



The next step in planning a Third Act Films production is to contact us at: info@thirdactfilms.com

or call us, toll free, at 877-610-FILM 877-610-3456.

We are looking forward to meeting with you, in person, to talk about the scope of your project.

If you are not ready to move forward with us right now, here are some suggestions:

It's really important to organize some specific material when you begin to consider producing a family story. Our typical production process incorporates many of the steps listed below, but we are actively involved in the process, making it much easier for our clients. Even if we are not creating your family story for you right now, there are a number of things you can do for yourself.

We even suggest that, before you tackle genealogy and family tree issues, you attend to the **resources** that will eventually be important to the family story process.



Locate your oldest family pictures.

If you start trying to organize all your family images it might be overwhelming. If it's sepia toned, brown or old, put a label on the back and identify the people, the date and the area. If you have brothers and sisters, uncles and aunts, they have pictures too that you may or may not have. Try to consolidate the most important images.

Get all the pictures copied with a digital camera. Find someone with a six-megapixel camera (or higher), that will allow you to do close up work, or have a professional copy them. Get multiple copies on CD's and give them to the other family members when you return their pictures.

You've just created "off site backup" for your oldest family images. You also have some of the visuals for the oldest part of your story.

Cherry Pick your Contemporary Pictures

We don't recommend trying to organize your life's work in photography, instead just pick images that are significant in some way. In a larger sense you are looking for stories that are triggered by these pictures. Think of turning points or images that were taken when significant decisions were made. Obviously, pictures of happenings, gatherings, activities, work, cars, houses, anything that triggers an emotion or memory for you, will probably do so for your audience. If a photograph shows a time, a fashion or style that is reminiscent of a particular chapter in your history it may work to set the stage.

Same process as before, you copy your photographs and those of your relatives, creating backup copies that will be stored at their homes.

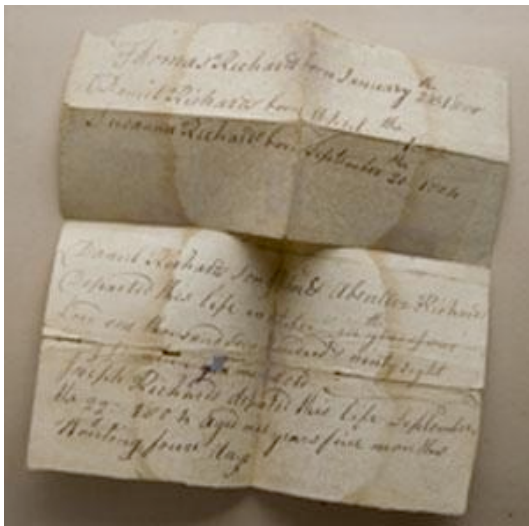


At this point you have multiple back up images of your family stored at multiple sites. The other vulnerable assets are the voices of those around you.

Living Voices

Another production resource will be family members who are good "on camera". You really never know who will have a gift for storytelling on camera, but there's a sure fire way to find out. Point a camera at them and have them tell a story. It doesn't matter how small or inexpensive the video camera, any camera has the potential to make people uncomfortable. Some people adapt readily, others don't. The technical quality of the image isn't as important as the sound quality. Try to minimize background noise and distractions and put the camera as close as is practical and comfortable.

An audio recorder may be less intimidating to your subject; you may want to record with a small cassette recorder first then try video later. What's important is to record now. Memories fade, don't miss the opportunity to preserve stories told by family members and friends.



It's also important to identify the people that can tell parts of the story. Several people telling the same story create the potential to intercut their versions of events.

Dead Voices

Having someone read a letter, a section from a journal or any written word from a family member who has passed on, is a wonderful way to move the story along. If the passage that is being read can be illustrated in part with photographs, you have the potential for a new meaningful story element.

Narrator

We use name narrators, people who are celebrities in their field, and that makes it easy to engage the audience dramatically with the ongoing thread of the story.

Sustaining an audience's interest is the essence of good storytelling. Multiple voices intercut at just the right time can propel your story nicely.

Graphics

The most obvious graphic element might be the boxes and names on a family tree. Animating these elements can visually tie together family members and relationships over several generations.



Maps, Geographic and Visual References

If you have ornate pages in your family Bible with names and information recorded by hand, it's a perfect visual resource.

If you have old maps or diagrams of important areas, drawings of houses even old road maps, they can be powerful to tell your story.

Locations

Places where things happened, old home places, even current residences can play a part in the story. Any building or place, interior or exterior, can be a visual resource for the story if there's a connection to your story.

Planning

Probably the most important element is the planning that we do to leverage the resources that exist. A story begins to take on a life of its own if you are sensitive to it. Themes emerge, characters reveal themselves, and plots develop that guide the production planning process. Although a family, with its past and its future, has no real beginning or end, a story does. Typically, a good story has a beginning, middle and end with some sort of resolution. The challenge is to avoid a feeling that the story is somehow contrived and predictable. If the story develops itself it can ring “true” for the audience.

Summary

You are about to create, or have a hand in creating, something of enormous importance and value for the future. One of our clients observed that his family story was one of the few things in life, which he knew of, that was almost certainly increasing in value, year after year. Our experience confirms that this is true, particularly for your grandchildren’s grandchildren.

Save The Story



The sooner you begin, the more material you will preserve and the better your story will be!

If you want us to help, call us: 877-610-FILM (877-610-3456)

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