

Telling Our Stories: Family Photo Archiving Guide



"...family celebrations, prime moments for picture-taking, are now so influenced by the presence of the camera that the act of photography has itself become a holiday tradition...Families use the image-freezing magic of the camera to isolate, record, and confer importance on certain events in their lives."¹

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1. Introduction

Stories give meaning to our lives. Family photographs and the stories that go with them connect individuals to past events and to each other, helping to shape personal and shared histories, as well as a sense of identity. As society moves further into the digital age, many people are still grappling with physical collections of old family photographs, often stored in poor conditions and subject to physical degradation with the passage of time. Others are enjoying the ease of on-demand, digital

¹ <http://www.folkstreams.net/film-detail.php?id=112>

photobook publishing, and the renaissance of scrap booking. There are many ways to tell your story. This guide provides basic recommendations and examples for how to retain value in historic family photographs and the stories that provide meaning and context for them, based on best practices in archives and library science.

2. Photo Archiving Checklist

Each part of the checklist is explained in detail in subsequent sections of this document.

Photo Preservation Basics

- Store photos away from light, at a reasonable temperature
- Handle photos carefully in a clean environment
- Do not write on photos or use paperclips, rubber bands, or adhesives on them

Assessing Your Collection

- Prioritize photos
- Determine sizes and extent of prioritized materials to inform storage decisions

★ Milestone 1

- Get storage materials

Organizing Your Collection

- Sort photographs into groups (if not already organized)
- Name and label your groupings

★ Milestone 2

- Create an inventory and put photos in safe storage

★ Milestone 3

Digitization

- Determine your goals for use of digital copies
- Determine how you will create digital copies of your photos
- Organize digital files to reflect the organization of the physical photos
- Make a copy!

Collecting Stories

- Interview family members
- Optional: Map out family tree
- Consider stories within a broader historical context

★ Milestone 4

Sharing Stories

- Seek permission before posting online or other publication
- Use a digital platform to share/exhibit photos
- Create a plan for digital circulation and/or physical display

3. Photo Preservation Basics

Preservation of physical materials is an ongoing activity; photos must be inspected periodically over time to monitor any degradation and ensure that they continue to remain in good condition.^{2 3 4 5}

- ❑ Store photos away from light, at a reasonable temperature

Storage conditions are typically the most important factor in ensuring that photographs remain intact and don't degrade. There are [many types of photograph formats](#), for which different storage conditions may be optimal. The main considerations for photo storage include:

- **Temperature & humidity** - Cooler temperatures (under 75 degrees Fahrenheit) and between 15-65% humidity provide the best environment.⁶ Avoid fluctuations in temperature. Consider [cold storage](#) for negatives⁷ and older color photos.
- **Light exposure** - All photographs are sensitive to the sun as well as light bulbs, so limiting exposure to both is essential.
- **Storage materials** - Most papers contain acid that can degrade photos over time, and some plastics can be abrasive. Use [acid-free paper and archival plastic storage enclosures](#) to keep photos safe. (See the "Assessing Your Collection" section below for where to find storage materials.)

DO NOT store photos in an attic, basement, or outdoor storage shed with unregulated temperature and humidity⁸:



² <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/care/photo.html>

³ <https://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/conservoogram/14-04.pdf>

⁴ <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/about/faqs/general.html#preventive>

⁵

https://f9f7df2c79cc13143598-609f7062990e04dd7dd5b501c851683c.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/aichaw_c8362185071923e160aef031f10ba3e2.pdf

⁶ <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/storing>

⁷ https://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/webfm_send/302

⁸ <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/about/faqs/general.html#attic>

Poor storage conditions can accelerate the degradation of photographs.

- ❑ Handle photos carefully in a clean environment
- ❑ Do not write on photos or use paperclips, rubber bands, or adhesives on them

Handle your photos with care.⁹ Human error, such as getting greasy fingerprints on photos or accidentally scratching them, can cause problems that are avoidable as long as you:

- Wear gloves when handling
- Pick photos up carefully using both hands
- Don't have food or drink near photos
- Don't write on photos (front or back)
- Don't put adhesive on or near photos
- Don't use paper clips, staples, rubber bands, or any other fasteners that could cause damage

4. Assessing Your Collection

Approaching a large collection of photographs can be overwhelming. Here are some tips on where and how to start inventorying and assessing what you have to work with.¹⁰

- ❑ Prioritize photos

Many people have amassed large collections of photos and other material that may be difficult to deal with all at once. When approaching your collection, try to identify and separate out any items that may be “at-risk,” which includes:



- **Oldest** - Determine how old a photograph is by the people, clothes, and/or objects depicted, as well as the general appearance of the photograph, such as whether it is black and white or color, or shows signs of fading, discoloration, or “silvering,” which is the appearance of a silver or metallic sheen on part of the image. The oldest photographs in your collection should be among those prioritized for archival storage, management, and care.

