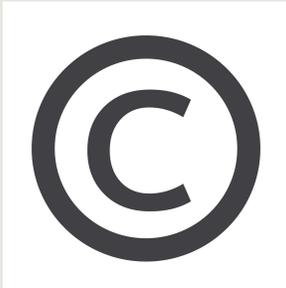


Writing Your Family History Book

The Narrative History Approach

By Walter B. Curry, Jr., Ed. D

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Presentation Theme

- Presentation Theme: Learning about writing narrative histories will empower us to write stories about our ancestors/relatives.

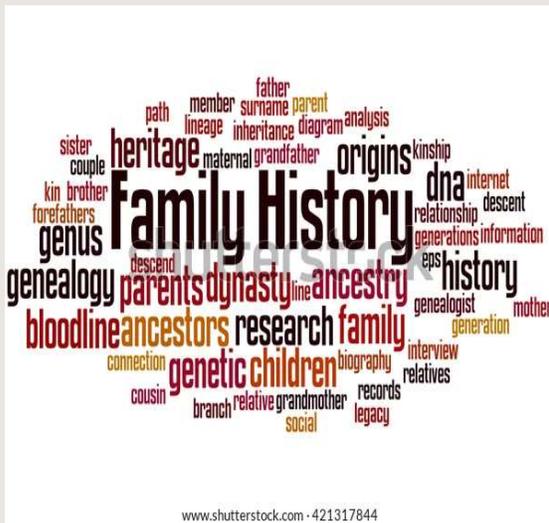
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Presentation Objectives

- Explore the Diversity of Family History
- Define Narrative History
- Explore “The Traditional & Circular Narrative” Structure of Writing Narrative History
- Explore the Five Steps To Write Narratives About Ancestors/Relatives
- Explore the Usage of Historical Context In Writing Narratives About Ancestors/Relatives
- Conclusion-Recap

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Family History is very diverse, but how do we tell our family stories?



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Sample Traditional Narrative

Tragedy in the Skillet: The murder of young Governor "Mint" Thompson, Jr.

Governor Hayes Thompson, Sr. was one of five children born to Rev. Logan and Lavinia Corley-Thompson on October 11, 1884 in Salley, South Carolina. At a young age, he joined Smyrna Baptist Church. In 1906, he married Sustanchia Henderson. Out of their union, six children were born: Robert Byrice Thompson, Effie Thompson, Essie Thompson-Martin, Governor "Mint" Thompson, Jr., Dorothy Thompson, and Cleola C. Calder.

On midnight Sunday, March 13, 1921, an unusual incident occurred.³⁶ George Piper, member of an industrious and prominent African-American family, became wildly intoxicated from alcohol began shooting up the neighborhood around Chapman Baptist Church in the Skillet community.³⁷ ³⁸ He went so far as to shoot in to his father's house in his drunkenness.³⁹ Governor, who was Piper friend, took him to task for his conduct and Piper turned on him to shoot him, but Governor shot first, the bullets hitting Piper in the mouth and breast. Because of the wounds, he died.⁴⁰

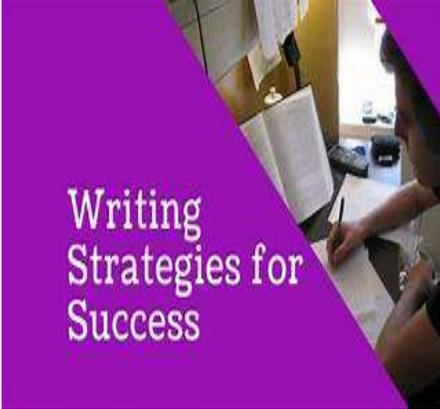
On Monday March 14, 1921, Governor surrender to the Sheriff at the courthouse being taken there by Mr. John D. Brodie. He was charged with murder and appeared before the court the following Tuesday.⁴¹ Solicitor Gunter and William M. Smoak aided in the prosecution of the case and Messrs. Salley, and Gyles were Governor's

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Sample Circular Narrative

Oscar's agricultural pursuits are noteworthy. His employment of the three-year crop rotation demonstrated his inventiveness. As a member of the delegation of African-American farmers visiting Coker Pedigreed Farm, demonstrated Oscar's zealously to stay abreast educationally in the field of agriculture. He understood the importance of leveraging opportunities in agricultural by taking risks, being inventive, and acquiring necessary knowledge. Oscar's real estate ventures demonstrated his zeal to see some of his relatives to become landowners. I suspected that he wanted them to enjoy the pleasures of landownership. Furthermore, he profited!

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Writing Strategies for Success

Explore the Five Steps To Write Narratives About Ancestors/Relatives

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#1-Gather and Organize Research

- Before you begin any project, save **yourself time by gathering and organizing your sources first.**
- Select **one ancestor/relative, event, or tradition** to write about and gather **all documents, diaries, photos, oral histories, newspaper clippings, artifacts, and audio/video recordings you can lay your hands on.**

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#2-Create a research chart

- Create a research chart of your sources in your notebook. A typical chart includes the following elements:
 - A. Cite the source (i.e., name & date)
 - B. Summary of Source

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Sample Research Chart

Cite The Source (i.e., name & date)	Summary of Source
FamilySearch.org "United States, Freedmen's Bureau Labor Contracts, Indenture and Apprenticeship Records, 1865-1872."	The original and transcribed freedmen labor contract signed between Hugh E. Phillips & The Kitchings family that included Martha Kitchings Seawright Ellison.

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#3-Summarize Your Sources

- Every story begins with a fact. Each fact in genealogy derives from a source.
- Review your source and write a summary for each source. A summary is the main points or details of the source.
- Write your summary in the "Summary of Source" section of your chart.

