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

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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

CU at the Conference | 5 June 2020

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”

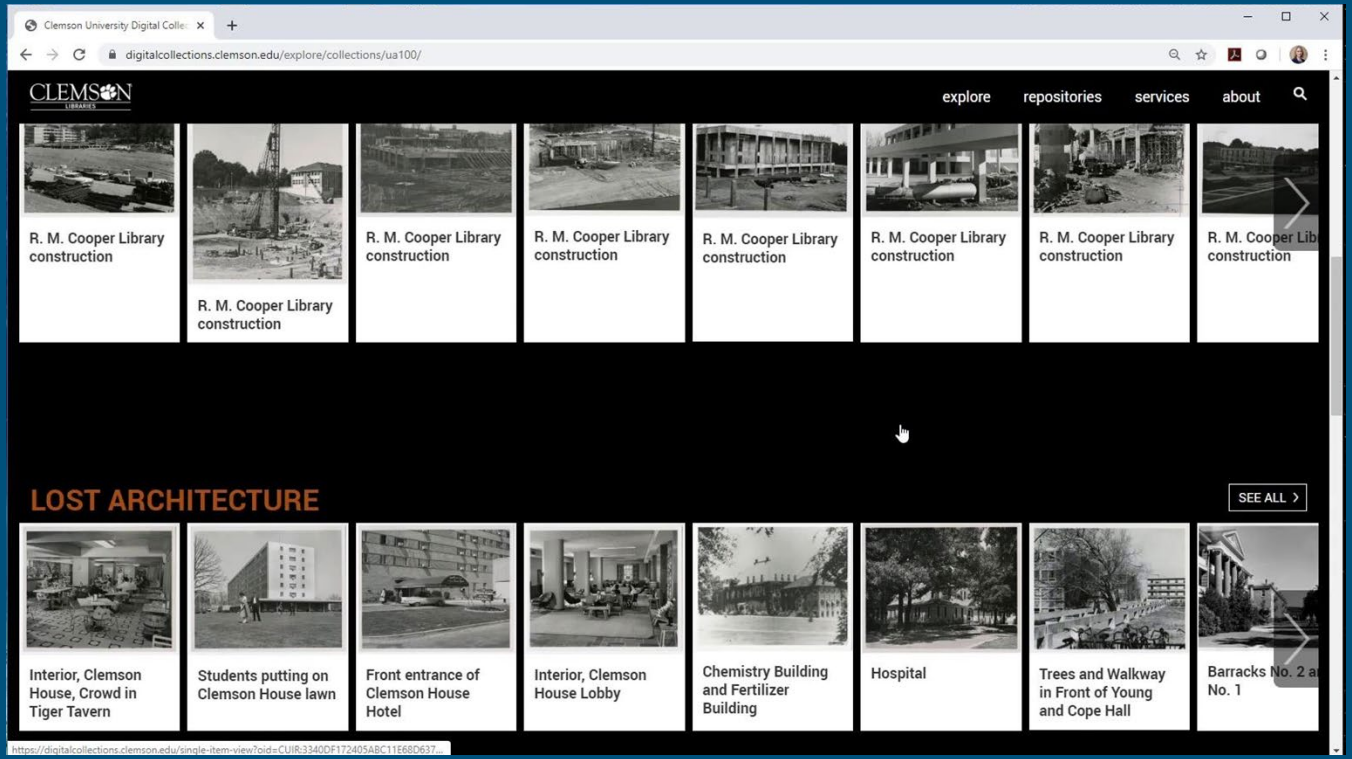
Link to collection:
https://digitalcollections.clemson.edu/explore/collections/ua100/