⁹ <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/handling.html>

¹⁰ <https://blogs.loc.gov/thesignal/2016/05/how-to-begin-a-personal-archiving-project/>



- **Discoloration, fading, or “silvering” (appearance of a silver or metallic sheen on parts of the image) -** Images that have started to degrade can not be repaired. However, the degradation process can be slowed or halted by storing photographs in proper conditions (see “Photo Preservation Basics” above). To be safe, images showing discoloration should be stored in individual sleeves, separated from other photographs.¹¹



- **Ripped, torn, creased, or cracked -** Use an [archival board](#) to support the photograph either in an archivally safe sleeve, or a box if the image is flaking. Avoid handling the photograph, and do not use adhesive tape to repair torn photographs. Instead, consider scanning the pieces that you have to create a digital copy, and place the original in a plastic sleeve.

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<https://archivesandspecialcollections.wordpress.com/2012/02/17/forms-of-photograph-degradation-sulfiding-and-insufficient-fixing/>



- **Stuck to glass** - High humidity can cause photographs to stick to frame glass. It can be difficult and risky to attempt removing a photograph that is stuck to glass. If it is clear that the photo is stuck, do not attempt to remove it from the glass yourself; this could risk further damage to the photo. Instead, make a digital copy of the image (see “Digitizing Photographs” section below) and store original in an archival paper sleeve or box, or [consult a conservator](#).



- **Stuck to other materials** - It can be difficult and risky to attempt removing a photograph that is stuck to paper, other photographs, or other materials. Make a digital copy of the image if you can (see “Digitizing Photographs” section below) and have it printed out. Store the original in an archival paper sleeve or box, or [consult a conservator](#).



- **Stored with or near adhesive** - adhesive of any kind is damaging to photos and should be avoided as much as possible. Photos that have been taped or glued to other surfaces in the past should be stored individually or interleaved with archival paper to avoid photos getting stuck together. Photos stuck to self-adhesive photo albums (very popular in the 1970s-1980s) that rely on adhesive and plastic covering to display photos, can be removed by [using dental floss to gently separate photos](#) in some cases. If photos are too stuck and will not come free with dental floss, they should be left on the page to avoid risking damage. Make a digital copy of the photo album page (see “Digitizing Photographs” section below) and store original in an archival paper sleeve or box, or [consult a conservator](#).



- **Stored with acidic paper** - Photographs contained within cardboard portfolios or housed with construction paper or cardboard should ideally be removed from contact with these materials. If the paper is brittle and flaking, it's not acid-free. A [PH Testing Pen](#) can be used to discreetly test the acidity of cardboard or paper to determine the urgency with which materials need to be re-housed. The more acidic the paper, the sooner photos will need to be re-housed, before the acid can cause damage to the photograph. Photos stored within cardboard portfolios as an artifact may not necessarily need to be moved if the cardboard is not very acidic.



- **Insect damage or mold** - Prevent insect access to photographs by storing them in clean, secure conditions away from food and drink debris. If faced with an infestation, you can [freeze items](#) to kill the pests.¹² Consult a conservator for severe insect issues or mold.^{13 14}

When in doubt: [Consult a professional](#) - some at-risk situations may require help from a professional conservator.¹⁵

- ❑ Determine sizes and extent of at-risk materials to inform storage decisions

Physically separate your collection into two general groups:

1. **First priority** = at-risk. If necessary, at-risk items may be divided up into even smaller groups to be prioritized.
2. **Second priority** = deal with later. Put the second priority items away and don't look at them or think about them until you're done dealing with the at-risk pile.

¹² <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/about/faqs/general.html#pests>

¹³ <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/mold-insects.html>

¹⁴ <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/about/faqs/general.html#wet>

¹⁵ <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/repairing.html>

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **Milestone 1** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Congrats! You have made it to the first milestone in archiving your family photographs - taking the first step of looking through your collection to identify at-risk or first priority photographs. You may have even discovered family treasures you didn't know you had. Getting these treasures into safe archival storage will help to ensure your keepsakes last into the future. Are you ready to go one step further to protect your photos with proper storage?



