A Guide to
Printing Your Family History


BRIGHAM YOUNG UNIVERSITY
PRINT & MAIL
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We here at BYU Print and Mail are pleased to have the opportunity to help you with your family history. Your history will be the result of many, many hours of research and writing that will be a unique and meaningful contribution to your family. Our experience with thousands of family histories of all sizes enables us to help you make your history the attractive, quality product you envision.

This guide provides information to smooth the process of turning your manuscript into a finished history you’ll be proud to give your family. It does not replace visiting with our family history publishing consultant, but it will give you some step-by-step tips and technical information you’ll want to access as you prepare your history.

**Step 1**

**Plan Your Project**

No matter where you are in the process of researching and writing your history, now is a good time to carefully plan your project if you haven’t already done so. Your plan may need to change, but it will help you organize your work and determine the level of assistance you might need. Following are items to consider as you develop your plan:
**Scope.** Is this history intended to be an exhaustive work on the life and descendants of one person, a gathering of vignettes of several people, or something in between? How many copies will need to be made?

**Length.** The scope of the project will have a great impact on the length. You can estimate pretty closely if you have decided you want a certain number of pages about each person, for example, or you might determine that it will be as long as necessary to accommodate all the information you have found. Having an idea of the length will help you with the other decisions you’ll make about your project.

**Budget.** A general idea of your budget will help you determine how much of the technical aspect of the project you will need to do yourself and how much you can invest in software or professional assistance. You’ll also want to decide who is paying for what. Will your research and production expenses be passed on to purchasers of your work, or will that be a gift to your family? Will individuals in the family pay for their own copies? The answers to these and related questions can guide your financial decisions.

**Photographs.** Photographs capture the interest of even the most reluctant readers. If you will have photographs in your history, see page 6 in this guide for information on scanning them for best quality reproduction.

**Charts.** Charts can help family members understand relationships between people and events. Will a pedigree, family group, timeline, or other chart help clarify vital information for your family?
**Binding.** The scope, length, and budget constraints of your project will affect your decision about how it is bound. Ask our consultant to show you examples of various binding options. We can help you choose the binding that will give your work the look and durability you desire.

![Binding Options]

**Time frame.** Whether this will be a quick pamphlet for a family reunion or a large hardbound book, allow adequate time for preparing your history and achieving the results you desire. If this is a long-term project, having a goal for completion can keep you energized and motivated.

### Step 2
**Visit with Our Consultant**

Once your project is planned, you’re ready to visit with our consultant, either in person or over the phone. If you are able to come to our offices at 701 E. University Parkway, Provo, UT, our consultant will be able to show you samples of paper, printing, bindings, and finished histories. Actually seeing and touching samples can be helpful, but we have many satisfied customers who have never been to our shop. If you can’t come in, please call 801-422-2741 and we will have a consultant speak with you. Whether over the phone or in person, you’ll want to discuss the following:

**Printing method.** The printing method you choose will determine much of the technical aspect of what you do to prepare your history.
• *Photocopying.* Print quality is lower than the other methods, but this is a good choice if you are uncomfortable with computers and have no one to help you, have no photographs, or simply want to reproduce something that has already been printed. You provide a printed copy of your project for us to duplicate.

• *Digital printing.* This is our most popular option for printing histories because the print quality is very high, photographs are reproduced well, and it is economical for smaller quantities. You submit your work to us in a digital format, either on disc or over the Internet (see Submitting Your History for Printing, page 10).

![Indigo Digital Press](image)

• *Offset printing.* If you are looking at printing large quantities of your history, it might be more economical for you to choose this option. It will generally take longer for us to print your history on an offset press, but the print quality is excellent. Preparation and submission of your history are the same as for digital printing, except as indicated for scanning photographs. Our consultant can provide any other specific information you might need.

**Page size.** The standard 8.5x11-inch size is most commonly chosen for histories. It easily accommodates text and photographs on the same
page and is the standard size for genealogical charts. You might want to consider other page sizes to give your history added personality. Our consultant can show you samples and help you choose a size that suits your purposes and fits your budget.

**Photographs.** Following our guidelines below will assure quality reproduction of your photographs—an obvious indication to the reader of the time and care you’ve invested in your history.

**Paper.** A smooth-finished, acid-free, white paper is best if you have photographs. If your project is to be printed on both sides, the paper needs to be opaque enough to limit show-through. Our consultant will help you choose the right paper for your specific needs.

**Binding.** We offer bindings to fit every budget and purpose, from a stapled binding suitable for a small pamphlet to hard bindings for large books. Our consultant can explain the differences between the various binding methods so you can choose the binding that meets your objectives.

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**Step 3**  
**Scan Your Photographs**

Ensuring that your photos look and print as you imagine is a little more involved than most people suppose. The following tips will help you successfully produce high-quality scans that will print well:

- Scan the picture with a target resolution of 300 dpi (dots per inch).
- Never enlarge a photo from within your page layout program; chances are it won’t look like you want when it is printed. Scan images with a target size of 8 x 10 inches. At this size it will fit the page or can be downsized without resolution issues.
• Unless you plan on printing in color, scan everything as gray scale. A color scan takes up at least three times as much disc space as gray scale.

• Scan photographs at the right resolution (ask our consultants what resolution works best for the printing equipment that will be used). Unless you are requested to use a different figure, set your scanner control at 300 dpi for electronic printing and 600 dpi for offset printing press. Resist the temptation to scan at super-high resolution; it won’t improve print quality, but it will significantly slow processing time, and will eat up huge amounts of precious space on your hard drive.

