Museum and Archival Cataloging of Ethnographic and Ethnohistorical Photographs: An Introductory Survey of the State of the Art

Museums and archives frequently include within their holdings collections of photographs that can be of great ethnographic and ethnohistorical value. One of the most frustrating problems facing anyone who would like to utilize these photographs for research purposes or for illustrative purposes is the problem of locating the appropriate ones. There are, in reality, two major problems involved: first, identifying the museums or archives that have photographs that are pertinent to your research needs, and second, locating the photographs within any particular museum or archive collection.

In recent years there have been a number of projects in museums and archives around the world the intent of which is to more fully catalogue holdings within museums and archives and to make whatever form of index that is produced more available to other museums, archives, and other interested parties. Recent developments in the application of computer technology and computer programming to the cross-indexing of photographic holdings have been coupled with the introduction of video disc equipment to store images of photographs and the descriptive data which pertain to them. There are two major advantages of this union between computer and video disc: accessibility and replicability.

The use of computers in locating images stored on a video disc not only allows rapid location of an item stored, but it also allows a more sophisticated cross-indexing of the identifying information pertaining to the photograph. Since photographs often contain a number of subject matters each one of which may be of some importance to a researcher, the cross-referential system can be expanded beyond that possible in a reference system maintained by hand. The use of computers in a cross-indexing system will be considered a blessing by many individuals who have found much to their chagrin that photographs are often cross-indexed in a manually-maintained system only by photographer or by collection. The use of computers in cross-indexing will increase the chances that searches of holdings will locate the pertinent photographs.

The replicability of video discs coupled with their low cost and enormous capacity will allow interested museums and archives to purchase duplicates of the video disc indexes to the holdings of other museums and archives. These indexes will consist of three elements: the computer-based cross-referential set of categories used in identifying the system upon which the photographs are catalogued, the video disc images replicating the photographs, and the video disc images of the descriptors and identifiers which accompany individual photographs.

At some point in the not too distant future, individuals interested in initiating a research project involving ethnographic or ethnohistorical photographs will simply travel to the nearest museum which has a set of video disc indexes from a wide variety of other museums and archives. Then, utilizing a search procedure based on his/her own subject of inquiry, he/she can examine a video disc image on a television screen of the photographs in a number of collections throughout the world which pertain to that subject of inquiry.

In preparing this issue of the SAVICOM NEWSLETTER, I approached a number of individuals in prominent museums and archives in the United States and Canada and asked them for a statement indicating how ethnographic and ethnohistorical photographs were catalogued in their collection and for some indication of the changes in cataloging procedures in their institution. I received a very positive response from these individuals and I would like to express my appreciation to them for providing the following original contributions.

Jack R. Rollwagen
Two-Level Control of Photographic Collections in the National Anthropological Archives

James R. Glenn, Archivist

and

Judith Luskey, NAA Inventory Data Coordinator
National Anthropological Archives
Smithsonian Institution

The Smithsonian’s National Anthropological Archives (NAA) succeeds the archives of the Bureau of American Ethnology and incorporates documents of the Institution’s Department of Anthropology and outside donors. It includes photographs by anthropologists, early government expeditions, and professional and amateur photographers. Annually, through correspondence, visits, and telephone inquiries, three thousand researchers seek images from its 250,000 photographs. Most researchers are interested in the 100,000 ethnographical items, especially the large number of photographs that concern North American Indians. The selection is growing, in some years by as many as 50,000 ethnological, archeological, and physical anthropological items.

Earlier techniques for managing this valuable resource were essentially those of a librarian. The chief feature, a card catalog, described individual items and indexed elements of description. The goal was to bring all material under its control. In 1972, constant influx of material and backlogs of unprocessed collections necessitated a new approach. Borrowing from archival practices, it concentrates on meaningful aggregates—collections defined as donors’ accumulations. The older techniques, however, have not been abandoned. All photographs are described at the collection level with candid admission that it will be the greatest control for some. Selected materials is described, in addition, by item. Although the scheme is explicable in terms of archivists’ practices, item control retains such importance it is perhaps more accurately said to be a combination of librarians’ and archivists’ methods, a union that preserves values and eliminates disadvantages of each.

NAA’s concern for control rests on the realization that, for the anthropologist, images of cultures that have changed or vanished hold not only their history but the history of anthropology as well. Although overall concern for the collections and for efficiency plays an important part in NAA’s scheme, it also rests on three other considerations that are intended to serve the researcher. First is concern for protection of maximum research value of the material. In this, conservation practices play their part, as does the larger archival scheme of arranging and describing material in terms of its provenience. It also concerns safeguarding information implied in the associations of material created as original collectors arranged their photographs, recorded data about them, and thus included their own interests and understandings. Second is concern with avenues of access that make materials available to the greatest number of researchers. NAA has attempted to maximize its elements of control in order to remove obstacles. The nature of the archives leads to emphasis on anthropologists’ needs, but outstanding needs of other researchers are also considered. Third is concern for adequacy and scientific accuracy of data. This does not involve the alteration of historical information however unscientific it may be. An effort is made through finding aids, however, to bring old, possibly discredited understandings into line with newer ones when these involve controls on the material.

At the higher level of control, NAA achieves its purposes by storing and describing collections as units. If they have entered the archives as part of manuscript collections or official records, the photographs are maintained as part of the larger units. Meaningful arrangements within series of photographs are preserved. These lacking, arrangements are devised. They grow from the nature of the material but with due consideration given subcollections, tribes, culture features, and historical events. A uniform, possibly Procrustean, scheme has been avoided. Minimal description includes a title, incorporating the name of a collector, photographer, or organization, dates, size; physical types; and references to more detailed finding aids. Further description, prepared as time allows, includes historical background and a list of the collection’s divisions. Further analyses may be included and notes about photographers and subjects appended. Generally, such descriptions are presented in finding aids similar to the registers prepared by the Manuscript Division of the Library of Congress.

