Welcome!

The National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) is pleased to present this educational series of lectures on how to do family research.

As one of the nation’s premier genealogy institutions, it is our mission to inform the public about the National Archives’ holdings that relate to family history and to make those holdings available.
About the Lecture Series

Lectures demonstrate how to use Federal records and other resources for genealogical research for beginning to experienced family historians.

Our presenters include experts from the National Archives nationwide representing our facilities in College Park, MD; Denver, CO; New York City, NY; St. Louis, MO; and Washington, DC.
# May Schedule

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date</th>
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| Tuesday, May 4     | Preserving and Digitizing Personal Photo Albums and Scrapbooks         | Sara Holmes  
Conservator in Preservation Programs  
National Archives at St. Louis, MO |
| 1 p.m. ET          |                                                                        | Noah Durham  
Supervisory Preservation Specialist  
National Archives at St. Louis, MO |
| Wednesday, May 12  | Finding Genealogy Resources and Tools on Archives.gov                 | Sarah Swanson  
Website Liaison  
National Archives at College Park, MD |
| 1 p.m. ET          |                                                                        | Missy McNatt  
Education Specialist  
National Archives in Washington, DC |
| Wednesday, May 19  | Tips and Tools for Engaging Family with Your Research Finds           | Missy McNatt  
Education Specialist  
National Archives in Washington, DC |
| 1 p.m. ET          |                                                                        | Dorothy Dougherty  
Virtual Public Programs Director  
National Archives at New York City, NY |
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| Tuesday, June 1       | From Here to There: Researching Office of Indian Affairs Employees             | Cara Moore Lebonick  
Reference Archives Specialist  
National Archives at St. Louis, MO **Cody White**  
Archivist and Native American Related Records  
Subject Matter Expert  
National Archives at Denver, CO |
| Tuesday, June 8       | Civil War Union Noncombatant Personnel: Teamsters, Laundresses, Nurses, Sutlers, and more | Claire Kluskens  
Genealogy/Census Subject Matter Expert and Digital Projects Archivist  
National Archives in Washington, DC |
| Tuesday, June 15      | Merchant Marine Records at The National Archives at St. Louis                 | Theresa Fitzgerald  
Director  
National Archives at St. Louis, MO |
Join the conversation!

Participate with the presenters and other family historians during the live event.

Live Chat on YouTube: log in and type your questions and comments

Join us at @USNatArchives on Twitter #GenieSeries2021
After the broadcast, the video presentation and handouts will remain available.
Preserving and Digitizing Personal Photo Albums and Scrapbooks

Preserving photo albums and scrapbooks can be especially challenging, often because they are bound and contain a variety of problematic materials. This session addresses how to work with poor quality materials commonly found in personal scrapbooks and albums, how to maintain the integrity of the arrangement, and how to store them appropriately. Pro tips for home users provide ways to digitize albums, organize electronic files, and preserve them as electronic records. Examples come from both National Archives and personal collections.
Presenter Biography

**Sara Holmes** started work at the National Archives in Preservation Programs at St. Louis in 2007. She currently works at the conservation lab as a conservator for field projects coming from National Archives facilities nationwide. She previously served as a management and program analyst, and as a supervisory preservation specialist overseeing conservation of the records burned in the St. Louis fire. Before coming to the National Archives, she was a conservator at Texas Tech University and the Missouri State Archives. Sara has a Master of Library and Information Science with a Certificate of Advanced Study in Conservation of Library and Archival Materials from the University of Texas and an M.A. in history from the University of New Orleans. She is also a Certified Archivist and was selected as a member of the first cohort of the Archives Leadership Institute in 2008.
Noah Durham has been working within the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) since 2008. Currently, he is the supervisory preservation specialist at the St. Louis facility, where he leads digitization projects to preserve and expand access to fire-affected records. His projects include working on the National Archives Iraqi Jewish Archive project from 2012 to 2014. Noah’s professional career in cultural heritage imaging began in the mid-1990s. At that time, he was hired to convert photographic operations from analog to digital at two worldwide auction houses (Christie’s and Sotheby’s). He holds an M.S. in graphic arts systems from the School of Printing Management and Science at the Rochester Institute of Technology.
Preserving and Digitizing Scrapbooks and Photo Albums
Preserving Albums: Possible Problems

- Structural problems of binding preventing access
- Adhesives
- Plastics
- Mix of media
- Oddball sizes for storage
The ideal
• Lies flat
• Accommodates thickness
Bindings with Curving Openings

May be stable, or may be complicated by other problems
Bindings that do not stay open!
Bindings that just don’t work well!
Attachment Methods

Photo corners
- May be adhered to the photo and page
Attachment Methods

Glues and pastes
Attachment Methods

Tape
Can be a result of
• Bad binding
• Stiff material pasted down on pages which push against paper when turning pages
• Simple mishandling

Can be mended
• Need training in mending in bound books to do properly! Seek out a conservator or trained technician.
Adhesive Issues: Desiccation

The “nice” adhesive failure
Adhesive Issues: Creep and Goo!
Problems with Plastic
Mixing Media

