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"All the World's a Stage" and Each Has a Role to Play: A Collaborative Cross-Unit Metadata Project in Five Acts

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"All the world 's a stage" and each has a role to play

A collaborative cross-unit metadata project in five acts

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Clemson University Libraries

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Dramatis personae
(In order of appearance)

The Play

Setting the Stage

SETTING THE STAGE The James F. Byrnes Collection

James F. Byrnes with Maude Busch Byrnes on a donkey and Haitian woman in front of the NCO Club, Port-au-Prince, Haiti, 1938 (mss90_1561)

COVID-19 and WFH

High profile political collection

2,425 photographs

Manageable size

Basic metadata completed

Good entry-level project
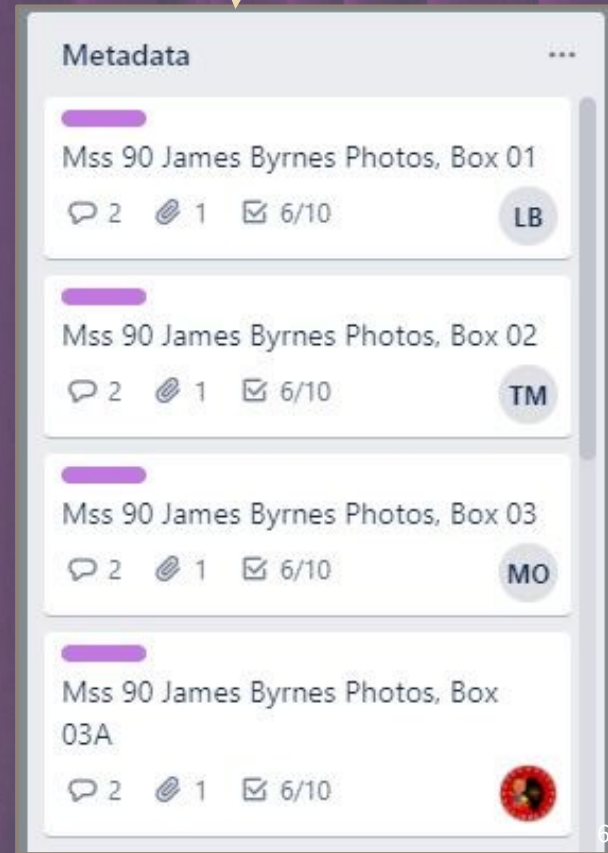
ACT I
Documentation

ACT I Documentation

Trello

Project Charter

CLEMSON LIBRARIES

Metadata Application Profile for Digital Collections

Metadata:

Metadata records are maintained in CollectiveAccess (CA). Descriptive metadata will be assigned at the item level. Follow guidelines for metadata creation as outlined in the Clemson Libraries Metadata Application Profile for Digital Collections. Instructions below are particular to this collection and are to be followed in addition to the instructions in the Metadata Application Profile.

Metadata Elements

Element	Instructions	Assigned By
Object identifier	Format as Mss90_####. Identifier is Special Collections & Archives Collection ID followed by underscore and 4-digit sequential numbering scheme.	Digital Projects Manager (Josh Morgan) to assign upon initial import into CA and batch apply to digital files.
Title	Derive from information on back of photographs or based on content of image. Include basic who/what/where information, and add dates to end of titles.	Metadata partner to assess accuracy, revise if necessary.
Cataloging Status	Following input standards in the Metadata Application Profile.	Metadata partner to supply status of

Metadata ...

Mss 90 James Byrnes Photos, Box 01
💬 2 📎 1 ☑ 6/10 LB

Mss 90 James Byrnes Photos, Box 02
💬 2 📎 1 ☑ 6/10 TM

Mss 90 James Byrnes Photos, Box 03
💬 2 📎 1 ☑ 6/10 MO

Mss 90 James Byrnes Photos, Box 03A
💬 2 📎 1 ☑ 6/10

ACT II
Orientation

ACT II SCENE I
Orientation

What does metadata do?

Enables precise, reliable, comprehensive retrieval of data and documents

Facilitates access to diverse information resources

Makes these resources more discoverable to potential researchers

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CLEMSON LIBRARIES — Technical Services & Collection Management

TSCM Home › Teams › Metadata and Monographic Resources › How-To Guide to Clemson Digital Collections …

How-To Guide to Clemson Digital Collections Metadata

This guide will walk you through how to get started creating descriptive metadata for Clemson digital collections.

Learn and Prepare

1. Review the Libraries' Digital Projects webpage. This will give you an overview of the digital projects workflow of which you will be a part.
2. Review the Project Charter for the collection you are assigned. Pay close attention to the Metadata section for project-specific guidelines to follow. These guidelines, in partnership with the Clemson Libraries Metadata Application Profile for Digital Collections (linked in 4.), will be your foundation for creating metadata.
3. Look over the two websites where researchers use Clemson's digital collections: Clemson University Libraries Digital Collections (images) and TigerPrints Special Collections and Archives Online Collections (documents). Browse the collections, view items and their metadata, and test out the facets on the left of your search results. This will help you understand how the metadata you create will display and act online.
4. Read the Clemson Libraries Metadata Application Profile for Digital Collections. This extensive document outlines the metadata elements we use and how to assign metadata for all digital collections.
   a. This is a long document, but make sure to read Section A. Elements Overview, Section B. Definition and Application of Elements, and Appendix A. Best Practices.

