



RESOURCE LIST: Family Story Toolbox

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How Safe are Your Family Stories?

Don't forget that experts state that it only takes three generations for a family story to be "lost" forever. As the family genealogist and historian, you need to be proactive in working to document not just your research, but the family stories. So use the resources below BEFORE your next family gathering and you'll be prepared to document and preserve those cherished stories of your family history.

Family Story Tools and Apps

These tools, apps, and websites – most of them free – can assist you in making sure that your family stories aren't lost forever!

- **Cyndi's List – Oral History & Interviews**
<https://www.cyndislist.com/oral/>
An amazing list of resources, tools, vendors and more – all related to capturing family stories!
- **Day One**
<https://dayoneapp.com/>
Day One is a simple way to journal. It's easy to quickly enter your thoughts and memories and have them synced and backed up in the cloud. Day One is well designed and extremely focused to encourage you to write more.
- **Family History Fanatics**
<https://www.familyhistoryfanatics.com>
"Family History Fanatics launched in August 2016 in hopes that Devon Noel Lee could share her tips, tricks, and insights to the genealogical community. She wanted to generate a broader audience in hopes of selling the books she had written. In doing so, Devon wanted to add educational value to the genealogical industry."
- **Family History Sample Outline and Questions – UCLA Library**
<http://oralhistory.library.ucla.edu/familyHistory.html>
A comprehensive list of questions for interviewing family members.
- **FamilySearch Memories App – FamilySearch**
<https://www.familysearch.org/mobile/memories>
"FamilySearch Memories makes collecting, preserving, and sharing your favorite family memories easy and convenient wherever you are. You could be the one everyone thanks for saving the most meaningful memories."



- **Family Story Form** – Abundant Genealogy
<https://abundantgenealogy.com/FORM-familystory>
FREE Microsoft Word template for documenting family stories in writing.
- **Family Tree App** – FamilySearch
<https://www.familysearch.org/campaign/mobile/tree>
“This mobile companion to FamilySearch Family Tree puts the power of heritage in your hands. Easily attach photos, stories, and documents to add details and bring your family story to life.”
- **Forever**
<http://genealogybargains.com/forever>
“We guarantee that the memories you store with FOREVER® will be preserved, protected, and available for your lifetime plus 100 years, with a goal of keeping your content safe and available as you have determined for many generations beyond.”
- **HistoryLines**
<https://historylines.com/>
“HistoryLines will create a life sketch for any ancestor on your family tree, but first, we need a few basic details about your ancestor. You can enter these details manually, or for a more comprehensive start, import a GEDCOM file or import your tree from FamilySearch.”
- **Kindeo**
<https://www.kindeo.com/>
“KiNDEO helps parents and grandparents tell the story of their life. We automatically save their stories, family knowledge and memories to a private digital archive for you and future generations of your family to enjoy. Forever.”
- **Legacy Stories**
<https://www.legacystories.org/>
“Secure your place in family history by sharing your legacy stories now. Build your legacy portfolio for FREE thanks to our partners & sponsors.”
- **Legacy Tale**
<https://www.legacytale.com/>
“Harness the power of storytelling and technology to strengthen your family across generations.”
- **Life’s Time Capsule**
<https://www.lifetimecapsule.com/>
Capture or upload life's special moments from your desktop or device and send them to your capsule. Keep your legacy safe for an eternity with the highest level of secured cloud storage. Always be remembered for the person you are and the legacy you are leaving behind.



- **MemLife**
<https://memlife.com/home>
“Preserve memories and milestones from your life, or the lives of family and friends. MemLife works seamlessly across your devices and is built for everyone. It's easy to add memories and photos to a timeline, organize life stages and when you're ready, export a book. And it's free.”
- **MemoryWeb**
<https://www.memoryweb.me/>
“MemoryWeb is the photo app that brings generations of photos together in one place, creates interactive connections between them, and preserves "back-of-the-photo" details forever.”
- **MyFamily Booklet – FamilySearch**
<https://www.familysearch.org/myfamily/>
“The My Family: Stories That Bring Us Together booklet is an engaging way to capture and preserve your family story. We'll help you record family information, including adding photos, names, dates, and precious family stories.”
- **Pass It Down**
<https://www.passitdown.com/>
At Pass It Down, we work with organizations, communities and families around the world to bring their stories to life. Pass It Down's all-in-one platform gives you the ability to showcase your stories across any phone, tablet, computer or kiosk. Plus, we are the only platform in the world that allows your community to upload multi-media memories and narratives straight to your digital collections. Don't worry, you can review and approve everything first.
- **StoryCatcher**
<https://storycatcherapp.com/>
“A simple tool to create and share video stories with; complete with a title card, video capture, photos, and screen text. You can record and save all that you, your family, your friends — or maybe even strangers — have to tell. “
- **StoryCorps**
<https://storycorps.org/>
“StoryCorps' mission is to preserve and share humanity's stories in order to build connections between people and create a more just and compassionate world.”
- **StoryScans – Flip-Pal mobile scanner**
<https://flip-pal.com/storyscans/about-storyscans/r/hidefgen/>
“For the first time, you can record voice and merge it with the scan to create an image that speaks.”



