



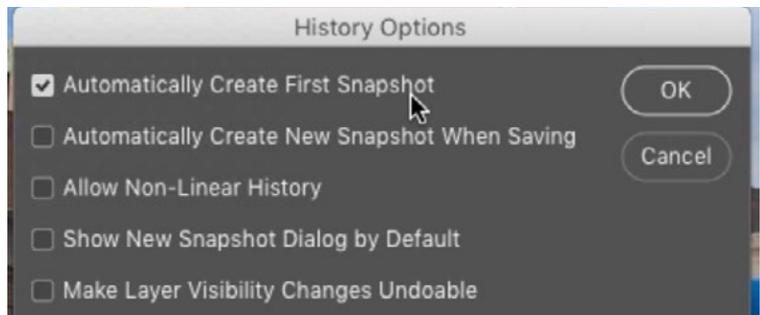
Advanced History Techniques

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In this lesson, we're going to look at intermediate and advanced uses for the History panel. Note that there is another Masters Academy video on Undos & History panel basics. If you have not already visited that lesson, you might want to do so before moving on to this one, as it provides much of the foundational knowledge you'll need to work with the Undo command, multiple Undos and the History panel.

Quick Basics Recap

The History panel If the History panel is not already visible in your interface, you can access it by going to the Window menu and choosing History. The History panel will list everything that you have done to your picture since you opened it in Photoshop. The first step in the list will be "Open." At the top of the panel is where you will find any snapshots. By default, there will be one snapshot that is automatically created every time you open a document and it will have the same name as the document. If you do NOT see this snapshot, it means that some settings were changed within the History Options dialog. Click on the little menu in the upper right corner of the History panel and choose "History Options" to access this dialog. Here, you will see that the top check box reads "Automatically Create First Snapshot." Make sure that this is turned on so that the initial snapshot will automatically be created.



The History Options dialog is shown above. When the top check box is turned on, Photoshop will automatically create a snapshot that contains the original version of the document.

Undo & Step Backward To undo the last step you did, use the keyboard shortcut Command+Z (Ctrl+Z on Win). In Photoshop, you can also go to the Edit menu and choose Undo. If the very last thing you did was undo something, then this menu will show "Redo" instead. This is because Photoshop will only allow you to undo one step.

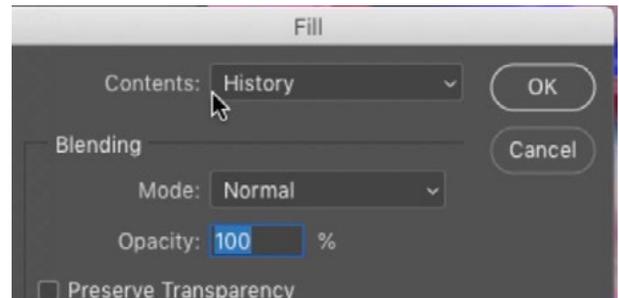
To go back multiple steps, either click on the step you want to go back to (within the History panel) or use the keyboard shortcut to step backward:

Step backward: Option+Command+Z (Alt+Ctrl+Z on Win)

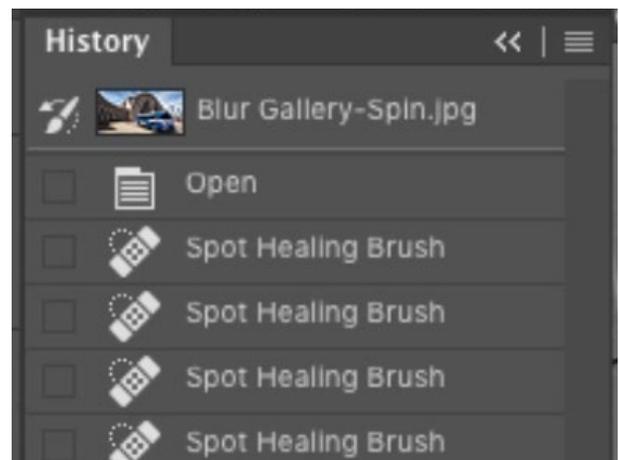
If you'd like to go the other direction in the History panel, and redo the steps you've undone, you can use the step forward shortcut:

Step forward: Shift+Command+Z (Shift+Ctrl+Z on Win)

Paint & Fill with History You can also paint or fill an area with a previous version of your image. To fill the document or a selected area with history, go to the Edit menu and choose Fill. In the Fill dialog, use the Contents menu to choose History, make sure the Mode is set to Normal and the Opacity is set to 100, and then click OK. By default, this is going to fill the document or selected area with what your image looked like at the time you opened it. You can also choose to change which history state is being used. Looking at the History panel, you'll see a little brush icon to the left of the top snapshot. This means that when you fill or paint with History, this snapshot (which is the original image) will be used to fill the area. If you'd like to change this, click on the little square to the left of a snapshot name or a history state and this will place that little brush icon there, designating that as the state in history that should be used when you paint or fill with history.



To Fill with the contents of a snapshot or specified history state, choose the History option within the Fill dialog (Accessed via the Edit menu).



