

## Watch Geoff Live: Digital Images

By Geoff Rasmussen

In the past couple of months I've taken another 200 pictures or so with my digital camera. It's time to import them to my computer, get them organized and searchable, and publish them to the cloud so the rest of the family can see what we've been up to. With the hope that others might benefit by watching the process, I've waited until this webinar to do it all.

Because the "Watch Geoff Live" webinars are live and unscripted, it prevents me from preparing a complete syllabus with step-by-step instructions for everything that is covered. I simply do not know all of the angles we will cover during the presentation. However, since the process of importing, organizing, and publishing my camera's digital images is mostly the same every time, I can provide you with some guidance.

The few pages that follow are excerpts from my *Digital Imaging Essentials* book...They cover:

- the two steps to transferring a photograph from your digital camera to your computer (pages 49-52)
- introduction to organizing your digital files on your hard drive (pages 75-84)

These syllabus pages do not cover the keyword tags, facial recognition, and a few other things we'll go over in the webinar. But [here's the link](#) where you can have access to everything! 😊

**Step #3 – Copy digital images to your computer.**

The Flip-Pal mobile scanner stores scans on the SD memory card the same way your digital camera does. When you are ready to use the digital images, transfer them to your computer using a card reader.

- To remove the SD card from the scanner, push it in gently. It will then spring out slightly, allowing you to slide it out. Note: it is recommended that you power off the scanner before removing the SD card.

**Two Steps to Transferring a Photograph from your Digital Camera to Your Computer**

1. Connect your camera or card reader to your computer.
2. Import pictures to your hard drive.

**Step #1 – Connect your camera or card reader to your computer**

Once you have snapped a bunch of pictures with your digital camera, to move them from your camera to your computer is a matter of connecting the two together. Your camera probably came with a USB cable. Connect one end into the camera and the other into an open USB port on your computer and turn your camera on.



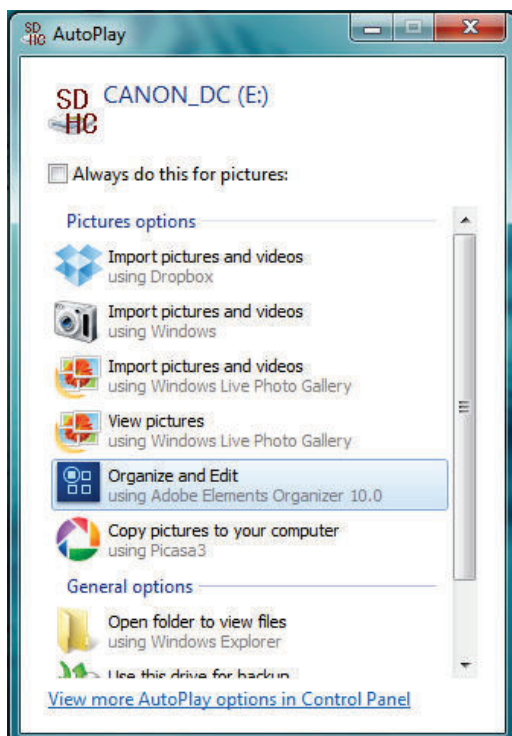
The problem with this method is that I often forget to turn my camera back off when I am done importing which completely drains the battery. The solution is to use a USB card reader like the one shown below. The reader plugs into the USB port of your computer, and then the SD card plugs into it.



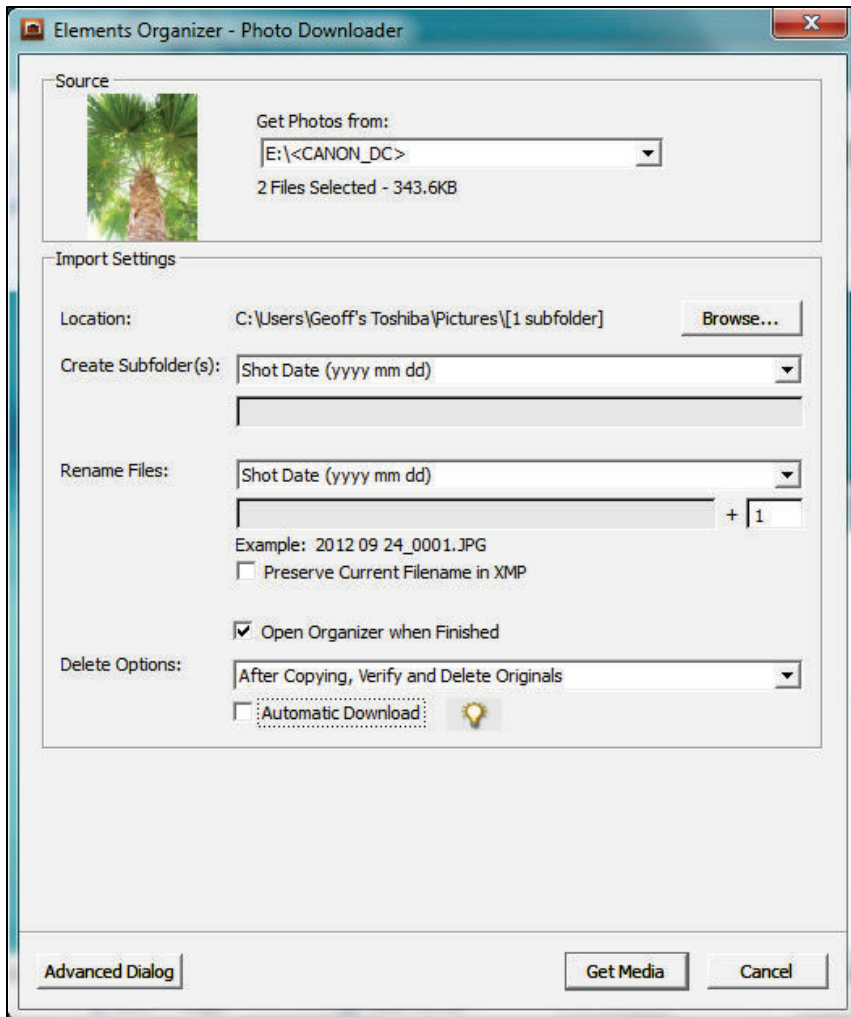
Or, computers, especially laptops, now come with the card reader built in so you may not need a cable or an external card reader.

