

# Introduction to Scanning Photographs

This overview provides basic steps to help you scan your photos. Please read your scanner's manual for more specific information.

## 1. Prepare the scanner and photos

Clean the scanner glass with an anti-static cloth to make sure it is free of dirt, smudges or particles that could interfere with the scan. Prepare the photographs for scanning. Wearing gloves and using a soft bristle brush clean dust or other debris that is on the surface of the photograph. Please contact a local conservator if there is any damage to the photograph before attempting to clean the surface.



## 2. Select scanner settings

Here are some common terms to help you select the setting most appropriate for you.

- *Grayscale*: a palette of up to 256 gray tones, best for black and white

photographs. Grayscale may capture music and handwriting details better than bitonal scans.

- *Color*: a palette of 256 to thousands of color tones, used for photographs, maps, diagrams, illustrations and other documents.
- *Resolution*: finely spaced detail, a measure of a sharpness of an image.
- *Dots per inch (DPI) or pixels per inch (PPI)*: a measure of how many dots of color or shading are contained within one inch, which affects the image resolution. The more dots packed into an inch, the finer the image and the larger the file size. The terms DPI and PPI are often used interchangeably.
- **NOTE**: In general, scan photos (4"X6" and 5"X7") at 300 dpi/ppi. To enlarge 4"X6" and 5"X7" photos to 8"x10" or greater, scan at 400 or 600 dpi.

### **3. Scan and save**

After previewing or scanning your images, you may have a choice of "save" options.

- Tiff
- Jpeg

### **4. Access and storage**

Once you've scanned your photos, make sure that you can access them. Here are a few tips for storage and access.

- Organize the scanned images
- Give the scanned photos descriptive file names to help you identify them. Create your own naming system but be consistent.
- Create and organize a sub-folder structure on your computer in which to store the files.
- Create backup copies and store them in different places
- Create at least two copies of your collection. Save one on your computer and save other copies on CDs, portable hard drives, thumb drives or online storage.