

A NEW LIFE FOR OLD PHOTOS: Identifying, Organizing, and Restoring Photos
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Photos capture our stories and those of family and friends who lived before us. They give insights into the world of our ancestors. But our photo collection can be overwhelming. Many of us have hundreds if not thousands of photos, and most are decades old. So where do we start? Join Kathy Nielsen as she shares some tips on identifying, organizing, and restoring old photos.

I. Recommended Reading

Maureen Taylor, **Family Photo Detective: Learn How to Find Genealogy Clues in Old Photos and Solve Family Photo Mysteries**
Maureen Taylor, **Bonnets and Hats 1840-1900**
Maureen Taylor, **Hairstyles 1840-1900**
Family Chronicle's More Dating Old Photographs 1840-1929
Betty Kreisel Shubert, **Out-of-Style: A Modern Perspective of How, Why and When Vintage Fashions Evolved**
Cathi Nelson, **Photo Organizing Made Easy**

II. What to consider when identifying a photo

Format of the photo
Photographer
Captions on the photo
Background, location
Clothing, house, garden, car
Facial features
Your own genealogical research...dates, family groups, where living
Local and national history (place photo in historical context)

III. Formats of photos

Daguerreotype 1839-c.1860
Ambrotype 1854-c.1865
Tintype 1856-1900
Carte de Visite 1860-1870
Cabinet Card 1870s to late 19th century
Snapshots late 1880s...Brownie Box camera in 1900!

IV. Every photo tells a story

- Who owned the photo?
- Who took the picture?
- Who is in the picture?
- What is the event?
- When was it taken?
- Where was it taken?
- Why was it taken?

V. Look at the photo as though you have never seen it before Use clues to identify a photo

- Background...Location (Use Google Images)
- Building, house
- Garden
- Clothing
- Automobile

VI. Who is the photographer?

VII. How does facial recognition work?

- Shape of face
- Eyes
- Nose and nostrils
- Ears
- Hair
- Eyebrows
- Teeth

VIII. Facial recognition software

- Photos (Mac)
- Photoshop Elements (Adobe)
- Google Photos
- My Heritage

IX. Organization...Paper photos

- Organize photos by year
- Go through one box at a time
- Decide whether to toss, digitize, put in an album

X. Toss and scan

- Keep one copy of each image
- Ask yourself how many photos you need of a vacation or an event
- Select the important pictures. Toss the others.
- Get rid of blurry, over and under exposed pictures
- Scan the ones you keep

XI. Scanning possibilities

- Flatbed scanner (better results than with 3-1 printer)
- Shotbox
- Smartphone app

XII. Digitized photos

- Create a Digital Photo Hub
- Organize a folder structure
- Label photos
- Tag them by name, event, date, location
- Metadata (source, courtesy of, photo taken by)

XIII. Photo Management Systems

- Heritage Collector System heritagecollector.com
- Memory Web memoryweb.me
- Collectionaire
- Google
- Flickr (SmugMug)
- Apple PHOTOS

XIV. Web-based backup Backblaze

XV. Photo editing

- Adobe Photoshop
- Adobe Lightroom
- Snapseed (iOS and Android)
- Photos (Mac)
- MyHeritage
- Restore (Vivid-Pix)

XVI. What do you do with your photos?

- Photo book, scrapbook or album, flash drive, video or slideshow

