

# Digitization Station Photos & Documents

- 1 Make sure your hands are clean and dry.** If you are scanning photographic material or negatives, you may also wish to use nitrile gloves to avoid fingerprints. For all other types of materials, clean, bare hands are preferred so that you retain tactile sensitivity.
- 2** Make sure you have an **external storage device** (like a USB thumb drive) plugged into the computer, and that the **scanner is turned on.** (The on/off switch is on the right side.)
- 3 Gently lift the scanner's lid** and make sure the scanning surface is clean. You can use an anti-static cloth to wipe off any residual dust particles.
- 4 Place your photographs or documents face down on the scanning bed, and close the lid.** Make sure photo surfaces are also clean and free of dust. Be careful not to scratch the scanning bed when placing things on it.

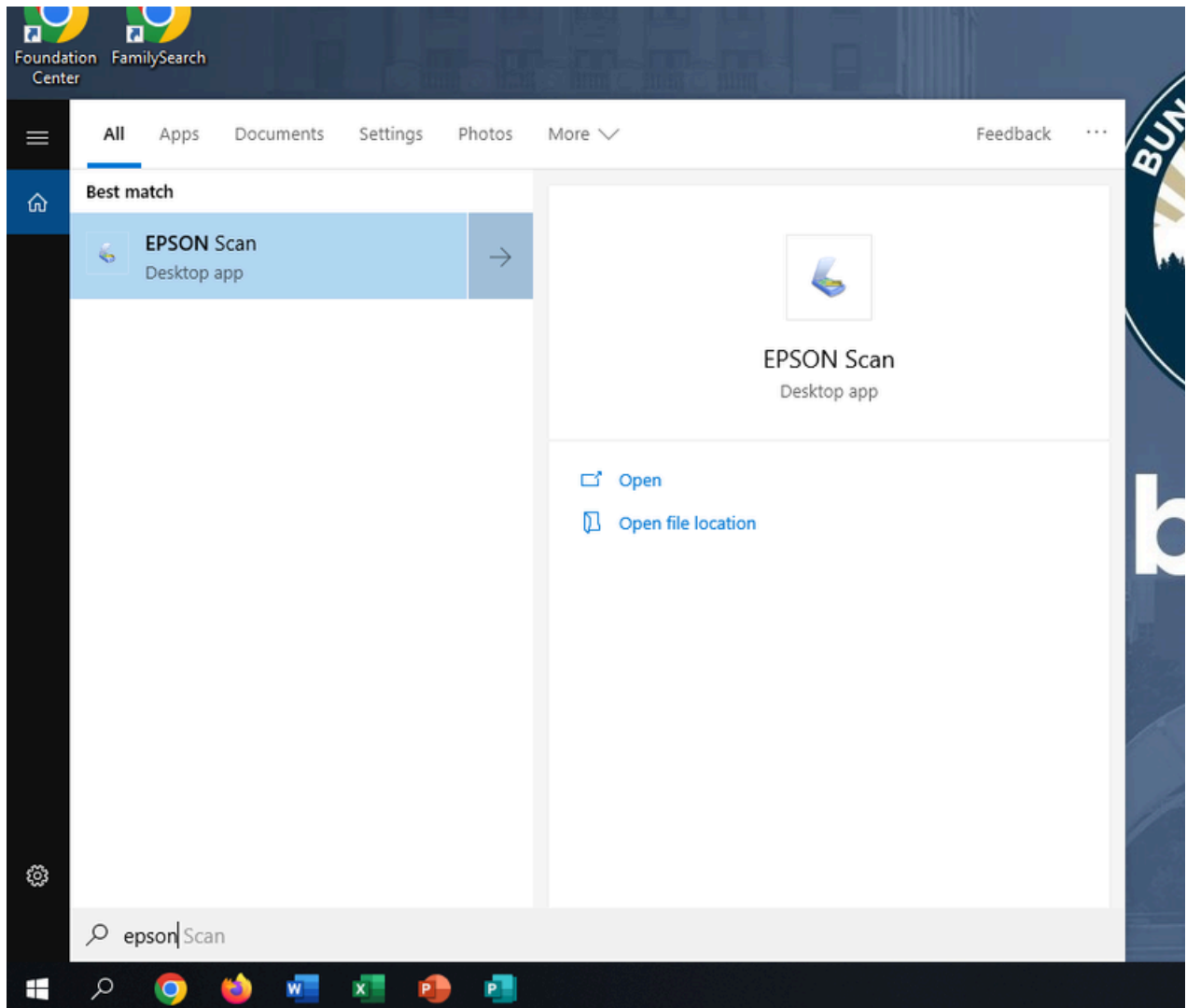


## **TIP: Scanning multiple items**

If you are scanning small photographs or documents, you can place several items on the scanning bed and scan them all at once. Make sure edges do not overlap.

