

The Old Shoebox Newsletter

October 16th 2008 Copyright by Marlo E. Schuldt <http://heritagecollector.com> Vol. 3 #3

Getting Started

by Marlo E. Schuldt



Early in my career as a Speech Pathologist I discovered a secret about overcoming communication disorders. It may surprise you to learn it's the tussle to utter the first sound of the first word in the first sentence – *The Struggle to Get Started*.

Determining *where to begin* is the first step of *getting started* in any endeavor. You are not alone if you've become frustrated trying to determine the best place to begin organizing your photos.

I've spent hundreds of hours and several years trying to answer the question of where to begin with my photos and family history.

Initially I decided my frustration must be caused by a lack of organization. I reasoned if I could get everything organized it would be easy to begin. I spent hours trying to sort photos into little stacks or file folders. I had piles of photos all over my living room floor. I soon forgot what was in each pile because the contents kept changing. I discovered my photos could not be organized into neat little stacks. One photo could "logically" fit into several places. I considered making copies of photos so I could place the photo in more than one location. I decided making copies would be too expensive. Creating duplicate digital images would eat up space on my hard drive. I was defeated before I could even get started.

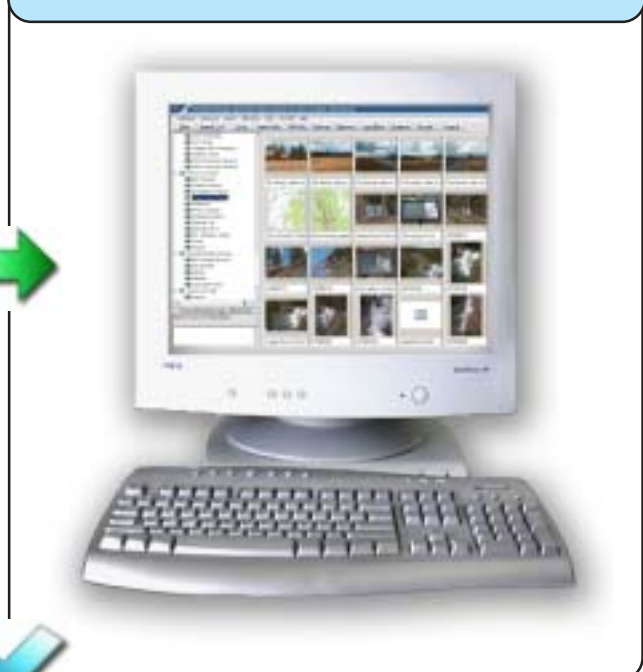


Becoming organized is easy if you “eat the elephant one bite at a time.” First create a collection or folder called “Sort.” Copy, import or scan images into the Sort collection. Name and create more collections. Continue to move photos out of the Sort collection or from other collections into the appropriate collection. Following this process makes it simple to get organized.

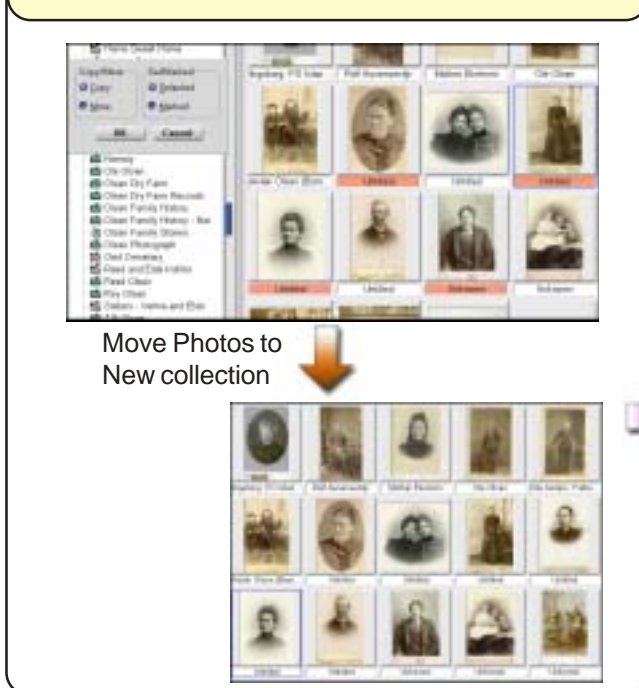
1. Scan / copy / import photos into the “Sort” collection.



