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Got Metadata in Your Future? Lessons Learned from Describing a Unique Image Collection

Scott Dutkiewicz

Jessica Serrao

Charlotte Grubbs

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Got Metadata in Your Future?

Lessons Learned from Describing a Unique Image Collection

Scott Dutkiewicz, Jessica Serrao, Charlotte Grubbs
Clemson University Libraries

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What is metadata?

“Any data used to aid in the identification, description and location of networked electronic resources” (International Federation of Library Associations)

There are types of metadata-- descriptive, administrative, and structural being a commonly-mentioned triad.

Our discussion focuses on *descriptive metadata*



Why is metadata important?

Metadata permits one to organize and subsequently search a complex and extensive collection of objects

It helps people accomplish tasks.

- Researchers can find what they are looking for

- Institutions preserve and understand identity and memory



What we will cover today

The Metadata Team and Clemson's Historical Images Collection

Virtual Tours of Digital Collections and CollectiveAccess

Strategies for Image Descriptions

Local Heading Controlled Vocabulary

Leveraging Expertise and Documentation

Challenges and Future Directions



Introducing the *Metadata* and Monographic Resources Team

Scott Dutkiewicz, team lead; Cataloger/becoming a metadata librarian

Jessica Serrao, Metadata Librarian for Digital Collections

Charlotte Grubbs, Metadata Specialist

Janice Prater, Metadata Specialist



Introducing the Clemson University Historical Images

AKA “Series 100”

Link to collection:

<https://digitalcollections.clemson.edu/explore/collections/ua100/>

“spans from 1893-2008 and contains photographs, negatives, slides, postcards, and other media documenting the history and development of Clemson University”

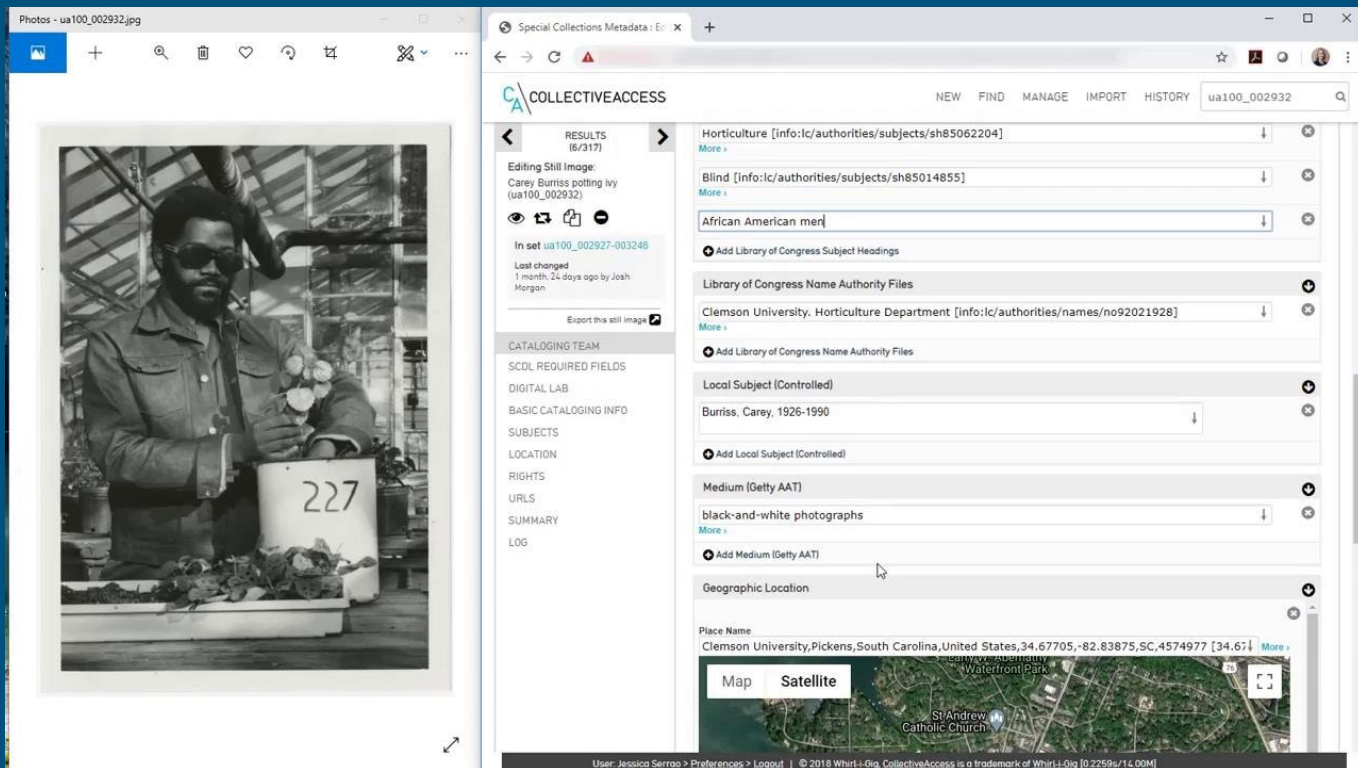
2800 items online. 3400 objects are in the metadata queue.

