

Digitizing Your Family History Collections

Planning Your Digitization Project

THE BRUE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER



American Ancestors®
by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Meet today's presenter



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Digital Archivist



Voice of
Sally Benny
Digital Archivist

Planning

Planning Your Digitization Project

1. Review your collection
2. Choose hardware: Scanners, cameras, and other accessories
3. Become familiar with file formats and image properties
4. Plan for metadata
5. Preserve your digital files

Digitization Planning Form

Digitization Planning Form

Summary

Briefly describe the material that you want to digitize.

Size of Project

Estimate the number of documents, photographs, and other material that you will digitize.

Format of Originals

- ☐ Unbound documents (letters, legal documents, etc.)
- ☐ General oversized documents
- ☐ Artifacts and objects (medals, etc.)
- ☐ Film (negatives, slides, etc.)
- ☐ Photographs (loose)
- ☐ Photograph albums
- ☐ Scrapbooks
- ☐ Other bound volumes
- ☐ Newspapers
- ☐ Other:

Condition

- ☐ Tape
- ☐ Metal fasteners (rusty clips, staples, other)
- ☐ Mold or water damage
- ☐ Insect or mice damage
- ☐ Excessive dirt / dust
- ☐ Damaged binding(s) in bound volumes
- ☐ Brittle paper
- ☐ Newspapers
- ☐ Other:

Purpose of Digitization

What will you do with your images?

Hardware and Supplies

List the hardware and any other supplies (tripod, weights, etc.) that you need for this project.

Equipment	Have/Need?	Notes

File Formats and Image Specifications

Format of Original	File Format	Resolution	Grayscale or Color?

File Names

Describe the standard file naming system you will use and provide an example.

File Organization

How will you organize the files? Provide an example.

Key Terms

Definitions: Resolution

- A relative value, usually expressed as the density of elements, such as **pixels**, within a specific distance, most commonly an inch. Affects the amount of detail you can see in a digital image.



400 ppi
vs.
2400 ppi



Source: <https://blogs.loc.gov/thesignal/2013/03/what-resolution-should-i-use-part-3/>

