

Digitizing Your Family History Collections

Choosing Hardware and Equipment

THE BRUE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER



American Ancestors®
by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Meet today's presenter

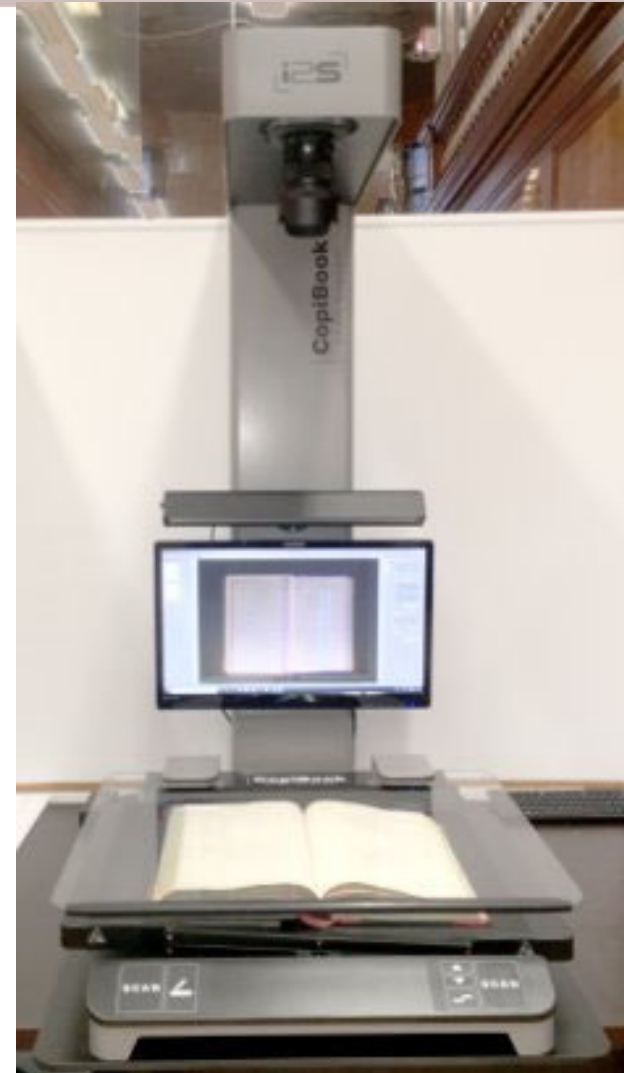


Rachel Adams
Database Services Volunteer Coordinator



Voice of
Rachel Adams
Database Services
Volunteer Coordinator

Setup at American Ancestors



Selecting Hardware for at Home

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



Not recommended!

- Sheet-fed scanner
- Scanning wand



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

Recommended Scanning Settings

Document type	Minimum Resolution	Color Mode	Notes
Printed documents (bound or unbound)	300-400 ppi	grayscale (8 bit) or color (24 bit)	Higher resolution and color recommended for rare and illustrated materials.
Handwritten documents (bound or unbound)	400 ppi	color (24 bit)	
Oversized documents (over 11 x 17 inches)	300 ppi	color (24 bit)	
Photographs (8 x 10 inches or less)	400 ppi	grayscale (8 bit) or color (24 bit)	Image should be 4000 pixels on long edge; adjust resolution accordingly.
Photographs (8 x 10 to 11 x 14 inches)	400-600 ppi	grayscale (8 bit) or color (24 bit)	Image should be 6000 pixels on long edge.
Photographs (over 11 x 14 inches)	600 ppi	grayscale (8 bit) or color (24 bit)	Image should be 8000 pixels on long edge.

Scanning Settings, continued

Document type	Minimum Resolution	Color Mode	Notes
Photographic film, including negatives and slides (4 x 5 inches or less)	800-2800 ppi	grayscale (8 bit) or color (24 bit)	Image should be 4000 pixels on long edge.
Photographic film (4 x 5 to 8 x 10 inches)	800-1200 ppi	grayscale (8 bit) or color (24 bit)	Image should be 6000 pixels on long edge.
Photographic film (over 8 x 10 inches)	800 ppi	grayscale (8 bit) or color (24 bit)	Image should be 6000 pixels on long edge.

Based on: ALCTS Minimum Digitization Capture Recommendations, June 2013,
<http://www.ala.org/alcts/resources/preserv/minimum-digitization-capture-recommendations>

Tip

Always read reviews!



PCMag editors select and review products independently. If you buy through affiliate links, we may earn commissions, which help support our testing.

Home > Reviews

Scanner Reviews

Best Overall Scanners

Best Photo Scanners

Best Document Scanners

Best Portable Scanners



How to Buy a Scanner: Today's Top Models, Tested

BY TONY HOFFMAN



Photo Scanners: We Tested the Best

BY TONY HOFFMAN



Calibration 101: How to Get Your Imaging Gear in Sync

BY WILLIAM HARREL

pcmag.com

Other Accessories

- Tripod
- Weights
- Pillows or book cradles
- Lightbox and/or lights



Specialty Add-Ons

- Specialized slide and negative scanners are also available
- Cameras can also photograph film
 - Use a lightbox to illuminate negatives and transparencies





Materials:

- Tripod or camera clamp (with table)
- 2 lamps
- Remote shutter release
- Background material

Camera Set-up



Source:

<https://archivehistory.jeksite.org/chapters/appendixd.htm> (left); *Digitisation of Heritage Materials*, p. 129, <http://www.dohm.com.au/> (above)

Where to buy?

- Electronics stores
- Online retailers
- Specialty resellers
 - e.g., B&H photo <https://www.bhphotovideo.com/>
- Archival suppliers (for weights, etc.)
 - <https://www.gaylord.com/c/Weights>

Get help!

- 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.



Online Community

for the American Institute for Conservation and Foundation for Advancement in Conservation

[Home](#) [Communities ▾](#) [Learning ▾](#) [News ▾](#) [Help/FAQs](#) [Find a Professional ▾](#)

search



[Find a Professional](#) / Local Search

Find a Professional

Local Search

- **Step 1: Check a box to narrow your search results by specialty.** Search logic is cumulative. If you check "Art on Paper" and "Photographs," search results will only show those who specialize in BOTH, not those who specialize in EITHER.
- **Step 2: Enter your location (address or just ZIP code) at the bottom of the page, and select a radius by mile to define the preferred search area.**

Architecture

- | | | |
|---|---|------------------------------------|
| ☐ Archaeological Sites | ☐ Architectural Models | ☐ Buildings |
| ☐ Architectural Elements/Materials | ☐ Architecture (General) | ☐ Monuments |

Books and Paper

- | | | |
|--|---|--|
| ☐ Art on Paper | ☐ Books | ☐ Unbound Documents |
| ☐ Asian Screens | ☐ Non-Western Art on Paper | ☐ Wallcoverings |

community.culturalheritage.org/expertsearch/local-search

A large audience is seated in a conference hall, facing a stage. The audience is seen from behind, filling the foreground and middle ground. The stage is at the far end of the hall, with a large presentation screen displaying a slide. The room has a high ceiling with recessed lighting. The overall image has a reddish-brown tint.

THANK YOU!

AmericanAncestors.org



NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC
GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

AmericanAncestors.org

Copyright © 2022