

Journaling Your Memories

In preserving your family heritage, journaling is the addition of written details often done to compliment a picture or document. The most common kind of journaling is noting the names of people in a photograph, but as easy as this is, there is one all too familiar mistake made here – the habit of referring to people in relation to oneself. You may have already encountered this in your own quest to discover the identities of people in old photographs even when someone went to the bother to include names, such as “Great Aunt Claire, Mom, Dad, and Sis.” You may find yourself asking, “Whose Great Aunt Claire? Whose Mom and Dad!” The frustration can be maddening, so always use first and last names. Remember that journaling isn't just for your own reference but for future generations who may not know who made the notations. Of course the paper and ink you use should be archival quality and you should avoid writing on the actual photo or document. Journal next to, beneath, or on an adjacent scrapbook page. Include dates, names, events and any other details you may know.

Think of journaling as telling a story – write down the sort of things you say when you show someone your scrapbook or genealogy collection. Perhaps an ancestor was a privateer during the American Revolution, or a blacksmith who fashioned his wife's wedding ring himself out of gold he panned in the Black Hills.

Journal notations are the perfect way to hand down family lore too, noting of course that they may not be fact. You may note that the tree in the background of a photo was where a known outlaw was supposedly hung, or that an ancestor was the first to suggest to Abraham Lincoln that he go into politics, or that the family home in the last century was thought to be haunted.

You may wish to dedicate the first page or first section of your heritage album or notebook to family stories and lore. Don't be afraid to include family superstitions since they say so much about the times, including our own.

Of course journaling doesn't have to accompany pictures or documents. You could keep your own journal of your daily life or take a notebook along to genealogy libraries, cemeteries, record rooms of private libraries, anywhere you go to do your family research, and jot down your thoughts, ideas, questions and theories. They may help you in future searches or give clues to genealogists researching your family a hundred years from now.

No matter how you journal – with a few words jotted next to a photo or dozens of pages in a notebook, don't let your family's past and present be lost to future generations who want to know who they are and where they come from.

For more information:

“The Key to Faster and More Satisfying Journaling”:
<http://scrapbooking.about.com/library/weekly/aa041301a.htm>

Journaling Your Memories

Journaling for Scrapbookers:

<http://journals.about.com/cs/scrapbooking/index.htm>

Scrapbooking and Preserving Family Memories – Journaling:

<http://www.thefamily.com/scrapbooking/journal.html>

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