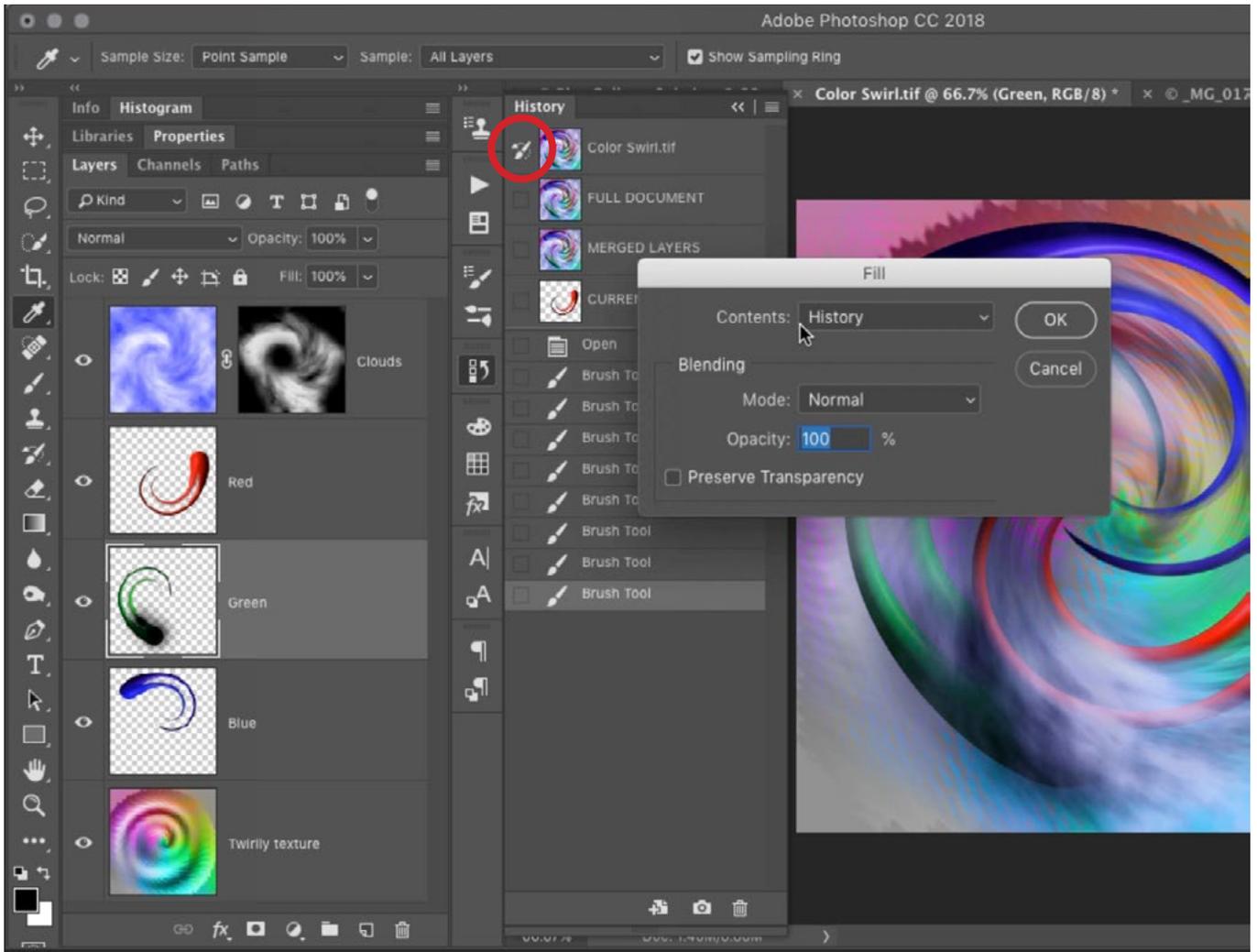
The snapshot or history state with the History Brush icon next to it is the one that will be used when you fill or paint with history.

You can also use a brush to paint in a previous state of your image. First, make sure that the brush icon is pointing at the state in history you'd like to paint with in the History panel. Then, activate the History Brush (located in the Tool Bar on the left side of the interface) and use it to paint on the image. This is nice because you have many of the same brush settings that you'd have with the regular Brush Tool (size, opacity, blending mode, etc.) and they can be found in the Options Bar above the main image window.

Clear History You can clear out the History panel by clicking on the little menu in the top right corner of the panel and then choosing Clear History. This will not undo any of the steps. It will just remove them from the panel and you will no longer be able to undo them. Note that when you clear the history, it will still keep the one step that the History Brush icon was pointing to.

