

## Caring For Your Family Photographs



## What are the different types of photographs?



## Types of photographs - Analogue

### Types of Photographic Materials

#### Analogue

Early daguerreotypes & ambrotypes

Glass Plates

Photographic Prints

Negatives

Slides

#### Ephemera

Newspaper

Annuals / Publications

Postcards



## Types of Photographs - Analogue

### Daguerreotypes

Announced in 1839, the daguerreotype was the first commercially successful photographic process.

The daguerreotype is a direct-positive process, creating a highly detailed image on a sheet of copper plated with a thin coat of silver without the use of a negative.



Daguerreotype of two young girls, c. 1840s. Courtesy © Sean Sexton Collection

## Types of Photographs - Analogue

### Ambrotypes

An ambrotype is an early form of a photograph in which the photo is created by placing a glass negative against a dark background. Ambrotypes were introduced in the 1850s.



Unknown Labourer c. 1857. Ambrotype. Courtesy © Sean Sexton Collection



## Glass Plates

There are two basic types of glass plate negatives: collodion wet plate and gelatin dry plate. Wet plate negatives, invented by Frederick Scott Archer in 1851 were in use until the 1880s. Using glass allowed for a sharp, stable and detailed negative, and several prints could be produced from one negative. Available in 1873, silver gelatin-coated dry plate negatives were easily transported and required less exposure to light than the wet plates. They were the first economically successful durable photographic medium.



Portrait of a member of the Coghill family, 1869-70 by Sir John Jocelyn Coghill (1826-1905)  
© Sir John Jocelyn Coghill Collection, Courtesy Queen's University, Belfast, from the exhibition:  
*In Our Own Image* – Photo Museum Ireland 2022

## Democratisation of Photography

The first widely affordable camera was the Box Brownie introduced by Eastman Kodak in 1900. Their famous slogan was:

“You press the button  
– we’ll do the rest”

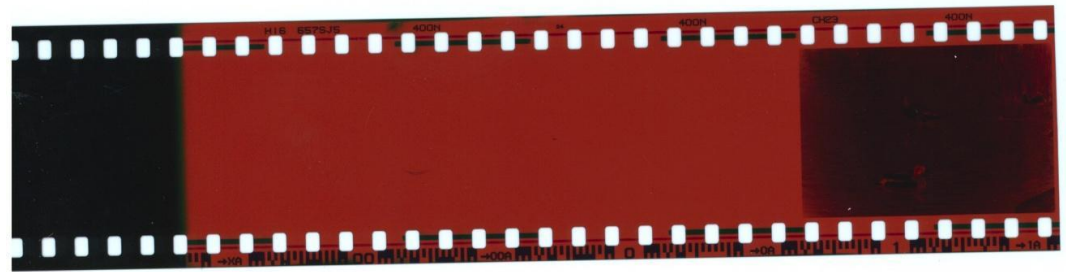
It was a basic cardboard box camera – cheap and easy to use. Many family collections will feature the small B & W photos produced by these affordable and easy to use cameras.





## Recent Photographic Materials - Analogue

Negative film



## Recent Photographic Materials - Analogue

Colour transparencies or slides.



## Recent Photographic Materials - Analogue

Family album colour transparency or slide from the Eugene Clerkin Collection.



© Courtesy Eugene Clerkin collection/ Photo Album of the Irish

## How to care for your family photos

- Remove them from the photo album.
- The glue and plastic rapidly degrade photographs.
- Store Flat. Do not use elastic bands.
- At a minimum, store the photographs in an airtight plastic container.
- Preferably use polyester pockets, not plastic sleeves.
- These should be stored in acid free cardboard folders.



## What are the threats?

### Light

- Sunlight will fade photographs.
- Store precious items away from light.
- McCourt family photograph showing signs of fading at the edges.



Rowe family group, Dundalk, 1917 © McCourt family collection/ Photo Album of the Irish

## What are the threats?

### Pens and metal objects

- It's great when people write names and dates on the back of photos.
- Writing with pens can do damage.
- A soft pencil is best.

