

Writing your Family History

By Lida Larkin - (momuv712@gmail.com)

Give people a fact & you enlighten their minds; tell them a story & you touch their souls (Hasidic Jewish proverb)

- **We are the story tellers**

When you speak, your words echo only across the room. When you Write, your words echo down the ages (Bud Gardner)
- **Tell It Like it Was**
 - a. Cast Chronology Aside
 - b. Open with a Bang
 - c. Cut to the Chase
 - d. Build your Story from Scenes
 - e. Scribble out a Plan
 - f. Show, don't Tell
 - g. Be Detailed
- **Tools to help you Write**
 - a. Dictionary/Thesaurus
 - b. Atlas
 - c. Open PAF/Legacy, etc.
 - d. Time Line
 - e. Try not to use "was and were" – Avoid "had." Stay away from the passive voice -Use action
 - f. Are you a Noah's Ark Writer? Your adjectives come in twos?
 - g. Strange Resources like Ebay, Goggle Images, Goggle Earth
 - h. Have you read the local news in the old local paper of your ancestor's home town? Society pages report local gatherings with names of family members.
- **Writing is about Memory Triggers**
 - a. Sight – visual memories – describe how things were – can you visit the people or place?
 - b. Sounds – music, clothes pin on the bicycle wheel, the tap tap tap of the typewriter keys
 - c. Smells - the strongest memory trigger – fresh mown grass, baking cookies, camp fire
 - d. Taste – juicy drip of a sweet watermelon, pucker taste of a lemon, crunch of a crisp apple
 - e. Touch – how does it feel? Sand between our toes, rough tongue of a dog licking us, ice
- **Paint Word Pictures**

A Picture is worth a thousand words - a Word can also be worth a thousand pictures
- **Top 10 Overlooked Genealogy Record Picks** by Kimberly Powell - Your Guide to Genealogy
 - a. Home Sources
 - b. Court Records
 - c. Draft Records
 - d. Newspapers
 - e. The Social Security Index
 - f. Voter Records
 - g. Supplemental Census Schedules

- h. Funeral Home Records
 - i. Land Entry Case Files
 - j. PERSI (The PERiodical Source Index)
- **Use photos** to add visual information and interest and understanding to your histories.
Where do you find useful photos? Your own, relatives, friends of ancestors, descendants of ancestor's friends, newspaper archives, Google Images, Ebay, Flickr, SmugMug, etc.
 - **Reviving an Old Tradition in Your Family - Share Ancestor Stories**
 - **Some Search Engines to try**
Google, Teoma, Alta Vista, Yahoo, Meta Crawler, Dogpile, Bing, Duck Duck Go, Iseek, Ixquick, & ZapMeta/searches Yahoo, , Cuil, Gigablast, Alta Vista, Entire web,
 - **Copyright Info**
 - a. Copyright [dates] by [author/owner]
 - b. Even if it is not written as copyrighted, it is copyrighted immediately.
 - c. Public Doman is only free if author/owner puts words to the effect "I grant this to public domain."
 - d. If someone posts it who does not have permission, then to make a copy is still pirating it.
 - e. Even writing your own story based on another's work is the exclusive providence of the original author.
 - f. Innocent until proven guilty is a principle of criminal law. Copyright violation is civil law.
 - g. Always ask before using.
 - **Printing**
 - a. Print on Demand
 - b. Self Publish
 - c. Pay someone to help you create & print
 - d. Have Document "Print Ready" as a PDF file and on a flash drive
 - e. What kind of Binding? Spiral bind, comb binding, soft cover, hard bound, 3 ring binder, staples
 - f. What size of book? A Single Event? A Generational story? An Ancestor story?
 - **Writing a Family History**
 - a. What is available? How do I find out? Google the name – Google the place – Ask friends and relatives – Check with neighbors of the ancestor.
 - b. Interview any who will know of the people you are writing about
 - c. Check local histories and newspapers – watch for family reunion write-ups.
 - d. Begin!
 - e. Juanita Brooks, famed historian, says, "There is no good writing, only good rewriting."

So don't be afraid to WRITE!