

PRESERVING A FAMILY HISTORY

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I. Description of various means of preserving a family history

- A. Family lore, handed down verbally from one generation to another.
- B. Box, drawer, or some other repository filled with family related materials.
- C. Collection and preservation of family related items, such as quilts, photos, uniforms, silverware, furniture, letters.
- D. Tape recording the reminiscences of family members.
- E. Preparation of carefully documented descendancy charts of family lines.
- F. Compilation of a family history, incorporating some or all of the above materials, then making it available to interested family members in printed or digital form.

II. Description of own experiences in getting involved in the publication of *The Family of Peter and Mary Elizabeth Johnson Shumway*.

III. Suggestions for the publication of a family history

A. Some common types of family histories (show examples).

- 1. Descendancy charts. Short on plot, but a great list of characters. Often very useful and appreciated by family members.
- 2. Narrative history. Lends itself well to describing family migration, traits, experiences, lore and individual achievements. Can be very readable.
- 3. Compilation of individual personal histories.
- 4. A biography of one ancestor, or a limited small group.
- 5. A photographic essay of the family history. Tells much about the family, while at the same time preserving, systematizing, identifying persons in photos, and sharing photos, often belonging to several individuals, relevant to a family.
- 6. Some combination of the above.

B. Gathering the information.

1. Establish exactly what you want from family members, then send a questionnaire asking specifically for this information, or a sample of the kind of response desired.
2. Enthusiasm, patience, persuasion, persistence and vision needed to elicit information from family members, who often have varying levels of commitment, ability, or freedom from other distractions.
3. When appropriate, consider using tape recorded oral histories for those who wish to contribute, but procrastinate, have failing health, or do not feel they have writing ability.

C. Preparing the material for publication.

1. Use a computer to incode the document and prepare photos and other ephemera for inclusion in the document.
2. Print out a copy of the text and photos, etc. for final editing, having three or more individuals with good editing skills, and who did not participate in incoding the text, serve as final editors.
3. Make corrections on the computer, incorporating recommendations from the edited copy.
4. Print a copy that includes the editing recommendations, submit this to a proofreader.
5. Correct on the computer file any errors found by the proofreader.
6. When the files containing the text and the photos are considered to be error free, give them to a family member or someone else with expertise in In-design or some other final layout program.
7. Review the recommended final format provided by the layout expert, keeping in mind that this is the last best time to make any changes.
8. Index the document, using either the indexing capability of yourr word processing program used, or index manually.
9. Make any corrections made obvious by the indexing process.
10. Although the copies required can be made on your own computer, if more than ten copies are needed, it will generally be more cost effective and enjoyable to have a company specializing in printing and binding do this for you.
11. Other considerations for the preparation of family histories.

- a. Are there photos and other documents (such as a coat of arms) that would be more effectively printed in color? This is no longer prohibitively expensive, and the proper inks have been artificially aged to indicate a permanence of at least 100 years. Colored end sheets, showing a site important in the family history or something else, such as a family reunion photo, are often very striking in the bound, completed book.
- b. Are there members of the family group who are financially able and willing to do one of the following:
 - (1). Underwrite the inclusion of photos in the book, a few of which might be in color?
 - (2). Cover the cost for professional editing and proofreading of the manuscript?
 - (3). Improve the quality of hardbound books by paying for a die for stamping the desired art work on the covers (about \$70) or upgrading the binding to buckram or bonded leather (about \$1.40 per book).
 - (4). Cover the cost for indexing the book.
 - (5). Cover the cost for adding full color end sheets at the beginning and end of the book (about \$1 per book).
- c. At this point, the person in charge of creating the family history needs to make the following decisions:
 - (1). Printing method to be used, such as computer printed, photo duplicated, docuteched, or offset printed.
 - (2). Quality of paper, ranging from regular text to archival quality.
 - (3). Binding method, ranging from Velobind through library quality oversewn hardbound.
 - (4). Layout or design of cover.
 - (5). Number of copies to be printed.
 - (6). How to distribute copies.
 - (7). Guidelines for fulfilling copyright obligations.

IV. Rewards, both tangible and intangible, for being involved in the creation of a family history.