

We all want to share our family research. There are many ways to do that and how we decide depends on:

What we want to accomplish – tell the story, get relatives interested in genealogy, record charts/vital statistics, etc.

**Just the facts** – Two of my mother’s cousins contacted the descendants of their grandparents and asked each family for vital information (name, birth, marriage, death, children.) They then put the information in family group sheets. Each child of the grandparents was given a section that started with a wedding or family photo. Then each descendant from that family was given a family group sheet. A name index was included in the front to show what section and group sheet the person was on. They had the group sheets copied and put in order by family. (I probably would have done back to back copying to save paper, but that might be a problem if you wanted to be able to update.)

**Tell the stories** – Member Jerry Stabler’s book Memories of One Stabler Farm tells stories of one farm, the family, the neighbors, and happenings in the area when he was growing up.

**Memorialize someone** – My cousin Linda never met her uncle who died before she was born. Since he died young and didn’t have children, she wanted him to be remembered. She gathered information, photos, and stories and put them in book form. She gave direct family members hard-cover copies and others paperback. She had extras printed to give anyone else she might meet that knew him. Dick Dollen: The Memoir of an Unknown Uncle

**Explain who your ancestors are** – My cousin Mary has used different formats - books, booklets, calendars, CDs, DVDs, and flash-drives to tell the history of her ancestors’ families for her siblings. She gave these at birthdays, Christmas, and other holidays. She included family charts, photos, copies of records, maps, and reprints of articles. (She also documents where the information came from!) Our Swiss Immigrant Ancestors: The 1700’s – the Family of Hans Herr and Edward Elliott’s Hamacher Ancestors.

You don’t have to do it all at once. Perhaps include the story of an ancestor or family event with your Christmas card/letter. Even just enclosing a newspaper article or photo may inspire someone to ask questions. One Christmas I made notebooks for my sister, daughter, grand-daughter, and nieces. (I kept a copy of everything for myself so I’d remember what I had given them so I didn’t give duplicates or leave something out that was important.) I started with one side of the family and gave an over view. The next year I did the other side. I’ve given additional information, reprints, stories, etc. labeling each as to which section it should be put in. (I need to get busy and write up a new installment for this Christmas!)

I’ve taken part in Lynn Palermo’s Family History Writing Challenge a few years which she does in February. While many of the stories I wrote each February day are still on my computer in draft form, it showed me where I need to do more research and made me focus more on what I had and got me started.

#### **Resources -**

Genealogists, organizations, and companies have writing prompts, webinars, online courses, blogs, and/or books to help you get started writing. Here are some examples:

Lynn Palermo <https://www.thearmchairgenealogist.com> has helps on her website and gave permission for us to include 2 blogs in this handout. She usually has a Family History Writing Challenge in February and also has Story Lines and books/courses to help.

Amy Johnson Crow – <https://www.amyjohnsoncrow.com/> & <https://www.amyjohnsoncrow.com/52-ancestors-in-52-weeks/>

Legacy Tale <https://www.legacytale.com/>

Jennifer Holik *Coordinator World War II Research and Writing Center* <http://wwiiresearchandwritingcenter.com/jennifer-holik/>

Genealogical.com - publisher of genealogy books in the country <https://genealogical.com/about/>

Family History Publishers and Print on Demand Services (<https://www.thoughtco.com/family-history-publishers-1422317>)

Cyndi's List has a list of publishers that print family history books <https://www.cyndislist.com/books/family-history-publishers/> for example: <http://genealogybookpublisher.com/>

12 Top Family History Book Publishers - Recommended by By Shikha Pandey (<https://writingtipsoasis.com/family-history-book-publishers/>)

Maureen Taylor wrote an article for the September 2015 issue of Family Tree Magazine titled "How to Self-Publish Your Family History Book."

Family Search has a blog "Publishing Your Genealogy—Traditional vs. eBook" <https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/publishing-genealogy-traditional-ebook/>

Most of the publishing-on-demand companies have online instructions/tutorials to help you decide on options for your book. Look at more than one before deciding.

