

Preservation Generation: If Not You, Then Who?

10 Simple Ways to Preserve Your Heritage

Amanda Terry and Jana Rasmussen, Managers

FamilySearch International
Amanda.Terry@familysearch.org
Jana.Rasmussen@familysearch.org

Introduction

- Start with small projects: Family history doesn't have to be a BIG book of ALL the family.
 - Documenting one story, one activity or vacation, or focus on one person (descendent or ancestor) and maybe one individual life event for that person.
- Make time regularly: Make an appointment with yourself and KEEP it. Consider:
 - Sunday afternoons, weekly: Document the past week's happenings.
 - First or last day of each month: What do you want to record from the month's activities?
 - January 1st: Spend time writing about or simply making a list of the past year's highlights.
 - Add your appointment to your calendar (if using a digital calendar, set a reminder to help you create this important new habit).
- Connect the generations through regular phone calls or messages, asking questions of your family members about what they remember for specific events or occasions.
- In essence, do what you are already doing! Just find ways to preserve it!

1. Create a System for Preservation

- Why should you preserve your family history? You and your family history deserve to be remembered. Everyone's story deserves to be remembered. Choose to be part of consistently creating and preserving lasting memories for your family now and future generations to come. Build habits of remembering and sharing your family's history so you and others will not forget important stories and events that are sure to fade with time.
- Get organized with the Family Connections Experiment: Preservation Station Plan.
 - Website: <https://connections-experiment.com/preservation-station/>
 - PDF: <https://connections-experiment.com/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/PLAN-CHECKLISTS-2021.pdf>
 - Other fun ideas from the website:
 - Random connection idea generator: <https://connections-experiment.com/ideas/>
 - 5-minute Interview: <https://connections-experiment.com/speed-interviews/>

2. Photo Preservation

- Physical
 - Divide photos among adult children and ask them to sort the photos in their group into piles for each family member.
 - Photos of one family member go in their pile.
 - Photos of all the family, especially where there are often multiples, divide between the various family members.
 - If there is only one copy, digitize and print for all.
 - Add photos to frames and trade them out as desired. To make it easier, you can add several photos to the same frames and rotate.
 - Example: Honor ancestors and family members with birthdays during specific months by prominently displaying their photos.
 - Make a topic of event memory book.
 - Add to Archival Photo Albums. See: <https://www.artnews.com/art-news/product-recommendations/best-archival-photo-albums-1234602608/>
 - Use small labels on the album sleeve to document year or location or people included in the photo, where possible.
- Digital [Jana]
 - Upload to FamilySearch Memories (<https://www.familysearch.org/memories/>) for yourself and other family members.
 - Be sure to review the Content Submission Agreement before uploading memories. <https://www.familysearch.org/legal/familysearch-content-submission-agreement>
 - You should have your living relative's permission before you upload images of them on FamilySearch.org.
 - When family members pass on, the individual identification numbers (Ex: [LH23-P4R](#)) for that person can be merged, which will bring all preserved photos or documents into the same repository.
 - A newly developed FamilySearch.org experience, Family Group Trees, allows you to share photos and memories with living relatives within a Family Group.
 - See in-person session (not broadcast or recorded) about this new feature on FamilySearch.org (<https://www.familysearch.org/en/rootstech/session/introducing-family-group-trees-to-familysearch-org>)
 - Online Photo Repositories:
 - Examples: Dropbox, Google Photos, Amazon Photos, Apple iCloud, Microsoft OneDrive, Flickr, SmugMug, Photobucket.
 - With many, you can share photos with other family members so they can download images as well as create and print memory books.
 - Create albums on smartphones.
 - Many smartphones will automatically create memories from your photos. You can customize with music, add or remove photos, and edit titles before finalizing.
 - Download and save the memory, then upload to FamilySearch.org, Dropbox, Google Photos, or digitally share the memory with family members.

3. Using Social Media as a Preservation Tool

- Use posts as a journal to document "What happened today..."
 - Set privacy to "Just Me" or "Friends", depending on who you want to share this information with.
 - You can also use "Friends except..." Or "Specific Friends" to have custom audience for sharing your journal.
- Organize uploaded photos into digital folders or albums with themes or common groupings.
- Caption uploaded photos to explain what is happening. Include the date, time, other people included in the photo, and a brief description of what was happening.
- Popular apps like 1 Second Everyday allow you to choose a photo or video to represent each day of the month. This brief "every day" look at your life over the course of 1 month can then be uploaded to social media, saved and uploaded to FamilySearch.org, or shared with family and friends: <http://www.1se.co>
- Download your Facebook history: <https://www.facebook.com/help/212802592074644>
 - Check with your favorite social media app to see if there is a way to download or retain your activity and history.

