

WOOD COUNTY ROOTS



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CHAIRMAN'S CORNER

Greetings Everyone!

I hope everyone's 2024 is getting off to a great start! We sure can't complain about the winter we've had so far... most of us are just waiting for the other shoe to drop in the form of a great snowfall! But with temps hitting 54+ degrees next week and with Belt's Ice Cream opening in Point soon, I'm thinking the great weather will continue.

Now it's time to buckle down and get ready for road trips this summer. Have you got your "to-do" list up to date? Many of the genealogy programs will keep track of a list for you as to what you should be researching next. Check it out and get busy.

Remember to sign up for Gene-A-Rama, especially if you're looking into publishing your family history. They have quite a line-up of top-notch speakers for us cover-

ing that topic. We should all check out the publishing possibilities. During the past winter, I have looked at a few family histories that friends' families have published. I'm gathering quite a few ideas along the lines of how I want to do mine. Perhaps it's time to check out what the new AI features that are becoming more and more available can do; maybe we can all find some help writing our stories. That should be our main goal in gathering all this family history and the stories of our ancestor's lives—getting the information out in a format that's easy for our families! There is so much more to our family history than just family group sheets.

So it's time to get to work! Hope to see you all at Gene-A-Rama!

Happy Hunting!

Bev Peaslee, Chair



OFFICERS

Officers were voted in at the end of last year to take us on into the new year. Please help the officers out in any way that you can. Our society is only as strong as its members.

Chairman:

Bev Peaslee

Vice Chairman:

Wayne Peters

Secretary:

Sue Miller &
Myra Sweet

Treasurer:

Tina Krummel

Trustee:

Betty Pearson

Dues!

It's that time of year again—your annual dues are payable now. Our membership year runs from **August 1 through July 31.**

Check your newsletter label. The line above your name has the expiration date of your membership. There is a membership form on page 1357 of this newsletter. Please check with Tina, our treasurer, on the status of your membership.

6 Tips for Writing Your Life Story

By Sharon DeBartolo Carmack

I was born on August 19, 1933 ...” Yawn. Mind wanders. Go to kitchen and look for something to eat. Sit back down at computer. “...my mother’s name was Rose Norton; my father was Paul Franklin ...” Squirm in seat. Memories of having to write about summer vacations in grade school come flooding back. Check e-mail. Return to word processor. “My earliest childhood memory is ...” Suddenly realize that it will take forever to record the past 66 years. And who would want to read it, anyway? Shut down computer. Turn on TV. Get more snacks.

Ever have this problem? Me, too. And I have only 42 years to write about. But I bet my 16-year-old daughter would have the same problem. Why does writing your life story have to be so overwhelming?

Or does it? If more people realized there are other ways of getting their life story on paper, more would probably do it. And more of their descendants would be thrilled that they did. For example, how does this life-story opening grab you: My aunt used to tie me occasionally to the clothesline. We lived on a main street, and my aunt didn’t want me to go out into the street. The clothesline went the full length of the backyard. It ran from a window in the back of the house to a big tree, where the playhouse and swing were. My brother and sister were at school, so Aunt Emily used to tie me to the clothesline, and I could run around in the backyard. One day a dog came along and started chasing me. He thought I was playing because I was running back and forth. I hollered for my aunt, and she came out and got me. I was scared to be tied after that. Not only is this more fun to read, it’s also more fun to write. Writing the story of your life — or your parents’ or grandparents’ — doesn’t have to be a chore. It can be enjoyable, entertaining and cathartic for you and your readers.

Your life may not seem like anything anyone would want to read about. No doubt most of our ancestors felt the same way about their lives. But if they had written an autobiography or memoir, wouldn’t you be thrilled to be able to read it today? Remember, there is only one you who’ll ever walk this earth, and no one will ever be able to tell your life story better than you. People record their life events for many reasons, including:

- to leave a record for their descendants
- to re-live pleasant events of the past
- to resolve painful experiences
- to tell a story

Whatever your reasons, they are valid. Writing your life story is one of the most rewarding and important things you can do. And there will be someone who will be delighted you did. Remember what Clarence, the angel, said in *It’s a Wonderful Life*? “Strange, isn’t it, how a man’s life touches so many other lives? When he isn’t around, he leaves an awful hole, doesn’t he?” You have touched innumerable lives over the years, and those you have touched will want to read your story.

1. Autobiography vs. Memoir

Before you start putting memories down on paper, though, think about what type of life story you want to write. An “autobiography” covers your whole life; a “memoir” focuses on a few key themes and important years of your life.