Two local printers (New Life Printers in Monroe and Minuteman Press in Janesville ( the one Jerry Stabler used for his book) said they couldn't give me any cost information without having the specifics for a book. The variables include the type of cover, binding, paper, size, black & white or color photos, how many printed, etc. I have used my cousin Linda's book information as an example. She did a number of extras such as pictures in the background that added to the look, but not the content.

**My Cousin Mary** has done a number of books, booklets, and CD's for her family of their family history.

I asked her for tips for our workshop. She said the computer programs she uses are dated but she likes them because she can manipulate text and photos on the pages. Mary thought we may want to check newer versions, but for her she feels if it works, don't change it. For photos, she uses Paintshop Pro 7 to edit photos and graphics. For making books, she used PrintMaster 12. It allows a newsletter format. It can be printed portrait or landscape and can be used to make multipage brochures. Most of her books are 30 pages or more with a text box on each page and graphics in another. She can manipulate anything with page clip. The drawback is that you can't share the files since most people don't have that program. To get around that, she used PDFfill, a free program, which allows print to software converted to PDF format. Then it can be shared on flashdrives, CDs, or small books emailed. For her genealogy she uses Family Tree Maker 2005. She said scrapbook programs are also an option. She started making the books for her family – which was somewhat expensive. Now she does CDs. (Note: her sister told me she looks at the books some, but hasn't really used the CDs and didn't know what was on them.)

Mary stressed that with new programs and equipment and new services, there are other options to publishing. She said that many of the scrapbook programs can be used at home or uploaded to make nice books or calendars. She did a calendar for 2019 with images of estates in England where our ancestors once lived. She provided simple family trees and other information. She said after her parents died her siblings divided up the box of photos. The identified photos were all scanned and shared with the other siblings so each had a full set. As a retired teacher, she feels having kids find a family connection helps them to be interested in history and remember it better. She suggested making alphabet books for kids. These can be by relative/ancestor's, name, town, occupation (may be a stretch to find one for each letter), etc. Then a photo/picture is on each page with identification/description/story. You can make family charts attaching photos to each person.

**My Cousin Linda** gave me this information:

Linda wrote a book about an uncle she never knew since he died before she was born. She took a publishing class from Boston University. She checked into Kinko's spiral bound books and decided against it. She wanted it to be special and memorable and printed using really good paper. She chose **Books of Life** from Wilmette, IL. She visited their storefront and really liked what she saw. She sent in her information and they gave her a quote. They scanned her photos, formatted the book, and had their proof reader proof it (at a cost of \$75). She asked for background photos on some pages. She spent about \$2000 in 2015 for 4 hard cover books (for direct family) and 20 paperback books to be given to others (such as me). She mentioned that it can be done completely online.

From the website: [Books of Life - Preserve Your Legacy in Custom Designed Books](https://www.yourbooksoflife.com/) <https://www.yourbooksoflife.com/>  
847-859-9442. 805 Ridge Rd. Wilmette, IL 60091 [info@yourbooksoflife.com](mailto:info@yourbooksoflife.com)

MEMORIES EVERYWHERE?Books of Life is a boutique design studio that organizes, optimizes and transforms your photos, memorabilia, artwork and stories into exquisitely designed books. The finest archival paper, sewn binding, foil stamping and custom end sheets make each

book truly unique and of the highest quality on the market. Your most meaningful memories are preserved and showcased for you and your family to love for generations. Is there anything more book worthy?

**WHY BOOKS OF LIFE?** Taking photos is easy - figuring out what to do with them is not. The volume of photographs your family accumulates over the years can be overwhelming. Chances are those memories are literally all over the place. In boxes. In albums. On your computer. And now, on your phone. For many, just remembering to download them is difficult, not to mention sorting and organizing. And the process of compiling them into a book, even with DIY online tools, can be particularly vexing. That's where Books of Life comes in.

We offer end to end photography management, picking your best photos, individually color correcting them, and turning these important images into exquisitely designed coffee table books. You're not limited to just photos; custom books also can include memorabilia, old letters and historical documents.