Primacy is given this level of control. Implied is dependence on provenience data in conducting searches and researchers’ prior preparation, willingness to work closely with the staff, and readiness to follow up clues and search for material. Admittedly, some researchers, trained in the use of library catalogs, have difficulty in making the necessary adjustments required by this approach. Yet, it promotes rapid establishment of minimal controls and allows for delays entailed in special research for data and consultations with experts. It provides overviews especially required for further processing.
and preserves data implied in existing arrangements. Descriptions, in a narrative style of unrestricted length, detail significant historical data. Researchers interested in particular collections are easily served.

NAA's item-level control is now in transition. The older method, the card catalog, describes copy negatives. Selection of material to be entered is made, in part, upon accessioning. Rare material is cataloged immediately and other material whose demand is virtually certain is noted for eventual cataloging. In part, selection is by researchers. As orders are placed for reproductions, cataloging is scheduled. This especially simplifies responses to requests created by publication of photographs.

The illustration of a main-entry card (Figure 2) shows the data recorded for the photograph included as Figure 1. Such cards, normally filed by tribe or place, are indexed by cross-references from names of photographers and photographic subjects. Both main-entries and cross-references are filed in a single alphabetical series. Copy prints, whose arrangement parallels the main-entry cards, are available for researchers' examination unless they have special reasons for seeing the originals. Another set of cards is arranged numerically by negative number. Thus composed, the catalog makes access easy. If demands, however, rather complete data about each photograph and these are often not readily available. The problem of manually preparing and filing the cards is one unto itself.

The newer method of item control, centering on computer-produced catalogs, was introduced in 1979 after Congress mandated an inventory of Smithsonian holdings. Throughout much of the Institution, the inventory has employed automatic data processing techniques (ADP). In the National Museum of Natural History, of which NAA is a part, ADP Inventory has been limited to the Smithsonian's own Self-Generating Master System (SELGEM). This system was designed to provide a generalized approach for information storage, management, and retrieval especially for museums whose collections grow rapidly. SELGEM has the ability to adjust a master file record on a spontaneous basis and accommodates unanticipated data without reprogramming.

The inventory places priority on items of high monetary value. These are to be brought under item-level control. Remaining materials may be controlled as aggregates. This, of course, fits NAA's general approach quite well. Moreover, NAA's materials of greatest monetary value - especially artwork and photographs - are those for which item control will probably yield the greatest return in research value. Since only selected series of photographs meet the criterion, the description of only 69,000 items will be entered on the computer as part of inventory. In contrast to the card catalog, the descriptions pertain to original items, not copy negatives. The selected series are rich in nineteenth- and early twentieth-century prints of North American Indians and other peoples of the world, including images by anthropologists like Matilda Coxe Stevenson, James Mooney, Franz Boas, Ales Hrdlicka, Truman Michelson, and John R. Swanton. Also included is a collection of glass negatives that include works by John K. Hillers, William Henry Jackson, Julian Vannerson and Samuel A. Cohner, A. Zeno Shindler, Charles M. Bell, and De Lancey W. Gill. Many of these photographs are not now under catalog control and most are frequently examined by researchers.

The program has allowed a fresh start in NAA's item-level control. To determine data elements to allow maximum use of the material, a survey of photographs was undertaken, knowledge of the staff tapped, and researchers' demands noted. At first, maximum data elements were established. Many were the familiar ones included in the card catalog, but many new ones were added. Altogether they numbered thirty-two. Restraints of time and money -- the target date for completion of inventory is May, 1983, and costs have to be kept around one dollar per item -- forced the deletion of certain marginally valuable categories concerned with signatures, annotations, and publication data. Elements concerning exposure, camera, lens, and weather conditions were never considered seriously, for little is known about these in relation to NAA's photographs. A rather conspicuous omission is subject categories concerned with culture features and proper names. These were found too complex and time consuming because of inventory production requirements. In the near future, however, they will be included as a separate program. Twenty-one categories remain, and they have been incorporated in a form that simplifies abstraction and recording of data (Figure 3).

With both the older and newer controls, uniformity of terminology has been of prime importance. North American Indian names are based on F. W. Hodge's HANDBOOK OF AMERICAN INDIANS NORTH OF MEXICO (Bureau of American Ethnology Bulletin 30), with modifications drawn from George P. Murdock and Timothy J. Leary's ETHNOGRAPHIC BIBLIOGRAPHY OF NORTH AMERICA and the Smithsonian's new HANDBOOK OF NORTH AMERICAN INDIANS,
edited by William C. Sturtevant. Names of groups outside North America are based on Murdock’s OUTLINE OF WORLD CULTURES. Other terms are controlled through NAA’s own authority file and a growing list of terms for culture features. The latter is being developed from researchers’ requests, the staff’s knowledge of the holdings, the various published and unpublished lists. It is anticipated that the computer project itself will contribute significantly to the standardization of terminology.

Abstraction of data is by direct observation of the objects. For inventory, only information contained on the photographs is recorded in so far as possible. Since most contain little data, however, it is frequently necessary for the processor to use certain standard sources such as Hodge’s and Sturtevant’s handbooks. Completed data sheets are edited and then entered on the computer in lots of five hundred. The computer stores them in a temporary file where they can be further edited before being merged with the full data base. At this point, master lists of all data or lists of selected material can be drawn, including both simple reports and those providing various combinations of data. It is possible, for example, to have indexes of photographs by a given photographer. It is also possible to have descriptions arranged by tribe and thereunder chronologically.

One of the obvious advantages of computerized controls is great flexibility in locating photographs and providing researchers with information about NAA’s holdings. Although entry of data is not simple, use of the computer eliminates many purely clerical problems involved in the manually produced card catalog. Notably, correction has become such a relatively easy matter that the hesitancy to enter questionable data (properly identified as such) has disappeared. The ADP Inventory Program, however, does not allow the rather long, free-form historical narratives sometimes necessary in describing the provenience of a collection or providing special remarks. It is also sufficiently laborious and expensive that NAA will not use it for all its photographs. The project will continue at a reduced level beyond its inventory phase and additional descriptions will be computerized.

