

Family History Research and Life-Writing Workshops
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Short Bio: Duane Roen has been tracing his roots since his teenage years, building a database with more than 32,000 ancestors. He and his wife, Maureen Roen, have also been recording their family history since 1978 by writing more than 19,000 daily journal entries on their children and other family members. Combining his professional and personal interests, Duane worked with colleagues to establish courses on writing and recording family history at Arizona State University. He also is founding coordinator of the Project for Writing and Recording Family History in the College of Integrative Sciences and Arts at ASU.

Longer Bio: It's no secret that one of my greatest passions in life is family history and writing about life experiences. It all started when Grandma Roen showed me the Norwegian family Bible when I was in my mid-teens. She opened the cover to reveal the name of Grandpa Roen, along with the names of his siblings and parents, as well as their dates of birth and my great-grandparents marriage date. I was instantly hooked, and I've been doing research ever since.

Another of my passions is teaching writing, which I have been doing for more than five decades, most recently at Arizona State University. One of the principles that I learned early on is that everyone can learn to write effectively and that there is always something new to learn. I've been writing for nearly seven decades and teaching writing for more than five, and I'm still learning.

Anyone who has done much family research has collected lots of names, dates, and places. However, they usually have collected relatively few stories. When my wife (Maureen) and I realized that, we became determined to leave lots of stories for future generations of our family. On the day that our son Nick was born in 1978, we started a daily family journal, and we have written in it every day since then. We are now approaching 20,000 pages of journal entries full of stories about our family, as well as some events in the world. Reading an entry from forty-five years ago is like watching a video of what happened that day—all the memories come flooding back.

Because I am committed to helping others have their family memories come flooding back, I have developed more than sixty workshops that generate memories about a wide range of life's experiences with family. Some of those topics include family and food, family photos, heirlooms, holidays, joyous moments, a conversation with an ancestor, family names, gratitude, childhood toys, family lore, humor, love, and dozens more.

I've offered these workshop about 500 times in the last fifteen years, and all of them bring me much joy because I get to hear lots fascinating stories that people share. I get as excited about these workshops just as much today as I did when I first started offering them. And people tell me that my excitement is pretty obvious. During the workshops, we discuss questions that focus on memories. We then jot down ideas, and then we share what we have written. It's interesting to see how sharing stories evokes memories for others in the room. It's very contagious. Of course, those memories spark a wide range of emotions too, and some of those emotions get our eyes to water a little. And there's always plenty of laughter in the room.

I hope that you will consider joining me for some of these workshops so that we help one another tell stories about our experience with our families.

Workshop Descriptions

- 1. Getting Started with Family History Research: Tips for Beginners:** Have you thought about tracing your family's history but don't know where to begin? Duane Roen will share some readily-available

resources, tools, and strategies for getting started with researching your roots. This workshop is designed for those who have little or no experience in researching family history.

