

Unearthing Truths & Crafting Stories:

How To Write Long-Form
Narrative Nonfiction



saddleseekhorse.com



What untold story has a grip on you?

- What topic do you keep thinking about and you can't shake off?
- Is there a story idea you've thought about over the years and have always wanted to explore on a deep level?

Take a moment to think about this.



Warm Up: Jot Down Your Responses

Question #1 What is that topic?

Question #2 What do you hope to learn from this session?



Why You Are Already Equipped to Write Long-Form Nonfiction

1. You're a horse person.
2. You're a learner.

Question: What do you do if you have a bad ride?

Question: How long does it take to train a horse?

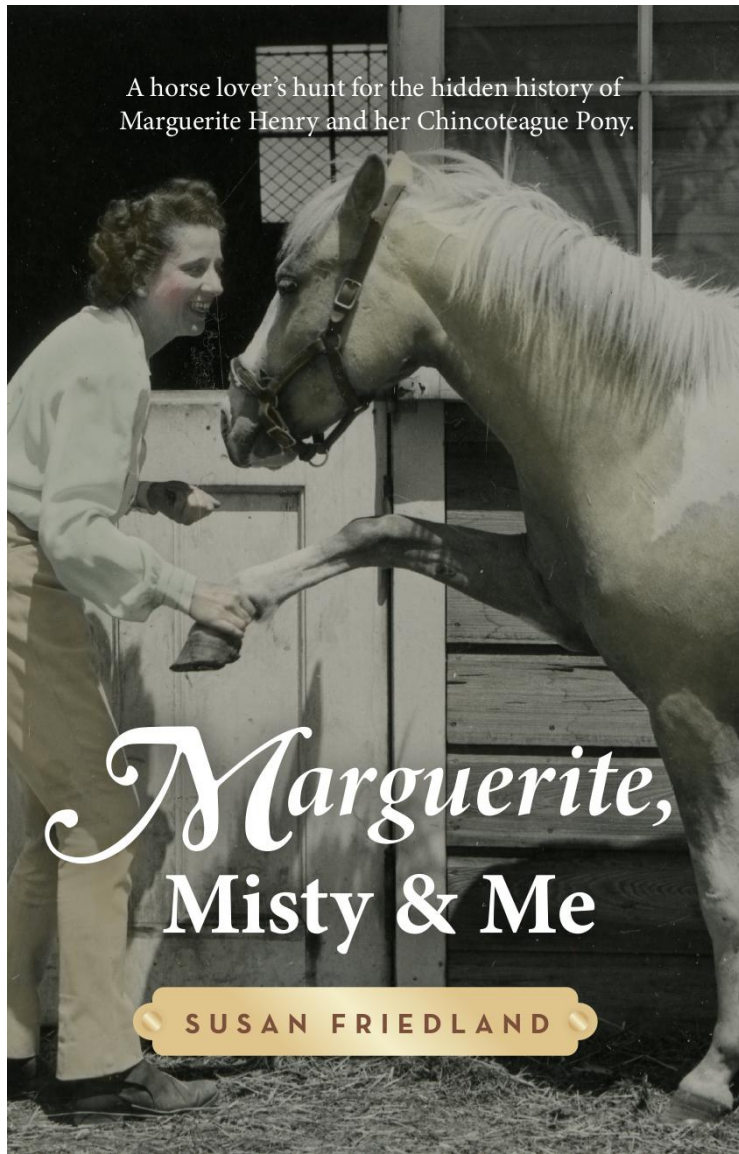


Helpful Metaphors

Think of writing long-form nonfiction like training a horse or getting physically fit. It's a long, slow process.

Remember, Rome wasn't built in a day.