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- 5 Using the search bar at the bottom of the computer screen, pull up the “**Epson Scan**” desktop application by typing it into the search bar, and click to open it..



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6 If you are given the option to select settings, click on **“Professional Mode.”** A screen with the options at right will appear.

## TIP: Selecting scan settings

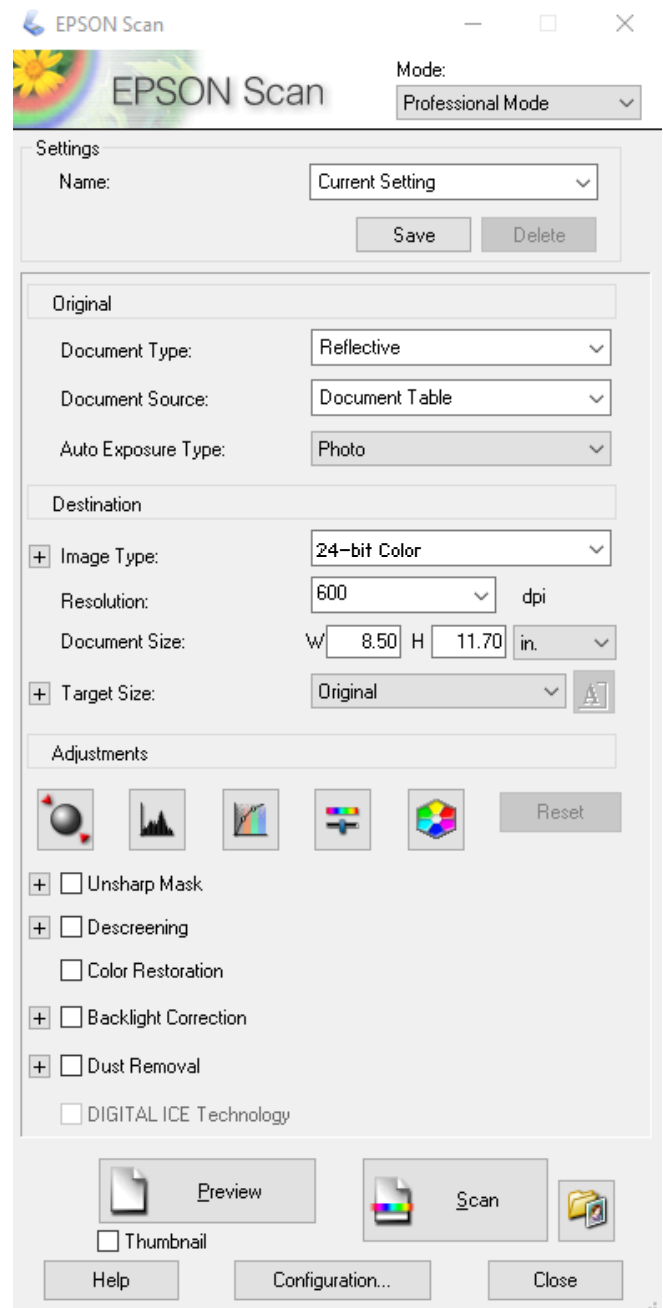
The file formats and resolution you choose depends on your goals for your archive and your storage capacity. Here are examples of what we use at the library for preservation-quality files:

Documents: PDF format, 300dpi

Photos (8x10 or larger): TIF format, 300 dpi, 24-bit color

Photos (smaller than 8x10): TIF format, 600 dpi

PDF and TIF are lossless formats, meaning they won't lose information from compression when saving and sharing. However, JPEG or PNG are smaller file sizes, thus easier to store and share.