In autobiography, you not only record your life story, but also add facts and explanations about historical topics that affected you. For example, you might write about the day John F. Kennedy was assassinated and what you were doing when you heard the news. First, you need to fact check and make sure you’ve got the right date. Then, to broaden the scope of the story, you would research newspaper articles to see how and why this event rocked an

6 Tips for Writing Your Life Story Continued

By Sharon DeBartolo Carmack

entire nation. Finally, you would tell how it affected you. A memoir focuses more tightly on a slice of your personal experiences. Suppose you're a baby boomer who, as a teen in the early 1970s, wore love beads and bell bottoms and protested the Vietnam War. Your memoir might cover just that decade in your life — the theme being coming of age in the '70s — and include not only your experiences, but examples of what being a "typical" teenager in the 1970s was like. As in fiction, characters in a memoir must grow and change, which usually springs from conflicts or problems. Discuss these as part of your story. Discuss decisions you have made and why. Include details that led to resolutions and decisions. Reflect on your past; don't just record it.

If you're not up to tackling a book-length autobiography or memoir, you could start writing your life story as a collection of short-story-length memoirs or essays — like that school paper you wrote on what you did on your summer vacation. Each essay should have an independent theme, focusing on one event or experience in your life. Your ultimate collection may have a common connecting thread, or each may represent a stand-alone experience.

To help prod your memory or to select themes and topics for essays, use guidebooks on oral history interviewing, taking one question at a time from the book to write about. A good book for this approach is William Fletcher's *Recording Your Family History*. Fletcher breaks down events in a person's life by age, with subtopics, such as "the first time you saw your spouse," followed by specific questions:

Do you remember the first time you ever saw your wife/husband — the very first time your eyes met?

Do you remember the first time you talked to each other?

Do you remember what you talked about?

Did you have any idea at that time how your relationship would develop?

What did you think of him/her at first?

Flip through such a list, find a topic that intrigues you, then write about it using the questions to get started. This collection of essays can be simply that: an assortment of short life stories you keep in a three-ring notebook. You can arrange them in chronological order or thematically. Or you can buy a blank journal book and record your essays there.

If you keep a diary you can include your stories as part of it. If you don't already keep a diary consider it as an alternative to writing essays, autobiography or a memoir. A diary or journal doesn't have to be a day-by-day account of your activities; your diary can be whatever you want it to be. Your descendants will be thrilled with whatever you choose to record.

2. What to Include, What to Leave Out

Even if you choose to write your life story as autobiography, that doesn't mean you have to account for every second of every day of your life. Not only is that overwhelming for you and the reader; it would be boring. This may be one reason to choose writing memoir over autobiography or to write your life story as a collection of essays: You can skip the more routine aspects of your life. On the other hand, you don't want to completely ignore your daily routines; this gives your readers and descendants a taste of your everyday life, which is also important and part of your story.

A tougher decision is how intimate to make your narrative — what private things to put in, what to leave out. This, of course, is up to you and how comfortable you feel with exposing personal matters. (Personally, I'd include everything, no matter how intimate — but I wouldn't want it published until long after my death!)

When you're trying to decide, think about your likely audience. Of course, it will probably be family members, but it may also include others reading your story as an example of how to write their own narrative, future generations and even social historians studying daily life. While you can't satisfy all your readers, keep in mind that your life story will be a contribution to history one day. It is through the surviving memoirs, letters and diaries of people of the past that we know today how they dressed, thought and behaved.

Another aspect of writing your life story is the inclusion of friends and family. None of us lives on a desert island. We come in contact with people daily many of whom are close to us and affect our lives. Your life story would be incomplete and inaccurate if you didn't mention and include them. Though you can write about your life in as much detail as you want, writing about someone else's as part of your story may infringe on that person's privacy. It is always best to run the sections by the people about whom you've written and get their permission, preferable in writing.

"Open your story with one of the happiest, most memorable, unusual or exciting events in your life."

A version of this article appeared in the January 2000 issue of *Family Tree Magazine*.

This article will be continued in the June Newsletter.