Definitions: Pixel Dimensions



1116×746 pixels

300 pixels

3.72 in. x 2.49 in.
maximum printable size



400×278 pixels

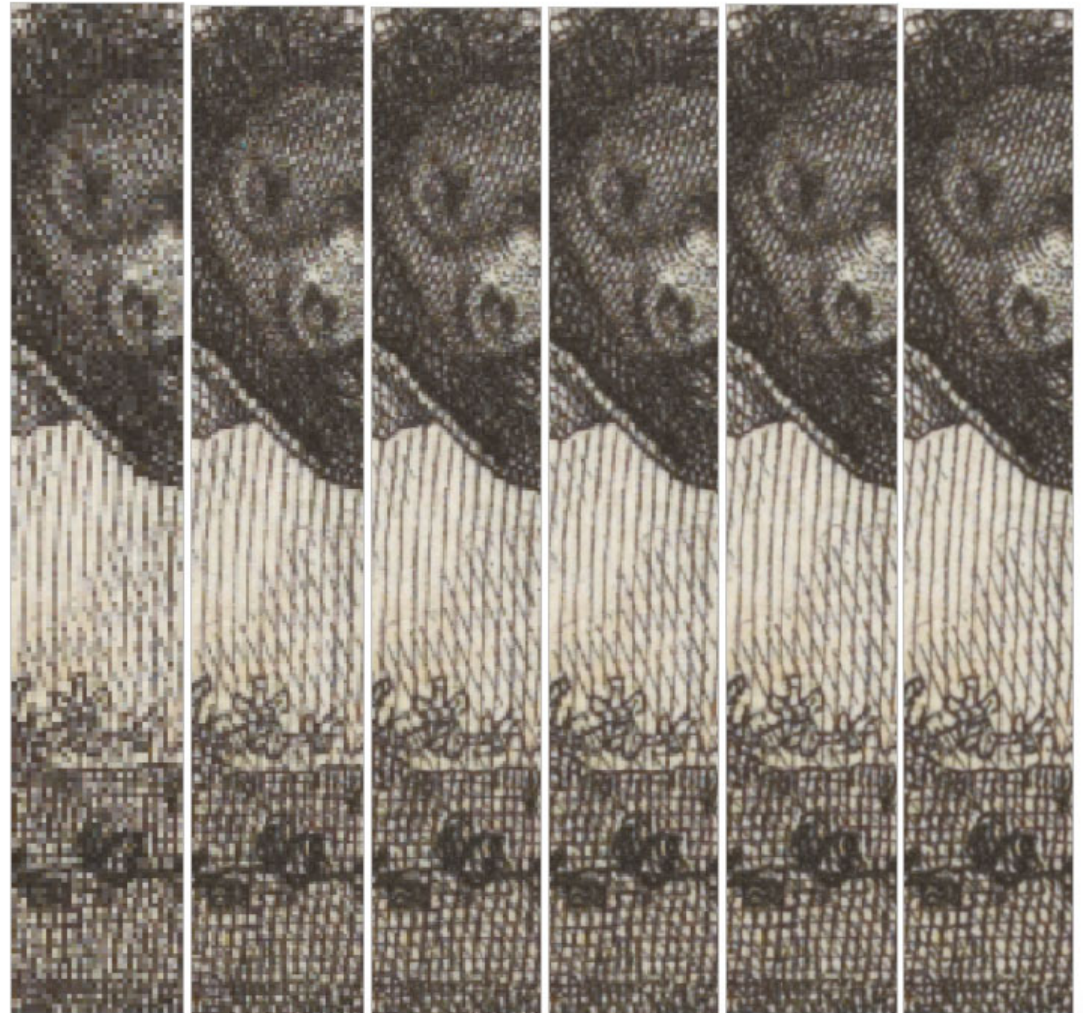
300 pixels

1.33 in. x 0.93 in.
maximum printable size

Definitions: DPI and PPI

- ppi (pixels per inch)
- dpi (dots per inch)

Image Source:
<http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/preserv/minimum-digitization-capture-recommendations>





Top: Red boxes indicate edge features used to calculate maximum image information content.

Bottom: Enlarged detail version extracted from the circled area in the top image showing no difference in image information at 3000 ppi, 1500 ppi, and 1500 ppi interpolated up to 3000 ppi. From an 8x10-inch glass plate dating from 1906, in the collections of the Bancroft Library, University of California, Berkeley.

Source: Information or Artifact: Digitizing Photographic Negatives and Transparencies, Part 2, <https://blogs.loc.gov/thesignal/2011/10/information-or-artifact-digitizing-photographic-negatives-and-transparencies-part-2/>

Resolution Example

Definitions: Optical Resolution

- The resolution at which a capture device, such as a scanner or digital camera, is capable of capturing pixel values based on actual samples taken from an original to construct an image.



Maximum optical resolution (300 ppi)



Interpolated resolution (600 ppi)

Source: <https://www.scantips.com/interpol.html>

Definitions: Bit Depth

- the number of bits used to describe each pixel in an image.



1-bit = 2 shades



8-bit = 256 shades

Source: <https://archivesoutside.records.nsw.gov.au/digitising-your-collection-part-3-technical-specifications/>

Definitions: RAW files

- The unprocessed file that is produced by a digital camera.
- The highest quality image that a camera can produce, with the greatest amount of data.
- Requires additional editing before it can be used.

Definitions: Metadata

- “Data about data”
- Documents important aspects of a resource, and helps users to find, interpret, and access resources in any format
- Includes descriptive metadata, which describes the content of a resource

▼ IPTC Core	
Creator	William Jones
Creator: Job Title	
Creator: Address	
Creator: City	
Creator: State/Province	
Creator: Postal Code	
Creator: Country	
Creator: Phone(s)	
Creator: Email(s)	
Creator: Website(s)	
Headline	
Description	Letters, 1771 July 10 and 1771 August 1, to John Hancock (Mss C 709). R Stanton Avery Special Collections, New England Historic Genealogical Society.
Keywords	William Jones; John Hancock; Boston; Massachusetts; Merchants; Shipping
IPTC Subject Code	
Description Writer	NEHGS
Date Created	
Intellectual Genre	
IPTC Scene	
Location	
City	
State/Province	
Country	
ISO Country Code	
Title	Letters by William Jones, 1771 July ...
Job Identifier	
Instructions	
Provider	
Source	
Copyright Notice	
Copyright Status	Unknown
Rights Usage Terms	

• 1

Review Your Collection

Review Your Collection



- What do you want to digitize and why?
- What do you plan to do with the images?
- How many documents do you have?
- What condition are they in?