Computerization also will not solve all problems of imperfect documentation. NAA will continue to improve data through research of the staff, arrangements of exchange with other repositories, and appeals help from researchers. Computerization does promise new ways of locating and comparing material dispersed widely through the collections. This should also help with the improvement of data.

Since 1972, NAA has tested its controls. To do this it has had a staff averaging around ten, most of whom have primary duties other than management of photographs. Currently, only two persons devote full time to describing them. By proceeding from minimal collection control to nearly maximal item control, however, NAA has brought order to its backlog and new collections. In fact, all material is accessible to researchers. Around 30,000 photographs are now described in the card catalog; and, by 1983, the inventory project will have extended control to more than twice that number. The transition from full reliance on the card catalog to full reliance on computer-produced catalogs is also well under way.

Of greater importance than mere numbers in measuring success is the great satisfaction expressed by researchers. That is the primary goal of the National Anthropological Archives.

NOTE: Readers who wish additional information may write for Glenn’s “Processing Photographic Collections in the National Anthropological Archives” and “Cataloging Photographs in the National Anthropological Archives” and Luskey’s data standards for defining and formatting categories for completion of inventory worksheets.

Figure 1: Sample Photograph from the Collection of the National Anthropological Archives
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Field</th>
<th>Value</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Serial Number</td>
<td>003231.00</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accession</td>
<td>020 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Catalog</td>
<td>030 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Original</td>
<td>040 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Negative</td>
<td>050 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Creator</td>
<td>100 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Collector</td>
<td>130 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Date</td>
<td>200 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Title</td>
<td>300 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Geographic</td>
<td>402 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Region</td>
<td>403 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>State/Prov</td>
<td>404 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Site</td>
<td>405 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Physical Type</td>
<td>506 02</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Color</td>
<td>507 03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mount</td>
<td>508 03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Case</td>
<td>509 03</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Culture/Tribe</td>
<td>610 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Size</td>
<td>720 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Citation</td>
<td>900 01</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Remarks</td>
<td>920 01</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**Geographic Location**
- Country: 402 01
- Region: 403 01
- State/Prov: 404 01
- Site: 405 01

**Fort Belknap Reservation**

**Physical Type Original**
- Film: 506 02
- Print: 507 03
- Color: 508 03
- Mount: 509 03

**Citation**
- Pub. 900 01

**Remarks**
- 920 01

**Culture/Tribe**
- Assiniboine/Gros Vente

**Size (Image/Mount)**
- 720 01

**Printer**
- Super Mattson, Minneapolis, Minnesota

**Date**
- July, 1906

**Notes**
- Some in series also Gros Ventre

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**SMITHSONIAN INSTITUTION, NATIONAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL ARCHIVES**

**PHOTOGRAPHIC NEGATIVE CATALOG**

**Ref. No.** 34055-B

**File Code** Assiniboine

**Subject** Masked Fool Dance Warrior going out to attack a dead steer, Fort Belknap Reservation, Montana

**Source** Copy from print in source Print Collection, Plains, Assiniboine, U.S. it no number

**Date** July, 1906

**Photographer** Super Mattson, Minneapolis, Minnesona

**Note** Some in series also Gros Ventre

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**Figure 2:** Main Entry Card from the National Anthropological Archives for Figure 1.

**Figure 3:** Inventory Sheet from the National Anthropological Archives for Figure 1.
The Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives: A National Inventory Project of the Public Archives of Canada

Christopher Seifried
National Photography Collection
Public Archives of Canada

Canadian archives contain an abundance of photographs recording in detail the country’s history from the later colonial period to the present day. Millions of images bear witness to the exploration of the new land, to the cultures of the Indian and Inuit, to the growth of agriculture and the cities, to war and peace, to industry, social life and commerce; in short, to a century and a half of history and development. Yet until recently many of these significant images lay unknown, inaccessible to users who were unaware of their existence. While individual archivists and curators may have had a thorough knowledge of their own collections, no effort had been made to create a national inventory of the thousands of photographic collections in the archives of governments, educational, religious and historical institutions, and private businesses.

The Public Archives of Canada have accepted the challenge of identifying this enormous mass of material with the publication of the Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives. The first in a series of volumes was published in 1979. It is a guide to the location of some 7 million photographs in 113 Canadian archives. The next volume will be published in 1982, cumulating descriptions of collections of participating institutions acquired prior to that year.

The principle condition of participation in the Guide is that the collections in the inventory must be held by institutions offering public access to their photographic record and at least a minimal facility for aiding researchers. Most kinds of photographs are included in the Guide. Original photographs and their copies are eligible, regardless of type. The major exception is that the inventory does not include photographs which are documentary reproductions of such objects as works of art or manuscripts.

The Guide is a list of descriptions of photographic collections arranged in alphabetical order by title. Each of these descriptions consists of a number of elements of information. These include:

1. Title of the collection (usually named after donor or creator of the photographs);
2. Birth and death dates of the source, if available. For corporate sources, date of incorporation or founding is used;
3. Location (city or place of principle residence or location)
4. Occupation of the source;
5. Repository (indicating which institution the collection is in);
6. Type (original or copy);
7. Number of photographs in the collection;
8. Inclusive dates of the photographs;
9. Description of the collection, identifying its subjects, events, persons or activities, geographic locations and photographers.

In addition, each entry in the Guide is assigned subject headings. These make up the subject index which provides the main form of access to the entries. The index consists of all collection titles, generic subjects, names of geographic locations, personal and corporate names, processes (chiefly nineteenth century, such as ambrotype, tintype, etc.), and photographers’ names.

This inventory is therefore not a conventional catalogue describing and classifying individual photographs. While such catalogues are commonplace in most photographic collections, few can aspire to identifying all the holdings, particularly in larger institutions. At the National Photography Collection, for example, only about 150,000 of 7 million photographic records are individually catalogued. With an accession rate far greater than that for cataloguing, it is not expected that this ratio will improve. The problem requires a much broader solution, that of group cataloguing.