2. **Writing about Family Members:** Family members can be memorable for all sorts of reasons. The uncle who told stories that were filled with embellishment. The aunt who was the best mentor ever. The grandparent who spoiled us at every turn. The cousin who is an exemplary model of empathy and compassion. The sibling who brings out the best in us. The parent who loved us unconditionally. The child who makes us proud every day. The grandchild whom we spoil at after turn. We will discuss and write about family members whose words and deeds are etched in our memories.
3. **Writing about Family Events:** Family events such as holiday gatherings, weddings, birthday parties, vacations, and others often loom large in our memories. But there are also smaller events that can also have a large impact on our lives: A dinner conversation in with parents who helped us better understand our own emotional intelligence. Making a birdhouse with a grandparent. Watching an uncle or aunt navigate the challenges of an illness. Observing a sibling graciously win or lose an athletic event. Reuniting with a long-lost cousin. A family conversation about a movie.
4. **Writing about Family Places:** Some places are special to families—our childhood homes, other family members' homes, places of worship, favorite vacation destinations, and others. Some are memorable because we spend so much time at them. Others are memorable even if we have been there only a few times—e.g., a family cemetery in another state, a great-grandparent's birthplace in another part of the world. In this workshop, we will discuss a range of family places, and each of us will write about one of them.
5. **Writing Family History for Special Occasions:** How to write family history for special occasions. Duane Roen will discuss ideas for sharing your stories with family members and friends to celebrate special occasions such as birthdays, weddings, anniversaries, and holidays. He will discuss the experiences that offer rich material for writing about cherished moments in our lives. The workshop will include an easy hands-on activity that will get participants writing (**so please bring paper and pen or laptop**). Participants will be invited to share their writing with the group. In turn, the group will be encouraged to offer constructive feedback that will help writers develop their writing further.
6. **Writing about Family Photographs:** Family photographs offer rich opportunities for writing about family history. For this session, please bring one or more family photos—either a physical copy or a mental image. Duane Roen will introduce several writing activities for seeing the descriptive and narrative details found in those photos (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).
7. **Writing about Family Heirlooms:** Family heirlooms offer rich opportunities for writing about family history. For this session, please bring one or more family heirlooms—either the physical object or a mental image of it. Duane Roen will introduce several writing activities for seeing the descriptive and narrative details found in those heirlooms (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).
8. **Making Your Own Family History: Keeping a Journal:** How are you making history? Duane Roen will discuss keeping a diary or journal to record and reflect on our daily activities. Duane will begin the session by talking about the daily journal that he has kept with his wife, Maureen. Together they have written more than 19,000 pages as they have captured family stories to pass down to future generations. Participants will write a journal entry (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**). Participants will be invited to share their writing with the group. In turn, the group will be encouraged to offer constructive feedback that will help writers develop their writing further.
9. **Weaving Cultural History into Our Family History Writing:** Sometimes family historians have only names, dates, and places for ancestors. But the more we gather names, dates, and other genealogical

facts, the more we yearn for more personal connections to and understanding of those who came before us, found in stories about their lives and accounts of their daily struggles, hopes, and dreams. How can we enrich the stories that we write about our ancestors if we have relatively few details about their lives? Duane Roen will talk about using cultural/social history to flesh out the stories that we write about ancestors. Such history can give us a better understanding of what our ancestors experienced.

10. **Writing about Family and Food:** In this workshop, we will consider the roles of food in our family experiences. How has food helped to define family events and places? How do we associate certain foods with specific family members? What special roles do certain foods play in holidays and rituals? How have our relationships with specific foods changed over time? Participants will respond to some questions to write about food (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).
11. **The Role of Music in Our Families:** Music plays many roles for each of us and our families. For example, when we hear a song from our teenage years, it can bring back a flood of memories about what was happening in our lives at the time. Or when we hear our mother's favorite song, it can make us think about her. When we hear a contemporary song, it can evoke a range of emotions—either because of the lyrics or the music. For example, “You’ve Lost That Loving Feeling” has frequently been played at weddings even though its words tell a sad story. In this workshop, we will write about songs that have been meaningful to us and/or other members of our families (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).
12. ***It's a Wonderful Life: How Have You Affected the Lives of Others:*** In the 1946 film *It's a Wonderful Life*, George Bailey (played by Jimmy Stewart) is so overwhelmed by problems in his life that he wishes that he had never been born. In the next section of the film, he learns what life would have been like if he had not been born, and he comes to appreciate the positive—and even lifesaving—effect he has had on the lives of family and friends. In this workshop we will write about how the lives of our family and friends would be different if each of us had not been born (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).
13. **“How to Live Forever”: Leaving a Personal Legacy for Future Generations:** There are many ways to reflect on our lives, but an especially important question to ask is “How do I want family and friends to remember me?” Of course, it is a very personal question, but it gets at the core of who we are. What are your values? How have those values guided your journey through life? How have/will those values shape the memories that friends and family have of you now and when you are gone? How will your life connect you to future generations? We will write about our personal legacies (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).
14. **Your Family in the Americas:** Whether your ancestors are indigenous to the Americas, came via migration, bondage or immigration, you will have an opportunity to explore writing about that experience in this session (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**). If you don't know much about your family's story, we will discuss strategies for learning more.
15. **Writing about Family Traditions:** Families have traditions. Some of them are centuries old—e.g., eating holiday foods that were eaten in our ancestors' home counties. Some are relatively recent—e.g., taking a photo on the first day of school each year. Sometimes we know the origins of our traditions; sometimes we may not ever realize that something is a tradition. In this workshop, we will write about family traditions that are important to us or ones that we no longer observe, (so please bring paper and pen or a laptop.)
16. **Favorite Family Holidays:** Families observe and celebrate a range of holidays for religious, secular, historical, familial, or even whimsical reasons. In this workshop, each of us will write about a favorite family holiday—how and why we celebrate it (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).

