SCANNING PHOTOGRAPHS
I Get the Picture!

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Overview of handling photographic files

You will use an application like Photoshop, Photoshop Elements, or iPhoto to work with your picture files. Read their manuals, but those books often describe features beyond our needs. Our recommendation is to stick to the elementary tasks outlined on these four pages.

- File formats (uses, benefits, and conversion of different file formats)
- File formats revisited (dots, pixels, resolution, and file conversion)
- Scanning photographs (using a scanner and generating a master file)
- Retouching photographs (alignment, cropping, color modes, light and contrast)

Preservation of historical photographs requires a digital backup, with this backup becoming a stand-in for the original. This digital file is created electronically with a scanner and computer, a simple process although you should be aware of the mechanics underlying it.

Objective: Learn how to scan a picture and save it as a master.

These are the steps for scanning historical photographs:

1. Clean the scanner screen; lightly dust the picture surface; correctly align the picture on the screen; and close the scanner cover.
2. Review the information on metadata.
3. You often need an 8 x 10 copy of a historical photograph (it is unlikely that you will need a larger size, however). The goal is to create a master that is capable of generating an 8 x 10 print.
4. Plan to scan at a higher resolution if your source picture is smaller than 8 x 10.
5. To calculate the correct resolution for scanning, measure the *longer* edge of the original photo in inches and *divide it into 3000*.
   For example, if the long edge of the original photo had a measurement of 6 inches: 3000/6 = 500 dpi.
6. Click Preview; crop the picture; and scan the image at 500 dpi in color (even though it is a black and white photo).

7. Save the file as a TIF format with its metadata ID used as a file name (000000.tiff). Lock this file so it is Read Only.
8. Select all of the picture, and copy-and-paste it into a picture box built into the database record that you had created.
9. Include all the metadata information that you know into the database.

This article is one of several to help you document local history. Other articles will help you convert your interviews, documents, pictures, and artifacts into documentation of your local history that can be shared with your community.

Analyzing Your Own Resources	***Creating Your Own Local History***
Organizing your information	Developing documentation from your resources
Organizing the people of your area	Genealogical work
Organizing the documents of your area	Validating local history
Organizing the pictures of your area	Presenting and publishing local history
Organizing the artifacts of your area	***Courses and Support***

Assignment: Most historical societies close down for the winter, and non-migratory neighbors tend to fight cabin fever by going to the Saturday or Sunday afternoon movies in Hunter, at the Power Authority, or another venue. While these may be fun, I hope you set up this alternative: host a series of workshops using this article as a focus and start to document your own local history.

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