

For More Information, Consult These Sources

Thomas Davies, *Shoots: A Guide to Your Family's Photographic Heritage* (Danbury, NH: Addison House, 1978).

Arlene H. Eakle, *Photography Analysis* (Salt Lake City, Utah: Family History World, 1976).

Julia Hirsch, *Family Photographs: Content, Meaning, and Effect* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1981).

Laurence E. Keefe, Jr., and Dennis Inch, *The Life of a Photograph* (Boston: Focal Press, 1984).

Catherine Noren, *The Way We Looked: The Meaning and Magic of Family Photographs* (New York:

Lodestar Books, 1982).

James M. Reilly, *Care and Identification of 19th Century Photographic Prints* (Rochester, NY: Eastman Kodak Company Publications, G-25, 1986).

Robert A. Weinstein and Larry Booth, *Collection, Use, and Care of Historical Photographs* (Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1977).

William Welling, *Collectors' Guide to Nineteenth-Century Photographs* (New York: Collier Books, 1976).

Tips on Handling and Labeling Historical Photographs

by Mary Bennett

1. Always wash your hands or wear white cotton gloves when working with photographs. Never touch the print surface because skin oils and chemicals will permanently damage the image.

2. Do not use tape or adhesives of any kind on the original photograph. The chemical composition may break down and permeate or discolor the photograph. Removing the adhesive, often impossible, may damage the image.

3. Do not use pen, ink, or felt-tip pens when labeling photographs or storage envelopes. (Ink may bleed through. The pen's impression may "dent" the image.)

4. Write in pencil on the storage envelope and on the back side of the print in the margins only. Faithfully copy any information or identification that comes with the photo. Make some attempt to date the photo even if it is only an approximation, such as

circa 1900, or post-1920, or 1960s. It is also helpful to record the donor's name on the envelope. Careful labeling will make the collection more convenient to use and more valuable for future use. Record all that is known about the photograph now; information passed down orally may be lost or remembered inaccurately by future generations.

5. Writing with pencil on the backs of today's commercially processed prints is nearly impossible because the paper is too slick. Try using a very soft pencil, with #1 lead. If this doesn't work, label only the storage envelope or album page and key it to the photograph by a short description.

For more detailed information, consult the sources listed above, especially those by Reilly and by Weinstein and Booth. Upcoming *Palimpsests* will offer more tips on storing photographs, displaying photos in albums or frames, and storing negatives.