



Written Genealogies: The Basics

By Barbara J. Mathews, CG

Family History Library
15 October 2007

A compilation is the ultimate reduction of genealogical data and analysis. Although impressive in print, producing a compiled genealogy is actually simple and straightforward.

Getting Started:

- Who is Your Audience?
- What Does that Audience Need from the Narrative?
- What Does a Good Compiled Narrative Look Like?
- What Function Does a Good Compiled Narrative Serve?
- The Compiled Narrative Format, Simple but Impressive

Compiled Narrative in 4 Easy Steps [with a grin]:

- Step 1: A Good Compilation *Must* Be Built on Good Research
- Step 2: For each family, the First Paragraph Tells All: the Summary Paragraph

- Step 2½: The Citations
- Step 3: The Child Paragraphs
- Step 3½: The Citations
- Step 4: The Biography or Life Story
- Step 4½: The Citations

Books That Are Really Useful to the Writer of the Compiled Narrative:

- Joan Ferris Curran, *Numbering Your Genealogy: Sound and Simple Systems* (Arlington, VA: NGS special publication number 59, 1995).
- Henry B. Hoff, ed., *Genealogical Writing in the 21st Century* (Boston: New England Historic Genealogical Society, 2002).
- Patricia Law Hatcher, *Producing a Quality Family History* (Salt Lake City: Ancestry Inc., 1996).
- Lawrence P. Gouldrup, *Writing the Family Narrative*
- D.G. Fulford and Bob Greene, *One Memory at a Time: Inspiration and Advice for Writing Your Family History*
- Sharon DeBartolo Carmack, *You Can Write Your Family History*
- John Philip Colletta, Ph.D., "Developing Family Narratives from Leads in Sources: The Case of James W. and Nancy Parberry," *National Genealogical Society Quarterly*, vol. 94 [2006], pp. 23-37.

Sample File in Microsoft Word for Register-style Compilations:

- Helen Schatvet Ullmann, CG, "A Template and Suggestions for Writing in Register Style in Microsoft Word," available to the public at:
http://www.newenglandancestors.org/research/database/download_reg_temp.asp