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Custom Folders Prep Guide

Pre-Organizing Help and Guidelines and Scanning Preparation Instructions

Congratulations on wanting to get your collection organized and ready to scan using Custom Folders! This is a **Premium Service** designed to help you create a beautifully organized and searchable legacy that you can enrich with important information and family history.

As with all scanning companies, we have instructions for how to prepare your photos for scanning. The information below will provide you with suggestions and recommendations to help you understand the scanning process, as well as help you organize your photos. Preparing your photos and items and knowing what to expect will make this an efficient and enjoyable process. ☺

Custom Services: Our regular scanning costs reflect the time required to digitize photos prepared according to this guide and ready to scan out of the box in the most efficient manner without us doing additional work. We know that everyone's photo collection, needs, and goals are unique, which is why we offer customized packages and solutions that deliver outstanding and unique archival quality collections. Whatever extra support you need, a Certified Personal Photo Manager is ready to help!

Condition of Photos and the Scanning Process

Many factors contribute to the efficiency of scanning and the resulting quality of the scanned images. These are a few important points to keep in mind.

- Photos in good, clean condition and sized 2x2.5" to 8x10" will be hand-fed through our professional photo scanner by a Certified Personal Photo Manager. These are the least costly and time-consuming to scan.
 - Some photos and other items require the use of a flatbed scanner, which is priced separately (see Services and Price List). These are more time-consuming and costly to scan.
- Photos should be clean and free of debris, paper, sticky tape, adhesive, etc.
 - The FRONT AND BACK surfaces of the photos should be clean. **Test for adhesive you can rub or wipe off the back side of photos that were removed from sticky albums.** Adhesive transfer is a major problem and affects how the photos can be scanned. You can easily feel the glue "balling up" (gummy feel) as you wipe. This adhesive will rub off in the scanner, possibly damaging it, and could result in marks on scanned images and require more interruptions to clean the scanner.
 - Items that cannot be cleaned (e.g., are sticky or have paper or adhesive stuck to the backside) and could damage the scanner or require excessive cleaning (photos with adhesive on them) will be scanned on the flatbed scanner.

Now on to the fun stuff!

How to Create Your Ideal Digital Collection

Custom Folders is a fantastic way to prepare your printed items so you get back an organized and searchable digital collection that is ready to enjoy immediately or gift to your loved ones.

If you need to prepare your items differently than described below, please contact me ahead of time to discuss what you need to ensure we can accommodate your request.

Using Custom Folder Names

What is a Custom Folder?

A Custom Folder is the same as a folder on your computer. When you think of folder names for your digital scans as you organize them, think in terms of the way you organize and name your folders and files now for your digital photo collection or how you would like to name and organize them.

Additionally, consider what words you or others would use to search for specific photos and include them in the folder name, which also doubles as the filename! Having the matching filename ensures you can move or share individual files and the essential details of the photo stay with each image.

The Folder name can be a person's name, a theme, event, date, location, etc. Consider what information you want a person to know who is viewing them 50 years from now.

How it Works

- You sort through your print items by category, such as date, person, theme, place, event, etc. You provide a specific folder name for each category or group of photos. For example, "1980 Christmas" or "1990-04 Grand Canyon Vacation."
- We create a folder with that name in which all its respective items are scanned.
- The image files scanned into each folder will have the same name as the folder. For example, if you have 25 photos in the "1980 Christmas" folder, each image file will be named "1980 Christmas" with a numeric extension of "0001, 0002, 0003," etc.
- You get back a complete folder structure precisely the way you want it. No wasting time creating digital folders from scratch for dozens of categories and moving and renaming all their respective image files.
- You and your family enjoy a searchable collection that makes finding specific photos a breeze! You have image files with easily identifiable and searchable information, instantly knowing what the image is without having to open it. You can also search for specific photos using the words from your file names. For example, find all your photos from "1990-04 Grand Canyon Vacation" by typing "grand canyon" in the search field on your computer.