Using the History tools to work smarter and correct mistakes

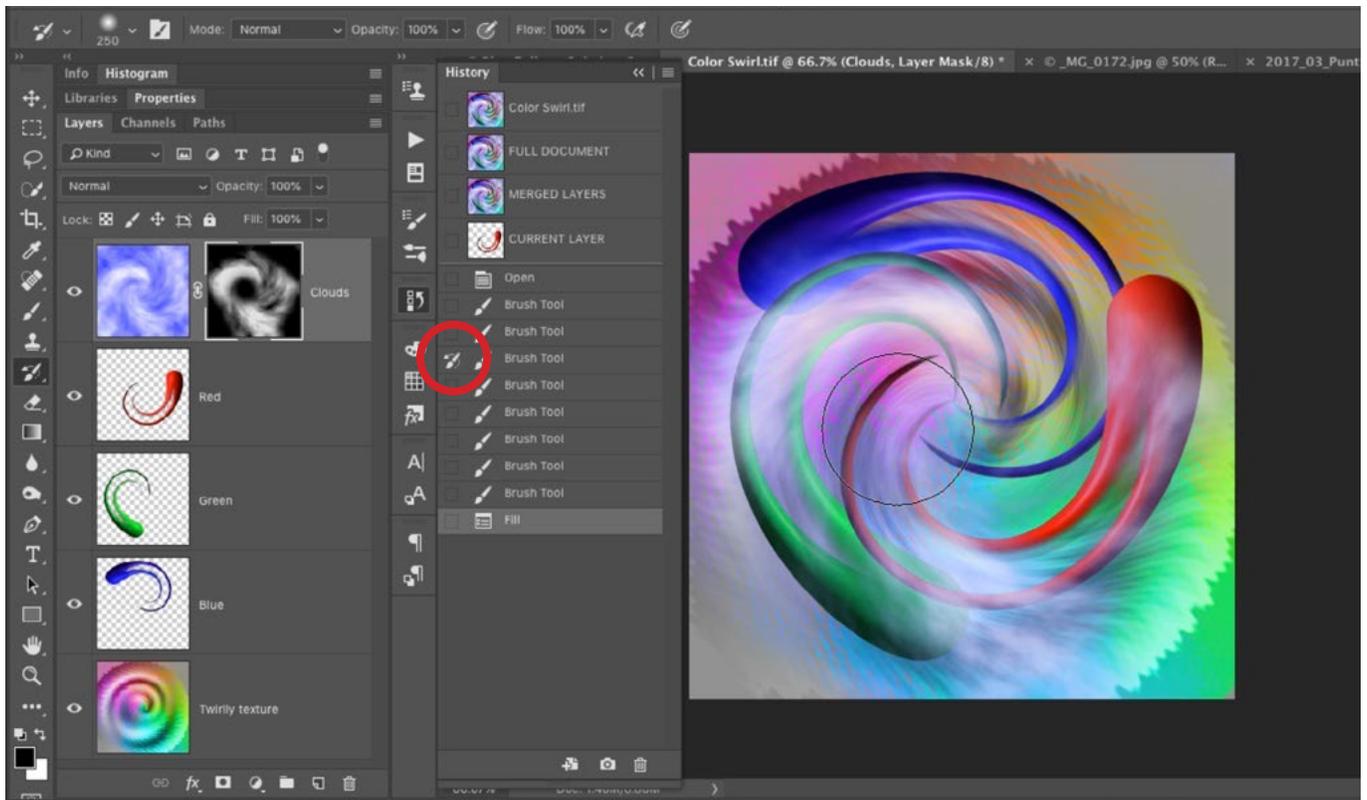
The History panel can be used for much more than simply undoing things you did in Photoshop. It can be used to isolate a mistake you made several steps ago and then make it as though it never happened (while keeping the changes you DID want intact). Let's say you did something to a layer many steps ago and now decide that you didn't want that change. In our example image, we accidentally painted with black on the layer with the green swirl. The problem is that we did many things afterwards that we DO like. If we simply used the step backward command enough times to remove the error, we would also erase all those changes that we did want. Here's how we can use the History features to fix that one isolated step. We'll activate the layer that contains the problem (In our case, it's the layer with the green swirl.) and make sure that the History Brush icon is to the left of the top snapshot in the History panel. This will ensure that we're filling the area with what the document looked like at the time that it was opened. Then, we'll go to the Edit menu and choose Fill. We'll set the Contents menu to History and make sure that the Mode is set to Normal and the Opacity is 100%. We'll click OK. Because this is a multi-layered document, Photoshop knows what was in the active layer at the time the document was opened, so it will use that information to fill the layer.



Here, we accidentally added black paint to the layer with the green swirl. To fix that (without affecting all the steps taken after it), we are filling with history, using the snapshot that was created when the document was opened. You can see that the History Brush icon is positioned to the left of that snapshot, which is telling Photoshop what to use when we fill with history.

