

What to Do with All of Our Family Stuff...Research and Heirlooms

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INTRODUCTION

We have all collected family research, memorabilia and heirlooms over the years. But will our family want to continue collecting these items? Let's talk about how we might preserve and pass on these family treasures to future generations.

**YOU HAVE BEEN THE KEEPER OF THE STORIES, THE MEMORIES,
AND THE FAMILY TREASURES**

NOW IT IS TIME TO LET GO

Don't let your memorabilia and your heirlooms become a burden to you or to your family

You control the stuff... The stuff does not control you

Working on a family member's possessions may bring up the emotion and the dynamic of the relationship

Let go of the past so that you can move on to your next chapter

THE PROCESS

Organize your research, memorabilia, and heirlooms

Discard or give away what you do not want

Preserve what you want to keep

Use your research, memorabilia, and heirlooms to create or curate a family legacy for your family and for your descendants

Share that legacy and that story with your family and the world

WHAT IS YOUR FAMILY LEGACY

Family papers, documents, recipes, photos, scrapbooks, home movies, audio tapes

Family research that you have done

Heirlooms...furniture, knickknacks, kitchen utensils, quilts, wedding dress, baptismal dress, military uniform, framed pictures, artwork, tools, jewelry, watches

START WITH YOUR PERSONAL FAMILY PAPERS

Letters, newspaper clippings, photos, diaries, journals, yearbooks, family Bible, ephemera

THEN ORGANIZE YOUR RESEARCH DOCUMENTS

Census, wills, deeds, maps, etc.

Keep your primary source (original) documents

Scan (or toss) your secondary materials (compiled)

Consider entering your research in an online data base

- Ancestry

- MyHeritage

- Family Search

- FindMyPast

And consider entering your research in a genealogy software

- Reunion

- Family Tree Maker

- RootsMagic

- Legacy Family Tree

GET RID OF...OR SCAN

Church and club newsletters

Cancelled checks, check registers, bank statements,

Newspaper and magazine clippings

Travel itineraries and brochures

Old calendars

Receipts

Medical bills and records

Insurance policies

ORGANIZE YOUR FAMILY PAPERS BY COUPLE, INDIVIDUAL,
LOCATION, OR YEAR

HONOR THE PROVENANCE OF YOUR PAPERS

PROTECT YOUR PHYSICAL FAMILY PAPERS FROM LIGHT, HEAT,
DUST AND BUGS

Preserve your material in archival boxes, folders, and plastic sleeves

Archival companies

Gaylord

Hollinger Metal Edge

Archival Products

Archival Methods

SHARE YOUR MEMORABILIA AND RESEARCH WITH YOUR FAMILY

Use online subscription sites

Create a flash drive of photos and information for your cousins

Self publish a book

Create a digital archive (Permanent.org, Forever.com, Collectionaire.com)

IF YOU DON'T HAVE FAMILY...

SHARE YOUR FAMILY'S STORY WITH THE WORLD

Local libraries

Local historical and genealogical societies

Family History Center (Salt Lake City)

Allen County Public Library (Fort Wayne, IN)

State Libraries and Archives

College or University special collections

Library of Congress

HEIRLOOMS

Furniture, jewelry, china, crystal, silver, pottery, clothes, artwork

Create three piles: Trash, transfer, keep

Marie Kondo advises us to keep what is useful and what brings us joy

DESCRIBE YOUR HEIRLOOMS

Take an inventory, create a spreadsheet

Put a picture, description, and story in an heirloom binder

WHERE DO YOU WANT YOUR RESEARCH AND HEIRLOOMS TO GO?

Create a family history and heirlooms directive (estate planning)

Put your instructions in writing

Share where you would like your research to go...to a person or to an institution

(A repository might be better able to handle your research if it is organized)

Have your heirlooms appraised. Avoid disputes over your heirlooms

WRITE UP A SUMMARY OF YOUR LEGACY

Briefly describe your collection/archive

Describe how and where your documents and papers are organized

Share how and where your original photos and digital prints are stored

Explain how your genealogy software works

Share where your computer files are backed up

Include the passwords to genealogy subscription sites and to backup sites

Explain how your heirloom binder or file works

Summarize and list the contents of your archival boxes

DON'T BE OVERWHELMED

Take it step by step

Start with an easy project

Remember whatever you do, will be better than when you started

Congratulate yourself on what you have accomplished

Remember you are doing this for your family, your descendants, your ancestors...and for yourself!

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