(I have transcribed the following text from the introduction that was written by the authors. My scanned copy of the original was hard to read.)

**Introduction**

**IF I SHOULD DIE BEFORE I WAKE**

This line from an ancient children’s prayer is followed by an entreaty for the lord to take the soul of the supplicant. This spiritual heavy lifting can only be done by the Lord, and if any of us has not prepared for the disposition of the soul, we are advised in scripture that the eternal soul may be lost. Accordingly many of us give a great amount of thought, prayer, and effort into ensuring our escape from eternal damnation – As well we should! If we succeed, we’ll spend eternity in the presence of God.

Such a state of grace will no doubt serve to comfort our families and friends in their grieving. But they must at some point put grief aside and move on to the complexities of dealing with not the spiritual aspects of our passing but the material.

Safe is it to say that life in the 21st century is a great deal more complicated than it used to be. For example, many of today’s elderly reside in secure condos or gated retirement communities. Many of our children and/or grandchildren have no idea how to gain access to where we live. The purpose of this little workbook is to give us a head start on giving our families, heirs, and descendants a few keys to unraveling the affairs of our nuclear family existence. A generation or two ago, everyone knew the grandmother or aunt who presided over the “Family Bible”. There were inscribed births, deaths, marriages and other important events. These also provided a roadmap for genealogy. Most have tragically disappeared as we have moved away and lost track of cousins with whom we once spent holidays.

I possess my grandmother’s high chair and the toy box (it looks like a pirate’s chest) in which my brother and I stowed our toys during World War II, when there was no metal out of which to make toys. I want future generations of my family to know about these and other treasures. I reckon that many who see these pages will share those feelings. Maybe we’ll actually do something about it.

It is not my purpose to provide estate planning or any other kind of legal advice. There are more than enough qualified people for that. It is my purpose to lift a burden of guilt from my own shoulders (and perhaps yours) by actually filling out these pages. It is also my purpose to find a next generation home for that thirty-five pound crocheted bedspread started by my mother and finished by my wife’s mother.

Finally, it is my purpose to make the settlement of my affairs a little easier for those I leave behind.

I hope you find it helpful.