17. **Our Role Models:** From childhood to today, we have role models who have shaped us in diverse ways. Maybe our eighth-grade language arts teacher showed us how to nurture learning and learners. Maybe a grandparent lived a life that taught us the importance of empathy and compassion. Maybe a parent showed us the importance of sacrifice in the service of others. In this workshop, each of us will write about a person who has served as role model for us and others (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).
18. **An Event in the World That Changed My Family's Story:** Events in the world can affect people many people in many ways. For example, the Irish potato famine drove many people to leave Ireland in the late 1840s. Perhaps, though, a smaller event had a major impact on our family—e.g., a fire that caused the family to quit farming. In this workshop each of us will write about some large or small event that changed the course for our family (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).
19. **The Most Joyous Moment:** Life is full of moments that range from the sad to the joyous. In this workshop, we will each write about the most joyous moment in our lives (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).
20. **The Nature and Roles of Work in Our Families:** People work to earn a living, but the nature of work varies across individuals and generations. For example, in 1900 approximately 40% of the U.S. population lived on farms. By 2016, that number had dropped to 1%. The nature of some kinds of work has also changed dramatically in the last century—from our grandparents' generation to ours—especially because of emerging technologies. The roles of work also vary across individuals even within a single generation in a family. For example, some of us see work as little more than a way to pay the bills; others see their careers as an important part of their identities. In this workshop, we will write about our own views of work—and perhaps contrast those views with those of other family members (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**). We will also talk about resources for finding out about the nature of work in our ancestors' lives.
21. **Writing Autobiographies and Memoirs:** Learn about strategies and resources for writing autobiography and memoir to tell your family's story. We will also engage in a writing activity based on a series of questions (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).
22. **Using the Techniques of Creative Nonfiction to Writing about Family History:** Would you like to jazz up your family history writing? In this session, Duane Roen will share a range of simple techniques that creative nonfiction writers use. We will engage in a writing activity (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).
23. **Writing Obituaries—An Historical Document:** We will discuss strategies for writing obituaries that will help future family historians as they conduct research on their ancestors. We will discuss some examples that exemplify some of these strategies. If time permits, we will also begin to draft obituaries during the session, and we will share a few of them (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).
24. **Writing Eulogies:** We will discuss strategies for writing eulogies that reflect the priorities of the person's life and that celebrate the person's life. We will also draft eulogies during the session (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**).
25. **The Conversation That I Wish I Could Have:** There are moments in our lives when we wish that we could have a conversation with an ancestor who is no longer alive. In this workshop, we will write questions that we would like to have with an ancestor (**so please bring paper and pen or a laptop**). Some of us may even take the next step and invent a dialog with that person. For example, it could be a conversation with an ancestor who immigrated to the United States in the 1800s.