## Step #2 – Import pictures to your hard drive

Once connected, your computer may display the Windows Auto Play dialog. If you are using something other than Photoshop Elements, select the “Copy pictures to a folder on my computer” option and follow the prompts. You will need to manually browse to the location where you want to save the pictures. If you are using Photoshop Elements, click the Organize and Edit button.

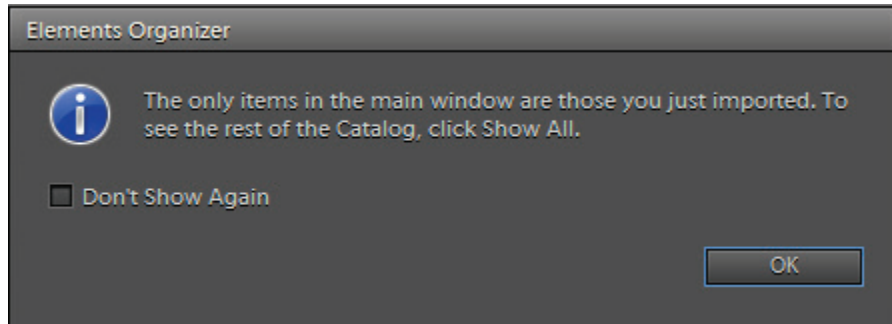


If the Windows Auto Play dialog does not appear, open Photoshop Elements and go to File > Get Photos and Videos > From Camera or Card Reader.



On the Photo Downloader dialog, your camera should be selected in the “Get Photos from:” section. Next, make sure that the “Location” is set to where you want to save the pictures. Next, within that folder, because the “Create Subfolder” choice shows the syntax of yyyy mm dd, it will automatically create folders based on the date that the pictures were taken. Finally, I prefer that the pictures are renamed to their shot date by choosing that option in the “Rename Files” section. Notice the example of “2012 09 24\_0001.JPG” – this is how the file name will be saved when imported.

The last dialog you will see will be:



Your pictures have now been imported and are ready for your keyword tags (which you will learn about in the Organization chapter).

# Getting Organized

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When I worked for a genealogy research company in Salt Lake City we had a goal to be able to file and retrieve any document in under a minute. Time was money. I have carried this goal into my personal digital filing system. If your digital collections number into the hundreds or even thousands, and you can locate any picture in under a minute, you know that you have a good digital filing system.

The organizational system I will describe below enables you to locate your digital pictures chronologically, geographically, by subject, by family, or even by face using facial recognition technology. Using these techniques you should be able to quickly locate what you are looking for.

After creating a digital image, either with your scanner or your digital camera, you have the choice of where to store that image. It can be stored on your hard drive, on a USB drive, a DVD drive, your camera's SD card, in a Dropbox folder, or even on a web server (the cloud). My recommendation is to use a combination, but always start in the same place – your hard drive. Keep in mind that any of these media can fail at any time, so make sure that you have a good backup strategy in place.





