

Recording Your Family History

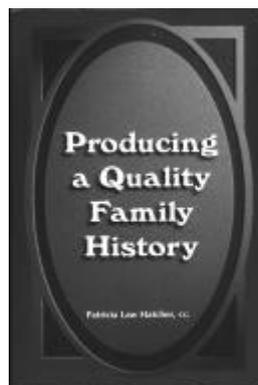
The many phases of genealogy:

1. Gathering information
2. Recording
3. Organizing
4. Documenting
5. Publishing

Many people say they are just gathering and recording information for their immediate family. That is fine, but it still needs to be documented for accuracy. The final chapter for any genealogist is to publish your information

Have you ever been into someone's home and been handed a photo album? Unless it contains a lot of writing to identify the people, places and events, it is meaningless . . . like looking at pictures of a bunch of strangers. If what you leave your descendants is only names, dates and places, it

will be just a bunch of strange names. In both cases you need to bring the people to life. These are real people. They lived interesting lives in interesting times. Their lives and times were completely different from today's culture. The times have changed so dramatically that we need to record how it was then. We also need to record how it is now as this will be your descendant's yesterdays.



In time, all genealogist become historians. Our inquiring minds demand to know how it was in the old country. How did they live? What was the economy? Why did they leave? What were the conditions like when they arrived in this country?

Those of us who have been fortunate enough to find an old homestead where our ancestors lived in over a century ago know the feeling. You feel like you are walking on haloed ground. This is where they walked. This is what they saw. They listened to the same stream that ran behind the house. These ancestors now have become alive to us. Can you do the same for future generations? Pictures of the people, houses, and barns and addresses. help, but the text you write will really bring them to life.

We did find out how to surf the internet for genealogy

Karen Opp did an outstanding job of presenting the many avenues of research that can be found on the familysearch.org, along with ancestry.com, kindred.konnections.com, and [Dear Myrtle](http://DearMyrtle.com). I could not help but feel that the members not in attendance were missing a valuable "How To" lesson.

There must be a number of genealogist in our area who would like to gain the knowledge shared in our meetings. If you know any of them, please invite and encourage them to join us..

Genealogists Are from Mars, Family Historians Are from Venus

The task of writing a family history account is very similar to the task of writing a biography or autobiography. Events from a given time period often played a very important role in shaping the destiny of a family. Major events like the Civil War and the Revolutionary War touched the lives of every family in the United States. Moves to a new location, often inspired by religious persecution or economic pressures were major events for families. My great-grandfather left Pennsylvania during the 1850s with eleven other families (all related to each other) and took flatboats down the Ohio river and then went by boat up the Mississippi to Davenport where they then went by train to Benton county, Iowa. Such a trip required a major family By Allin Kingsbury

When I am dead, I hope it may be said, "His sins were as scarlet but his books were read."
Hilaire Belloc

There is a difference among genealogists as fundamental as the difference between men and women. As strictly defined, the genealogist is focused on finding the facts which identify an individual and link the individual as a part of a family. The family historian wants to develop a story of a family and, as in a good history, tell what happened, why it happened, and how it influenced people living then and in later generations. The genealogist and family historian are writing about the same individuals and the same families, but it is as though they speak a different language. The results are as different as the mythical characters, Mars and Venus. Mars wants to conquer the task, and Venus wants to make the task elegant and beautiful to know feelings as well as facts.

One must look hard to finding a book more boring than a family history which has been converted from a GEDCOM file which contained no notes. It rivals a reading of the white

pages of the telephone directory. Each of the characters has a detailed description listing where he or she was born, married and where he or she died. And for many of the individuals, there is even less to say because the information is not available.

Too often, a family history lacks three essential elements of a good book: character development, plot and setting. These elements are key factors in the success of a novel and also of many non-fiction works such as biographies, histories, autobiographies. The techniques for creation of these elements can be used to make a family history interesting and readable. The suggestions offered here are not intended as a rigorous list to exhaust the subject. The examples may spark some ideas that will help with the development of character, plot and setting in your family history. To be effective, these techniques must be balanced with a body of factual information about the family members. To include too little fact and too much embellishment makes historical fiction. However, most family histories tend to reside at the other extreme with little more than a compilation of dates, places, and relationships. Here, character, plot, and setting can help in a big way.

