

Sharing Our Ancestors' Stories: Transforming Family Experiences into Meaningful Narratives



Creating Interesting Stories from Family History– Part 2

The Value of Creating Meaningful Stories

Stefan Walters, Family Therapist, Why Children Need to Know Their Family History, The Guardian.com

Emotional Health

“Children who have a strong “family narrative” enjoy better emotional health.”

Self Control

“The more the children know about their family, the stronger their sense of control over their lives and the higher their self-esteem.”

History

“Hearing stories gives children a sense of their history and a strong “intergenerational self.”

Strength

“We are stronger as part of a tapestry. One thread alone is weak, but, woven together with other threads it becomes unbreakable.”

Why Share Stories?

“ Learning our Ancestor’s stories helps us understand our own lives as well as our family. Their trials and successes lends us strength through difficulties.”



We must assure that our ancestors are remembered by creating meaningful and interesting narratives for future generations.

Carl Earl Davis
1913-1998



Why learning his story
matters to me.



“When the war ended, it would still be months before the men of the 6th Division returned home.

During this time, most, near exhaustion, were fed and nursed back to health while being briefed and essentially deprogrammed.

After 306 days of combat, the last 219 being continuous, all including even the medics, had learned to kill automatically.

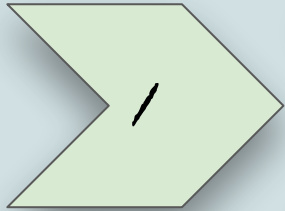
The men of the 6th Division had to gradually get used to the idea of not killing.

They had to get used to the idea of no longer living with a rifle as a constant companion.

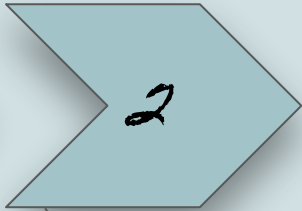
In the years to come, many would continue to experience the effects of the war, including bouts of Malaria and flashbacks.

Creating Meaningful Family Stories

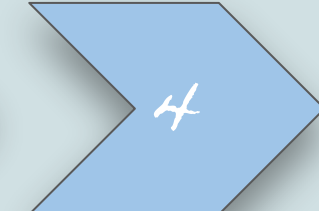
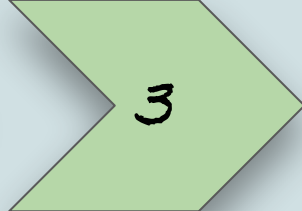
Choose your inspiration
and starting point



Plan and Perform
Research

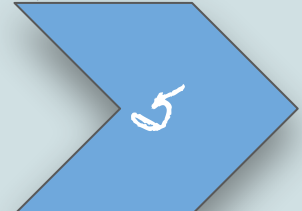


Choose the medium
to use to capture
your story



Refine and polish
your story

Publish and
Share your story



Step 1: Choose Your Subject

Keep it simple

Subject Ideas

Financial Records



Personal Histories & Personal Journals



Handiwork and Recipes



Memorabilia



School & Work Records



Photographs



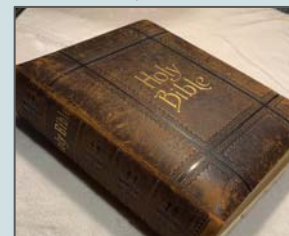
20 Questions

Do you know how your parents met?

Do you know where your mother grew up?

Do you know where your father grew up?

Family Bibles



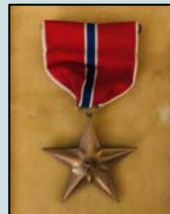
Church Records



Letters



Awards & Programs



Landmarks Maps



Step 2: Choose Format and Recording Method

Format Ideas:

- Essay
- Short Story
- Artwork
- Children's Book
- Photo Book

Recording Ideas:

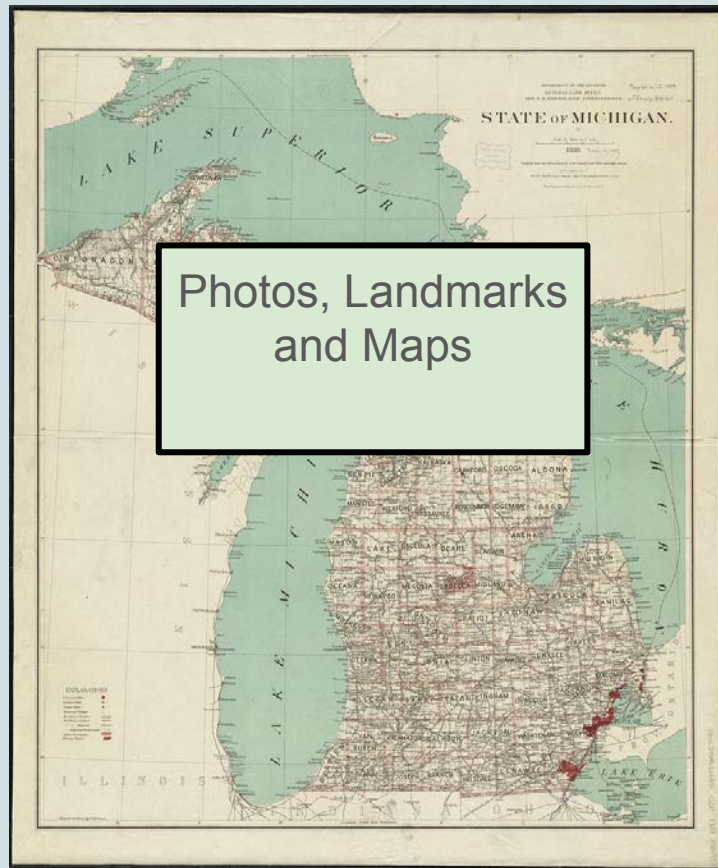
- Word Document
- Google Slides
- Pencil & Paper
- Canva

*Examples- Subject
Matter and Result*

A few ways to share our Ancestors lives
and stories with our families.

Let us keep their names and their lives in
front of us and present in our minds.

Subject Matter



Result

Freimund Acres

Find:

- Corky the Mutt
- Lady
- Scout the German Shepherd
- Peatey the Peacock
- Rivets the Terrier
- Harvey the Goose
- Muffy the Yorkie
- Wild Deer
- White Goat
- Brown Goat
- Grandpa's workshop
- Grandpa's Boat
- Tractor
- The Building
- Grandpa with his pipe
- Grandma
- The Pond
- The Creek
- The Dock
- Lily Pads