26. **Publishing Your Family History:** Although many people automatically consider books to be the best media for publishing family histories, there are many other ways to make your family history writing available to interested readers. In this workshop, we will spend some time discussing book publishing, but we will also consider a range of digital media and venues that are more cost effective than printed books and that can more easily reach a larger audience.
27. **Tracing Your Norwegian Roots:** The resources for doing Norwegian genealogy are amazing: they go back to the 1500s, they are online, and they are free. Duane Roen, who has been tracing his Norwegian ancestry since he was a teenager (“Roen” [“Raaen”] is a Norwegian farm name), will share resources and tips for finding information about your ancestors.
28. **Using Cemetery Records for Family History Research:** Family historians can access a wide range of sources for conducting research, including cemetery records. In this workshop, we will talk about how to find cemetery records and how to make good use of them. Even though these records contain limited information, they can lead us to other sources that can unlock the mysteries of our ancestors’ lives.
29. **Recording Oral Histories with Family Members:** We will talk about some of the resources that are available, and how to use those resources. We will talk about informed consent, as well as permission to record interviews and to archive those recordings. We will also discuss recommended practices and sample questions for interviewing family members. We will conduct a mock interview during the session. There will be time to write questions that you’d like to ask a family member.
30. **Why Do Family History:** Duane Roen will describe some of his experiences with family history research, sharing his favorite stories. As he does so, we will discuss similar experiences of those who participate in the workshop.
31. **Names in My Family:** Family members have first names (given names), middle names, and last names. Each of those names has an origin and a meaning. For example, “Duane” is a Gaelic name meaning “dark one,” and “Roen” is a Norwegian farm name (“Raaen”) meaning “rapidly running water.” Throughout history, naming practices have varied around the world, and in recent history, some names have gone in and out of favor. For example, “Duane” was pretty common in the United States in the middle of the twentieth century; now it is pretty rare. Besides naming practices and the historical means of names, each of us has emotions that we associate with our names. In this workshop, we will write about our own names or the names of family members to explore what we know about them and how we feel about them.
32. **The Role of Play in Our Lives:** When we think of play, our first inclination is to see it as recreation—activity that diverts our attention from more serious matters, something that is voluntary and pleasurable. However, psychologists who study the nature and roles of play tell us that it helps children learn about the world and to develop skills for interacting with others. It is important for cognitive and social development. Play also helps adults with creativity and relationships. In this workshop, we will consider some of the roles of play in our own lives and the lives of family members. We will write about our earliest memories of engaging in play.
33. **Skills Learned from Family and Friends:** Although we have acquired some of our skills in school and in the workplace, we have also learned some of them from family and friends. For example, our parents, uncles and aunts, grandparents, and siblings may have helped us develop skills in cooking, sewing, gardening, home maintenance, driving, and many more. Family and friends may also have taught us—either directly or through example--how to interact with others. In this workshop, we will write about some of these skills and how they have served us throughout our lives.

