



Western Massachusetts Genealogical Society, Inc.

Share Your Family History with a Blog!

By Joanne Mason

October is Family History Month, and it's a perfect time to think about ways to share the stories and photos you find while climbing your family tree. There are several ways to go about this. You might start a scrapbook or a special photo album. But have you ever considered a blog?

A blog is a website that is updated regularly with new content, with the most recent articles coming up first. You can post stories, photos and other images, videos, and more. You can also provide links to other internet sites. You can set it up for everyone to see, or have it password-protected and limit views to people you specify.

Why Blog?

Why start a blog about your family history?

- **You can share information quickly.** Many of us have relatives in far-flung places who are interested in knowing more about the family, but don't live close enough to go through boxes of photos and memorabilia with us. When you update your blog, your relatives can read about your discoveries immediately.
- **Readers can comment on your posts.** You never know when readers might have information you're looking for. You might love your grandmother's family-famous green bean, potato, and salt pork dish, but have no idea how to make it yourself. One of your readers might have the recipe. Others might share happy memories of picking the beans in Grandmother's vegetable garden.

- **It could help other genealogists with their research.** When I search online for information about my ancestors, I often see blog posts that others have written about them, their home areas, or the time period during which they lived. That has provided me with clues for my own research. Your blog might do the same for another genealogist.

Blogging platforms have been making it easier to get started, even for those who are not tech-savvy. Most have a variety of templates to choose from, and you can customize them to suit your own needs. Some of the more popular platforms are:

Blogger.com

Wordpress.com

Squarespace.com

Currently, Blogger and WordPress offer free plans, which can help you decide whether blogging is for you. Squarespace's plans start at \$12 per month.

Points to Consider

Before you publish your blog, keep these points in mind:

- **Privacy!** This is a huge concern, and an important one. Your relatives might not be keen on the idea of your blogging about family history. Before I started my blog, I talked to my relatives about it, assuring them that I was not out to reveal any family secrets. I follow a few ground rules too. I don't write anything about family members currently living. If I were to do so, I would check with them first. The same goes for photographs. I will not post photos of any living family member without permission. Also, I try to keep posts positive. While every family has skeletons in the closet, I'm not interested in sharing them.

If you'd like to limit your audience to specific people, you can always password-protect your blog. With this setup, your readers need to type in a password to access your content. It is not available to anyone else.

Be sure to review the privacy policies of your blogging platform and be aware of libel laws if you have any concerns.

- **Topics.** What should you write about? Here are some ideas to get you started:

- ✓ A genealogy trip you've taken.
- ✓ The anniversary of an important event.
- ✓ Holiday traditions.
- ✓ Favorite recipes.
- ✓ Unusual professions.

Remember, a post doesn't have to be a written story. It can be a photograph or other image. I've posted photos of my ancestor's needlework, letters, and autograph books. A post can also be a video or a sound recording.

Check out my blog for ideas of possible content: www.dotblossoms.com

Resources

If you're interested in starting a blog, I highly recommend the website [GeneaBloggers Tribe](#). You'll find hundreds of member genealogy blogs for inspiration. You'll also find [daily writing prompts](#), [a calendar of ideas](#), and a [page of resources](#) to help make your blog the best it can be.

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