Scanning Negative Collections at the Library of Congress
Prints & Photographs Division
Background

- 13.9 million items (nearly 12 million photos)
- Electronic imaging since 1980s
  - Optical Disk Pilot Project
  - American Memory
  - National Digital Library Project
  - P&P Online Catalog
- 1.1 million items scanned
- Adding 50,000 new scans/year
Imaging Goals

- Access surrogate
- Reproduction surrogate
- Accommodate most use cases
- Photographic negatives are priority
- Whole collections
Production overview

• Contractors working *in situ*
  - Sinar 54 camera on custom built workstation
  - Custom production software
    • Designed for high throughput
    • Capture and processing stages separate
Imaging specifications

- TIFF-format master
- Minimal tonal processing
- Inventory management
- Metadata
Workflow

- Batches
- Descriptive metadata
- Delivery on CD-R media
- Receipt
- Quality review
- Load to servers (backup, archiving)
Workflow

- LC staff create derivatives
- Linkage to catalog records
- P&P Online Catalog
  - Thumbnail
  - Service JPEGs
  - Master accessible if rights OK
How to obtain copies of this item

TITLE:  S.L. Clemens

CALL NUMBER:  LC-B2- 572-9[P&P]

REPRODUCTION NUMBER:  LC-DIG-ghanbain-02702 (digital file from original neg.)
No known restrictions on publication

MEDIUM:  1 negative : glass ; 5 x 7 in. or smaller

CREATED/PUBLISHED:  1909

NOTES:

Forms part of: George Grantham Bain Collection (Library of Congress)

Title from unverified data provided by the Bain News Service on the negatives or caption cards.

Temp. note: Batch one loaded.

FORMAT:

Glass negatives.

REPOSITORY:  Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division Washington, D.C. 20540 USA

DIGITAL ID:  (digital file from original neg.) gghanbain 02702 http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/gghanbain 02702

CARD #:  ggb2004002702

View the MARC Record for this item.
Negative collections

- Sizes range from 1/2 frame 35mm to 16x20
- Glass, nitrate, acetate carriers
- Usually very homogenous
- Sometimes very fragile, channeled, or outright broken
Information content

- Process images to capture full image content
- Reasonable reproduction
- Permit future adjustments
WHERE WE LIVED
DISCOVERING THE PLACES WE ONCE CALLED HOME
The American Home from 1790 to 1840 | by Jack Larkin
Repository
Digital Asset Management System
Repository
Digital Asset Management System

- We don’t have one
- ...but the metadata and images have been transformed into many packages
- Organized storage on servers
- TIFF header content
- Catalog records & digitizing specs readily available online
- Retaining source contractor-generated metadata
What it is not

• Replacement surrogate
• Absolute reproduction
• Full preservation solution
Some future directions

• Retaining unprocessed master (functional equivalent to RAW, DNG)
• Support for more high-end use cases
• Standardization of practice
• Process control (targets)
• Repository services (ingest, managed storage, object delivery...)
Phil Michel
pmic@loc.gov