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What kind of book do you want to write?

Who is your intended audience?
Which ancestors are to be included?
What content will you include?
How will you organize your information?
How will you publish your work?

Copyright: basing on compilations and phrasings rather than on titles, ideas, facts.

Public Domain

A source: Wikimedia Commons: <https://commons.wikimedia.org>

A source: Internet Archive: <https://archive.org>

Many websites offer public domain content on given topics, such as colonial history.

Research

Begin with what you know, and from there dig into what you don't know.
Gather and confirm vital record facts of your ancestors to serve as your framework.

Bring your family tree to life: flesh out your framework of "begats" to become living story.

In a moment we will look at PAGE 3 and PAGE 4 of this handout side by side.

A basic framework for the fictitious James Brock family is stated on PAGE 3.

The narrative version of it on PAGE 4 illustrates three levels of enrichment:

- (a) Enrich your story based on just the vital facts without more research.
- (b) Enrich your story via further research based on family data.
- (c) Enrich your story via further research based on historical context.

Start writing

Two Sayings: (1) First get it down, then get it right. (2) You can't edit a blank page.
Cursive. Digital. Editing. Revising. Proofreading. The potential of Voice to Text.

Organize Your Book

The Inside: front matter. Copyright page (colophon), Table of Contents, any Introduction or Preface, any Dedications or Acknowledgements, and so forth

The Inside: back matter: Any Appendices, Bibliography, Indexes. (For bibliographical formats see *Evidence Explained* by Elizabeth Shown Mills.)

The Outside: Cover image(s), the font, and the text for the front, back, and spine (if space)

How to Publish

Do it at home, take to a printer, hire a company to do it digitally, do it yourself digitally

Single print run, or print on demand

Kindle Direct Publishing (KDP) as a Do-It-Yourself, Digital, Print-on-Demand Option

<https://kdp.amazon.com>

KDP University and other KDP How-To video tutorials

https://kdp.amazon.com/en_US/help/topic/G202193640#paperback_formatting

Prepare your publication in word processing, e.g. Microsoft Word. (Later change to PDF.)

KDP will indicate some useful Microsoft Word settings

Arrange for high enough image resolutions

Some of the decisions you will make:

DON'T WORRY. YOU WILL NOT HAVE TO MAKE ALL THESE DECISIONS AT ONCE.

THERE IS NOT A DEADLINE TO MAKE YOUR DECISIONS. DON'T BE DETERRED.

Do you want to make it hard cover, paperback, Amazon Kindle edition? All?

Size of book, margins, justification, fonts, headers and footers, pagination

Number of pages (hence thickness) also determines if there can be words on spine

Images: their resolution, placement, and how your text moves in relation to them

Choose categories befitting your book for cataloging and customer searching

Pricing (Probably do not include price in the bar code so you can easily change it.)

Distribution: online at Amazon, through bookstores, internationally... or in person too.

To do separately from KDP:

When your manuscript is ready to upload to KDP, get these two numbers and add them to your manuscript:

ISBN (International Standard Book Number) from the monopoly <https://Bowker.com>

(KDP rather than Bowker will create the barcode for your book.)

LCCN (Library of Congress Control Number) The Library of Congress website for its

“PCN” (preassigned control number program) may take some examination.

There is a link to an “Author/Self Publisher User Guide” near the bottom of the webpage <https://www.loc.gov/programs/prepub-book-link/user-guides>.

Upload your manuscript to KDP. Upload your cover to KDP and choose the way it is applied. If your upload from KDP bounces back to you for corrections, fix them. When it doesn't bounce and is accepted, order a copy for proofreading. Make any edits in your manuscript and upload it again. Order another proof copy. When it is the way you want it, click **PUBLISH**. Your book is now published and for sale. **CONGRATULATIONS!**

If you want to make your analytical work more convenient, you should look at this page side by side with the following page 4 of 4 to compare them.

The following Brock family is fictitious, but its story is much like the stories of many real families of that time and place.