Starting Your Survey

1. Survey the collection

- What do you have?
- What to digitize?

2. Triage possible and existing preservation issues



What is a survey?

A survey looks at:

- general subject matter
- formats of material
- any pre-existing arrangement
- condition of materials
- preservation needs



JHC archivists surveying a new arrival of records at NEHGS

Identify document types



Saturday April 18-1903
 Cyrus and I left home taking the
 three twenty train from Haskinsville
 on Friday afternoon for New York.
 After a comfortable night's rest, being
 called at seven for early breakfast
 we were on board of the Kronprinz
 Wilhelm in season to start out on
 our trip at ten o'clock sharp.
 From the New York side, her next
 starting being made from her own
 Hoboken slips, just ready for me.
 We find most of the passengers
 to be Jews and Germans. About
 twenty Americans (full blooded) in all.
 The German language is everywhere
 to be heard. At our table sat
 Mrs. Anna next Mrs. Parker, the Mrs. G.
 Mrs. Neuburger, Mrs. Jakob Schilder's child
 Dr. Jacob Schlegelstein, Mr. Louis Hauberg
 Mr. Haefer, Mrs. Mrs. Jean C. Nagelstein
 (family consisting of...)

1903 travel diary

[Form 98.]

STATE OF NEW HAMPSHIRE.

To the Honorable Judge of Probate for the County of Carroll:

Your petitioners Lozzie Berry and Harland B. Kelly, in said County, respectfully represent that they are residents of Hopkinton, in said County, and are husband and wife, living together in that relation; that Harland B. Kelly, a minor, now residing at Hopkinton, in the County of Carroll, is a legitimate child of Fred A. Kelly and Larania (Rodewick) Kelly; that same child was born at Hopkinton on the Second day of August, A. D. 1897; and has been abandoned by his parents that they are desirous of adopting said child as their own, and as a change of its name; that they are of sufficient ability to bring up said child, and to furnish suitable nurture and education, having reference to the degree and condition of its parents; and that it is fit and proper that such adoption should take effect.

Wherefore they pray that such adoption may be decreed, and that the name of said child be changed to

Dated the twenty-third day of February, A. D. 1906

Lozzie Berry
Harland B. Kelly

and

respectfully represent that they are husband and wife, and parents of a minor, who is named in the foregoing petition of _____ and _____; that said child was born at _____, on the _____ day of _____, A. D. _____, and that they hereby give their full consent, respectively, to the adoption of said child and a change of its name agreeably to the prayer of said petition.

Dated the _____ day of _____, A. D. 1906

Signed in presence of _____

1898 Adoption Petition

Identify other formats



Tip

Handle materials gently

Arrangement



- Is there an order to the materials?
- Are the materials in labeled folders? Does the folder label match up to the contents?
- Photos – loose?
In albums? Identified?

