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A Dive Into YOUR History

By:
Anna Markland



You Might Just Find A New Passion or Enough Family Secrets to Write a Book!

I love history! So it was no surprise that when someone mentioned finding an 1891 census of England on a genealogy website, I wondered if my grandparents might be included in the official document. Little did I know that the moment I signed on to Ancestry.com, it would signify the end of every minute of my free time. I immediately ended up with a permanent membership, and became deeply addicted to delving into my family's distant past.

Now, years later, I'm inspired by historical research to create intricate plot-lines for my bestselling books. However, aside from professional writing, I now have a passion for genealogy that readers and writers might want to try for themselves. By diving into genealogy, one can unlock secrets about their ancestors that other relatives may have never known.

We can understand the rationale for many previously puzzling events in our family histories.

My mother always wondered why her father was so determined to take his wife and six children to America. My mom didn't know the reasoning behind the difficult decision because no one talked about that. With a little detective work, I found the answers that had been left unspoken.

My grandfather's parents tragically died when he was a boy. He was raised by his grandparents. Several years later, his grandfather took his own life and his grandmother emigrated to Massachusetts to be with her adult children—that decision led to the rest of the family following her. My mother was only seven-years-old at the time and the story was never shared



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with her because she was a child, or maybe they assumed she'd remember why because they all did.

Digging into the past is more than figuring out your family's mysteries, it's also looking deeper at the time in history that your family traveled through. But what if you don't like history?

As a former teacher, I suggest taking a fresh look at what studying history can mean. It's important to bear in mind that history is more than reviewing a list of dates and facts about important events. History is really the study of people. It's fascinating to discover what motivated people and how the decisions they made really caused important events to happen. It's also interesting to connect the dots between the original motivation that caused certain historic actions, and how those decisions ended up making such a major impact on people through the centuries.

I've discovered that understanding history can offer perspective into the family's story, and the family's experience can bring history to life. Finding out my great-grandmother died of smallpox shocked me and led to research into the compulsory vaccination programs of the day that probably contributed to her death, since she was likely pregnant with her fourth child. Discovering she was buried in a communal grave opened my eyes to how terrifyingly prevalent smallpox must have been in England about that time.

Becoming aware of a personal connection can make history more interesting. You may not have thought about your family against the backdrop of a history book. But you may know something interesting from

a couple of generations back, like your grandmother lost two children in the 1918 pandemic. I am sure Covid has given us all a new appreciation of what it must have been like to live through a global pandemic when people didn't have any of the technological advances at their disposal that we have now.

Jumping into researching your family history is one fun-filled sleuthing expedition after another that takes you on a huge scavenger hunt for records, documents, personal information, photographs, and recollections of living relatives and friends. It can also untap a deep-seated need to know where you came from, particularly if you know your ancestors were immigrants.

The payoff for all your detective work is the chance to time travel through your family history and understand the past in a more intimate and meaningful way. If you love crosswords and jigsaw puzzles, you already have some of the skills you need to be successful at uncovering your family tree.



Cryptic crosswords and 3D jigsaws are some of my favorite pastimes. My love for untying knotty problems is one of the reasons I fell hook, line, and sinker for genealogical research.

That passion for digging into the past proved instrumental to the success of my writing career. The farther back in time I went into my own genealogy research, the more I began to understand the impact the Norman Conquest had on the land of my birth.

The past is a wonderful source of inspiration for anyone who wants to write. So much is already there. I mean, who could conjure up a character that equals the real-life William the Conqueror—a bastard-born minor nobleman who changed the course of world history? Who could dream up an event with more far-reaching consequences than the Norman Conquest?

The influence the Normans had on my country's language, place names, customs and beliefs became crystal clear. I suddenly thirsted to trace my own lineage back to the 11th Century. But, finding facts linked to family across that span of time proved impossible. I didn't descend from nobility. Personal family records just don't exist that far back unless your ancestors were nobles, but I still love the time period.

So I decided to create a noble Medieval family and write about them. My signature series, *The Montbryce Legacy*, was born.

The spectacular history of the Montbryce family traces the intricate lineage of an intriguing family of notable warriors. It starts with three handsome brothers who all fight in the epic Battle of Hastings and then strive to build their lives in the aftermath of the bloody war between the Normans and the Saxons in Medieval England.



The decisive Battle of Hastings was fought in 1066. It was a pivotal and defining moment in history. For me, the fun and satisfaction of creating all of my Historical Romances comes from researching the cultural attitudes, politics, daily life, clothing, and so on of various periods. I believe in letting the characters tell their stories, especially when they are obliged to adapt to historical events over which they often have no control.

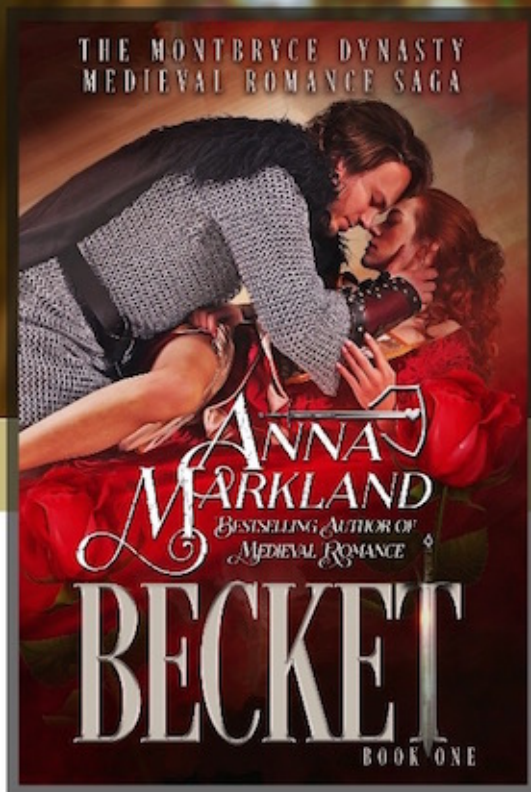
Obviously, I have a special interest in the Medieval period, not only in the United Kingdom but also in Europe, where the Holy Roman Empire held sway. As a writer, I had to change my whole mindset about mundane things like what did people eat, how did they cook, how did they deal with minor ailments. It's even important to figure out how fast and how far a horse can travel in a day.

Of course, with more than 60 books in print, I've had to focus and learn more about time periods before and after the Medieval Era, and I enjoyed every minute. History is truly fascinating, especially when it leads a researcher to exclaim with great glee, "I never knew that!" We sometimes forget we, ourselves, are making history as we speak, and every single one of us has been molded by the historical events that have shaped our world. Every person's story is important in the tapestry of human history. We all strive to bloom where we are planted, but deep roots help.



NEW SERIES!

CAN THESE TWO HANDSOME BROTHERS FIND TRUE LOVE?

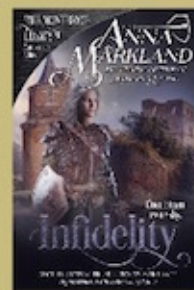


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