34. **Technology across Generations:** Technology changes from one generation to another, and these days it changes rapidly within a single generation. For example, in the United States farmers were still using workhorses into the 1940s, but tractors had pretty much replaced them by the 1950s. In the home and workplace, many forms of technology have changed in our lifetime—e.g., crank phones were still used in the 1950s. In this workshop we will write about technologies that have changed during our lifetime and how those changes have altered our lives in ways that our parents or grandparents could not have imagined.
35. **Resilience in My Family:** The American Psychological Association (“The Road to Resilience,” 2014) defines resilience as “the process of adapting well in the face of adversity, trauma, tragedy, threats or even significant sources of stress” (para. 4). Participants will write about how they or other family members have experienced moments of resilience.
36. **Family Gratitude:** The literature on gratitude indicates that it has a range of benefits for both the giver and the recipient. In this workshop, we will consider the ways in which each of us has experienced moments of gratitude. We will reflect on some of those moments, and we will write notes of gratitude to share with family and friends.
37. **Childhood Toys:** Each of us may have vivid or vague memories about the toys that occupied our play time as children. Some of those toys may have been purchased; some may have been lovingly crafted by family members; some have been ordinary objects that we spontaneously converted to toys—e.g., a stick or a rock. And some of us have had more expensive toys in adulthood. In this workshop, we will talk and write about some of the toys that each of us has had, reflecting on the role of toys in our lives and the lives of other family members.
38. **Family Myths, Mysteries, Legends, and Lore:** It is not an exaggeration to say that every family has some myths, lore, legends, and mysteries. In this workshop, we share some of them with one another, and we will talk about how to unearth some of the stories behind them.
39. **Stories Our Parents and Grandparents Told Us:** If we are fortunate, our parents and grandparents told us lots of stories about their lives and the lives of others. Some of those stories may have focused on ordinary daily life (e.g., work, school, cooking and eating) or unexpected surprises (e.g. accidents, severe weather). Some of those stories may have focused on how bigger events in the world affected them—e.g., the Great Depression, World War II. We will share some of those stories in conversation and writing.
40. **A Letter to An Ancestor:** If we’ve spent any time thinking about any of our ancestors, we probably have lots of thoughts that we wish we could share with them. In this workshop, we will talk about some of those thoughts. Each of us will also draft a letter to an ancestor, and we will discuss them.
41. **Clothing Choices and Family Memories:** Members of our families have made clothing choices (and some have even *made* clothing). Sometimes those choices reflect certain commitments to style and fashion. Sometimes those choices reflect practical realities. For example, some of us wore hand-me-down clothes as children, and some still follow the practice of wearing clothes the others have worn—clothes that we buy at thrift stores. Family members’ clothing can reflect something in their personalities and their values. Clothing may also have made an impression on you or be connected with especially vivid memories. In this workshop, we will talk and write about some clothing choices in our families.
42. **Memories on Wheels:** A great vehicle (groan) for accessing rich memories is to think about, or ask a family member about, experiences and memorable moments related to transportation of any kind. Maybe it’s a bike or car you saved up for—or that you never had but always envied. Your bus ride to school.

Maybe it's the Farmall tractor you rode on with your dad. Or your first cross-country road trip in a rusted-out Chevy Luv pickup. Or the dusty pink Studebaker that your aunt drove. In this workshop, we will share some of those memories in conversation and in writing.

43. **Mapping Our Memories:** In this workshop we'll tap into past memories by first drawing a rough map identifying the places and spaces that represented the focus of our world—and the people and activities in it—at a particular phase of life. What spaces were important at 10? 20? 40? Then we'll write about a memory associated with a particular mapped place/space/experience.
44. **Life Lessons:** Sometimes family members teach us lessons about life by talking with or to us. For example, perhaps a parent talked with us on the heels of a conversation in our elementary school principal's office. At other times, though, family members and friends teach us about life simply by the ways that they live their lives—e.g., the ways that they treat other people, the ways that they display emotional intelligence, or the ways in which they do their jobs. In this workshop, we will discuss some of the ways that family members and friends have taught us about life. Then each of us will write about one learned lesson.
45. **Our Greatest Commitments/Passions in Life:** In this workshop we will begin by discussing some of our greatest commitments/passions in life (or those of some family members)—what they are, why we have them, how we have pursued them. They may be in any realm of life—academic, professional, civic, personal. After we have discussed some examples from our lives, we will each write about one of them.
46. **Our Best Friends:** Some of us may have had one best friend throughout our lives—that neighbor or first-grade friend who has stayed with us for decades. Some of us, though, may have had a series of best friends—one in elementary school, one in secondary school, one in college, one in more recent years. And some of us may have added best friends along the way, so that we now have “a group of best friends.” We will begin this workshop by talking about some of our best friends and what role(s) they have played in our lives. After that, we will each write about a best friend.
47. **I Was a Perfect Child, But There Was That One Time:** Of course, all of us were perfect children. However, there may have been a time or two—no more than that—when we fell short of angelic behavior and fell into the depths of naughty behavior. Perhaps we weren't quite truthful when we explained that the dog ate our homework. Or maybe it was not accurate to say that a passerby threw a rock through the window. Or maybe it wasn't by accident that dish soap was added to a sibling's orange juice. Or maybe the baby sister did not give herself a buzz cut. We will begin this session by sharing a few childhood stories about that one time when we were not perfect children. After that, we will each write about one moment—hopefully humorous—in childhood when we fell short of being perfect.
48. **Favorite Memories about School Days:** We have a wide range of memories about our days in school, covering our experiences with the physical spaces of schools, the technologies for learning (e.g., pens, pencils, paper, books, projectors, whiteboards, blackboards, videos), the clothes we wore, many classroom discussions, projects, classmates, teachers, extra-curricular activities, and more. In this workshop, we will first discuss questions about a robust range of memory categories. Then each of us will write a favorite memory, and everyone will be invited to share a memory with the group.
49. **Your Hero's Journey:** In a hero's journey, the protagonist goes on a journey, overcomes adversity, and is changed by the experience. Literature is filled with such journeys, but all of us have experienced such journeys in our own lives. In this workshop we will discuss the features of a hero's journey, write about one of our own hero's journeys (or a family member's), and share that story with other participants.
50. **The Pandemic Experience (not your personal health):** Winston Churchill is credited with saying, “Never let a good crisis go to waste” at the end of World War II. That is, when something bad

