

## Beware of Creative “Destruction”

Creativity brings personality and vibrancy to every family heritage project. Sometimes, however, the creative touches you add to a scrapbook or journaling page can be a destructive element either by compromising the integrity of the page or the heritage aspect of the project itself. Here are some ways to avoid destructive creativity:

- Remember that natural isn't the same as acid free. Natural items such as flowers and plant life have lignin which creates acid. To avoid destroying your paper and photos, isolate the saved flower on it's own page or in its own memorabilia pocket. Leaves and other plant life are best reproduced onto the page by way of scanner or copier.
- Water used as a treatment, for the spotting or teardrop affect, should be completely dry before placing the page into a plastic protector to prevent mold from forming. The page should be clear of all eroding or damaging residue from any other treatments as well such as residue from sanding for the “old affect”.
- Think twice before you crop original photos even if they are recent, unless you've preserved the negatives. Backgrounds and other cropped areas of the photo will someday be of family or historic interest. Instead, consider matting the portion of the photo you wanted to use or scan the picture and use only the portion you want when designing your page.
- Use copies of original old photos in scrapbooks if the scrapbook will be “paged through” often. If scrapbooking is your method of safe storage, be sure to use photo corners instead of glue or tape.
- Don't write on the front of photos. While this preserves your handwriting for future generations, it compromising the integrity of the image as well as the beauty of the captured moment. You can just as nicely preserve your personal script on the back of photos with an ink that won't soak through or by tracing the images and writing the names of people and your comments on the traced copy to be placed with the photo.
- When journaling in creative prose or story form, which can bring events, biographies and family stories to life in the most entertaining fashion, avoid writing in the first person unless you are writing from your own view point. Writing “as” an ancestor or any other person, while entertaining, is historical fraud. Don't mislead future generations. If you must write in the first person biographically, make it clear that you are doing so, lest future

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generations believe they have stumbled upon a rare first person account or autobiography. Remember, they’ll be just as excited to find you as to find some other ancestor. State who you are.

- When writing your family history story be sure you make it clear what is fact and what isn’t. There is nothing wrong with interjecting your own suppositions or your own method of filling in the blanks for the sake of entertainment or suggestive interest so long as you make it clear that you are doing so.

So with these few cautions to help preserve both your family heritage and your individual projects, go discover who you are and where you came from. Be creative!

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Your Family Legacy

“Discover the past, capture the present, preserve for the future.”

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