

Digitizing Your Family History Collections

Scanning & Photography Basics

THE BRUE FAMILY LEARNING CENTER



American Ancestors®
by NEW ENGLAND HISTORIC GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY

Meet today's presenter



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Voice of
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Before getting started

- ✓ Choose your hardware
- ✓ Consider your digitization plan
 - Scanner or camera settings
 - File formats
 - File naming
 - File organization

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

Other Accessories

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



File Formats and Imaging Settings

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

File Naming

- Should be relatively short
- Use alphanumeric characters, hyphens, and underscores
- Use meaningful names
- Write dates in yyyyymmdd, so the filenames sort chronologically
- End with a 3-letter file extension (.tif, .jpg)

Example: **Smith_letter_19110513_001.tif**

File Organization

- Keep original images in a master folder
- Put another copy in a working folder
 - Only edit the images in the working folder

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.

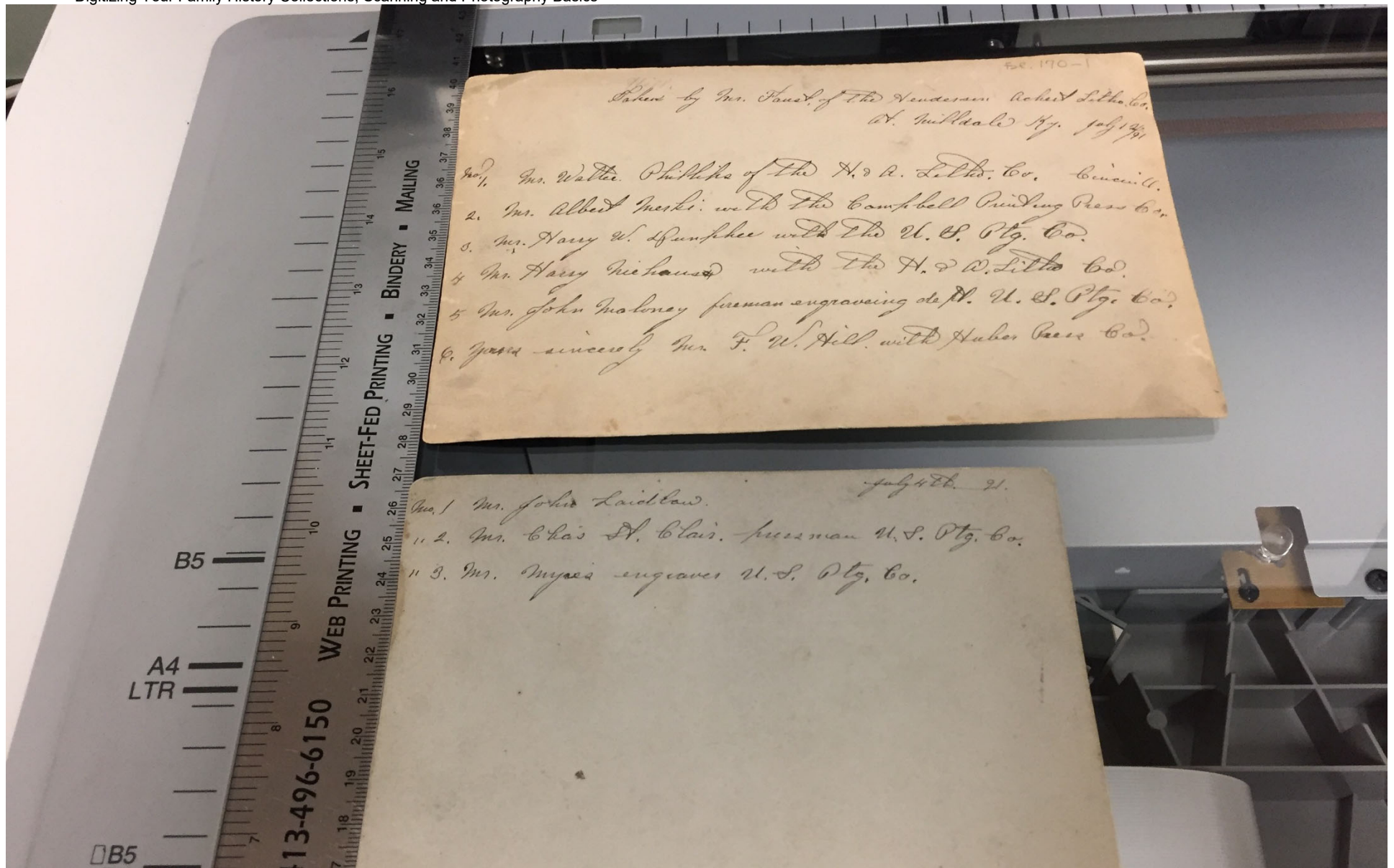
Scanning Settings, continued

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>

Using a Flatbed Scanner

1. Unfold documents and remove fastenings, if necessary.
2. Clean scanner.
3. Position document(s).
4. Select image settings.
5. Preview and scan.



