

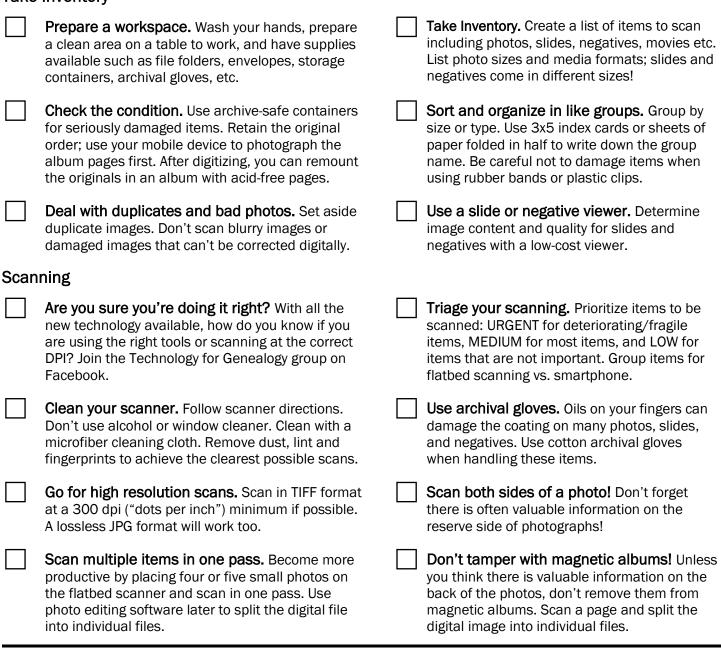
25 Tips for "Do It Yourself" Family Photo Scanning

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One the biggest challenges when it comes to family history is how to handle years of photos, slides, and negatives. These are valuable assets for genealogy research and preserving family stories. Organizing and preserving family photos can be so daunting that I throw up my hands and tell myself: "I will get to it sometime." That sometime is NOW!

Take Inventory



Build a Photo Scanning Toolbox

You will likely need a variety of tools and supplies to assist you. Here is what's in my photo scanning toolbox:

- Archival gloves
- Acid-free envelopes, folders, photo holders
- An archival spatula (to remove staples)
- Unwaxed dental floss (to remove photos from magnetic albums)
- Plastic paper clips

File Naming and Management

Rename the digital file. Scanners use "IMG001"
or some variation for file names. Right after
scanning, use a file name that makes sense. Your
goal is to know about the image file BEFORE you
click it. Example: AUSTIN John Ralph b1896 Coney
Island, NY Summer 1917.

Consider using metadata. Metadata is digital information such as names of people in a photo, location, date, etc. that can be added for purposes of organizing image files. It can also be used for copyright and source citations.

Storing Digital Image Files

Store scanned images in a cloud program. Platforms like Amazon Photos and Google Photos offer free or inexpensive ways to store and organize your digital images.

How is Metadata handled? Many platforms strip out metadata that you worked hard to add. As a test, upload a digital image with metadata, download it and review the results. Is your metadata still there?

Have an Exit Strategy. For any platform used to store digital images, know how to export all your images. Some platforms give 30 days or less notice when they are shutting down or merging with another platform.

Miscellaneous Tips and Tricks

Digitizing can bring up lots of emotions. Tears and memories are often involved. That's why you want photos for years to come, right? With a photo scanning plan, you can manage your scanning project, stay "on track" and not get distracted.

- Rubber bands
- Microfiber cleaning cloth
- 3x5 index cards
- Rechargeable batteries
- SD cards (for storing scanned images)
- USB flash drive

Create original and working images. Create
a digital folders labeled ORIGINAL and
WORKING. Add "ORIGINAL" to the TIFF image
file names. Create a working copy of each
image file in JPG format; edit the file name
prefix changing ORIGINAL to WORKING.

Backup your scans! Use the 3-2-1 Backup
Plan: 3 different backups, 2 different media,
and 1 backup in the cloud or offsite. Don't lose
all your scanning efforts by not backing up!

Review the Terms and Conditions. What is the platform doing with your images (like using it in marketing campaigns or selling it to stock photography companies?

Facebook and Ancestry are NOT Storage Platforms! Facebook compresses images, degrades image quality and strips out metadata. Ancestry let's you add images to a tree. but it is not the ideal storage platform.

Recycle your equipment. Donate items such as slide scanners to your local genealogical society or public library. Many set up "do it yourself" scanning stations for patrons.