



Case Study

Rescuing photos from disaster inspires digital preservation initiatives

South Carolina woman and Missouri church do good and save memories with **Kodak** Picture Saver Scanning Systems

Situation

When photos are lost or ruined by natural disasters and storms, people realize that their memories are priceless and must be safeguarded and preserved.

Objective

Offer scanning services in areas where disasters have struck to protect irreplaceable moments captured in pictures.

Solution

Kodak Picture Saver Scanning System PS50, combined with a lot of hard work and dedication.

Results

Along with thousands of hard copy prints cleaned and saved, hundreds of thousands of images proactively scanned and stored digitally, safeguarding them for future generations. Thousands of images that could not be replaced returned to their owners.

It began with one woman in South Carolina, and many volunteers from a church in Missouri who did all they could to find thousands of photos scattered across many miles by tornadoes and floods. Over time, their efforts expanded to not only clean and restore the prints, but also scan and preserve the images in digital form to guard against future disasters.

Kathy Craig, owner of Memories Managed LLC, did not know that the weekend of October 3rd, 2015 would change her city and life forever. Hurricane Joaquin created historic flooding in Columbia, South Carolina. As she watched the televised news, it became increasingly apparent that thousands would lose all the possessions in their homes. She was starting up a business to scan and preserve photos, but realized that at the moment the most important thing was simply to rescue photos. And resourcefully, that's exactly what she began to do.

In Carthage, Missouri, members of the First Baptist Church and their Music and

Outreach Minister, Thad Beeler, took on a different crisis. In May 2011, a tornado devastated a nearby town, Joplin, Missouri. The day after the tornado, a man brought a photo to the church he'd found on his lawn, 12 miles from Joplin. He asked Beeler what he should do with it. That moment, and reflecting on his parents' photos that had survived the storm, inspired Beeler and members of First Baptist to start a ministry and organization dedicated to recovering and preserving photos lost in disasters and scanning photos to prevent future loss.



“You can buy another house and fill it with new things, but you can’t replace the only picture of your grandmother or that one snapshot of your friend who died too young. Memories have to be kept safe.”

Kathy Craig, Owner, Memories Managed LLC, Columbia, SC

Kathy Craig: Rescuing and preserving a flood of memories

On Sunday morning of the flood, Kathy Craig learned that her friend Bea had been rescued from her home, after waking up on a “floating bed.” Bea was 38 weeks pregnant and starting contractions. Rescuers smashed a bedroom window to get her, and then took her to the hospital where she gave birth the next morning.

Visiting Bea’s house on Monday, Craig spoke with a clean up crew who mentioned that some of Bea’s photos on an upper shelf had been above the floodwaters that ruined her home’s belongings. “I found more of her pictures in a wet pile, from when she was a girl in Tanzania and her husband’s mission in the Philippines... all irreplaceable,” says Craig.

From washing and drying to scanning and saving

Earlier in the weekend, Craig had found information online from Operation Photo Rescue about how to salvage “flooded photos.” She e-mailed local media and appeared on a TV news segment demonstrating the correct technique to rescue prints.

Her husband, daughter, and Craig began washing and drying hundreds of Bea’s photos and thousands rescued for another friend, Monica. “These pictures were a record of their lives, I couldn’t imagine not trying to save them,” Craig says.

The flood experience made Craig realize how quickly disasters can alter lives and wipe out photo memories. So she teamed with a local real estate company

on a fundraising effort to clean, restore, and scan pictures. Craig has already scanned hundreds of photos through this program, educating people about the importance of digital preservation. She’s also participated in Save Your Photo Days, sponsored by the Association of Personal Photo Organizers (APPO), and genealogy photo preservation events.

Her charitable efforts, and those that are driven by her Memories Managed business, are made possible by a **Kodak** Picture Saver Scanning System PS50. Beyond it’s ability to “simply zip through piles of photos safely,” Craig says, “People are simply thrilled by the results. They can’t believe how good it makes their pictures look – often times better than the originals, thanks to Kodak Alaris’ built-in image processing that enhances color, brightness, and contrast. And they now understand the importance of having digital copies in case something happens to their originals.”

Thad Beeler: Reuniting photos with families and protecting memories for the future

After the tornado in Missouri, at “reunification events,” Beeler – and his team of dedicated volunteers from First Baptist – returned almost 18,000 photos to their owners. They handed back precious pictures to a family that had lost everything; pictures found in various farm fields, often many miles from home. “We have collected, cleaned, and preserved photos from as far as 200 miles away,” Beeler says.

Beeler and church members also created National Disaster Photo Rescue (NDPR), including a website where unclaimed scanned images live and can be found by, and returned to, their owners.

Making the process proactive and more powerful

Initially, church volunteers scanned pictures one at a time on the flatbed of a multi-function printer/copier. It was a time-consuming and grueling process. Through the Save Your Photos Alliance, an initiative of APPO focused on helping people digitally safeguard their photos, Beeler met Rick Lippert. Lippert is the President of E-Z Photo Scan of Altamonte Springs, Florida. After learning of the expanding mission – to not only rescue prints but preserve memories digitally – Lippert worked closely with Kodak Alaris to donate a **Kodak** Picture Saver Scanning System PS50, Flatbed Accessory, and Photo Selector Accessory to the NDPR. “Now they can go into communities and proactively capture and save images,” Lippert says. Beeler adds, “We are able to scan thousands of photos that have not yet been digitized, so we won’t have to go through a recovery, restoration, and unification process in the future,” says Beeler. “Now we can connect with people before their memories are endangered, educating them about the importance of digital preservation, and providing a valuable service at no charge.”

With their PS50 System, Beeler and team scanned over 25,000 pictures in one day. Another 1,700 after a tornado in Van, Texas. And 3,500 in Baxter Springs, Kansas following a 2014 tornado there. “I can’t say enough about how much we appreciate what Kodak Alaris and Rick Lippert have enabled us to do,” Beeler notes. “The system simultaneously scans both sides of the prints, which we’ve learned is critical. Dates, names, notes, they’re all important to people and provide us with information to help get images back to their owners.”

Want to learn more?

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