



Writing and Sharing Family Stories

Family historians and genealogists are among the most passionate seekers of knowledge. With their eyes glued to pedigree charts, family group sheets, and digital archives, they delve into vital records, census data, and much more. But no matter the level of research prowess, writing family stories may often feel like a daunting task.

Shaking off writer's block is a journey of capturing one tale at a time. It could be a brief biographical sketch. Perhaps it's a narrative about an elder family member that speaks volumes about your family's resilience or fortune. This adds a richness data alone can't provide, preserving not just facts, but emotions and legacies.

The stories of our ancestors weave the fabric of who we are today.



Prompts to Spark Your Family Storytelling

- **A Memoir of Yourself:** Write about where you grew up, went to school, your career, marriage, and other life milestones.
 - **Recordings and Videos:** Listen to or watch old family recordings. They can be a catalyst for related stories you may want to write.
 - **Pictures:** Look at family photos. Describe the people or the events captured and elaborate on them.
 - **Family Heirlooms:** Narrate the history of family heirlooms, specifying when, where, and to whom they belonged.
 - **Newspaper Articles:** Use them as a jumping-off point for a bigger family story.
 - **Historical Records:** Pool together data from various historical documents to craft your narrative.
 - **Sports or Hobbies:** Detail accounts of family members who had specific talents or interests; these make for intriguing stories.
- Don't let your stories fade away; put them on paper and share them, thereby ensuring they live on in the hearts of future generations.**



Resources to Illuminate Your Path to Family Storytelling

- **FamilySearch Wiki:**

Look at section 7 (“Start Writing”) of the Create-A Family-History Wiki. As suggested, “Don’t get bogged down, just begin to write and polish it later.”

familysearch.org/en/wiki/Create_a_Family_History#Start_Writing (Free)

- **Storyworth.com:**

Write one week at a time with inspiring prompts; at the end receive a hardcover book. Sometimes a promo code for a discount is available. welcome.storyworth.com/ (\$)

- **Genealogy Stories:**

Suggests you set a plan and structure your writing to “Go from Boring to Brilliant” family history writing. A fun and educational site. genealogystories.co.uk/how-to-go-from-boring-to-brilliant-family-history-writing/ (Free)

- **Wartsandall Blog:**

Article on writer’s block and pen portraits. It urges you to write from memory to get started, and contains helpful prompts.

wartsandall.blog/2019/06/25/writers-block/ (Free)

For more ideas on writing family stories, please visit these NGS sponsors:

- **Storied.com:**

Advice on getting started by writing small stories and using prompts. Also, some subscription access to records. storied.com/stories (\$ + Free)

- **Ancestry.com:**

No writing advice but lots of facts to gather to get you started writing a biographical sketch for an ancestor. ancestry.com/ (\$)