Review current storage methods

- File cabinets and folders
- Binders
- Boxes
- Bound volumes



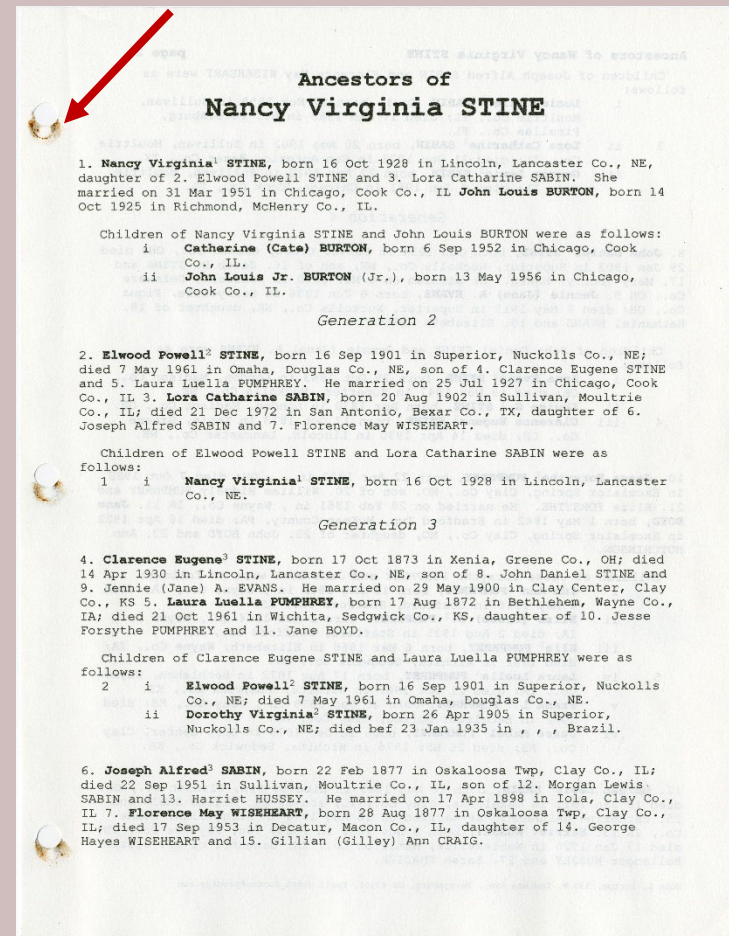
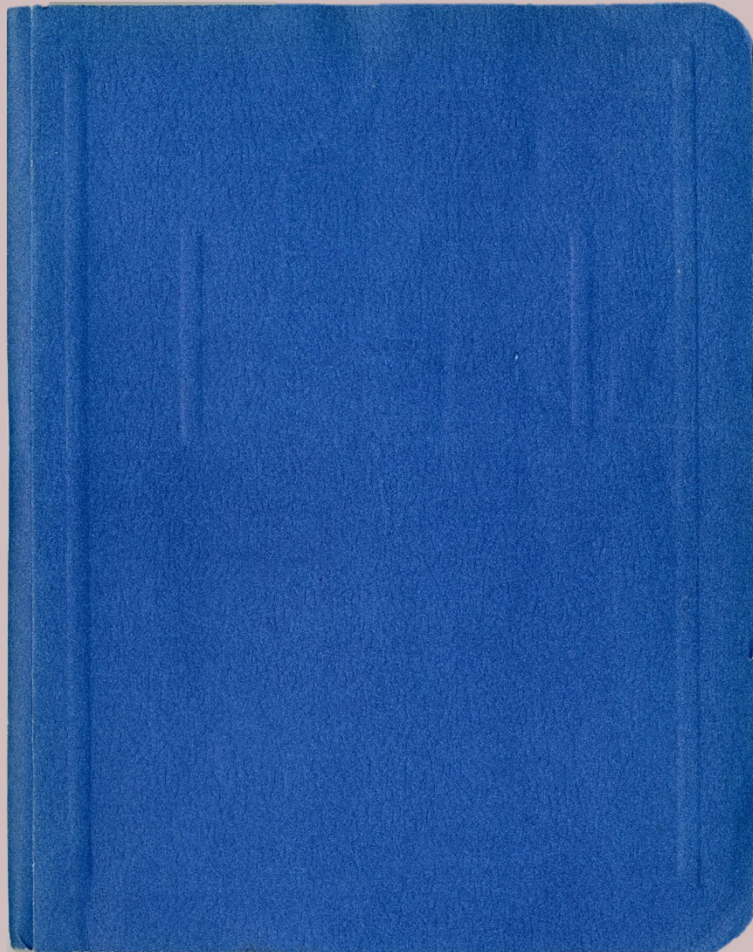
Identify preservation issues



