

Writing and Publishing Your Family History

Class 5: The Publishing Process

Sharon Inglis, sharon.inglis@nehgs.org

Steps in the Publishing Process

DIY or get help?		
Step	You	Someone else*
1 - Write	✓	
2 - Edit your manuscript	✓	✓
3 - Select illustrations	✓	
4 - Scan, crop, and edit images	✓	✓
5 - Design and lay out pages	✓	✓
6 - Proofread pages	✓	✓
7 - Create front matter	✓	✓
8 - Design a cover	✓	✓
9 - Index		✓
10 - Print	✓ (booklet/binder)	✓ (book)
11 - Distribute your work	✓	✓

* Friend or family member, freelance editor or designer, or publishing service

You are writing (Step 1), but to find a professional to edit your work (Step 2), see **Where to Find Help** below. You likely have family photos already, and rights-free historical or geographical or biographical context images can be found online to complete Step 3. Steps 4 through 8 can be done by you or someone else depending on your skill level, time available, and budget.

Indexing (Step 9) is best done by a professional. Who prints (Step 10) depends on what your final product will be. Distribution (Step 11) could be farmed out to an online or full-service vendor if you choose.

Where to Find Help

FULL-SERVICE PUBLISHING VENDORS

These companies have experience doing family history publications and we have samples of their work in our library:

- Genealogy House genealogyhouse.net
- Legacy Books legacybooks.com
- A Life in Print alifeinprint.com
- Heron Creek Press heroncreekpress.com

FREELANCE PROFESSIONALS

Editing & Design: The Editorial Freelancers Association website is a good place to find professionals to help you with your writing and/or someone to edit your work. You can find design professionals at this site as well if you need help designing and laying out pages or a cover. Go to the “Hire a Freelancer” tab, choose “Member Directory” and then “Search the Directory” to check off the skills you are looking for: <https://www.the-efa.org>

Indexing: A good index is vital to any family history publication. You can find professional indexers listed on the Editorial Freelancers Association (EFA) website (above) or the American Society for Indexing (<https://www.asindexing.org>). Go to “Find an Indexer” then “Indexer Locator” to select “Genealogies” under “Types of Materials.” For someone who is familiar with the intricacies of genealogical publications, use “Find a Professional” and “Directory” at the Association of Professional Genealogists website, then search for Keyword “index”: <https://www.apgen.org>

MORAL SUPPORT FROM AMERICAN ANCESTORS

If you have other questions or concerns, you can set up a consultation with me or Editorial Director Cécile Engeln on taking the next step. Some consultation time is free with certain levels of American Ancestors membership, or you can pay by the hour. To book a consultation, fill out the form at [Consultations | American Ancestors](#) or email consultations@nehgs.org

Editing: Why, When, Who?

WHY?

- Because a spell checker isn't enough.
- Because accurate names, dates, and numbering really matter in a genealogy.

WHEN?

- Once you have a draft of at least two chapters.
- If you need a break from writing.

WHO?

- You, because you know your content better than anyone else.
- Someone else, because you are too close to what you've written.

Genealogical Content Review

- Check that you are using the accepted style of bold small caps, small caps, italics, parentheses, superscript generational numbers.
- Check your *Register-style* or *Ahnentafel* numbering system.
- Check that the order in which you present vital event data is consistent and the punctuation you use is correct.
- Watch for unnecessary repeating of place names. If you've already mentioned Framingham, Middlesex County, Massachusetts in a sketch, you need only say "Framingham" thereafter in **that** sketch. Framingham in the next sketch, however, gets its county and state back.
- Use "search and replace" to find, for example, instances of "born" or "died" spelled out in child lists and change them to "b." and "d."
- Make sure the name and birth and marriage dates in a person's main sketch match what you have in their child list entry.
- Check that dates make sense; it's very easy to mistype 1945 instead of 1845! And we don't want any women having babies after they're dead or when they are only 8 years old!

Book Design Basics

- The typeface you use must be easy to read. A hint: decorative fonts and italic text are not very legible in large chunks.
- You always want to use the same typography – meaning typeface and point size – for all chapter titles and the same typography for all subheads. This consistent look for the headings helps your readers understand and benefit from your work.
- You need to be certain that your page margins are adequate for printing as a book. Don't try to save pages (and money) by jamming too much text onto each page or you may end up with content being "sucked into" the binding or cut off on the sides.

Your Book's "Specs"

If your book is a short family story, like the little *Bigamist* book from Class 1, you'll probably want a small trim size like 6 x 9. If your book is going to be very long and you want it not to be too thick, pick a larger trim like 8¼ x 10¼ (the size of Metcalf-Small book from Class 1). These sizes are both common for printers. If you're doing the printing at home, you should use a standard letter-size 8½ x 11 trim. It doesn't have to be plain white; you can buy nicer "resume" paper at a craft store and print on that.

Do you want paperback or hardcover? A paperback will be less costly to produce, but it isn't as sturdy and can't have a full-color illustrated dust jacket. A hardcover doesn't **have** to have a dust jacket, though. You can put images on the cover like you would see with a school textbook or just have the cloth case of a hardcover book embossed with type for the title and author.

