

Do the “Write” Thing for Genealogy: Ideas and Resources for Writing Your Family’s History

By Marian & Wally Wood

- ✓ Focus on: One ancestor/family/surname; one photo or heirloom; one occasion or situation; or one timeline
- ✓ Ask family for documents, photos, stories, ideas to understand more about ancestors
- ✓ Start with what you know (you can do more research as needed)
- ✓ Start anywhere in the story and then edit/change/add later
- ✓ Think about individuals (family order, role in family, personality, appearance, actions, speech, strengths/weaknesses, life choices, goals, successes, failures, work, education, skills, interests)
- ✓ Think about family in context (history, culture, technological changes, urban/rural, immigrants/established, local issues, drama or themes)
- ✓ Write clearly and vividly, bring out the drama, include details to bring ancestors alive
- ✓ Write *who, what, when, where, why* to show the human story
- ✓ Organize narrative chronologically, by ancestor/generation, family unit, or moment in time
- ✓ Write a paragraph or page, then continue sentence by sentence to add to your family history
- ✓ Include maps, photos, and/or timelines to add interest to your family's story!

WRITING RESOURCES

FamilySearch.org (a wonderful research site and source of genealogy instruction)

- 10 Steps to Writing an Engaging Family History
(www.familysearch.org/blog/en/10-steps-writing-engaging-family-history/)
- 18 Writing Tips for Telling Stories
(www.familysearch.org/blog/en/18-writing-tips-tell-stories/)

Family history writing articles

- “Writing a Non-Boring Family History”
(www.writerswrite.com/journal/jul02/writing-a-non-boring-family-history-7024)
- “Twenty Reasons Why You Should Write Your Family History”
(www.nypl.org/blog/2015/02/09/reasons-to-write-your-family-history)
- “The Fallacy of Writing Your Family History”
(www.amyjohnsoncrow.com/the-fallacy-of-writing-your-family-history/)
- “Painting a Picture with Characterization”
(www.familyhistorywritingstudio.com/painting-a-picture-with-characterization/)

Please visit Marian's genealogy blog at: <https://climbingmyfamilytree.blogspot.com/>