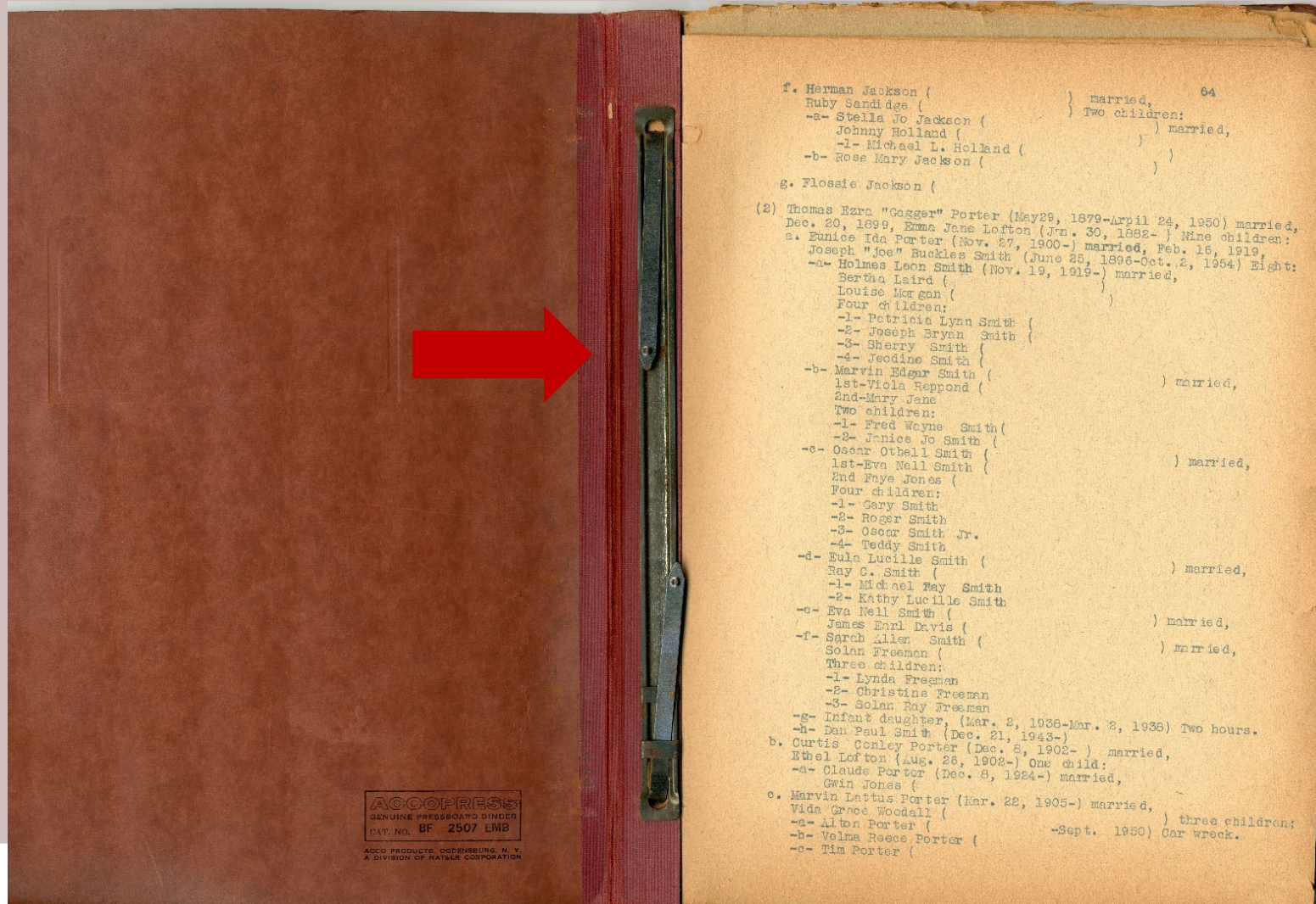
What's Bad

- Rust - paper clips, staples, etc.
- Rubber
- Folds/creases
- Adhesive - tape, glues, etc.
- Mold
- Insects and rodents
- Humidity
- Light
- Temperature

