

## ARCHIVAL ACTION

### ENCAPSULATE AN HEIRLOOM DOCUMENT

**TIME**  
20 minutes

**COST**  
less than \$10

From *An Ounce of Preservation* by Craig Tuttle, these instructions tell you how to encapsulate an invaluable heirloom document using archival plastic. Just be sure to practice these steps on blank sheets of paper to get the hang of it before you tackle Great-grandma's birth certificate.

**1.** Measure the length and width of the document to be encapsulated. On a cutting mat with a grid, cut two sheets of archival polyester plastic large enough to leave a 1-inch border around the document.

**2.** Place one plastic sheet over the document and a paperweight on top. Then center the sheet over the document using the grids on the cutting mat as your guides.

**3.** Apply ¼-inch wide, pH-neutral double-sided tape (see resource roundup, opposite page) to each edge of the sheet, leaving ⅛-inch of space between the document edge and the tape, and between the ends of the tape strips. (Don't peel off the backing strips on the tape just yet.)

**4.** Place the document on top of the taped side of the polyester sheet and then place the second sheet over the document. Slowly peel the tape strips one at a time while holding the polyester sheets in place, and then use your finger to seal them together.

**5.** Use the ruler to trim the excess plastic with an X-Acto knife or scissors. Rub a soft cloth over the tape strips to complete the seal. Use a pair of scissors

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to round off the pointed edges of the polyester sheets.

Family Tree Magazine Plus members can view more encapsulation advice (with step-by-step photos) on our website at [familytreemagazine.com/article/sealed-with-a-kiss](http://familytreemagazine.com/article/sealed-with-a-kiss).



## HEIRLOOM ID

bifocals, circa 1790



COURTESY OF DAVID A. FLEISHMAN

### Seeing Double

Imagine sporting these specs! The steel-framed eyeglasses have double-hinged sidearms and a second, flip-down pair of lenses that supply additional magnifying power. The name of the owner, Bedlord Kington, appears across the top. This pair likely was made around 1790 by an English optician. The English experimented with bifocal lenses in the latter half of the 1700s; inventor Ben Franklin apparently had split-lens bifocals made for himself in 1784. The first patent related to eyeglasses was given to Addison Smith of London in 1783 for double spectacles that rotated down (only a few examples like the pair shown here still exist). In 1797, John Richardson expanded the idea with four-lens spectacles that rotated in from the sides (a more common style) and obtained the world's second eyeglass patent. ■

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