Once you have identified your first priority items, create a rough inventory, either hand-written or using a text or spreadsheet computer program, to help determine your storage needs, looking at:

- 1. Number of items
- 2. Format of items
- 3. Size of items

Based on the sizes and condition of your first priority pile, determine how you want to store your physical photographs. Do you want to use archival acid-free paper or stable plastic such as polyester, polypropylene or polyethylene? Considerations for each include:

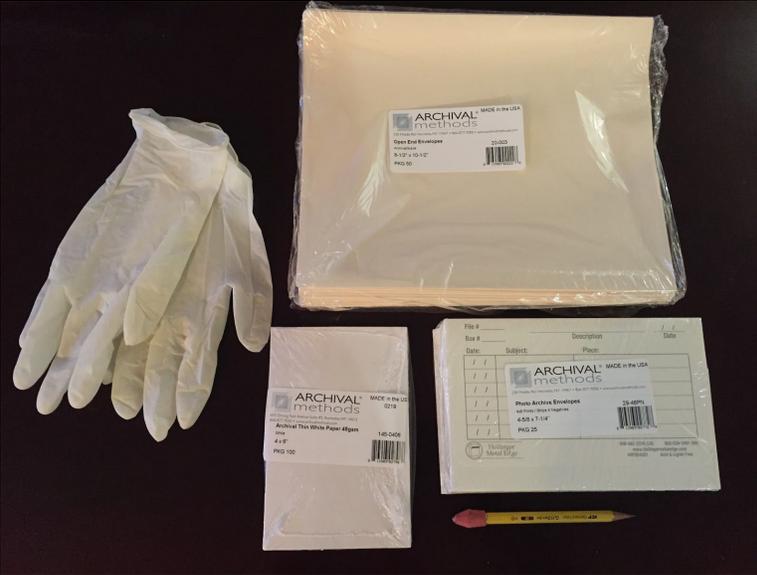
- Paper - can write on the outside in pencil, protects photo from light
- Plastic - can write on the outside in permanent ink, can view photo without removing from sleeve, protects against fingerprints

Some recommended storage options include:

- **Good:** Store all photos together in an archival box
- **+ Better:** Store small photographs together in archival envelopes and store large photographs individually in acid-free paper sleeves
- **+ Best:** Use acid-free paper to interleave photos that are stored together, or use archival plastic sleeves to protect individual photos

Get storage materials

Where to get storage materials (this is not an endorsement):



- All supplies:
 - [Archival Methods](#)
 - [Archival Products](#)
 - [Gaylord](#)
 - [Conservation Resources](#)
 - [Talas](#)
 - [University Products](#)
- Archival boxes:
 - [Light Impressions](#)
 - [Container Store](#)
 - [Amazon](#)

5. Organizing Your Collection

True preservation requires that materials are not only stored and handled properly, but also findable and accessible for future generations.¹⁶

- ❑ Sort photographs into groups (if not already organized)
 - If photos are already organized, try to maintain the original order and organization
 - If photos are not already organized, look for themes across your photos and photos that tell a story or illustrate folklore such as family traditions, rituals, or beliefs.
 - If you have photos from multiple sources or branches of your family, try to keep those that are from the same source together. This concept is known as **provenance**, which helps to track where your photos came from (mom's side vs. dad's side, for example).
 - Within each family branch or provenance group, separate your photos into sub-groups. Potential groupings include:
 - **Format** - Black and White, Color, 4x6s, 8x10s, negatives, etc.
 - **Decade** - 1920s, 1930s, 1940s, 1950s, etc.
 - **People** - grandparents, aunts and uncles, cousins, etc.
 - **Events and/or Traditions** - weddings, birthdays, holidays, religious rituals
 - **Special milestones** - graduations, anniversaries, etc.

Examples of family folklore in photographs:

- Recurring occupations or other activities:
 - Example: Multiple generations of military service:



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https://f9f7df2c79cc13143598-609f7062990e04dd7dd5b501c851683c.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/aichaw_c8362185071923e160aef031f10ba3e2.pdf

- Example: Multiple instances of religious occupations:



- Traditions, rituals, and ceremonies, for example:

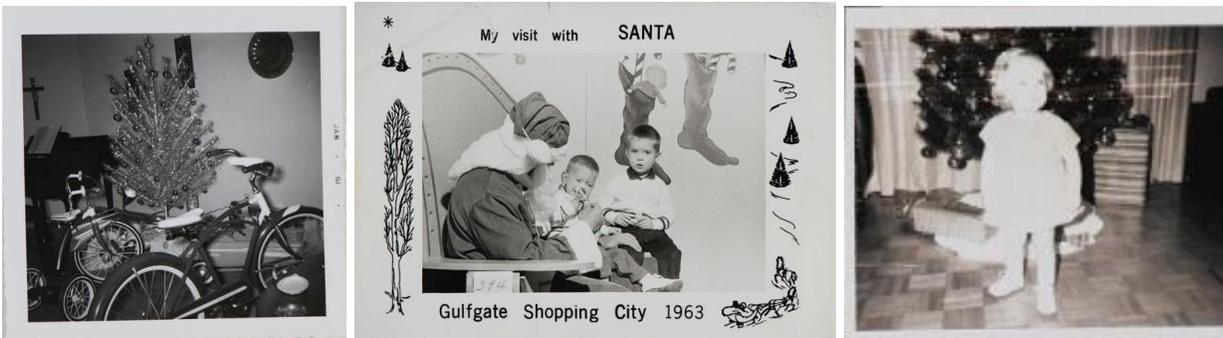
- Weddings:



- Religious rituals and rites of passage (Example: First Communion):



- Holidays (Example: Christmas):



- Birthday celebrations:



Determine the groupings that make the most sense for your collection, and divide your items into stacks or clumps based on grouping theme. You can loosely group items together. It does not have to be perfect, and you do not have to order every single photo, especially if you are limited on time.

- ☐ Name and label your groupings

Give each grouping a name, such as 1, 2, 3 or A, B, C. If you are planning to digitize your photos, these group names will come in handy for file naming and organization. Create a list of groupings and their corresponding names:

Example groupings:

- Group 1 - oldest photographs, grandma's side of the family
- Group 2 - 1950s, grandparents' wedding
- Group 3 - 1950s, 1970s, Multi-generational military service
- Group 4 - 1950s, first three children
- Group 5 - 1950s-60s First Communion photographs
- Group 6 - 1960s, all six children
- Group 7 - oldest photographs, grandpa's side of the family (religious occupations)
- Group 8 - pictures from family photo album

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **Milestone 2** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

Great job! You have reached the second milestone in your journey - creating a series of groupings from your first priority pile. By now you have a good idea of any recurring themes that run through your photographs, as well as traditions within your family. You may have learned something new about your family and heritage that you hadn't realized before. Now it's time to put your groupings into safe storage and document what is stored where, so you and others can find your collection items in the future.



❑ Create an inventory and put photos in safe storage

Create an inventory for each grouping using a spreadsheet or pen and paper as you move photos to their new archival storage envelopes, boxes, and sleeves (by now the supplies you have ordered should have arrived). If you are using paper enclosures, you can label physical items using pencil on the outside of an envelope or box. Make sure to wear gloves and keep a clean area as you handle photos.

For your inventory, the more detailed the better, but if you are pressed for time, a general description for each grouping is ok. Consider recording the following background information in your inventory:

- **Good:**
 - Group name
 - Names of people in the photos (as much as you can)
 - Approximate date photos were taken
- **+ Better:**
 - Stories related to the photos (think about themes/groupings)
- **+ Best:**
 - Photo/file name
 - Description of the photo:
 - Physical dimensions and characteristics, such as whether the photo is color or black and white, and if anything is written or printed on the photo
 - Subject/content of the image
 - Additional notes

Example inventory 1:

1	A	B	C	D	E	F	G
	File Name	Group Number - Name	Approx. date	People in Photo	Description	Story	Notes
2	1A	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	1920s	Teresa Wathen (3rd from Right)	B&W, 4x5, 7 women sitting down in a row		
3	1B	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	1930s	Bernice Pettiette (Left) and Verna	B&W, 3x5, sisters sitting on front porch of a		
4	1C	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	1934-1935	Bernard Pettiette (Left) and Verna	B&W, 2x3, Standing in front of house in Pal		
5	1D_01	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	May 1937	Larry Pettiette (Left), Bernard	B&W, 2x3, Verna Pettiette and brothers Lar		torn
6	1D_02	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	May 1937	Verna Pettiette (Left) and Inez	B&W, 2x3, Verna and Inez sitting on a rock		
7	1D_03	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	May 1937	Bernice Pettiette (Left), cousin	B&W, 2x3, Verna, Dolores (cousin), and Be		
8	1D_04	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	May 1937	Bernard Pettiette (Left), Larry	B&W, 2x3, Pettiette boys sitting on rock wal		
9	1E_01	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	July 1938	Verna Pettiette (Left), Bernard	B&W, 2x3, Pettiette children on beach trip in		
10	1E_02	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	July 1938	Bernice Pettiette (Left), Berna	B&W, 2x3, Pettiette children on beach trip in		
11	1E_03	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	July 1938	Verna Pettiette (Left), Bernard	B&W, 2x3, Pettiette children on beach trip in		
12	1F_01	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	March 1948	cousin Peggy (Left), Verna Pe	B&W, 3x5, with border, Verna and family sta		
13	1F_02	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	March 1948	William Wathen (Left) and Ma	B&W, 3x5, with border, Will and Minnie Wat		
14	1G_01	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	1920s-1930s?	Mary Wathen "Aunt Mamie"	B&W, 3x5, rounded corners, silvering, Aunt	Aunt Mamie wen	
15	1G_02	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	1940s-1950s?	Mary Wathen "Aunt Mamie" at	B&W, 3x5, rounded corners, Aunt Mamie at ***		
16	1H_01	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	1933?	?James Edwin Wathen?	B&W, 3x5, baby picture	James Edwin We	
17	1H_02	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	1928?	?James Edwin Wathen?	B&W, 3x5, baby picture, baby is holding a b	James Edwin We silvering	
18	1H_03	1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948	1920s-1930s?	Mary Ruth Wathen	B&W, 3x5, baby girl in bonnet	Mary Ruth Wath	

