

# SHARING THE STORIES OF YOUR ANCESTORS

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- Why share family history?
  - Preservation
  - Healing
  - Interest others in family history
  - Building connections
  - Bridge between the past and the future (The 200-year Present)
- Finding the Story
  - Start with yourself and/or stories that you know well.
  - Look for opportunities for connection between living family members and the past.
  - Get inspired by photos and documents.
  - Look for stories on a particular topic.
- Questions to ask about your storytelling project
  - What stories do you have in your family history?
  - What are the stories that are important to you?
  - What is your goal?
  - Who is your audience?
  - What is your scope?
- Finding details for the story
  - What do you already know?
  - What records do you have that support that story?
  - What can you infer?
  - What else can you learn about the family, community, and time period?
  - Recommended reading for historical context research:
    - *Bringing Your Family History to Life through Social History*, by Katherine Scott Sturdevant
- Storytelling for Family History
  - Every story has a narrator and an audience.
  - Characters, setting, plot, and theme
  - Introduction, climax, conclusion
  - Engaging details and descriptive language.
- Getting Prepared
  - Gather photos and other artifacts.
  - Recruit family members.
  - Do background research.
  - Select an appropriate project to match your goal, audience, and scope.

- Just start!
- Ideas for sharing your story: Oral Histories
  - Share short stories with your family everyday.
  - Record stories on a recording device or app. (example: StoryCorps or Ancestry Storymaker Studio)
  - Live Storytelling events in community or a genealogy discussion group
  - Recommended reading for Oral Histories:
    - *Preserve Your Family History: A Step-by-Step Guide for Interviewing Family Members and Writing Oral Histories*, by LeAnn R. Ralph
    - StoryCorps: <https://storycorps.org/participate/great-questions/>
    - Cyndi's List, Oral Histories: [www.cyndislist.com/oral/](http://www.cyndislist.com/oral/)
  - Recommended reading for Live Storytelling:
    - Cyndi's List, Storytelling: [www.cyndislist.com/storytelling/](http://www.cyndislist.com/storytelling/)
    - *Long Story Short: The Only Storytelling Guide You'll Ever Need*, by Margot Leitman
- Ideas for sharing your story: Writing
  - Family History Journaling
  - Adding stories to online family tree
  - Written article: blog, website, newsletter, or genealogical society
  - Family History Book, Memoir, or Biography
  - Recommended reading for Writing Your Family History:
    - *Writing your Family History: A Guide for Family Historians*, by Gill Blanchard
    - *How to Write your Personal or Family History*, by Katie Funk Wiebe
    - *One Memory At a Time*, by D.G. Fulford
    - *Writing Family History Made Very Easy*, by Noeline Kyle
    - "18 Writing Tips for 2018" by Family Search  
[www.familysearch.org/blog/en/18-writing-tips-tell-stories/](http://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/18-writing-tips-tell-stories/)
    - "Publishing Your Family History" by Family Tree Magazine:  
[www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/publishing-your-family-history/](http://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/publishing-your-family-history/)
    - Cyndi's List, Writing Family Histories: [www.cyndislist.com/writing/](http://www.cyndislist.com/writing/)
- Ideas for sharing your story: Using Photos & Video
  - Heirloom shadow boxes
  - Visual Timeline (examples: [TreeLines.com](http://TreeLines.com) or [HistoryLines.com](http://HistoryLines.com))
  - Coloring book or children's story book
  - [Historypin.org](http://Historypin.org)
  - Photo book, scrapbook or family cookbook
  - Digital storytelling using video
  - Recommended reading for scrapbooks, albums, and more:
    - *Crafting Your Own Heritage Album*, by Bev Kirschner Braun
    - Cyndi's List, Scrapbooks: [www.cyndislist.com/scrapbooks/](http://www.cyndislist.com/scrapbooks/)
  - Recommended reading for preserving family recipes:
    - *Preserving Family Recipes*, by Valerie J. Frey

- *Sweet Home: over 100 Heritage Recipes and Ideas for Preserving Your Family History*, by Rebecca Miller French
  - Tips from FamilySearch: [www.familysearch.org/blog/en/recipes/](http://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/recipes/)
  - Cyndi's List, Recipes: [www.cyndislist.com/recipes/](http://www.cyndislist.com/recipes/)
- Ideas for sharing your story: Social Media & more
  - Share photos, videos, links to blog posts, etc. on your profile
  - Online Family Reunions
  - Facebook groups
  - Attach stories to your online family trees
  - Recommended reading for social media & online tools:
    - *Sharing your family history online*, by Chris Paton
- Preserving your family stories
  - L.O.C.K.S.S. - Lots of Copies Keeps Stuff Safe
  - Keep originals safe and make a digital copy.
  - Make backup copies of projects and files.
  - Find a long-term caretaker.
  - Recommended reading for preservation:
    - *Digitizing your Family History*, by Rhonda R. McClure
    - *Organize Your Digital Life*, by Aimee Baldrige.
    - *Your Digital Afterlife: When Facebook, Flickr and Twitter are your estate, What's Your Legacy?*, by Evan Carroll and John Romano
    - *Keeping Your Past: A Basic Guide to the Care & Preservation of Personal Papers*
- Encouraging others to share their story
  - Show interest in their story
  - Ask open-ended questions
  - Keep it casual
  - Use props to spark conversation
  - Involve them in your research
  - Be respectful
- Final thoughts
  - Don't wait - start now!
  - Do a little bit at a time.
  - It doesn't have to be perfect
  - Be creative
  - Use your own voice
  - Learn from other great storytellers
  - Get help from the library
    - Guides & Books
    - Writing & Discussion groups
    - Genealogy Databases & Local History Resources
    - Technology classes and more through the library or online resources