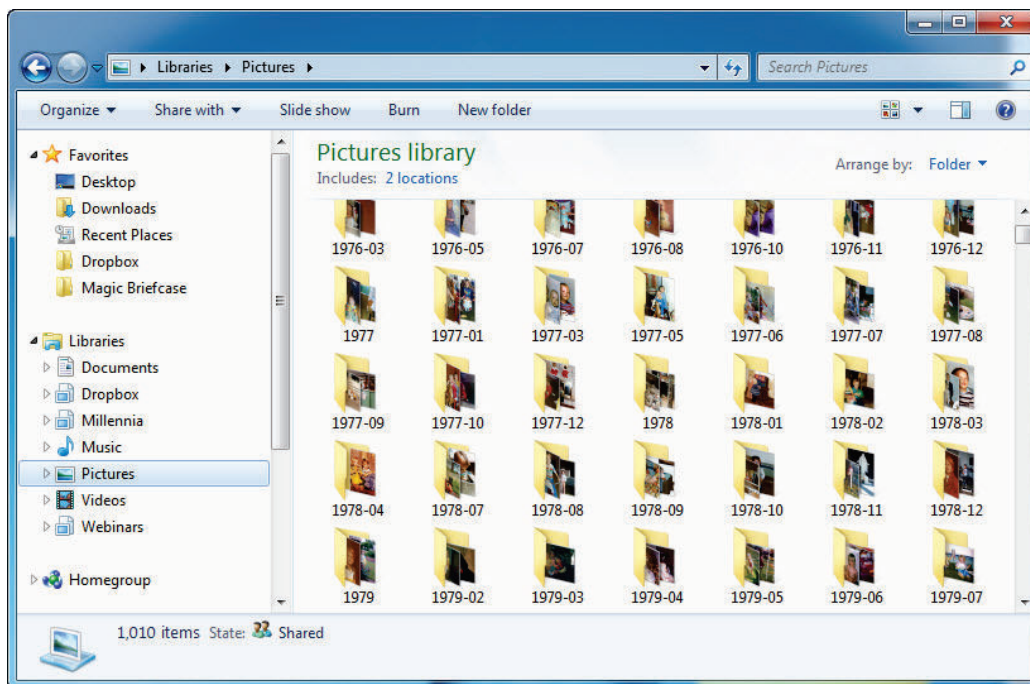
I store my digital images in two different locations on my hard drive.

The *My Pictures* folder – for my personal photographs and scanned images

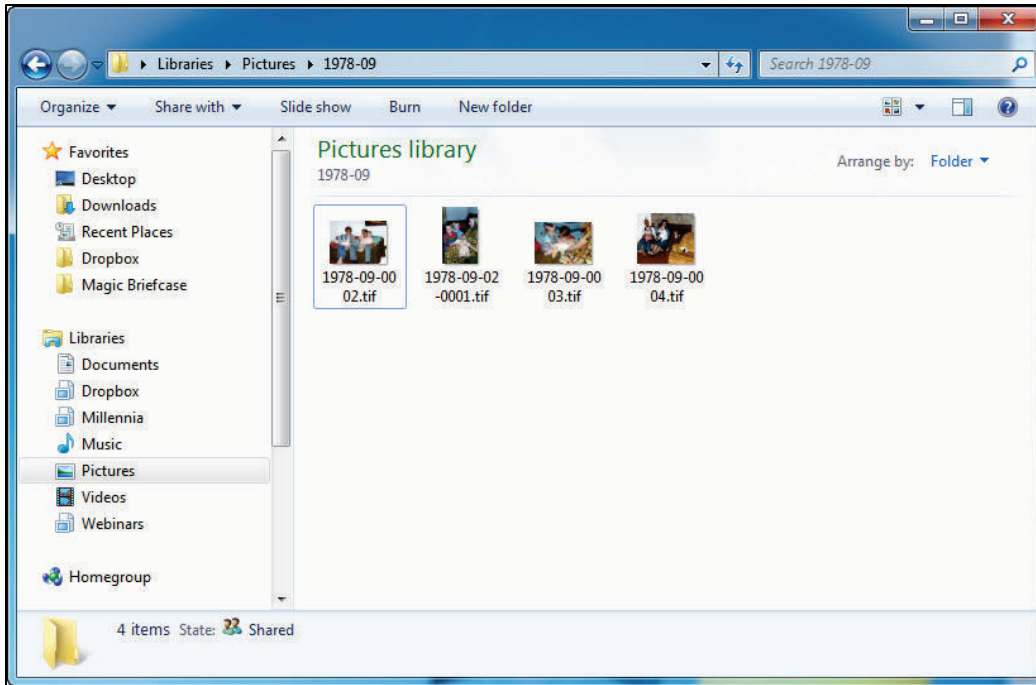
C:\Genealogy Photos Pictures – for my digital genealogy documents

### My Personal Photographs and Scanned Images

The *My Pictures* folder is where Windows stores your personal pictures by default. When importing pictures from your digital camera, almost always it directs you to save the pictures in the My Pictures folder. Within this folder it is a good idea to create subfolders to help you more easily manage your pictures. If all 17,861 of my personal digital images were in the same folder it would be more difficult to locate what I am searching for. Here's a snapshot of what the folder system looks like. Notice that each folder begins with the four digit year, followed by a hyphen, followed by the two digit month. With this syntax, the folders can easily be sorted by year.



Inside the 1978-09 folder it looks like this:

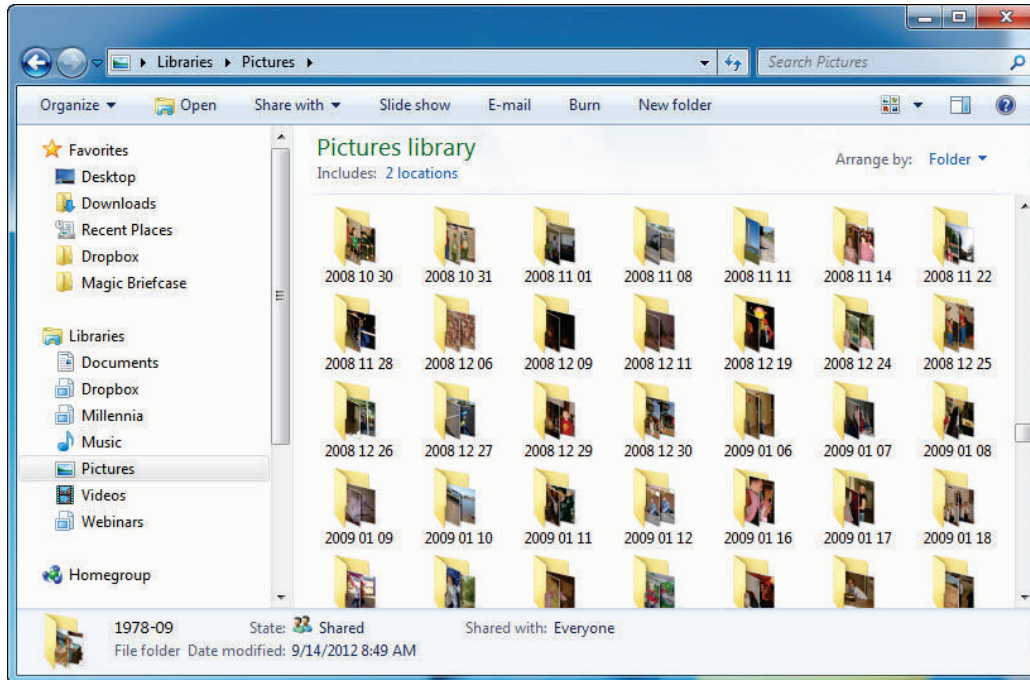


The file name of each picture in this folder uses this syntax: yyyy-mm-dd-#### followed by the picture's file extension (.tif, .jpg, etc.). Because of how I have named these files, it is not likely that I will ever have a duplicate of the file name on my hard drive.

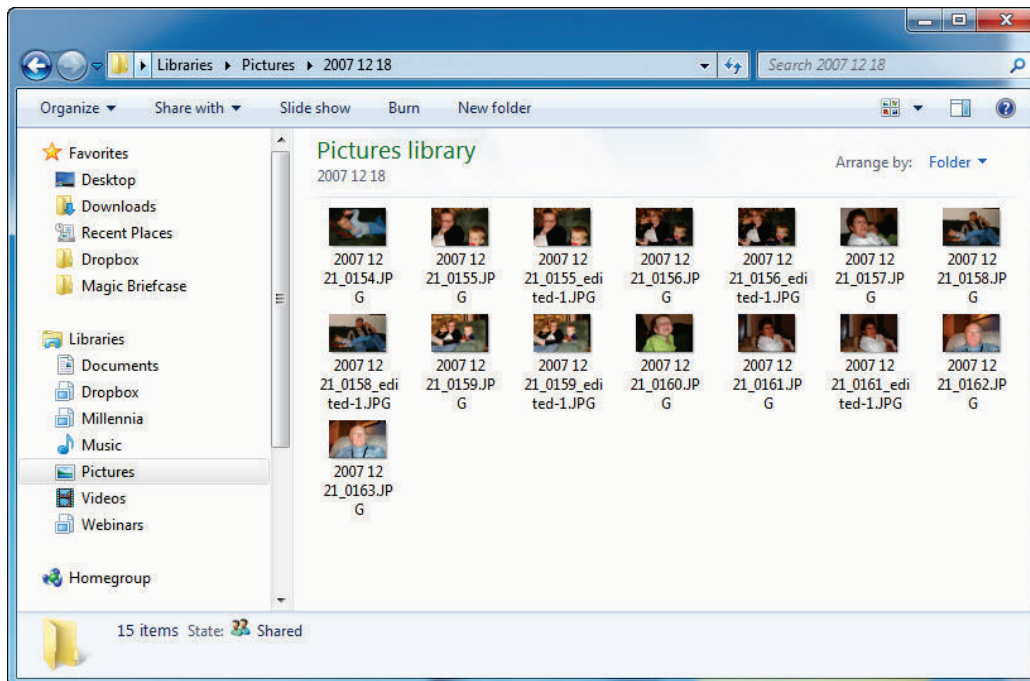
I manually created these folders and files based on the approximate dates of the pictures.



Now that I use a digital camera, when the pictures are imported to my hard drive, the software creates the folder and file syntax (which I can manipulate if desired). Here's what the folders look like:



And here's what the files inside one of these folders look like:



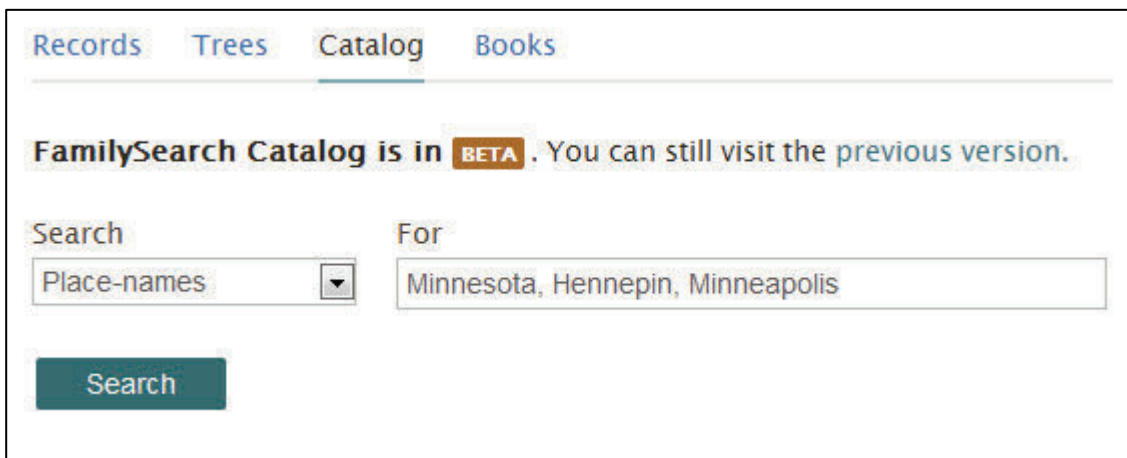
The files use the syntax of yyyy mm dd\_#### followed by the picture's file extension. I think we take way more pictures today than we did before digital cameras.

