

Personal Heritage Inventory

Are you ready to make your personal heritage inventory? It's easy to do in just a few simple steps.

Step 1: Find Your Heritage Items

The first step is finding your heritage items. What are they? They could be lots of things:

- Photos and photo albums
- Letters and journals
- Newspaper clippings
- Event programs and ticket stubs
- Home movies or audio recordings
- Other items with stories, like a wedding dress or family heirloom

Your heritage collection can include anything that is a record of you, your family or your community. These items can be physical, like a photo album, or digital, like the photos on your computer or phone.

Step 2: Make Your Inventory

Next, you can make an inventory of the items you found. You can use the inventory form on the next page, or just write the same information about each item on a piece of paper or in a notebook. Your inventory tells you:

- What you have
- Where it came from
- What condition it is in
- Where it is now

This is basically the same information a museum would collect about items in its collection. Your inventory will keep you organized as you dig deeper into your heritage collection.

Be as descriptive as possible. How many pages in the photo album? What years does it cover? Who took the photos? Are there notes in the album or on the back of the photos? Fill out one inventory sheet per item.

Step 3: Protect Your Collection

This is a great opportunity to make sure your personal heritage collection is safe and protected from damage. Hopefully it is already in a safe place. If it isn't, now is the perfect time to make sure it is protected from water, sunlight, mold and fungus, pests and other things that could damage these items.

If you find damage when doing your inventory, it could be a good time to change where you are storing these items. You will also need to access these items as you document and preserve your collection and your personal history. Try to find a place that is both protected and accessible.

Inventory Worksheet

Inventory by: _____ (your name)

Inventory date: _____ (today's date)

Description of Item (for example, photo album, box of photos, videocassette)

Description of Contents (for example, baby photos, video of vacation)

Origin of Item (for example, made by grandmother, purchased on St. Martin)

Condition of Item (for example, faded, water damaged, good condition)

Location of Item (for example, in a box on the top shelf of the bedroom closet)

Importance of Item (for example, contains the only photos of my great grandmother)

Special Meaning to Me (any reason why this item is important to you)