- **StoryWorth**
<https://www.storyworth.com/>
“StoryWorth makes it easy and fun for family members to share stories with loved ones, with weekly emailed story prompts – questions you’ve never thought to ask.”
- **Understanding Your Ancestors’ Stories** – Leslie Albrecht Huber
<http://www.understandingyourancestors.com/as/default.aspx>
“Each of our ancestors has an individual story. One of the greatest services you can do for your family is to write down these stories for others to enjoy. Gathering documents and other facts are part of the process. But, the best finished product isn’t simply a stack of documents. Instead, it’s the written story of your ancestors prepared in a way that others in your family can enjoy it.”
- **Write Stuff I: Telling the Story** – Research, Write, Connect!
<http://genealogybargains.com/rwc-writestuff1>
An online, self-paced family history writing course created and developed by writing expert Lisa Alzo.
- **Write Your Family History Toolkit** – Family Tree Magazine
<http://genealogybargains.com/ftm-write-fam-hist-toolkit>
“What better way to preserve your family history than by writing it? Whether it’s a book or other writing project, this collection is packed with all the tools to make writing your family history a labor of love. This collection includes everything from prompts gathering evidence and memories to workbooks and resources for gathering your memories and notes into an organized, easily accessible form. You’ll also get in-depth guidance on how to write a compelling narrative and define the story you want to tell.”

Family Story Preservation and Sharing: Tips and Tricks

These tips are provided by Thomas MacEntee from his best-selling book [*Preserving Your Family’s Oral History and Stories*](#) and from an article entitled [*The Power of Story: Yours, Mine and Ours*](#) about a family story of how he nearly drowned at age four.

- **Don’t delay.** While it can seem overwhelming to record interviews with family members and to preserve them, don’t put it off for “another day.” In addition, don’t expect someone else in the family to take on the task. For each day you delay, you risk losing a family member and their memories. Stories preserved on media – slides, film and more – break down and deteriorate over time.
- **Make a plan.** Even big projects that seem too difficult to take on are made easier when viewed as smaller tasks. Lists are your friend: make a list of “to do” and “action items,” as well as a list of existing items needing preservation.



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- **Get help.** Yes, the duty of story keeping usually falls to one person in a family but, if you look closely, you will notice how that person enlists others to help out. Seek out those with special skills such as writing, converting files, scanning photos, and more. Set up “work days” when family members meet to accomplish important tasks. Also, tap into the vibrant community of professionals and vendors who sell their services and knowledge of family history preservation.
- **Think long term.** When setting your sights on preserving stories and mementos, think decades in the future, not just years. Make sure digitized items are stored using the latest technology and employ multiple backups. Keep up with changes to technology and upgrade – before it is too late.
- **Pass it on.** Preserving your family’s history is more than just work; it can be a journey of discovery for you as well. Take time to document what you are doing, your thoughts and feelings – perhaps in a journal or online. Then look to the next generation of story keepers and make sure they understand the importance of family history preservation.

Family Story Services

The list below includes online courses, family story coaches, and more!

- **Kim Weitkamp**
<http://www.kimweitkamp.com/>
“Kim has hosted intensive workshops at festivals and at individual or guild requests. Workshops can vary from an intensive one day workshop or a week/weekend long intensive retreat. Learn how to craft and build your stories using her Memory Mapping and StoryBox techniques which are applicable to hobbyists or veteran tellers and writers.”
- **Legacy Tree Genealogists**
<https://www.legacytree.com/writing-family-biographies>
“Writing family biographies is one of our specialties. Let our team of genealogists record your family history to be cherished for generations to come!”
- **Research, Write, Connect!**
<https://researchwriteconnect.com>
Online, self-paced writing and genealogy courses created and led by family writing expert [Lisa Alzo](#).