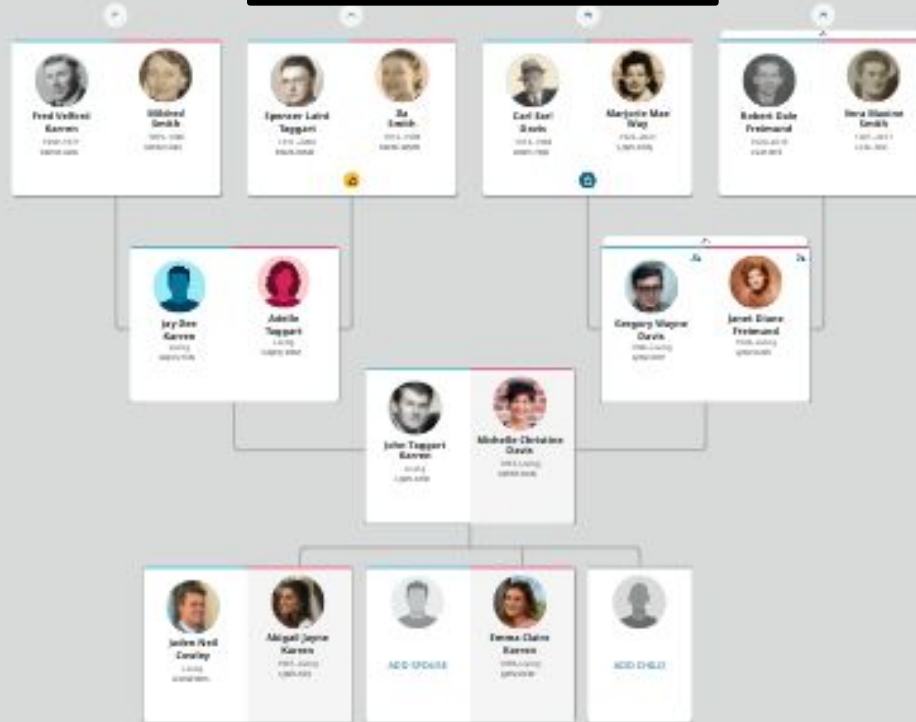


Freimund Acres

Result



Subject Matter

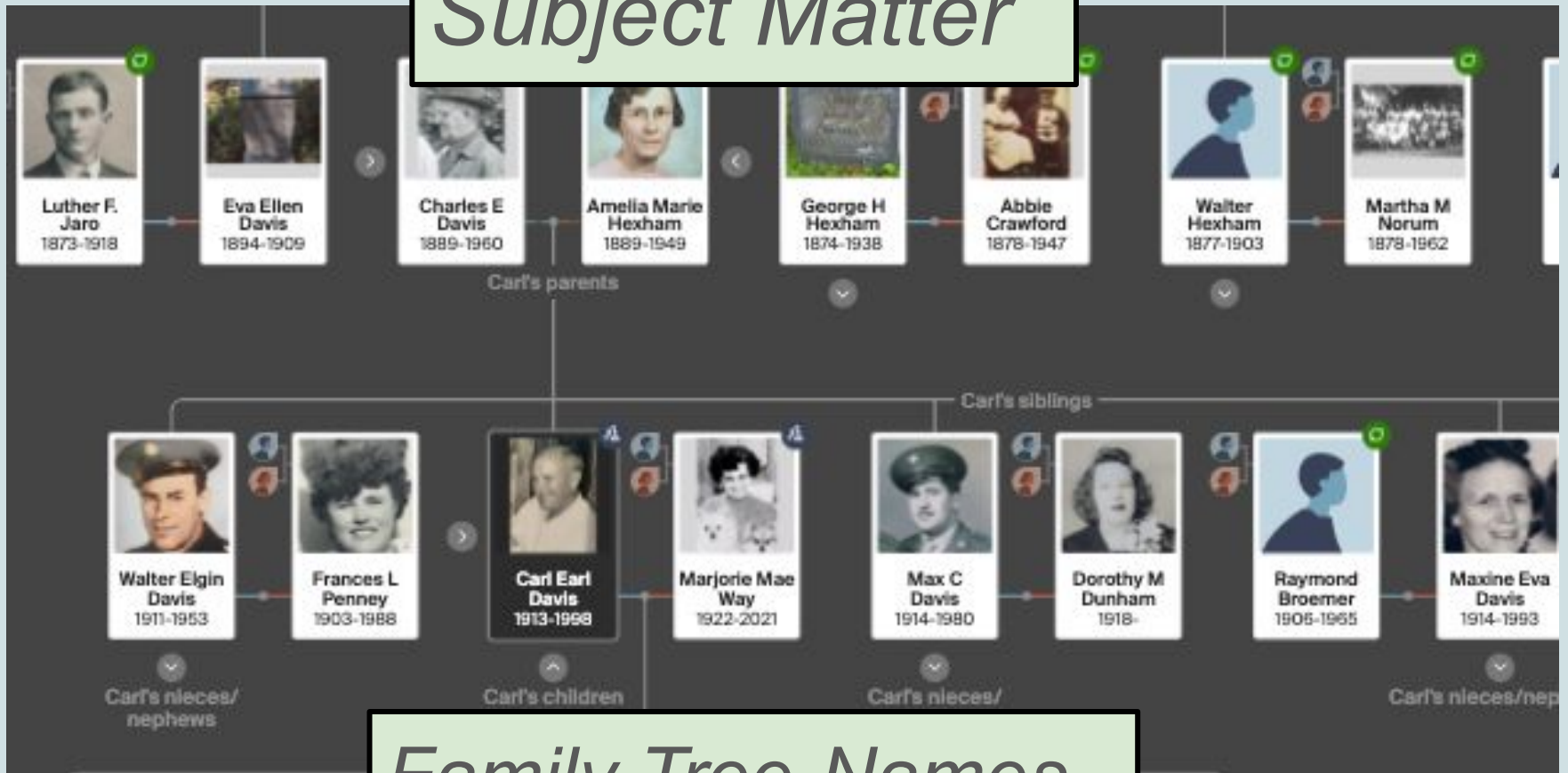


Family Tree-Birthdays

