Cataloging Historical Photographs in OLIVIA

*Introduction*

This document was created as part of a range of preservation services for photographic materials offered by the Weissman Preservation Center's Photograph Preservation Program. It serves as an unofficial supplement to existing OLIVIA documentation available through Harvard University Library's Office of Information Systems at:

http://hul.harvard.edu/ois/support/docs-olivia.html

It is intended primarily for use by photograph catalogers looking for additional guidelines and information when creating Works in OLIVIA for original historical photographs. Its purpose is: (1) to improve accessibility to Harvard's historical photographs by providing a means of achieving some consistency in the way catalogers describe these materials and create Works for them in OLIVIA; (2) to achieve a more uniform look to the data records that are displayed in VIA; and (3) to offer some help to OLIVIA users who may have limited experience cataloging historical photographs.

The guidelines are presented in the order that the data entry screens appear in the OLIVIA Work record, and nonessential data elements are not covered. Guidelines for creating Name and Site authority records apply to historical photographs, and guidelines for creating Surrogate records are not offered in this document.

The following tools were used as references in the development of this document and are highly recommended for use in cataloging historical photographs:

*Graphic Materials: Rules for Describing Original Items and Historical Collections* compiled by Elizabeth W. Betz
http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/gm/graphmat.html

Note: The Second Edition of *Graphic Materials: Rules for Describing Original Items and Historical Collections* compiled by Elisabeth W. Betz (Library of Congress, 1982) is currently being developed by the ACRL/RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee as part of the Descriptive Cataloging of Rare Materials set.

*Thesaurus for Graphic Materials (TGM)*
http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pp/tgmhtml/tgmabt.html

*Art and Architecture Thesaurus (AAT)*
http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/vocabularies/aat/

"Description and Cataloging" by Helena Zinkham in *Photographs: Archival Care and Management* by Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler & Diane Vogt-O'Connor (Society of American Archivists, 2006).
1 – Basic Info Tab

Work Title and Alternate Title

1.1 – In general, transcribe a title from the chief source of information, usually the photograph. If the title proper is not accurate or sufficiently descriptive – i.e., more cryptic than useful – provide additional information in the Description field. Or alternatively, devise a title and quote the original information in a General note.

Examples:

Devised title: Harriet, Ellen, and Elizabeth Ward
General note: Misidentified, from left to right, as "Ellen, Elizabeth, and Harriett Ward" in accompanying documentation.

Devised title: Anna Drew (left) and daughter Lucy at temple near Ningbo
General note: Caption in album: Temple near Ningpo.

1.2 – If it is necessary to devise a title and the Work record will have a corresponding digital image, it is generally unnecessary to include the pictorial type or vantage point in the title. The vantage point or pictorial type can be indicated in the Index Terms field. It also avoids stating the obvious.

Examples:

Preferred title: Milman Parry
Not: Portrait of Milman Parry

Preferred title: Landscape showing farms and fields in valley with mountains in background
Not: General view of landscape showing farms and fields in valley with mountains in background

Preferred title: Istanbul, Turkey
Not: Panoramic view of Istanbul, Turkey

1.3 – This is a matter of style that reflects how the cataloger views a photograph, but to show how an image captures a moment in progress, the progressive verb tense – or -ing verb form – without an auxiliary verb is preferred when devising a title.

Examples:

Preferred title: Boy posing with dog
Not: Boy posed with dog
Preferred title: Older woman sitting at table
Not: Older woman seated at table

Preferred title: Man walking in garden
Not: Man walks in garden

Whatever style is used when devising titles, the most important consideration is consistency. Each repository should adopt a preferred verb tense and use it consistently.

1.4 – Do not enclose devised titles in brackets. This affects sorting by title and the browse function in VIA. Instead, provide a source of title note in the General notes field when the title is not devised.

Examples:

General note: Title from case.
General note: Title from accompanying documentation.

1.5 – Do not use quotation marks around the title or the first word of the title. This also will affect sorting and the browse function in VIA.

1.6 – Initial articles (a, an, the) are not recommended, as they, too, will affect sorting.

1.7 – Sentence-style capitalization is recommended. In general, capitalize the first word of a title and all proper names. Also, for consistency, do not include a period at the end of the last word in a title (a title may consist of only a word or two, an incomplete or complete sentence, or even two or more sentences).

1.8 – For recommended guidelines on inaccuracies, abbreviations and initials, interpolations, and other title information see "General Rules" and "Title and Statement of Responsibility Area" in Graphic Materials.