Character Development

The reader must feel that he knows the principal characters in a novel before he becomes interested in the outcome of the plot. This is often accomplished by describing the likes and dislikes of the character(his or her tastes such as those in clothes, cars, hobbies, etc., and his or her feelings about the events and setting of the story. Without these insights, the character does not appear to be a real person. They all add up to a knowledge about the individual which helps the reader identify with the story.

An ancestor who died a century ago is not an easy candidate for character development. The individual cannot answer questions or supply information other than that which is available in old documents or in the memories of others. The available information sources include public sources such as court records, vital statistics, local and county histories and also private written material such as diaries, letters, journals and other papers. For those who died during the past century, there may be individuals still alive who knew them or remember stories told about them. An interview with an elderly aunt who knew her grandfather, for example, could reveal a lot about his character and interesting things that he did.

Occupation is one of the most important attributes for character development. Others are military service public office, membership in fraternal organizations, business ventures and investments. They may be revealed in the course of research. Women have fewer of these attributes mentioned in the records. Occasionally if the woman was widowed there is an occupation listed for her. Often there is a piano or other musical instrument played by the mother of the family. There may be an old quilt or hooked rug among the family heirlooms listed in the inventory of the estate.

Stories are a rich source of character development and sometimes a means of development of plot. For example, my grandfather lived on a farm in Iowa. When he was about 18 years of age he

Gene Sidwell made us aware of this excellent article.

This is a Reprint of an article published in the March issue of the PAFinder, a publication of the Silicon Valley PAF Users Group. The article does have copyright protection. Permission to reprint was granted by the author, Allin Kingsbury

wanted to earn some money, so he took his bicycle and rode across Iowa and South Dakota working where help was needed on the harvest. He saved money, but the hours spent riding the bicycle reduced his enjoyment of bicycling considerably. In the years following, he found work closer to home.

Some stories add mystery to a family history. My great grandfather had a lumber business in Texas in the 1920s. He was successful and well respected in his community. One day he left on a business trip to Houston and disappeared. No body was ever found and no clues surfaced to solve the mystery.

Some of the oral traditions passed down by family members are delightful. My great-great-grandmother who was born and married in England spoke with an accent. When asked if she was English, she would indignantly reply, "No, I am Cornish." This short quotation says a lot about her character.

Heirlooms often tell a story. My wife's grandfather was said to be in the California gold rush. There was a ring made with some of the gold that he found. He was obviously too young for the 1849 gold rush, but a site on the Internet lists participants in the gold rush in the Yukon and her grandfather, William Allen is listed among the participants along with several others from his home town in New Brunswick. Stories have a way of growing and changing. They should be checked to avoid creation or propagation of historical fiction.

Plot Development

Family history does not have a plot like a novel. However, for each family there is a series of events that shape the destiny of that family. Presented in sequence and as seen by the family members, these events provide continuity from generation to generation and give the reader the feeling of a plot to follow. The combination of large family and homestead laws made such a move attractive. Two married daughters remained in Pennsylvania and were separated from their brothers and sisters. It must have been disappointing for the parents to not have these daughters move with them.

Another great-grandfather moved to Kansas. He was prosperous in the farming business, but the deaths of three of his children by fire and diphtheria within a short span of time left the parents unhappy about the physical separation from their brothers and sisters and caused them to sell their farm in Kansas and return to Iowa. Here the sequence of events gives the reader a clear picture of the feelings of my great-grandparents and adds to the understanding of the history of this family.

Not all decisions turn out well: mistakes are made; tragedy strikes; family conflicts occur. Key decisions by a family are both important in a historical sense and interesting to the reader. All of these events are part of the story. How the family copes with these events and solves its problems are the building blocks of a good family history.