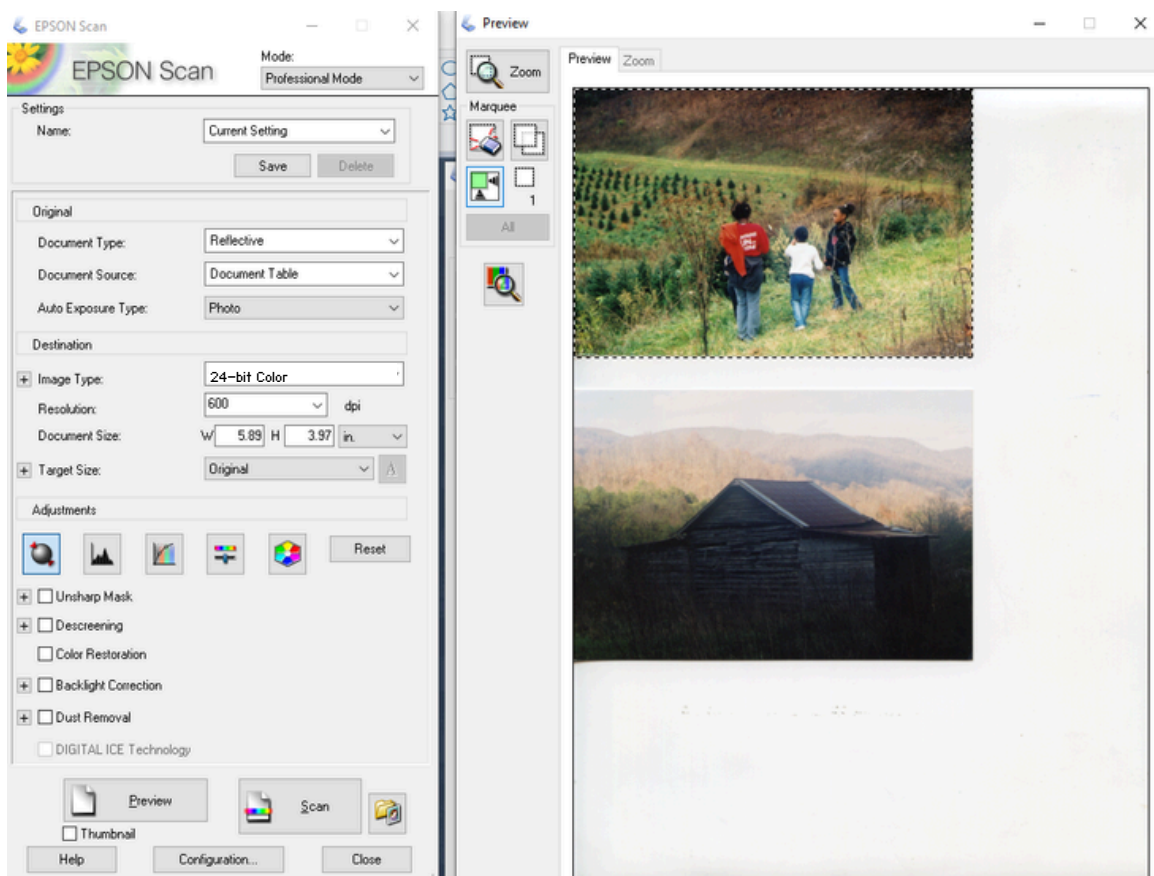
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7 Once you have your settings in place, **click “Preview”** at the bottom of that window. This will show you what’s on the scanner glass so you can make sure your photos or documents are laying straight.

After the images appear in the preview window, use your cursor to **select the area to scan**, then **click “Scan.”**

*(If you are scanning multiple photos, you will be able to select one image, scan it, save it, and then do the same for the second one.)*