Virtual tour: Clemson Digital Collections

<https://digitalcollections.clemson.edu/>

The screenshot displays the Clemson University Digital Collections website. The browser address bar shows the URL digitalcollections.clemson.edu/explore/collections/ua100/. The website header includes the Clemson University logo and navigation links for [explore](#), [repositories](#), [services](#), and [about](#). The main content area features a grid of historical photographs, each with a caption. The first row contains seven images, all captioned "R. M. Cooper Library construction". Below this is a section titled "LOST ARCHITECTURE" with a "SEE ALL >" button. This section contains eight images with captions: "Interior, Clemson House, Crowd in Tiger Tavern", "Students putting on Clemson House lawn", "Front entrance of Clemson House Hotel", "Interior, Clemson House Lobby", "Chemistry Building and Fertilizer Building", "Hospital", "Trees and Walkway in Front of Young and Cope Hall", and "Barracks No. 2 a No. 1". A mouse cursor is visible over the "LOST ARCHITECTURE" section. At the bottom of the browser window, a URL is visible: <https://digitalcollections.clemson.edu/single-item-view?cid=CUIR:3340DF172405ABC11E68D637>.

Virtual tour: CollectiveAccess



The screenshot displays the CollectiveAccess interface, which is used for managing digital collections. On the left, a photo viewer shows a black and white photograph of a man wearing sunglasses and a jacket, potting ivy in a white container labeled '227'. The photo viewer includes standard editing tools and a caption: 'Editing Still Image: Carey Burris potting ivy (ua100_002932)'. Below the photo, it indicates the image was last changed 1 month, 24 days ago by Josh Morgan.

The main interface is a metadata form for the item 'ua100_002932'. The form is organized into sections for different types of metadata:

- RESULTS (6/317)**: Shows the current item and provides options to view, refresh, or export.
- CATALOGING TEAM**: Lists roles such as SCDL_REQUIRED FIELDS, DIGITAL LAB, BASIC CATALOGING INFO, SUBJECTS, LOCATION, RIGHTS, URLs, SUMMARY, and LOG.
- Subjects**: Includes 'Horticulture' (info:lc/authorities/subjects/sh85062204) and 'Blind' (info:lc/authorities/subjects/sh85014855). A search field contains 'African American men'.
- Library of Congress Name Authority Files**: Includes 'Clemson University, Horticulture Department' (info:lc/authorities/names/no92021928).
- Local Subject (Controlled)**: Includes 'Burris, Carey, 1926-1990'.
- Medium (Getty AAT)**: Includes 'black-and-white photographs'.
- Geographic Location**: Includes 'Place Name' and a map showing the location at 'Clemson University, Pickens, South Carolina, United States, 34.67705, -82.83875, SC, 4574977 [34.67]'. The map shows 'Waterfront Park' and 'St Andrew Catholic Church'.

The footer of the interface shows the user 'Jessica Serrao' and the copyright notice '© 2018 Whirl-i-Og, CollectiveAccess is a trademark of Whirl-i-Og [0.22596/14.00M]'.



Strategies

How Clemson describes photographs



Strategies to describe buildings

Ask questions!

History

Do you recognize and know the name of the building? When was the photo taken? Has the name changed over time? Where is the building on a map?

Do you know the type and use of the building? Has use changed over time?

Vocabulary

Is the structure in the Library of Congress Name Authority File?

Are you using a generic heading across the collection? (LCSH: College buildings)

Is the building listed in Geonames?



Buildings--advanced considerations

Depending on purpose of the collection, additional information may be desired:

Entities

Architect

Builder/contractor

Donor

Dates

Groundbreaking

Construction/renovation/demolition

Dedication/opening

Other

Architectural style

Alternate names for building

If a dwelling, current or former owners/occupants





Image: Clemson House ua100_000736

Clemson House was already in Name Authority File!

Clemson House (Clemson, S.C.)

Type of building = Dormitories--South Carolina (thanks to NAF)

Building is in Geonames!

Working title: Clemson House

BUT this is an aerial view, which is not typical



Metadata for “Clemson House”

Title: Aerial view of Clemson House, 1978

Date created: 1978

Topics: Clemson House (Clemson, S.C.)