Preservation Example

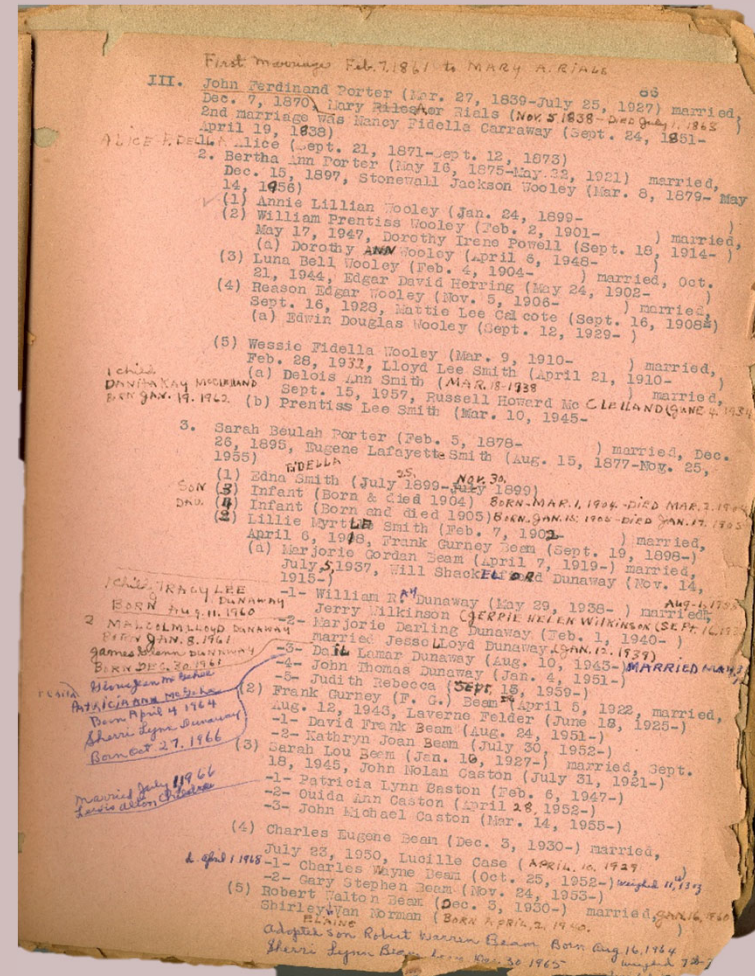


Preservation Example



Decisions to make

- Definitely remove from present enclosure
- To keep or throw away?
 - Does another copy exist in the collection?
 - Make sure annotated information is recorded elsewhere
- If you choose to keep, create preservation copy



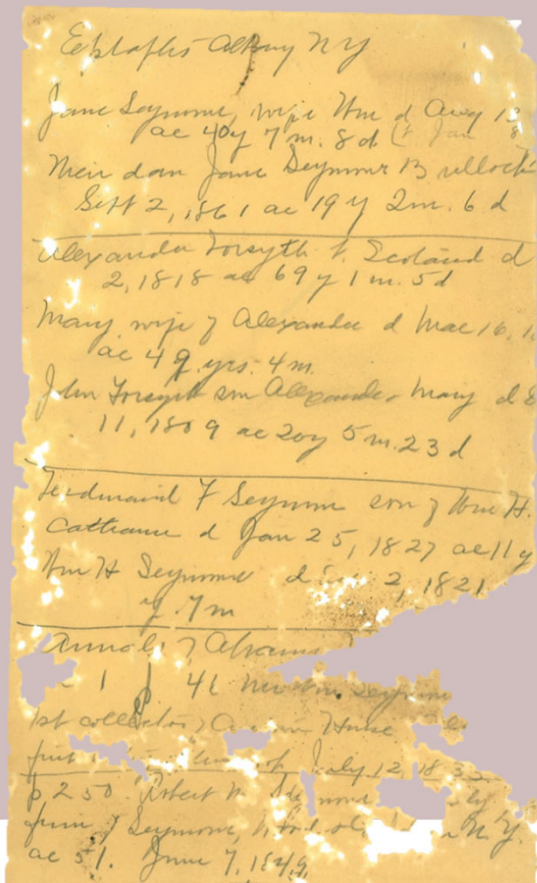
Do no harm!!!



