

DIGITIZATION PROJECT SUMMARY

The Durham Museum Photo Archive contains more than 1.1 million images organized into 20 distinct collections. In 2009 the Museum Board and senior staff made a strategic decision that this collection required active management, including "...properly preserving the collection so that future generations may learn from and enjoy them by easily accessing the archive through digital technology."

The Board approved strategy is to create an organizational system that preserves the collection, establishes a state of the art electronic finding system, and digitizes the collections to assure access to the images. This project is made possible in part by a grant from the U.S. Institute of Museum and Library Services.

The Durham Museum staff has consulted a variety of documents, including the *NISO Framework for Building Good Digital Collections* and the *Best Practice Guidelines for Digital Collections at University of Maryland Libraries*.

The Durham Museum will work on multiple collections at the same time to reflect the breadth of the collection.

Priority is given to negatives that are requested often. Even after the images are digitized, the museum will continue to keep the original artifacts in a secured storage facility.

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Watermarks - The Museum will be making lower resolution images available for public access, largely eliminating the need for watermarking. Additionally the Museum will be including rights management information in the metadata. Users requiring higher resolution images will need to contact the Photo Archive regarding use of the image.

METADATA

The goal of the Durham Museum is to provide access to collections in a single digital repository, allowing for objects to be discovered within the context of a collection or collections or from a search outside a collection context from a search screen. To realize all of these goals, the Museum will be creating metadata. The metadata record captures the name of the collection or project that unites those digital objects. This approach enables a visitor to see, for example, all of the photos associated with a particular collection with one search.

The Durham Museum has adopted the *CDP Metadata Best Practices Dublin Core Metadata Best Practices Version 2.1.1* (September 2006). These Best Practices provide guidelines for creating metadata records for digitized cultural heritage resources that have been reformatted from an existing physical resource, such as photographs, text, audio, or three-dimensional artifacts that are born digital.

Controlled vocabulary and authority: For users to effectively locate content by subject, authoritative forms of terms as well as controlled vocabularies are used where possible. Controlled vocabularies including *Thesaurus for Graphic Materials*, *Library of Congress Subject Headings*, *Nomenclature 3.0 for Museum Cataloging: Third Edition of Robert G. Chenhall's System for Classifying Man-Made Objects*, are all lists that the Durham Museum takes advantage of in building the thesaurus.

SCANNING

The Durham Museum has adopted the *BCR's CDP Imaging Best Practices Version 2.0* (June 2008) which provide guidelines on imaging. The document drew on National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) *Technical Guidelines for Digitizing Archival Materials for Electronic Access – Raster Images*; the *Universal Photographic Digital Imaging Guidelines* (UPDIG). Application of these best practices results in digital objects that:

- Increase the interoperability and accessibility of digital collections across the cultural heritage community through the use of widely accepted standards and formats
- Ensure a consistent, high level of image quality across collections
- Decrease the likelihood of redigitizing in the future by promoting best practices for conversion of materials into digital format
- Promote the long-term preservation of these digital resources.

The following principles of digital imaging have been adopted by the digital archiving project:

- Digitize at an appropriate level of quality to avoid re-digitizing and re-handling of the originals in the future;
- 4x5 inch negatives and anything larger than 4x5 inch negatives are scanned at 800 dpi.
- 120mm negatives or 2x2 inch negatives are scanned at 1200 dpi.
- 35mm negatives are scanned at 2400 dpi.
- Digitize an original or first generation (i.e., negative rather than print) of the source material to achieve the best quality image possible. In the case of art prints, the developed print is considered the original piece. Conservation concerns may prevent digitizing original negatives;
- Create and store a master image file that can be used to produce surrogate image files and serve a variety of current and future user needs;
- Use system components that are nonproprietary
- Use image file formats and compression techniques that conform to standards within the cultural heritage community
- Create backup copies of all files on servers and have an off-site backup strategy
- Create meaningful metadata for image files or collections
- Store digital files in an appropriate environment
- Monitor data as necessary
- Document a migration strategy for transferring data across generations of Technology; and plan for future technological developments

SOFTWARE AND HARDWARE

The Museum currently uses Epson Expression 10000XL Photograph Scanners.

Adobe Photoshop is the industry standard for image editing. The Museum will use this software to manipulate surrogates of the unaltered masters, creating derivatives. The goal is to make the image viewable, but not drastically alter it.

The Durham Museum Photo Archive has selected OCLC's CONTENTdm as its content management system.