

Marieta

WARREN COUNTY GENEALOGICAL SOCIETY
504 N. Buxton, Apt. #7
Indianola, Iowa 50125

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MEETINGS: Monthly, third Monday at 7:00 p.m. at Trinity United Presbyterian Church.
NEXT MEETING: July 16, 1984 Please bring scissors and a ballpoint pen for workshop.

June 30--IGS Quarterly meeting at Urbandale Senior High School (7101 Aurora Ave.)
Mr. Rudi Kaethner will be the main speaker. He and his wife are genealogists from near Frankfort, Germany and are in Iowa to present results of their research on the German ancestors of former Governor Norman Erbe to the Erbe family reunion in Boone on June 23.

Warren County Fair Entry Dates - June 30 thru July 7. Be ready!

Pedigree Charts--Do we have yours?

Thelma Pehrson and Marieta Grissom attended the 2nd Annual Genealogical Conference sponsored by the LSC in West Des Moines on April 13. The following come from Marieta's notes:

MARK D. DURRANT from the library in Salt Lake City was the opening speaker. He primarily talked about the importance of families and seeing them in "technicolor" through genealogy. He compared family heritage to a river--as you go up the river and around each bend, you become anxious to see what is around the next bend and even more anxious to see the head waters.

LOREN HORTON of the Iowa State Historical Dept. conducted a workshop: "Photography in Genealogy". He first briefly discussed 6 types of 19th Century images:
1) Calotype--the first type of image produced, it was developed in 1837 England by Fox Talbot.

2) Daguerreotype--developed in 1839 and was popular until the early 1850s, it can be identified because it reflects as a mirror.

3) Ambrotype--became popular in the 1850s, it does not reflect. The image is on glass with a black back.

Both the Daguerreotype and the Ambrotype were "one of a kind" images and they were encased, usually in a wood case, covered with embossed paper or a velvet material. The thin sheet brass mat became more elaborate with the passage of time.

4) Tintype--These were the first images that could be made multiple, with as many as 36 images on one plate. If there were 36 postage stamp size images, they were called "gems". They became very popular during the Civil War because they were more durable than glass and could be sent to and from the soldiers. They were also cheap. In 1863 a quarter-type (1/4 of a plate) cost 30¢. They could also be touched up with color.

5) Albumen prints--brown toned prints that were made on paper coated with egg albumen. The Carte de Visite was common 1860s-1870s; the larger Cabinet Card from 1870s-1900s.

6) Cyanotype--a bright blue print on very thin paper. These were made by amateur photographers and have lasted better than any of the other images.

Revenue stamps were only used from 1866-1868, so a photograph can be definitely dated to those years if it bears this stamp.

Then Loren gave us 12 QUESTIONS TO HELP US INTERPRET IMAGES. He said that photographs can tell us more than we think--they will actually "talk" and we can "read" them!

1) Why was the photograph taken? 2) Where was the photograph taken? 3) When was the photograph taken? 4) Of whom or of what was the photograph taken? 5) Who are the people and how are they related? 6) If you want to find out more about this

photograph, what research would you do? Gauge your research in relation to the meaning of the image to you. 7) Why did the photograph survive? 8) Is the photograph an accurate reflection of the time? 9) What is the focus of the photograph? 10) What does the body language mean? 11) What was the communication between the subject and the photographer? 12) Are there things in the photograph that don't belong?

JUNE BEALS presented a workshop session: "Digging in Iowa". She said that every time you find a record you should get enough information to go off in yet another direction. She also reminded us to be sure that we copy every single bit of information we find. She discussed the State and Federal Censuses, Vital Records (recommending that when we seek a birth record, we write the County Clerk of Court asking for a photo copy of the birth in the Register), Cemetery and Grave Records, Newspapers and Land Records (check at the Recorder's Office for the Grantor/Grantee record). She discussed the 1836 Territorial Census which is in printed form at the Historical Building. She particularly mentioned the Land Records that are available at the Iowa Archives Building in Des Moines and indicated that with the land records that are available at the Archives and at the Historical Bldg, trips to individual county court houses may not be necessary. Finally she emphasized using the Manuscript Dept. at the Historical Library in Iowa City.

The following are excerpts from the PHOTOGRAPH PRESERVATION program I gave in 1983. I promised at that time that I would prepare it for the newsletter and this seemed the appropriate time, since my presentation this month was also supposed to be photographically related. --Marieta Grissom

With photographs the past comes ALIVE! Old photographs offer the past to us in a way that words cannot--yet they are, by far, our most perishable resource. They require constant care, for they begin to chemically self-destruct as soon as they are produced.

