Scanning Standards for Archival Images

Standards to use when creating digital images that are to be stored ***permanently****.*

*Based on digitization standards used by the Library of Congress**

For scanning photographic prints and negatives:

- 8-bit grayscale if there is no significant color
- 24-bit RGB for color prints and negatives (use CMYK for screen prints)
- 24-bit RGB at 400 dpi for 35mm slides
- 600 dpi because most prints are small in size
- Save images as .TIFF files. TIFF format is lossless (not compressed), meaning that no information/data is lost when the digital file is created. It serves as the master file for the image. Create a separate folder for masters only which are never altered. Other formats, such as JPEGs, can be made from the TIFF. JPEG, GIF, and/or PNG are best for Web use. Save images on servers, not on discs (CDs have a life-span of 5 to 8 years only).
- To save space for larger images, resize to 4x6 or 5x7. Resizing is only recommended when computer storage space is limited due to the larger file sizes of TIFF files.
- Create a separate folder for only masters which are never altered.
- Retain the original, physical item that has been scanned – it is the archival copy. Digital files are not as stable as physical photographs. The scan is a copy of the original.
- Include subject, place and date when the photograph was taken in the filename or use the summary tab in file properties to enter information.

For scanning text, whether handwritten or printed:

- Use 8-bit grayscale or 24-bit RGB as appropriate to get the best image for color handwritten documents.
- 300 dpi unless the type is very small and hard to read.
- Save in an archival uncompressed TIFF format which is lossless and becomes the master file. Other formats can be made from the TIFFs. Save scans on servers, not on discs.
- Create a separate folder for masters only of TIFFs which are never altered.
- Use the PDF (PDF/A) file format in order to create a digital file that cannot be altered.
- Retain an analog version of digitally-reformatted items and do not dispose of the originals. Digital files are not as stable as paper records.

DO NOT scan or microfilm Sacramental Records.

Ensure that staff photographers and speech writers understand issues of ownership and copyright.
For more information, see **"Eight Blunders People Make When They Scan Photographs"** at http://practicalarchivist.blogspot.com/ or call the Archives at 404.978.0796.

* Standards available at http://memory.loc.gov/ammem/about/techStandards.pdf

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