**Important Exception**: Black and White line-art should be scanned at the resolution of the publisher’s printer. For example, if you are using a 600 dpi printer, line-art should be scanned at 600 dpi. Line-art is an image that has only 100% black and 100% white values (no grays). Examples of line art include: certificates, ink drawings, handwriting samples, and typewritten pages. If you have any questions, our consultants can give you more information.

• Unless your page layout software recommends another format, save your scans in the JPEG or TIFF image format (your photo editing software or scanner driver should provide you with this option). JPEG’s are generally smaller than TIFF images but JPEG files can introduce “noise” into the scanned images if the compression is set too aggressively.

This is line-art. Notice there are only two colors: black and white—no grays.
The final rule about working with photographs is this: Just because it looks great on your computer monitor does not mean it will look great when printed. For example, on a computer monitor the 72 dpi scan below looks exactly the same as the 400 dpi scan. However, a picture scanned at 72 dpi will not print as well as one printed at 400 dpi. If you have questions, our consultants will give guidance to ensure that your scanned images reproduce accurately and with the quality that you want in your publication.

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**Step 4**

**Lay Out Your History**

This is the step that will make your history appealing to your prospective readers. Many people choose to do this step themselves with the aid of computer software, advice from friends, and some good examples from which to learn. Another alternative is to hire a graphic designer to do it for you. Either way, our consultant can make valuable suggestions to help you achieve pleasing results. Following are some helpful tips for doing your own layout:

**Spelling and grammar.** Read through your history, looking for mistakes in spelling and grammar. It will be helpful to have other people who have not been involved in the project read it too. They are likely to find errors you haven’t seen because of your familiarity with the material.
Fonts. Use easy to read fonts. Your choice of fonts can have a significant impact on whether or not people will read what you’ve written. To avoid a cluttered appearance, use no more than two or possibly three different fonts.

Margins. Be sure to leave room in the margins for binding and trimming. One inch on each side is usually sufficient. If you like, the inside margin may be widened by an extra 1/4 inch to allow extra space for binding, but that isn’t necessary. Typically, the edges of the book will be trimmed a little in the binding process.

File formats. See “Submitting Your History for Printing” on the following page for information on file formats.

File sizes. Many word-processing programs, including Word and WordPerfect, do not handle large documents well, especially if they contain photographs or charts. A document that is too large can cause the program to crash and any unsaved work will be lost. If your history is very large, you’ll need to save sections as separate computer files. Be sure to number the pages in proper sequence so you don’t have each section starting over with page one.

Step 5
A Thing or Two Before You Finish…

You are on your way to completing your family history! Before you finish up, consider the following:

Run a test. Save yourself the stress and heartache of having to start over because of a technical hang-up. Before printing your whole document, make a mock-up page that includes a sampling of the different elements that will be in your finished history (photos, clip-art, text, etc.). Bring in your mock-up or take it to a publisher to test how the printing process is going to work for you. It’s better to discover a problem early so it can
be fixed with the least amount of effort.

**Make back-up copies.** It is a good habit to always be backing up your work. Someday your computer’s hard drive will most likely crash. Don’t let it go down with the only copy of your family history. Your back-up files can be placed on your flash drive, or you can send them to a close relative for safekeeping on their system.

**Save often.** Along with making a back-up copy, be sure to periodically save your computer documents as you work. Computers have an uncanny ability to crash just before you save a few hours of work.

**Proofreading.** As mentioned before, it’s always good to have others look at your work. With fresh eyes on a project, they are more likely to catch formatting and grammatical errors. When the files are submitted to us, we assume they are ready for print. We don’t do any proofreading of the materials, so please make sure all your corrections have been made before your files are submitted.

**Step 6**

**Submitting Your History for Printing**

When you are ready to submit your files to be printed, you have a couple options. You need to save them first in one of two formats if you plan to transfer it by disc to a publisher: application files or print-ready files (includes PDF). Ask your publisher which they prefer.

**Files on Disc.** Because most print shops will require you to submit your work in a print-ready file format, the following information is most important. There are a number of print-ready formats, the standard of which is a PDF file. Most print shops are set up to accept these files.

Print-ready files are nice because they are platform and application independent (which means they can be printed without any of your software programs...
from either Macintosh or PC-compatibles). Print-ready files also have the benefit of embedded fonts and graphics. As long as the file is made correctly it will print without problems, but please make sure to review your newly created PDF; it’s rare, but sometimes a problem may occur during the transition into a PDF. It’s best to catch problems before submitting the file to the printer. You cannot edit print-ready files once they are created, but it is very easy to create a new PDF file to submit.

**Online Submission.** You can also submit your files online to BYU Print and Mail. Your files must be in PDF format to use this service.

Simply go to our online submission site: www.cougarprints.byu.edu

- Begin with “Start my order”
- Choose the “Family History” option and click “Next”
- Browse to your files and upload all of them, adding them one at a time When you are finished, click “Next”
- Choose the type of binding you want, click “Next”
- Give us your email address, name and phone number
- Click “Submit”

Nothing could be easier!

**Conclusion**

Pulling together a family history is not an easy task, but it is without question one of the most rewarding activities you can be doing with your time. The end product will provide a wonderful depository for family stories, traditions, and other memories. The fruits of your labors will be appreciated for generations to come.
BYU Print & Mail Offers You the Following Services

Invitations
CD/DVD Duplication
Photo Books
Variable Data Printing
Coil Binding
Hard Binding
Perfect Binding (paperbacks)
Family History Books
Laminating
Shrink Wrapping
MTC Delivery
Ward Directories
Announcements
Posters
Christmas Cards
Book Printing
Brochures