



September 2017 - Keeper of the Family Treasures

Your favorite Aunt Martha was the family historian, and recently she died. Now — lucky you — you are responsible for keeping and handling all her historical stories, letters and photos.

For several months now, you've promised yourself that you were going to go through those six totes full of her memories. You just can't put off dealing with it any more.

Spend some time thinking about what should be your end result. Do you want to keep the family scrapbook, and possibly expand it? At a minimum, you want to assure that this irreplaceable information is handled safely, for the sake of the past and the future.

Do you want to consider creating an electronic scrapbook? I've used the website Shutterfly.com several times in the past 10 years. When my parents celebrated their 45th wedding anniversary several years ago, I wanted their love story to be passed along to their grandkids, showing the descendants how they came from Slovene to Canada.

In creating the digital book, I scanned several documents and saved them to my computer, as well as an external hard drive, too. (Always remember to back up your files!) Since it's available online at any time, I've been able to access the pictures a few times for different events in the past 10 years.

You can also create a scrapbook the old fashioned way. Start by purchasing a blank scrapbook and then mount the pictures or letters on each page. Write a description of the importance of each item. Always include a date whenever possible. It's nice to create a family tree with names, birth dates and when family members died. Always think how helpful this could be for future family historians.

Capture the important things — did any of your ancestors do anything famous, good or bad? You can include an online link if any of these stories appear in other places. The family scrapbook is the perfect place to save all this information for future generations.

If your family has an annual reunion that could be a great place to show the other family historians what you have put together. Perhaps some of them can provide more information and fill in some of the blanks. Remember, your family scrapbook doesn't have to be perfect. Something is better than nothing and hopefully your kids will appreciate that you downsized those six totes into just one or two!

Your local professional organizer,

Betty Huotari

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