

Scrapbooks for History

Have you ever created a family tree? Do you have a photo album brimming with pictures of your family? Do you have pictures of your ancestors? Is there a file somewhere in your house where you keep old birth certificates or marriage certificates?

If you can say YES, then you have started to put together a history of your family!

This web page explores what family history is and provides simple suggestions for creating your own family history scrapbook.

How does family history fit with community history?

Family history is a very important part of community history!

Family history is about how family members live and communicate with one another, from one generation to the next, and with others in the places where they live.

Community history is about how people within the same community live and interact with each other. It also includes larger national and regional events, and people's ethnic and social backgrounds.

Most important of all family history is made out of stories about our lives and about our family. These stories become the stories of our community, and these stories can become part of Tempe's history when they are organized and preserved. By preserving your family's history, you are preserving your community's history as well!

Community History is made of:

- National & Regional History
- Family History
- Place History
- Objects (Material Culture)
- Other Social History

My family history - where do I begin?

The easiest way to start your family history is to begin with yourself and work backwards through time.

Write down what you know about yourself, your parents, and grandparents. Can you go back further?

Next, search your home. Look for the keys in the papers and pictures that you have. Remember to write down where you got the information.

After that, talk, visit with or write relatives. Older relatives probably will be able to help you go back further. Other relatives already might have gathered family information.

Check out these three simple steps to finding and understanding your family history!

Step 1

Did you know that your family history is made up of four key ingredients?

Did you know?

- The four keys will unlock stories about your family and friends!
- Stories are the telling of family events that are meaningful to you.
- The four keys will remind you of stories you heard and suggest stories to look for.

Try to find four key pieces of information which will help you to discover your family's stories:

- names
- dates
- places
- relationships

You will use these four keys to identify people in records by:

- their names
- the dates of events in their lives
- the places they lived
- their relationships to others

Step 2

Where do I find the keys?

Start your search here!

1. Begin with yourself
2. Look in your home
3. Find certificates and official records
4. Find photographs
5. Talk to older relatives

Look for the keys! Find the stories!

Start in your home

- Look in your family prayer book.
- Look for birth certificates!
- Do you have a diary?
- Ask about photographs!

Did you know?

- You may have a historian in your family! Find out who it is.
- You can find family information on the Web.
- Family information can be found in government offices, archives, or museums.

Can you think of other places to look?

Step 3

What do I do with all this information?

Now that you have gathered some information about your family, it is time to organize and preserve what you have found.

One way to do this is to make a family album or scrapbook. We are not talking about old sticky photo albums! Next you can explore the steps for making your own family history album.

Family album pages contain all these:

- Photographs
- Important documents
- Your written comments to tell the history of your family.

How to Make a Scrapbook!

Scrapbooking is a hobby that is now more popular than stamp collecting. Scrapbooking is a way to combine family stories, family documents, and family photographs in one place in a way that will ensure their preservation.

Scrapbooking is also a hobby that matches the individuality and creativity of the person making the scrapbook. Album pages can be as simple or complex as a person wants to make them.

“Scrapbookers” find family information, photographs, and documents (research).

Next, they arrange copies of photographs and documents on album pages in a way that makes sense to them (organization).

They then write comments and stories around each item (interpretation).

Here are the three big steps to making an album:

- Research
- Organization
- Interpretation

Research: The first big step

The first step in making a scrapbook is to discover the history of your family. History is about asking questions, and one of the best ways to learn about your family is to talk with relatives.

When you interview family members, ask open-ended questions.

Open-ended questions are questions that begin with the five “W’s.”

The five “W’s” are:

- Who
- What
- Where
- When
- Why, and sometimes How.

Research made easy!

- From memory, write down the four keys for your family members.
- Search your house for documents to find more of the four keys.
- Ask family members questions, especially the older generations.

Organization: The second big step

Now that you have found out about your family’s history, you are ready to make a scrapbook. A scrapbook is a way to tell a big story about your family.

You will attach photographs and documents on each page of your scrapbook that will help you tell this big story.

Start sorting the materials you have collected into groups that you will put in your scrapbook. This is the process of organization, and it is the first step of “interpretation” – that is, telling a story.

Organization made easy!

- Write down all that you know, or fill out a family history chart.
- Connect each person to a document, photograph, or story that you have. Write the stories down.

