

WHO AM I?
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Many of us either as a child or as a grown adult have asked the age old question "Who am I?" or "Where did I come from?" or even "What were my ancestors like?". Scrapbooking is one way to help preserve that either for yourself or your other family members. Whether pages with photographs or pages with journaling alone you can start anytime! Hopefully this will give you some ideas to begin or even to continue with ideas you have.

Sort pictures, articles, or even thoughts into some order. You can do them by ancestor, by holiday, by family, or even by type of memorabilia you have. Once this is done you need to decide what type of album or page you want to create. This will give you a focus on what to pick when you are doing your pages.

Some suggestions:

Holidays through the years: Whether Christmas, Birthdays, Easter or even Halloween you can track the changes and ideas throughout the lives you have photos for. Journaling about any photographs with the memories associated with them gives others much to reflect on, remember or even laugh with you about. If you are doing a full album be sure the final page you do is about the holiday as you celebrate it now!

Baby Memories: Gather all the baby photos you have of all your ancestors and put them into one page or album depending on the amount of photos you have. If you have the information add birth statistics such as weight and height as well as their name and date of birth. See how you all may or may not look like each other. It is amazing sometimes to find out you look more like a relative that you knew! I found a photo of my grandmother (who I thought I look nothing like) at about age 3 and was astounded when put next to a photo of me at the same age..we could be twins! Finding cousins or great grandparents who definitely have each other's genes sometimes leads to funny or interesting stories you can add to journaling on any page!

Military Service: Photos or memorabilia from your family and ancestors with any military information can make a journey through the years memorable. While researching both sides of our family I have found not only photographs but also written articles, discharge papers or even draft registration cards that not only tell you a bit more about your relative but also the times they lived in. Finding out that one ancestor was a prisoner

of war during the Civil War or one that was a pilot in one of the World Wars leads to other information that you can keep and pass along to other generations. My husband's side seems to mostly have gone into the US Navy and seeing photos of different generations in uniform is quite a sight! In another area we found was Civil War records and journals of a distant relative who was a prisoner during those times as a physician and what he saw. Putting together the photos and information makes for some wonderful scrapping material!

Once you have all this information you should and hopefully want to preserve it so that it does not disappear! Scrapping is one way to do it but how to keep them from crumbling or fading is another issue! Keeping photos and newspaper articles next to each other can lead to damage unless you have treated the newsprint with some type of archival protection. Doing your scrapping digitally you can solve this as you can scan or photograph these precious items without destroying the originals in any way. The same applies to any old letters, cards, notes or even report cards--scan them or photograph them and add digitally to your digital pages or print them out on archival type paper to add to a traditional album. Be sure the originals are stored in archival safe boxes or albums and/or treat them with archival products. If you do this it will make sure that the originals stay safe and are there for future generations to enjoy as well.

Family reunions can be a wonderful source not only for your scrapping but for your heritage information. If you have one coming up take the time to print out some sheets you can give to family members to recall their favorite family memories or other family information and then compile it into one great album to pass along in the future. You will be amazed at stories you may hear that will make you laugh, cry or even sympathize with! Be sure to note who the stories came from and get some photos if you are able to go with them! This makes a wonderful treasure not only for you but for other family members! It can also make a wonderful theme for a future reunion where you exchange this information with others there whether by print out or on a cd/dvd you can view together. All of you come from some common ancestor and sharing what memories you all have that others do not can make it fun and enjoyable as well as informational. While alot of these memories are happy ones be sure to include the not so happy ones as many times this explains how certain events or people came to be!

I can hear some you now--"I don't have pictures to do that!". Well, scrapping is not ONLY pictures! If you're in this situation, you can still make great pages to show your heritage, you just have to use other materials! Some of

the materials you have on an ancestor can generally be put into three categories: documents, memorabilia, or data and can be used alone or in combination in your scrapbook to tell your "story". Items such as Birth/death/marriage certificates, Invitations & greeting cards, Military records, School/work records or report cards, Letters, Pages from Family bibles, Birth or Wedding Announcements, Newspaper articles, and even Census records can make up the stories and tell your family history in some way!

What if you have no documents or memorabilia? Use your information to write a simple biography that gives the basics of your ancestor's life--you can include their occupation or where they lived, a map showing where this was, a picture from the area, or even news articles about that time of their lives. Many libraries have a wealth of heritage books and newspapers you can usually make a copy of to include in your scrapbook or for your own records. These are just a few ideas but I am sure you can come up with many more!

Just have fun, remember and enjoy!