If you want to use illustrations throughout your book at relevant points in the story, you may need to move your source citations to be a section of **endnotes** at the back of the book, rather than **footnotes**. This will allow for more “real estate” for images on the pages of the book.

If you like the traditional, scholarly look of footnotes, you may need to limit your photos to one or two dedicated sections and put your page numbers in a running **head** at the top of the page to avoid too much going on at the bottom. Note that, in Word, you can change your footnotes to endnotes with the touch of a button in the Footnotes menu.

Page Layout Rules

- Page size in Word should be the trim size of your book.
- Aim for a ¾" to 1" gutter (inside) margin. Top, bottom, and outside margins should be at least ½".
- Keep line length between 63 and 72 characters; for 8 ½ × 11 books, consider using two columns.
- Odd-numbered pages are always on the right.
- The first page after the front matter is always Arabic page 1.
- Header/footer: Book title on the left (verso) and chapter title on the right (recto).
- Justified text looks neater than left-aligned (rag right) text.
- Place illustrations next to or just after what they relate to.
- Be consistent with head and caption style.
- Watch that genealogical styles are applied correctly (bold, small caps, italics, etc.).
- Don't allow blank right-hand pages.
- Don't allow “bad breaks” from page to page.

Hierarchy of Heads

- Chapter title
- Genealogical intro
- Caption
- Body text
- Subhead

Generation Two

==chapter opener image = Small 154 Fairbanks House Dedham MA 1915 postcard Michael Metcalf married Jonathan Fairbanks' daughter Mary ==

Michael² Metcalf

born in Norwich, England, August 29, 1620

died in Dedham, Massachusetts, March 25, 1654

Michael² Metcalf, the eldest surviving son of Michael¹ and Sarah (Elwyn) Metcalf, was named after his father and a brother who died in infancy. Michael² emigrated with the family when he was 16 years old. After spending his childhood in England, this elder son would become part of the generation that firmly established the community of Dedham. He was admitted as a freeman at 22 years of age on May 13, 1642, only five years after his father joined the town.¹⁰⁴

Marriage to Mary Fairbanks

Two years later, he married on April 2, 1644, Mary Fairbanks, who was born at Soverby, Halifax Parish, Yorkshire, England, on February 3, 1622, to Jonathan Fairbanks and Grace (Smith) Fairbanks.¹⁰⁵ Lorenzo Fairbanks suggested that Jonathan Fairbanks had immigrated to Boston by 1633; however, genealogist Robert Charles Anderson does not believe he had arrived in New England by then.¹⁰⁶ In any case, Jonathan Fairbanks settled

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The Fairbanks House, Dedham, Massachusetts, where Michael Metcalf married Jonathan Fairbanks' daughter Mary.

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Life in Dedham

Church life was extremely important to the early inhabitants of Massachusetts. The first church in Dedham was established by eight men on November 8, 1638, as an independent entity with no religious affiliation. It was composed of two parts—the parish and the church. Apparently the first several years of the church saw much dissension, prompting several families to leave the community. Robert Charles Anderson points out, "As a result of all this movement, the immigrants of 1637 and 1638 soon attained a dominant position in civil as well as ecclesiastical affairs."¹⁰⁸ Town tax revenues supported the church, and eligible males were allowed to vote on parish matters. To belong to the church, one had to apply and be accepted.¹⁰⁹ Being accepted in

Michael² Metcalf 19

Proofreading Checklist

- Are all text and all images present in the pages? Are the illustrations in the right places?
- Are the image captions correct? Are names spelled the same as they are in the text?
- Is the head structure and styling of header text correct?
- Did the genealogical numbering and formatting come through correctly?
- Check that the designer restored any lost italics for book titles, ship names, etc.
- Check for any bad page breaks.
- Check that the running heads or feet are correct.

Front Matter Parts

- Title page
- Copyright page
- Table of contents

End Matter Parts

- Endnotes (if you didn't use footnotes)
- Appendices: Charts, Coverage of allied families (families related by marriage), Transcriptions of letters, wills, diaries, interviews, etc.
- The all-important index!
- Text and Illustration Credits (if necessary)

Indexing Women's Names and Unknown Names

- Married women are indexed under *all* the surnames they have ever had:

Goodale

Elizabeth (Parlett) (Taylor),
4, 7, 13 [2nd marriage]

Parlett

Elizabeth, 4, 7, 13 [maiden
name]

Taylor

Elizabeth (Parlett), 4, 7, 13
[1st marriage]

- For unknown given or maiden names, use five underscores:

Bullard

_____, 56

Ann (_____), 197

- For unknown surnames, use a separate section at the end of the index:

Unknown Surnames

Helen, 55

Jim, 253

Final Checklist

- Page numbers in the TOC are correct
- Chapter/section names in the TOC match what is on the pages of your book
- All verso chapter/section headers/footers are correct
- Book title is the same on half-title, title page, recto running head/foot, cover stamping / dust jacket / cover
- Correct year on copyright page

Manuscript to Pages