The approach taken in the Guide is based primarily on the fundamental premise of archival organization, respect for the principle of provenance. It assumes that knowledge of the source of a particular group of documents often serves as an excellent indication of their subject matter. The creation or collection of a group of photographic records by an individual or organization seems often to impart to that collection a certain thematic unity. Whether these themes reflect the source’s business, occupation, interests or hobbies, the identity of the source will often reveal much more eloquently the nature of a collection than any number of subject headings.

The subject index is nonetheless, as already mentioned, considered very important, and great effort goes into the strict application of international indexing and cataloguing standards. Personal and corporate names are recorded according to the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (2nd edition), while generic subject terms are taken from Canadian Subject Headings and Library of Congress Subject Headings. This ensures a satisfactory degree of conformity with most libraries and numerous archives in North America.
The application of common standards is considered essential to the Guide project because the data used to produce the printed version is actually maintained in the form of a computerized, interactive database. As such it can potentially be linked to other automated catalogues and indexes. The choice of library standards was made as this appears to be the vanguard of information storage and retrieval technology in the area of intellectual access to document collections. The eventual communication of information between systems will be greatly facilitated by the use of a common indexing language.

As a research instrument, the Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives is only useful insofar as it facilitates contact between the researcher and original photographic records or their copies. It is based firmly in the belief that it is the original photographic record that best speaks for itself, and that the function of the catalogue or finding aid must always be to guide the researcher to that original. As it is the researcher himself who must ultimately derive his own conclusions, the Guide purposely avoids detailed textual description. Words, no matter how accurate, tend always to interpret the image, and thereby limit it.

It is difficult today to use the words "state of the art" without fear of discovering that one is in fact talking about an obsolete footnote to the history of a particular technology. The automated Guide file is a system designed to anticipate a host of innovations in the storage and retrieval of visual information. The Public Archives of Canada are now experimenting with videodisc storage of images, while the Canadian Department of Communications has developed an interactive data communication system, TELIDON, which will soon bring information from central data banks to private homes via telephone and television. The Guide data file is ready for interfacing with large files of electronically recorded images to facilitate rapid picture scanning. Lewis (1980) indicates that visual scanning can be a much more effective retrieval process than the use of textual finding aids.

While the Guide to Canadian Photographic Archives holds out promises for interesting future applications it has proven a critical success for more immediate and practical reasons. Many new photographic archives will appear in the next volume, with collections representing millions of photographic records. Each subsequent publication will bring the Canadian archival community ever closer to having a complete inventory of the nation's photographic records.

REFERENCES CITED

Lewis, Elizabeth M.
General Notes on the Origin, Scope and Policies of the Peabody Museum, Harvard University

Daniel W. Jones, Jr.
Photographic Archivist
Peabody Museum
Harvard University

Since its founding just over 100 years ago the Peabody Museum has been acquiring photographs of a widely varying sort. Hundreds of expeditions have brought back photographic records of their work, and many donations of photographic images have been received, including quantities of prints purchased from commercial photographers in various parts of the world, mostly before World War I.

Negatives derived from field expeditions, such as the work in Middle America in the 1880s, have been catalogued as have shots taken at the Museum of specimens in our collections. But the information recorded on the 2 catalog cards was minimal. No attempt was made to establish a subject file or to carry out any cross indexing. It has been imperative to modernize the cataloging system.

We have built up a collection of 30,000 numbered negatives, but no file of corresponding prints has ever been made. (Quite a high proportion of the negatives are copy negatives.) Similarly, we have a collection of 125,000 miscellaneous prints, mostly ethnographic in subject matter, for which no file of corresponding copy negatives has been made. These prints are all mounted on 11x14 inch boards which stand vertically in 2-drawer file cabinets, and are arranged by geographical area/tribe. Noteworthy in this collection are the photographs of Mexican archaeology, and the ethnology of Africa, Melanesia, Polynesia and the Philippine Islands.

The last major gift of photographs was received in the 1960s when the Carnegie Institution of Washington gave the Museum the entire record of its Division of History (and Archaeology) including around 50,000 original negatives and corresponding mounted contact prints recording more than 40 years of research in Middle American archaeology. Recently we have accepted stewardship of Robert Gardner’s large collection of motion picture footage and the many thousands of color slides shot on his expeditions. Finally, our collection includes 600 original Ektachromes, about 8,000 35mm color slides taken at the museum, 3,000 glass lantern slides, and a residue of some 18,000 uncatalogued prints.

All our color materials are stored in a specially constructed cold storage room in which the temperature is held at several degrees about the freezing point and a 25% relative humidity. The make-up air supply is charcoal-filtered. It is likely that we will in time lower the temperature to zero degrees Fahrenheit as the proportion of negative color motion picture stock increases, to assure its dye stability under long term storage.

Requests are received by mail and phone; we encourage a personal visit. Each applicant is asked to fill out a questionnaire which, when signed, becomes a contract binding the user to Harvard’s conditions which are spelled out in great detail in a document used by all 14 of Harvard’s museums. It is not Harvard’s policy to permit photographs to be used for commercial advertising purposes. By appointment, we allow researchers access to original prints and only to those negatives that are film-base, with careful supervision. No photographs are sent out on approval, and all work requested must be paid for in advance.

Our cataloging system is described in details by Melissa Banta below. The completion of her project will vastly improve the speed and ease with which an image in our collection can be located, although after the completion date in 1982 there will still remain many thousands of photographs to be catalogued.

We are in the process of transferring 500 Ektachromes and 600 black-and-white photographs electronically onto a sample optical laser disc with computer-interactive control, at Vision Machine Research Corporation here in Cambridge. In the case of the Ektachromes, we are alternating the picture images with litho photographs of the computer-generated catalog card for the images. Thus one can call up only pictures, or ask the machine to display specific printed data for any given image on demand. Complementary copy-making devices are available which will enable the user to request and get a black-and-white or color printout of the TV monitor image, either on paper or on film as desired.