Birthday
Flower Art



Subject Matter



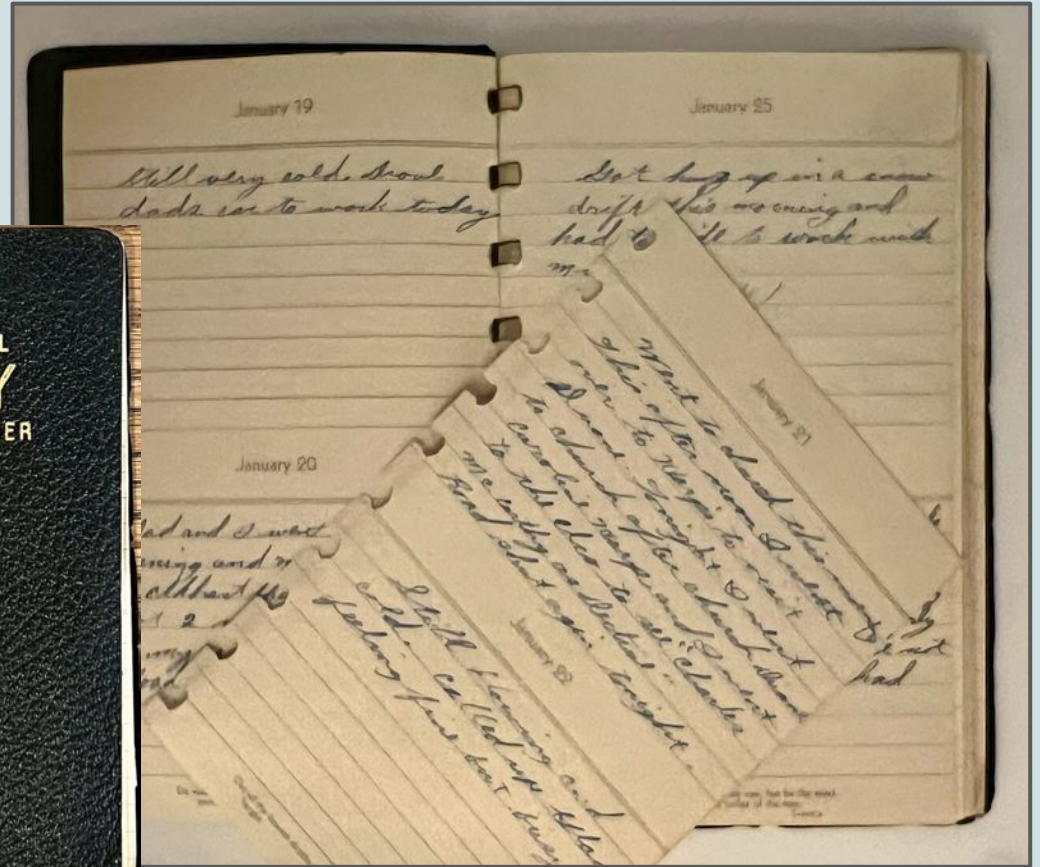
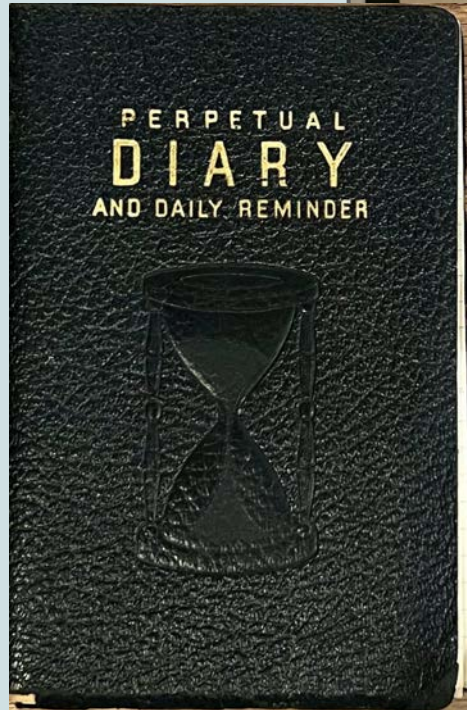
Family Tree-Names

