

Operation Granny Files

File Naming Quick Reference

Because “IMG_2039.jpg” is not a family history strategy.

Why File Naming Matters

Naming your files well means you’ll actually be able to find them again—next week, next year, or when your great-grandchild takes over the archive. This cheat sheet gives you a simple structure that works across all file types.

The Simple System (Use as many parts as you know)

[FamilyLine]_[Generation#]_[Relation]_[NameOrEvent]_[Year]_[Place].[ext]

Examples:

- Maxfield_03_GreatGrandpa_LeroyBaptism_1912_CastleDaleUT.jpg
- Espinoza_04_TiaCarmen_Wedding_1965_ElPasoTX.tif
- Chen_02_Dad_SchoolReportCard_1944_SanFranciscoCA.pdf

Part	Meaning	Example
FamilyLine	Main surname branch	Maxfield, Espinoza
Generation#	Numbered from the present (you = 01)	03 = great-grandparent
Relation	How this person relates to you	Mom, Grandpa, AuntJean
NameOrEvent	Full name or short descriptor of event/item	LeroyBaptism, CarmenWedding
Year	Year of event or document	1912, 1965
Place	Town/County/State/Region—whatever’s most specific & known	CastleDaleUT, ElPasoTX
.ext	File extension (.jpg, .pdf, etc.)	.jpg, .png, .tif

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Field Tool: Mission 3: The Biscuit Tin Dossier | Operationgrannyfiles.substack.com

Preserving the gold. Tossing the mold.

Tips for Success

- Use **underscores** instead of spaces
- Stick to **consistent formats** (e.g., always 4-digit years)
- For **unknowns**, leave blank or use UNK (e.g.,
Espinoza_02_Abuelo_UNKMarriage_UNK_Tijuana.jpg)
- Create folders for each **FamilyLine** if you have multiple branches