

The Laying Down of Words aka Why Write Down Your Stories:  
The Birth of My Writing Group  
Dara Tolbert Brooks, M. Ed.  
Lakewood Ranch Genealogy Society - Monday, April 3, 2023 - 7:00pm

Resource Sheet

Suggestions for jump starting your writing. Go back to your list: What do you want to share? Who do you want to share it with (your audience)? How do you want them to receive it? Then plan your writing according. As you become more in tune with your own writing style you may be able to hone in on the resources available to you. Sometimes looking at or reading something “bad” at least lets you know how you don’t want to come off and may even give you ideas on how to improve.

Below is a short list for you to consider.

**Lynn Palermo** [lynn@familyhistorywritingstudio.com](mailto:lynn@familyhistorywritingstudio.com) – She has an online presence. Get on her mailing list and she will provide topics, strategies and more. I highly recommend her and she has free information. From time-to-time she advertises writing groups, forums, etc. *for a fee*. She’s been around a long time and I think she offers good information. When you register for her Family History Writing Challenge, you’ll receive a daily writing prompt. Use these prompts to jumpstart your writing, develop your skills or as a warm up to your writing sessions. I did this several times and each time I learned something. Your schedules may not allow you to do it every day but the more you write, the better you become.

**Books on Tape, Over Drive and Libby** - I recommend these because you have to listen to them as opposed to reading them. The writing style may have an appeal for you. Some write in first person others third person or narrator style. You can decide what works for your writing style. The narrator’s voice plays a tremendous role in the delivery of the words. If you are carried away into the story then the combination is a good one. Try to figure out what aspect of it really works. It may be the style or the choice of words. Each are available through your library. Over Drive and Libby require an internet connection, phone, laptop, desktop or tablet.

**Television Dramas** such as Perry Mason, Columbo, Murder She wrote. Because they are always running on local stations that carry old programs you will have a steady selection to choose from. This helps on unfolding a scene or building to a climax. It also shows you bad as well as decent writing.

**Genealogical Programs** on PBS, You-Tube and more. Henry Louis Gates, Jr., Diahan Southard and others.

**Penguin and Audible** have a good selection of books that are available for rent or through your local library. There are some writers that I enjoy more than others but spending more time listening to books than reading them I have gained a favorite list of narrators. Some of my favorite narrators are George Guidall – governmental spy novels (for authors Vince Flynn, Craig Johnson – the Longmire series), Tony Roberts – murder / mystery (Stuart Woods) and Barbara Rosenblatt who reads for (author Nevada Barr). Some of my favorite authors are Michael Connelly – detective novels (his Lincoln Lawyer series with characters Mickey Haller and Harry Bosch), Nevada Barr (she writes about National Park Rangers and the areas they patrol) (her Ann Pigeon series).

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Finally, extend yourself a bit and consider the adage, *It Takes a Village*. Sometimes when doing our research, we uncover information about others that are not on our list. Find a way to pass it on. You can post it on a site or send it on to someone on MyHeritage, Ancestry, FamilySearch or other site who seems to be researching the same surnames in your specific place. You can add your name to a site as someone who can help. As an African American I am always looking for access to information to help me over the hurdles created by the institution of slavery.

Places to share *information uncovered* during your research that are *not your research target* but could help others:

A number of projects and websites exist to document records of enslavement that aren't easily located. Slave Deeds of Buncombe County, NC is a compilation of documents that records the trade of enslaved people within the county. The Iredell (NC) Register of Deeds and Court Ordered Slave Sales found in St. Louis Probate Court Records both host similar lists of records.

The Beyond Kin Project

[Descendants of slaveholders, do we still hold a key? - The Beyond Kin Project](#) - Perceived as a way to encourage and facilitate the documentation of enslaved populations, particularly by recruiting the resources and efforts of the descendants of slaveholders. Running across those records related to the enslaved individuals may be of help to someone out there who has been trying to make connections. You never know what piece of information can help. This is a resource to share that information.

Search for a worthy project in your area of interest, or consider starting one if one doesn't already exist. The Afrigeneas Slave Data Collection also accepts user-contributed data culled from a wide variety of records.