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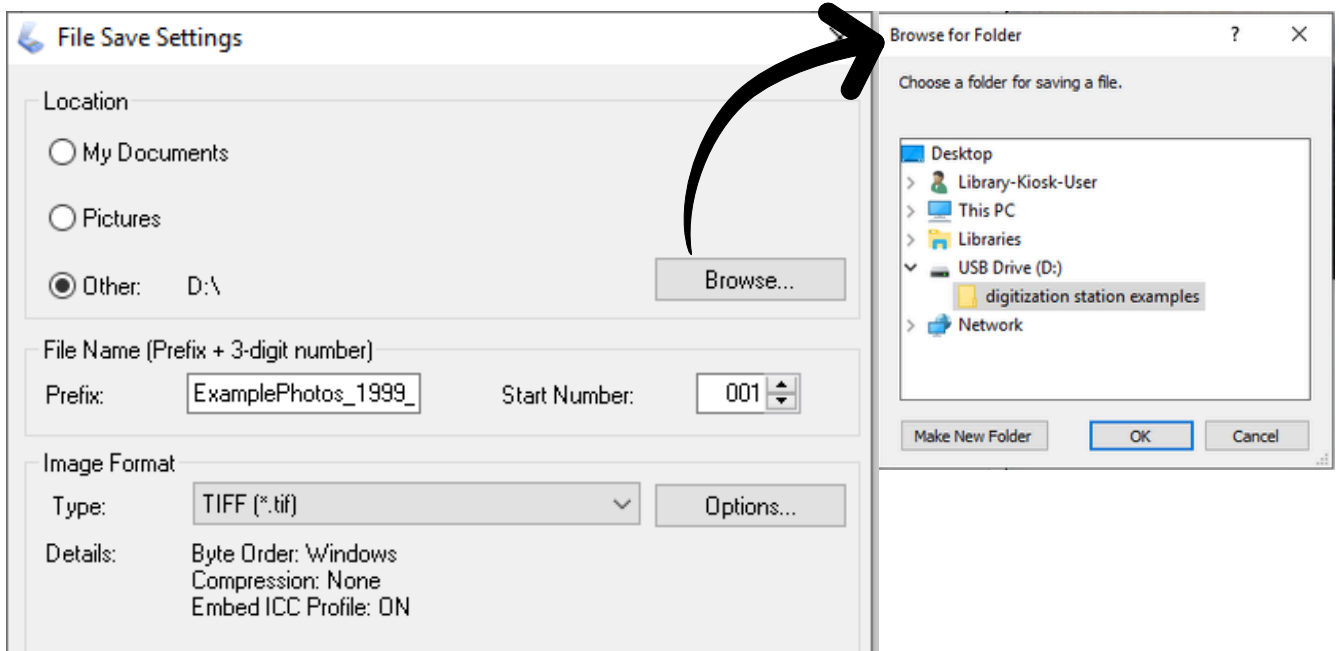
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7 A window will pop up to ask you about your **File Save Settings**. Make sure that you are saving your scans to YOUR device, not the public computer.

Next, add a prefix that will apply to the **file names** for all the images scanned in this session. Ideally, your file names should be:

- Meaningful & descriptive, even outside of the context of folder organization. (For instance, instead of grandma.tif, consider something like SmithCatherine\_1940s.tif)
- Consistent
- Short & to the point

Avoid special characters & spaces. Use hyphens or underscores, or case (capital vs. lowercase letters) instead.



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**7 Check your file.** Open the folder for your USB device and make sure it opens properly.

**8 Done--and repeat!** Once you are finished scanning all your photos, right click your USB device and select EJECT to safely remove the device. Exit the Epson software. Remove your photos and turn off the scanner

Don't  
forget!

**Remember to remove your photos or documents from the scanner, and take these and any other personal belongings with you, such as notes.**

## FAQ & Tips

### Time

Plan for a few minutes of scan time for large files. Higher resolution files will take longer to scan and save onto storage devices.

### Storage

The photos we used as examples here were size photo at 600 dpi, 48-bit color, saved in TIF format. This resulted in a size of 48.5 MB. Be sure to arrive prepared with a flash drive or other storage solution that is large enough to accommodate your digital files.

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## Appendix: Digital Preservation

### **Digitization is only the first step!**

To make sure that your files are preserved long-term, take these steps:

#### **Organize your photos**

- Give individual photos descriptive file names.
- Edit metadata: tag photos with names of people and descriptive subjects.
- Create a directory/folder structure on your computer to put the images.
- Write a brief description of the directory structure and the photos.

#### **Make copies and store them in different places**

- Make at least two copies of your selected photos—more copies are better. Remember: **LOCKSS (Lots Of Copies Keeps Stuff Safe!)**
- One copy can stay on your computer or laptop; put other copies on separate media such as DVDs, CDs, portable hard drives, thumb drives or Internet storage.
- Store copies in different locations that are as physically far apart as practical. If disaster strikes one location, your photographs in the other place should be safe.
- Put a copy of the photo inventory with your important papers in a secure location.
- Check your photos at least once a year to make sure you can read them.
- Create new media copies every five years or when necessary to avoid data loss.

Source: <https://digitalpreservation.gov/>

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## Acknowledgments & Further Information

This document was prepared July 2022 by the staff of Buncombe County Special Collections, Pack Memorial Library, Asheville, North Carolina.

These instructions are largely derived from those created by the DIY Memory Lab at the Los Angeles Public Library, a project done in association with Washington, D.C. Public Library and funded by a grant from the Institute of Museum and Library Services.

*Everyone is an archivist.*

Drawing inspiration from the Memory Lab project, Buncombe County Special Collections strives to empower members of our community to preserve objects of special personal and cultural significance, by providing the tools and education for free do-it-yourself digitization of photos and sound recording.

We occasionally offer workshops on various personal archiving topics, and we hope to expand this station to make digitization of other formats possible in the future. Want to help? Got equipment or expertise?

Reach out to us as **[packnc@buncombecounty.org](mailto:packnc@buncombecounty.org)**

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