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# Scrapbooks

There is an amazing amount of information available today about creating scrapbooks. There are companies that will sell you all that you need in one easy package. Where do you go first?

Start by asking yourself

- How will these albums and books be used?
- Are these being saved for future generations?
- Have important mementos been damaged by their present display?
- Do negatives exist of deteriorating photographs?
- Is it worth making reproductions of some pieces before their conditions deteriorate further?
- Can environmental conditions be improved for storing these scrapbooks and albums in the future?

## BASIC PRESERVATION PRINCIPLES

### 1) Never use what the industry calls magnetic albums

The term *archival*, when used in conjunction with a magnetic album, is being misused. The very materials that enables the clear plastic covers to suspend photographs and other items to the page will permanently damage all the material in a very short time.

If your photographs or mementos are already in a magnetic album and do not come off the magnetic page easily do not proceed to remove them. Consult a photographic conservator before you do permanent damage to your photographs and mementos.

**2) Use archival album pages** that are made for the long-term preservation of the material. Construction paper, copy paper and other inexpensive types of paper are not appropriate. Read the labels of album page brands that claim to be archival. Know that there are quality, inexpensive alternatives and solutions for creating an archival scrapbook.

Photographs need an acid-free but **unbuffered** (pH7) paper stock. Newsprint and other paper artifacts need an acid-free buffered (pH8.5-9.0) paper stock.

You can mount memorabilia into clear, polyethylene photo sleeves to place in an album. There are many

choices for the aware consumer. At the end I will list a few places that you can turn to for assistance. The catalogs that many of the preservation supply companies publish offer a great deal of information to help you make a wise selection.

### **3) Use corner mounts or clear polyester pocket mounts**

Using adhesive tapes to place items on a page will damage them and make removal difficult. A few preservation supply companies offer an acrylic double stick tape for this purpose. This is another case of buyer beware! Adhering anything to the back of a photograph or memento is reversible only at a great expense. Having to hire a conservator to rescue a rare family document from a page, removing the adhesive residue from the document, and attempting to reduce the staining caused by the tape, will cost considerably more than the time it will take to properly mount them from the get go.

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