NGS Recommends... Eighteen Important Free Websites for Genealogy Research

1. **[FamilySearch](https://www.familysearch.org/en/united-states/)**: A completely free genealogy database website. You can use an Advanced Search tool by surname, record type, and/or place to access millions of records. The FamilySearch Wiki is a “go to” resource to find what exists for a wide range of family history topics, even beyond FamilySearch’s extensive databases.
<https://www.familysearch.org/en/united-states/>
2. **[U.S. Census Bureau](https://www.census-online.com/)** : Discover explanations on all federal census years and access copies of [original forms and questions](#). Also see [Census Online](#) for links to state censuses; tools for research; and calculators to convert year of birth.
<https://www.census-online.com/>
3. **[National Archives and Records Administration \(NARA\)](https://www.loc.gov/)** Maintained by the U.S. Federal government, NARA houses millions of microfilmed, printed, and manuscript records. Excellent for census records; governmental and military history records; military pension files; product patents; also passenger lists, early naturalization records, and much more. <https://www.loc.gov/>
4. **[Library of Congress \(LOC\)](#)** One of the largest collections in the world of printed and recorded materials; outstanding source for free images; resource for all copyrighted materials in America and beyond. LOC maintains collections of nearly all city directories and county histories in the U.S.; houses a comprehensive directory of all known copyrighted newspapers by timeframe and where they can be located today, in the important U.S. Newspaper Directory and Chronicling America; and offers comprehensive historical materials of all kinds.
5. **[New York Public Library \(NYPL\)](#)** Among the elite tier of library collections, second only to LOC in the size and scope of its historical and genealogical collections. The NYPL Map Division has one of the best collections in the U.S.; the Milstein Division has extensive local history and genealogical materials related to the all fifty states, including one of the largest American collections of city directories on microfilm; other notable divisions are the Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture, Dorot Jewish Division, Manuscripts and Archives, Performing Arts Division, and the Science, Industry, and Business Library. Plus many accessible online digital collections and image galleries; and use of IntraLibrary Loan through ILL and your local library card.
<https://www.nypl.org/>
6. **[USGenWeb Project](https://www.usgenweb.org/)** Free county/state historical and genealogical resources; research resources and content projects driven by volunteers of local and state genealogical societies throughout the United States. Also see [WorldGenWeb Project](#) for records beyond the U.S.
<https://www.usgenweb.org/>
7. **[Research Guides for Ship Passenger and Immigration Records](https://www.researchguides.net/immigration/index.htm)** Focuses on providing guidance and links to records for passenger lists from about 1820 to the early 1950s. It includes suggestions for finding records for ports of arrival and immigration records.
<https://www.researchguides.net/immigration/index.htm>
8. **[Allen County Public Library, Fort Wayne, Indiana](http://www.genealogy.acpl.lib.in.us/)** Special collections include African American and a Native American Gateway; military records; and a surname database contributed by researchers. One of the largest genealogical library collections in the U.S. <https://www.genealogy.acpl.lib.in.us/>

NGS Recommends... Continued

9. **[Freedman's Bureau](#)** A Federal agency of the United States Department of War to help slaves who were set free after the Civil War and also poor whites with provisions, clothing, and fuel. It also helped with immediate and temporary shelter and supplied food and aid to the destitute and suffering.
<https://nmaahc.si.edu/explore/initiatives/freedmens-bureau-records>
10. **[Access Genealogy](#)** Access hundreds of links to genealogical data by state or by topic. Very helpful and handy website.
<https://accessgenealogy.com/>
11. **[JewishGen](#)** An easy-to-use website with many record groups and good surname search facilities. Daitch-Mokotoff phonetic search algorithms for eastern European and Jewish name searches. Some databases require payment.
<https://www.jewishgen.org/>
12. **[BillionGraves](#)** Search their free database by people or by cemetery. Many entries have photos of gravesites. Free app helps to direct you to the GPS location in a cemetery, which is a great help as many cemeteries are poorly marked. <https://billiongraves.com/search/>
13. **[Find A Grave](#)** They call themselves the world's largest gravesite collection with more than 170 million memorials. Search for free. Many photos and text has been added to gravesite information. <https://www.findagrave.com/>
14. **[Legacy.com](#)** The global leader in online obituaries, partners with more than 1,500 newspapers and 3,500 funeral homes across the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand, the United Kingdom, and Europe. Consumers can also express condolences, share direct support for families, and celebrate the people who have touched their lives.
<https://www.legacy.com/us/obituaries/>
15. **[Afrigenas.org](#)** An excellent starting place for African American genealogy. It features a "Beginners Guide" video; details on best sites for African American records, resources, and research; good direction on finding slave data, vital records, history of slavery; plus a website search function, forums and chats.
<https://afrigenas.org/>
16. **[Rootsweb](#)** One of the first genealogical resources on the internet; it still offers excellent help with mailing lists; Ancestry Wiki; obituaries; connect to USGenWeb; Family Trees; queries; and more.
<https://home.rootsweb.com/>
17. **[Cyndi's List](#)** Offers links organized by topics/categories. A cross-referenced index contains extensive lists of online genealogy resources. Don't know where to look for specific records? Check Cyndi's up-to-date list of suggested sources.
<https://www.cyndislist.com/>
18. **[Society of American Archivists](#)** Laura Schmidt in "[Using Archives: A Guide to Effective Research](#)" provides an excellent tutorial on archives: what are archives, the types, requesting materials, visiting and guidelines, copyright, and more. <https://www2.archivists.org/usingarchives>

My Family



Lutheran Confirmation Class of 1911 Wood River

We received this email:

Sonia Worobec

(soniakirsten@shaw.ca)

Hello

I am interested in finding the names of the people in this photo of a 1911 Lutheran confirmation class in Wood River, Wisconsin. In particular, the young man who is third from the left. I suspect he is my great Uncle Edwin W.B. Johnson or some other relative. Please let me know if this is something that the HOWG Society can help me with, or if not, could direct me to another source. Also, I understand there is a fee for searching. Please let me know the cost of such a search.



