealogy*.