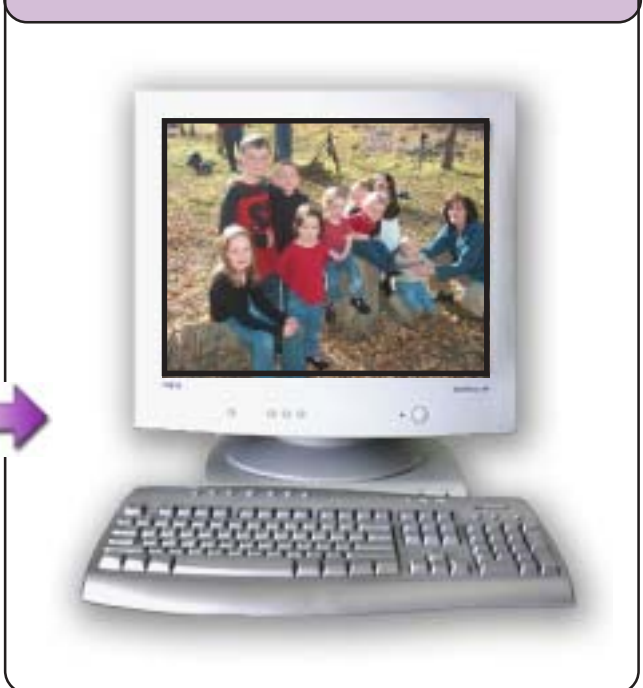
2. Review Sort collection. Determine photos groups.



4. Create new collections. Drag photos into other collections.



5. Use the Find option to quickly locate photos and files.



Impossible Organization Attempt #229

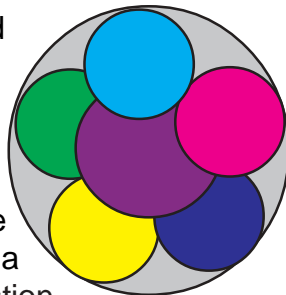
If you knew me personally you might decide I'm determined, or of a stubborn mindset. A psychologist might diagnose me as having an obsessive compulsive personality. My wife would agree with both.

My next attempt to start organizing occurred as I held a box of old photos on my lap. I was so frustrated! I remember talking loudly to myself saying, "How am I supposed to begin organizing the photos in this box when I don't know what's in the box?" *Once again I did not know where to begin.* I felt confused and highly frustrated. All my previous attempts at organizing photos were exercises in futility. That's when I decided not to waste more time trying to think of a better way. *I HAD TO ADMIT DEFEAT AND GIVE UP which was the right choice.*



The Riddle is the Answer

I had been going around in circles trying to decide where to start. I discovered the answer to my organizational dilemma could be found in the question, "Where does a circle begin?" The question cannot be answered because a circle has no beginning or end. My answer was, "A circle begins wherever you decide to start."



Finally I had discovered where to begin - *wherever you have interest.* This is good advice and will help you avoid stumbling around forever in the catacombs of your own creations trying to decide where to start.

Basic Conclusions

1. If you are just starting, begin simple and do not worry about organization.
2. Initially it's too difficult to organize since you may not know or remember everything you are trying to organize. You will end up going in circles.
3. Organization evolves and improves as you become more familiar with what you have imported or copied into your computer.
4. Just get started.

Your Computer to the Rescue!

The reason I'm encouraging you to "throw caution to the wind" and begin without planning is because your computer and the right software will help you become organized as you work with your photos and information. Let's not struggle trying to answer another question about beginning. "Which came first? The chicken – or the egg?" Our answer should be, "Do you like your eggs scrambled or sunny side up and with toast?" It's time to stop planning and start eating before it gets cold.