Naming Your Folders

Remember that a Folder Name also doubles as the file name. You should include important information about each group of photos, such as a date and/or person, place, event or theme. You can create any system that works for you.

Each Folder name can have up to 44 characters and spaces. This is a scanning software limitation. Anything past that will be cut off. We will adjust the name to fit as best we can. For an additional fee, we can create longer Folder/file names to match your exact wording. This is done post-scanning.

Use the following examples for creating Folder Names:

Best Practice Template: **Date** [year-month-day]_**Subject** [who-what-where]

Examples of naming options from simple to descriptive:

Date only: 1980; 1980s; 1970-1975; 1971-01-31;

Subject only: Bob Grade School; John School Sports; Grand Canyon Vacation; Mary; 50th Anniversary
Bob and Sue

Date and Subject(s): 1980_Christmas; 1980-1985_Bob Birth through Kindergarten; 1955-1960_First
Home 1234 Maple Lane Olathe Kansas; 1971-01-31_Bob 30th Birthday Party

Full date format when some dates are unknown (For the advanced or extremely organized! Use this if you like the full date format and/or you plan to add the missing dates at a later time): 1980-01-xx; 1980-xx-xx; 198x-12-25 or any other combination

Use "x" for any part of the date for which you are unsure. This will keep everything sorting correctly and you can easily add the information to the Folder name when you get it. (You will also need to batch rename your file names as well.)

IMPORTANT: Always use numbers, not names for the month. For example, use 1999-01, not 1999 January or January 1999. Your folders and files will not sort properly if the names are spelled out or the month is listed first. We will revise any folder names that do not fit the above naming convention to ensure you receive an organized collection that sorts properly and provides an enjoyable experience, unless otherwise agreed upon.

Organizing Your Collection

- Decide how you want to sort your photos and other items. Some sorting category ideas are listed below. You can use any combination of these, as noted in the Naming Your Folders section.

Date (period of time)	Vacations	School Years	Person
Place	Sports	Family Traditions	Holidays
Weddings	Anniversaries	Birthdays	Pets
Homes	Cars	Family	Grandparents

- Set up a large table and use index cards (which can be used later when prepping for scanning) or pieces of paper as placeholders on which you've written your sorting category name or Folder Name. You can also use photo or shoe boxes to help in the sorting process as well. Then sort your photos into your categories.
- Have a trash bag handy to throw away duplicate and other unwanted photos or use a bin to "gift" any extras to family members that might like them.
- When done sorting, create your final Folder Names and **print** them **LEGIBLY** (e.g., 1980 Christmas or 1990-04 Grand Canyon Vacation) on 3" x5," 4" x6," or 5" x8" index cards. Colored cards or ones that are slightly larger than the photos make the batches easier to distinguish.

DO NOT use small pieces of paper to write your Folder Names when preparing your order as they are challenging to see and handle and can get separated from their bundle resulting in photos being scanned into an incorrect Folder. Paper cut to the size of the photos can only be used if bundling the photos using rubber bands.

- Verify the Folder Name length. Remember, there is a 44 character and space limit for the Folder Name unless you select the more extended custom naming option.
 - For albums, you can use sticky notes to record the Folder name and securely place it inside the album. You can also use index cards and tape them to the outside or inside the album or use any other method in which the Folder name will not become separated from the album.
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Instructions for Preparing Your Collection for Scanning

Photos must be prepared as follows:

- Ensure all items are free from extraneous materials: paper clips, staples, sticky notes, individual envelopes, etc. All items must be loose and ready-to-scan. Exception: For stapled items that need to stay together, remove the staple and use a paperclip so we know to keep them together.
- Be sure you have eliminated unwanted photos. All items are scanned except any duplicates we find.
- Photos facing consistent direction is helpful.
- Bundle your loose, ready-to-scan photos and items by Folder Name and place the index card in front of its group of photos in a photo box, shoebox, bin, envelope, or bags (only one group of photos per envelope or bag). [See the examples below](#). The index card is NOT scanned.
 - If placing the loose photos in a box or bin, put the index card **vertically** (if lid space allows) so that the beginning of each batch is easily identified.
 - If using bags, please use either the "press to seal" or fold-over type (not the slide type) and insert the index card inside the bag on the top photo. **Only one Folder Name per bag**. If multiple bags are required for one Folder, include the full Folder Name and number the cards as "1," "2," etc.
 - If using envelopes, you can write the Folder Name on the outside of the envelope.
- You can also use rubber bands to bundle groups of photos if they will not damage the photos or cause them to curl. Place the index card or paper cut to size on the top of each bundle.

Important: Photos that have debris, paper, adhesive, tape, etc., on them require special handling and will be put aside as they are found and scanned at the end of each Custom Folder to maximize scanning efficiency unless otherwise agreed upon.

NEED A CUSTOM SOLUTION? If you want or need anything above and beyond our regular service, please reach out to us. We can scan in order, remove and/or replace photos from additional packages (processing envelopes, bags, folders, etc.), remove extraneous materials from items, and more.

Examples of Properly Prepared Photos

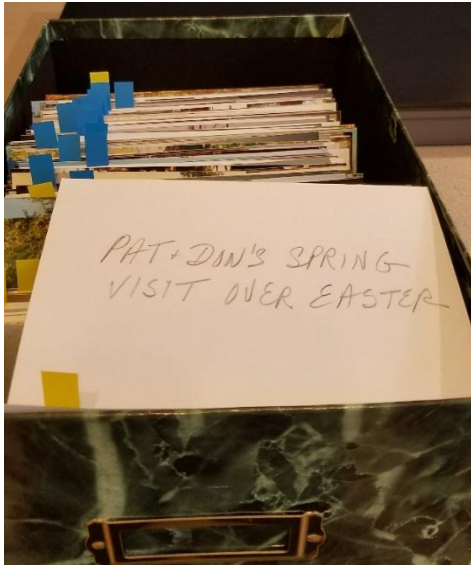


Figure 1: Example of loose photos in a box using index cards for Folder Names and flags to separate the bundles. This provides for the most efficient scanning and fastest turnaround time.



Figure 2: Example using index cards for the Folder Names and bundled using clear fold over type sandwich bags.

Figure 3: Example using rubber bands and index cards or paper cut to the photo size for the Folder Names. This works best for large groupings with photos of the same size.



Figure 4: Example using envelopes with the Folder Name written on the outside of the envelope.

What to Expect

- You will receive unparalleled service, quality, and value.
- We provide much more than just a scanning service. If, while working with your items, we determine that a different approach or scanning option would help create a more useful or meaningful collection and legacy, we will contact you to share our ideas.
- You will receive personal attention, and your collection is always handled with care.
- Photos will be scanned at the agreed-upon resolution.
- Items will be scanned in an order that is most efficient unless otherwise agreed upon.
- Items will be dusted to reduce spots and to deliver the highest quality image to you.
- All items are scanned, except any duplicates we find.
- You always receive the original scanned image files. We believe an unaltered image is essential for archival collections.
- Items are rotated to their proper orientation.

Additional Options for Creating Your Ideal Legacy Collection

- Possible next steps to consider for further organizing your photos (charged at a rate of \$75.00 per hour) to maximize searchability and value, and provide important detailed historical and genealogical information:
 - Rename photos with additional details in the filename
 - Tag/keyword metadata in photos

Next Steps

- Save your scanned files to at least three (3) different sources (cloud storage, external hard or portable drive, laptop, or desktop computer) for peace of mind and safekeeping.
- Have fun with your new digital collection. Create some of the following:
 - Photobooks
 - Slideshows
 - Gifts for family and friends, and more!