Developing the Setting

The setting for a family history consists of the geography and the culture that surround the family. The nearby towns and homes are where family members did their business, attended church, enlisted in the army, attended school, and went to quilting bees and dances. If there are no letters and/or journals to describe the setting, there may be local histories which describe the setting. If your family were pioneers, the names and dates of the arrival for the first settlers in the area are important. The coming of the railroad was an important event for farmers nearby. Also, for a farmer, the arrival of the first steel plow or the first horse-drawn reaper was an event of considerable interest whether or not he owned one at the time.

If an aunt happened to be born the year photographic film was invented and died the year television was patented, these events may be worth mentioning to provide an historical perspective for her lifespan. Obviously she had nothing to do with making the two events happen, but the invention of photography did make pictures of her possible so they could be left for her posterity.

Where we have no journals or letters written by an ancestor, local historical societies may have letters or journals of contemporary individuals. Local histories may have old pictures taken during the lifetime of an ancestor. All such sources add to information about the setting of our family history. Facts about the setting can be collected, ranked in order of importance, and woven into the history. The setting adds color to the picture. The older generation may not consider details about the time setting as significant, because they can remember their childhood under similar conditions. Details such as a one-room school, a horse and buggy, or a car with a running board may seem commonplace to an old-timer. A child today

would have difficulty imagining these things. The details are important for the younger generations who cannot imagine a life before television, or cars with running boards, or doctors who made house calls, or neighbors who came for a barn raising. Things we take for granted now will fascinate someone born 25 or 50 years from now.

Descriptions of the setting can include many things which we may overlook. Some universities have collections of books, sheet music, old photographs, paintings, or magazines from the time of our great-grandparents' childhood. Some of these are available as scanned images which can be downloaded from Internet sites. Such things can add interest as illustrations, if not overdone. Advertisements for home remedies from magazines, popular song covers, pictures of "Tom Swift" novel covers, facsimiles from McGuffey readers, are examples.

Even a recent photograph of a place will do quite well. Some of the small villages in England look almost the same as they did a hundred years. The old stone church with the slate roof and the older homes have changed little. My great uncle took a picture in the village of Holsworthy in Devonshire in 1908. A picture taken of the same scene by my cousin about ten years ago looked almost the same. The only noticeable differences were that the road was paved and that there was a TV antenna on the roof of the house. Eighty years had made little noticeable change.

Creating an Honest History

You can bring your family history a touch of Venus and make it more interesting by developing character, plot, and setting. This should not be done to cover up a lack of factual information. We must be clear and honest in stating assumptions so that they are not confused with fact. Development of character, setting, and plot without factual detail creates historical fiction and makes a weak story seem long and tedious. When we have factual details, we can enhance the story with additional material to show a geographical and historical setting, to develop character of individuals, and to add plot to the history. Then we have a family history that is both informative and interesting to the reader.

This Month's Epitaph

Someone in Winslow, Maine
didn't like Mr. Wood:

In memory of Beza Wood
Departed this life
Nov. 2, 1837
Aged 45 yrs.

Here lies one Wood
Enclosed in wood

One Wood
Within another.

The outer wood
Is very good:

We cannot praise
The other.

This Month's Quote

Every man has
a right to his
opinion, but no
man has a right
to be wrong in
his facts.

Bernard M. Baruch



Many of the churches where our ancestors were baptized, married, or buried are still standing after many centuries. Including pictures will always add interest to your family history story.

Marvin's Tips



A. Should I leave the computer ON all the time or turn it off when I am not using it?

In the ancient history of computers (that is with XTs, 286 or 386 computers) it was highly recommended to leave the computers always ON. The hard drive on 286/386 computers were MFM, RLL, or ESDI. Today's computer have a much more sophisticated parts and EIDE/ultra-dma drives. Just like your television set it is okay to turn it on and off 10 times a day.

My rule-of-thumb is: if you are not going to use the computer for more than one hour, turn it off. Unless, of course, you have stocks with the Georgia Power Company..... then you should be preaching to the public to leave all home appliances on at all times.