- Use folders to organize the stuff you found to tell the stories.

Here are the five most common items in scrapbooks:

- Old photographs of ancestors
- New photographs of family members
- Newspaper clippings
- Marriage certificates
- Awards

Can you think of other items you can place in a scrapbook?

Interpretation: The third big step

Now that you have organized what you have for your scrapbook, it is time to share the stories you have collected.

A photograph, a document, and a list of facts cannot speak for themselves. Each item or fact has a story about it and a reason that makes the object or fact important. Explain what each photograph, document, or fact means to you and how they relate to each other as elements of a story. This is a comment.

In a way, your comments are saying why you chose to include the items in your scrapbook.

Interpretation made easy!

- Attach the photograph copies and document copies onto the pages.
- Identify each item on the same page, and write down any related stories you have.
- Share your album with family members at gatherings and reunions. Ask others to make their own albums.

Don't forget to write comments about these things.

- Weddings and anniversaries
- Family holidays and events
- Jobs and family businesses
- Awards and family heroes
- Sports, hobbies, and pets

What can you say about your family?

How to Care for Your Stuff

Some people make albums to care for their documents and photographs. Others want to use albums to share these materials.

Most important! You want to protect your original documents from damage. Make sure that you “do no harm” to your originals when making an album.

Here are three simple steps to guide you!

1. The best way to protect your family documents and photographs is to store them in a safe environment.
 - Keep them in a place that avoids excessive heat, light, moisture, dust and poor air.
 - Do not store them in attics or basements or near laundry and bath rooms.
 - Natural and fluorescent lights cause photographs and documents to fade. Keep them as dark as possible.

2. Make copies of your original documents.

You want to make copies because it will allow you to share documents with others while protecting the originals from being damaged.

3. Use archival quality materials for making albums.

What does “archival” mean?

Archival materials do not contain acids or other chemicals that will harm documents and photographs. You can purchase these materials at many local businesses. See the listing on the following page.

TOOLS AND SUPPLIES FOR MAKING YOUR FAMILY HISTORY SCRAPBOOK

For your information!

Check out these items you can use to make your scrapbook!

A. Archival folders

Acid-free folders are great for storing your original documents and photographs. They will not release acids that can damage your documents.

B. Mylar sleeve

A Mylar sleeve can be used as a cover to protect documents and pictures from dust or fingerprints.

C. Cotton gloves

Cotton gloves protect your documents and photographs from skin oils and from smudging.

D. Magnifying glass

You can use a magnifying glass to enlarge small details in documents or photographs to find clues about your family's history.

E. Glossy photo paper

You will want to make copies of the documents or photographs that you put in your scrapbook. One way to do this is to make a scan on your home computer and print it on this type of paper.

F. Razor-blade cutting knife

Along with a ruler, use a knife like this to cut out your copies of documents and photographs. You can also use sharp scissors to do this.

G. Archival scrapbook page

Acid-free scrapbook pages do not contain materials that will harm original documents, photographs, or copies.

H. Archival mounting corners

You can use corners like these to attach copies of documents or photographs to your scrapbook pages. The mounting corners fit around the corners of your documents or photographs. The bottom of each mounting corner has an adhesive that will hold the corner to the page. Mounting corners are available in different colors and sizes.

I. Tweezers

You can use tweezers to help you attach copies of documents and photographs to scrapbook pages using mounting corners.

J. Archival ink pens

These pens have an acid-free ink that you can use for writing on scrapbook pages, but not on original documents or photographs. You can also use pencils to do the same thing.

K. Document cleaner pad

You can use this to clean dust from the copies of documents and photographs in your scrapbook, and to remove fingerprints.

L. Bone-folder

You can buy special kinds of adhesive sheets that you can attach to your copies. Use something like this bone-folder to attach the sheet to the copy.

M. Double-sided adhesive tape

You can use this to attach a Mylar sheet over documents or photographs. Do not stick the tape directly on original documents or photographs!

N. Business card pockets

You can attach one of these to the front of your scrapbook to hold a card with information (such as a title) about your scrapbook.

Where can you buy these items?

Check out these web sites:

www.lightimpressionsdirect.com

www.archivalsuppliers.com

Some of these supplies also can be found at craft and scrapbook stores. Make sure to verify that they are archival quality before purchasing.