Example inventory 2:

File # _____
 Box # _____

Group 1, Wathens, Pettiette 1920s-1948
 Description Children Date

Date: _____ Subject: _____ Place: _____

11A	7 ladies: 3rd from R = Teresa Wathen, 2nd from R =	Mary "Mamie" Wathen (1920s)
1B + 1C	Bernice and Verna on front porch, Bernard	Palestine (1930s) and Verna in front of house
1D, 01, 02, 03, 04	Pettiette children	May 1937
1E, 01, 02, 03	Pettiette children at beach	Corpus Christi, July 1938
1F, 01, 02	children, with Minnie Wathen	Athens Country Club March 1948
1G, 01, 02	Aunt Mamie	
Neg: 1H, 01, 02, 03 1K, 1L	Verna's cousins baby pictures Teresa - portrait, Adolphus at diner	1920s-1930s

Hollinger Metal Edge
 800-862-2228 (CA) 800-634-0491 (VA)
 www.hollingermetaledge.com
 #APSE4281 Acid & Lignin Free

Example single photo inventory info:



- **File Name:** 1G_01
- **Group Name:** 1 - Wathens, Pettiette children, 1920s-1948
- **Approx. Date:** 1920s-30s
- **People in Photo:** Mary "Mamie" Wathen
- **Description:** B&W, 3x5, portrait of Mary Wathen in a graduation cap and gown
- **Story:** Mary Wathen went to college to become a school teacher and taught in Tennessee Colony, Texas
- **Notes:** Slight silvering on bottom of photo



Milestone 3

The hard part is over! You have reached milestone three. All of your first priority photos are generally organized, labeled, and stored safely. Even if you haven't filled out every detail in your inventory, you at least know the basics of what photos you have, where they're stored, and that they are safe from the harm of acidic paper, light, and poor climate conditions. That's a huge achievement! If you want to also create digital versions of your photos, move to the next section. Otherwise, skip to the "Collecting Stories" section below to learn how to retain value and meaning in your photograph collection.



6. Digitizing Photographs

Digitizing your photographs can help with photo preservation and access, but a digital storage and maintenance plan is essential for your efforts to be worthwhile over time.¹⁷

- ❑ Determine your goals for use of digital copies

Before you start to scan your photographs, identify the reason(s) why you want to create digital image files of your collection. Common motivations include:

- **Preservation:**
 - Create a backup collection in case the physical items are lost or destroyed
 - Print out digital images of the photos so originals can stay safely stored away
- **Access:**
 - Post on social media or share via email with family and friends
 - Create a website or digital exhibit of your photo collection to share with others

If you are planning to digitize your photos for **preservation**:

- Use a high-quality camera or scanner to create digital images
- Recommended file formats: raw, TIFF
- Pay attention to file naming and organization so you know where to find things later
- Keep multiple copies (on external hard drive and cloud storage)

If you are planning to digitize your photos for **access**:

- Camera or scanner quality is not as important
- Recommended file formats: JPG, PNG
- Pay attention to file naming and organization so you know where to find things later
- Keep at least one backup copy (on external hard drive or cloud storage)
- If you are planning to make your digital photos accessible to the public online, see the "Sharing Stories" section below

¹⁷ <https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/about/techStandards.pdf>