Name Art



Subject

Personal
Histories
and
Journals



Result

Diary and Daily Reminder 1940

Robert Dale Frittsand
Color of hair: Brown
Color of Eyes: Grey

January 1

Solo Hiett, Carl bowers, Gladys Hiett, and myself left the Oakland Ave. Church where we attended New Year's services. We then enjoyed lunch at the Ibric Sandwich shop. I also helped butcher today. Weather, cold and snowy.



Oakland Street Evangelical/Protestant Church

January 2

Worked today. Ran into snow bank coming home from work. Weather, cold and snowy.

January 3

Went shooting with Duane tonight on Simonson Lake. Weather same as yesterday.



Simonson Lake, which was named for Samuel Simonson, a 19th Century farmer. Simonson, a native of Pennsylvania, immigrated to Indiana 1832 with his wife Anna and family of 5 sons and 3 daughters and settled in Oasin Township on the bank of the Lake, now known as Simonson Lake.

January 20

Dad and I went to Cass this morning and Mom and I went to Elkhart this afternoon. Got two new tires on the rear of my car. Road drifted shut again tonight.

January 21

Went to church this morning. This afternoon went over to Harry's to visit Duane. Tonight I went to church and after church Duane and Caroline Harry and I went to the Elca to see "Charlie McCarthy, Detective" Road shut again tonight.



January 22

Still blowing and cold. Called up Gladys- she's feeling fine but busy.

January 23

Got two new front tires tonight. Still snowing and blowing.

January 24

PS It's cold yet, I guess that's all.

January 25

Got hung up in a snow drift this morning and had to ride to work with Mr. Ostrum. (1940 Census shows Mr. Robert Ostrum living in Elkhart Indiana and working for Retail Coal Company as a truck driver.)

January 26

Got my biggest paycheck 42.88 this morning. Went to our class party tonight at George & Beverly Odeff's home. There were not as many there but we had a fine time.



January 27

We went to town this afternoon. Vera rode home from town with us. Went to town tonight to the show "Gulliver and his Travels" a comic Technicolor picture. Also opened our road today. Drifts higher than the car.

January 28

Went to church this morn. Went over to Harry's to visit Duane this afternoon. Duane, Caroline and myself went to church tonight then went to town to get a hamburger.