- Chemical degradation
- Mechanical damage
But I really want to take them out…

- Can they slide out without damage?
But I really want to take them out…

- Or are they adhered?
Removing Glued-In Photos
Preservation Material Tips

- “Archival” is not a standardized product!
- Do look for pH neutral “acid-free” products
  - Understand that over time, all organic materials deteriorate and pH is not static
- Look for lignin-free description in paper-based products
- If interleaving
  - Use buffered tissue (with an alkaline reserve) for black-and-white photos, negatives, most papers, and cotton-based textiles.
  - Use unbuffered tissue (no alkaline reserve) for color photographs and negatives, blueprints, silk, wool, leather, and metals.
- For materials used with photos look for “Passed P.A.T. Test” (Photo Activity Test)
  - Do be aware that not all products have been tested
Tool Tips

- Mylar™ (or Melinex™) Polyester—if there is room to slip in
- Microspatula—for turning pages, removing fasteners (staples, paper clips), and simple probing
- Bone or Teflon folders—for smoothing out creases and tears, creasing polyester, and possibly for turning pages
- Don’t overdo it! Damage can occur quickly!
Storing Albums

- Good environment—no temperature or humidity extremes
- Boxes help provide safety and microclimates
- Custom-sized boxes will make a big difference for stabilizing intact albums
- Do consider machine-made custom-sized boxes as an inexpensive alternative to individual boxes made by a conservator or bookbinder
There is an immense range of possibilities and problems to be found in albums. Please do consult the handouts for more information and resources.

You may also reach out to preservation@nara.gov if you cannot find the answer to your question.
Photographing Scrapbooks and Photo Albums

- Provide information about equipment
- Show a few examples of photographic methods
- Share a few tips related to how the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) organizes, tracks, and archives images from digitization projects
Equipment Options

1. Combination of camera, copy stand, and supplemental lighting
2. Specialized book scanner
3. Flatbed scanner
4. iPad / iPhone DIY

$350 vs. $5000 vs. $65,000
Copy stand with camera

PROS
- Excellent quality is possible with well-matched camera, lens, and lighting
- Systems can be configured for any budget
- Can be made efficient and ergonomic by “tethering” camera to a computer with remote shutter release and “live focus”
- As a modular system it’s flexible; components like lenses, cameras, lights can be purchased separately and replaced as needed to optimize or upgrade
- Camera height is adjustable to increase or decrease the copy area

CONS
- Requires photography knowhow to skills to set up and operate
- Settings are important, small mistakes in setup can go unnoticed (i.e., wrong resolution) causing significant rework
Book Scanner

**PROS**
- Integrated lighting
- Integrated book cradle (high-end solutions)
- Very little photographic knowhow is required to operate
- A smaller book scanner system is affordable (Fuji ScanSnap) @ ~$600.00

**CONS**
- Everything is fixed: the lens, resolution, focus, copy area and lighting. This means it’s less adaptable for nonstandard items
- Software becomes obsolete sooner
- Higher-end systems require support from specialized vendor or reseller to update or repair (Zeutschel or Indus for example)
**Flatbed scanner**

**PROS**
- Excellent quality for loose photographs and documents in good condition
- Compact and can sit at a regular desk in an office environment with computers

**CONS**
- Not recommended for bound volumes
- If items won’t lay fully flat on platten; glare and shadows will be apparent in image
- Requires a computer

**iPad / phone camera with holder/stand (Do it Yourself [DIY] or eBay/Amazon products)**

**PROS**
- High image quality is achievable at relatively low cost
- Phones are everywhere, they are easy to operate and understand without photography knowhow
- Big user base means lots of new apps and technical innovation

**CONS**
- Phone cameras are optimized for pictorial imaging (making great selfies), not flat reprographics (barrel distortion, focus flaws, and other problems may appear)
- Remote shutter release may not be possible
Unique characteristics of scrapbooks and photo albums make the task challenging. Here are some strategies to overcome photography problems without disassembling the item.

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An example of polyethylene strapping with bean bag weights to gently restrain page.

A stack of mat board to build height. As photography progresses boards can be removed and added to opposite side.

A snake weight and a custom cradle.

An integrated book cradle that is adjustable to raise and lower sides independently. A gap is also adjustable for width of spine.
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Problem area 
(close up)
Lighting is increased from the right side, improving the image.
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Certificate of Promotion

from the Nursery Department

This is to certify that

[signature]

has been promoted to the Kindergarten Department

of the Sacred Heart Catholic Church
School in Lincoln, Nebraska.

(Date)

[Signature]

[Signature]

Certificate

Vacation Church School

[Signature]

Certificate

Vacation Church School
Note: polyester sleeve is to assist in flattening foldout
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Slugs; some examples from NARA

- “Foldouts”
- “Pages missing”
- “Pages cannot be separated”
- “Photo cannot be separated”
- “Rolled-back item not fully photographed”
- “Visible fragment from binding”
- “Following page(s) blank”
- “This page is not blank”
- “All unique information in the document is visible in the image”
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Flaw. Use slip sheet to reduce show through next time!
Referring to the great population explosion, not only in China, but all over the world, Dr. Togasaki said that if the world doesn’t destroy itself by atomic war, there will be a definite population problem—people will have to be persuaded to do some family planning.