happens, what can we learn from it? In this workshop, you are **not** expected to reveal details about your personal health or the personal health of anyone who has confided in you. Instead, this workshop is an opportunity to write about how the pandemic has changed the world in which we live. It has affected how we work, how we learn, how we play, how we navigate life. What observations and insights about the pandemic can you share with future generations?

- 51. Leadership Every Day of Lives:** Sometimes people think that leadership is associated with a job title. However, for organizations and communities and families to function as well as possible, each of us needs to act as a leader every day of our lives. In this workshop, we will discuss a few dozen leadership qualities, as well as family members (including ourselves) and friends who consistently demonstrate these qualities. Then each of us will write about a family member or friend who exhibits leadership every day.
- 52. This Is Who I Am—This Is What I Want You To Know about Me:** It's an understatement to say that many problems in the world exist because we don't know enough about one another. First and foremost, it's difficult to have empathy for someone and to act with compassion toward that person if we don't know what it's like to be that person. The late Anthony Bourdain hosted a wonderful television series, *No Reservations*, that introduced viewers to people around the world in such a way that made viewers realize that humans have much in common, no matter where they live and what their identities are. Bourdain was skilled at asking questions that got people to talk about who they are and what they want others to know about them. In this workshop, we will discuss questions that help let others know who we are and what we want them to know about us. Following the discussion, we will write for a while and share what we have written. Everyone is encouraged to share, but no one is required to do so.
- 53. Reflections on Love in Our Lives:** Because love comes in many forms, and people experience those forms in diverse ways. Scholars who write about love, have identified at least eight forms: *philia* (affectionate love), *pragma* (enduring love), *storge* (unconditional familial love), *eros* (romantic love), *ludus* (playful love), *mania* (obsessive love), *philautia* (self-love), *agape* (selfless love for others). The word "philosophy" literally means "love of knowledge or wisdom," which explains why one kind of graduate degree is called "doctor of philosophy." In this workshop, we will discuss some forms of love that each of us has experienced. Then we will write and share our writing.
- 54. Humor and Laughter in Our Lives:** Research indicates that getting angry or upset can suppress our immune systems, but finding humor in stressful situations and laughing at them can boost our immune systems, reduce stress, and even regulate blood pressure (Northwestern Medicine). Fortunately, life offers us humor in many forms and at many moments. In this workshop, we will share some of the humor that each of us has experienced. We will discuss some of that humor; then we will write about it and share what we have written.
- 55. Making a Family Recipe Book:** Family cooks and bakers have favorite recipes. Some of them may be recent additions to the collection; some of them may have been passed down for generations. Some of them may be written down, but some may exist only in the chef's brain. While these recipes yield delicious food that family member enjoy, they also are surrounded by stories about family—e.g., a grandparent preparing a dish that we craved as children, a parent wearing a special apron while cooking or baking, friends and family gathered around the dining room table to enjoy the food and one another's company. And if we are fortunate, there are

photos related to these recipes—e.g., a photo of the food item itself, a photo of the family sharing the meal, a photo of our grandparents' old wood-burning kitchen stove, or a photo of a family member preparing the dish, or a photo of a grandparent. In this workshop, we are going to share our memories about recipes. We will also design a family recipe book that includes recipes, stories, photos.