Start Year, End Year, and Date Description

1.9 – See "Appendix A" of Graphic Materials for recommended guidelines on recording probable or uncertain dates of execution in the Date Description field. The following date ranges are recommended for the Start Year and End Year when estimating dates:

Examples:

Use a two year date range for one year or the other:
Start Year: 1851
End Year: 1852
Date Description: 1851 or 1852
Use a three year date range for a probable date:
Start Year: 1851
End Year: 1853
Date Description: 1852?

Use a five year date range for an approximate, or circa, date:
Start Year: 1850
End Year: 1854
Date Description: ca. 1852

Use a ten year range for a probable decade (or when the decade is certain):
Start Year: 1850
End Year: 1859
Date Description: 185-? (or 185-)

Do not exceed a span of more than 20 years when giving a probable date range:
Start Year: 1840
End Year: 1860
Date Description: between 1840 and 1860

1.10 – When no date of execution, publication, etc. can be found, it should be possible to give a probable date or date range based on the photographic process or format, the photographer (if identified), and visual clues in the image (clothing, hairstyles, vehicles, buildings, etc.). Do not use "n.d." (no date).

**Work Type**

1.11 – For photographs, always include the term "photographs" in the Work Type field; and for photomechanical processes, always use the term "photomechanical prints" in this field.

Use other more specific terms in the Work Type field only if special circumstances require it (e.g., if the use of a specific term would better enable the harvesting of records for a particular purpose, such as the creation of an OIS Virtual Collections), or if the terms are not available in the Materials and Techniques field (under the Access Terms tab). Generally, such terms indicate physical characteristics rather than production processes.

**Examples:**

- cabinet photographs
- cartes-de-visite
- lantern slides
- photograph albums
- stereographs
postcards

Use the Materials and Techniques field for indicating production processes.

Examples:

- albumen process
- gelatin silver process
- cyanotype
- daguerreotype
- photomechanical processes

See the section on Notes for examples of Material and Techniques notes.

Use the Index Terms field for indicating pictorial types, vantage points, or intended purpose.

Examples:

- portrait photographs
- group portraits
- landscape photographs
- aerial photographs
- panoramic photographs
- snapshots

Culture

1.12 – It is not necessary to use this field in cataloging original historical photographs.

Dimensions

1.13 – For the dimensions of a photograph always give height x width, except for daguerreotypes and ambrotypes. For these cased photographs always indicate the plate size, and, optionally, add the dimensions of the case. In general, give dimensions in centimeters rounded up to the next whole centimeter, except when a photograph is a standard trade size given in inches, such as 8 x 10, 5 x 7, or 4 x 5.

Examples:

- 11 x 17 cm. (Note: This is the approximate measurement for a cabinet card photograph.)
- 10 x 6 cm. (Note: This is the approximate measurement for a carte de visite.)
- 8 x 10 in.
- 5 x 4 in.
quarter plate
sixth plate; 9 x 7 cm.

1.14 – For photographs on nonstandard cardboard mounts or other supports, when there is no information on the recto of the mount or support and there is a notable difference in size between the two, provide dimensions for both the image and the mount.

Examples:

– image 13 x 17 cm., on cardboard mount 21 x 26 cm.
– image 9 x 7 cm., on sheet 20 x 13 cm.

Under the heading "Card photographs" in the Thesaurus for Graphic Materials (TGM) online at http://lcweb2.loc.gov/pp/tgmhtml/tgmabt.html, there is a list of narrower terms for the most common standard card mounts. The scope note for each of these terms includes approximate dimensions and information about when these standard mounts were used.

Description

1.15 – Use this field to further clarify the subject of an image and to provide contextual or artifactual information.

Examples:

Title: Front view of Italian House in winter
Description: Signs posted on building read "Children's Aid Society night school".

Title: Black Dragon Pool
Description: Older man standing on bridge. Possibly north of Kunming, Yunnan Sheng.

Title: Harvard College class of 1818 in 1852
Description: One of Harvard's earliest photographic class portraits.

1.16 – If there is no corresponding digital image, use this field to fully describe the image subject(s).

2 -- Name, Site, & Groups Tab

Names (Relationship, Role, and Attribution)

2.1 – If the photographer is known, select "creator" for the Relationship and "photographer" for the Relationship Role. If the photographer is in doubt and you are
making an attribution, enter "Attributed to" in the Attribution field as well. You can also include an Attribution or General note describing the basis of your attribution if desirable.

2.2 – In situations where the creator is unknown, do not use "Anonymous", unless "Anonymous" is on the chief source of information. Because the photographer, or creator, is often not clearly identified, the use of "Anonymous" for the creator, in effect, creates a collection catalog where most of the records will fall under this heading in the Name/Creator index and can even suggest to the uninformed student or researcher that all of the images with "Anonymous" were created by the same person who made a conscious choice to remain anonymous. Unknown creators are better handled with a General note simply stating: "Photographer unidentified." Also, an Attribution or General note should be included in the rare instance where "Anonymous" appears on the chief source of information.