My Misty & MH Journey

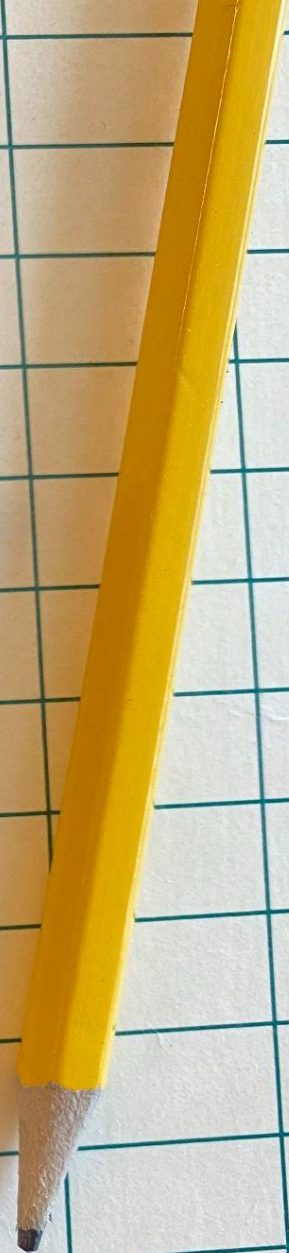
- Loved ***Misty of Chincoteague***
- I rode in Wayne, IL
- Mom's friend rode Misty in 50s
- History nerd
- Had Marguerite's address, but never wrote her
- Pre-order is live on **saddleseekhorse.shop**
<wink, wink>



1. Vet Your Subject First

1. Does this story have enough “meat” to be long form?
2. Is there something similar out there?
 - a. Yes=proof of concept.
 - b. No=you might be on to something!
3. Will others be interested (not just you)?
 - a. AHP in 2018 Hunt Valley, MD--Kleenex
 - b. Autographed MH FB post





2. Get Over Imposter Syndrome

Who remembers the Donna Brothers' keynote from last year's conference in Lexington?

*As a writer, you already know that words have power but remember that the ones you tell yourself have equal weight ...
"And now I'm a historian."*



3. Read a Ton & Choose a “Mentor”

- Read books like the one you’d like to bring into the world
- Elizabeth Letts was my inspo
- Bibliomemoir--*Julie and Julia, Montaigne in Barn Boots, Bookworm: a Memoir of Childhood Reading*



4. Research & See Where It Goes

- Wrote 2015 blog post re: Mary Ellen. Visited her in 2019.
- Sky M. emailed me
- Ancestry.com
- Horse world is small--convo at my new barn
- Went to Chincoteague