We look to the day when every photographic image of any consequence in our collection can be viewed on a TV monitor in every other interested institution in the world by making available a set of optical laser discs, each carrying a total of 108,000 discrete images.
Photo Archives Computerization Project, Peabody Museum, Harvard University

Melissa Banta
Cataloguer and Director of Computerization
Photo Archives

I. Approach and Goals

In 1978 under a grant from the National Science Foundation, the Peabody Museum Photo Archives began a computerized cataloguing project. The project is using a computer system to convert information describing approximately 45,000 photographic images into a machine-readable, updated catalogue. These images include 600 ektachromes, 2,000 lantern slides, 3,000 35mm black and white negatives, 30,000 negatives, and 9,000 color slides. At completion of the project in 1982, the system will produce three cross indexed cards for each image - one filed numerically, one by subject, subdivided by tribe/culture, and one by geographic location, subdivided by tribe/culture. The project aims to create a useful reference index which will make the photographic collection easily accessible to interested users.

Before the computerization program began, 31,000 images in the collection had been catalogued and filed under numerical and geographic indexes. The computer system has made it possible for the Photo Archives to:

1. update and edit the existing index to the collection;
2. correct and reorganize geographic information on the collection;
3. create a subject index (sorely lacking heretofore);
4. generate additional special indexes, available in the form of special printouts, such as lists of photographers names, and expedition names and places;
5. implement a workable computer system which enables us to catalogue all remaining photographs in the collection and which might serve as a model for other interested institutions.

II. Computer System

The Photo Archives computerization project works on a time-sharing system with the Children’s Museum in Boston, Massachusetts. In 1973 under the direction of Bill Mayhew, the Children’s Museum established “The Center for Advanced Computing.” Like the Peabody, over twenty other non-profit organizations also share computer space and use programs developed by the Children’s Museum.

In 1978, Ms. Lenore Sarasan of the Department of Anthropology at the Field Museum of Natural History in Chicago was implementing a method of data input for museum collections. Her program, called AIMS (“Anthropology Information Management System”), converts catalogue card entries into machine-readable form at a relatively low cost. Together Mayhew and Sarasan co-ordinated programs they had developed and created a computerized cataloguing procedure for museums. The Children’s Museum was the first to use this program. Under a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts received in March, 1979, the Children’s Museum computerized information on their collection of 20,000 cultural artifacts.

The system works on a PDP/11-70 minicomputer made by Digital Equipment Corporation and uses the “C” language, a programming language developed by Dennis Ritchie and his associates at Bell Telephone Laboratories. Our Photo Archives project uses a Vistar 52 CRT terminal which connects to the Children’s Museum by a Modem.

III. Outline of Procedures

After long consideration, we settled upon twenty-three categories of catalogue data which could apply to each image. They are: Photo #: Cross References; Description (no longer than 1 sentence); Subject (one of nine subject headings - see below); Ethnographic, Archaeological or Neither; Keyword (a word or phrase describing the image); Sub-category (hierarchical listing into which keyword falls - see below); Material, Locality (Area, Region, Country, State, Specific); Tribe/Culture; Accession/Catalogue # (if photo is of an artifact in the museum); Copyright information, Photographer; Size/Type; Published/Pages; and Remarks.

Data from 31,000 images previously catalogued was input directly from existing records (old index cards) into the computer. For the remaining uncatalogued photographs to be computerized (600 ektachromes, 3,400 negatives and 9,000 slides) information was entered onto data collection sheets and then input into the computer. Two part-time staff members input all 45,000 entries into the computer in nine months.

After all entries were input, and the printouts were proofed and edited, the script editing phase of the project began. With the development of special programs, the computer enabled us to extract desired information from the computer database, and research this material. Then information based on this research was edited in or added to the database.

The first application of script editing involved
standardizing terms and information. Computer programs pulled all listings from specified categories and produced vocabulary reference lists of terms in these categories. Staff members, with the help of curators and professors in the museum, designated a standard terminology for each keyword and tribe/culture entry. Staff members also corrected and standardized all incorrect and out-of-date geographic data on the collection. This corrected information was then edited back into the entries in the computer.

The second phase of script editing involved adding information to the database. Staff members determined the correct data for (1) sub-categories, based on analysis of keyword listings, and for (2) regions, based on analysis of tribe/culture listings. Lisa Kamisher, director of the project until 1981, developed a classified subject index. At the inputting stage all images were catalogued under one of nine subject headings: Peabody Museum History, Images, Man-Made Objects, Skeletal, Unmodified Object, Field Shot, People, Activity and View. Ms. Kamisher determined a list of sub-categories for each subject heading. Using vocabulary lists of keywords, she then manually assigned a sub-category for each keyword listing.

Ms. Kamisher created this subject index with the help of curators in the museum and in accordance with the specific characteristics and nature of the collection. She studied classification systems used by other institutions such as the Museum of the American Indian. Ms. Kamisher also referred to the following classification resources:

**GUIDE TO INVENTORYING ETHNOLOGICAL COLLECTIONS**
Mary Jane Schneider, Museum of Anthropology, University of Missouri, 1970

**CLASSIFICATION OUTLINE FOR ETHNOGRAPHIC SPECIMENS**
Lawrence Dawson and Frank Norick, 1975

Using vocabulary lists of tribe/culture data, staff members also determined a geographic region applicable to each ethnographic tribe and archaeological culture. Because the extent and nature of the collections of photographs differed from one geographic area to the next, the regional systems used for each area of the world, varied from one to the other.