Conditions and materials that relate to the stability of photographs include: 1. Atmosphere, 2. Infestation, 3. Containers, 4. Lighting, 5. Papers and Plastics, 6. Adhesives, 7. Reference, 8. Display

ATMOSPHERE: High humidity and high temperature are two controllable environmental conditions that together accelerate nearly every form of harmful action to which negatives and prints are subject. Dampness and warmth promote the growth of damaging fungus on the surface of photographs; this encourages insects to eat the gelatin and the fungus, destroying the image. Humidity initiates a chemical reaction of color film and photos that color-changes the dyes. In black-and-white photographs the moisture will combine with any excess chemicals not completely washed out in the developing process, known as residual chemicals. The print will fade to a sepia shade, and eventually will fade completely away.

Pollutants in the atmosphere are another major cause of photograph deterioration. The pollutants are created by a wide variety of processes including automobile exhaust, heating generation (furnaces, fireplaces, woodburning stoves), fumes from paint and new home construction materials. Furthermore, beware of fumes from hot water heaters, cleaning supplies, and photographic chemicals.

WHAT CAN YOU DO?

1) Have a heating/air-conditioning system that will maintain a temperature of 65° - 75° F (lower temperature is better but less practical).

2) Have a humidity control system that will maintain a relative humidity of 40%-50%. This may mean a de-humidifier in summer and a humidifier in winter.

3) Have an air-filtering system. This is frequently attached to the furnace/air-conditioner. It is not what are usually referred to as furnace filters. It is an additional filtering system. Many times it is also recommended for people with hay fever, asthma and other lung diseases in order to filter the air they breathe.

Jim Julich, Asst. Director, State Archives of Iowa, says a good rule of thumb is to store photographs where we live--we don't live in hot attics or wet basements.

INFESTATION: Airborn micro-organisms are everywhere and thrive on the surfaces of photographs in humid conditions. However, insects such as cockroaches, and silverfish in search of food find it in the paper base, the emulsion gelatin, fungus and in other airborne decomposition products deposited on photographs. Carpet beetles will eat the paper base, destroying the images on them. Insect excreta on photographs can both stain and fade the images.

CONTAINERS: Prints and negatives should not be stored in wooden boxes, drawers, cupboards, closets, or in ordinary cardboard or corrugated boxes. They should be stored in closed cabinets or drawers or on open shelves in vented containers of anodized aluminum, steel with baked-on nonplasticized synthetic resin lacquer or stainless steel. Interiors of these cabinets should have vents to permit the air to circulate freely with room air so that humidity and temperature conditions can be uniformly maintained and the accumulation of undesirable gases can be prevented.

LIGHTING: B & W prints that have been processed properly suffer little from exposure to light for moderate periods. However, constant exposure to light yellows gelatin and tend to make it brittle. Paper also yellows with exposure to light. Tungsten light is preferred. However, light exposure to color prints becomes a much different story. Light energy boosts the activity of atoms and molecules, making them more reactive and susceptible to change. Daylight, rich in blue and ultraviolet radiation, is one of the most active and destructive illuminants for collection materials. Ultraviolet radiation fades dyes, breaks down gelatin fibers, making them brittle, and converts various substances in papers to colored compounds. Some of these reactions continue in papers even after the exposure to light has ended. Daylight must be excluded from storage rooms; fluorescent lights should be shielded with an ultraviolet absorbing filter. In addition, color dyes are affected significantly by high temperature, high humidity, and atmospheric pollution. Further, the manufacturer, the processor, and the user of color photographic products can all affect significantly the rate at which dyes fade in a color photograph.

PAPERS and PLASTICS: The problems involving preservation of photographs are vastly more complicated than those concerning plain papers. Since photos are multi-layer constructions of different materials--organic and inorganic--and the interaction of these products under a wide variety of storage and handling condition greatly complicates matters. In the long term storage of photographs, we must give attention not only to the paper base of the photograph, but must also consider associate paper products: envelopes, mount and mat board, interleavers, wrappers, etc. The quality of these materials is almost always unsatisfactory because of acidity.

WHAT IS MEANT BY ACIDITY IN PAPER? In the raw fibers used in making paper and in the paper making process, there are chemicals, that easily combine to form acids, particularly when exposed to pollutants in the air. The symbol pH (potential of Hydrogen) is used to indicate acidity or alkalinity. pH 7 is regarded as neutral; pH values 0-7 indicate acidity and pH values 7-14 indicate alkalinity. Therefore, if a paper is labeled as "acid-free" it has a pH above 7.0.