2.3 – When linking a Name authority record for a person pictured in a photograph select "associated name" for the Relationship and "subject" for the Relationship Role. Even if the photograph is a studio portrait, "subject" is preferable to "sitter" because the latter term is associated more with sitting for an artist or sculptor.

2.4 – In general, create Name authority records for people who are the subject of a photograph only when they are identified by both their forename, or initials, and surname. For example, create an authority record for Mrs. Julia B. Mateer, but do not create an authority record for Mrs. Myres.

2.5 – The Name Relationship field is not the same as the MARC subfield (1XXe) for relator terms; the MARC subfield for relator terms corresponds or maps to the Name Role field.

See Helena Zinkham's "Relator Terms for Cataloging Pictorial Materials" for helpful guidelines to the use of relator terms:


2.6 – When creating a Name authority record (or a biographical note) for a photographer or other creator, the following authority files are recommended:

Library of Congress Authorities
http://authorities.loc.gov/

George Eastman House Database
http://www.geh.org/gehdata.html

Getty Union List of Artist Names (ULAN)
http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/vocabularies/ulan/

Craig's Daguerreian Registry
http://www.daguerreotype.com/

And for local photographers:


Also, Helena Zinkham's "Main and Added Entries for Pictures" provides some guidelines for determining primary and secondary levels of responsibility when an image is credited to more than one creator:

http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/tp/Main%20&%20Added%20Entries%20for%20Pictures.pdf

**Sites (Relationship and Type)**

2.7 – If the image shows a landscape, cityscape, or other view, and the location is known, then select "associated site" for the Relationship and "subject" for the Relationship Type to the linked Site record.

2.8 – When creating a Site authority record, the following authority files are recommended:

Library of Congress Authorities
http://authorities.loc.gov/

Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names
http://www.getty.edu/research/conducting_research/vocabularies/tgn/

U.S. Board of Geographic Names
http://geonames.usgs.gov/

2.8 – For studio portraits. If the location of the studio is known, select "production" for the Relationship and "place of production" for the Relationship Type to the linked Site record.

**3 -- Notes & Numbers Tab**

3.1 – Use correct punctuation, including closing punctuation, and capitalization for all notes. Also, do not separate more than one note in any Note Type with a line space. The space will not display in VIA.

**General**
3.2 – No note is necessary if the title is devised by the cataloger, otherwise indicate the source of the title with a General note.

Examples:

- Title from verso.
- Title from recto.
- Title from caption.
- Title from caption attached to verso.
- Title from caption card.
- Alternate title from caption card.
- Title from album.
- Title from verso of duplicate.
- Title from similar photograph.
- Title from accompanying documentation.
- Caption in album: [Use when a devised title is more appropriate.]
- Title from verso, with "[word or phrase]" hand-corrected to read "[word or phrase]."
- Title from caption. Caption continues:

3.3 – Examples of other General notes related to physical description, condition, date, subject, or statement of responsibility:

- Blind stamp: [Stamp information].
- Stamped on verso: [Stamp information].
- Photographer's stamp on verso.
- Photographer's imprint on verso.
- Possibly photographed by [Name].
- Probably photographed by [Name].
- Attribution based on similarity to [Accession no.].
- Date and photographer based on similarity to [Accession no.].
- Double-exposed photograph.
- Photograph out of focus.
- Photograph badly faded.
- Photograph damaged.
- Photograph ink stained.
- Additional unverified information on caption card: [Information on caption card].
- Misidentified as “[Name, location, etc.]” on verso.
- Geographic location uncertain.

3.4 – When it is possible to determine in advance of cataloging if there are duplicate copies of a photograph, create only one catalog record, and if desirable, include the following General note:

- This photograph is one of [total number of] copies in the [name of collection].
When it is not possible to determine in advance of cataloging if there are duplicate copies of a photograph, create catalog records for all images and include the following General note in each record:

- Duplicate of [accession no.].

This will help HCL Imaging Services identify duplicate copies of a photograph, and after they select which ones to use for creating digital images, then duplicate records in OLIVIA can be suppressed (by not checking the VIA box on the Basic Info tab) and deleted later.

**Attribution**

**3.5** – Use this field when the photographer is in doubt and you are making an attribution, or simply include the attribution in a General note, as above.