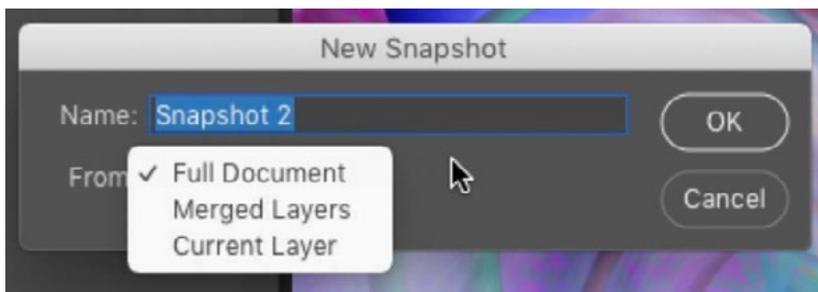
If you need to fill the layer with a history state other than the version of the document at the time that it was opened, find that step in which things look the way you want and click the little square to the left of the step's name in the History panel in order to position the History Brush icon there. (After the brush has been placed, be sure to click back on the last step in the History panel to make it active again.) Then, follow the same step. Go to the Edit menu, choose Fill and then choose to Fill with History. Alternatively, you could use the History Brush to paint

in that selected history state in only the areas you want. If you only wanted to reduce an effect, you could use the History Brush and paint with a lower opacity so that you're not completely hiding the content that's currently there. You're just lessening its effect. The Opacity setting can be found in the Options Bar above the main image window (The brush needs to be active in order to for the Opacity setting to be available.)



The History Brush is being used to paint in a previous state in history (designated by the History Brush icon placement in the History panel).

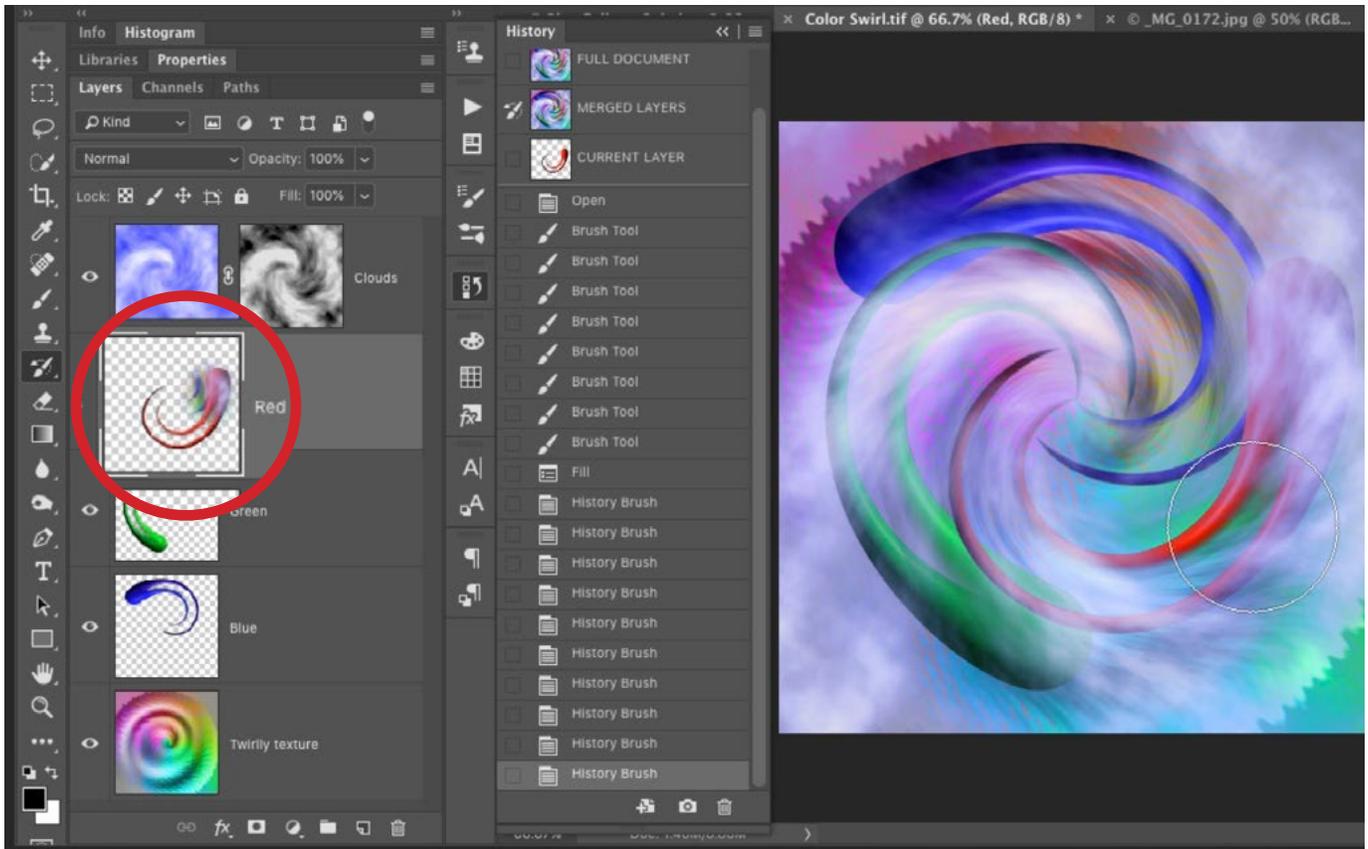
Different types of snapshots As we mentioned in the basics video, you can create a snapshot by clicking on the camera icon at the bottom of the History panel. This method will use default settings. If you hold down the Option key (Alt on Win) while clicking on the camera icon, the New Snapshot dialog will appear. Here, you can specify a name for the snapshot and use the “From” menu to determine what type of snapshot you’d like to create. The choices are Full Document, Merged Layers or the Current Layer.