Once you know your main goal(s) for digitization, you can determine the equipment you will need, where and how you will keep backup copies, and when you will check on your digital files periodically to keep them intact and accessible over time.¹⁸

- ❑ Determine how you will create digital copies of your photos

The digitization method you choose will depend on the size, format, and condition of your photographs and the resources that you have available.^{19 20 21} Common digitization methods include:

- Copy stand - a flat surface with a camera mounted directly above for a bird's eye view
- Flatbed - commercial scanner with a lid that lifts to expose a flat glass surface
- Camera phone - cell phone with a built-in camera

Examples of different digitization methods (no edits have been made):



Copy stand: Nikon D810



Flatbed: Brother 3 in 1



Camera phone: iPhone 6

- ❑ Organize digital files to reflect the organization of the physical photos

Create a digital folder for each group of photographs that you have created. Store individual photo files within their corresponding group folder, naming the files to match your physical inventory.

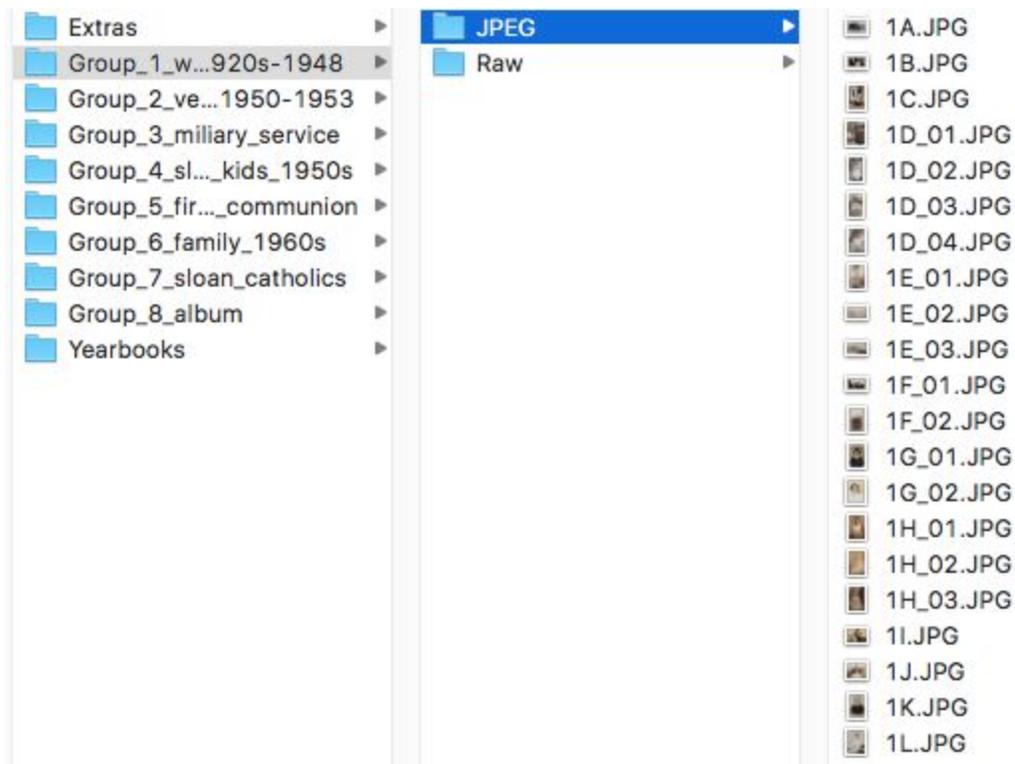
¹⁸ <http://preservationtutorial.library.cornell.edu/contents.html>

¹⁹ <https://www.archivalmethods.com/blog/scanning-photographs/>

²⁰ <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/digitizing>

²¹ <https://dpbestflow.org/links/32>

Example of digital file organization:



- ❑ Make a copy!

Digital media can degrade over time, just like physical objects. To mitigate loss of digital files, keep at least one, if not two or three backup copies of your digital files. Once you have one digital copy of each photograph, check the total file size to see how much storage space you will need.

Common backup storage options include²²:

- External hard drive(s)
- Google Drive - limit of 15GB free storage
- Amazon Prime - unlimited photo storage for Amazon Prime members
- Dropbox - limit of 2GB free storage
- iCloud - \$.99/month for 50GB

For ongoing digital preservation:

- Check your digital files periodically (at least every six months)
 - Look for changes in file size and number of files
 - Make sure files are still viewable on your computer
 - If you find corrupt files or discrepancies, make another copy from intact files, or re-digitize affected items
- Replace external hard drives periodically (at least every five years)

²² <https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/virtual-photo-storage/>

7. Collecting Stories

All photos have a story connected to them that gives meaning and importance to the photograph itself as a memory and artifact. Collecting and preserving these stories is just as important as preserving the physical photographs.

