

**DIGITIZATION ON A DIME:
PART 2 - EMPLOYING BEST PRACTICES
WHILE ON A BUDGET**

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DIGITIZING ON A BUDGET MEANS...

- Borrowing a digital camera, preferably a digital SLR
- Borrowing a camera tripod
- Borrowing a scanner
- Using free or inexpensive software
- Using what you have on hand, e.g. large gray board, fabric

As a recent MLIS grad, this is what I had to do when I had a low-budget gig for the Sadie Pope Dowdell Public Library.

GENERAL DIGITIZATION TIPS

- Have clean, dry hands when handling anything you are digitizing.
- Use clean, white gloves when handling photographs, slides, and negatives.
- Treat your scanner glass with care! Clean gently with a microfiber cloth. Do often if handling brittle documents are disintegrating as you digitize them!
- If you move your scanner around, make sure to “lock it.”
- If photographing, you can use Camera Raw during shooting and then convert to TIFF. Just be aware that Camera Raw takes up LOTS of space on the camera card.
- When doing digital photography, it might help to have a partner, e.g. adjust lighting.
- Quality control (QC): After scanning or photographing, check the files.
- With some instructions, volunteers can help with prep work, digitization, and QC.

PREPARING TO DIGITIZE

Before you digitize, it's a good idea to assess the items you want to digitize and make an inventory.

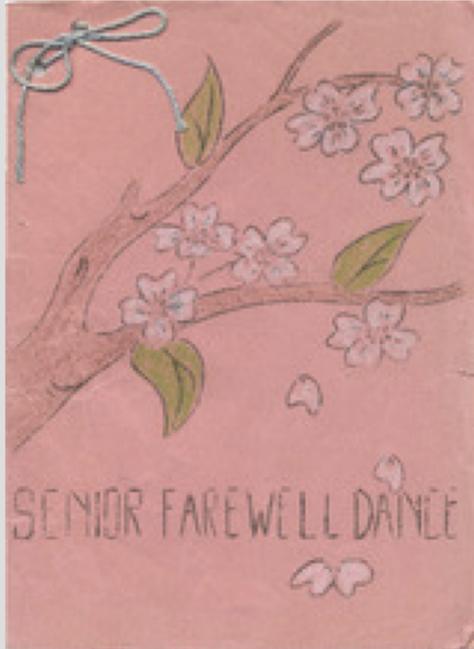
- What is the physical condition of the item(s) you are digitizing?
- Is there any prep work for specific item(s)?
- Supplies/tools needed?
- Number of item(s) or page(s)?
- Other special considerations?
- Copyright issues?



Army men handling explosives

<https://doi.org/doi:10.7282/T3T72FNM>

PRE-DIGITIZATION WORK: CORNER BINDINGS



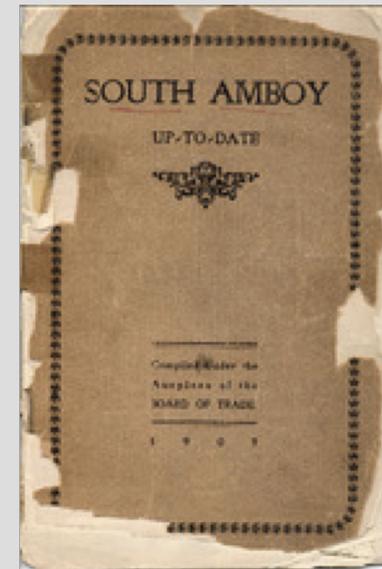
- Staples in corner: If you have contemporary print documents, e.g. Board of Trustees minutes, you may or may not need to spend time removing staples prior to scanning.
- String/Ribbon: In special cases, you may have to remove special bindings, e.g. string and ribbon, to get something flat. As noted in scan to left, it's helpful for users to see how the binding it used on the cover.