Hold down the Option Key (Alt on Win) while clicking the New Snapshot icon and you will get the New Snapshot dialog, where you can use the From menu to choose between three different types of snapshots.

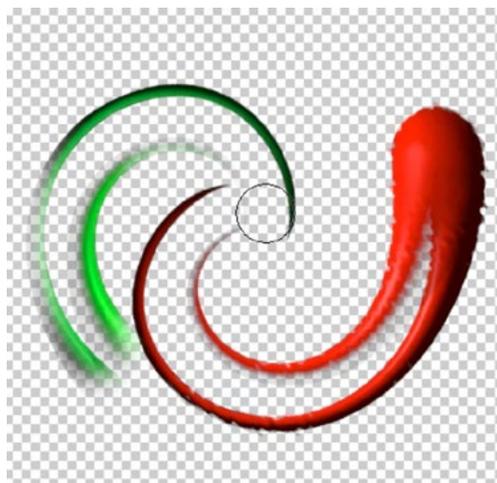
The default option is Full Document and this will remember everything in the document at the time you create the snapshot. When you use this snapshot to paint with history, it will look at the layer you are working on and paint in the contents of that layer at the time the snapshot was created. Note that if you try to use this snapshot to paint on a layer that did not exist at the time you created the snapshot, you will likely get an error. Also, its not based on the name of the layer or the stacking order of the layer. You can change either of these things and the History Brush will still know which layer it should use.

The Merged Layers option will take all of the layers and combine them all together so it’s seen as one piece. If you use this snapshot to fill or paint with history, it will use the contents of the entire merged document (and not just the contents of the active layer) to fill the layer. You can use this type of snapshot to paint with the History Brush on a new layer.



Here, we created a snapshot using the Merged Layers option and we are using the History Brush to paint with that snapshot. It's easier to see in the layer thumbnail (circled) that we are painting the contents of the entire merged document.

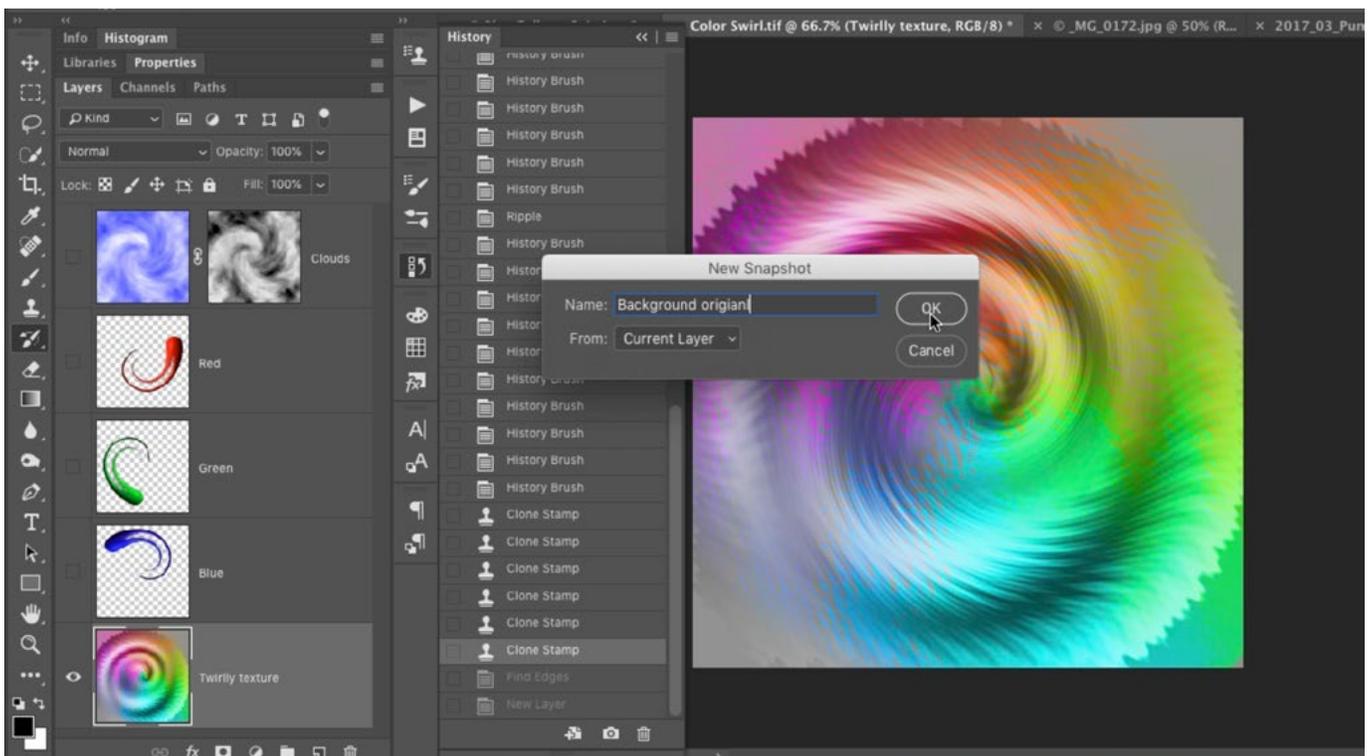
The Current Layer option will create the snapshot containing only the information in the active layer (the layer active at the time you create the snapshot). If you use this snapshot to paint with history, it will only paint in the contents of that single layer (the layer used to create the snapshot).