4. Create Photo Books

- Taking Online to Offline
 - My Social Book (www.mysocialbook.com) can be connected to your Facebook, Instagram or Google Photos.
 - Create 20-page to 450-page photo books.
 - Pulls photos from Facebook, Instagram, or Google Photos
 - Chatbooks (www.chatbooks.com)
 - Quickly and easily compiles photos from your social media account or photo repository into books that are easy to view and fun to look at.
 - See Brooke Romney's blog post on using Chatbooks to document family history for additional ideas: <https://brookeromney.com/how-i-use-chatbooks-to-record-our-real-history/>
 - Example: Use two accounts – one for your normal posts and one to document your history in photos and pull into Chatbooks
 - Make it a group collab: <https://chatbooks.com/blog/family-photo-albums-its-a-group-effort>
 - Create a book of old family photos: <https://chatbooks.com/blog/how-to-create-photo-books-from-old-family-photos>
 - Use a collage maker app to create collages of photos that are then saved and uploaded to your page. Then you can upload just one image containing multiple photos.
- Can create your own memory books.
 - They don't have to be elaborate or tell all the details. Sometimes a picture really does tell 1,000 words!
 - Walmart (<https://photos3.walmart.com/about/photo-books#>)
 - Walgreens (<https://photo.walgreens.com/store/photo-books>)
 - Shutterfly (<https://www.shutterfly.com/photo-books/>)
 - YPhoto (<https://youngevity.com/yphoto>)

5. Online Storytelling (Audio Preservation)

- Storyworth: <https://welcome.storyworth.com/>
 - Work on one story or question a week. If you don't like the question, you can change it to something you want to preserve.
- Use photos to trigger memories. Tell the story of the photos while audio-recording, then add the photos to an album with a transcription or digital file of the stories.
- Consider working with multiple family members to distribute the work and gain additional memories, especially for a family book.
- Post on FS or other family history website or otherwise share the stories with your family members: <https://www.familysearch.org/en/help/helpcenter/article/how-do-i-upload-audio-files>
 - Be sure to read and understand the Content Submission Agreement when uploading memories. You should have living relatives permissions before you upload images of them on FamilySearch.org. See: <https://www.familysearch.org/legal/familysearch-content-submission-agreement>
- Some local FamilySearch Centers may have tools available like these at the Lehi, Utah FamilySearch Center for preserving audio files: https://www.familysearch.org/en/wiki/Lehi_Utah_FamilySearch_Center/Audio_video?

6. Family Recipe Book

- Collect and compile recipes that your family remembers eating while growing up.
- Include photos of your family members with, around, or eating food.
- Include short snippets or stories of a family member who remembered that meal or why they love that recipe.
- Scan images of handwritten recipes from parents or grandparents to preserve handwriting.

7. Short Stories

- Write short one-page memories or stories about your family members. You may have been told a story about an ancestor, or your parent, or had an experience with a cousin or other family member. Document those and/or collect them from other family members.
- Did your family member learn a valuable lesson from an experience? Share a "Moral of the Story" thought at the beginning or end of the story to succinctly document this lesson learned.
- Write one short story each month and by December, you'll have 12 stories that you can gift to family members. What a precious gift!
- Don't worry about being fancy. Use a simple binder or digital folder and add new stories each year.
- Include photo(s) of the family member or the activity, or one that is representative, where possible.
- Writing Prompts:
 - <https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/journal-prompts-ideas>
 - <https://www.familyhistorywritingstudio.com/writing-prompts/>

- <https://familytreemagazine.com/storytelling/writing/family-history-writing-prompts/>

8. Keeping a Journal

- Yes, there's the typical daily or weekly diary or journal writing, but think outside-the-box and consider:
 - One-sentence journals
 - Special event journals
 - Photo or art journals (Draw something memorable about your day and add a caption.)
 - Gratitude journals
 - Audio journals: <https://www.familysearch.org/photos/gallery> (Add audio to written stories or record a memory.)
 - Apps (online): <https://zapier.com/blog/best-journaling-apps/>
 - Project Life: <https://www.beckyhiggins.com/project-life>
 - Annual Writing Prompts:
 - <https://theblissfulmind.com/end-of-year-journal-prompts/>
 - <https://brilliantio.com/end-of-the-year-journal-prompts/>
 - <https://www.familysearch.org/en/blog/52-questions-in-52-weeks-writing-your-life-story-has-never-been-easier>

9. Sensory Stories

- There is a connection between nose and our brain that brings back long-stored memories that are sometimes difficult to access as adults, like those from when we were very young children.
- Memories that come from scents create a more emotional tale and are often associated with more positive memories overall; people are transported back to the original time and place in their memories, compared to when they try to recall the same event/time period with other senses (like seeing a photo or hearing a story about it).
- Be cautious, however, as scent can also bring about more intense, negative memories.
 - Rachel S. Herz, *The Role of Odor-Evoked Memory in Psychological and Physiological Health* (<https://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pmc/articles/PMC5039451/>)
- Sensory Story Activity:
 - Gather a variety of scents (Examples: cinnamon, pickling spices, mint, coffee beans, wintergreen scented lotions or creams, vanilla extract, fresh cut grass, old books, perfumes or flowers).
 - With your eyes closed, smell each scent, then:
 - Jot down a line or two about a memory associated with that scent to quickly capture the memory. Smell as much or as long as you need to and capture threads of one or more memories.
 - Or verbally describe the scene the odor brings to mind while audio recording. Later, this can be transcribed.

10. Family Photo Calendar

- Use photos of family members from the past year to populate the calendar.
- Add birthdays, anniversaries and other special dates, if possible.
- Document your Year.
 - Write your commitments, activities, and gatherings right on the calendar.
- File it away for future preservation or digitally scan your calendar year.
- Places to help you make your calendar: Walmart.com, Walgreen.com, Shutterfly.com, YPhoto.

11. BONUS! Stories in a Jar

- Keep a stack of paper or index cards with a pen near a jar. Decorate, if you want.
- When something happens that you want to remember, spend a few moments writing down a few details about the event – date, time, place, who was there and a brief description of what happened. Drop the card into the jar.
- At the end of the year, you can review the cards and put them in a book, as is, or use them to write more fully about specific events that you want to record for posterity.