In the fall of 1981 after completion of the script editing phase, the computer will produce three catalogue cards for each photographic entry, to create three cross-referenced index files. The first index will sort in numerical order. The second will sort by subject, sub-indexed by tribe/culture. (For example users of the system will be able to find all “bowls” from the “Navajo” culture grouped together under the subject heading “man-made”, the sub-category “1. container”, and the keyword “bowl.”) The third index will sort geographically, from area of the world down to specific location, also sub-indexed by tribe/culture.

In addition to these three index files, the computer will generate special reference printouts, for example photographers’ names and corresponding photo numbers, and expedition names and corresponding photo numbers.

IV. Computerization of Remaining Collection

The funds allotted for this project made it possible for the department to computerize information on approximately 45,000 photographic images. However, many more photographs in the collection remain uncatalogued. These include 125,000 historical photographs, over 12,000 undocumented miscellaneous prints, and all newly received photographs. Much of the time and work expended on this project entailed developing an effective strategy in conjunction with the programs available at the Children’s Museum to meet the specific needs of this department. We have contracted for and paid for the creation of numerous software programs now proven to be effective in creating a computerized cataloguing system. Now that we have thoroughly worked out the steps involved in this system, computerization of the remaining collection should proceed in a relatively straightforward manner and involved following procedures already laid out by this program.

V. Conclusion

Computerization of a museum’s collection requires extensive planning and a serious commitment. Those interested should evaluate all options and carefully determine if alternatives other than computerization can achieve the aims desired. Individuals in charge of collections should ask themselves if the size of the collection necessitates automation, or if manual indexing would provide adequate control. Those evaluating computer systems should:

1. find out if the availability of computer time and space is in fact available on a regular, reliable basis;
2. investigate if the available space will without question provide the capacity to hold and store the museum’s entire database and allow for the programming of this database; and
3. confer with other clients who share space in the computer to gain information on the electromechanical dependability of the
system.

In order to better define a project’s objectives from the beginning, it is of great importance to conduct a pilot test of a small representative sample of data which will follow from start to finish the entire system being considered. This requires going through each step of the procedure, acquiring all software necessary, testing each program individually and determining the actual effectiveness of the overall strategy. This preliminary testing stage should account for and work out any programming or strategy changes required. Revisions to a system after a project is well underway can result in delays and extra work to correct problems which should have been resolved at the project’s start.

A Natural History Librarian’s Viewpoint: The Current State-of-the-Art in Collections of Still Photographs with Anthropological Content

Pamela Haas
Assistant Librarian for the
Archives and Photographic Collection
Library Services Department
American Museum of Natural History

The Photographic Collection of the American Museum of Natural History, located in the Library Services Department, serves a wide spectrum of users, from scholars and students to publishers and teachers. In recent years, the increased interest in the history of photography, of anthropology, and of the natural sciences has brought an ever-growing number of serious researchers to the Collection. The richness of this material has captured the attention of the journalistic world ("Rare finds in a museum," by Mary Vespa, New York Times Sunday Magazine, April 20, 1980) and the author of six books currently in preparation are using the Photographic Collection’s materials either exclusively or nearly so. Portions of the Collection have also been used in several different episodes of the televised anthropology series, Odyssey, which is being aired on public stations internationally.

The AMNH Photographic Collection contains photographs dating back to the 1850’s, many of which relate directly to the Museum’s research and specimens. Its arrangement, however, is only by broad geographic and subject areas. Although they are sometimes sorted into these broad subjects, and assigned image control numbers, the 800,000+ photographs housed in the Collection are otherwise uncataloged, and lack descriptive information and true indexing. Access to and research on the photographs in the central Collection is therefore difficult and inefficient. Finding a specific positive image is dependent upon the librarians’ or curators’ memories; access by photographer is similarly difficult; a total lack of subject cross references severely limits theoretically-based and cross-cultural research; and the lack of correlation between the photographs and the Museum’s artifacts, field notebooks, and published works has created a roadblock that hinders research by the Museum’s curatorial staff as well as that conducted by outside scholars. Given the Museum functions of protecting, organizing, and making available its specimens and artifacts for study, the fact that a photograph can document an entry in a field notebook or can provide contextual documentation for a collected object makes it imperative that the object or notebook entry and the photograph be made mutually accessible. Yet at the moment it is impossible to relate Museum photographs to specimens and field notes without intensive research and/or curatorial assistance.

The first step has been taken toward gaining intellectual control in the AMNH Photographic Collection. National Endowment for the Humanities funding for one year has provided the opportunity to survey -- at the collection level -- all anthropological photographic material in the Museum. This survey, now in its fourth month, will, with the assistance of an automated data system, lay the groundwork for cataloging the Photographic Collection. When completed, it will generate (for the first time) a list of the anthropological photographic collections held by the Museum, and will provide creator, provenance, descriptive, and basic subject/contextual information for each of these collections. It is also allowing the librarians of the Photographic Collection to study and select a means for achieving proper subject and museum records-related control. At the same time, the Museum Library staff is watching national and international developments closely.

The inadequacy of the existing cataloging of the Museum’s photographs does not exist in a vacuum, nor is the Museum unique in its felt need for improvement. Two related national and international problems, (1) a lack of standardized cataloging procedures for documentary (indeed, for all types of) photographs, and (2) coping with the sheer bulk of the photographic record, are both well known to the library, archive, and museum communities. In a 1978 working paper, Elizabeth Betz of the Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division became the first to voice concern that the Anglo-American cataloging rules did not adequately cover such problems as by-lot versus individual image cataloging, subject control, and the descriptive nature of
cataloging these ‘works without title pages.’ A Joint Committee on Specialized Cataloging to the Council of National Library and Information Associations was not formed until after the decisions were made that culminated in the recent AACR2, and the Library of Congress is now working indirectly with this committee under National Endowment for the Humanities funding, to create a series of cataloging manuals to supplement AACR2 for graphics, manuscripts, motion pictures, and videorecordings. This effort will soon be completed, and groups such as the Special Library Association’s Picture Division and its journal, PICTURESQUE, the Society of American Archivists’ oral and graphic records affinity group, the Image Access Society, and the journal VISUAL RESOURCES have all begun to address themselves to the question of good access to photographs with an unprecedented sense of urgency.