Where to Begin?

Start simple and use this process.

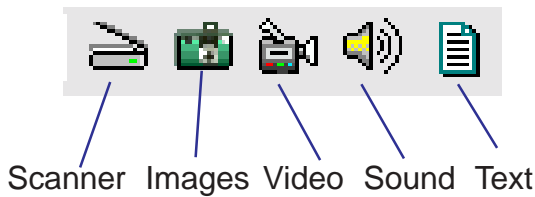
1. Create a folder called "Sort." If you are using Heritage Collector, create a collection called "Sort." View the "Creating a Collection" movie to help



you start. As the name "Sort" implies, you will initially use this Sort collection or folder as

a place to copy all your photos and family history files. Later you can easily move files from the "sort" collection into other collections.

2. Start copying or moving photos and files into your Sort collection. Click on one of the import icons.



3. Don't worry about organizing yet. Get twenty or thirty files into your Sort collection.

Occasionally you should review the images and files in the Sort collection. This is when the magic will begin. You will start to notice some photos and files belong together in a specific group.

4. Create and name a new collection so you can move these photos and files out of the Sort collection and into the new collection. Don't anguish trying to come up with a perfect collection name! Keep collection names simple, i.e., "Uncle Frank, Spanish Fork Farm, or Olsen Family History." Heritage Collector makes it easy to *change the names later* if you think of more descriptive titles.

5. Move photos and files from the Sort collection into the new collections. The Copy/Move option in Heritage Collector makes it easy.

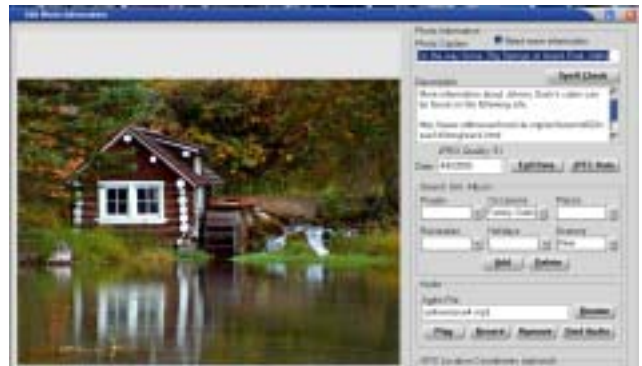


Open the Sort collection. Click on the thumbnails of the images or files you would like to move. Click one of the thumbnails selected and drag it to the collection name on the left side of the

display. Select the appropriate option (Copy / Move – selected or marked). Selecting the "Move" and "Selected" options will move the files out of the Sort collection and into the collection selected. The Copy option will place a copy of the file into the collection but will leave the original file in the Sort collection. I recommend using the Move option.

6. Getting Better Organized. Gradually your collections become more specific and structured as you move photos from your Sort collection to other collections. This may seem backwards, but you will become more organized as you add more photos, files, and collections. It will be easy for you to create collections, rename collections, and use the copy / move option to move photos and files into different collections.

The same gradual organizational philosophy applies when you want to add information to your files and images. Don't stress about adding all the information when you begin.

