

Write Your Family History **NOW!**

by **Mike Karsen**

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Introduction

Excuses for Not Publishing

- I need to get all the data into my computer.
- I'm waiting till "this one mystery" is solved.
- I'm waiting till Aunt Em sends me the information.
- Some of the data I have may not be correct.
- I am not good at writing.
- I do not have enough time right now.
- I want to do it *just right*.

Why Publish **NOW**

- Need to share information
- Stimulus for corrections/additional information
- Prevent your work from being lost
- Encourages you to publish in manageable pieces
- Bring your relatives back to life/give them immortality
- Give a gift that will last a lifetime and beyond

Start Simple

Who

- Define the family of each grandparent as *one* family
- Pick family you are most interested in or where you have the most information
- Keep balance in information shown for all parts of the family

What

- Set a limited goal
- Look objectively at what information you have
- Work with the end in mind
 - Who is it for?
 - Will it be interesting?
 - Names/Dates
 - **Pictures**

When

- As soon as you have something worthwhile to share (aka **NOW**)
- Family events (weddings, reunions, ...) can serve as target dates
- Set a goal and start working toward it: **Give your work some urgency**

A Basic Book

- Introduction/Overview
- Descendant Tree (a simply one)
- Family Group Sheets
- Outline Descendant Tree

A Basic Book: Yankelovich

- Published in March 2000
- 26 pages (made 14 copies): Kinko's
- Double sided (black & white)
- Simple plastic binding: Office Max
- Cost: \$4.00 per book
- Project duration: less than 6 months

Adding More Flavor

Biographies

Social History

Family Pictures

Family Documents

Final Touches

- Cover
- Title page
- Copyright, dedication, acknowledgements
- Sources
- Index

Books with More Flavor (see note at end)

- Peltzer Family History (April 2000)
 - 52 pages/ \$11.25 per book
 - Velo binding
- Frost Family History (June 2001)
 - 115 pages/ \$15 per book
 - Comb binding
- Markowitch Family History (October 2002)
 - 90 pages/ \$11 per book
 - Comb binding
- Yankelovich Family History: 2nd Ed. (March 2004)
 - 110 pages/ \$6 per book
 - Comb binding

Additional Flavors

- Timelines
- Story of writing this book
- Visits to the homeland
- Wedding Gallery

Is It All Worth It?

Summary

- Need to share work **NOW**
- Start simple
- Add more flavor later

References

- *Writing Family Histories and Memoirs* by Kirk Polking
- *Producing a Quality Family History* by Patricia Law Hatcher
- *Writing the Family Narrative* by Lawrence P. Gouldrup
- *Bringing Your Family History to Life through social history* by Katherine Scott Sturdevant
- *The Complete Idiot's Guide to Writing Your Family History* by Lynda Rutledge Stephenson

For more information about Mike's lectures or to obtain copies of his books on CD (in pdf format) e-mail him at MikeFamHistorian@aol.com or go to his website at www.hometown.aol.com/MikeFamhistorian .

Please send me feedback on this talk and information about progress you make on publishing your family histories.

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