Shifting to the topic of world unity, starting with the European Common Market, Dr. Togasaki said the continent will not be united by some individual country trying to dictate the others.

“The European Common Market will succeed only if all the countries involved work with and for each other,” he said. “It will be important for Europe and the world—I hope it will not become an exclusive club of European countries, but will eventually encompass the world.”

“The longer we wait for world unity, the more chance there is for war. In our present day, as nations unite by force, we have to volunteer to unite, such as the 13 colonies did when the United States was formed, only on a much, much larger scale.”

Asked about Prime Minister David Ben-Gurion’s theory that eventually Israel will become a socialist country and the United States a capitalist country, Togasaki said, “There probably will be a reversal, but the leaders will realize the same—Japan’s Santander and the United States Rockefeller.”

“The reason for this is that technology and technologies need cooperation to succeed, and this leads toward socialism.”

— Dr. Togasaki
EXAMPLES:

Tape

Slug here could say “Roll back item not fully photographed.” The taped in item could not be folded back for photography.
A spread view is practical only when the imaging device can capture the full size of the open scrapbook or photo album. Make sure image files have sufficient resolution for legibility of smallest text.
Naming, Organizing and Tracking

Your approach to organizing and naming your files will have a big impact on your ability to find those files later. Consistent and descriptive folder hierarchy is key to locating and understanding what image directories contain.

An example is NARA’s folder structure on our cloud storage:
Record Group folder > Series Identifier folder > File Unit [box / folder or other separator]

Imagename = {series identifier} - {file unit} - {image sequence}
rg99/123456/123456-001-001.tiff

Tracking tips:
- While shooting, create a “read me” text file using notepad inside each folder of images to capture notes pertaining to the images and the particulars of the camera setup, lighting or device settings.
- Create a spreadsheet as a project tracker with workflow milestones and include hyperlinks to folders for quick access.
- Learn to create recursive directory lists using the DIR command (recursive = seeing into multiple folders top down) to make inventories of images. This will assist in creating finding aids and in quality control for file naming.
File name accuracy is important. Here is one routine the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) uses to check file names. In a command prompt, a DIR command is used to create a text file. The text file is checked prior to uploading images into the NARA catalog.

Mistakes in naming can result in multipage documents being created out of order. In this example, image number 1 appears after image 35 by mistake.
The same set of images, three file formats used in our workflow

TIFF - Long-term archiving and as a source file (may not be cropped / can contain color bars for highly accurate representation of images). This format is best for master images or highest quality versions. File size is typically larger.

JPG - Smaller file size images of JPG make optimal versions for access, storage, and distribution of images. Also JPG is used for the creation of multipage versions in PDF.

PDF - As an end product, it’s used for multipage versions, reducing complexity of viewing and accessing multiple single images.

Tip: Avoid multipage TIFF file format. They are not fully supported by viewing and editing programs on computers.
EXAMPLE WORKFLOW OF DIGITAL IMAGES

1. QC for completeness (checking screen to originals)
2. Optimization of contrast, color, and cropping
3. Rework / reshooting / rescanning when needed
4. Final file naming and sequencing (batch renaming)
5. Creating access versions (multipage PDF for example)
6. Distribution (website, catalog, exhibit kiosk, etc…)
7. Archiving

Tip: Batch rename utility is needed for this type of work. This allows file names to be changed to match naming rules and for files to be correctly sequenced when renaming. Adobe Bridge and Photoshop have a batch renaming utility. Other utilities can be found online.
Storing Images

Ready access to digitized originals may depend on your organization / institution having network storage or cloud storage available.

Best Practices

● Have more than one copy.
● Keep images on imaging device or camera storage card until they have been processed fully. This will protect you from having to reshoot or rescan due to losing images while they are being processed.
● When image processing work is completed, “archive” images by storing them on a remote system, a separate hard drive system, or by maintaining an optical disc library (DVD, BluRay).
Feel free to contact me with any questions you might have on this topic.

Noah Durham  
Supervisory Preservation Specialist  
Preservation Programs Division  
National Archives Records Administration  
St. Louis, MO

noah.durham@nara.gov
After the broadcast . . .

Email questions to preservation@nara.gov

Video recordings of lectures and downloadable handouts will remain online at www.archives.gov/calendar/genealogy-fair
We value your opinion.

Please take a minute to complete a short evaluation. Your comments help us maintain the quality of our services and plan future programs.

Thank you!

Event Evaluation:

www.surveymonkey.com/r/KYREventEval
Educational resources on how to access and do research using U.S. Federal Government records held at the National Archives and Records Administration.

Know Your Records

www.archives.gov/calendar/know-your-records

Videos and handouts on YouTube
Please stay if you have questions.

Although this concludes the video portion of the broadcast, we will continue to take your questions in Chat for another 10 minutes.