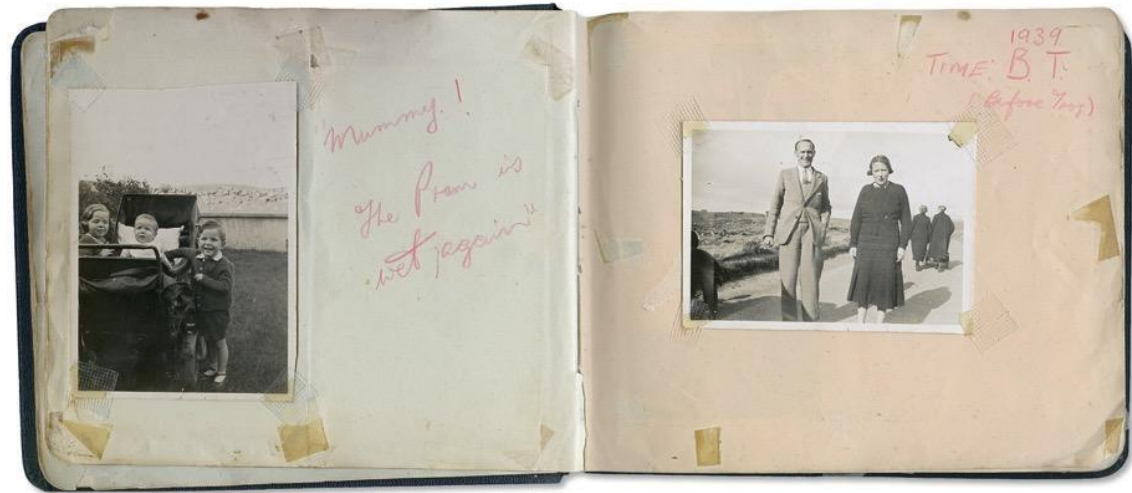


McCourt family group, Dundalk, 1917 © McCourt family collection/ Photo Album of the Irish

## What are the threats?

### Cellotape

Over time cellotape will corrode and damage photographs.



Gilroy-Barry family album © Gilroy-Barry family collection/ Photo Album of the Irish

## What are the threats?

### Moisture

- Mould and damp eat away at photographs over time.



Survivors of the Cork Hunger Strike, 1920 © O'Donovan collection/ Photo Album of the Irish



## Scanning your photographs – a quick guide

### Handling your photos

- Wipe the surfaces gently using a lint free cloth to remove dust and debris.
- Handle the photographs by the edges only.
- Place photographs in the centre of the scanner.
- Don't place too many photographs on the glass
- Don't overlap the edges of the photographs

### Basic scanning guide

#### Step 1:

- Plug in the scanner.
- Press the power button in the scanner
- Connect the computer
- Unlock the imaging unit lock
- Check the glass on the scanner is clean
- Make sure that you are not wearing anything that might scratch the scanner as you use it.



## Scanning your photographs – a quick guide

To learn how to scan your photographs you can check out numerous online video tutorials on YouTube etc.

They can be a great help!

### Epson Scan interface:



### Step 2 – Set the Mode:

- Go to professional mode
- Document type for photographic prints is **Reflective**
- Place photo face down on the scanning glass
- Image type: make sure 24 bit colour is selected
- Resolution: set resolution to 600 – 1200 dpi
- Use 1200dpi –for the best photos, especially for small, sharp photos
- Do not check any of the further scanning options listed on the left side of the Scanner interface, such as unsharp mask, colour restoration etc, – in other words, leave all boxes unchecked.