Black-and-white photographs in contact with "highly acidic" paper will "self-destruct" much more quickly than photos in contact with "acid-free" paper. Most photo albums, most interleaf paper, most mat board, most mounting board, most cardboard,--in fact, most paper products are highly acidic!

SUGGESTIONS:

1) Test for acidity. There is a pH testing pen available. It contains a brightgreen chemical ink which changes color from blue (acid-free) to green

(some acid content) to yellow (high acid content) when applied to paper. The blue dot remains on the surface of the paper to serve as an indicator of future contamination.

2) Deacidify. There is a product available, Dr. Rich Smith's Wei T'io solution or spray. It is named for an ancient Chinese god who protects books from destruction. This is a clear, non-water solution/spray that effectively deacidifies conveniently, safely and relatively inexpensively. One simple treatment lasts indefinitely, neutralizing existing acidity and depositing a benign alkaline reserve that protects against oxidative attack. It also sanitizes the item and typically increases the life of acidic paper by 2-4 times. These products are routinely and widely used to preserve books, documents, and works of art, but are NOT intended to be used on photographs themselves.

3) "Acid-free" papers that are available include "Museum board" which is 100% rag (cotton fibers), acid-free mount or mat board which has demonstrated long term stability. The drawback is that the raw materials and manufacture of rag papers for this museum board are expensive, therefore, the final cost is higher. There are also available archival photoalbums, mounting corners, storage boxes, negative envelopes, bond paper, etc.

However, color, again becomes a different story! The final step in color processing is acidic--the acid is needed to set the color dyes. Therefore, putting color prints, acid by nature, in an acid-free environment causes them to fade quicker! Pat Wildenberg, Director of the Hoover Library at West Branch, Ia, suggests putting color prints in mylar or acetate (an inert atmosphere).

4) To encapsulate means to enclose between sheets of polyester film (Mylar) which are sealed together with a special double coated tape. Thus, the item is protected from deterioration caused by handling, moisture, contact with acidic materials and other harmful elements. Note that this process is reversible, leaving the document in its original state.

Mylar is one of the most stable and inert films available and is the one least subject to variations in manufacture. It is characterized by being exceptionally strong, durable, transparent and dimensionally stable. It comes in flat sheets, envelopes, covers, etc. and in a variety of weights.

Acetate is considered safe, however, the black paper that frequently comes with acetate page protectors should be discarded immediately.

Polyethylene is the cheapest of the safe products. Every day "Baggies" are an example. Polyethylene breaks down with time; loses its transparency and eventually will come apart, but it does not have any harmful by-products during the break-down process.

Vinyl, on the other hand, is a big NO! The by-product during its break-down process is HCl (hydrochloric acid), definitely harmful to photographs.

ADHESIVES: Most adhesives are harmful to the silver image. A good adhesive for photographic prints should have the following characteristics:

- 1) should contain no chemicals harmful to the silver image or the paper base;
- 2) should not contain or attract moisture;
- 3) be removable without harming the print or mount;
- 4) hold the print securely flat and neat.

Rubber cement should never be used for photographs. It contains sulfur which will inevitably fade or stain a print. Likewise, never use transparent tape or masking tape.

Starch paste comes close to being a good adhesive for this purpose except that it can attract and hold moisture and it can also attract insects in search of food.

Contemporary prints are frequently mounted with dry mounting tissue onto museum quality board. This adhesive can be removed with acetone or denatured alcohol.

WHAT IS THE BEST METHOD? One answer seems to be to use either acid-free or inert photo corners! But Mr. Wildenberg suggests slitting the mounting paper for each corner of the photograph.

REFERENCE: With precious original prints, we must always remember DO NOT DO SOMETHING THAT CANNOT BE UNDONE! DO NOT discard old photographs because you cannot identify them. DO NOT trim original photographs down. DO NOT peel off their backing. DO NOT clip someone out of a larger group photo. If family photographs are mounted in an album, think long and carefully before you remove them. Chances are, they are better off right where they are; loose they may be damaged. In the album, they may have a continuity you will not be able to achieve elsewhere.

Always include a label with photos, but if you must write on the photo be sure you use pencil on the back in the margin!

How can you USE your photos and share them with other family members with all these restrictions? Also, considering the many ways in which photographs deteriorate, originals are not going to last forever. WHAT DO YOU DO? The solution is to have the old photographs reproduced--then, TREAT THE ORIGINAL LIKE THE IRREPLACEABLE ANTIQUE THAT IT IS. Reproducing photos is neither as complicated nor as expensive as you think it might be and it allows nearly endless possibilities for things you can do with photos. Furthermore, the results obtained from faded or yellowed originals by copying with an appropriate combination of lens, filter, film, and development are often superior to the originals. Thus, images that might be regarded as practically lost can be given a new lease on life.