- ❑ Interview family members and document stories

You may already know the stories that go with your photos. If so, document them by recording and writing them down. Use the “stories” column of your inventory to connect family narratives with the photos that go with them (see the “Organizing Your Collection” section above).²³ If you don’t already know the stories, or if there are gaps in your knowledge, interview your family members, using the photos as a guide.²⁴

Sample questions to spark conversation:

- What is going on in this photo?
- Can you think of any traditions or stories that we pass on in our family?
- How far back do our traditions/stories date?
- Where did our family originate?
- Has our family moved to other places over time?
- Did anyone in our family ever speak a language other than English while living in the US?
- What were some of our ancestors’ occupations?
- Did anyone in our family participate in important events or struggles?
- What were some of the major challenges that family members had to face in order to be here today?

- ❑ Consider stories within a broader historical context

Storytelling, sharing personal experiences, and participating in traditions ties individuals and family units to the larger cultural heritage history and landscape, as we all fit within the context of our time period and society. Recognizing these connections may not only provide individuals with an increased sense of identity, but can bring awareness to the roles that individuals play in shaping history and cultures. While you’re gathering your family’s stories, think about and investigate the wider cultural and social conditions of the time of the photo; locally, nationwide, and on a global level.

²³ <http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/Migrations/seek2/family.html>

²⁴ <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/oral-history/>

Example of connecting to broader context:



- **Description:** This photo was taken in Palestine, Texas in May 1937, and shows three young girls standing in front of a dogwood tree. Two of the girls are barefoot and the tallest girl has a cast on one arm.

- **Family Story:** Verna (the youngest), her older sister Bernice, and their cousin Dolores (middle) would play outside their family’s house in Palestine, Texas, where it was so hot in the summer that they hated wearing shoes. Her sister had broken her arm while climbing a tree. The girls stopped to pose for a photo in front of the dogwood tree in the front yard, which became a common backdrop for a variety of family photos over the years.

- **Local:** The Great Depression was felt strongly in Texas, where many people worked in farming and suffered from the dust bowl as well as general economic downturn. Additionally, when this photo was taken, just 60 miles away, a natural gas explosion at a school killed over 300 students and teachers in one of the worst school tragedies in Texas.

- **National:** This photo was taken just 5 years after the lowest point of the Great Depression, when millions of people were unemployed and multitudes of banks had

failed, with many Americans struggling financially. Franklin D. Roosevelt had just recently been re-elected and was promoting the second New Deal.

- **Global:** Repercussions of the Depression were felt across the globe, while German forces were strengthening leading up to World War I. 1937 is also the year that Amelia Earhart disappeared.

★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ **Milestone 4** ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★ ★

You made it to the finish line!!! Not only are your physical photographs stored safely and documented, you also have gathered a collection of stories to go with them. When future generations look at these images of their ancestors, they’ll have a better idea of who these people were and what their lives were like, in addition to what they looked like. We all have stories to tell that contribute to our collective histories and cultures. To go further with discovering your stories and sharing them with others, continue on.



- ❑ Optional: Map out family tree

As you gather and document family names, places, and dates, consider mapping out your family tree as another way to contextualize your photo collection. You can either draw your tree by hand, type it up on the computer, or use an online tool like “[Family Echo](#).”

Genealogy Research Resources:

- National newspaper archives: <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov>
- State newspaper archives (such as the Oregon Digital Newspaper Program: <https://oregonnews.uoregon.edu>)
- National Archives: <https://www.archives.gov/research/genealogy/start-research>
- Family Search: https://www.familysearch.org/wiki/en/New_to_Genealogy_-_Beginners_First_Step
- American Ancestors: <https://www.americanancestors.org/education/learning-resources/read/getting-started>

Example of family history information hidden in social media posts:



8. Sharing Stories

Share your stories with family and friends by presenting your photographs and family histories online, or leverage your scans to display physical photos either framed or in photo albums.

- ❑ Seek permission before posting online

If you want to create a digital exhibit to share online, be considerate of your family members and get permission from the people in the photos before posting and making them publicly accessible.

- ❑ Use a digital exhibit platform

For a digital showcase, there are a few recommended software platforms you may use to display and share your photos online, depending on your goals and resources that you have available:

Wordpress: <https://wordpress.com/>

- Pricing: 3GB - Free; see photo-based themes: Snaps, Photos
- Notes: Free, relatively easy to use. Allows for combination of text and images. Paid versions are available, and free version is more limited in storage, functionality, and design.