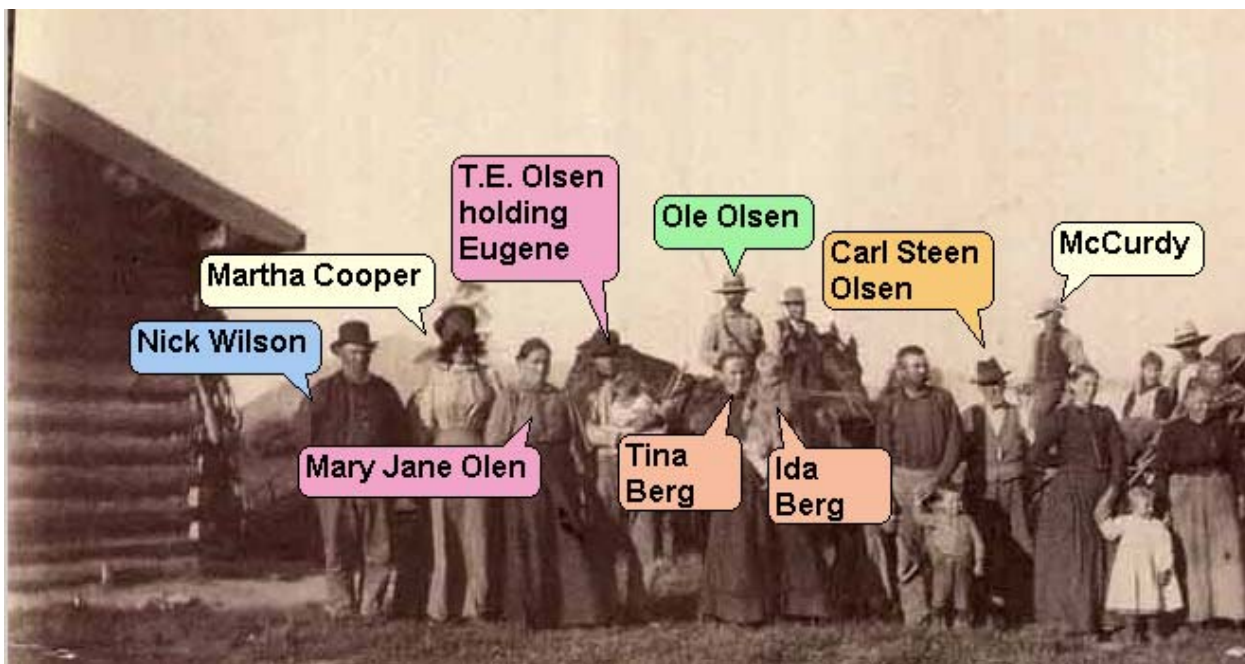


Add a few words to the caption or description for each photo or file. You can add more information later and use Heritage Collector's "Needs info" option to locate each file that needs more information. Captions and descriptions will also help you locate the files using the Find option.

Later you can use the Hot Spot function to identify each person in a group photo. This allows you to use the Find function to search hot spots for a specific person in a group photo and eliminates the need to have group photos in multiple collections or folders. View the Hot Spot movie to learn how easily hot spots can be created.

Most of us fall prey to what I call, the “Logically Incorrect Mistake.” Simply put, you do what you think is logical at the time but later determine what you did was incorrect.

I have created a special little designation for all these kinds of logically incorrect mistakes. I call them Marlo’s Minefields. It’s my way of warning



Maintaining Your Focus

It’s easy to get distracted from your main goal. Initially, your focus should be to get photos and files into your Sort collection. Keep it simple! Don’t overwhelm yourself trying to do everything too soon.

Be patient with your progress. Enjoy the fun of discovering and adding new photos and information. Making slideshows, sharing collections, or creating a hardbound book will come after you have a base of photos and files. Using Heritage Collector’s Find option will help you locate specifically what you are looking for when it comes time to work on other projects.

Avoiding Mistakes – *that’s a laugh!*

You will make mistakes – even if you are a perfectionist - *you guys will make more*. It’s only a mistake if you make it twice!

you since I’ve been there – done that – and already made the mistakes. I give you a gentle avoidance or “KEEP OUT” warning.

I continue to make a ton of mistakes as I explore new ways to enrich family history. Hopefully you can learn from my “logically incorrect mistakes” and avoid the box canyons, cliffs and swamps I continue to stumble through each day.

Whenever you see this graphic in my newsletters, manuals or writing, read it and then run the other way!



Copyrighted Material

Please remember the newsletters are copyrighted. If you would like to include a newsletter or excerpts in your newsletter or publication, please e-mail me for written permission.