

From Genealogy to Narrative

For families that already have dates, records and trees but need a readable human story.

This is preparation, not homework. You do not need complete dates, perfect memory, or a box of scanned records. Circle what helps. Leave the rest. Uncertainty is part of an honest history.

Before we speak

- Circle five records that changed what you understood about the family.
- Identify people who are over-documented and under-known.
- List contradictions between records and oral memory.
- Choose a narrative spine: migration, family business, one branch, one place, or one generation.

Gather only if it is easy

- GEDCOM printout or family tree
- Key certificates and census extracts
- Research notes with sources
- A list of unresolved questions

Prompts worth thinking about

- Which record surprised you?
- What does the tree fail to explain?
- Where does the paper trail go silent?
- Which relationship needs context?
- What would a non-genealogist actually want to read?

Set your boundaries first

Before the interview, decide what may be explored, what should be handled carefully, and what is off limits. You can change those boundaries later. A useful history does not require surrendering privacy.

After the first conversation

No quotation is given before the first conversation. If the project is a fit, use the Story Mixer to show the balance you want - emotional depth, humour, intimacy, historical context, voice and boundaries. I then assess the actual scope and normally send a written quotation within 24 hours.

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