

## How To Run a Scanning Party



Heritage NL

Written by Terra Barrett, ICH Research with Heritage NL - PO Box 5171, St. John's, NL, Canada, A1C 5V5

Are there photos in your community you would like to preserve for future generations? Do you want a visual record of the people, places, and events in your town? Would you like to have an accessible archives of photographs?

## Your community should host a Scanning Party!

A Scanning Party is an informal photo collection session for heritage groups, small museums and archives, or town councils. Community members come to a Scanning Party prepared. They bring their own photographs to be scanned at the event and then taken back home with them the same day.

You are not limited to photographs. You could also scan recipes, documents, slides, negatives, or anything else that will fit into a scanner.

The goal of a Scanning Party is to help digitize and preserve community photographs as well as make them accessible to community members.

## What do you need?

In order to run a Scanning Party you will need to prepare a **scanning station**. At the station you will need scanning equipment, access to an electrical outlet, two volunteers, and consent forms.

One of the volunteers at your station will be the **scanner**. They will be in charge of digitizing each photograph. They will also name each photograph scanned.

Example:

Bugden, Ruth - 014.tif

Last name, first name of donor - image number in order of scanning.file type

The other volunteer will be your **collector**. This person will document the photograph. This means they will ask questions and write a description for each photograph. The description

should include the location, date, and photographer. It should also include the names of the people in the photo. Not all photos will have all the information but the goal is to get as much information as possible for each photograph.



Example:

014. Ruth Bugden inside home on Round Pond Road, Portugal Cove. 1945. Pots on floor.

## What supplies do you need for each scanning station?

Pencils

A scanner

A computer

Access to an electrical outlet

Several copies of the [Scanning Party Consent/Deposit Form](#)

Optional:

Extension cords

Paper clips, extra paper

Tea/coffee and snacks

Make sure your scanner is compatible with your computer in advance of the scanning party. Check that any required software or drivers are downloaded and installed on your computer. Do a test scan before your event.

## Step 1: Set a date and invite community members.

Let people know what kind of materials you are looking to collect. We suggest community members bring old photos of the community, from the 1880s to the 1980s, including anything showing old buildings, garden parties, reunions, games or sporting events, cars decorated for weddings, family snapshots, or any of the old shops that once dotted the area.

Reach out to community members by calling and inviting them personally, creating an event on social media, or doing posters to advertise the event. While we don't recommend having food or drink around photographs, a snack and tea/coffee can draw a crowd so you can set up a small area away from your scanning stations for food.

## Step 2: Set up your scanning stations.

Make sure the space you use allows for a few scanning stations where three people can sit comfortably. You will need access to an electrical outlet for your computers and scanners so extra extension cords can be useful. Make sure you have two volunteers per station. You can make as many stations as you have volunteers and scanners. A few stations allow things to go faster if you have a large crowd.

## Step 3: Scan away!

We recommend scanning images as tiff files. This creates a high-quality, lossless image which can be used in a variety of ways. Your scanning program should allow you to choose this higher-quality, larger format. We do not recommend scanning images as jpeg or png files. You can convert tiff files to jpegs later for sharing online. Different scanners allow you to scan at different DPI levels and we recommend using a minimum of 300-600 DPI (or dots per inch).



If community members bring their own USB flash drive they can take home digital copies as well as their original photographs.

Don't forget to number the pages as you go and use a paperclip to hold pages together. When you are finished scanning all of someone's photos, scan the form with your descriptions as well.

## Step 4: Archive the material.

You should have a plan on how and where the material will end up before you start to scan. All of the material we collect at Scanning Parties is backed up in an online database, and is also sent to the [Digital Archives Initiative \(DAI\)](#). The consent form allows material to be donated to the DAI and used for non-commercial purposes. If you would like more information on how to put your material on the DAI please reach out to Heritage NL at 1-888-739-1892.

Here is an example of a collection from a Scanning Party on the DAI:

[Portugal Cove-St. Philip's Photo Scanning Party Collection](#)