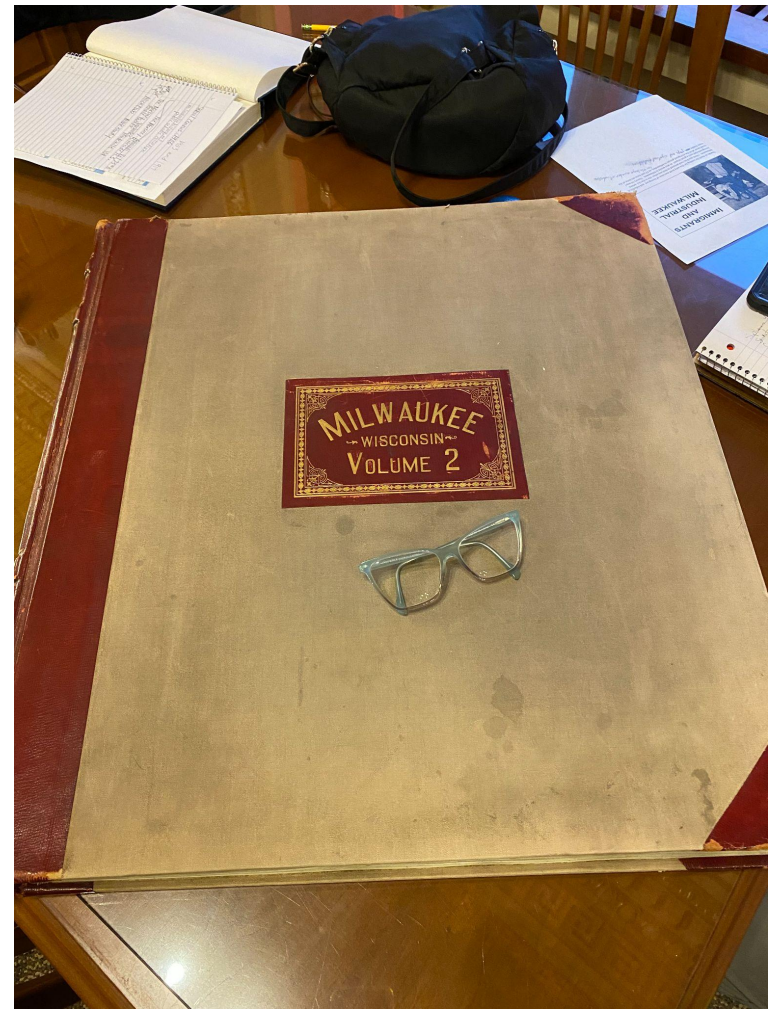


5. Befriend Librarians

- Marguerite got ideas for books from them:
 - *Brightly of the Grand Canyon*
 - *The Wildest Horse Race in the World (Gaudenzia)*
- Not just librarians: local historians, archivists, professors, locals
 - Bobby from OnMilwaukee.com
 - Steve from MKE Historical Society



6. Research & See Where It Leads



7. Start Writing in Small Chunks

- Worst case scenario: write an article or blog post (maybe even a series)
- Google Docs w/ Table of Contents turned on

“Let your first draft run.”

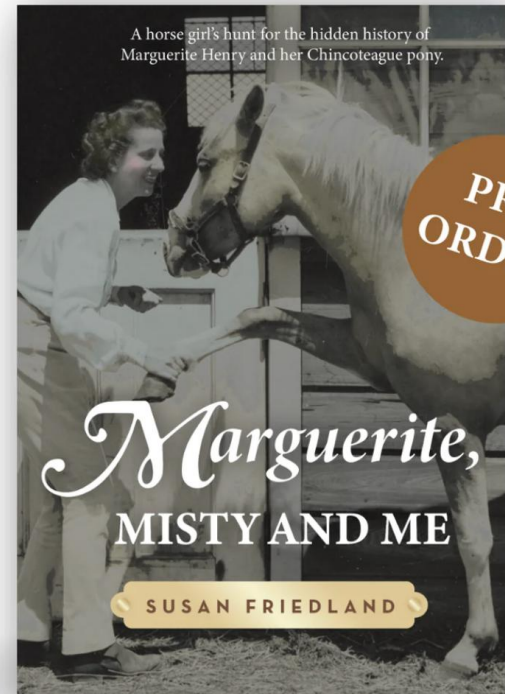
-May Masee (publisher) told Marguerite



8. Give Yourself a Deadline

- People with oral history getting up there in years
- AETA Trade Show
- Pony Penning in July

COMING SUMMER 2023





9. Assemble Your Team

- Book coach
 - Developmental editor
 - Copy editor
 - Proofreader/s
 - Beta readers (experts in the field)
 - Graphic designer
 - Book formatter
 - Attorney
 - Advance readers
 - Influencers
 - Publicist
- (You might not need all these roles)



10. Prepare to Invest Time & \$

Examples:

- Ancestry.com subscription
- Newspapers.com subscription
- Paperpile subscription
- Genius Scan subscription
- Travel to Chincoteague
- Travel to Minneapolis
- Travel to Milwaukee



Bonus Content:

Learn from My Mistakes & Ignorance

1. Keep a log of EVERYONE you talk too (even the lady at the county recorder of deeds office)
2. Keep a log of what you work on each day
3. Learn Atticus book formatting BEFORE you need to actually format your book (if applicable)
4. Use citation management system at beginning
5. Record Box and File Folder Numbers
6. In Genius Scan, name file what it is and where it was



Had won Kentucky Derby

YR OLDER

DESCR.: MAN • WAR

that thick curving neck

red gold

his coat streaked = gold

a white star on forehead. a faint line of white
running down nose.

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September

S	M	T	W	T	F	S
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September

October

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Monday

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Saturday

Other Smart Ideas

1. Share about what you're working on and doors of opportunity will open. (Pray)
2. Blog about your topic to start gaining online authority/SEO.
3. Figure out where passionate readers will hang out online and start connecting in those places long before the book is out.
4. Network, network, network.





Getting an idea
should be like
sitting on a tack
It should make
you get up & do
something about it

Questions, Thoughts, Comments???

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