Perhaps most distressing -- and perennial -- of all the issues to occupy the attention of anthropology librarians is the discipline’s lack of “bibliographic control.” A lively correspondence has taken place in the newsletter THE OTHER FIELDWORK during the past year between the members of the Association of College and Research Libraries’ Anthropology and Sociology Section and the Tozer Library of Harvard’s Peabody Museum regarding the quality of current subject and author indexing available to anthropology researchers by means of the Tozer’s ANTHROPOLOGICAL LITERATURE: AN INDEX TO PERIODICAL ARTICLES AND ESSAYS. The difficulty lies in part with the lack of funds available for indexing in the discipline. But implicit in these discussions is a matter that should be of particular concern to visual anthropologists: the discipline lacks a detailed, standardized thesaurus of terms. The Tozer Library’s indexing prior to 1979 contained subject headings that, while helpful in bibliographic research, were in no way detailed enough for visual research. Now the headings are not used at all. The U.N.’s INTERNATIONAL BIBLIOGRAPHY OF SOCIAL AND CULTURAL ANTHROPOLOGY does not include any of the four subdivisions of the discipline. The INDEX TO CURRENT PERIODICALS IN THE LIBRARY OF THE ROYAL ANTHROPOLOGICAL INSTITUTE only approaches by means of disciplinary subdivision and geographic region. The Human Relations Area Files at Yale have avoided vocabulary problems altogether by setting up a coded system that attempts to describe all human, culturally-based activity. This coding system is perhaps the best tool we have at the moment, and has been used to index film footage by the National Institutes of Health. Unfortunately, the HRAF codes have limited usefulness in a cross-disciplinary context. The gap left by our lack of a consistent, overall, standardized disciplinary vocabulary -- one that can mesh with other disciplines’ vocabularies -- continues to exist. A thesaurus must be created, and in enough detail to allow for the description of a still photograph, before visual anthropologists can hope to successfully exploit the great photographic collections of this country and the world with such questions as “How are babies bathed?” and “Does kinship affect conceptions of personal space?”

The creation of this anthropological thesaurus will lead to -- or will occur along with -- automation of the entry and retrieval of anthropological visual information. This is important because there are many photographs out there, each one of which is full of information. Manual systems cannot hope to handle the volume. It is also important because an automated indexing system can be combined with (“interfaced with”) an optical disc (for now, read “videodisc” although the future may bring digitalization). This implies the ability to immediately see an individual image as well as its cataloging information, from a large collection of photographs. (Librarians call this “visual browsing.”) Videodiscs made from still photos are being created right now on an experimental basis at the Peabody Museum, the Boston Museum of Fine Arts (theirs is finished), and the Smithsonian Institution. They are expensive, because each image must be photographically copied in order to create the disc. They also have limits: about 49,000 images per side, and no possibility of updating without creating a new disc (although there is work being done on a ‘read-and-write’ version). But the direction is clear: automation, and electronic visual browsing. In other words, the caretakers of collections of still both verbal and visual means, to visual information -- on a very detailed level. Perhaps this will occur within the lifetimes of some of us.
Museum and Archival Cataloguing of Ethnohistorical and Ethnographic Photographs: An Initial Bibliography of Current Literature

Glen Muschio
Department of Anthropology
Temple University

Organizing a photographic collection is a multi-faceted problem involving issues of cataloging, storage, preservation and information retrieval. The following sources are presented to acquaint those interested in visual communication with the scope of the problem of cataloging photographic material. The information presented here has been compiled from library and archival publications which have devoted considerable attention to the problem. In library literature the problem of cataloging photographic material is discussed under the broader topic of “nonprint” materials.

There is no widely accepted scheme for classifying photographic material (Roberts and Light 1980), however, over the last ten years a number of suggestions and guides have been published which address issues in the processing of “nonprint material” (Grove and Clement 1972; Tillin and Quinley 1976; Gorman and Winkler 1978). For an overview of the development of bibliographic controls regarding nonprint material from 1952 to 1976 see Massonneau 1977. London 1980 provides an analysis of the development of general bibliographic description and the trend to account for both print and nonprint material in library cataloging practices from 1791 to the publication of the Anglo-American Cataloguing Rules (AACR2) 1978.

Published cataloging formats such as the International Standard Bibliographic Description (ISBD) and the AACR2 are designed to standardize the processing of print and non print materials. While acknowledging differences in the characteristics of each medium, the systems claim to provide rules to process each on an equal basis. These formats are not intended to address specific archival cataloging problems (Gorman 1978:215), however, they do provide guidelines useful in establishing photographic collections. Mattison and Sherman 1977-78 discuss the application and necessary adjustments made to the ISBO when cataloging a collection of some two thousand historical photographs located in the Special Collections Division of the University of British Columbia Library. Kaufman 1978 describes a photographic cataloging systems which make use of the AACR.

Complete bibliographic references to these and other articles relevant for cataloging photographic collections are as follows:

Betz, Elizabeth

Brook, Barry S.

Bryant, Philip

Evans, Max J.

Gorman, Michael

Gorman, Michael, and Paul W. Winkler (eds.)

Grove, Pearce S., And Evelyn G. Clement (eds.)

Harrison, Helen P.

Jussim, Estelle

Kaufman, Judith

London, Gertrude

Massonneau, Suzanne

Mattison, David, and Saundra Sherman

Roberts, Andrew D., and Richard B. Light

Shinebourne, J.A.

Tillin, Alma M., and William J. Quinley
1976 Standards for Cataloging Nonprint Materials:
ANNOUNCEMENTS AND NOTICES...

