

Using Black & White Photos

From its beginnings, the photograph has been a treasured piece of a family's memories. It was only with the invention of color film, however, that the photograph became the brilliant "true to life" image we know today. Even so, we continue to be captivated by those old black and white photos. There is an honesty, a breathless stillness in them that color film doesn't quite capture. I'm told it's the lighting.

Whatever the reason, black and white photos, particularly those of your own family, create wonderfully sentimental feelings. Why not create those same feelings with today's memories by using black and white film? Here are some ideas to bring the nostalgia of yesterday into the memories of today:

In the absence of colors, the subjects within black and white photos become the emphasis. You can use this to blend the old and new in your scrapbooks. In black and white, the subjects within the old and new pictures are in striking contrast.

You can create this contrast by taking black and white photos of your family in poses similar to old photos, then place them side by side in a scrapbook album. Or include black and white photos of your family birthdays, your children at play, etc. and create a scrapbook album beginning with old black and white photos of your ancestors and moving through the generations. The effect is wonderful since there is no sharp contrast when the page is turned and modern, color photos appear. The contrast is in the style of clothing, the mode of play or entertainment, the hair styles, etc.

With black and white pictures, the eye follows lines and patterns. For this reason there are those who insist that clothing with striking patterns should be avoided, but that isn't necessarily true. The effect of patterned clothing can be quite striking, especially in contrast to older family photos where the clothing is more conservative.

You can also create that "old homestead" look with black and white photos of your home or all of the houses (even apartment buildings) where you've lived or your family (old and new) has lived.

If you don't want to run out and buy black and white film, you can still create black and white photos. Most photofinishers can print your color film on black and white paper for you, and if you prefer to use a digital camera, many have

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a black and white setting. Of course if you have picture-editing software, you can create a black and white copy from any digital or scanned color photo.

Because black and white photos don't have the distraction or the defining elements of color, light is far more important and dramatic. It creates a mood in a black and white photo that turns your simple photo into art. Experiment and have fun with it.

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