Dormitories

College buildings

Medium: Aerial photographs

GeoNames: Clemson House,Pickens,South Carolina,United States,34.68126,-82.834,SC,11237661 [34.68126,-82.834]



BUT! Something dramatic happened on December 3, 2018





Aerial view of Clemson House

On Monday, December 4, every image of Clemson House needed revision

Why? Building no longer existed (and there are many others)

How do we collocate such buildings?

LCSH has a term for that: “Lost architecture”

Metadata for buildings, ideally, keeps up with the current architectural situation!

Strategies to describe people in photographs

- ★ Keep formatting consistent across collection(s).
- ★ Focus on **describing the known** and **not the unknown**.
- ★ Do not use question marks (?) as placeholders for unidentified persons. Instead use “unidentified.”
- ★ For large groups with many known names, follow below formatting:
 - Left to right -
 - Back row left to right -
 - Standing left to right -
- ★ For large groups with few known names, follow parenthetical formatting:
 - President James Barker (third from right) with students
 - Peter Jones (seated center)
- ★ For small groups with most or all people identified, follow parenthetical formatting or list with directionals:
 - John Smith (left) with Jane Doe
 - Fred Lee (standing left), Olive Lee (seated), and Joe Johnson (standing right)
 - On back: Left to right - A. B. Smith, T. L. Jones, John Hughes

Strategies to describe people

TITLE

Group portrait of the Big Five cadets at the fair, 1913

DESCRIPTION

Left to right - Charles John "Tin" Shannon, Walter A. "Walt" Bigby, Monroe Boyce "Judge" Bailey, Tom "Major" Spratt, and Warren Thomas "Cap" White. On back: The "Big Five" at the "Fair"

LOCAL SUBJECTS

Shannon, Charles John

Bigby, Walter A. (Walter Ashbury), 1894-1973

Bailey, Monroe Boyce, 1894-1976

Spratt, Tom

White, Warren Thomas, 1895-1973

LC SUBJECT HEADING

Military cadets



Strategies to describe people

TITLE

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Bigby, Walter A. (Walter Ashbury), 1894-1973
Bailey, Monroe Boyce, 1894-1976
Spratt, Tom
White, Warren Thomas, 1895-1973

LC SUBJECT HEADING

Military cadets



On back: From left to right; "Tim" Shannon; "Walt" Begley [illegible]; "Judge" Bailey; "Major" Sjratt [illegible]; "Lafa" White [illegible]; The "Big Five" at the "Fair" 1913



Local subject headings

- Standardized descriptive access points unique to your collection(s).
- Used when subject is **not** in the Library of Congress Authorities (LCNAF or LCSH)
- Establishing guidelines for the creation of local headings at the beginning of your project will save you headaches down the road!

Managing local headings in CollectiveAccess

Successfully utilizing local subject headings requires managing a **Controlled Vocabulary**, an organized list of terms and phrases used to index content and/or retrieve content through browsing and searching.

Current location > Manage > Lists & vocabularies > Search


Search: Q Search


Hierarchy

Add under Local Subject (local_subjects) ▼ new +

Loan label type values (loan_types) >	Abbeville County Club (sccleucl_lh_0000001)
Local Subject (local_subjects) ▼ >	Abernathy, Warren H. (Warren Henry), 1923-2009 (sccleucl_lh_0000002)
Media Types (media_types) ▼ >	Addison, Clarence Lee Benjamin, 1933-2005 (sccleucl_lh_0000003)
Movement type values (movement_types) >	Agnew, Hugh (Edwin Hugh), 1894-1977 (sccleucl_lh_0000004)
Object access statuses (access_statuses) >	Agricultural Engineering Building (Clemson, S.C. : 1950-1971)
Object acquisition types (object_acq_types) >	

Anatomy of a local heading record

Preferred labels 

Item name (singular) 

Wylie, William Harry, 1888-1931 **Subject name**


Item name (plural)


Wylie, William Harry, 1888-1931

Description

First identified ua100_003247. Full name and place of birth taken from Clemson College Annual 1907. Birth and death dates taken from Find a Grave, via Ancestry: <https://www.findagrave.com/memorial/169122268>.

Subject description, including original image and additional identification sources.

