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Protect Special Papers by Binding Them into a Book

By Marcus Harbert

You have them hanging on the refrigerator, stored in boxes, or stuck between the thick pages of a big book until you have the time figure out what to do with them. These are the crayola drawings your children or grandchildren have made; the certificates and awards they have earned in school and even the programs from their school plays that you have saved to remember those special events. They are also important documents such as Marriage & Death certificates, diplomas, and career awards. You can protect these special papers and important documents from deterioration by binding them into a book.

People have been binding important documents and special papers into books for centuries. The practice of bookbinding even dates back to ancient times, when the detailed accounts of certain events were inscribed on thin stone tablets and then encased using different materials such as leather, ropes, and wooden pegs inside thicker tablets of stone to protect this information from being lost due to damaging toxins in the air, and dirt. These early `bindings' were the first books created.

Bookbinding occurs through the use of various methods to secure or bind together loose pages or sections of a book or booklet using stitching, staples, wire, plastic, tape, or glue. You can bind your special papers and important documents into a book using these techniques yourself or by having a professional binding service do the job for you. You can find binding services through your local print shop, your local phone directory, and online. The costs of having a professional do the binding for you will be influenced by your choice of materials used in the binding process, but these costs can be a worthwhile investment in the time and work it saves you from having to do on your own.

You will be pleased to find that there are many materials available to you to choose from for your bookbinding project. Today we have materials such as: leather, strong-bond paper, and vinyl, which are a light-weight, yet durable alternative to the heavy-weight, stone tablets of ancient times. These materials are used every day to produce the copy-back and hard-cover books that we buy to read.

If you prefer to bind your special papers and important documents into a book yourself, it is no longer required that you perform the labor-intensive task of stapling, taping, or gluing individual pages together in order to bind them into a book. Today, you can purchase a `binding machine' that takes the work out of bookbinding for you. These machines are capable of using different materials to bind your

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pages together and they are a good investment. This is especially true for those who don't want to, or who don't have the luxury of a lot of time to put towards protecting special documents by binding them into a book.

If your budget doesn't allow for the purchase of a binding machine or to have your pages bound by a professional, consider this alternative: purchase 3–ring binders with protective sleeves already in them, or use a photo album you already have and personalize your book by using stickers, decorated paper cut into different shapes, markers, crayons, and whatever else you would like. Place your important documents and special papers in the protective sleeves and then don't forget to use labels to document such important information as what, where, when, and who. Binding special papers and documents into a book, not only protects them from spills, fingerprints, and dirt; it also ensures their long–term preservation as well.

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crafts and trades of yesterday.

The Basics of Bookbinding

By Marcus Harbert

Bookbinding can be traced back to ancient times when stone tablets were used to record important events. Information was transcribed onto these tablets and then placed between other tablets to protect the vital information from being lost due to damage from particles in the air, or dust. These tablets were then bound together using various materials that also made it possible to transport these tablets from one area to another much easier. These same principles are behind today's bookbinding, whether they are employed for publishing paperback and hardcover books for sale to consumers, to protect important legal and personal documents, or used to preserve special photographs and papers in a scrapbook keepsake memory book.

Bookbinding is a term used to describe the various methods of securing or `binding' together of loose pages into a book. The binding can be accomplished by using stitching, staples, wire, plastic, tape, or glue. Bookbinding can be a labor–intensive project for the do–it–yourselfer, depending upon the methods chosen and the number of loose pages to be bound. However, there are many options available to the `crafty' and the not–so–crafty person, that can make bookbinding a worthwhile and enjoyable experience. If you are good at working with your hands, you might enjoy punching holes in your pages and then stitching them together into a book by using materials such as, leather, rope, and colored yarns. If you're less handy when it comes to craft –making but still want to turn your loose pages into a book yourself: consider purchasing 3–ring binders and protective sleeves that are pre–punched to hold the pages you want to preserve. You can then decorate these binders using

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stickers, cut-outs, pictures, buttons, labels, etc. to make it truly your own creation.

If you would like to use different materials for your bookbinding without all of the hard work, you can opt to purchase a binding machine that will do most of the work for you. A binding machine is a good investment, especially if you plan to create several books at home. You can always choose to have your pages bound into a book by professionals too. Inquire at your local print shop as to their pricing for binding services. Professional bookbinding services can also be found online. The internet contains a wealth of information in the form of tips and ideas for bookbinding, discount suppliers of binding machines, and binding materials for the do-it-yourselfer and referrals to professional binding services. Keep in mind that the costs of bookbinding whether you do-it-yourself, or hire it out, will be determined not only by the methods you choose for your bookbinding, but also by the types of materials you choose in binding your book.

You might be asking yourself why anyone would go to the trouble of binding loose pages into a book themselves or by paying someone else to do it for them. The answer is quite simple; bookbinding is an excellent way to protect legal and personal documents, as well as preserve special photographs and papers in a format that is functional, attractive, portable, and personalized. Bookbinding can be an enjoyable activity for the crafter. And even those who don't necessarily enjoy crafts will delight in having a personalized book that holds the documents and memories that are important to them. Binding your pages into a book not only protects and preserves those special documents, pictures, papers, and memories, it creates a keepsake to be shared with family and friends, and even be passed from one generation to another, full of history and memories to be preserved forever.

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