

YOUR ULTIMATE FAMILY PHOTO PROJECT



READ UP ON IT:

Digital Asset Management expertise:

Krogh, P. (2009)

The DAM Book. Digital Asset Management for Photographers.

Surrey: O'Reilly Media.

copies of your files to be saved on 2 different types of storage media, with 1 of the copies stored off site.

PART 2: Gather physical family history photographs.

Physical photographs can be found in a multitude of locations around your home: lofts, garages, basements, sheds, bookshelves, under the bed, and in cupboards, shelves or drawers. They may also be located in other people's homes and in the archives of organisations. Photographs may be loose in boxes or suitcases, still in the processor's envelopes, in albums, in frames, in carousels, etc. Search in all of these places and any others you can think of. Don't start sorting yet, just gathering, but remember once gathered, 'all your eggs will be in one basket' ... the sooner you can start scanning the better!

When all your digital photographs are in your Digital Photo Hub and safely backed up, and all your physical photographs are gathered, you may feel overwhelmed by the size of the sorting and organising tasks ahead. That's not surprising but don't despair, you've already made significant progress.



So, how do you do photogenealogy?

By breaking it into manageable steps.

These steps are outlined below and more detail will follow in the coming months.



Step 1: Gather & Back-up

The gathering step comes in two parts:

PART 1: Gather digital family history photographs.

Your digital photographs may be stored in many places, including computers and mobile devices, external hard drives, memory sticks and cards, and CDs and DVDs. In addition, you may have digital photographs stored online, in family tree programs, in cloud services you use for syncing and backing-up, in email accounts, in messaging apps, in photography sharing apps, in social media accounts, etc. The aim of gathering is to copy all of your digital photographs to one location, your Digital Photo Hub. If you have enough space, this Hub could be located

on your computer's hard drive, or, if space is limited, an external hard drive. The space needed will depend on the number, quality and size of your photographs.

Once your photographs are copied to your Hub, it is essential to back it up. Backing-up allows recovery from data loss caused by technological failures, loss or theft of mobile devices, natural disasters, and of course, those occasional technical mistakes we all make!

A proven and reliable approach to backing-up, used by professional photographers and digital asset managers, is the 3-2-1 method. This method requires 3 complete

Computer or cloud, disc or memory stick – these are just some of the places you may find digital photographs

A collection of gathered physical photographs ready for organising



Step 2: Sort & Organise

The aim of sorting and organising is to make your family history photographs, both digital and physical, easier to find, share and enjoy. Photographs can be organised by size, format, family, Ahnentafel number, generation,



event, or theme. They can also be organised chronologically or geographically, or in any other way that reflects how you think about your photographs, and more importantly, how you will use them.

As a family historian, you may already have a computer-based filing system for your genealogical documents. This existing system can provide the basis for the storage of both digital and physical photographs, or you can set up a new system using your computer's file organising program. Alternatively, you can use Adobe Bridge, which is a free cross-platform file browser that allows you to organise, search and add metadata to your photographs. Other programs are available that can perform these functions too, for example, Adobe Lightroom (subscription required). This and other similar programs, of which there are many, use facial recognition and machine learning to identify individuals in photographs, which helps with the organising process. Programs differ in cost, the algorithms used, resolutions of stored images, ability to add and retrieve metadata, upload/download restrictions and attitudes towards your privacy and control. Choosing the best program for yourself depends on the relative value you place on these features.

Organising digital family history photographs begins with removing the 'Dups & Duds'. Dups are duplicate photographs and duds are, well...duds; those photographs that are really badly framed or poorly focused (although these issues can sometimes be improved or corrected). Removing duds comes with an important caveat: content always tops quality – if the only photograph you have of a family member is badly framed

and out of focus, it should remain in your collection.

Next, metadata and file names are added to digital photographs, before storing them in a simple folder structure in the Digital Photo Hub.



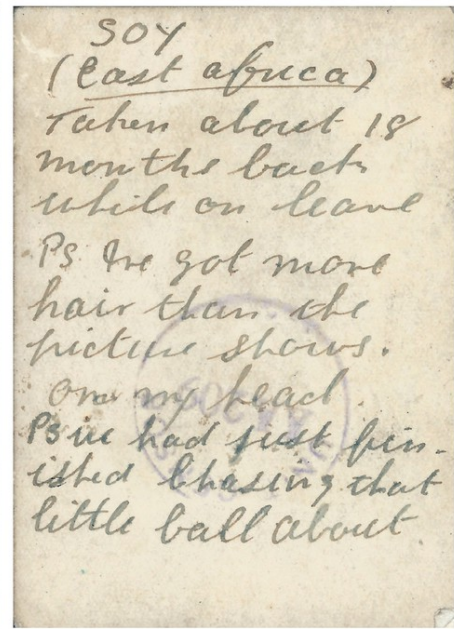
Metadata

You may find hand-written notes on the back of physical photographs. These are messages from our ancestors sent through time. Digital photographs have 'messages' too, called metadata. Information, including time, date, and device settings, is automatically recorded in the metadata when a digital photograph is taken. You can edit or add to this metadata, for example by transcribing the notes found on the back of photographs or by adding keywords or tags that identify who is in the photograph. Metadata is a powerful tool that not only helps tell the stories of your photographs, but it also makes them searchable: no

more browsing through nested computer folders; metadata means that digital photographs can be found quickly and easily by searching.

Physical photographs are sorted into categories depending on whether you wish to preserve, store or dispose of them. Photographs in the preserve category are your 'best' photographs, they will be scanned and become part of your legacy. Dups and Duds go in the dispose category. Any remaining photographs go in the store category. Stored photographs are not the best but you just can't bring yourself to part with them!

This is probably a good time to address the elephant in the room ... is it OK to delete or discard photographs? Yes, it is! (but you may regret it). Always check the background of photographs for genealogical clues. Then check if relatives want them. If they don't, photographs can sometimes be donated, re-purposed or sold. When all these options have



The front and back of a photograph, sent by Ann's grandad to her nan during WW2. His message to his wife became a message through time to Ann, which she was able to use to pinpoint where he served, before adding the message to the metadata of the scanned photograph