

## YOUR FAMILY FILMS ARE IMPORTANT, AND NOT JUST TO YOU

Home movies are likely to have their greatest meaning for immediate family members. Even if no one in the family currently takes an interest in these personal documents, a future child or family member may find them of enormous significance. You may be surprised to learn that your home movies can also hold great interest for a much wider public, including local historians, international scholars, and artists.



## TWO WORDS: COOL AND DRY

If you store your films in your home, they will generally be happiest where you are happiest, not stashed in a hot, dry attic where the acetate film will tend to dry out and shrink, and not relegated to a garage or basement prone to dampness and cold, where mold will develop and high humidity may speed deterioration.

House your films and tapes in containers so that dust and other environmental substances do not settle on them. Store films in containers that allow them to “breathe” and they will remain viable for many years.

Store videotapes end on end, not flat, and keep them away from electromagnetic devices like machinery or televisions.

## PROJECTING AND PLAYING: HANDLE WITH CARE

If you have a projector along with your films, it may not be difficult to get it working, especially if you still have a user’s manual. However, it is very possible to damage home movies by projecting them on a dirty or misaligned projector, or by failing to thread the machine properly - and if a film already has any



damage or weak splices, or if it has shrunk, further damage is assured. Small hand-cranked film viewers/

editors can be somewhat gentler on film elements if clean and used properly; however, care must be taken in order to avoid scratching or mangling your films whenever they are in contact with moving parts.

Keep your old video decks well maintained, and eject tapes only at the beginning or end of the cassette, never in the middle.

## DOCUMENTATION

Label cans and boxes and include some documentation along with your home movies for the benefit of those who come later. Go beyond mere names and events to include facts that might seem obvious to your immediate family: the name of the town, the street address, the identity of the film maker. Make an audio recording about the films, recorded

during an actual screening of the materials, with comments offered “on the fly” in reaction to the images. Tell the future viewer facts and stories about the individuals in the films and anecdotes about people and places, traditions, rituals and unique events.

## TRANSFERS

For preservation purposes, create an uncompressed digital transfer of your movies. Make access copies on a format you find easy to use now, so that you do not damage your originals through repeated projection or playing on old equipment. Access copies let you share the footage with your family and friends while keeping your originals safe at home.

Research the different ways of making digital video copies of your films and ask your transfer company about their technology. As a general rule: you get what you pay for.

Don’t get stuck with obsolete video formats, both tape and files. Digital is not forever. Pay attention to changes in technology, and make sure that you can play your videos today and next year.

After you have film transfers made, Save the originals! The original photographic material will always provide the “truest” visual record of events.



## DONATION

If you have made copies of your home movies and do not want to care for them any longer, consider donating them to an archive so that they can become part of your community's historical record. Contact a local archive or the Center for Home Movies for some recommended repositories for your films and tapes.

**CHM** CENTER FOR HOME MOVIES

## THE CENTER FOR HOME MOVIES

Our mission is to transform the way people think about home movies by providing the means to discover, celebrate, and preserve them as cultural heritage.

[www.centerforhomemovies.org](http://www.centerforhomemovies.org)

## HOME MOVIE DAY

Home Movie Day is a celebration of amateur films and filmmaking held annually at many local venues worldwide. Home Movie Day events provide the opportunity for individuals and families to see and share their own home movies with an audience of their community, and to see their neighbors' in turn. It's a chance to discover why to care about these films and to learn how best to care for them.

[www.homemovieday.com](http://www.homemovieday.com)



# THE HOME MOVIE DAY



# GUIDE TO SAVING YOUR HOME MOVIES

Design: Asia Harman  
Photos: Sukdith "Sukie" Punjasthitkul