January 29

Subject

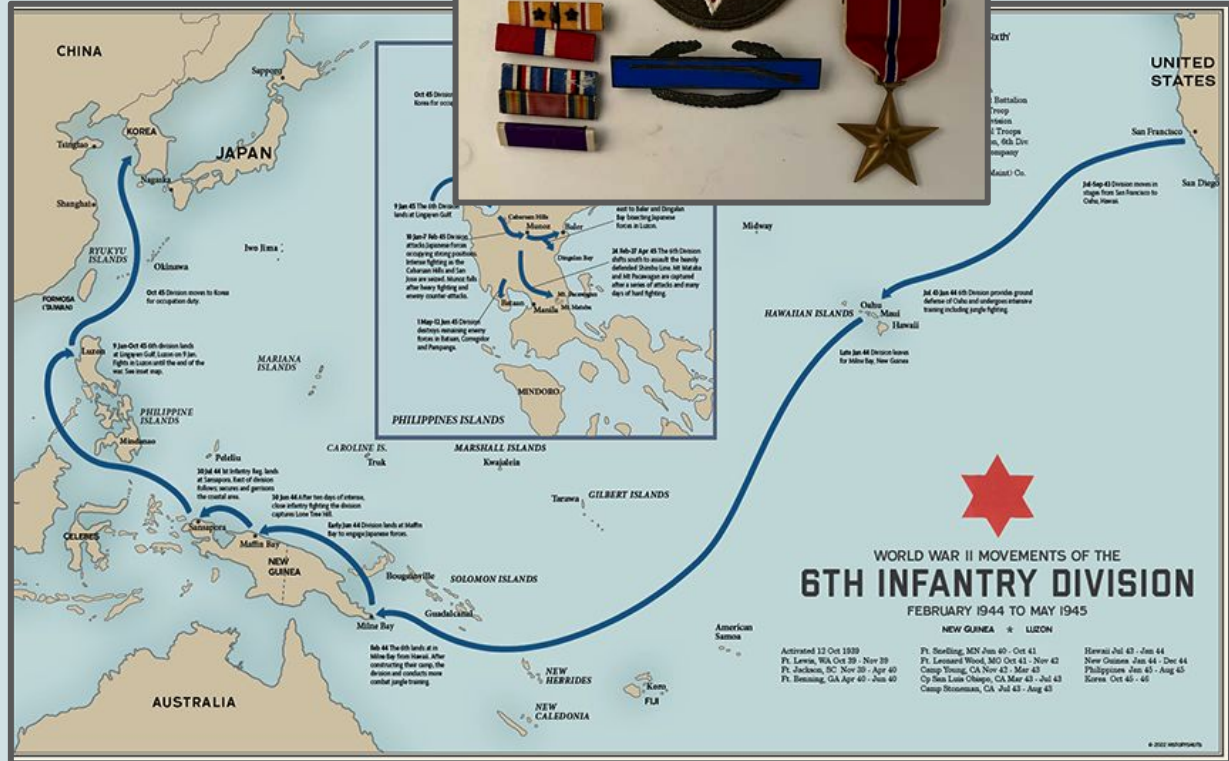
Awards, Newspaper Article, Maps

Sidnaw

Receives Awards—

With the 6th infantry division on Luzon, Pfc. Carl E. Davis, son of Mrs. Amelia Davis of Sidnaw, Michigan, has been awarded the Bronze Star medal and the Purple Heart by the commanding general of the Sixth infantry division for heroism in action against the Japanese at Novaliches, Luzon, P. I. on Feb. 24. When a Jap bullet ignited a phosphorous grenade on the belt of one of his comrades, Davis, heedless of the burns he received, stripped the clothing from his suffering comrade in a heroic attempt to save his life. Davis is a member of the headquarters company of the First infantry regiment of the "Red Star" Sixth infantry division.

Davis has been in the army since Sept. 1942.



WORLD WAR II MOVEMENTS OF THE 6TH INFANTRY DIVISION
FEBRUARY 1944 TO MAY 1945

Activated 12 Oct 1939
Pt. Lewis, WA Oct 39 - Nov 39
Pt. Johnston, SC Nov 39 - Apr 40
Pt. Breunig, GA Apr 40 - Jun 40

Pt. Sterling, MN Jun 40 - Oct 41
Pt. Leonard Wood, MO Oct 41 - Nov 42
Camp Young, CA Nov 42 - Mar 43
Camp Young, CA Mar 43 - Jul 43
Camp Stockman, CA Jul 43 - Aug 43

Hawaii Jul 42 - Jan 44
New Guinea Jan 44 - Dec 44
Philippines Jan 45 - Aug 45
Korea Oct 45 - 46

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Subject Idea

“The 20 Questions,” that tap into different kinds of family stories.

These questions are designed as a starting point for sharing family stories.

*Robin Fivish and
Marshall Duke,
Ph.D, 2016, Emory
University,
psychologytoday.com*

20 Questions: 1-10

1. Do you know how your parents met?
2. Do you know where your mother grew up?
3. Do you know where your father grew up?
4. Do you know where some of your grandparents grew up?
5. Do you know where some of your grandparents met?
6. Do you know where your parents were married?
7. Do you know what went on when you were being born?
8. Do you know the source of your name?
9. Do you know some things about what happened when your brothers or sisters were being born?
10. Do you know which person in your family you look most like?