With the green layer active, we created a Current Layer snapshot. Now, we have the red layer active and are painting with history, using that Current Layer snapshot. You can see that it's painting the green layer into the active layer.

Restoring parts of the original document

Let's say that you completely changed your image and there is no layer containing the content you want to restore. In the video example image, it is the original colored background in the document. Click back through the steps in the History panel until you find the step where the content was still there. With that step active, select the layer that contains the content you want and turn off the visibility of all the other layers. Then, hold down the Option key (Alt on Win) and click on the snapshot icon (the camera) at the bottom of the History panel. The New Snapshot dialog will appear and you'll want to choose the Current Layer option from the "From" menu. It's also a good idea to give the snapshot a name that indicates what it is. Click OK.

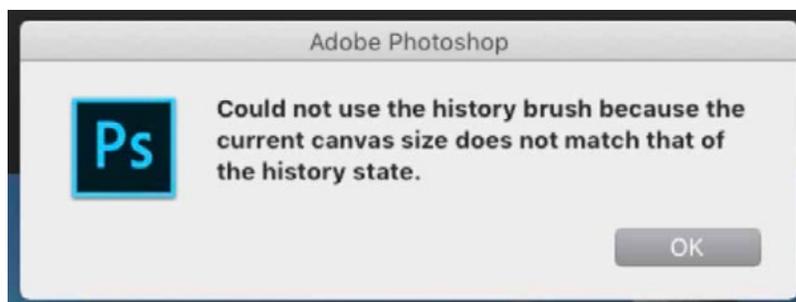


We wanted to bring back the look of our bottom layer from an earlier stage in the editing process. We stepped backward in the History panel until the layer contained the content we wanted, we made sure that bottom layer was active and then we turned off the visibility of all the other layers. Now, we are creating a new snapshot, using the Current Layer setting.

Now, you can click back on the last step in the History panel to get all of your other work back. Activate the layer where you want that saved content to appear (in the video example, we created a new, empty layer.). Then, click the little square to the left of the icon for the new snapshot you just created in order to place the History Brush icon there. Finally, go to the Edit menu, choose Fill, select the History option within the Fill dialog and then click OK. This will fill the active layer with the contents of the snapshot.

When the History tools can fail

Let's look at an instance where the History tools can mess up a bit. This can happen when you apply some retouching to the image and then change the dimensions or the mode (RGB, CMYK, etc.) of the document. If you try to use the History Brush after cropping the image or changing the mode, you will get an error message. To get around this, you'll either need to change the document back to its original dimensions or you will have to get tricky.