Videos and Webinars

- ***Enriching Your Family History through Pictures and Stories*** – Legacy Family Tree Webinars
<http://legacy.familytreewebinars.com/?aid=4000>
Webinar by Amie Bowser Tennant
“Pictures and stories add that special piece of enriching detail to your family story. Learn where and how you might drag up old photos and stories about your ancestors. We will be discussing helpful websites, how to use social media as a tool, and specified search techniques to find these lost stories and photos.”
- ***Family Stories: Using Newspapers to Reconnect with the Stories of Your Family's Past*** – Legacy Family Tree Webinars
<http://legacy.familytreewebinars.com/?aid=3998>
FREE webinar by Tom Kemp of GenealogyBank
“As genealogists we want to learn who our ancestors and relatives are, to document them, learn the stories of their lives and pass them down to the rising generation. The old newspapers are the new tool for uncovering these stories. Newspapers were published every day of their lives & take this tour of the remarkable examples that can be found in GenealogyBank's three centuries of newspaper archives. Find your family's stories that have been lost over time & document them and preserve them. Don't let your heritage be lost.”
- ***Home for the Holidays - Tips for Collecting Family History*** – Legacy Family Tree Webinars
<http://legacy.familytreewebinars.com/?aid=3997>
FREE webinar with the team from Flip-Pal mobile scanner
“Get the family photos out of shoe boxes or from the back of the closet...it is a perfect time for grandparents to get the next generation involved. Start your children or grandchildren on a lifelong journey by telling your story and introducing them to family history. And don't forget you can easily add Aunt Betty's recipes to the family cookbook. Students love these when they go off to college and they also make great wedding gifts. You will learn how to recognize and capture those great pieces from family history.”
- ***Multi-Media Story Telling*** – Legacy Family Tree Webinars
<http://legacy.familytreewebinars.com/?aid=3996>
FREE webinar by Devin Ashby of FamilySearch
“Stories are all around us but very few are captured and even fewer are shared. The technologies we have to tell stories today are unique and go way beyond just text. We'll discuss ways to capture audio, video, text, photos and use the internet to make your stories come alive with multi-media.”



- ***On the Go: Using Your Mobile Device for Genealogy*** – Legacy Family Tree Webinars
<http://legacy.familytreewebinars.com/?aid=3877>
FREE webinar by Guy Tsyse of MyHeritage Webinars
“In this webinar, you will learn how to use your mobile device to expand your family history research. From recording your family's story to sharing your discoveries, your mobile device has a wealth of tools that allow you to continue your research wherever you are.”
- ***World War II Heroes - Telling Their Stories*** – Legacy Family Tree Webinars Webinar by Mary Kircher Roddy
<http://legacy.familytreewebinars.com/?aid=4001>
“World War II is the earliest war where we can actually speak to the veterans themselves, the men and women who served, but this precious resource is fading quickly so time is of the essence! This webinar will present a case study, fleshing out a basic story of a pilot and crew of a B-17 shot down over Germany, illustrating how to find and access multiple sources to learn about the experiences of these heroes.”

Podcasts and Radio Shows

- ***A Great New Way to Get Stories From Seniors And Sampler Turned Oil Rag Reveals Cryptic Family History!*** – Extreme Genes
<https://extremegenes.com/2014/05/19/ep-42-a-great-new-way-to-get-stories-from-seniors-and-sampler-turned-oil-rag-reveals-cryptic-family-history/>
“Nick Baum, founder of StoryWorth.com talks about the founding of this remarkable web site that will help you assemble the stories of your seniors in a way that just might surprise you by its simplicity.”
- ***Do You Know Your Family History Stories?*** – The Not Old Better Show
<https://notold-better.com/180-do-you-know-your-family-history-stories/>
“Our guest today is Scott Spencer, who is an unabashed genealogy enthusiast, with a passion for family history research. Scott Spencer is with GenealogyBank, where he is the Vice President of Customer Experience. GenealogyBank.com which boasts one of the largest U.S. obituary collections available online in addition to hosting over 8,000 newspaper titles dating back to the 1600s. In speaking with Scott, I learned a ton, and you will, too.”
- ***Nationally Renowned Storyteller Kim Weitkamp On The Art Of Telling Family Stories*** – Extreme Genes
<https://extremegenes.com/2018/11/04/episode-258-nationally-renowned-storyteller-kim-weitkamp-on-the-art-of-telling-family-stories/>
“Kim is a nationally renowned storyteller who is a leading player in the national storytelling festival circuit. Fisher was astounded at her “telling” skills while watching her recount how she found her birth family. Kim talks about how she puts her stories together and some techniques for becoming a better storyteller.”



- ***The Benefits of Family History Stories on Children and The Wax Figure That Wasn't!*** – Extreme Genes
<https://extremegenes.com/2015/11/10/ep-112-the-benefits-of-family-history-stories-on-children-and-the-wax-figure-that-wasnt/>
“Stan Lindaas of Heritage Consulting.com returns to talk with Fisher about an astounding study that will once and for all answer the question, “Why family history?” The lifelong benefits to your children and grandchildren will shock you! This is a segment you won't want to miss.”

Reading List and Resources

The resources below include blog posts, articles, videos, webinars and more. Most are free or priced reasonably.