To summarize – for my personal photographs and scanned images, I use the My Pictures folder with subfolders.

### My Digital Genealogy Documents

One of my favorite repositories of genealogical information is the Family History Library in Salt Lake City. With their more than 2.4 million rolls of microfilm, over 1 million microfiche, and 3 billion pages of family history records, we are sure to find something about our ancestors. Combing through all these records without a catalog would make it very difficult to locate your records. Their catalog, now known as the FamilySearch Catalog, lets you search for record collections in a number of ways, but more often than not we search for records in one of two ways.

First we locate records geographically. To see what their collections hold for Minneapolis, Minnesota, we would use the “Place-names” category and type in *Minneapolis*. The catalog reformats the location to display its geographic hierarchy in reverse order, showing us that Minneapolis is a sub-location of Hennepin (the county in this case), which is a sub-location of Minnesota (its state). Clicking on the Search button would present us with the register of their holdings for Minneapolis.



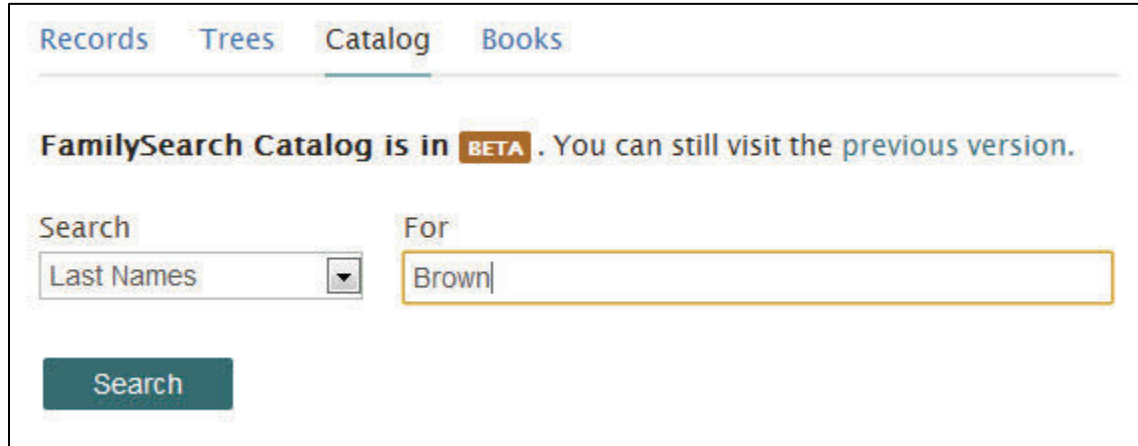
Records Trees **Catalog** Books

FamilySearch Catalog is in **BETA**. You can still visit the [previous version](#).