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#4-Create an Outline

- Creating an outline is a good step to take while writing your paper.
- It allows you to brainstorm new ideas and make sure your paper will be organized, focused, and supported.



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How do I write an outline?

- Identify your topic or thesis statement.
- Decide what points you would like to discuss during your paper.
- Put your points in logical, numerical order so that each point connects back to your main point.
- Use your “research chart” from your notebook as a reference to complete your outline.

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Two Types of Outline



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The Alphanumeric Outline

My Family History

- I. The island of Lemnos
 - a. My great grandfather, the mayor
 - b. Greek mythology, Hephaestus
 - c. Once volcanic
 - d. Flat, rugged, mountains here and there
 - e. Home to Muscat grapes
 - f. My mythologizing of the island vs. what the island is|
- II. Grandfather's life in the U.S.
 - a. The laundromat
 - b. The auto body shop
 - c. Life in Ohio vs. life in Florida
- III. My own Greek Orthodox Upbringing
 - a. The significance of the sign of the cross
 - b. The time I spent at church—both Sunday and beyond
 - c. My first Bible, introduction to Bible stories
 - d. The Alpha and Omega on the church doors

- The alphanumeric outline is exactly what it sounds like: It uses a combination of letters (lowercase or uppercase) and numbers (Arabic or Roman numerals) to denote hierarchies in your thought process.

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The Sentence Outline

- I. My grandfather hails from Lemnos, a small, jagged island that sits in the North Aegean Region of Greece.
 - a. I never met my great grandfather, but I've heard of him, often spoken of with great reverence and a sense of anonymity, sometimes simply "The Mayor."
 - b. In Greek mythology, Hephaestus, a fiery god of all things metal, called the island his home and foundry.
 - c. The Hephaestus myth likely endured thanks to the island's famous volcanoes, now quiet and never to sputter again.
 - d. The Lemnos of today is flat and rugged; in places, squat mountains jut from the earth.
 - e. The island overflows with clusters of Muscat grapes, treasured for the wine they make.
 - f. Today, I sit at my desk and imagine a place to which I've never been but which I'm told flows uneven in my blood like the Aegean Sea that cradles it. For so long, I pictured Lemnos as I had any other island: overwhelmed by sun, gold with sand, dotted with bee-dizzing flowers. The reality is not disappointing; it feels closer to home, to closer to what I know.

- Like the alphanumeric outline, the sentence outline sorts ideas and subjects into subject groups. However, each topic and sub-topic is written as a complete sentence. S

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Outline Tips

- You can use any form (alphanumeric or sentence outline) to write your outline. Everyone organizes differently, so it is important to do what works best for you.
- Write your outline in your notebook.

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#5-Begin Writing Your Draft

- Use your outline to begin writing your drafts. You will make multiple revisions as you go along.
- Then type your work on your word document program (i.e., Microsoft Word, Google) on your computer and save your work.
- Make sure you include titles in your stories.

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After you've written your first draft based on sources, then it's essential to add historical context.

- Historical context refers to the social, cultural, religious, economic, and political conditions that existed during a certain time and place.

- Historical context includes
 - A. Historical events
 - B. Cultural events & traditions
 - C. Lifestyles & Occupations
 - D. Social & economic events
 - E. Religion influences

What historical context do you like to add to your stories? What resources do you have for finding the context?

Secondary sources can help you find the context (i.e., history books, newspaper articles, old magazines)

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Sample Historical Context in Passage

Martha was sixteen years old when slavery officially ended. Her family, along with other formerly enslaved families transitioned into freedom. As newly freedmen, they had to learn to live as freedmen. Secondly, they had to acquire basic needs without assistance from their former masters. Thirdly, they had to acquire proper education. The dire reality of freedmen led Congress to pass the Freedmen's Bureau Act of 1865.¹¹ The act created the Freedmen Bureau, which aided and protected freedmen in the South. The bureau was given power to dispense relief to both freedmen and White refugees. The relief included access to medical care, education, and redistribution of abandoned lands to former slaves. The entity was a democratic experiment during the Reconstruction Era (1865–1877), a pivotal time when the country attempted to reunify the divided nation and integrate freedmen into mainstream society.

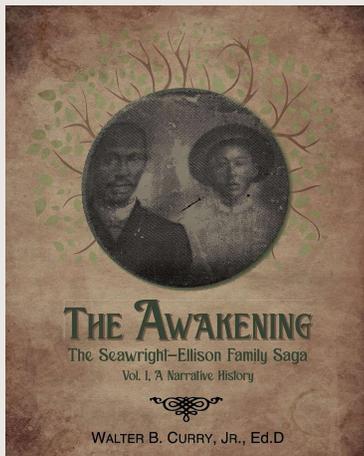
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Conclusion-Recap

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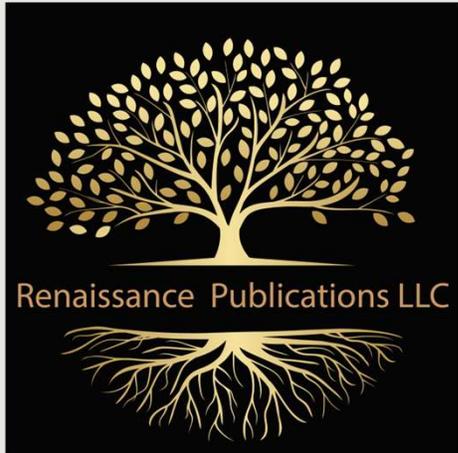
Call to Action



- The Awakening: The Seawright-Ellison Family Saga, Vol.1, A Narrative History
- Price-\$35.00
- Available for purchase at <https://www.paypal.com/instantcommerce/checkout/YKZELHA57SRL>

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