

BRINGING FAMILY HISTORY BACK TO LIFE THROUGH DIGITIZATION



1 / Original American ivorytype portrait from a private family collection (left) and a facsimile printed after digital restoration, which included reducing the appearance of tears and wrinkling (right) **2 /** The cover and double-page spreads of this journal, written by a private client's ancestor in 1838 and 1839, were scanned and provided to the client as digital files

The articles in this issue of *Art-i-facts* highlight a number of notable collection digitization projects sent to CCAHA's digital imaging studio from institutions across the country, including Rabbi Mordecai Kaplan's letters from the Reconstructionist Rabbinical College Archives and an early explorer's diary from Wind Cave National Park. Digitization of these once personal, private treasures gives wider audiences access to their contents.

But CCAHA's state-of-the-art digital imaging services aren't reserved for institutional clients. They're also available to any individual interested in preserving family documents such as certificates and diplomas, journals, correspondence, and photographs.

CCAHA'S DIGITAL IMAGING STUDIO OFFERS:

> RESTORATION OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS THAT ARE PHYSICALLY DAMAGED

Tears, stains, and fading can be distracting, even upsetting, when they mar family photographs and other important documents. Conservation treatment often remedies this damage, but there are times when it is either impossible to safely treat an object or when facsimiles can reduce handling of fragile originals. In these cases, digital restoration presents a cost-effective solution.

When digitally restoring an artifact, Michelle Dauberman, CCAHA's Manager of Digital Documentation, first digitally captures its recto (front) and/or verso (back) using a professional scanner or a medium format camera. She uses Adobe Photoshop to color correct the resulting digital image, adjusting its colors to more closely match those of the original. Then, depending on the document's needs, she can reduce stains, enhance signatures, minimize the appearance of tears or losses, and increase the contrast between lights and darks to make the image clearer.

> PRINTS OF PHOTOGRAPHS AND OTHER DOCUMENTS TO SHARE WITH FAMILY AND FRIENDS

Only one person can own the original version of a favorite family treasure, but digital imaging offers the ability to create copies for every family member. Once Dauberman has digitally restored or color corrected a capture of an artifact, she can print a high-quality facsimile. She uses pigmented inks—which are more stable and durable than other inks—on Premium Epson matte photo paper, a water- and fade-resistant paper that yields remarkable color reproduction. Printed at a high resolution, a facsimile can be almost indistinguishable from the original document.

> IMAGE FILES FOR AN ACCESSIBLE DIGITAL COLLECTION OF FAMILY PAPERS AND PHOTOGRAPHS

Digital capture of an artifact results in a high-quality image file that is the same size as the original. A digital collection built from these image files has nearly unlimited uses; for instance, it facilitates exploring family history or genealogy, sharing on social networking sites, and passing on valuable information to future generations of the family (or even to historians). For many families, however, a digital archive's greatest benefit is easy access to the information it contains. As our recent institutional projects prove, every story adds to the historical record when it is documented, saved, and—most importantly—made accessible.

Questions? Contact Michelle Dauberman, Manager of Digital Documentation, at mdauberman@ccha.org or 215.545.0613.