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

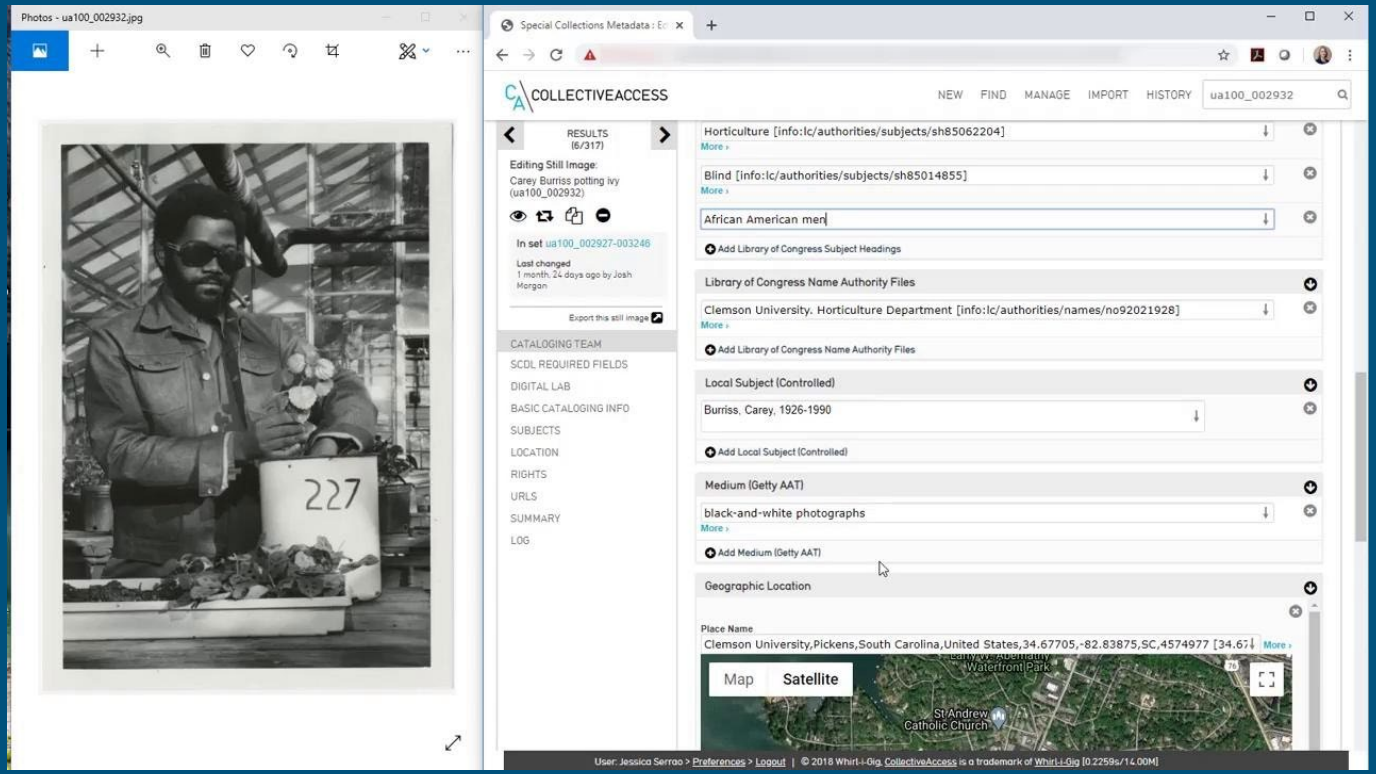
2800 items online. 3400 objects are in the metadata queue.