Examples:

- Possibly photographed by [Name].
- Probably photographed by [Name].
- Attributed to [Name] based on similarity to [Accession no.].
- Attributed to [Name] based on similarity to other photographs taken of [subject] in [date].
- Attributed to [Name] based on related photographs.

**Inscription**

**3.6** – When transcribing an inscription, use an introductory phrase with a colon followed by the inscription. Do not use quotation marks around the inscription, unless it contains quotation marks.

Examples of introductory phrases for Inscription notes:

- Inscribed on verso: [Inscription].
- Inscribed on verso, [upper, middle, or lower] [left, center, or right]: [Inscription].
- Inscribed on recto [or mount], [above or below image]: [Inscription].
- Inscribed on image: [Inscription].
- Illegible names inscribed on image, [upper, middle, or lower] [left, center, or right].
- Illegible annotation on verso.
- Inscribed on front fly leaf [of album]: [Inscription].
- Inscribed on verso and crossed out: [Inscription].
3.7 – Enter specific information not included in the Work Type, Materials and Techniques, or Index Terms fields.

Examples:

- Hand colored.
- Mounted on detached album page.
- Mounted on paper.
- Photographic print with brush and brown ink.
- Reproduction of original photograph.
- Photographic reproduction of painting.
- Imperial card photograph.
- Boudoir card photograph.
- Corresponding negative available.
- Copy print from photograph taken in [date].
- Photographic print from daguerreotype made in [date] by unknown photographer.
- Sepia toned.
- Sepia toned photographic print tipped on to textured brown cardboard.
- Toned photographic print tipped on to two mounts, folded to [dimensions].
- Photographic print inside textured card mount [dimensions], folded to [dimensions].
- Photographic print on cardboard mount with overlaying mat frame.
- Half-tone print, on sheet [dimensions].
- Color instant camera photographic print.
- Halftone photomechanical print.
- Rotogravure print.
- Photographic print tipped on to textured paper mount [dimensions].

Copyright

3.8 – In general, use copyright information provided by the repository.

Examples:

- Copyright various dates, President and Fellows of Harvard College; all rights reserved.
- Please consult [name of repository] for copyright information and restrictions on use.
- Copyright by [Name].

Provenance

3.9 – Consult with the repository before including provenance or source of acquisition information.

Examples:
- Purchased from [Name], [year].
- Gift of [Name], [year].
- Transferred from [Name of collection, department, or repository], [year].

**Citation/References**

3.10 – Use this field to indicate if a photograph has been published, or to site a published source that was used for information provided in the record.

Examples:

- References: [Title] / [Statement of responsibility]. [Place of publication] : [Publisher], [Date of publication].

**Historical**

3.11 – If desirable, use this field to record biographical information about the photographer, person, or corporate body responsible for the material being described, especially if they are notable. If an Historical note is included, copy the note to the Biography/History field in the Name authority record. This will be helpful to other catalogers.

Examples:

- Henry Van der Weyde, a British painter turned professional portrait photographer, was a founding member of the Linked Ring Brotherhood, a group of early modernist photographers. In 1877 he became the first photographer to take portraits by electric light, allowing him to take many portraits in a short period of time.
- Adolfo Farsari was an Italian photographer (1841-1898) based in Yokohama, Japan, where he operated a commercial photography studio, A. Farsari & Co., from 1885-1890. His hand-colored portraits and landscapes were highly regarded, and he was one of the most important foreign photographers in 19th century Japan.
- American photography studio and publisher Underwood & Underwood was established by the Underwood brothers, Bert and Elmer, in 1882. The firm was a prominent publisher of stereographs in North America until 1910 when it began to specialize in news photography. After the Underwood brothers retired in 1925, the company eventually dissolved around 1940.
Subject

3.12 – Use this field to provide a biographical or historical note about the subject matter of the image. If a Subject note is included, copy the note to the Biography/History field in the Name authority record. This will be helpful to other catalogers.

Examples:

- Edward Bangs Drew, a Harvard graduate who went to China in 1865, served as commissioner of customs in the Chinese Maritime Customs Service from 1868-1908.
- Sir Robert Hart served as inspector general of the Chinese Maritime Custom Service from 1863-1908.
- Nikola Vujnovic assisted Milman Parry and Albert Lord in their field work from 1933-1935. A guslar (singer) from Stolac, Bosnia and Herzegovina, Vujnovic transcribed songs and interviewed singers.
- The Harvard University baseball team played on Holmes Field in Cambridge until 1898 when the site became part of Harvard Law School.
- Italian House was established in the Five Points neighborhood of Manhattan by the Children's Aid Society of New York as a trade school and social center for Italian immigrants.

Series

3.13 – Use this field for notes regarding series titles, incomplete series, and numbers or letters that imply a series.