Please remember that you have at least two fans inside your computer. If you leave it always ON, they will collect unwanted dust and decrease the life expectancy of your computer. A dirty computer will have higher tendency to over-heat and have more hard drive problems.

B. Be aware of highly sophisticated SCREEN SAVERS.

Remember the purpose of a screen saver. They are there to avoid screen burns and extend the life expectancy of your monitor, hard drive and cpu.

High graphic colors, sound and moving pictures defeat the purpose of the screen saver. They make the monitor, hard disk and cpu work the whole time. With the three monitor guns (red, blue and yellow) always working, you will decrease life expectancy for about 1+ year and loose the sharpness and

brightness of the monitor.

These fancy screen savers are only good for sales marketing and to impress your neighbors and friends.

The best screen saver is the plain blank screen.

C. My computer used to be much faster. Why is it Sooo Sloooow now?

We live in a highly cut-throat competitive marketing world. When you bought a new software and installed it in your computer, the engineers that designed the programs were told by the company to have the program dominate any other existing program....or in other words, have it running on the background.

When I install the programs I always do a CUSTOM installation instead of a default installation. I will never allow an programmer to decide what to load or where/how to put the program in my computer. First of all, he has never seen my system in his life.

Custom install the program so you have full control at all times. You will decide in which directory and in which hard drive or partition to put your program. What to install, what do you want running on the background etc.

If you do a CTRL + ALT + DEL one time, the computer will show all the programs that are running on the background. I only have about 4 programs running on my computers. Most of my clients have more that 12 programs. This have a tremendous slowing down effect on the computer.

Also excessive temp files and internet temp files have

a tendency to slow the system down. Clean it up often. At least monthly Scandisk and Defrag are a must to your computer. They are just as important to them as your daily sleep.

If you fell comfortable, you can also open the computer box and clean the power supply and internal fans. BEAWARE..... never never never vacuum a computer. The static will kill the computer in a big hurry. Get a static free clean can of air and blow the dust out. Be careful not to disconnect any of the internal cables. If you are not comfortable with this procedure, give us a call, we will be glad to help you.

Another thing that slows a system down is to have your anti-virus running on the background checking for ALL files. If you have Norton Anti-Virus 2000, the definition dated 5/19/2000, NAV will protect you against 47,286 viruses. An average person have about 9,000 files. Every time you click an icon or command, the computer will have to do a lot of work matching $47,286 \times 9000 = 425,474,000$ that is a lot of checking ! Knowing this it is surprising that the computer does it so fast.

D. Summer is almost here. Is your computer ready for the HEAT?

There is a program called CPU-Idle especially design to lower the CPU temperature on your computer. CPU-Idle works by disabling the CPU when is not in use. This prolongs the CPU life by decreasing the CPU temperature (~10'C lower); therefore, doubling the life span of the CPU. CPU-Idle also cuts power consumption.

Marvin can be reached at
Martech Computers
770-418-0101

PS. Don't call me to find out which 4 programs Marvin has running; let him answer that next month. Don

A Giant Tree has Died

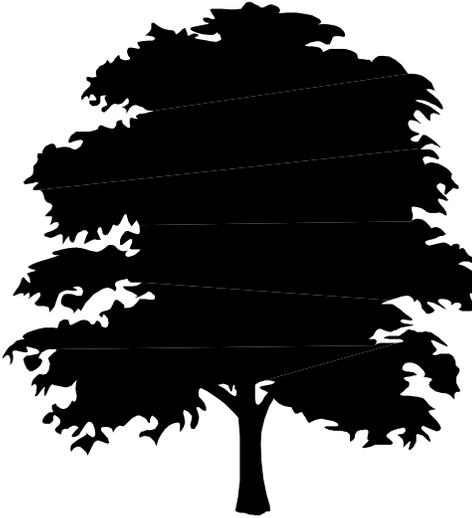
By now, most of you probably know that Ultimate Family Tree became a fatal casualty of the merger wars.

It is hard to believe that such an outstanding program could go the way of the Packard, Studebaker, and LaSalle automobiles.