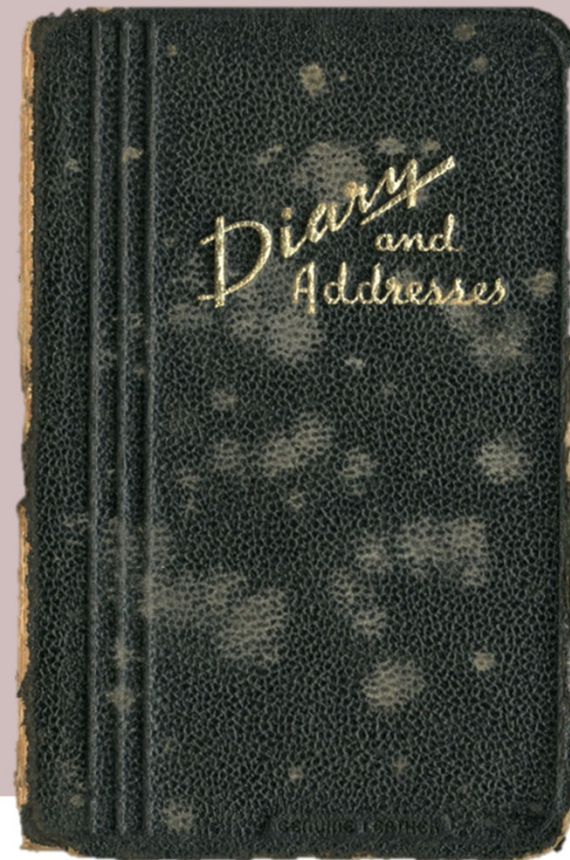
Image from Marion Emerett Colman Scrapbook from
Florida State Special Collections

Conservation Example

Insect damage



Mold on diary



Tip

Ask for help if
you need it.

Contacting a Conservator

- Contact a conservator before digitizing if:
 - Documents are extremely fragile
 - Documents can't be unfolded without cracking or tearing
 - Documents are tightly rolled
- Find a local conservator by searching <http://www.conservation-us.org/membership/find-a-conservator>
- NEDCC (www.nedcc.org) also has conservators as well as imaging services.

NORTHEAST DOCUMENT CONSERVATION CENTER

HOME ABOUT WORKING WITH NEDCC PHOTO LIBRARY SUPPORTERS CROWDFUNDING CONTACT

BOOK CONSERVATION PAPER CONSERVATION PHOTOGRAPH CONSERVATION ASIAN ART CONSERVATION IMAGING SERVICES AUDIO PRESERVATION ASSESSMENTS AND CONSULTATIONS PRESERVATION TRAINING

PRESERVATION LEAFLETS **DISASTER ASSISTANCE** FREE RESOURCES

Join E-list GO Site Search GO TEXT SIZE

Free Resources

FREE RESOURCES

- Overview
- Ask NEDCC
- Disaster Assistance
- dPlan™: The Online Disaster-Planning Tool
- COSTEP: Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness
- Digital Preservation
- Preservation 101
- Preservation Education Curriculum
- Preservation Leaflets
- NEDCC Publications
- Funding Opportunities
- Resources for Town, Municipal, and County Clerks
- Vital Records Replacement
- Preserving Private and Family Collections
- Further Reading on Preservation

Part of NEDCC's mission is to help improve the conservation efforts of libraries, archives, historical organizations, and museums.

The Center offers many free resources and services that help support the preservation efforts of cultural heritage institutions as well as private and family collectors.

NEDCC's free services and resources are made possible in part by support from the National Endowment for the Humanities. Many of the Center's resources were developed with support from the Institute of Museum and Library Services, the Andrew Mellon Foundation, the Massachusetts Cultural Council, corporate sponsors, and other funding agencies and private foundations.

