

APGO

Association of Professional Genealogists Quarterly

EVIDENCE EXPLAINED

Citing History Sources from Artifacts to Cyberspace

Third Edition

Explaining

EVIDENCE EXPLAINED

Escaping the Trees to Get an Overview of the Forest

Elizabeth Shown Mills



Helping Clients Preserve Their Stories

Meet Tristan Tolman



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My Unique Project

I help clients publish personal, family, and business histories.

Some Nitty-Gritty Details

Whether it's a person's interesting career, charitable work, military experiences, rise from rags to riches, or their ancestors' journey to America, everyone has a story to tell and can leave a legacy by preserving it.

For personal and business histories, I interview the clients (usually multiple times) and learn their story, then write a history based on what I learned in the interviews and while conducting additional research. For family histories, I typically research the client's ancestry for several months, then once we feel we have obtained enough information, I write the ancestors' stories and put the information together in book format.

I give my clients lots of options for designing their book the way they want it to look. I provide them with choices, then they decide on the book size and length, the chapters, the layout design, the cover, and more. They choose whether to print in black-and-white or color, whether to use footnotes or endnotes, how many pictures to include, whether to create a hard-bound book or a paperback, and what type of cover and paper to use. This way it is truly their book!

For example, one client wanted a published history about his successful business

venture. He wrote a draft explaining how he decided on that specific business, how he got started, the challenges he faced in making it profitable, the decisions and people that helped make it a success, and his plans for the future. He sent the draft to me and I edited it, suggesting needed corrections and clarification. We went back and forth working out the details for a few months. We also organized the book into chapters, selected photos to include, and prepared the acknowledgements. Finally, we had an edited draft, and with that we went to a layout artist. He formatted the interior book design and drafted several different cover options, from which the client chose his favorite. When we received the formatted book draft, I copyedited the entire book and created the index before going to press.

There are many different printing companies, and they often specialize in different things, so their prices vary depending on what the client wants. Some specialize in small runs. Others print large quantities, or print on demand as orders come in, or produce ebooks. Some offer distribution services by filling orders, while others simply print the books and ship them to the author who is responsible for filling the orders. This client wanted his business history to be a 6 x 9 paperback with a full-color cover, interior printed in black only, and with a section of color photos on glossy paper in the middle of the book. We found a printer who was

able to produce exactly what he wanted and the books turned out beautifully. The entire process, from start to finish, took about a year.

Another client wanted a very different type of project. He wanted a published history of his ancestors organized into four sections representing four lines of his pedigree. Before we could produce the book, however, he hired me to conduct in-depth research on these lines. After about two to three years of extensive research, he determined it was time to organize and publish the book. We worked together to determine the chapter sequence and content for each chapter. We wrote a genealogical narrative that told the stories of his ancestors, with hundreds of source citations supporting the facts. We found photos and maps that helped tell the story and break up the text, and rather than include a special section for photos, this client chose

to intersperse the photos throughout the book and print the entire book in color. It was a more expensive option, but it resulted in a beautiful and unique hard-cover book.

I work with layout artists, graphic designers, printing companies, and distribution services as needed to create the finished product. Each client decides how many books to print, whether to sell the books or just make them available to family, and the best ways to get the word out.

How I Started This Service

Twenty-three years ago, my husband and I wrote and published our first book—a dating idea book for teenagers! It was a great success, so we decided to open our own publishing company and continue writing and publishing for ourselves and others. Many years and many books later, I decided to apply the knowledge I'd gained

and offer writing and publishing services to my genealogy clients as well. It has been incredibly fun and rewarding to help my clients preserve their stories in beautiful, custom-designed books that they can share with family, friends, and others.

Advice for Other Pros


Find a niche in the genealogy market that uses your specific skills and makes your business stand out. What can you offer to clients that makes you unique? Also, always do your best work and become known for your excellent product. You will grow a successful business faster by developing loyal, repeat customers and by their referrals than you will by constantly advertising to new potential clients.

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