More Than Just the Facts: Writing your Families’ Histories

This course will touch on the following:

I. **Why Write a Family History**
   A. General introduction to class

II. **Excuses, excuses**
    A. 5 excuses that we use that keeps us from writing family histories

III. **Getting Ready to Write**
    A. Check all sources
    B. Revisit the records
    C. Expand your knowledge of the times your family lived by becoming a social bookworm
    D. Check other resources to fill out the happenings during the times your family lived
    E. Broaden your research for background information

IV. **How to Begin**
    A. Develop your plot
    B. Grabbing your reader
    C. Open with a bang
    D. Cast chronology aside
    E. Interesting from the start
    F. Scribble out a plan
    G. Cut to the chase
    H. Historical context

V. **Keeping the story from Sagging in the Middle**
    A. Build suspense
    B. Build your story from scenes
    C. Show, don’t tell
    D. Be detailed

VI. **Ending the Story**
    A. Death is not the end (necessarily)
    B. What to do with the facts

VII. **Overwhelmed?**
    A. How to eat the elephant
    B. How to get motivated

VIII. **Where to go for help**
    A. Important resources
IX. Where/How to preserve your family histories

X. Resources:

1. ancestry.com


3. Legacy Stories (a great website to help you write, preserve, and share your family histories).  http://www.legacystories.org/?wiz_id=2050

4. Books about writing your family histories:

   - *My Life & Times* by Sunny Jane Morton is one example of a book to guide your writing. (http://www.shopfamilytree.com/my-life-and-times-x9677/?lid=DHftar091813x9677)

   - *Bringing Your Family History to Life through Social History* by Katherine Scott Sturdevant (Betterway Books)

   - *Writing Family Histories and Memoirs* by Kirk Polking (Writer's Digest Books)

   - *Writing the Family Narrative* by Lawrence P. Goldrup (Ancestry)

   - *For All Time: A Complete Guide to Writing Your Family History* (Heinemann)

   - A legacy book such as *To Our Children's Children: Journal of Family Memories* by Bob Greene and D.G. Fulford (Doubleday)

5. Computer Programs that help you write your family history:

   - www.personalhistorian.com
     A program that imports events from several genealogy programs and turns each one into a topic you write about. You also can add "LifeCapsules" of events from your ancestors' time
- [http://rootsmagic.com/Products/](http://rootsmagic.com/Products/)
  Personal Historian: Use to organize and publish a biographical or autobiographical writing project.

- [http://www.familytreemaker.com/](http://www.familytreemaker.com/)
  Create charts, reports, timelines, maps and biographical summaries. Incorporate images; and generate contents page and an index.

  Create customized charts, indexes, reports and illustrated books; you can export to your word-processing program (but not to PDF).

  The Deluxe Edition adds publishing features including indexes, contents page and other front matter formatting; interview and chronology reports

- [http://www.familytreemagazine.com/article/preservation-resources](http://www.familytreemagazine.com/article/preservation-resources) - has sources for Photos, memoirs, family history publishers, scrapbooking and family reunions, as well as links to other articles on writing your family histories