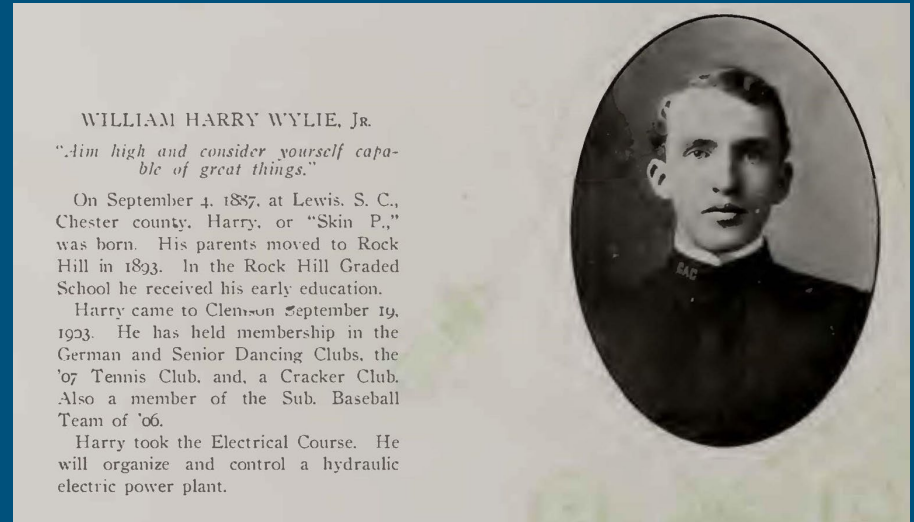
Identifier **Unique identifier** 

sccleucl_lh_0000914  Changing this value may break parts of the system configuration

Subject identification resources

Institutional resources: Collections unique to your institution, including records, databases and digital collections.

Ex. TAPS, The Tiger, Board of Trustees minutes, maps, and other university publications.



Clemson College Annual, 1907

Subject identification resources, cont'd

William Harry Wylie Jr
in the U.S., Find A Grave Index, 1600s-Current



Go to website

Want to get involved? Click here!

Name:	William Harry Wylie Jr
Birth Date:	4 Sep 1888
Birth Place:	Rock Hill, York County, South Carolina, United States of America
Death Date:	23 Sep 1931
Death Place:	Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, United States of America
Cemetery:	Elmwood Cemetery
Burial or Cremation Place:	Charlotte, Mecklenburg County, North Carolina, United States of America
Has Bio?:	N
Father:	William Harrison Wylie
Mother:	Amelia Jane Wylie
URL:	https://www.findagrave.com/mem...

Suggested Records

- North Carolina, Death Certificates, 1909-1976
W Harry Wylie
- 1930 United States Federal Census
William H Wylie
- North Carolina, Marriage Records, 1741-2011
William Hary Wylie
- U.S., Social Security Applications and Claims Index, 1936-2007
William H Wylie
- North Carolina, Death Certificates, 1909-1976
W Harry Wylie
- North Carolina, Death Certificates, 1909-1976
William H Wylie
- North Carolina, Deaths, 1906-1930
W Harry Wylie

External resources: Collections and research databases available to the public.

Ex. Ancestry, National Archives, census information.



Leveraging expertise across the Libraries

- Metadata isn't solo work! What other library or university departments may be able to contribute metadata for your digital collection(s)?
 - SCA provided local heading: [Clemson Agricultural College of South Carolina. Corps of Cadets. Battalion, 1st. Company B. Platoon, 2nd](#)
- Metadata workflows will require different people and teams with different areas of expertise to collaborate, from the archivist working with the original document or image, to the digitization specialist, to the metadata practitioner and the library web developer.



Metadata documentation: Write it down and follow it

Supports your work and communicates across units

Project charter: Set the expectations, resources and timeline for the project for all stakeholders.

Metadata Application Profile: Guides metadata providers with field by field instructions and vocabularies. A place to record decisions.



Challenges We Still Face

Access Points

SUBJECT HEADINGS

Selecting appropriate terms

ENTITIES

Messy data!

Guidelines for creation

DIFFERENCE BETWEEN THE TWO



Challenges We Still Face

Lack of Original
Description

DERIVING TITLES

Formulating based on photo
content, not on context

Relying on Special Collections
& Archives expertise

AVOIDING ASSUMPTIONS



Challenges We Still Face

Metadata Revisions

PROCESS

Manual

Multiple steps

Multiple humans





Future directions



Questions

Scott Dutkiewicz

scottmd@clemson.edu

Jessica Serrao

jserrao@clemson.edu

Charlotte Grubbs

grubbs4@clemson.edu

Resources

Clemson Libraries Digital Project Charter template

<http://bit.ly/CUL-Project-Charter>

Clemson Libraries Metadata Application Profile

<http://bit.ly/CUL-Metadata-Application-Profile>

Clemson Digital Collections

<https://digitalcollections.clemson.edu/>

CollectiveAccess

<https://www.collectiveaccess.org/>