

Want to Record/Write Your Family History? Start Here!

GENEALOGY INVOLVES MUCH more than just gathering names, dates and places. You may have years of research data stored in binders, photo albums and in your genealogical software program, but what good is it if it stays hidden? Here are 15 websites to inspire and instruct you on how to preserve, record and write your family history. (\$) = subscription, or fee may be required.

1. American Life Histories, Manuscripts from the Federal Writers' Project, 1936-1940 Library of Congress, American Memory

<http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/wpaintr/wpahome.html>

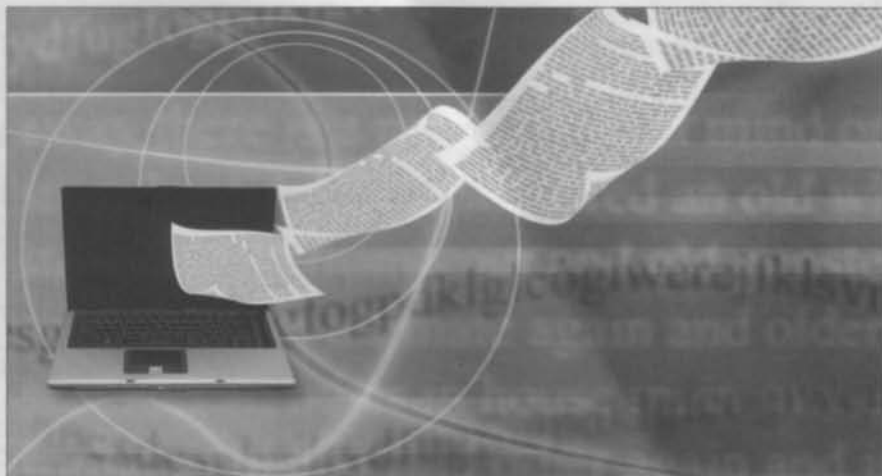
This site features more than 2,900 life histories, both in transcribed and image form, collected from 1936-40. The documents represent the work of more than 300 writers from the Federal Writers' Project of the US Work Projects Administration. The histories appear as drafts and revisions, in various formats, from narrative to dialogue, report to case history. Topics include the informant's family, education, income, occupation, political views, religion and mores, medical needs and diet, as well as observations on society and culture. Interviewers often substituted pseudonyms for names of individuals and places.

2. Ancestry.com's Audio Storytelling Service (\$)

www.ancestry.com

Ancestry's audio storytelling service allows members to share stories in their own words and voice to allow these to be preserved for future generations. These can be saved and shared, so that others who might benefit from a story will have access to it.

This service is free for any registered user of Ancestry who has created a Family Tree. You can add as many stories as desired to your



Family Tree, but each story has a recording time limit of approximately 12 minutes.

3. DoHistory Step-by-Step Guide to Oral History

http://dohistory.org/on_your_own/toolkit/oralHistory.html

Judith Moyer's comprehensive step-by-step guide to oral history (published 1993, revised 1999). Plenty of links and tips here to get you going. Her advice: Just Do It!

4. Family History Research: Steps to a Successful Interview

<http://life.familyeducation.com/family/genetics/29663.html>

This site, in association with the Ellis Island Foundation, www.ellisland.org, notes 13 easy steps for a successful interview.

5. Family Oral History Digital Tools

www.familyoralhistory.us

This site explores how to use digital tools and media to record and preserve spoken memories of family members. The site has blog postings and podcasts in addition to various articles addressing interviewing trends, equipment and techniques and many real-life examples.

6. Footnote Pages (\$)

www.footnote.com/pages

This popular feature on Footnote.com, that's been dubbed "Facebook for the deceased", lets users create profiles of deceased individuals, based on the 80 million names from the Social Security Death Index or from WWII enlistment records, or from scratch. You must register to create your free page, but if you want to link images found on the site, such as census or military records or other premium content, you'll need to purchase a subscription (\$11.95 US per month, \$69.95 US per year). A free seven-day trial is available.

7. GeneaBloggers

www.geneabloggers.com

One of the best motivations for writing is to start a blog! Once you've got some posts, consider registering your blog with GeneaBloggers — The genealogy community's resource for blogging. With a current blogroll of over 1,200 genealogy and family history-related blogs, you're also sure to find many related to recording and writing your family history, as well as fun weekly blogging prompts, blog carnivals and other great blog resources!

8. GenealogyGems Podcast (\$)

<http://genealogygems.tv>

Hosted by Lisa Louise Cooke, it's a

free online family history radio show about all things genealogy. Also, be sure to listen to Cooke's new podcast, "Family History: Genealogy Made Easy", <http://personallifemedia.com/podcasts/415-family-history>, with entertaining 30-minute shows to guide you through the research process.

9. GenWriters

www.genwriters.com

GenWriters is your online source to add life to your family history. GenWriters points you to resources that will add variety and substance to your research. Look for links to general history resources, diaries and narratives, migration patterns and trails, timelines and chronologies, wars and the military, and other helpful tools to help you bust through your writer's block!

10. History Matters: The US Survey Course on the Web

<http://historymatters.gmu.edu/mse/oral>

Published online February 2002. Linda Shopes, a historian at the Pennsylvania Historical and Museum Commission, "Making Sense of Oral History" presents an overview of oral history and ways historians use it, tips on what questions to ask when reading or listening to oral history interviews, a sample interpretation of an interview, an annotated bibliography and a guide to finding and using oral history online.

11. Living Genealogy

www.livinggenealogy.com

This free site lets your family create webpages on ancestors and ancestral hometowns. Use the Ancestor Pages to include text and photos. Although you can't upload or download a GEDCOM file, there are spaces to record names, dates, and places of birth and death. There are also Place Pages dedicated to geographic locales and you can offer tips on where to locate records, add maps or photos, and share local history and advice. There's an option to make User Groups private (open only to family members) or public (e.g., everyone researching ancestors in the same place) and a blog feature for sharing.

www.internet-genealogy.com

12. National Library of Australia — Oral History & Folklore

<http://www.nla.gov.au/oh/index.html>

Expand your Australian family history with this collection of over 58,000 oral history interviews and folk recordings, an electronic guide to Australian oral history collections and free how-to info for conducting your own oral history.

13. StoryCorps (\$)

www.storycorps.net

StoryCorps is a nonprofit project whose mission is to honor and celebrate one another's lives through listening. Since 2003, tens of thousands of everyday people have interviewed family and friends through StoryCorps. Each conversation is recorded on a free CD to take home and is archived for generations to come at the Library of Congress. Learn how to book a StoryCorps appointment at a mobile booth near you and listen to sample interviews online.

14. TapeScribe (\$)

www.oralhistory.uconn.edu/tapescribe.html

If you have taped interviews and are unable to transcribe them

yourself, you can hire their staff to produce transcripts from audio tapes, CDs, video tapes and digital audio/video in the format you choose, for a fee.

15. VoiceQuilt (\$)

www.voicequilt.com

With VoiceQuilt, you gather audio memories together to create a collage of voices into a special keepsake that can be played back and remembered long after an event is over. The cost depends on what keepsake you choose and on the number of days you purchase to invite friends and family to call in an unlimited number of toasts, tributes and greetings. CDs start at \$16.95 USD or an heirloom quality keepsake box (\$59 USD and up), and e-mail or download it (as an MP3) for free. You can try before you buy by signing up for one day of unlimited toll-free voice messages for free. The site has an idea center and you can listen to samples.

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