Senior Farewell Dance, 1940

<https://doi.org/doi:10.7282/T3610XRB>

WHEN YOUR DOCUMENT IS DISINTEGRATING WHILE YOU SCAN

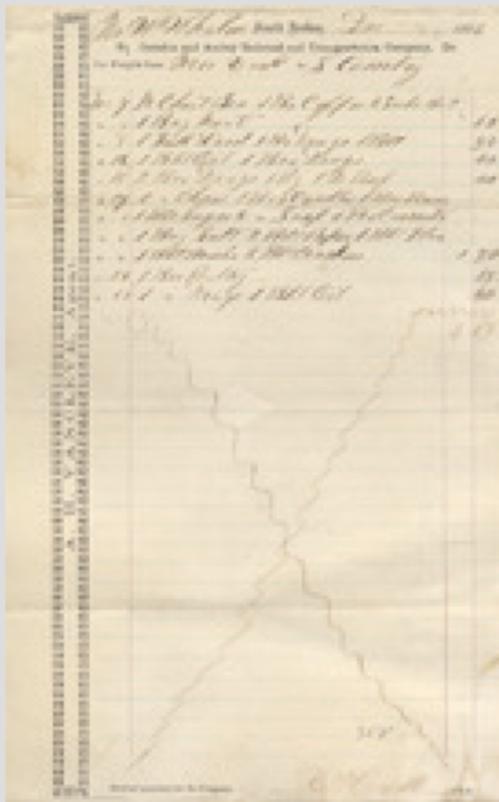
- Clean scanner glass gently with a microfiber cloth. The scanner glass should be clean and dry when documents are on it.
- If you have documents that are disintegrating as you scan, you'll need to clean the scanner glass regularly.
- Can you use glass cleaner on the scanner glass? Check the scanner manual to be on the safe side. If you do, apply cleaner to cloth.



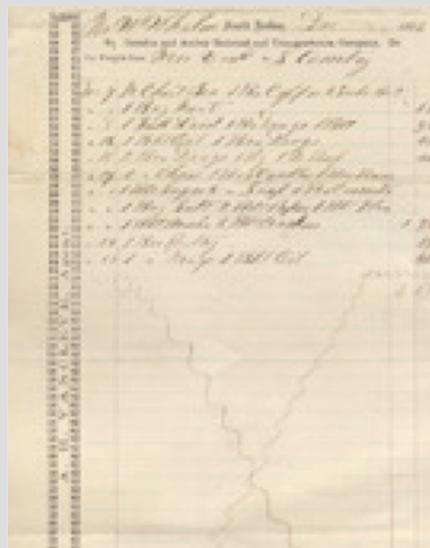
South Amboy Up-to-Date:
Growth and Development of the City
<https://doi.org/doi:10.7282/T3M043SR>

WHEN YOUR OBJECT IS BIGGER THAN THE SCANNER

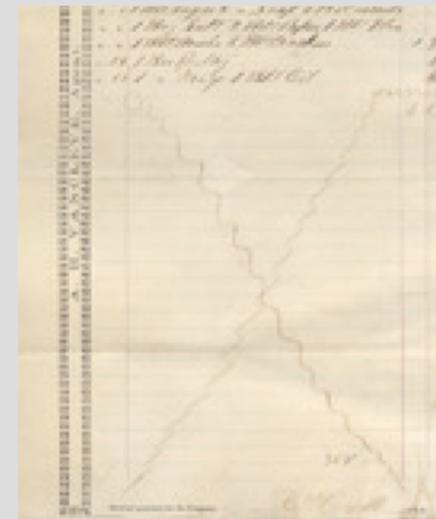
In an ideal world, you'd use a copy stand or a scanner with a surface large enough for your item. If you don't have that option, be gentle with objects that are scanned in sections. A large neutral board may be necessary to back items.



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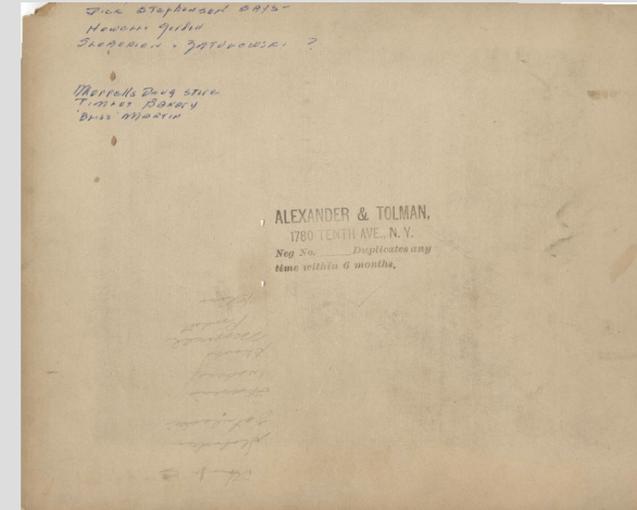
Camden and Amboy Railroad and Transportation Company 1866 freight bill