**BRINGING YOUR STORY TO LIFE** It all starts with an idea for your book. Whether it's a family trip, a special event or even a collection of love letters. Next, we will work with you to find the best way to acquire your photography. Hand over your photos in any format – prints, negatives, slides, and digital photos (cds, memory cards or hard drives). Pick up and drop off service is available for local clients. If you need help transferring your files from you computer, we can walk you through the steps. And of course, we're happy to copy your photos off your computer for you. Your hardcopy prints, negatives and slides will be converted to high-res digital files and safely returned to you!

**PHOTO REVIEW AND SELECTION** No need to sift through thousands of photos to include in your books. Leave this herculean task to us! We will carefully review and select photographs with the most visual impact that support a strong and meaningful story.

The photos we select for your book will be posted to a password protected client review website where you can confirm chronology, remove unwanted photos, or identify missing photos.

**PHOTO OPTIMIZATION** Once we select your photography and it is approved by you, it's time for us to work our digital magic. We optimize your photography using professional photo editing software. Each image is individually enhanced to correct exposure, color and clarity for optimal print quality. Red eye is corrected and dust and scratches from prints are removed. Clients marvel at the new life given to their snap shots and casual photos after they have been color corrected and cropped.

The beauty is in the details.

**BOOK DESIGN AND LAYOUT** Now it's time for us to design a gorgeous coffee-table-worthy book. We don't want to simply chronicle the event, we want people to feel as if they were there – either for the first time or as a lasting memory. In addition to photos, we can add captions, pages from a journal, maps or drawings from a child. Once the pages of your book are designed, a powerful and stunning visual story will unfold.

Your book will be packed with action, emotion, and artistry that you'll be proud to display.

**THE PRINTED BOOKS** Superior binding, hard cover linen, premium archival papers and printing materials are used to produce a bookstore quality product. Book dimensions range from 7"x7" to 11"x13" and range from 50 to 400 pages. Dust jacket or image imprint cover options are available. Additional upgrades include leather binding, foil stamping, and custom end sheets. Duplicate copies are available and make perfect gifts for children, grandparents or travel companions.

Our end-to-end services include:

- gathering & organizing your best photos
- selecting your best photos
- scanning and archiving
- color correction / photo enhancement
- beauty retouching
- custom book design, printing and binding

Every book created is unique. Books of Life uses no automation or templating in designing your books. Additional options may include leather binding, foil stamping, artwork and memorabilia integration.

**PRICING INFO**

Books range from 50 to 400 pages and start at \$500.

**PRINTING UPGRADES:** • sewn binding, • leather cover, • cover foil stamping, • custom end sheets

**ADDITIONAL UPGRADES:** • typesetting captions, stories, blogs, • custom maps & illustrations, • photo restoration & cosmetic photo retouching, • writing, copy editing, proofreading

Linda mentioned that her Google group recommended [Lulu.com](http://Lulu.com), Amazon's POD called Kindle Digital Print, and [DiggyPod.com](http://DiggyPod.com). She found Lulu confusing and said the question we must answer is how many copies wanted. That may determine which path to follow. You don't have to get as fancy or spend as much money on your book as Linda did. While it is a beautiful and loving book, the information could have been shared less expensively.

Other sharing options include family calendars personalized with photos of relatives/ancestors, their homes, pets, etc. Many photo companies also do photo books. Most you can upload photos online and they will print and mail you the finished book, calendar, poster, etc. Check online for options available and comparison shop. You may know someone who has made calendars for families. Ask them about their experience.

A new one I recently learned of is **OurCards**. This company will make a deck of cards with each card featuring a different person. Information about that person can be added. It's fun to think who you would put on each card. For information go to [www.ourcards.com](http://www.ourcards.com). While it may not be publishing a book, it is sharing your genealogy. You can include interesting tidbits about the people. Kids playing fish will come to recognize their relatives as will adults playing poker.

**Lynn Palermo the Armchair Genealogist** (<https://www.thearmchairgenealogist.com>) gave permission for us to include these 2 blogs in our handouts. Her website has numerous helps and blogs to help those wanting to write their family history. She has written books and holds online courses. She has had a Family History Writing Challenge the past few Februarys that participants received daily email encouragement and prompts to write a little family history each day.

