

A black and white photograph of a tombstone with text overlaid. The text is in a white, sans-serif font and reads: "We are the chosen. In each family, there is one who seems called to find the ancestors. To put flesh on their bones and make them live again, to tell the family story and to feel that somehow they know and approve. Doing genealogy is not a cold gathering of facts, but instead, breathing life into all who have gone before. We are the storytellers of the tribe." The tombstone is dark and has a slightly arched top. The background is a light, neutral color.

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For the past 25 years I have spent many hours in cemeteries, archives, clerk of courts and libraries searching for ancestors and related family. As I wandered through burial grounds, the most prevalent thought that surfaced was that ordinary people die—to be remembered only by a tombstone; that somewhere between birth and death they lived a life of human struggle and triumph that is forgotten. The scant information that might be recorded in an obituary is soon set aside and eventually lost.