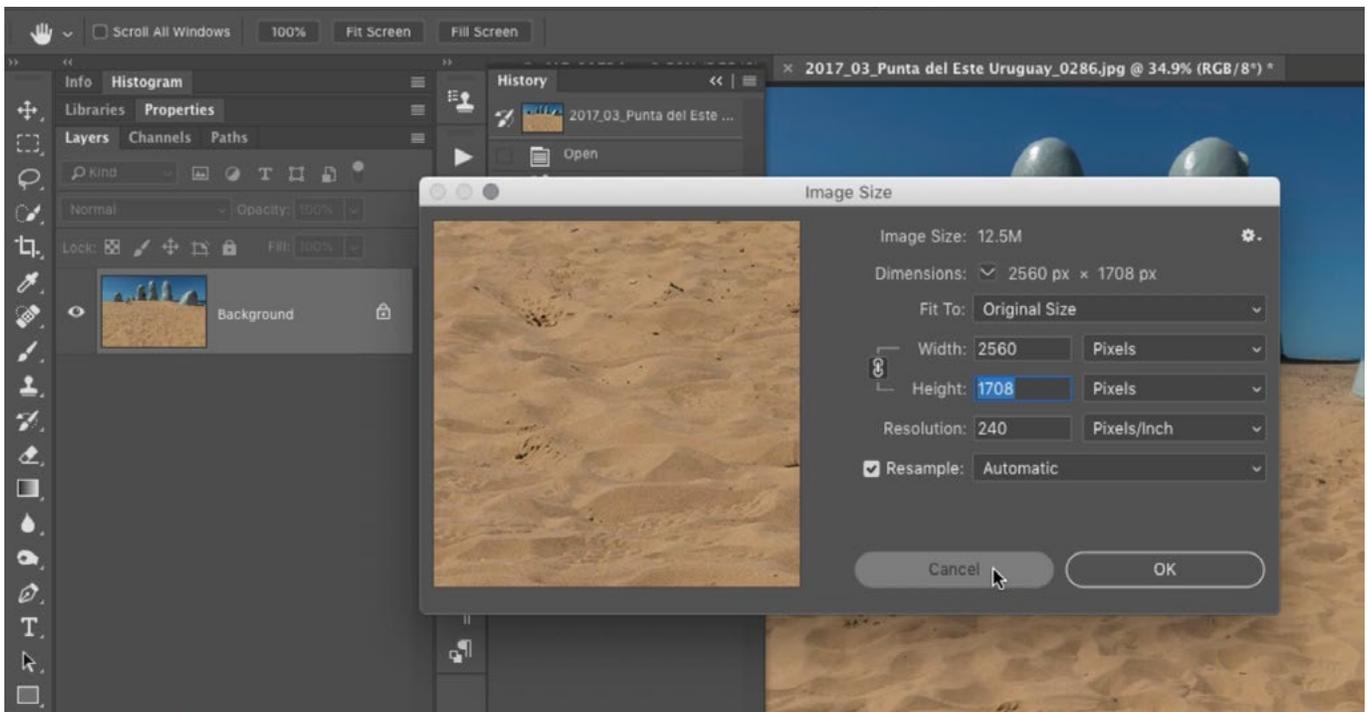


This is the error message you'll get if you try to use the History brush after cropping/resizing your document.

In the video example image, we have a photo of a sculpture in the sand and we used some retouching tools to remove some tourists. Then, we used the Crop Tool to crop out the bottom half of the image so that we could focus in on the subject. If we were to try and use the History Brush after cropping, the error message will appear. Here's how we can get around this. We'll click back through the History panel until we find the step where the image was at its original size. Then, we'll go to the Image menu, choose Image Size and then note the dimensions. We'll

copy down the numbers for both the width and height dimensions and then click Cancel. Now we'll click back to the last step in the History panel so that the image goes back to its current state. We'll go back to the image menu and choose Canvas Size. Within the Canvas Size dialog, we'll enter in the dimensions of the original image (that we copied down). We'll also set the anchor point to the top so that the extra canvas size is added at the bottom (this is the half that we had cropped out) and we'll click OK. The canvas will expand back to its original size and we can now use the History Brush to paint in a previous state of our image.

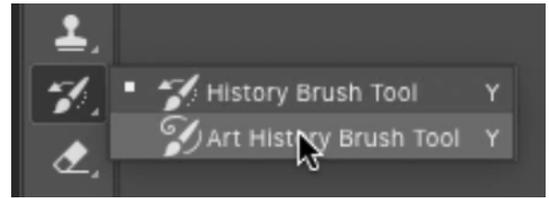
If the History tools are not working because we changed the mode of the image, we'd simply change the mode back to what it originally was.



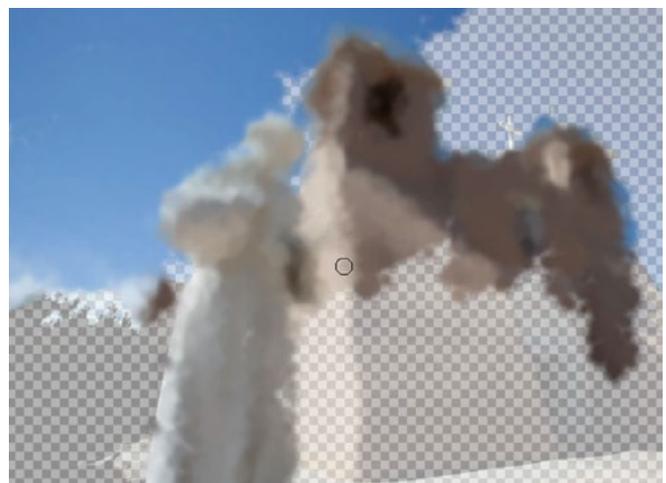
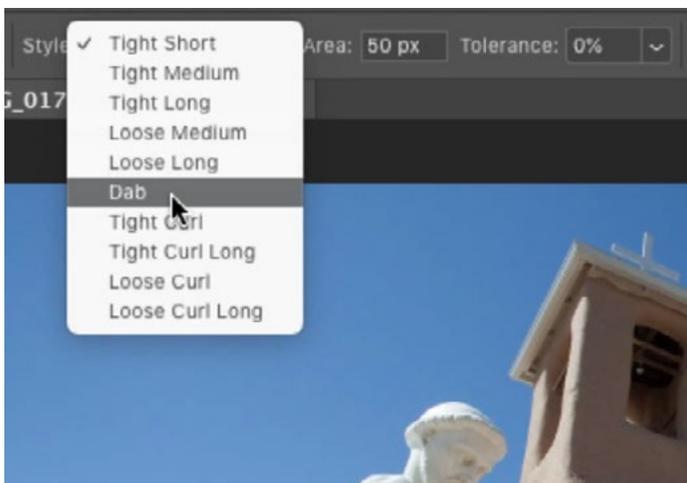
Here, we clicked back through the history steps until we reached the step prior to cropping. Then we went to the Image menu and chose Image Size to call up this dialog. We are simply taking note of the width and height dimensions so that we can change the document back to its original size later.

