

Transforming a Rights & Reproductions Department to Support a Sustainable Digital Collection

Dana M. Lamparello, Digital Collections Archivist
Historical Society of Pennsylvania
dlamparello@hsp.org

As with most underfunded cultural institutions, particularly in our present economic climate, the Historical Society of Pennsylvania's (HSP) staff members often are required to perform the duties of two or more employees—sometimes even of two or more departments. Such is the case with HSP's Rights & Reproductions (R&R) Department, which recently has evolved from exclusively fulfilling image reproduction orders and licensing image usage rights, to additionally managing a rapidly growing, sustainable digital surrogate collection.

Having transitioned from film photography to digital imaging in 2006, the R&R department did not initially regard the amassing image files as having much potential beyond fulfilling individual reproduction requests. This has posed the biggest challenge in developing a sustainable digital collection, as approximately 3,000 legacy digital images were scattered among a number of network folders and employee hard drives—all exhibiting sparse metadata and inconsistent image quality, file names, and file formats. In greater depth, my poster will detail the steps taken to assess HSP's legacy digital collection, uncovering the true extent of its size and determining what is usable (see below for outline). What makes this particular assessment unique is the need to strike a balance between what is “appropriate” quality for continuing to fulfill ongoing R&R orders and what is “ideal” quality for building a sustainable digital collection. My poster will also include the next steps required to develop HSP's digital collection (see below for outline).

Steps in Assessing HSP's Legacy Digital Collection

1. Set quality standards for digital images
 - Minimum Model: 300dpi at 8x10 inches, 8-bit color, JPG or TIFF
 - Ideal Model: 400-600dpi at 8x10 inches, 24-bit color, TIFF
2. Design expanded Dublin Core-based metadata schema and modify legacy Microsoft Access database to reflect edits
3. Set standards for metadata capture
 - Minimum Model: includes collection-level descriptive metadata and basic administrative metadata (mostly physical location information of the original item)
 - Ideal Model: includes maximum descriptive, administrative, and structural metadata
4. Inventory network folders and employee hard drives for usable digital image objects based on criteria detailed in flow chart (see page 2)

Next Steps in Further Developing HSP's Digital Collection

1. Tend to “Re-Digitize Queue,” transforming all JPG format and poor quality TIF format legacy digital objects to reflect current quality standards (ongoing)
2. Edit and mine legacy metadata to reflect new metadata schema (ongoing)
3. Export metadata and digital objects to CollectiveAccess, an open source digital asset management system, to improve internal and public access to collection

*Digital Image Inventory Criteria
Flow Chart*

