

# What To Do With My Stuff?

Two different but equally important approaches:

- 1) Preservation
- 2) Posterity

Both Preservation and Posterity have similar procedures.

## **Preservation:**

Two different media types:

- 1) Paper
- 2) Electronic

## **Paper Stuff**

Separate into documents such as birth and death certificates, marriage licenses, military, awards, diplomas, letters and plus ?

These should be encapsulated and protected with acid free folders and or boxes.

Scan them into electronic form so they can be preserved electronically and dispersed.

Handouts from conferences, classes and meetings should be electronically saved if still relevant and then the papers can be discarded. Keep the ones you really value.

Family group sheets and other forms . . . are they outdated? Again, scan the important ones and discard the old outdated ones.

In other words, narrow down the piles and save in an archival manner and/or turn into an electronic format.

Be careful as to where you store the files and documents.

Dust and away from light.

Newspapers: special care

One time "light" scan and the preserve separately. Do not pile newspapers together so as to avoid acid transfer.

Photographs: (non-electronic)

Dark, dry and acid free environment.

Do you need 25 photos of a birthday celebration?

Make an electronic file of your photos

Fire, floods, tornados and . . .

Identify people in the photo using a pencil or acid free ink pen on the back of the photo.

Do not display the original but rather make a copy.

Label the item, if necessary use plastic paper clips. Do not use archival tape!



Archival Products:

Library of Congress: “Collections Care”  
<https://www.loc.gov/preservation/care>

## Electronic Stuff

Many excuses for not digitizing and backing up your stuff.  
You have spent hours, weeks and years doing your family history.  
Why not spend time preserving the research and family documents,  
letters, photos and . . .

Three prong approach:

- 1) local backup (on site)
- 2) Off site (family, office, safe deposit box

3) Remote cloud backup service

Remote backup services:



<https://www.pcmag.com/picks/best-backup-services>

Store in open standard formats as software types become obsolete  
Remember Appleworks? ClarisWorks? WordPerfect?

Family Tree(s):

Post online but be cognizant that this is a preservation action  
and not posterity.  
Too many websites have gone away, such as AOL Hometown and  
GeoCities. RootsWeb is now controlled by Ancestry

# Posterity

Discuss with family members. Know their receptiveness to take the “stuff” and how much and what type of stuff they are willing to take.

If some of the stuff is going to someplace other than family, know the policy on what they will take. Do not assume...

Publish a family history book. You do not have to be a writer.

## Heirlooms

A valuable object that has belonged to a family for several generations.

1. Check with immediate family.
2. If not, then nieces and nephews.
3. If not, children of cousins (1C1R\*)
4. If not, relatives in which you have made a connection through your family history research.
5. Local genealogical / historical society  
(keep in mind they will not want most of your stuff, especially if it is not of historical significance).
6. Sell it.

Label and identify the heirloom in order for family know the history of the heirloom.

## Genealogical Stuff:

Documents, family bibles, letters, jewelry, and . . .  
Preserve and then plan the posterity.

Open a dialogue and be specific. Your family may not know the history of the object.

Hopefully, multiple copies of documents and files will be needed.

Photos, narrow down the amount and add time, place and people.  
Use pencil on backside. Do not use ink.

Yes, all this takes time but think about the amount of time and money you have already invested in your research. Preservation and posterity activities are important parts of you genealogy pursuit.