Set Up Your Tech

ACT II SCENE II
Orientation

ACT II SCENE III
Orientation

Mentor Expectations

Get a long-neglected collection completed

Educate faculty and staff outside the team about metadata

After initial orientation stage, minimal intervention by mentors

Understand the nuts & bolts of the project

Learn how metadata is created at Clemson

Acquire and update skill sets

Have FUN!

ACT II SCENE IV Orientation

Partner Expectations
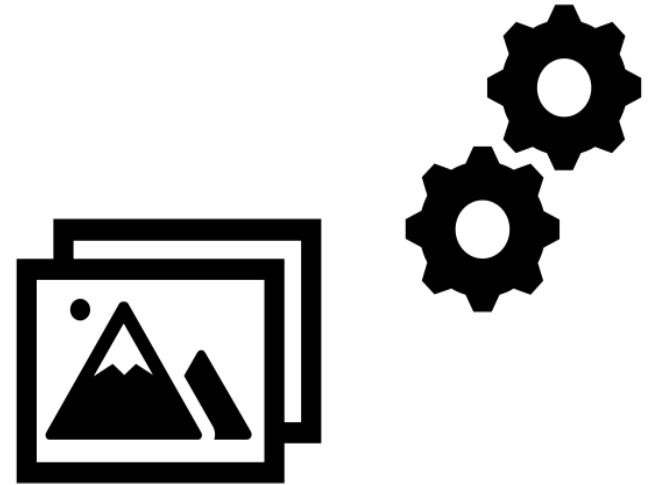
ACT III
Creating Metadata

Metadata creation was a collaborative effort between mentors and partners.

- Some partners preferred one-on-one training in Collective Access post-orientation
- While methods and styles varied based on mentor-partner relationship, we found CONSISTENT COMMUNICATION WAS KEY TO CONSISTENT METADATA
- Partners benefitted from dedicated Teams channel for project questions

ACT III SCENE I
Creating Metadata

The Mentors' View

Partners had questions about issues great and small:

- how to find the balance between providing too much metadata but yet providing "enough" description? Or, how much information should you put in a title?
- How to cope with people who were unidentified
- Verifying that research done to provide context or to identify people was "enough" and "correct." Jumping down rabbit holes was allowed!

ACT III SCENE II
Creating Metadata

The Partners' View

What did these men have to do with James F. Byrnes?

Tom Connally and Scott W. Lucas with journalist Selden Menefee, 1946 July 27 (mss90_0094)

ACT III SCENE III
Creating Metadata

Challenging Images

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ACT IV
Metadata Review

Quality control was ongoing process, aimed at giving partners actionable feedback.

Partners complete set # of records

⬇

Mentors review records

⬇

Mentors give feedback to partners

⬇

Partners revise records, make adjustments to process as necessary

ACT IV SCENE I
Metadata Review

Mentors' Perspectives

ACT IV SCENE II
Metadata Review

Capitol Theatre marquee, "Homes for Today," circa 1939 (Mss90_0518)

Partners' Perspectives

"Reviews were done in sections as we worked instead of at the end"-Partners.

"Mentors gave timely responses that allowed us to learn as we worked and built our confidence"- Partners

"I was able to track what I learned from paced reviews"- Partner Jessica Scott

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ACT V
What We Learned

New Access Point

Unidentified persons (local heading)

vs

Anonymous persons (LCSH)

Foreign Language Translations

Hebrew   "I"I"OHI   (Scott)

French   Rue que les Allemands ont fait sauter (Lisa)

Russian   Война и мир (library colleague and Clemson Russian language program)

ACT V SCENE I
What Mentors Learned

Adopting New Practices

Partners were careful and responsive to instruction by mentors

Partners performed valuable research

Partner-mentor communication

Partners who finished assignments wanted to do more!

ACT V SCENE II
What Mentors Learned

What Went Well

Mentors needed to be more hands-on during the metadata creation process than expected.

Projected completion date was inaccurate - initial expectations were August, but timeline stretched as partners returned to regular work.

Mentors who had not done quality control before were a little overwhelmed.

Some issues with consistency of metadata quality between boxes.

ACT V SCENE III
What Mentors Learned

What Could Be Done Better… Honestly

Excellent instructional documentation for the project

Communication with mentors

Our understanding of the metadata process

Training and use of CollectiveAccess

ACT V SCENE IV
What Partners Learned

What Went Well

More emphasis/training on the question "How much information is enough?"

Cross sharing of difficult unidentified individuals
Common board for unidentified individuals

Overall the metadata project was a smashing success

ACT V SCENE V
What Partners Learned
What Could Be Done Better… Honestly

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Coming Attraction!

James F. Byrnes Photographs Collection

Coming to a website near you at
digitalcollections.clemson.edu

Cast

Lisa Bodenheimer
Brenda Burk
Jim Cross
Susan Hiott
Bree Johnson
Teresa McCoy
Melissa O'Neill
Krista Oldham
Carl Redd
Clayton Ruminski
Jessica S. Scott
Allison Shultz
Nolan Smith
Laurie Varenhorst
Michelle Voyles

Thanks!

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Credits and Resources

Photographic images are from Mss 90, James F. Byrnes Papers, Special Collections, Clemson University Libraries, Clemson, SC. To be published in the digital collections at https://digitalcollections.clemson.edu/

Clemson Libraries Digital Project Charter template
http://bit.ly/CUL-Project-Charter

Clemson Libraries Metadata Application Profile
http://bit.ly/CUL-Metadata-Application-Profile

CollectiveAccess
https://www.collectiveaccess.org/