Subject

*Family
Search
Story from
Memories*

The Chain Came Off

Original Story as told by Don Dyer

“As a teenager I was finally allowed to ride my used bike and go to town with the older boys (a four mile trip) to go to the movie. One night as we were coming home it was very dark (we didn't have lights on our bikes) and as we started down the hill to cross big creek (the scariest place at night) of course I was behind the others when my chain came off and there I was by myself and scared (who knows what was there in the dark anyway). My

older brother, Gene came back and rescued me by putting the chain back on and staying with me down and back up that awful long hill where you continually looked over your shoulder to see what was going to get you. It was not easy for the older boys to peddle up that long hill without out stopping and for a few more years for me but I don't think I stopped that night. THANKS GENE!”

Research

WHO:

Dyer Family- Farmers who had lived in the same area a few generations
Parents and six Children:
Names

WHERE:

Bokchito, Bryan County,
Oklahoma
Dyer Family Farm
Big Creek
Hollywood Movie Theatre

WHEN:
1940s

WHAT:

An adventure tale of Don, the youngest of the six Dyer Children and the lesson he learned about the strength of family ties (the moral of the story)

WHY:

To help the reader get to know the family, place, time period of the Dyers.

As a teenager

How does a teenager feel?
When was he a teenager?

I was finally allowed
to ride my used bike

Why did he have a used
bike?
What kind of bike did a
kid have in 1940s?
His parents cared for him.

and go to town

Where did
he live?
Rural
area-where
was town?

with the older boys

Who were his
brothers?
How much
older were
they?

(a four mile trip)

What was four
miles away?

to go to the movie.

Which movie
theater was
about 4 miles
away?

Research Process

Share

Print and
distribute
copies

Publish on
FamilySearch
and
Ancestry

Notify by
email, call,
text, snail
mail, etc.

Step 6: Share



Lost and Found: A Brother's Love

A story about a used bicycle, a big creek and a hero brother



As told by Don Dyer

Adapted by Michelle Karren

Illustrated by Whitney Davies



Cotton Plant



Peanut Plant

In Bryan County, Oklahoma, my family lived on a sprawling 80-acre farm. I, Don, was the youngest of six children: my sister, Earlene, and four brothers, Lendell, Gene, Gerald, and Royce. We grew crops of cotton and peanuts, and everyone pulled together to work the farm.



With all that wide open space, I yearned for a bicycle to explore my world. Finally, my dream came true when I was given a used bike.



As we settled into the seats, I felt so grown up sitting with my big brothers as the movie flickered to life on the big screen.



Or was it the graceful strides of a white-tailed deer guiding her fawn?

Bibliography:

1. *Slide 3: Stefan Walters, Family Therapist, Why Children Need to Know Their Family History, The Guardian.com*
2. *Slide 4: Painting: One of the Family by Frederick George Cotman Original 1934*
3. *Slide 4,5,6: Robin Fivish and marshall Duke, Ph.D,2016,Emory University, psychologytoday.com,<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-stories-our-lives/201611/the-do-you-know-20-questions-about-family-stories>*
4. *Slide 6 and 7: Duke, M.P., Lazarus, A., & Fivush, R. (2008). Knowledge of family history as a clinically useful index of psychological well-being and prognosis: A brief report. Psychotherapy Theory, Research, Practice, Training, 45, 268-272*
5. *Slide 7: Jessica Andrews, (C) 2001 SKG Music Nashville L.L.C, youtube.com*

Bibliography:

1. *Slide 3: Stefan Walters, Family Therapist, Why Children Need to Know Their Family History, The Guardian.com*
2. *Slide 4,5,6: Robin Fivish and Marshall Duke, Ph.D, 2016, Emory University, psychologytoday.com, <https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/the-stories-our-lives/201611/the-do-you-know-20-questions-about-family-stories>*
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#1

"If there is no one to remember or no evidence of a life accessible in this earthly world a person ceases to exist for those who come after."

Bring your ancestors to life and keep them present.

YOUR FAMILY

2018