Preparation and positioning documents

Scanning Oversized Items

- Make sure that oversized documents won't be creased or damaged by the scanner lid.
- Support any part of the document that is hanging over scanner edge.
- Scan overlapping sections of each page.



Using a Camera

1. Set up background for photographs.
2. Set up and turn on lights.
3. Set up tripod or stand and attach camera.
4. Adjust camera and tripod so that the document will fill most of the camera viewfinder.
5. Set up document.
6. Test focus and exposure.
7. Take photographs.

Using a Camera



- Background color should be neutral
- Consider your lighting
- Recommended camera settings:
 - ISO 100-200
 - Aperture priority mode
 - Highest image quality
 - Autofocus
 - Adjust white balance (if necessary)

Source: *Digitisation of Heritage Materials*,
p. 129, <http://www.dohm.com.au/>

Camera Basics



- Flash/no flash
- Exposure value (EV)
- Timer
- Camera scene modes



Materials:

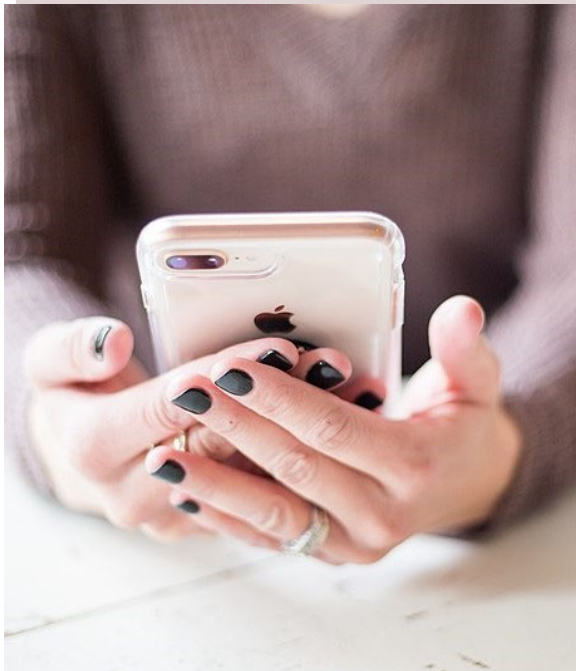
- Tripod or camera clamp (with table)
- 2 lamps
- Remote shutter release
- Background material

Source:

<https://archivehistory.jeksite.org/chapters/appendixd.htm>

Camera Set-up

Digitizing Materials with a Cell Phone or Mobile Device



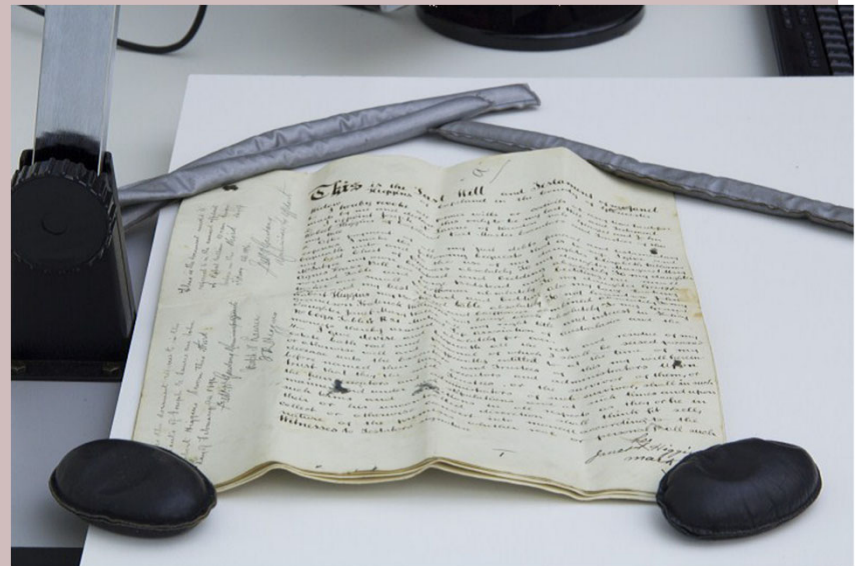
- Follow the same procedures you would if you were using a handheld camera
- Phone-specific tripods or phone-holders can be used
- Phone cameras have timer options
- Flash optional
- Many phones offer direct cloud-storage/back-up of images

Setting Up Documents

- Use weights, spatulas, or pointers to hold pages down
- Use a book pillow or book cradle to support books that cannot open flat

Source:

<https://archivesoutside.records.nsw.gov.au/digitising-your-collection-part-4-scanning-and-handling-tips/>





THANK YOU!
AmericanAncestors.org