Search For

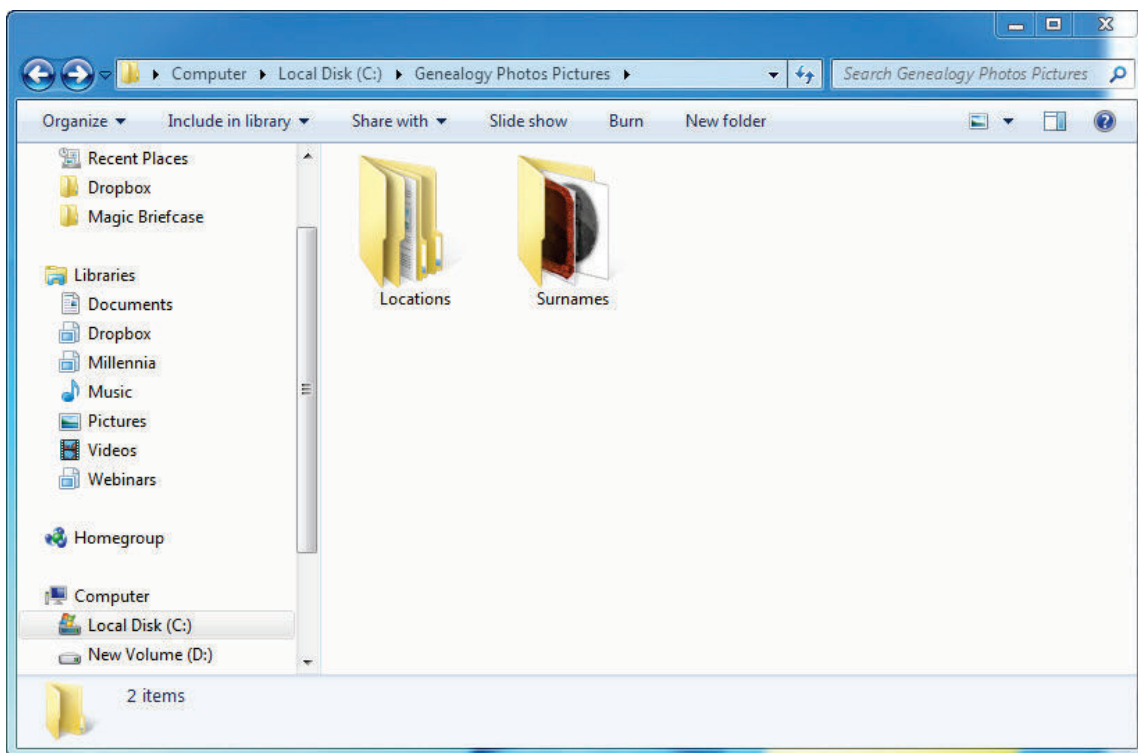
Place-names

Second we locate records by surname. To see what their book collections hold for the surname of Brown we would use the “Last Names” category and type in *Brown*. Clicking on the Search button would present us with the register of their holdings for this surname.

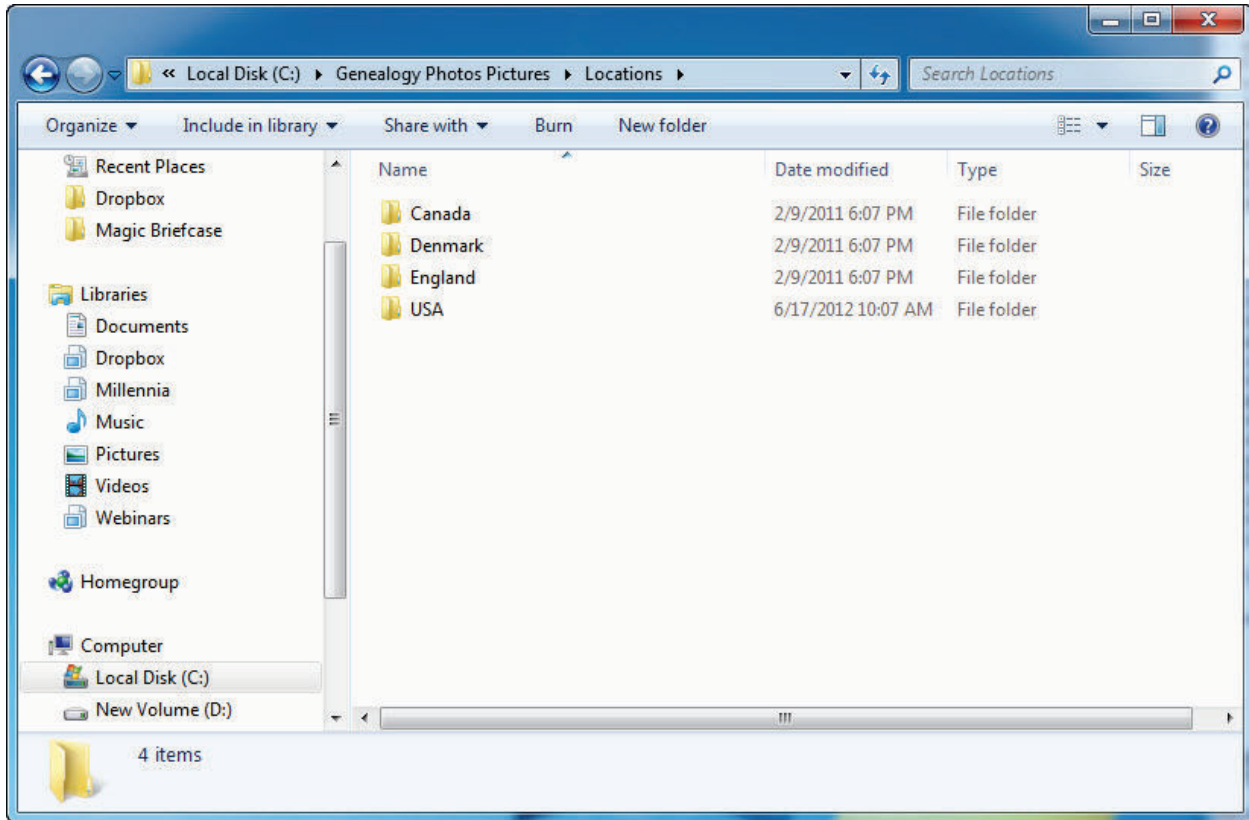


The screenshot shows the FamilySearch Catalog search page. At the top, there are navigation tabs for "Records", "Trees", "Catalog", and "Books". Below these, a message states "FamilySearch Catalog is in BETA . You can still visit the previous version." The search interface includes a "Search" dropdown menu set to "Last Names" and a "For" text input field containing the name "Brown". A green "Search" button is located below the input fields.