Husband: James Brock

born 01 Feb 1787 in Windham County, Vermont.

died 15 Nov 1859 in Trumbull County, Ohio.

First Wife: Susan Evans

born 06 Jun 1790 in Windham County, Vermont.

married 19 Jun 1810 in Windham County, Vermont.

died 30 Oct 1816 in Windham County, Vermont.

Second Wife: Beatrice Watson

born 14 Aug 1780 in Windham County, Vermont.

married 30 Dec 1816 in Windham County, Vermont.

died 12 Dec 1870 in Clyde, Cloud County, Kansas.

Children:

Abigail: born 30 Aug 1811 in Windham County, Vermont.

died 18 Aug 1815 in Windham County, Vermont.

Nathan: born 10 Nov 1813 in Windham County, Vermont.

married 12 Jul 1835 Jane Lyle in Trumbull County, Ohio.

died 01 Dec 1891 in Clyde, Cloud County, Kansas.

Daniel: born 30 Oct 1816 in Windham County, Vermont.

died 05 Nov 1816 in Windham County, Vermont.

Clarissa: born 12 Oct 1818 in Trumbull County, Ohio.

married 10 Apr 1840 Paul Ott in Trumbull County, Ohio.

died 27 Sep 1859 in Trumbull County, Ohio.

A. Enrich your story even without doing more research

“James Brock and Susan Evans were born in Windsor County, Vermont, and married there in June 1810. James was 23 years old, and Susan had just turned 20. The next year in late summer during the harvest season, Susan gave birth to their first child, a daughter. They named her Abigail. Unfortunately, their new baby would not live to see her fourth birthday.

“Two years after baby Abigail’s birth, James and Susan had a second child, this time a son they named Nathan. As we shall soon see, Nathan would grow up and marry in Ohio and eventually migrate west to Kansas.

“After the births of their daughter Abigail and son Nathan, James and Susan had another son, Daniel, in October 1816. Tragically, Susan died on the day of Daniel’s birth. James had become instantly a widower with a toddler son Nathan, age not quite three, and the newborn baby Daniel to raise on his own. Then within a week of Susan’s death, the newborn Daniel died. The family that had begun with James and Susan and the births of three children had been reduced to the single parent James, age 29, and two-year-old Nathan.

“Two months after his wife Susan’s death, James married again to Beatrice Evans. She was 36 years old and apparently did not bring any children into their new family. Then within months of their marriage, the small family of James, Beatrice, and little Nathan migrated 600 miles east to Trumbull County, Ohio, leaving behind the graves of Susan and the two children.

“In the fall of their first year in Ohio, James and Beatrice had their first and only child together, a daughter they named Clarissa. She would marry in Ohio and die there at the age of forty-two. Then only two months after Clarissa’s death, her father James died at the age of seventy-two in 1859.

“Beatrice lived on for eleven more years and died in Kansas, where her stepson Nathan had migrated. Nathan died there at the age of seventy-eight in 1891.”

B. Enrich your story with further research based on family facts

Probate (family members and relationships, possessions, bequests), land records (locations), church records (claimed beliefs, social involvement), newspapers (activities, obituaries), local history books. For example, we learn the important fact that James Brock was a yeoman.

C. Enrich your story with further research based on the context in which the family is living

The number of settlers in Vermont increased from 300 in 1763 to 85,000 in 1791.

Child mortality rates

The place of women in that society and death rates from childbirth and other causes

The Vermont Republic that existed from 1777 to 1791 and its progressive Constitution

The Year without a Summer (1816)

Migration routes to traverse the 600 miles from Vermont to eastern Ohio

Splits in society and within churches over the issue of slavery

Homesteading and Bounty Lands

Rather than overload your narrative with too many details, put them all into an Appendix.

The above is only a beginning. There is no end of it, but at some point enough has to be enough.

(You will go from wondering what you can write about to wondering what you must leave out.)