## **6 Tips to Building a Family History Book – Lynn Palermo**

### **1. Know the scope and span of your book before you begin**

Too many family historians start out with no idea the extent their book will take. Will it be one surname, one couple, two surnames? Nor do they take the time to identify how much research they have and just how big their book will be. They dive in, and before you know it, their book has taken on a life of its own, and it's out of control. Usually what happens is the book gets too big and too expensive to print. You must take the time upfront to map out the contents of your book and stay on track.

### **2. Don't start too big**

We all want the big beautiful heirloom book that will be left as a treasure for future generations. And there's nothing wrong with that. But if this is your first time writing stories, if this is your first time building a book then start small and learn the process of writing and publishing a book. Maybe start with one ancestor, one story. This way when you do build the beautiful heirloom book that you'll want to leave for generations to come it will be your best work.

### **3. Set a budget and stick to it.**

This is the one step most family historians don't worry about until the book is written and they're ready to go to print. But then they realize the book is too big, and they can't afford to print it, and no one can afford to buy it. Do some preliminary work before you start. Understand all the costs involved in printing a book and how it will add on to the final cost of your book.

### **4. You don't have to go it alone – build a team**

We often get caught in a mindset that we must develop our book alone. Build a team, someone to help scan pictures, someone to edit, a graphic designer, or in the family or has a natural talent for creativity. Surround yourself with people who can help make the project a little easier and much more enjoyable.

### **5. Designate a time each week**

You can wish it to happen. You have to make it a priority. It needs to go on the calendar. Add a designated time on the agenda each day or week to work on your book. Maybe turn off the TV in the evenings and make this your book creating time. Turn off social media, email, there are plenty of opportunities in our day to take on a special and rewarding project like building a family history book. But if you are serious about it, you must make the time.

### **6. Have a deadline**

It's so important to have a timeline for your heirloom book, or you'll work on it forever. Without a goal, your book can take on a life of its own and never see the light of day. When you have a target, it's easy to work backwards and set critical dates along the way. Also, make your goal a public announcement to the family. When you make a public proclamation of your heirloom book, you are more likely to keep your promise.

## **Family History Books- Made Easy with Print-On-Demand Publishing – Lynn Palermo**

Gone are the days of their only being two options to printing your family history book, the full colour, leather bound coffee table book or the homemade photocopied, scanned and 3 hole-punched style book. Today's technology offers us many options in between. If you are looking for an easy and affordable format for publishing your family history book, then look no further than Print-On-Demand Publishing.

### **What is Print-On-Demand?**

Print-on-Demand is a process by which you provide the company with a digital file of your written family history and they will turn it into a beautiful family history book. The beauty of print-on-demand as the name suggests allows you to order as many copies of your book as you need, when you need them. Anywhere from one copy to hundreds of copies.

Traditional printers usually require a minimum order and the price of the book is usually set around how many copies you order. The more you order the cheaper the book becomes. With POD, the price is set and you can go back as many times as you like ordering your book as the need arises. Many companies also provide a service so relatives can order the book directly from them eliminating the work of your family having to go through you.

### **The Advantages of Print-on-Demand**

**Cost:** For the family historian print-on-demand publishing can save you money over traditional publishing. Printing your own books can also be costly, home use inkjet printers can be unreliable and ink cartridges are expensive. A traditional printer is far too expensive for most family historians. Print-on-Demand offers an affordable middle ground.

**Professional Looking:** A POD service not only will be cost effective but also will afford you a much more professional looking family history book.

**Timely:** Turn-around time on receiving your submission to a printed book is generally a few weeks, providing you with more time to prepare your book instead of months of waiting on the finished product.

**Creative Services:** While some family historians have the time and talent to provide a completed manuscript with a beautiful layout and design, some of us do not have that luxury or talent. Many POD services will provide a variety of services including design, typing and editing, of course this comes at an added cost, but it is nice to have the option.

For all these reasons when you are ready to take your family history book to print, consider a print-on-demand publisher. A simple google search will provide you with a variety of choices, do a little comparison-shopping and then choose the best fit for your family history book.

<https://www.familyhistorywritingstudio.com/>      <https://www.familyhistorywritingstudio.com/writing-prompts/>

<https://www.familyhistorywritingstudio.com/writers-resources>      <https://www.thearmchairgenealogist.com/>