

# How to Publish Your Family History

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## 1. Defining what *publishing* means

## 2. Who's your audience?

Family? Children? General Audience? Your answer to this question determines how you write your personal history, what you put in and leave out, and how you publish your story.

## 3. What resources do you have to call upon?

- Financial support
- Help with text editing, photo scanning and editing, formatting, proofreading for text and historical accuracy.

## 5. Publishing Options

- **Small press publishers**
  - ✓ What they can do for you
  - ✓ Finding a publisher who is right for you
  - ✓ How you can save yourself some money
  - ✓ Resources:
    - Association of Personal Historians ([personallhistorians.org](http://personallhistorians.org))
    - Local publishers
- **Print on Demand (POD) Publishers**
  - ✓ What they can do for you
  - ✓ What you need to do for them
  - ✓ Pros and Cons
  - ✓ Blurb ([www.blurb.com](http://www.blurb.com))
  - ✓ Lulu ([www.lulu.com](http://www.lulu.com))
- **Thinking "Big Time"**
  - ✓ The pros and cons
  - ✓ The process for seeking a mainstream publisher
- **The Kinkos Route**
  - ✓ Costs
  - ✓ Options

## 6. Promoting Your Family History

- Your website and/or blog
- Dedicated website
- Genealogy societies, and websites
- Speaking engagements

## 7. Things to Consider

- Number of copies
- Book size
  - ✓ 6 x 9 most common for hardbound books.
  - ✓ 8 ½ x 11 – can look amateurish; can be beautiful
  - ✓ 7 x 10 – for a heftier book; allows for larger photos
  - ✓ 4 ½ x 7 – many paperbacks
- Book cover
  - ✓ Hardcover?
    - Oversewn—signatures clamped together. Very strong, but the pages will not lie flat when opened.
    - Smyth Sewn—signatures are folded and stitched through the fold. More expensive, but strong and will lie flat. Allows more room for margins.
  - ✓ Softcover?
    - Usually have “perfect binding.” The pages are cut and glued to the spine. Not particularly strong or durable
  - ✓ Dust jacket or not?
  - ✓ Professional designer? Spend time in bookstores looking at different designs and book sizes
- Paper
  - ✓ Acid free, archival quality
  - ✓ Different weights (thick enough so photos don’t bleed through)
  - ✓ Color—bright whites vs. off-whites
  - ✓ Matte vs. glossy
- Font
  - ✓ Use a serif font for text body. Sans-serif fonts *may* be used for titles, headers, footers, etc.
  - ✓ Don’t mix too many fonts.
  - ✓ Don’t use a fancy font for body text (but I would avoid Times Roman). Some other fonts used for body text are Garamond, **Bookman Old Style**, **Book Antiqua**, and Caslon.
  - ✓ Avoid specialty fonts from free sources. Needs to have true bold and true italics.
  - ✓ Don’t use a 12-point font. Most books use 10 or 11-point (or something between). Different fonts may require different sizes. Print out a page and compare it to a book you like.
- **Illustrations**
  - ✓ Bunched together or spread throughout the book?
  - ✓ How many per page?
  - ✓ Larger is usually better!
  - ✓ Color?
  - ✓ Borders?
  - ✓ Captions?

- ✓ Consider the quality—more is not necessarily better.
- ✓ Always ask for high-resolution scans.
- ✓ Photo restoration.

## 8. Parts of a Book (but your book may not have *all* of these)

- Front Cover
- Inside Front Cover
- Half-Title Page
- Title Page
- Copyright Page
- Dedication
- Table of Contents
- Foreword—an introductory essay written by a different person
- Preface—a summary describing your purpose for writing the book and thoughts you have about writing it. You may include acknowledgements here or include them in a separate section.
- Prologue—a short introductory segment (backstory?) that sets the stage for the main narrative
- The Body—your narrative
- Epilogue / Afterword
- Appendices—additional material (documents, articles, maps, family trees) that supplements the body of the book
- Glossary—definition of terms
- Bibliography
- Index
- Inside Back Cover
- Back Cover

## 9. Good Resource

- Patricia Law Hatcher's *Producing a Quality Family History* (available from Amazon)

