



Article: NPS Service-Wide Initiative for the Preservation of Film-Based Media: Project Update and Presentation of Multimedia Training Program (Abstract)

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NPS SERVICE-WIDE INITIATIVE FOR THE PRESERVATION OF FILM-BASED MEDIA: PROJECT UPDATE AND PRESENTATION OF MULTIMEDIA TRAINING PROGRAM

JENNY BARTON (LEASOR) AND THERESA ANNE VOELLINGER

Presented at the PMG session of the 2010 AIC Annual Meeting in Milwaukee, Wisconsin

This presentation summarized the progress of the ongoing NPS service-wide film preservation initiative and included a presentation of the new DVD training program focused on cold storage implementation for film-based photographic collections. The National Park Service has an estimated 15 million film-based photographic images in its museum collections, many of which are cellulose nitrate, cellulose acetate and color materials. It is well-known that these materials are highly susceptible to deterioration when not stored in optimum conditions. However, this deterioration can be slowed by an introduction into cold storage. In an effort to practice proper stewardship and improve storage environments for its film-based photographic collections, the NPS embarked on an unprecedented, multi-year project to implement cold storage.

This project, which concluded in December 2011, was developed to utilize the best preservation practices while accommodating the uniqueness of the NPS, where collections are managed at 397 individual sites in accordance with service-wide standards. To this end, a wide range of specialists were assembled in 2007 for initial consultation and discussions concerning project design and the creation of achievable goals. These specialists included NPS representatives, photograph conservators, image preservation specialists, digital archivists and standards consultants from individual institutions such as the Image Permanence Institute, National Gallery of Art, National Archives and Records Administration (NARA), Smithsonian Archives and the Library of Congress.

To implement this valuable preservation strategy, the NPS is using upright freezer units and cold storage vaults. Additionally, the NPS developed a vapor-proof packaging design for use in freezers and vaults without humidity control. Successful implementation was largely dependent upon the development of individual cold storage plans for sites with collections ranging in size and scope. Consequently, the use of numerous resources was required. To help the NPS accomplish project goals at hundreds of sites across the United States, a variety of training materials were developed for staff with collections management responsibilities. The NPS collaborated with NARA to bring a senior photograph conservator onto the project for consultation and to create Standards of Practice (SOPs) for cold storage packaging and write three *NPS Conserve O Grams*. This collaboration also facilitated the development of a new interactive multimedia program (DVD) that was recently distributed to staff at all NPS sites. The program includes still images, downloadable documents and videos with step-by-step packaging demonstrations.

Users benefited from expert guidance during each phase of the implementation process. A web-based version of the program is now available to the public on the NPS.gov website:

<http://www.nps.gov/history/museum/coldstorage/NPSColdStorage.swf>

As of December 2011, project staff completed surveys of photographic collections in 193 park units and made site visits to 81 park units. Cold storage vaults were constructed in four regions, and 144 freezers were purchased and shipped to park units service-wide. Additional supplied and packaging materials were also distributed. All surveys, site visits, equipment, supplied and training materials were provided at no cost to the parks.

Theresa Voellinger, Paper/Photograph Conservator at Harpers Ferry Center, provided a brief project update and presented the new multimedia training program. She presented an overview of the program and demonstrated how it can be used as a valuable preservation tool in a variety of institutions.

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