CALL FOR CONTRIBUTIONS TO FUTURE ISSUES

In forthcoming issues of the SAVICOM NEWSLETTER there will be a discussion of a variety of issues and topics of importance to the readers of the SAVICOM NEWSLETTER. I will be organizing some of the presentations but I would like to encourage others to organize presentations on issues or topics that they see as important. Readers may suggest topics to me that they wish treated; they may suggest the names of individuals who should be contacted to provide an essay or a set of essays on a particular topic, or they may provide essays individually or as a member of a group organized to write a set of essays on various aspects of a particular topic.

Some of the topics that I think are important to be treated in forthcoming issues of the SAVICOM NEWSLETTER are:

1. Ethnographic Film Festivals: Directions and Evaluations;
2. Museum Uses of Visual Anthropology;
3. The Use of Historical Photographs in Anthropology;

If you are interested in contributing to one of the above discussions or if you wish to write an essay (2 to 6 typewritten, double-spaced pages) individually or as a member of a group of individuals, please write to me immediately concerning your interests.

Jack R. Rollwagen

SUBSCRIPTION INFORMATION

The SAVICOM NEWSLETTER is published three times a year: fall, winter, and spring. Subscriptions to the NEWSLETTER may be through either of two means:

1. Membership in the Society for the Anthropology of Visual Communications (SAVICOM). Membership is U.S. $18.00 per year. For this amount, members receive a subscription to the journal STUDIES IN VISUAL COMMUNICATION and a subscription to the SAVICOM NEWSLETTER as well as other benefits of membership.

2. Subscription specifically for the SAVICOM NEWSLETTER. Subscription to the NEWSLETTER is U.S. $5.00 per year.

Inquiries concerning membership in the Society for the Anthropology of Visual Communications or concerning subscriptions to the SAVICOM NEWSLETTER should be sent to the American Anthropological Association, 1703 New Hampshire Avenue NW, Washington, DC 20009. Payment should accompany any order. Checks should be payable to the Society for the Anthropology of Visual Communication.
FILM, TELEVISION AND THE HUMANITIES

Offered by
THE UNIVERSITY OF NORTH CAROLINA
at Chapel Hill, North Carolina

Date: July 7-20, 1981
Price: Non-credit: $360.00
Credit: $120.00 (N.C. resident)
$390.00 (non-resident)
Credit: 3-semester hours

A three-week long, intensive workshop aimed at college and university teachers of film and related courses, which will emphasize the recent developments in film historical research and pedagogy. Robert Allen, Assistant Professor of the Department of Radio, TV, and Motion Pictures at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, will be known for his recent work in film historiography. The seminar will be in the form of an intensive six-hour course, which will be conducted, written, and consumed, as well as a film history itself. The primary approach will include the study of the subject of film history and the historical context, as well as the implications of this context. The seminar will be concerned with the development of a new history of film and the history of the film industry. Participants in the workshop will be able to use the Wilson Library at the University of North Carolina, and will have access to the film libraries at Duke University and North Carolina State. Each participant, in addition to time spent on last meetings, will engage in a seminar on the history of film. The seminar will be available to all those who have successfully participated in the film and television course at UNC.

To Kill a Mockingbird (1962)

REGISTRATION

Please fill out the portions below and mail this card within three weeks after receipt of the registration notice.

1. Name
Address

2. Full-time Institution affiliation
Name
Address

3. State
Location
K-12
Other

4. Workshop Registration Form
a. Film, Video & the Liberal Arts (Karen)
b. Film, Video & the Humanities (Kathy)
c. Film, Video & the Humanities (Kathy)

5. Credit hours Workshop
Yes
No

You will receive an acknowledgement and registration package with all the information provided by the host institution. The completed forms must be returned to the host institution.

Housing will be available for all workshopers if provided by the host institution. In most cases, dormitory rooms will be provided at no charge.

The American Film Institute is working grants to assist educators with their expenses and tuition in these workshops. If grants are received, information will be made available to those who have registered for the workshops.

THE HUMANITIES WORKSHOP

FILM, VIDEO AND THE LIBERAL ARTS

Offered by
THE UNIVERSITY OF KANSAS
in Lawrence, Kansas

Date: June 14-26, 1981
Price: Non-credit: $50.00 (K..<NAME>
$100.00 (non-resident)
Credit: 3-semester hours

The two-week intensive workshop, headed by Clark Berg of the University of Kansas is directed at K-12 and Junior College educators. The goal is to develop new ideas for teaching film and television in the classroom. The workshop offers a broad overview of current and recent trends in film and video education. Film and video history is also a central part of the workshop. The workshop will also provide intensive training in film and video education, as well as the development of new ideas for teaching film and television in the classroom.

DOCUMENTING SOCIETY: ETHNOGRAPHIC FILM

Offered by
TEMPLE UNIVERSITY
in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Date: July 9-22, 1981
Price: Non-credit: $180.00
Credit: 3-semester hours

A unique opportunity to examine the theoretical and practical means surrounding ethnography and documentary film in collaboration with Cal Poly, UC Berkeley, and UT Austin. The purpose of the workshop is to develop new ideas for teaching film and television in the classroom. The workshop will be conducted at the University of California, Berkeley, and will include visits to film and television archives, as well as hands-on training in the use of film and video equipment. Participants will be expected to bring their own cameras and video equipment, and to participate in all aspects of the workshop.

Cinema of the North (1957)

DIRECTORS GUILD HOLLYWOOD WORKSHOP

Offered by
THE DIRECTORS GUILD OF AMERICA
and the DIRECTORS GUILD FILM INSTITUTE
in Hollywood, California

Date: August 7-13, 1981
Price: $225.00
Credit: Will be available

This is an intensive program designed for university, college, and high school teachers and educators who have experience in teaching film and television and who have had the opportunity to develop professional production. The workshop will be conducted in Los Angeles, where the participants will have access to the largest film and video libraries in the world. The workshop will be conducted at the Directors Guild of America and will provide an intensive course in film and television education. The workshop will be conducted by the Directors Guild of America and will provide an intensive course in film and television education.
Museum and Archival Cataloging of Ethnographic and Ethnohistorical Photographs: An Introductory Survey of the State of the Art