Ask NEDCC
NEDCC answers your preservation questions for free

Disaster Assistance
NEDCC offers free 24/7 phone advice on damaged collections

dPlan
The Free Online Disaster-Planning Template

COSTEP
Coordinated Statewide Emergency Preparedness Framework

Digital Preservation Resources
Further Reading on Digital Preservation

Preservation 101
The Free Online Introduction to Preservation

Preservation Education Curriculum
A free, ready-to-use curriculum for Masters of Library Science Programs

Preservation Leaflets
Free printable Leaflets with information on a wide variety of preservation topics

NEDCC Publications
Publications to help preserve your collections

Funding Sources
Sources for funding conservation or preservation

Resources for Town and Municipal Clerks
Free advice from professionals

Vital Records Replacement
Guidelines for replacing important personal documents and records

Preserving Private and Family Collections

Further Reading on Preservation

HELP SUPPORT AMERICA'S COLLECTIONS

CROWDFUNDING FOR PRESERVATION

Are you interested in history? Would you like to play an important role in the preservation of America's historical artifacts?

www.nedcc.org/free-resources/overview

Basic Steps of Organization

1. Based on your survey, look for patterns and natural groupings
2. Determine your arrangement and create an outline
3. Physically arrange your collection

Find Patterns

- Look at your collection survey
- Find natural groupings of your materials based on:
 - Who or what created them
 - What or how they were created
 - What they document
 - When they were created
- Families, document types, and time periods are common groupings

Determine Your Arrangement

- What is (a good) arrangement?
 - Groups like materials together
 - Allows you to know what you have
 - Makes items easy to find
 - Includes hierarchies that show clear relationships
- Common arrangement schemes:
 - Organized by family
 - Organized by document type
 - Organized chronologically

Choose Hardware

Selecting Hardware

- Choose equipment that won't damage your documents
- The best options for home collections:
 - Flatbed scanner
 - Camera with a tripod or copy stand



Choosing Scanners and Cameras

- Scanners
 - 600 dpi optical resolution or higher
 - 2000-3000 dpi optical resolution for film
- Cameras
 - At least 10 megapixels (3872 x 2592 px)
 - need to be able to control image settings, like ISO, white balance, and shutter speed

Scanners vs. Cameras

- [General overview – when to use a scanner vs. a camera]
- Cameras are faster and can be used to digitize anything
 - But they require more equipment and setup to take high-quality images

File Formats and Organization

File Formats and Imaging Settings

- Save original images in a file format that uses little or no compression.
 - TIFF preferred
- If scanning:
 - 300 ppi or higher, in color
- If using a camera, select the highest image quality

File Naming and Organization

- File names should be relatively short, but meaningful
- Organize your images in folders
- Always edit copies, not originals



Plan for Metadata

Metadata

```
Collection: William Lowe Papers
Make/Model of scanner: Epson Scan 10000XL
Scanning software used: Epson Scan Professional
File format used/compression level: TIFF, compression unknown
Date of digitization: 2011-05

Folder: Lowe\Photographs\France_October_1919
photo1.tif Captain William Lowe, June 4, 1919 in camp at Brest,
France written on back.
photo2.tif William Lowe in uniform at barracks, 1919, identified
by son Amos Lowe.

Folder: Lowe\Papers\1918\Russia_Archangel_1918
letter1_envelope_front.tif Letter from William Lowe to his wife,
Mary, dated May 5, 1918
letter1_page1.tif first page of letter to his wife
letter2_envelope_front.tif Letter from William Lowe to his
mother, Clara, dated June 3, 1918
letter_2.tif 1 page letter to his mother, front only

Folder: Lowe\Papers\Diary
cover.tif Cover of Lowe's war diary
inside_cover.tif Inside cover of diary, with Lowe's name and
signature
scan1.tif Diary pages 1 and 2 scanned together
```

- Metadata, or “data about data,” describes your documents, making them easier to find.
- Options:
 - Embedded metadata
 - Separate files, like a spreadsheet or text file
 - Software, like an image browser or digital asset manager

Preserving Your Digital Files

Digital Preservation

- Save multiple copies in multiple locations
- Check your images at least once a year
- Copy your files to new media every 5 years

Your Digitization Plan

- Get started on your first digitization plan:
 - Select part of your family collection to digitize.
 - What equipment will you need to digitize these items? What do you already have? What do you need to buy?
 - What image settings and file formats will you use when creating the images?



THANK YOU!
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