



**There's no end  
to making a  
more perfect  
union.**



## TRASH OR TREASURE

### What Gets Saved \*Might\* Get Remembered

How do we know anything about Cleopatra or Julius Caesar? Or George and Martha Washington? Or your great-grandparents, for that matter? From personal journals to societal remnants, it's the stuff that gets saved-intentionally or accidentally-that makes up the patchwork rearview mirror that becomes solidified into our history. This unprecedented moment, as the novel coronavirus COVID-19 sweeps around the globe, brings up the contradictions and complexity of how we learn about the past-based on what gets retold and remixed and remembered and mis-remembered. Have you ever wondered about what does NOT get saved and what THOSE things might say about us?

Since it's clear that this moment is historic, if devastating in new and familiar ways, we should be proactive in capturing it from many angles as it unfolds. This will better allow historians to make sense of it in the years to come (and to help future generations of citizens at large-admit it, how many of you have only recently learned about the 1918 Flu pandemic for the first time, on a late night Google search for "what to do in a pandemic?"...). Also, we know a lot of us are spending WAY more time online and on screens than usual-so, if you're looking for a break, we offer this as a simple experiment to do offline that still connects to our shared moment and story (and, yes, you can still share to social when you're done). You can read more here: <https://medium.com/history-made-by-us>

#### GET STARTED (OR HOW TO STAY AWAY FROM THE NEWS FOR AN HOUR)

Ask yourself and/or anyone else who might be doing this with you the following questions (we encourage you to ask your parents, your kids, your colleagues and your neighbors, because this offers a break from whatever else they're managing). These will help you pick just the right things to document. You don't have to answer all of these, but it's part of the fun to try out different answers.

- What do you think are the top three things being saved right now and why?
- What is NOT being saved that should be and why?
- What item or object (or photo) could tell future generations the most about your unique experience at this time? And what do you hope people will learn?
- What item or object (or photo) could tell future generations the most about our collective experience at this time? And what do you hope people will learn?
- What item do you wish had been saved from a some moment in the past? Why is it important to you?
- If you live with someone else or a few people, and they are willing to explore these questions, did you pick different objects? Why? And what might it tell you about how each of us manages experiences differently?

Once you have “carefully” selected your item for posterity, you're ready to document it and share with the world..

# MADE BY US

POWERING OUR FUTURE WITH HISTORY

## HOARDER OR HISTORIAN

### Part 2

#### SIMPLE INSTRUCTIONS FOR ACTING LIKE AN ARCHIVIST

Given that we're doing this in a pandemic, it's okay to bend the rules a bit. For our purposes, we'd love for you to simply take a photo and then email it to yourself with your answers to the questions to look back on at some date in the future when this has begun to feel like a distant memory. (*To: Me; From: Me; Subj: That Time I Lived Through A Pandemic...*) Of course, email is hardly secure for posterity, as we've seen papyrus last longer than pixels.

If you want to share it on social media, we'll be keeping an eye out for anything using **#TrashOrTreasure** or **#HistoryAtHome** and **#FutureMadeByUs**

While there's no need to be precious about how we document our artifacts for this project, we'd be remiss if we didn't share some pro tips, so you know how it's usually done. Things to consider when saving things for the future:

- Make sure any writing in your photograph is legible, especially if it's of a document (there's nothing worse than finding something fascinating and not being able to read it when you zoom in!)
- If you need to take a few photos to really capture it, consider taking close-up shots of different sections of your object (especially if front and back are important)
- Add a caption or description with a date, so you won't forget when you find your treasure under a pile of junk mail
- If there's a person or place in your photo, write down who and where it is specifically, since that's always what people wonder when there's no label
- If you plan to keep the item, consider sealing it in a Ziplock bag and keeping it in a dark place (newspapers yellow and fade in direct sunlight over the years and books might mold)

If you're really interested in archiving or making a time capsule, here are some additional resources:

- **SUBMIT MORE HERE:** <https://covid19.omeka.net/>
- <https://www.mnhs.org/preserve/conservation/reports/timecapsule.pdf>
- [https://www.si.edu/mci/english/learn\\_more/taking\\_care/timecaps.html](https://www.si.edu/mci/english/learn_more/taking_care/timecaps.html)
- <https://www.amnh.org/explore/ology/archaeology/create-your-own-time-capsule2>
- <https://www.history.com/news/8-famous-time-capsules>



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