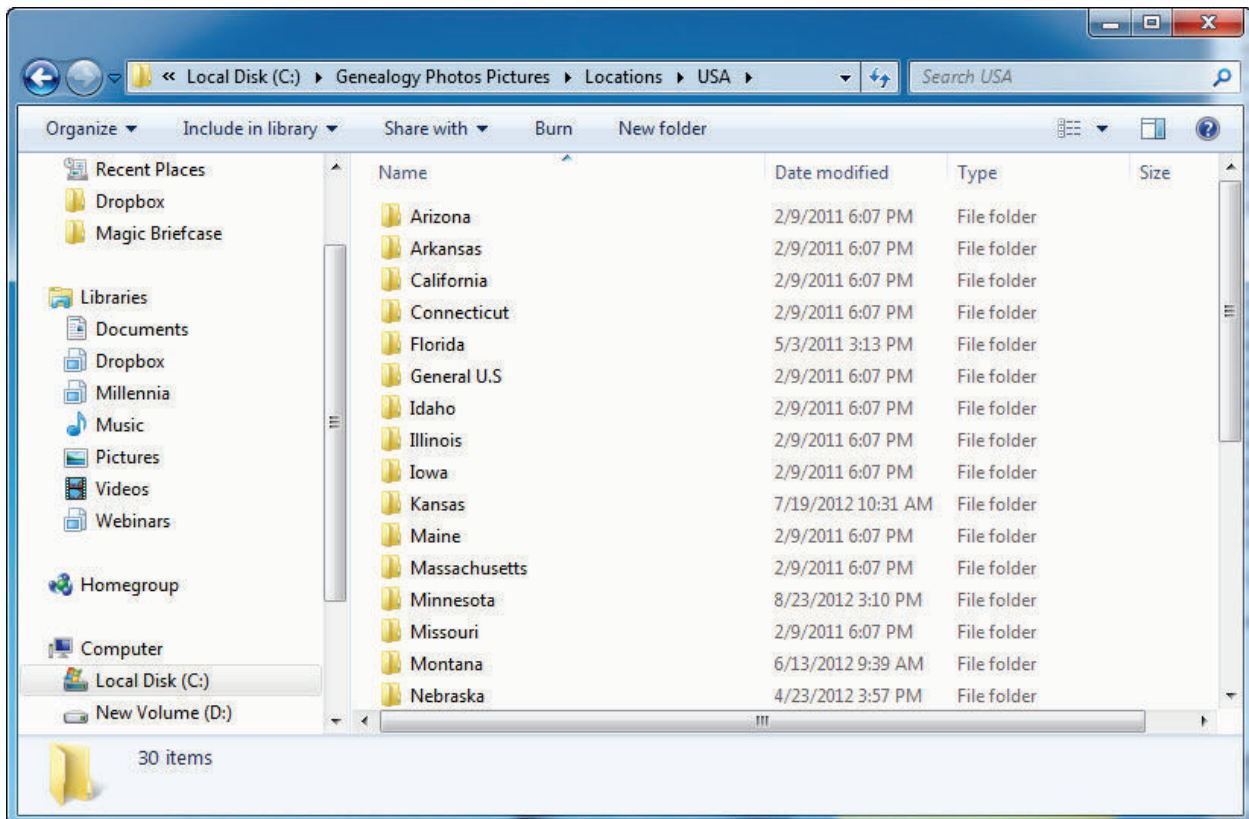
What does this have to do with digital images you say? I have set up my digital genealogy filing system to match the same organizational structure. Within my C:\Genealogy Photos Pictures folder, I have two sub-folders: Locations and Surnames.



Within the Locations folder, I have created sub-folders for the countries for which I have digital images.