Ten years ago there were three genealogy software programs. Family Tree maker by Banner Blue was a very primitive program that would only hold 500 individuals in one directory and sold for \$50.

Personal Ancestry File (PAF) by the Mormon Church was a better program and the most popular program at that time. It sold for \$35 and was not upgraded for years.

Roots 3 by Commssoft was the



Cadillac of genealogy Programs. It sold for \$160 + \$40 for GEDCOM and \$40 for revert. It was used by the pros and other advanced serious genealogist. Unfortunately, it was never user friendly. I waited for years

for an upgrade, thinking it would be simpler. Roots 4 was a disaster. If you wanted a manual, you could print out a 250 page manual. Some users went back to 3, others changed to new programs. Roots 5 repaired the damage, but for some, it was too late. New programs like Family Origins and Corel had simple screens which were really user friendly. By then, Palladium Interactive had purchased the program and upgraded with family Gathering and later with Ultimate Family Tree.

Mergers and acquisitions brought it and other genealogy programs to The Learning Channel and then to Mattel which was already in deep trouble.

A sad ending to a great program.

Bill Reece sent the following

Don - you probably already saw this, but I wanted to pass it on to you just in case, and you may want to send a note on it. UFT is dropped and TMG is offering a special deal to UFT users.

Several things to note:

1. UFT will be supported for some time, so there is no rush to do anything unless you want the deal.
2. TMG is coming out with Rel. 5.0 later in the year. I expect there will be a charge for it, although current users may get a slight discount. If current UFT users wish to wait to move, they can gamble that the charge for TMG 5.0 may be less than the charge for TMG 4.0 (discounted) plus the upgrade charge. No telling. Bill Reece

from the Eastman newsletter of last week (05/21/00):

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Ultimate Family Tree
Dropped

Rumors have been flowing for some time, but this week the official announcement was posted to the Ultimate Family Tree mailing list: the program is being dropped. Genealogy.com produces several genealogy programs and has now decided to no longer develop new versions of the Ultimate Family Tree (often called UFT). This is a bit sad since Ultimate Family Tree has always been considered to be one of the best genealogy programs in the marketplace. Apparently quality didn't equal financial success, however.

Genealogy.com announced

that they will not do any further development on the program although they will continue to provide support for the present version through next year.

In the announcement, Rob Armstrong, CEO of Genealogy.com wrote: After long and careful deliberation, we've come to the conclusion that it is no longer feasible for us to continue development of Ultimate Family Tree. Coming to the decision to stop the development of a program is never an easy thing to do. It is made more difficult when that program has a long history and devoted customers. However, in keeping with our mission to provide all family history enthusiasts with tools to search their family history, we are putting a greater emphasis on products and services that are accessible

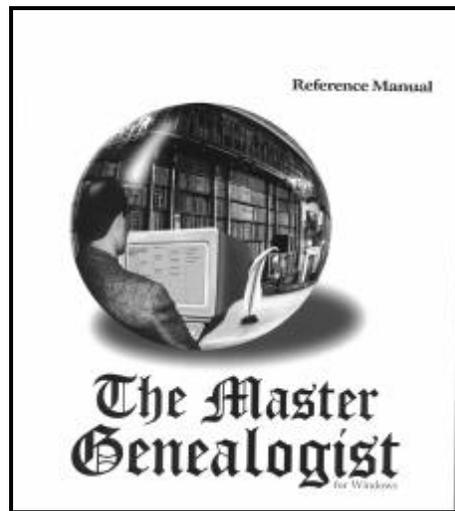
A sad ending to a great program

online. Concentrating our efforts on developing online genealogy tools allows all computer users access to an incredibly wide range of genealogy products and services.