Virtual tour: Clemson Digital Collections

https://digitalcollections.clemson.edu/



Virtual tour: CollectiveAccess



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

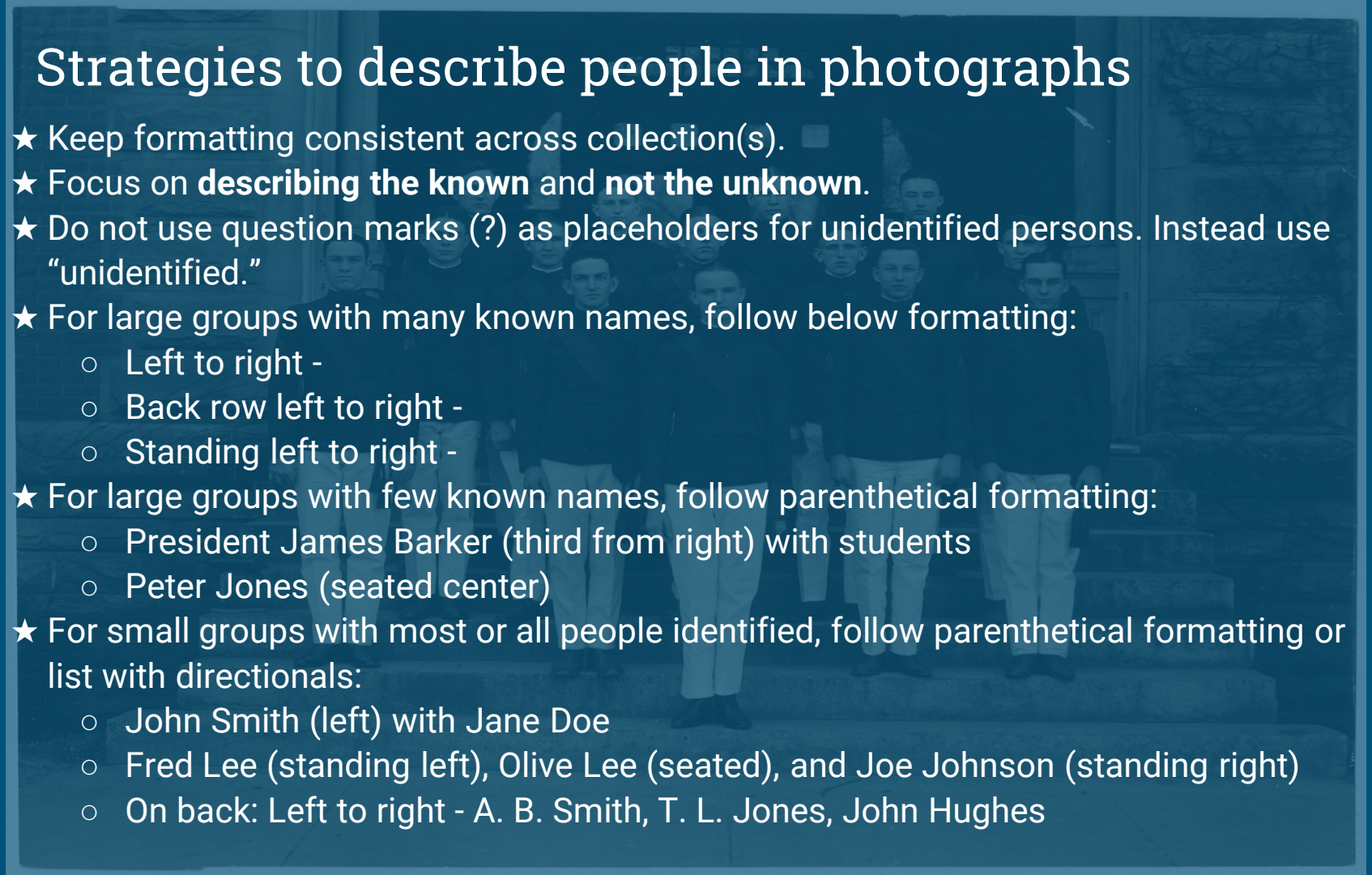
Why? Building no longer existed (and there are many others)

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

IDENTIFIER ua100_003078

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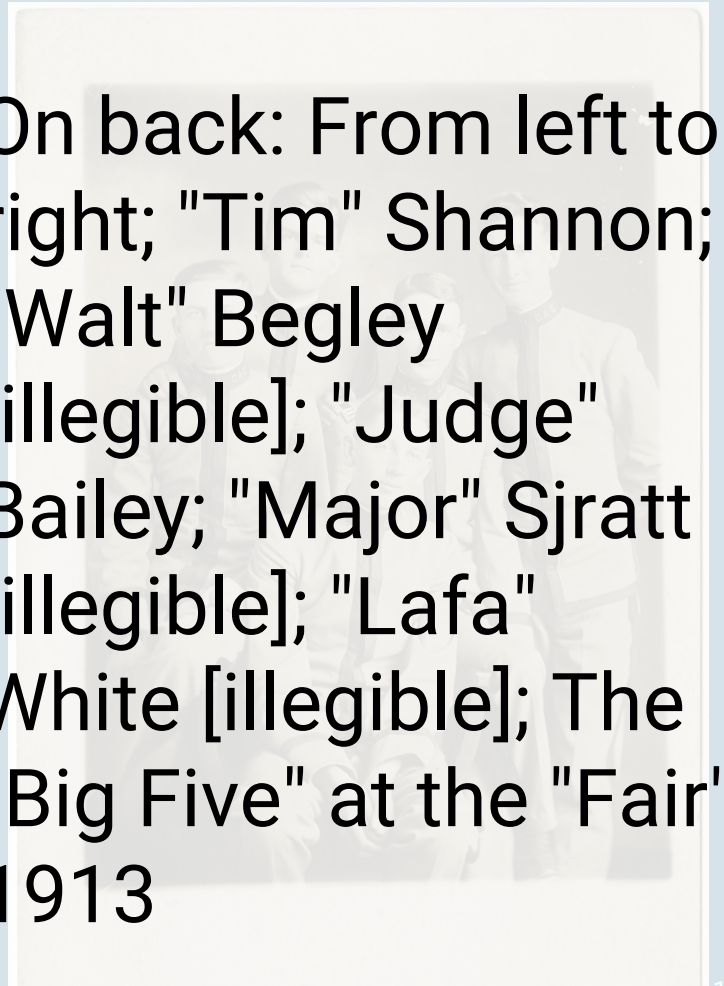


