



Imperial Order of the Daughters of the Empire Centennial Scrapbook, ca.1971 CA CCOQ C4-S7-C4.001

City of Coquitlam

# ARCHIVES

## ***Caring For Your Photo Albums And Scrapbooks***

*Do you have cherished photo albums and scrapbooks that you'd like to preserve for the future? Are you thinking of one day donating your scrapbooks or memorabilia to an Archives?*

*There are some things you can do to ensure that your records stay in good shape. The following tips and practical advice will help you ensure that your scrapbooks are still available for browsing by generations to come.*

*Scrapbooks and photo albums are treasured items in an archival repository. These items give us insight into the events and celebrations that bring communities together.*

### **What are scrapbooks and photo albums? Is there a difference?**

Scrapbooks are any multi-page books which have memorabilia, photos, ephemera and news clippings adhered to their pages. Photo albums usually contain photographic prints. However, there are grey areas: you might find postcards and clippings in a photo album or photos in a scrapbook. The distinction is not that important, as there are similar guidelines for care of both things.

### **What to look for when buying a scrapbook or photo album:**

- ❖ Pages made from acid-free paper
- ❖ Photo corners or acid-free adhesives to affix your prints and other items to the page.
- ❖ A book with a spiral or ring binding will prevent “bulging”, which can occur when you add items to pages

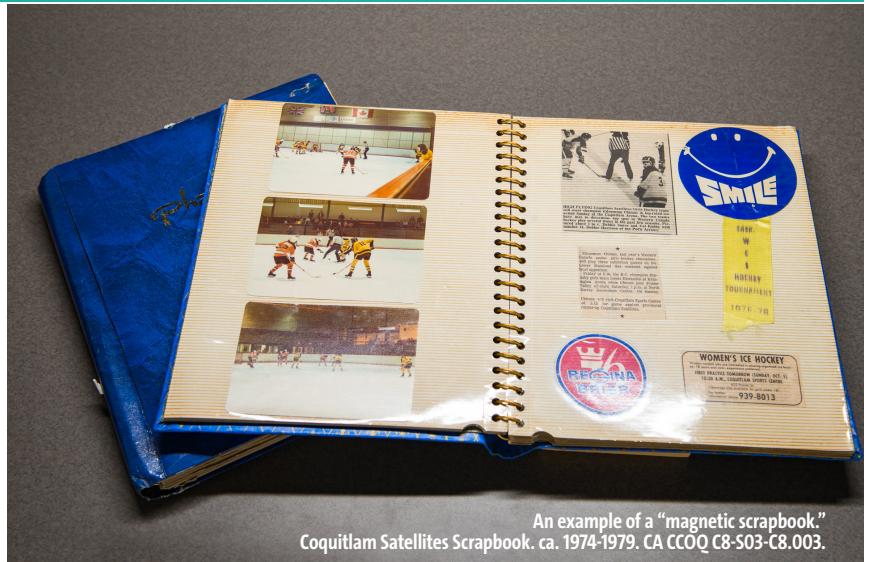


[coquitlam.ca/archives](http://coquitlam.ca/archives)

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## Where to store scrapbooks or photo albums:

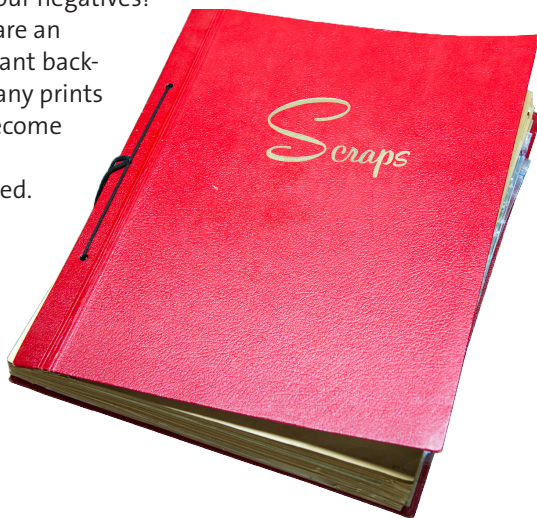
- ❖ A dry and cool place with a relatively stable temperature. While there are 'ideal' temperature ranges for different material types, it is fluctuations in temperature and humidity that stress items the most
- ❖ Away from direct light, particularly away from the UV rays in sunlight
- ❖ Flat in boxes or along a shelf resting on the page edge. Resting the scrapbook on its spine eventually results in warping of the pages and the items stuck to them
- ❖ In pest-free spaces, away from threat of rodents and insects like weevils or silverfish.



An example of a "magnetic scrapbook."  
Coquitlam Satellites Scrapbook. ca. 1974-1979. CA CCOQ C8-S03-C8.003.

## How to care for your scrapbooks and albums:

- ❖ Always remember to label items in the scrapbook with details such as names of people pictured, dates, event titles and place names. Think of who might read the scrapbook in ten, fifty or one hundred years' time. Try not to write directly on items if possible, and use a soft pencil or acid-free ink pen.
- ❖ Collect any items coming loose from pages into acid-free envelopes and place them in the back of the scrapbook. You could also use plastic sleeves made of PET, polypropylene or polyester type plastics. Avoid PVC, or anything with surface coatings.
- ❖ Where possible, remove prints from 'magnetic' albums as these will deteriorate further over time. If photos are stuck to pages, do not attempt to remove them yourself as you may tear the print. Instead, continue to store them properly, consider scanning the pages and consider enlisting the help of a professional conservator
- ❖ Keep your negatives!  
These are an important back-up for any prints that become lost or damaged.



Mountain View School Scrapbook. 1979. CA CCOQ C1-S2-S51-C1.002

## Should I digitize my scrapbooks or photo albums?

Digitizing photos or scrapbook pages can be a great way to make pictures previously confined to your personal collection easily accessible and shareable. If done properly, it can also be a way to preserve your photographs, as you will be scanning them before they degrade. However, scanning can be very time-consuming and resource intensive. Once you have your scanned images, you need to care for them properly or they can easily be lost due to technological failure or obsolescence.

Consult the City of Coquitlam Archives' Fact Sheet: "Maintaining Your Digital Records At Home" for more information.

For more information about scrapbooks, visit the City of Coquitlam Archives' online exhibit: "Scrapbooks: Fragile Time Capsules"

### Warning!

Adhesives such as tape and conventional glues can cause staining and deterioration of items over time. Using photo corners or acid-free adhesives helps to avoid these kinds of damage.

### Contact Information

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When the time comes, consider donating your scrapbooks or albums to the Archives. Your donation will help preserve Coquitlam's history and will leave an important legacy for the community.