

MyHeritage: Your Family Stories are Just One Click Away

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Family stories, we all have them. For many of us, family stories are all we have and we are trying to research them and document the facts behind those stories. Sometimes we have a small portion of the story to work with and other times we have the full story, yet we question its validity. Searching for evidence, records and documentation for our family stories should be a high priority. The priority should be high because family stories are very fragile and can disappear within one family generation if they are not retold and more importantly researched and documented.

The Story

A family story is unique to each family, each family member and each ancestor. Many of our family stories are handed down verbally to each new generation and we hope those stories are true and correct. The family story, which there could be many, are just as important to research and document as any other piece of information in our family history.

-Family Folklore: A body of traditions and knowledge on a subject or held by a particular group, typically passed from person to person by word of mouth (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

-Family Gossip: Casual or unconstrained conversation or reports about other people, typically involving details that are not confirmed as being true (Merriam-Webster Dictionary)

-Family Legend: A story passed down through generations of a family and is often embellished over time.

-Family Tradition: A repeated activity, routine, or behavior that is passed down through generations of a family. They can be unique to a family or more universal and often tied to holidays or important events in the family history, culture or religion.

-Family Memories: Stories, experiences, and traditions that are passed down through generations to share a family's history. Family memories are only as good and as accurate as an individual memory.

Family Stories Facts & Fiction

Once you have the story and have recorded that story, it is time to dissect the story and glean the specific information contained in the story. There are very few family stories that are 100% correct or true, so it is important to study the story and confirm or deny the information that was provided in the story.

-Family Story Dates: If the family story has dates as part of the story, it is important to highlight those dates for further research to determine if they are correct.

-Family Story Names: If the family story has names associated with the story, highlight those names and indicate whether they are family names or Friends, Associates and Neighbors (FAN Club).

-Family Story Places: If the family story has places associated with it, make notes for future research to determine if the places exist and how they played a part in your family history and the story.

-Family Story Fiction: Almost all family stories have at least one piece that is fiction, not completely true or is intentionally false. It's quite possible that large chunks of the story are fiction or the entire story never happened or is untrue. Never believe a family story completely without doing your own research and documentation.

Family Stories: The Good, The Bad, The Ugly

Family stories can make us smile, can shock us and some stories can make us cry. Whatever the story is, it is our responsibility as family historians to gather the stories, document them and preserve them so they are not forgotten.

-The Good: We love the family stories that give us a good feeling or make us smile. These stories we love to hear and we will retell whenever we get that chance.

-The Bad: Almost all families have stories that are considered bad or not flattering to our ancestor. We should not shy away from collecting, documenting and preserving these stories right along with the good stories.

-The Ugly: These stories are the family stories that typically get buried in history and time. They are too painful or disturbing to retell or document. They may be the hardest stories to unearth and to document but we should not shy away from them.

Recording the Story

Before a family story can be researched and documented, the story should be recorded and preserved as is, word for word. It is important to not leave any piece or part out of the story because it may become very important during the research process. There are several ways the story can be recorded.

-Write it Down: Record the family story by using pen and paper or typing it up and printing it out. While this might seem like an old-fashioned way to record a family story, it is a form that might survive longer than electronic formats.

-Electronic File: Record the family story in an electronic file that can be saved to your computer, genealogy software, online cloud storage and other electronic storage places. This choice requires a plan on how to preserve and save the stories so they are not lost to computer crashes or defunct online storage places.

-Audio and Video Recordings: It is encouraged to use audio or video equipment to record family members retelling family stories. A simple cell phone could be used to record the stories as long as they are transferred from the phone to a media that is reliable to preserve the recordings.

-Family History Blog: Placing family stories, memories, folklore, traditions and legends on a family history blog is a great way to record family stories that could possibly last and survive beyond our own lives.

MyHeritage Records and Family Stories

Genealogists are constantly looking for their ancestors in various types of records. MyHeritage offers various record types that we can use to document and tell our family stories. From the basic census record to more unusual record sets, MyHeritage can help us research and document our family stories.

-Collection Catalog: Allows you to explore the main collection of records available on MyHeritage or browse through specific collections

-Newspaper Collection: MyHeritage has a great collection of newspapers from around the world and some that are hard to find. Newspapers can help to document a family story where no other documentation exists.

-Military Records Collection: MyHeritage has draft, enlistment and service records for our ancestors who served in the military. They also have pension records and other military type records to help us tell our family members military stories from North American in in other countries.

-Immigration & Travel Records Collection: Tracing our ancestors travels in their country of origin or when they “crossed the pond” is made easier by accessing the immigration and emigration records on MyHeritage. Many of us have family stories of how our ancestors left their home country and arrived in another country or they migrated from one end of a country to the other. These records could help us document these particular family stories.

-Books and Publications Records Collection: This collection has thousands of published books ranging from family histories, local histories, military histories, city and county directories, school publications, church publications and so much more. This collection has these books and publications fully digitized and available to us to help with researching our family stories.

-MyHeritage Wiki: A community-led, comprehensive resource on family history research and DNA. Provides genealogists with information to help them research their ancestors and their stories. A collaborative platform with contributors from across the globe.

Family Stories and MyHeritage

There are many online databases and websites to help us research, document and most importantly preserve our family stories. MyHeritage is no different in what it offers to genealogists to help them tell their family stories, document those stories and preserve those stories.

-DNA: The only way many of us will be able to document or prove a family story is with DNA. There are many stories of family stories involving parentage or proving connections to ancestors that we are having a hard time connecting with document research. MyHeritage offers DNA testing and a place to record those findings. MyHeritage has over 2,000 geographic regions to connect to when you use MyHeritage DNA.

-Photos: Many of us struggle to locate photos of our ancestors or we have photos that are not identified and are part of a family story. MyHeritage offers several options to help us look at our photographs in a different light that may even help us document or preserve our ancestors and their stories.

-Family Trees: MyHeritage offers a space to record your family genealogy and those family stories. The MyHeritage Family Trees are user contributed trees and the information contained in them should be verified and researched. A great place to find documents, photographs, information and family stories from other genealogists who are researching the same people you are researching. A great place to share your family history and stories so others can collaborate and help you with your genealogy journey.

Brick-and-Mortar Still Relevant

Even though we can access so much from home, we should still use records at brick-and-mortar archives, libraries, historical societies, genealogical societies, courthouses and other record repositories can help us research our family stories.

-Brick and Mortar research facilities are still very relevant for genealogists. There are millions if not hundreds of millions of records that are not online anywhere and can only be accessed at a brick-and-mortar facility.

-The sad truth is that many of these records will never be digitized and available online and we need to be accessing them to help us with our family stories.

-MyHeritage could be at your local brick and mortar library or archive. Many libraries and archives offer a library edition of MyHeritage to their card holding patrons. This would give you access to MyHeritage right where you live.

MyHeritage Direct Links

Main Website

<https://www.myheritage.com>

Collection Catalog

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/catalog>

Newspaper Records Collection

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/category-8000/newspapers>

Military Records Collection

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/category-3000/military>

Immigration and Travel Records Collection

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/category-4030/immigration-emigration-records>

Books and Publications Records Collection

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/category-8020/books-publications>

MyHeritage Wiki

<https://www.myheritage.com/wiki/Home>

MyHeritage DNA

<https://www.myheritage.com/dna>

MyHeritage Photos

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/category-6000/photos>

MyHeritage Family Trees

<https://www.myheritage.com/research/collection-1/myheritage-family-trees>