<https://doi.org/doi:10.7282/T3C24TQ2>

WHAT'S ON THE BACK MATTERS



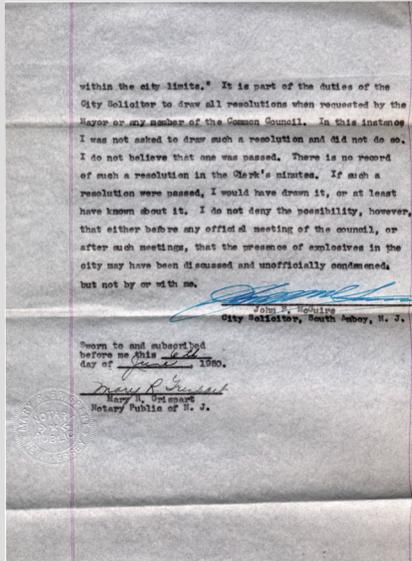
- Is there something printed or written on the backside of a photo?
- In this case, the photographer is stamped on the back and some descriptive information has been written.



Fire on Broadway between David & Henry Street, 1890

<https://doi.org/doi:10.7282/T3V957Bj>

TRANSLUCENT PAGES



If translucent pages are bound together, a neutral board is a good backing between pages to prevent see-through.

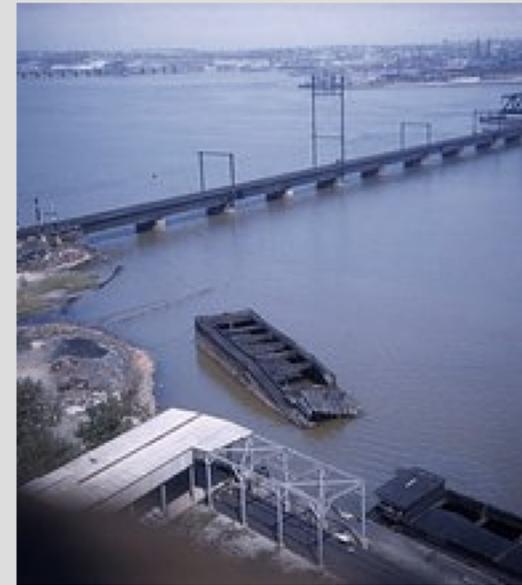
Note: This item was folded up. Ideally, it could have been pressed flat under heavy items during prep work.

Affidavit from John P. McGuire to the United States of America and the United States Coast Guard, "In the matter of the destruction of the Steam Lighter KENNETH HEALING and others at South Amboy, N.J. on May 19, 1950."

<https://doi.org/doi:10.7282/T328061D>

SLIDES AND NEGATIVES

- In an ideal world, conservator can clean dirty slides and negatives. Due to time and budget constraints, I used a clean blush brush with soft bristles to remove much of the debris on the slides. I got the tip from Tim Corlis, Rutgers University conservator.
- Slides and negatives require a transparency unit for digitization. However, you can scan a batch of slides or negatives at once.
- This slide was scanned at 4,800 pixels to reach the 3,000-pixel rule. Be prepared to wait when scanning at higher resolutions.



Aerial view of N. S. BURKY barge
<https://doi.org/doi:10.7282/T3DZ06QC>

PHOTOGRAPHING FRAMED ARTWORK – PART I



Portrait of Sadie Pope Dowdell

<https://doi.org/doi:10.7282/T3W66J04>

Equipment Used:

- Digital SLR*
- Camera card*
- Camera Tripod**
- Step ladder
- White board or paper

*A librarian loaned her Nikon DSLR and camera card.