Thanks.
Regards,

Sonia Worobec

Beaumont, Alberta Canada

MEMBERSHIP FORM

**DETACH AND MAIL WITH A CHECK FOR \$15 PAYABLE TO:
HEART O' WISCONSIN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
P.O. Box 1565
WISCONSIN RAPIDS WI 54495-1565**

Name: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Phone: (____) _____ E-mail: _____

New members only: You may have **one** free surname search if you reside outside of Wood County, WI (a \$10 value).

Surname you would like researched: _____

The membership list is published once per year in the December newsletter. We ask that you give permission for us to publish your address, telephone number, and e-mail address by responding to the following questions. **(Please clearly circle your answer; if no response is given, we will automatically publish):** I wish to have the following published in the December newsletter: my address? **Yes No**; my phone number? **Yes No**; my e-mail address? **Yes No**

Members may submit one free query per year, which will be published in the Society's newsletter in order to contact others researching the same ancestors. It should be 50 words or less, not counting the name and address of the submitter. Members and non-members may submit additional queries at the rate of 10 cents per word.

Please enclose a self-addressed, stamped envelope if you want a membership card mailed to you. Thanks.

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

- March 16th 2024** *Dog Tags: They're Someone's History*
- April 10th, 2024** Norwegian Heritage Center in Stoughton , Bus Trip
Lamers Motor Coach, 715-421-0123 X 10218 for reservations. Cost \$105 for bus, tour director, Stoughton guide, lunch Contact Bev Peaslee for more information by March 10th 2024
- April 12-13th,** WSGS Gene-A-Rama Oshkosh Waterfront Hotel & Convention Center
- April 20th, 2024** Ho-Chunk Nation & Genealogy
- May 18th, 2024** Neighbors Past & Present: The Wisc German Experience –Antje Petty
- June 15th, 2024** Cemetery Walk Babcock Cemeteries, Town of Remington, Mount Cemetery and St Joachim's

Watch for Wayne's email about this meeting

Starting August of 2024, the newsletter will have some changes. We will be raising our dues from \$15 to \$20, with a digital Newsletter. If you wish a mailed copy of the newsletter it would be an additional \$8.00 per year. We will need to have your email address so we can send the newsletter directly to you.

***Meetings: The third Saturday of the month from August through June (skipping January). At 9:30 a.m. At McMillan Memorial Library
We are in need of encouraging new members and activity from members who are in the Wisconsin Rapids Area.***

We would like your input. You can email, or mail our President.

Email: info@howgs.org

***U.S Mail : Heart O' Wisconsin Genealogical Society
P.O. Box 1565
Wisconsin Rapids, Wisconsin 54495-1565***

Look for us on Facebook.com

Heart O' Wisconsin Genealogical Society.

It is a now an open group so please check it out.

Heart O' Wisconsin Genealogical Society

Chairman	Bev Peaslee
Vice Chairman	Wayne Peters
Secretary	Sue Miller & Myra Sweet
Treasurer	Tina Krummel
Trustees 3 years	Betty Pearson
2 years	Kathy Bruner
1 year	Flores Gumz

COMMITTEE CHAIRS:

Book Purchases	Flores Gumz
Hospitality	Joyce Keehn
Indexing	Mary Peters
Library Files	Arlene Keehn
New Members	Joyce Keehn
Newsletter	Tina Krummel
Sunshine	Sue Miller
Website	Di Neinfeldt
Tech Data Admin	Ben Chitek

Wood County Roots Editor:

Tina Krummel
2520 Ranger Rd
Wisc Rapids, WI 54494
Phone: 715-325-5840
E-mail: krummtin@gmail.com

HEART O' WISCONSIN GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

PURPOSE OF SOCIETY: To assist members and others in genealogical research and to preserve local records.

DUES: \$15 per household—one newsletter per address. Please list names of all persons joining. Due at or before 31 July. **Membership year runs from 01 August through 31 July.**

MEETINGS: Held monthly—August through June—on the Third Saturday of the month at 9:30 a.m. at the McMillan Memorial Library, 490 East Grand Avenue, Wisconsin Rapids, WI (right across the street from the Hotel Mead & Convention Center).

Wood County Roots Editor:

Tina Krummel Phone: 715-325-5840 E-mail: krummtin@gmail.com

Visit us on the web at www.howgs.org!!!