

ALBUM SELECTION

Documenting your family history in charts and forms is important, but putting it into an album will allow you to creatively display your treasured family legacy. Imagine showing album pages to your kids, grandkids, and other relatives that have pictures, facts, and stories. Think of the ooohs and aaaahs! The first step, is to select an album, and you have two choices to make: size and type.

Album sizes fall into two basic choices: 8½ x 11 or 12 x 12. Anything smaller is unrealistic for displaying your family info. The 8½ x 11 is a familiar size, but has the disadvantage that the space on the page is limited, so its difficult to put multiple items on a page, such a photo, chart, and writing.

The 12 x 12 size has much more room, making creative page layouts possible. You can't print in this size from your standard desktop printer, which is a limitation when compared to the 8½ x 11, but you can always cut out items from your print-outs and paste them onto the larger pages. There is plenty of 12x12 paper available in a plethora of colors, themes, and styles so you needn't worry about availability.

Your next choice is the type of album, which are basically (but not exclusively) 3-ring, post-bound or strap-bound. Three ring albums are the easiest to use and allow you to rearrange pages readily. (We recommend that you put album pages inside archival page protectors for lasting protection. Most albums you buy – regardless of type - will come this way and refill paper and protectors are readily available.) The 3-ring album is limited in the number of pages they can hold, based on the size of the ring, but they are usually a large capacity ring. When opened, however, adjacent pages will be separated by the rings, which may be objectionable for a two-page spread.

Post-bound albums allow adjacent pages to lie relatively flat when opened, with no separation between them. They use the same page protectors as the ring albums, which allows you to have both types of albums and buy refills that will work in either. Additional posts can be added for expansion making the capacity variable to suit your needs. Rearranging pages is not as quick and easy as 3-ring albums, but is not difficult.

Strap-bound albums have an expandable strap hinge. A disadvantage of this type of album is that the album must be taken apart to move pages. These albums, when opened, allow adjacent pages to lie flat without the hinge being seen. If you get an album where the page is bound to the strap, then you'll need to get special page protectors. Some albums have the page protectors bound to the strap and pages can be slipped in and out through the top of the protector.

We recommend the 12 x 12 size in either 3-ring or post-bound type as these give you the most space and versatility in creating your album. But make a choice based on your needs.

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Whatever you choose, make sure the album you get is archival. This means that it's made with acid free materials and any included paper is also lignin free. A word of caution here, stay away from "magnetic" albums. They are most likely not archival and can ruin your pictures and documents in a few years. Just last week we received an e-mail from someone who was transferring photos from an old magnetic album to a 3-ring archival album, and found that her pictures were sticking to the album pages and that the backs were covered with a "sticky" substance. Don't make the same mistake. Treat your family heritage items safely. By the way, we recommended they use un-du adhesive remover on the problem pictures.

Some related sources and links:

Choosing an album:

<http://www.gracefulbee.com/newbees/albumguide.html>

Care and preservation of scrapbooks and albums:

<http://www.loc.gov/preserv/care/scrapbk.html>

"The Complete Idiots Guide to Scrapbooking"

"Create Your Own Heritage Album"

Both of these books are available at Your Family Legacy.

If you enjoyed this article, please forward it to a friend. We ask that you not change it in any way. Thanks.

Your Family Legacy

"Discover and Preserve Your Family Heritage"

<http://www.webYFL.com/>