

# Operation Granny Files



## Family Document Sorting Guide

*Because not every grocery list from 1973 needs to be saved for posterity.*







### Instructions:












As you begin sorting through the biscuit tin, trunk, or suspiciously heavy drawer, you'll encounter a mix of treasures and trash (and the occasional oddity that falls somewhere in between). Use the guide below to make fast, reasonable decisions—then revisit anything you're unsure about later.

You'll sort each item into one of four categories:

- ✓ **Keep** – Preserve in both physical and digital form
-  **Scan** – Digitize for backup, then decide on physical storage
- ❓ **Ask** – Worth keeping *if* someone can help identify it
-  **Toss** – It's OK. You're not dishonoring the ancestors. Probably.

### Suggested Document Types

Document Type	Keep	Scan	Ask	Toss	Notes
Birth, Marriage, Death Records	✓				Vital records—always preserve.
Military Records (Draft cards, service docs, etc.)	✓				Often useful for timeline building.
Naturalization / Immigration Papers	✓				Essential for tracing international origins.
School Certificates / Diplomas	✓				Great context for life stories.
Handwritten Letters	✓		❓		Look for emotional or historical significance.
Postcards	❓		✓		Especially if dated or signed.

Document Type	Keep	Scan	Ask	Toss	Notes
Funeral Programs / Obituaries	✓				Contain valuable biographical info.
Newspaper Clippings	?		✓		Toss only if undated or unrelated.
Receipts / Bills					Exceptions: major purchases, property, or land taxes.
Greeting Cards	?		✓		Keep only with meaningful personal notes.
Family Recipes (Handwritten)	✓				Cultural gold. Scan and share widely!
Journals / Diaries	✓				Handle with care—emotional value high.
Legal Documents (Deeds, Wills)	✓				May contain property or inheritance details.
Church Records	✓				Often fill gaps in early vital records.
Random Doodles / Notes	?		✓		Depends: Are they from Grandpa or a 3-year-old?

### Tips for Tough Calls:

- **Emotional gut check:** If it moves you, keep it (at least for now).
- **Ask around:** A second opinion can save a meaningful scrap from the trash.
- **Scan first, decide later:** When in doubt, digitize before decluttering.
- **Create an “Unsolved Mysteries” folder:** Store anything you can’t identify yet.