Create a Holiday Keepsake: Ancestral Ornaments

The holidays are a time to be with family—present and past. Remember your ancestors this year by creating a special keepsake ornament. When made with family members—especially children or grandchildren—you’ll not only create new family memories, but also share a piece of family history.

**Suggested Supplies:** Family photos; a computer, scanner and printer; scissors, glue stick, hot glue gun with glue, hole punch, cardstock or poster board. **Suggested Trimmings:** ribbon, lace, tassels, sequins, yarn, buttons, feathers—anything! **CAUTION:** Supervise children when using scissors. A hot glue gun should only be used by adults.

**Step 1: Scan & Print Your Image**
Scan your family photos, resize to approximately 3” x 4”, and print. Be sure to scan your images at 300 or 600 dpi for best printing quality. You can resize your photo in Microsoft® Word, Adobe® Photoshop, or any number of image viewing programs. If you don’t have these resources at home, a local copy center can help.

**Step 2: Select Your Shape**
Determine what shape will work best for your picture. Cut out that shape on colorful cardstock or poster board. This is the backing for your ornament. Use the [templates on our website](https://www.newenglandhistoricgenealogicalsociety.org) or make your own.

With a pencil, trace around the cut-out backing on the printed picture.

Cut out the traced shape and glue to the backing. Trim any exposed poster board.

**Step 3: Trim Your Ornament**
Trim your ornament using ribbon, lace, tassels, sequins, yarn, buttons, feathers—anything! A hot glue gun is needed for heavier trimmings such as buttons and bows. You can also use a tapestry needle to stitch ribbon or yarn around the edge. Add a loop for hanging using a hole punch or glue.

Don’t forget to write the “who,” “when,” and “where” on the back!

**Step 4: Trim your Tree**
Your Ancestral ornament is complete! Trim your tree and save your keepsake creations for years—and generations—to come.

*Photo of Hilda Kern, ca. 1905.*