56. **Message to the World—Sharing My Motto for Life:** In this workshop, we will discuss our views of life and how we have lived life. We will consider how we might present those views at mottos on a poster, headstone, t-shirt, coffee mug, bumper sticker, sign, or email signature. Each of us will do a rough design for one or more of these media.
57. **The Butterfly Effect in Our Lives:** The butterfly effect is the concept that small things can have a chain of unexpected consequences. In this workshop, we will discuss how some seemingly small things have affected our lives and the lives of family and friends in ways that we would never have expected. We will each write about one of those experiences.
58. **(Random) Acts of Kindness:** Research shows how even small acts of kindness can positively affect both those who perform those acts and those who receive them. Research also indicates that we underestimate the impact that kindness can have. In this workshop, we will discuss acts of kindness that we have witnessed and participated in. We will consider why and how we and our friends and family engage in acts of kindness and what the experience has been like. We will each write about one especially memorable act of kindness.
59. **A Practical Joke (Where No One Got Hurt):** Throughout life, most of us have participated in practical jokes—as instigators, observers, and/or targets. In this workshop we will discuss practical jokes that we and our friends and family have participated in. We will also write about our favorite practical jokes.
60. **Empathy and Compassion in Our Lives:** Life is a little easier when we experience empathy and compassion—both when we give it and when we receive it. In this workshop we will discuss some ways that people develop empathy and compassion, especially through intent listening. We will also share stories about our own experiences with empathy and compassion.
61. **The Envelope, Please: An Awards Ceremony for Family and Friends:** The first Academy Awards ceremony occurred in 1929, the Emmys in 1949 and the Grammys in 1959. And many more annual awards have been added since then. But it's time for one more: The Family and Friends Awards for our family members and circle of friends. Of course, there are many possible categories, and each category can—if you wish—have two divisions: one for family members and one for friends. And feel free to add a division for co-workers if that seems warranted. Fleshing out your reasoning for selecting each honoree is likely to bring up memories and stories that will bring rich and colorful details into your family history writing. Once you have compiled the list of winners, you can decide whether to keep it to yourself or share it with each winner privately. If you are especially bold and courageous, you might even share it on social media. Use your wisdom to make that decision.
62. **Family Gatherings:** Family gatherings can be small or large, and they occur for all sorts of reasons. For instance, some families gather at their grandparents' house every weekend, spending hours in conversation and they prepare and then enjoy tasty recipes that have been

passed down for generations. Some gather every weekend in the fall to watch a television broadcast of their college or professional football team's games. Some gather every summer at the family's vacation home to spend a week together—perhaps disconnected from any digital devices. Others have family reunions every few years. With the busy lives that many families live these days, even a week night dinner with immediate family members could be considered a family gathering. Some families use virtual meeting platforms so that family members can enjoy one another's company even though they may be physically separated by thousands of mile. In this workshop, we will share our stories about the ways in which our families gather.

- 63. Family Celebrations:** Families can celebrate a pretty wide range of life's events: birthdays, weddings, wedding anniversaries, graduations, job promotions, retirements, religious ceremonies, personal accomplishments, national holidays, holidays in other countries, religious holidays, World Series or Super Bowl victories, and more. Sometimes these celebrations can be simple events, with little planning. At other times, these celebrations can be very elaborate, with months of planning. In this workshop, we will share stories about some of the celebrations that our families hold.