## Scanning your photographs – a quick guide

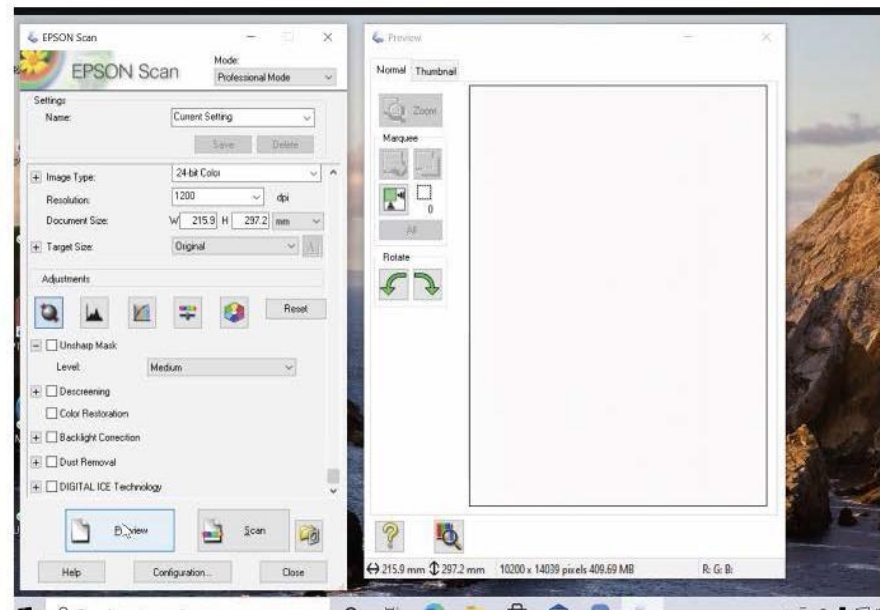
### Preview the photograph before you commit to scanning

Make a selection ensuring you keep the photograph edges too (cropping can be done later if necessary).

#### Scanning

Place the photograph on the scanner – face down.

- Click Preview button
- Image of scanner screen will appear
- Mask off the image to select the image only using the marquee tool – crosshair mouse cursor on screen.
- For albums – scan the whole album page – you might need to do this in sections. In that case, allow an overlap (just to be on the safe side) as they can be edited and stitched together later. Again, ensure that the mask or marquee area is expanded to include the entire scanner glass area. We can edit our any empty space in post-production.

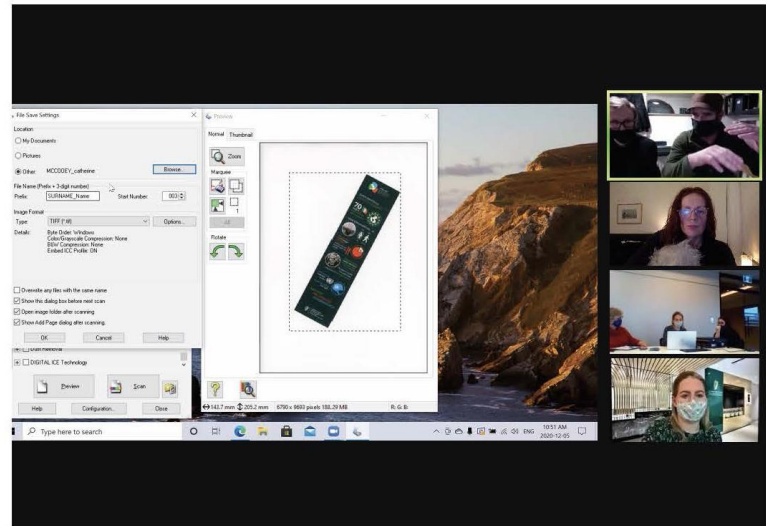


# Scanning your photographs - a quick guide

## File types – what type is best:

- Scan larger format Tiff files
- You can save a copy later in a lower resolution (smaller) e.g. Jpeg, which is suitable for websites etc.

Ready to scan



- Then press scan
- The scanning time is determined by the size of image and the resolution you are scanning at.
- Occasionally check the files are going into the folder and that the numbering is working.

## General advice on working with contributors

Ideally there would be 2 people at the scanning session so one can scan and the other person can type the caption there and then.

## At the end of the scanning session

Double check that no print is left of the scanner.