Furthermore, important color photos should be copied to black-and-white. Hollywood film makers are even having to do this, as the early color films are deteriorating.

DISPLAY: Glass provides the best atmospheric protection for prints, but a mat should definitely be used to separate the print from the glass. Otherwise, ferretyping of the print surface may occur. Metal frames are the safest to use, since the material is inert. DO NOT use bleached wood, varnished or oiled wood frames, as the chemicals can cause undesirable reactions. Also, you should be sure that the back of the frame is sealed.

CONCLUSION: There is a long list of things done to photographs in the name of preservation that may do more harm than good. Improper decisions concerning care and handling can result in irrevocable damage. Other decisions, though reversible, may require so much extra work to change that continuing with them may be a tragedy of wasted photographs, work and money.

LEARN WHAT TO DO BEFORE DOING ANYTHING: LEARN HOW PHOTOGRAPHS ARE DAMAGED AND HOW THEY ARE SAVED. NEVER, NEVER, NEVER DO SOMETHING THAT CANNOT BE UNDONE!!!!!!

RESOURCES:

1) Weinstein, Robert A. and Booth, Larry. Collection, Use and Care of Historical Photographs, American Association for State and Local History, Nashville, TN: 19

2) Preservation of Photographs, Eastman Kodak Company, 1979.

3) Bennett, Mary and Horton, Loren N., "Care of Historical Photographs", Technical Sheet Number 5, Iowa State Historical Department.

4) Sanders, Marilyn, "Preserving Photographs", Travel and Leisure, June 1980.

5) Ostroff, Eugene, "Conserving and Restoring Photographic Collections" (a series of four technical reports first published in the May, September, November, and December 1974 issues of Museum News, revised 1979 for American Association of Museums, Washington, D.C.)

6) Bourland, Dave with Price, Steve. "The Acid-Free Recipe" Ducks Unlimited, Sept-Oct 1983.

A new book is now available which I have not seen, but I suspect is an excellent resource: The Life of a Photograph by Dennis Inch and Lawrence S. Keeffe, Jr., published by Focal Press and is available from Light Impressions.

USEFUL ADDRESSES:

Light Impressions
P. O. Box 3012
Rochester, NY 14614
800-328-6216

University Products, Inc.
P. O. Box 101
South Canal Street
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01041
800-628-1912

I suggest you use the 800 number to call these places to order their catalog.

Wrinkles are hereditary. Parents get them from their children.

PRESERVATION HINTS -- Causes of paper deterioration: 90% of deterioration is caused by acid and 10% by other factors such as heat, humidity, light, air mold, insects, rodents, bad handling, or positions in storage. To avoid these it is best:

1. Best to keep temperature at 70 to 75°.
2. Maintain humidity at 50 to 65%. Attics and basements are bad for storage.
3. Avoid sunlight, which causes fading.
4. Control air pollution. Store in acid-free containers.
5. Check for mold, insects, rodents. Silver fish glue paste and sizing.
6. Always store in flat or firm upright position. Avoid folds and wrinkles.

If papers have been folded or rolled for a long time, do not try to flatten them before "relaxing" the paper. To do this, improvise a humidity chamber from a bread box or container with tight cover. Put damp blotters in bottom and papers on this and cover. In a few hours, the paper can be handled with ease, unfold and place between blotters under weight for several days until flat and dry. Lightly folded papers can be placed between damp blotters and under weights until flat. --JOTS, Vol. X, No. 2 P. 3 via Wayne County Genie News, Oct 1983.

The Virginia State Pension Act, which was enacted before the Federal Pension program paid a larger amount than the Federal program for Revolutionary War Soldiers or their widows. Therefore, there were 465 Revolutionary War pensioners, residents of Virginia, who signed for Virginia State Pensions and not the Federal Pension. Contact the Archives Division, Virginia State Library, 12th and Capital Sts. Richmond, VA. 23219 --Clark County (Washington) Genealogical Society Newsletter.

Southwest Nebraska Genealogical Society, P. O. Box 176, McCook, NE 69001. Membership is \$12 per year for individuals, \$13 for husband & wife, and \$6 for associate member. An associate member is one who lives outside a radius of 100 miles of McCook. All members receive the newsletter and can send us FREE queries, family surname lists, pedigree charts, family Bible records, family reunion news, etc. Associate members can't vote or hold office. Membership begins in January. Ancestors Unlimited is published six times a year.