- ***#52Stories for Families*** – Family Search
<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/52stories-families/>
- ***3 Tips to Make You a Great Storyteller*** – RootsTech
<https://www.rootstech.org/blog/3-tips-to-make-you-a-great-storyteller>
- ***5 Strategies to Inspire Relatives to Share Family Stories*** – Family Search
<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/5-strategies-inspire-relatives-share-family-stories/>
- ***7 Fantastic Storytelling Tools and Apps*** – RootsTech
<https://www.rootstech.org/blog/7-fantastic-storytelling-tools-and-apps>
- ***10 Apps for Capturing and Sharing Your Family's Story*** – RootsTech
<https://www.rootstech.org/blog/10-apps-for-capturing-and-sharing-your-family-story>
- ***10 Family History Conversation Starters for the Holidays (or Whenever)*** – Family Tree Magazine
<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/jan-2012-family-feast-feature/>
- ***10 Top Tech Tools for Sharing Family History*** – Family Tree Magazine
<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/top-tech-tools-sharing-family-history/>
- ***18 Writing Tips for 2018: How to Tell Personal and Family Stories with Confidence*** – Family Search
<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/18-writing-tips-tell-stories/>
- ***20+ Questions to Capture Grandma's Story—#MeetMyGrandma*** – Family Search
<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/20-questions-capture-grandmas-story/>
- ***20 Questions for Interviewing Relatives*** – Family Tree Magazine
<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/20-questions/>



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- **25 Family History Interview Tips You Need to Know** – Family Tree Magazine
<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/25-family-history-tips/>
- **50 Questions to Ask Relatives About Family History** – Kimberly Powell
<https://www.thoughtco.com/fifty-questions-for-family-history-interviews-1420705>
- **150 Questions to Ask Family Members About Their Lives** – Deseret News
<https://www.deseretnews.com/article/865595932/Genealogy-150-questions-to-ask-family-members-about-their-lives.html>
- **Build a Legacy Through Sharing Family Stories** – Family Search
<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/build-family-legacy/>
- **Conducting Oral Histories with Family Members** – UCLA Library
<http://www.library.ucla.edu/destination/center-oral-history-research/resources/conducting-oral-histories-family-members>
- **Create an Oral History to Share Your Family's Experience** – Seattle Times
<https://www.seattletimes.com/sponsored/create-an-oral-history-to-share-your-familys-experience/>
- **Documenting Memories and Family Stories: Remembering 9/11** – Thomas MacEntee
<https://abundantgenealogy.com/documenting-memories-and-family-stories-remembering-9-11/>
- **Family History Writing Tools** – Family Tree Magazine
<https://www.familytreemagazine.com/premium/toolkit-family-history-writing-tools/>
- **Family Tree 30-Day Family History Writing Challenge** – Family Tree Magazine
https://www.familytreemagazine.com/articles/save_share_family_history/writing-family-history/2018-family-history-writing-challenge/
- **Free Voice Recording Apps Are Convenient, Create Great Memories** – Evalogue Life
<http://evalogue.life/what-are-some-great-free-voice-recording-apps/>
- **How a Record Helped Me Uncover a Family Story** – Family Search
<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/record-helped-uncover-family-story/>
- **How Family Stories Shape Our Identities** – Family Search
<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/family-stories-shape-identities/>
- **Preserve the Stories of Grandparents Forever with These Expert Tips** – Family Search
<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/preserve-stories-grandparents-expert-tips/>
- **Preserving Family History, One Memory at a Time** – The New York Times
<https://www.nytimes.com/2014/03/16/business/preserving-family-history-one-memory-at-a-time.html>



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- **Preserving Family Memories: Real-Life Success Stories** – Family Search
<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/preserving-family-memories-reallife-success-stories/>
- **Quick Guide: Oral History Recording Apps** – Family Tree Magazine
<http://genealogybargains.com/ftm-quickguide-oralhistory-apps>
- **Record Your Family's Oral History- Before It Dies Out** – Instructables
<https://www.instructables.com/id/Record-Your-Familys-Oral-History-before-it-dies-/>
- **Saving Families Through Story Telling** – Family Search
<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/saving-families-story-telling/>
- **The Oral History Interview: Don't Miss a Chance to Record Family Stories** – Ancestry
<https://blogs.ancestry.com/ancestry/2017/09/10/the-oral-history-interview-dont-miss-a-chance-to-record-family-stories/>
- **The Power of Story: Yours, Mine and Ours** – MyHeritage
<https://blog.myheritage.com/2015/11/the-power-of-story-yours-mine-and-ours/>
- **Using FamilySearch Apps to Record Oral Histories** – Family Search
<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/familysearch-apps-oral-histories/>