"It's Time to Write a Book" (in as few as four pages)
Tuesday, April 13, 2021, 7:30 p.m.
Presented by the Central Florida Genealogical Society
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Calendar of events: http://janeenslist.com/events/
https://www.facebook.com/janeen.bjork.3

IF YOU ARE MORE COMFORTABLE WITH WORDS THAN IMAGES
- Scrapbooking
- A Book on a Wall (a mural)

What I learned from working with a professional book designer:

FOUR ASPECTS TO CREATING A BOOK
1. Content
2. Organization
3. Design
4. Printing

1. Content
- Elements
  - Photos and/or photo albums
  - Invitations, letters, old ads, etc.
  - Articles and publications
  - Photos of heirlooms
  - Family charts
  - Narrative, including family stories that have been passed down.
- Scan images at same size or larger at 300 dpi (dots per inch). If not, they won't be large enough or the resolution will suffer.
- Scan in RGB for color or sepia photos, convert to CMYK in Photoshop; Scan in Grayscale for Black & White
- Use "descreening" for printed material
- File in separate folders on your computer
- Back up everything!
- Newspaper articles are usually 144 dpi.
  - They need to be brought into Photoshop and saved as 1200 dpi in a black & white bitmap file.
- Organize your scans and photos in files by family and by individual.
- Organize your narrative in computer files, too.

When you write, work on one thought at a time.
- Take it slow. Write as you research.

- I create abstracts for each new find and upload them to the subject's ancestry.com profile. They can be highlighted and copied into Word.
- Author Lisa Alzo says, "You can't edit a blank page."
- Keep going. Be disciplined. I use MS Office tools to organize my work.
- Write every day. A little every day adds up.

Online research resources

- https://www.worldcat.org/ for books and the libraries holding them
- https://www.hathitrust.org/ for books that have been digitized.
- https://books.google.com/ for books that have been digitized.
- https://archive.org/index.php a free non-profit library, the WayBack Machine.
- https://www.ebay.com/b/Genealogy-Items/20925/bn_1865583
- https://www.facebook.com/groups
- https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/search/titles/ to find 156,000+ newspapers.
- https://www.theancestorhunt.com/newspapers.html for digitized newspapers.

Lay out Your Family Tree
- It does not have to be perfect. The designer will take care of that.

2. Organization and decision making [1]
- You can start with an introduction and a family chart. I added a map.
- Family units or individuals can be chapters.
- Our book evolved, we had too many chapters and not enough writers. We ended up with 13 chapters, the Introduction to Ord, 11 people, and the reunion chapter.

You need to find your style, an inventory system, and stick to it. I prefer to organize online. But confronted with file cabinets and boxes of books and papers, I had to make quick decisions, on what was most important, as I couldn't take it all home with me.

BACK-UP ON PAPER: After the images, documents, abstracts and notes are uploaded into ancestry.com profiles, text from the profiles can be highlighted, copied and pasted into a Word document. An entire family can be saved in a single document. You can search for key words within. Like a specific address, a person who visited, event types, etc. (CONTROL+F on Windows, or COMMAND+F on a Mac).

BACK-UP PAPER FILES BY DIGITIZATION: Word docs can be saved and shared to a thumb drive, to the cloud (e.g. Google Docs or Dropbox), or printed out and distributed to older family members who don't use computers. I prompted some interesting memories and responses from octogenarians (the next generation) and nonagenarians (our client) for the book when I handed them something they could read.

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[1] Read Marian Burk Wood's book, "Planning a Future for Your Family's Past." 98 pages, $12. https://www.amazon.com/Planning-Future-Your-Familys-Past/dp/1539124428

3. Design

- Design happens *after* the content is determined
- Give your files, as they're ready, to the designer.
- The designer starts by designing a cover. The title page can resemble it.
- The Table of Contents doesn't get page numbers until the book is done.
- The designer will create a sample chapter for approval.
- Our sample chapter of one family member was sent to the client and the next generation in the family for their approval. Once everybody agreed on a look, the other chapters were variations on that theme.
- Our first and final chapters were bookends to the individual family member chapters, and they had common elements, one with a map of Nebraska, and one with a timeline of the family reunions that happened in different locations, displayed chronologically by the time zone.
- The book gained authenticity from the words of family members, that we found written in diaries, books, emails, letters, and family newsletters.
- The book had additional authenticity by the hundreds of newspaper items we included. NOTE: Get permission to use copyrighted material <95 years old.

4. Printing

- When the designer starts working on the book, printing prices can be estimated.
- Final quote is requested towards the end of project.
- Printing costs are based on
  - Page size/Book size
  - Material selected for the cover
  - Bleed or non-bleed
  - Color or Black & White
  - Number of pages
  - Paper quality
  - Quantity of books
- Do-overs will cost additional money, send the book to the printer when you're sure you've got it right.

MY ORGANIZATIONAL SYSTEM (YOURS HAS TO WORK FOR YOU)

- Online trees (I teach Genealogy, I have over 90 of them, w/ images + abstracts)
- GEDcoms (as backups and to share)
- A personal website, a Facebook page
- Cloud storage (iDrive, OneDrive, GoogleDrive)
- External devices (Floppy? CD? Thumb drive?)
- Word documents; Excel spreadsheets; PPTs
- I work with 50 or more tabs open on my computer (not recommended)
- I cover every flat surface available with whatever I am working on…
  - You can only do that if you live alone or have your own room.

WRITE IN SMALL BITES, YOU CAN WRITE ABOUT…

1. A photo
2. An heirloom
3. A memory – your first day of school, your wedding day, a parent's funeral

MAKING IT INTERESTING

How do you write to interest other people? Ask them what interests them. What format.

- Write as if it were a historical novel.
  - Every good story has conflict, empathy, and suspense.
- Include graphics (timelines, graphs, maps) and images.

<u>SOME THOUGHTS FOR DO-IT-YOURSELFERS</u>

There are many options for printing a book yourself (Lulu, Shutterfly, Blurb, etc.). My biggest concerns would be, will there be a PDF to save, and will that company exist?

- You may want to hire a designer as a consultant to look over your book before it goes to the printer.
  - **EXAMPLE**: A friend's DIY book of beautiful photos was disappointing. The text on the cover did not line up. The text within the book was too close to the photos and ran into the gutter (so did some of his photos). Oops.
  - **EXAMPLE**: Same friend, different book. He had page numbers in the Table of Contents, but they never appeared on the actual pages

There are many options for publishing an eBook.

- You may want to create a professional-look by creating your own cover. I have used the templates in https://www.canva.com/ for social media, menus, invitations, and resumes, when I didn't have a budget for a designer.

There are also full-service companies that will help you write and print your book. One of them is https://legacybooks.com/.

  - I recommend you read their blogs. You will get insights, inspiration and tips. Like John Catron's "26 things to include in a family history book beyond photos and text."
  - https://legacybooks.com/26-things-to-include-in-a-family-history-book-beyond-photos-and-text/
  - And here's a warm and fuzzy video about one of their projects.
  - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AXp8384QRWc&feature=emb_logo

Note: Another I'll be presenting two programs on Genealogy and Newspapers in the next few months, the first at 7 p.m. on April 22nd for NYGB&S.
https://www.newyorkfamilyhistory.org/events/rest-story-finding-your-family-online-newspapers.