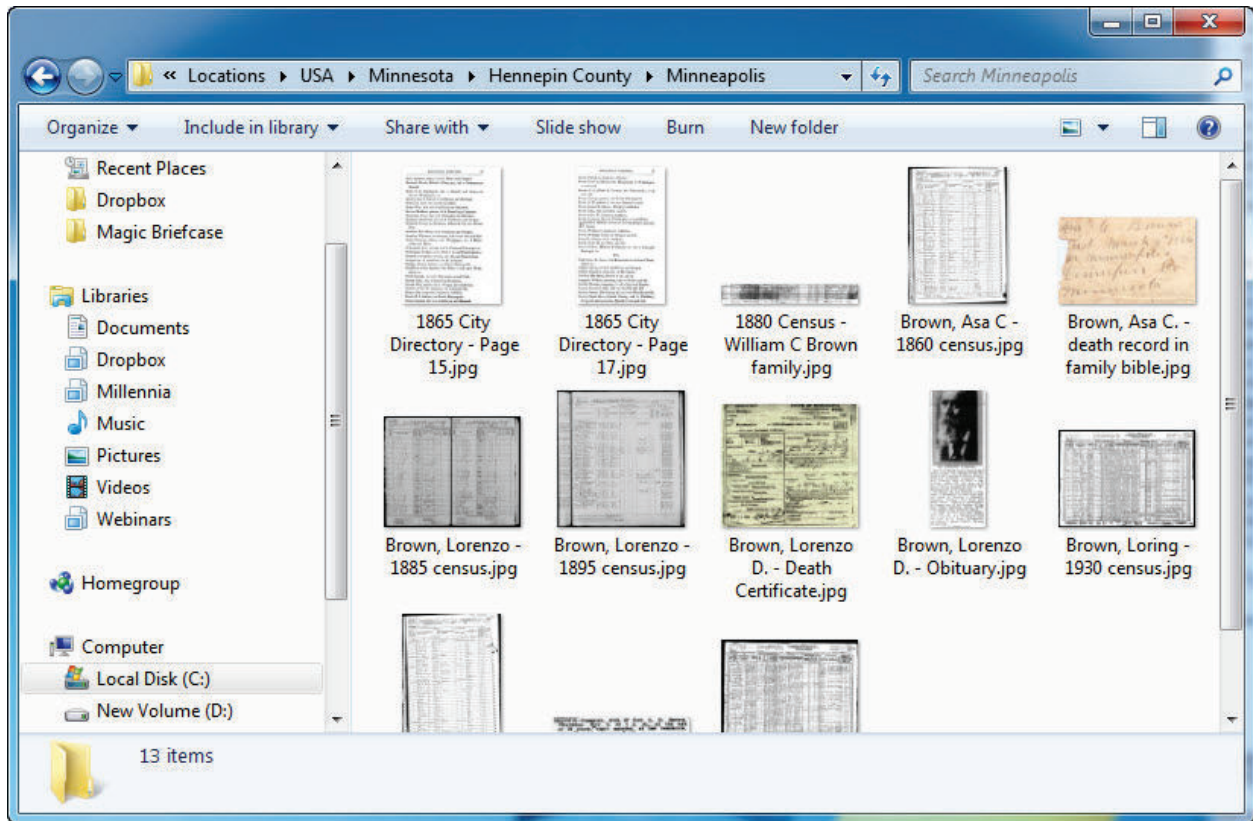


Within the countries, I have created sub-folders for each lower level of jurisdiction.





All the way down to the city/town/township level.



In most cases, if I were to try to locate these same documents in the FamilySearch catalog, they would be cataloged using the same directory structure as my digital filing system.

Within my Surnames folder, I store photographs, pdfs of books relating to a surname, research reports I have written about that surname and more. To protect the privacy of my living relatives I have not included an image here, but within this folder, you can create as many sub-folders as you want. Again, in most cases, if I were to try to locate these same types of documents in the FamilySearch catalog, they would be cataloged using the same directory structure as my digital filing system.

### Another Golden Rule

Once your digital files are stored on your hard drive:

- Do not move them to another location.
- Do not rename them.

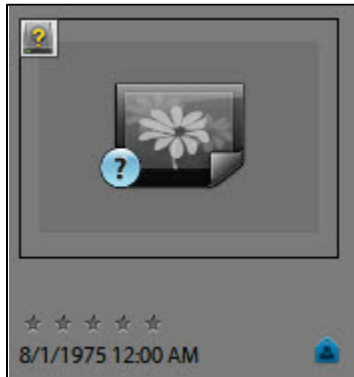


At this point, you will probably link many of these digital images to your genealogy management software (like Legacy Family Tree! or others...). When you do, that software does not make another copy of the image to store it into its database. Doing so would not only duplicate the images, but because of the increased file size to its database, the database would become more and more unmanageable and more difficult to share with others. The genealogy software stores the *link* to the picture. It is able to create a small thumbnail of the picture to display to you, but keep in mind that it only stores the name and location of the digital file. If you change the file's name or move it to another folder or drive, the next time you open your genealogy software to view that picture, you will get some kind of "broken link" or "question mark" graphic. Good genealogy software provides the ability to relocate the picture, which works well if you have only moved the picture, but does not work well if you have either deleted or renamed the picture. It simply does not know what happened to it.



The same is true with your photo management software. For example, I somehow lost one of my early digital images. I either renamed it, removed it, but most likely it just flew away, because I would never claim fault for it...Let's just pretend that it was my fault.

Photoshop Elements no longer knows where the picture is so it displays the following graphic instead.



Photoshop Elements does have a handy tool to try to reconnect these types of pictures (go to File > Reconnect > Missing File) but it is easier in the long run to follow these two golden rules. In my experience, Picasa, on the other hand, is able to locate pictures that have been renamed. However, if you move them to another location, make sure that Picasa is configured to also watch the other location for new files (go to Tools > Folder Manager for these settings).

### Photo Organizing Software

Now that you have a little guidance with your folder and file system, are you able to use it alone to quickly locate anything in under a minute? Probably not. But since all of your photographs have now been digitized and saved on your hard drive, you have made a giant step in this direction. This is where a good photo management program comes in. Both Photoshop Elements and Picasa excel in organizing your digital media. Lifestory's *Heritage Collector Suite* software also deserves a look as it is organizational software developed by genealogists for genealogists, although it lacks photo editing tools.

### Photoshop Elements

The first time you run Photoshop Elements it will ask you if you want it to scan your computer for any media. Click Yes and it will begin to happily crawl your hard drives for any media files. You are also given the choice as to which folders and drives to scan. Since I use the photo organizer software to manage only my personal media, I do not need it to scan my c:\Genealogy Photos Pictures folder. After making your selections, Elements will begin scanning. When it is complete, your *Catalog* will contain thumbnails of your media. The catalog contains information about each photo and media file, but it does not contain