Creative uses for the History tools

Now that we've talked about how the History tools can be used to correct things, let's look at some more creative uses. If you click and hold your mouse button down on the History Brush Tool in the Tool Bar, you will get a little pop-up menu that also gives you access to the Art History Brush Tool. With this tool active, different settings will appear in the Options Bar (above the main image window) that will allow us to create more unique effects in our images. One of those settings is a Style menu and this gives us different options for what kind of effect will be created when we paint. In the video example image, we'll set this menu to Dab. When we paint, it's going to look at whichever snapshot or history state that the History Brush icon is set to and it's going to use that to determine which color to paint with. The Dab setting is going to create a style that looks like we're dabbing the canvas with a paint brush. If we were to choose one of the Curl settings, it will create more of a spiral brush effect and we can determine how large the effect will expand from the brush tip by using the Area setting in the Options Bar. You can also click on the Brush Settings icon to access all of the settings that will allow you to come up with a much more creative brush effect.



The Art History Brush is hidden behind the History Brush in the Tool Bar.



The Art History Brush is active, we set the style to Dab (left) and are using the brush to paint in a specified history state. In this case, it's the original image.

Keeping snapshots after closing a document

When you close a document, the History panel will be cleared and you will lose any snapshots that you have saved there. To get around this, you can save out your snapshots as separate documents and then use these to reconstruct the contents of the panel after you re-open the document. Let's look at how to do that.

First, click on the snapshot that contains the state of your image you want to be used when you reopen the it and save the document in this state. Then, click on the next snapshot to make it active and click on the little plus icon at the bottom of the History panel to create a new document out of this snapshot. (Alternatively, you can go to the File menu and choose Save As.) You'll be prompted to name the new document and determine where it should be saved on your hard drive. Do this with any additional snapshots in the document (that you want to save) and then close the document. As we mentioned before, closing the document will discard any snapshots that were saved in the History panel. Re-open the document and you will see that the History panel is empty (except for the snapshot that is automatically created when you open the document). Now, open up the other file that was created from the snapshot that you saved from the original document.



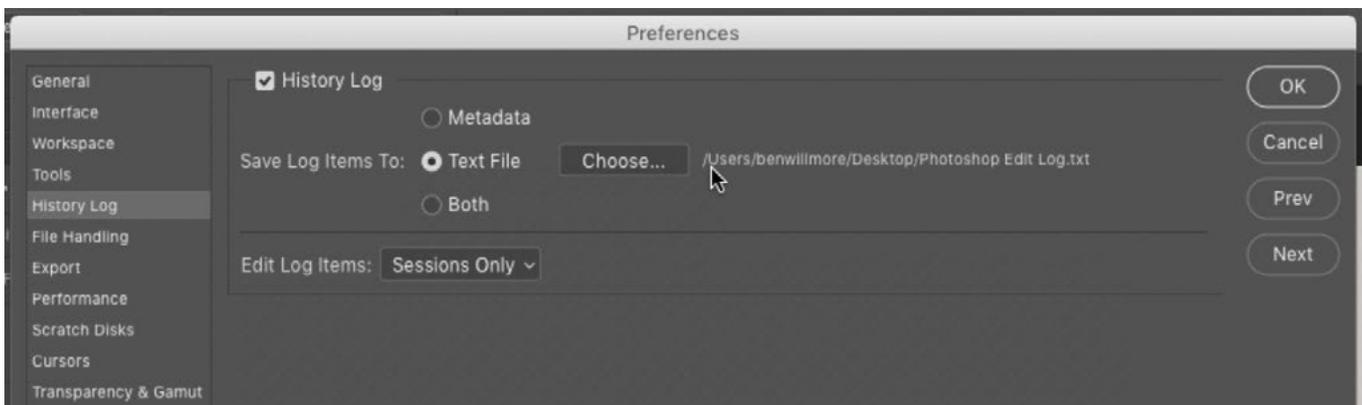
We are dragging the snapshot icon from one document into the image window for the original document. This will place the snapshot that we're dragging as a new snapshot within the original document.

Position this document so that it is in a floating window where you can see both documents at once and make sure that the History panel is open. Click and drag on the thumbnail for the single snapshot, drag it into the image window for the original document and then release the mouse button. This will add the new document as a snapshot within the original document.

The History Log

Photoshop gives us a way to save out our History list as a text file. Go to the Photoshop menu (the Edit menu in Windows) and choose Preferences > History Log. Turn on the History Log check box and some options will become available. If we choose the Metadata option, it means that it will save the history as a text file that is attached to the image itself. In order to see that info later, you'd have to open the image, go to the File menu and choose File Info. The screen that appears will contain the saved history information. If you choose the Text File option, you'll be prompted to name the file and determine where it should be saved on your hard drive. The Both option will save the information as a text file as well as within the file's metadata.

The Edit Log Items menu will allow you to determine how much detail should be saved when it comes to the history list. The Sessions Only option will save only the name of the file and how long the file was open. This can be useful when you need to log hours when billing to a client. The Concise option will save the same list that you see within the History panel, but it will not record the settings used for each individual step. The Detailed option will record enough info required to be able to reproduce each step (or record an action) so it will include the settings for each individual step.



Above are the History Log settings within Photoshop's Preferences dialog.