Examples:

- Fig. 1 from unpublished manuscript by Albert B. Lord, “Across Montenegro Searching for Gusle Songs” (March 1937).
- Pozdrav iz Bosne i Hercegovine.

Exhibitions

3.14 – Rarely used field. If a photograph was part of a notable exhibition, cite the exhibition in this field.

Associated Number and Type

3.15 – Use this field for any number that needs to be associated with the photograph, such as the photographer's catalog number or the original collection number.

Examples:
Associated Number: 2028
Type: Gardner Collection of Photographs No.

Associated Number: 757
Type: Photographer's catalog number

Associated Number: 12
Type: Maison Bonfils catalog no.

4 -- Access Terms Tab

Style/Period

4.1 – It is not necessary to use this field in cataloging original historical photographs.

Materials and Techniques

4.2 – If possible, identify the photographic process and use the appropriate term (albumen process, gelatin silver process, etc.) in the Materials and Techniques field, otherwise use the term "photography".

4.3 – Because the primary support for most photographic prints is paper, use the Support field only to indicate a secondary support or a primary support that is not paper. For example, if a photographic print is on either a standard commercially produced cardboard mount (carte de visite, cabinet card, etc.) or nonstandard cardboard mount, use the term "cardboard" in the Support field.

4.4 – Always indicate the primary support in the Support field when cataloging negatives (glass, film, and paper negatives) or transparencies (glass lantern slides and film slides).

4.5 – The following resources are recommended for learning how to identify photographic and other print processes:

Digital Sample Book
http://www.digitalsamplebook.com/home.htm


Index Terms

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4.5 – Indicate the pictorial type or vantage point in this field, along with any topical subjects.

Examples of pictorial types:

- portrait photographs
- group portraits
- landscape photographs
- panoramic photographs
- aerial photographs
- ethnographic photographs
- expedition photographs
- architectural photographs
- close-up views

4.6 – Unless a thesaurus with more specific terminology is requested by the repository, use topical subject terms from the *Thesaurus of Graphic Materials* (TGM) and the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus* (AAT).

4.7 – In general, use terms from *Library of Congress Subject Headings* only when the purpose of a collection is to illustrate a subject that requires more specific terms than can be found in either TGM or AAT. For example, if a collection of photographs were used as visual aids in teaching geology, then it would be more appropriate to use LCSH subject headings such as "drumlins" or "kames" rather than the broader TGM term "hills."

4.8 – In general, follow the principles of indexing images that appear in the "Introduction to TGM I":

[http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/tgm1/](http://www.loc.gov/rr/print/tgm1/)

Helena Zinkham's "Subject Indexing for Pictures: An Overview" is also a very useful guide to the subject analysis of photographs:


**5 -- Local & Related Info Tab**

**Local Work Information:**

**Accession Number**

5.1 – Consult with the repository to create an accession number format for each collection or group of images to be cataloged. In general, the format might consist of a
capital letter abbreviation for the collection as a prefix, followed by a number of digits (using leading zeros) that will be determined by the number of images in a collection. For example, for the George Augustus Gardner Collection of Photographs, which contains 1,320 photographs, the following format was used: GCP0001, GCP0002, etc., all the way up to GCP1320.

VIA Notes

5.2 – This field can be used to indicate the container number or physical location in the repository of the original photograph.

In House Notes

5.3 – This field can be used for non-public notes (that cannot be viewed by VIA users), such as information about source of acquisition, physical condition, or conservation treatment.

Access Restrictions

5.4 – Consult with the repository about any information to be included in this field.

Examples:

− Access to original photographs and albums in the Edward Bangs Drew Collection is restricted. Photographs and images from the collection may be reproduced only with written permission. Contact the Harvard-Yenching Library for permissions and fees.
− Contact Cabot Science Library for more information.

Related Works

5.5 – This field corresponds to MARC field 580.

Related Information

5.6 – If there is a MARC collection-level record in HOLLIS, a finding aid in OASIS, or some other online resource related to the Work, and it has a persistent identifier (or URN), this field can be used to create a link to the HOLLIS Catalog record, finding aid, or other resource.

Examples:

Description: HOLLIS Catalog record
Link: http://holliscatalog.harvard.edu/F/?func=find-c&CCL_TERM=sys=[HOLLISNumber]
Note: In the above link, the nine-digit HOLLIS Number should be inserted at the end, replacing [HOLLISNumber].

Description: Milman Parry Collection of Oral Literature On-Line Database  
Link:  
http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:hul.eresource:milparco

Description: Soviet Information Bureau photograph collection: Guide  
Link:  
nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:fun00002

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