In his announcement, Armstrong did offer one consolation: current Ultimate Family Tree customers can receive a free two-month subscription to the online Genealogy Library by going to:

<http://www.ultimatefamilytree.com/freeglc.html>

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- TMG Offer for Ultimate Family Tree Users

One of Ultimate Family Tree's primary competitors didn't waste much time after the announcement mentioned earlier: Wholly Genes Software is offering its flagship product, The Master Genealogist, to Ultimate Family Tree users at half price. Here is an excerpt from the announcement:

Today's notice by Genealogy.com of the discontinuation of Ultimate Family Tree(tm) marks the end of a long rivalry between it and The Master Genealogist (TMG) for the title of "the genealogy software to beat."

Ultimate Family Tree (UFT) is a long-respected product that traces its

own ancestry back to the earliest days of genealogical computing. Like TMG, UFT was designed to give researchers ultimate power and flexibility over their data.

Users of both programs are accustomed to tracking non-principal participants in events (e.g., witness, minister, midwife) and recording customized narratives, source templates, and many other kinds of advanced data types that are not supported by other products.

Now UFT users have the opportunity to preserve their data and transfer to TMG with a special limited-time upgrade offer of 50% off TMG's regular retail price.

This is a good choice as both programs are very powerful and also because The Master Genealogist does a great job of importing data from Ultimate Family Tree (as well as from earlier products called Roots 4, Roots 5, etc.). The Master Genealogist does not

use GEDCOM to import data, as GEDCOM is noted for dropping data. Instead, the data is directly imported from UFT's database into The Master Genealogist using GenBridge, a technology developed by Wholly Genes Software. GenBridge seems to import everything properly from the Ultimate Family Tree's database, including notes, sources and even the repository database. I do not think any other genealogy program can import UFT's data as well as The Master Genealogist does. Details on the importing of data, along with details about the special offer, are available at: <http://www.whollygenes.com>

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- The Master Genealogist 5.0 Announced

Speaking of The Master Genealogist, a new version will appear later this year. The following is an announcement from Wholly Genes Software:

Wholly Genes Software will take the opportunity of the National Genealogical Society conference in Providence, Rhode Island, May 31 - June 3, 2000 to release The Master Genealogist v4.0a. This free downloadable upgrade will include a number of features that have been requested by our users, including more explicit control over roles, user-defined place fields, source citations embedded in memos, multi-part citation details, short place names, and the ability to record comments and life-spans of places.

This update also includes special enhancements for users upgrading and transferring data from Ultimate Family Tree(tm), which has been recently discontinued by its manufacturer.

Attendees at the NGS conference may also stop by our booth for a demonstration of TMG v5.0, our 32-bit upgrade which is expected to be released later this year. TMG v5.0 will include all of the popular features of prior versions plus the ability to work with multiple datasets at the same time, user-defined screen layouts, multi-user and network compatibility, as well as greatly expanded support for multi-media, bookmarks, accents, and flags, among many other exciting enhancements. Its modern interface includes support for right-click menus, drag-and-drop, dockable toolbars, long file names, resizable windows and scalable fonts. With this major new release, TMG will continue its 10-year tradition of setting new standards in genealogical computing.

What program will be the choice of the UFT users?

GCS

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The Genealogy Computer Society meets the second Saturday of each month from 9:15 until noon at the Roswell Family History Center.

Guests are welcome. No one will twist your arm to join. We encourage each member to bring a friend.

*Bytes & Branches :
The newsletter for genealogist
with computers*

June 10, Meeting

We need more members
Have you thought about bringing a friend to this meeting?

The reason you are receiving this newsletter so early is that Pat and I will be out of town the next two weeks. Wilma established a precedence of mailing the newsletters the Monday before a meeting. It was a timely reminder and I have tried to continue it.

We are attending the National Genealogical Conference in Providence, RI from May 30 to June 3. The following week will be spent researching and site seeing in New England.

We will be returning the day before our meeting. I have tried unsuccessfully to arrange for a speaker due to time con-

flicts.

However, after attending between 16 and 20 lectures in Providence, I will have a lot to share and discuss with you. We will have an open discussion program.

The present UFT users will be thinking about changing to another program during the coming year. A program that we need to take a second look at is Legacy. It has had very little publicity, but it is an excellent program. We will take a look at it if we have time.