Mukurtu: <https://reclaimhosting.com/shared-hosting/>

- Pricing: \$30/Year for 2GB, \$50/Year for 10GB, \$100/year for 100GB
- Notes: Includes ability to set visibility controls and allow only certain people to view certain content upon logging in. Designed specifically for cultural heritage collections.

Omeka.net: <https://www.omeka.net/signup>

- Pricing: \$35/Year for 2GB, \$75/Year for 5GB, \$350/Year for 10 GB, \$1000/Year for 50 GB
- Notes: Allows for adding one item at a time so you can tag and search for individual items, detailed metadata fields at both item and collection level. Some default settings can be changed with some technical know-how.

Example digital exhibit: <https://sloanfamilyphotos.wordpress.com/>



- ❑ Create a plan for a physical display

In addition to or instead of a digital exhibit, you can also display your physical photographs^{25 26}, with consideration for the following:

- You may want to scan all of your photos and have the digital images printed out for display, keeping original photos safely protected in archival storage.

²⁵ <https://www.loc.gov/preservation/about/faqs/general.html#exh>

²⁶ <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/displaying.html>

- If you frame originals, make sure the frame materials are archivally safe and the glass offers UV protection. You should aim to replace the glass every 5-10 years, as UV protection can wear off over time.
- If you want to keep originals in a photo album, use archivally safe plastic sleeves. Do not use adhesive to label photos. Consider printing out an inventory or catalogue of the photos to keep with the album.



Congrats on reaching the bonus milestone! You have gone above and beyond in telling your stories and archiving your family photographs. How was your journey? How did it turn out? Share your archiving experience by sending an email to ofn@uoregon.edu.



9. Additional Resources

Photo Preservation Basics

- Care, handling, and storage of photos: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/care/photo.html> [2]
- Caring for photographs: <https://www.nps.gov/museum/publications/conservation/14-04.pdf> [3]
- Caring for your treasures: https://f9f7df2c79cc13143598-609f7062990e04dd7dd5b501c851683c.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/achaw_c8362185071923e160aef031f10ba3e2.pdf [5]
- How to preserve collections: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/about/faqs/general.html#preventive> [4]
- Storing family photographs: <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/storing> [6]
- Photo storage: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/about/faqs/general.html#attic> [8]
- Handling photos: <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/handling.html> [9]
- Dealing with negatives: https://www.imagepermanenceinstitute.org/webfm_send/302 [7]

Assessing and Organizing Your Collection

- How to begin a personal archiving project: <https://blogs.loc.gov/thesignal/2016/05/how-to-begin-a-personal-archiving-project/> [10]
- Types of photograph degradation: <https://archivesandspecialcollections.wordpress.com/2012/02/17/forms-of-photograph-degradation-sulfiding-and-insufficient-fixing/> [11]
- Dealing with pests: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/about/faqs/general.html#pests> [12]
- Dealing with mold and insects: <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/mold-insects.html> [13]
- Dealing with wet items: <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/about/faqs/general.html#wet> [14]
- Repairing damage: <https://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/repairing.html> [15]

- Caring for your treasures:
https://f9f7df2c79cc13143598-609f7062990e04dd7dd5b501c851683c.ssl.cf2.rackcdn.com/ichaw_c8362185071923e160aef031f10ba3e2.pdf [16]

Digitization

- Library of Congress' Technical Standards for Digitization:
<https://memory.loc.gov/ammem/about/techStandards.pdf> [17]
- Digital imaging tutorial: <http://preservationtutorial.library.cornell.edu/contents.html> [18]
- Scanning photographs: <https://www.archivalmethods.com/blog/scanning-photographs/> [19]
- Digitizing family photographs:
<https://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/digitizing> [20]
- Digital photography best practices: <https://dpbestflow.org/links/32> [21]
- How to use virtual photo storage:
<https://www.familysearch.org/blog/en/virtual-photo-storage/> [22]

Collecting Stories

- How to collect your own family folklore:
<http://www.smithsonianeducation.org/Migrations/seek2/family.html> [23]
- Oral history: <https://writingcenter.unc.edu/tips-and-tools/oral-history/> [24]

Sharing Stories

- Home Movie (1975): <http://www.folkstreams.net/film-detail.php?id=112> [1]
- How to safely display collection items:
<https://www.loc.gov/preservation/about/faqs/general.html#exh> [25]
- Displaying family photos:
<https://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/displaying.html> [26]

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