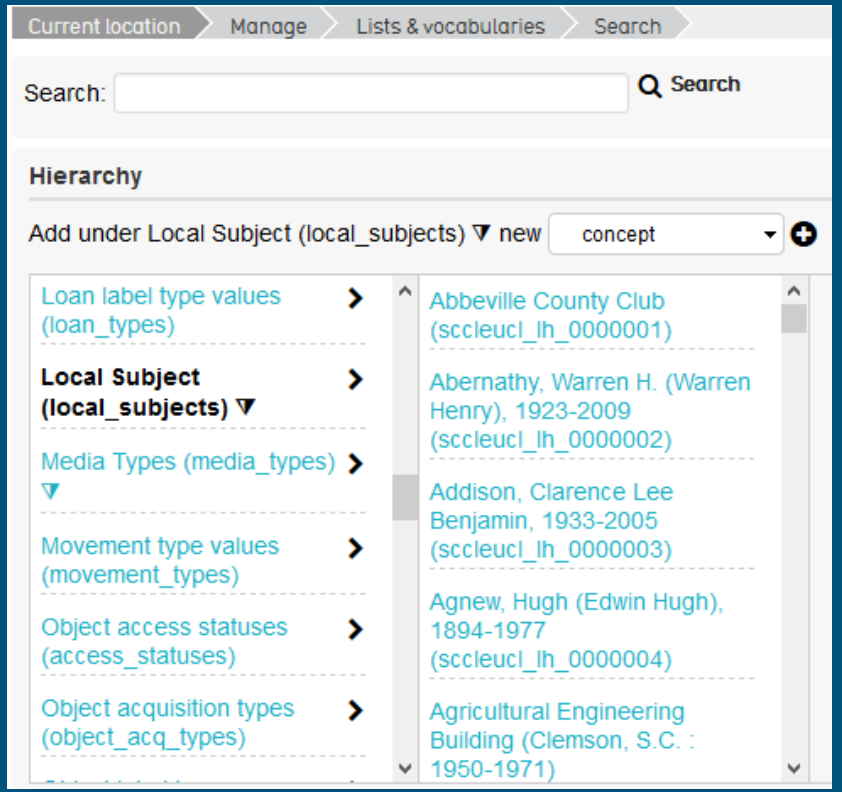
IDENTIFIER ua100_003078

Local subject headings

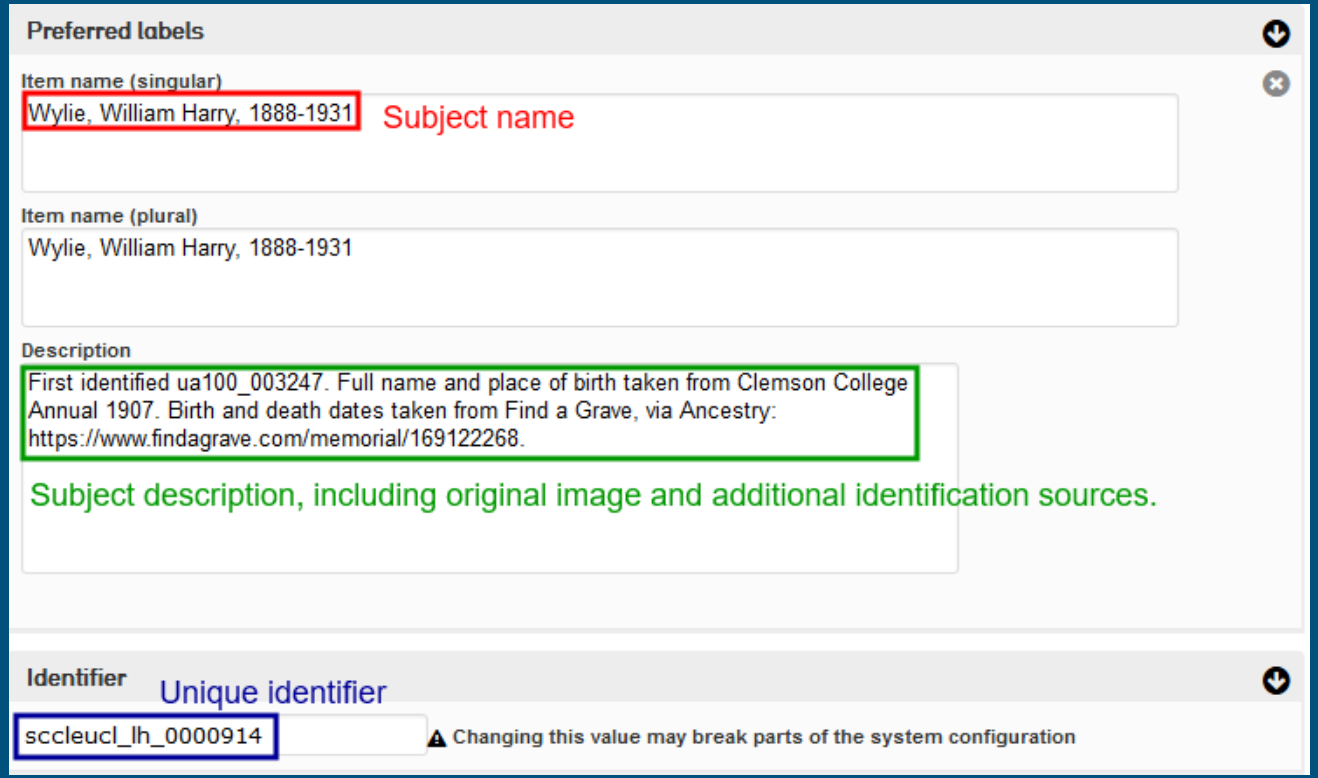
- Standardized descriptive access points unique to your collection(s).
- Used when subject is not in the Library of Congress Authorities (LCNAF or LCSH)
- Establishing guidelines for the creation of local headings at the beginning of your project will save you headaches down the road!

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.



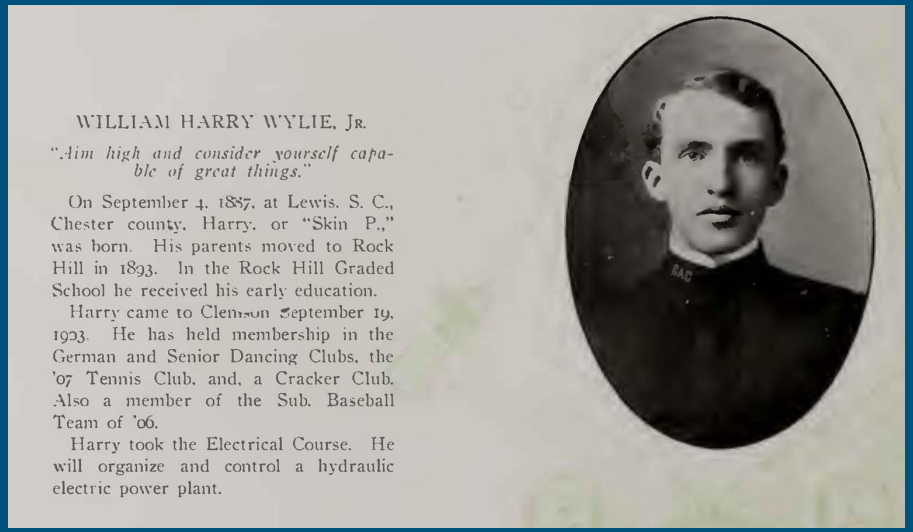
Anatomy of a local heading record



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.



WILLIAM HARRY WYLIE, JR.

"Aim high and consider yourself capable of great things."

On September 4, 1887, at Lewis, S. C., Chester county, Harry, or "Skin P.," was born. His parents moved to Rock Hill in 1893. In the Rock Hill Graded School he received his early education.

Harry came to Clemson September 19, 1903. He has held membership in the German and Senior Dancing Clubs, the '07 Tennis Club, and, a Cracker Club. Also a member of the Sub. Baseball Team of '06.

Harry took the Electrical Course. He will organize and control a hydraulic electric power plant.

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

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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/