



## Digital Albums

This album is not going to replace your research binders  
You don't have to include all your reference notations

### Goals of a Digital Album

- To engage others in being interested in family history
- To tell more of a story than just dry reporting of facts & dates
- To try to capture people's **personality** – something you can never get only from documents
- Make the story more relatable & engaging by adding photos, maps & memorabilia; much easier to "read" than just straight text
- You have the ability to bring things together from different places to tell a story. This is where an album becomes magical!

### Advantages of Digital

- Reproducibility
- You have the ability to include A LOT of things you may not possess – relatives may have them at their house
- You can google all kinds of images & include them as well (e.g., images of immigration ships & ports, military boot camp, newspapers, posters, towns/cities, candy, etc.)
- Depending on the program you use, you can email your project to others for their review, or you can print at home
- Affordability – Look for the coupon code "unlimited free pages" & you only pay for 20 pages, but you get up to 100; for smaller albums a 50% off coupon code may be better
- Traditional albums can be made into digital

Remember you can always include a QR code on a page that would take a reader to another document / photo / website / video / etc.

## Ideas for Heritage Book Themes:

- One Person's Story
- Married Couple
- One Surname, several generations
- All ancestors of one person/generation (multiple surnames)
- Recipe Book

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## What to Photograph/ Include in Your Heritage Album

Watches	Purses
Old money	War records (ancestor's, regiment's, etc.)
Cancelled checks	Baby clothes/ blankets
War ribbons	Baby mug/ plate
Gloves	Shoes
Newspaper clippings & headlines	Antique tools
Maps	Furniture
Glasses	Swatches of hair
Signatures	Clocks
Deeds/ land records	War ration books/ coupons
China silverware	Dog tags
Everyday dishes	Old or foreign coins
Thimble	Train station pictures
Census data (not original docs)	Pictures of Churches
Hats	Receipts
Jewelry	Spice rack/ cabinet
Diplomas	Candy dish & favorite candy
Graduation gifts	Hospital bills, receipts
Anniversary gifts/plates	Cars
Wedding invitation	Business cards
Wedding rings	Letters & cards
Recipes	Driver's license
Needlework	Club/membership cards
Quilts	Xmas ornaments
Old postcards	School building pictures
Matchboxes	Aprons
Graveyards/ markers	Office buildings (where ancestor worked)
Toys/ dolls	Handwritten notes of any kind
Lace/ doilies	

### Starting Your Digital Photo Book

- Choose a size you want to create – 8x8, 8-1/2"x11", 12x12, 10x10; you can always change your mind later to a different size, so maybe start bigger than you think
- Create a project with lots of pages (40 – 80)
- Put labels on pages to set-up the basic order you think you want – this can be people's names, "family tree", years, decades, "school years", whatever works for you  
*Note: If you have created a **Timeline** for a person or family, it can be very useful here*
- Leave some blank pages in between these labeled pages; most likely, your info is NOT already in chronological order (understatement!). By starting off with lots of room it is easier to add things in between other dates/events/people that you already have on pages
- Start adding photos and stories to specific pages

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- As you begin to finalize things, you can easily "copy & paste" photos & stories from one page to another – thus "tightening-up" the material and ultimately reducing the number of pages
- Consider making the very first page an introduction/explanation of what the book is about / who created the book / thanks to other contributing people / etc.
- Next, possibly include some general information why people left their homeland
- I opened one of my books with a family tree from my mother going backwards 12 generations – then I ended the book with my mother going forward 3 generations
- Books should contain a copyright section at the beginning or end, for example:

*Copyright 2021 by \_\_\_(name)\_\_\_*

*All rights reserved. No part of this publication may be reproduced, distributed or transmitted in any form without prior written permission of the author. For permission requests write to the author at the address below.*

## **Photo Tips**

### **Photos/Documents**

- Taking pictures of your photos allows you to photograph at relatives' houses
- Take photos outdoors under a covered area on a cloudy day – you want bright natural light without causing glare on the photos
- DO NOT USE FLASH
- Old documents that have yellowed can be turned black & white and then lighten the highlights to make the paper look much whiter and then turn up the contrast to make the writing darker
- For faded photos, play with darkening the shadows & mid-tones to get better definition of faces
- Turn old faded photos to black & white and then play with the contrast – it shows details better
- Old photos are actually different colors (brown, grey, patina, black) – make all the photos on one page the same (black & white or patina) for a more cohesive look
- Include the actual size measurements of photos or other things where appropriate in a note (e.g., marriage certificate is 14" x 20", or actual photo is 1 ½" x 1 ¾")

### **Memorabilia**

- Use high contrast background (normally black or white)
- Use flat fabric as background (NEVER a rug! – yep I learned the hard way)
- For jewelry use micro setting (close-up) on your camera
- Lay quilts out flat on the floor & photograph from the top of a chair or ladder; also photograph individual quilt blocks to show detailed design
- Photograph close details of embroidered designs/edges on clothing
- Photograph crocheted lace/edging (e.g., pillowcase edge) against a dark background & you can use it as a border on a page
- For photographing something clear/glass where you can't get rid of the background, put an old-fashioned dish towel/fabric/apron/tablecloth behind it
- Rings can be photographed sitting on a stuffed glove; engraving can be captured if jewelry is sitting on a white glove or cloth – the white reflects light up onto the engraving

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## Text Tips

- Use a fancy font or Alphabet to Make the page title
- For a large amount of text, set-up as columns (newspaper style) for easier reading
- Enlarge the first letter of each paragraph – you can also make this letter a different fancy font
- Break the paragraphs apart into separate boxes, off-setting them so they are easier to distinguish
- Add a subtitle over different paragraphs
- Put a box around or paper behind a specific paragraph that is important
- When your ancestor is mentioned in the text, make that sentence bold & red (or another color) so people will easily see it
- Add embellishments that are related to the paragraph content (e.g., an antique radio, quilt, cookies, etc.). This gives a person visual clues as to what your story is about
- Pull one quote from the page & put it in a separate box on the page – this gives the reader a snippet of what's in the text

## Time-Saving Tips

- Don't spend a lot of time early in your project working with making great backgrounds & perfect spacing of photos on the pages – before you're done you'll end up moving some photos to other pages and you'll add/subtract/move pages around
- When adding photos to your project, only add about 25 at a time – get those put on appropriate pages – and then go back to add more. You don't want to waste time scrolling through photos looking for the one you want to put on a page
- Old yellowy-colored photos generally look best on a blue background; red & green papers make the pictures look worse
- Don't put the same/similar color in the background as those that are prominent in your photos (e.g. a green forest) – the photos tend to blend in & disappear. It's better to find something small in the photo & make the background match that color
- Don't number your pages until near the end of your project

Everyone Has a Story

-have the patience to  
listen

-have the wisdom to learn

*- Mary Anne Madmacher*