**Lock the scanner and switch the power off.**

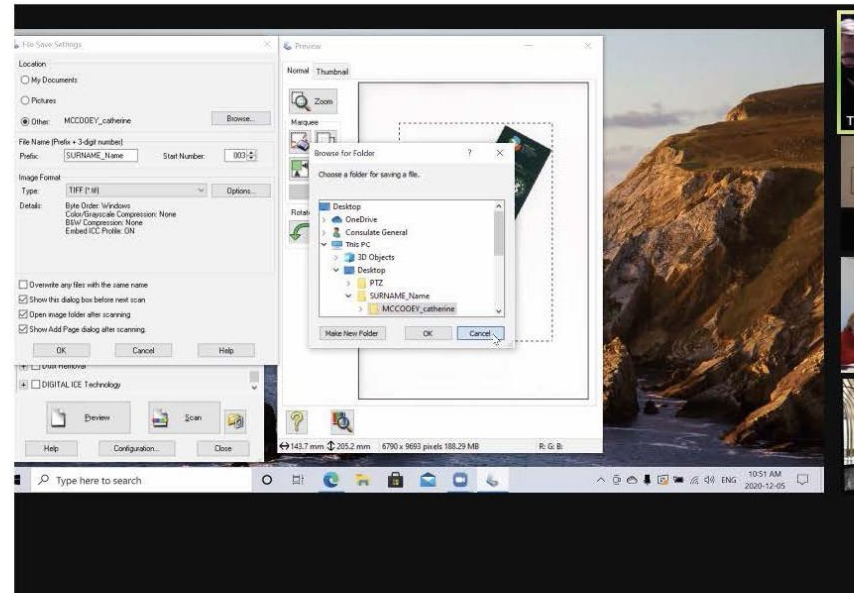
# Scanning your photographs – a quick guide

## Recommended file size settings

## Dots per inch or DPI

- Negatives in neg holders: 2400 dpi
- Slides in slide holders: 2400 dpi
- Prints on flatbed scanner: 600dpi

### Step 3. Saving to Folders



- Folder icon bottom right: click
- Go to 'Other' option, as opposed to default Desktop or Pictures folders - then build a new folder using naming protocol outlined here below:
- File naming: SURNAME\_First name
- Numbering: Set start number to 1
- Image Format : Type Tiff (it's the very bottom of this list)
- We prefer { .tiff } as this is the preferred image file type that allows us to manipulate and enhance the image quality if and as required.

## Digital camera

You can take photographs of larger images with a digital camera.

Camera files image formats:

- RAW
- Tiff
- Jpeg



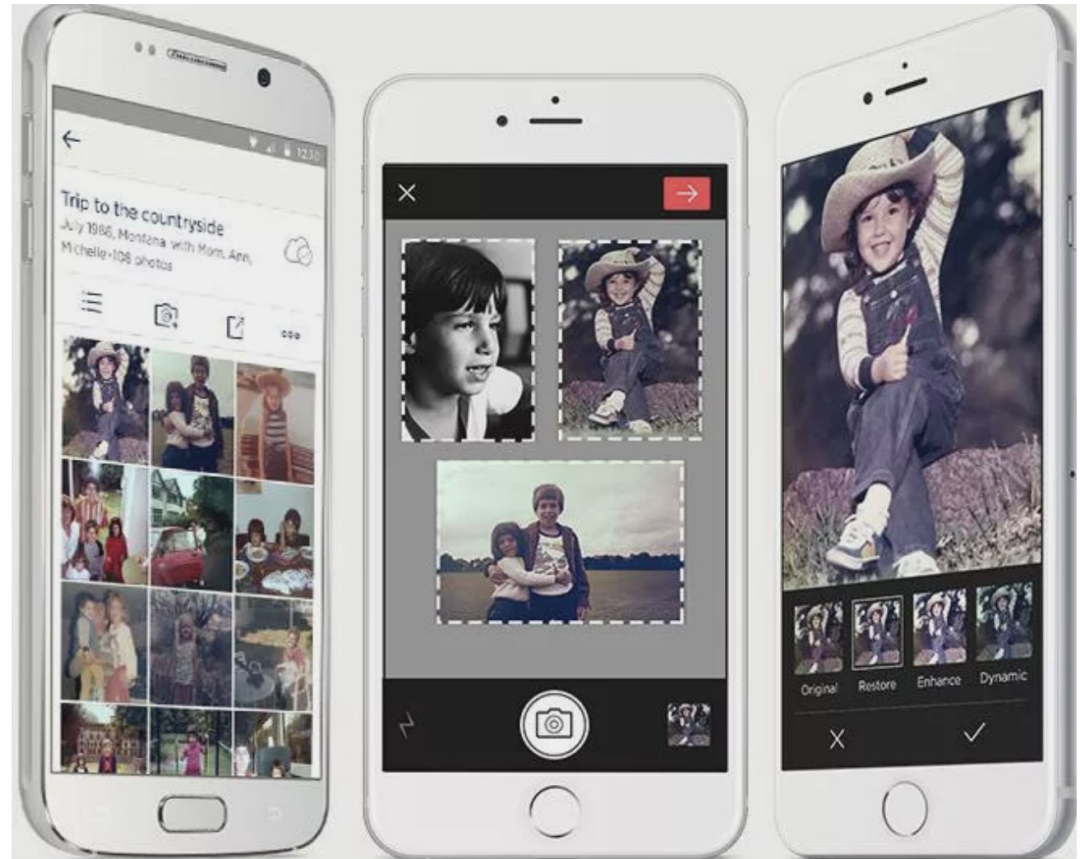
## Smartphone Apps

Applications for scanning photos:

Examples are:

- Microsoft Lens
- Google PhotoScan
- Photomyne

**Do bear in mind that Smartphone applications compress image sizes significantly.**



## Smartphone Apps

- Free and no fuss, no extra equipment required
- A great way to quickly share photos online

BUT:

- Requires a steady hand!
- Not recommended as a way to digitize photos for long-term archival purposes
- Quality will only be as good as your smartphone camera





## Digital restoration

### Editing & Restoration

#### What Changes?

- Colour Correction
- Removing Creases
- Removing Dirt
- Adjusting the Contrast
- Fixing any other damages (rips, chemical spots, fading etc.)

#### Why?

- To make your photographs look better
- To return them to their original condition
- To prepare them for printing
- To preserve them for future generations



Image and subsequent extracts : *Women of 1916*, courtesy the National Museum of Ireland from the exhibition *Reflecting 1916* at Photo Museum Ireland / Gallery of Photography March 2016.

## Examples of image repair

Removing creases, scratches &  
marks using Photoshop



## Enhancing the contrast

Enhancing contrast  
using Photoshop



## Solutions - Storage

### Storage

Where is best to keep your own collection?

- Keep precious photographs away from light in acid free storage, in dry, secure locations.
- Once packaged or boxed, store in a cool, dry, temperature stable location.
- NEVER store photographs in your Attic.
- Never store single photographs between the pages of a book.

### Useful resources:

- [www.conservation-by-design.com](http://www.conservation-by-design.com)
- <http://www.loc.gov/preservation/care/photo.html>



## Photo Album of the Irish

The Photo Album of the Irish is a digital archive project celebrating the histories of the Irish across generations as reflected in their family photographs. The evolving archive is available to view at: [www.photoalbumoftheirish.com](http://www.photoalbumoftheirish.com)

We would like to thank the families for their generosity in contributing to the Photo Album of the Irish project.



# Photo Album of the Irish



CANADA EDITION



**The Photo Album of the Irish project is a Photo Museum Ireland project.**

**The latest edition, working with the Irish Diaspora in England, is underway in 2024.**

**This project is supported by the Government of Ireland Emigrant Support Programme.**

Photo Museum Ireland is supported by The Arts Council of Ireland and the Dublin City Council.



**Government of Ireland  
Emigrant Support Programme**



An Roinn Gnóthaí Eachtracha  
Department of Foreign Affairs



Comhairle Cathraí  
Bhaile Átha Cliath  
Dublin City Council