** I borrowed the tripod from a relative.

PHOTOGRAPHING FRAMED ARTWORK – PART 2



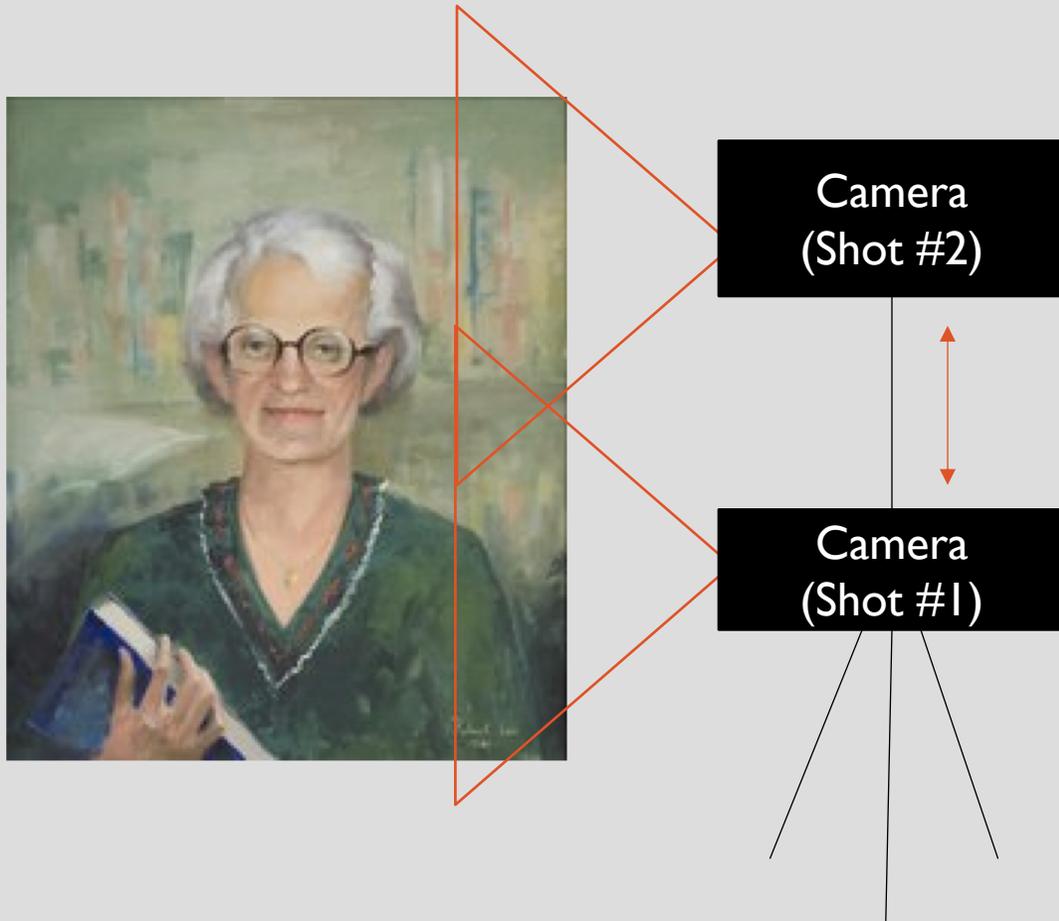
Pro: Painting did not have glazing, e.g. glass or plastic, covering on it. So, there were no reflections.



Cons: In order to photograph the image with a high enough resolution (3,000 pixel rule), I had to photograph it in 2 sections and splice the image together.*

*Note: Overlap between images.

PHOTOGRAPHING FRAMED ARTWORK – PART 3



It's important for the camera to shoot straight at the object. Otherwise, you will get a warped image (keystone effect). It may take a little trial and error!

In order to shoot the image in 2 sections, we need to raise/lower the camera on the tripod.

PHOTOGRAPHING FRAMED ARTWORK – PART 4

Tips:

- Make sure to white balance your camera before shooting. While there are more professional tools, you can use white copier paper or a white board in a pinch. Just make sure it's clean and hasn't yellowed.
- Whether artwork has glazing or not, be cognizant of light around it. You may have to experiment with turning on and off lights in the room. You don't want a bright or dark spots on the image. You need clean, even lighting.
- With a tripod, you can take a longer exposure if necessary.
- Consider cropping out the frame.

PHOTOGRAPHING 3-DIMENSIONAL OBJECTS (PART I)



The Bells of St. Nicholas

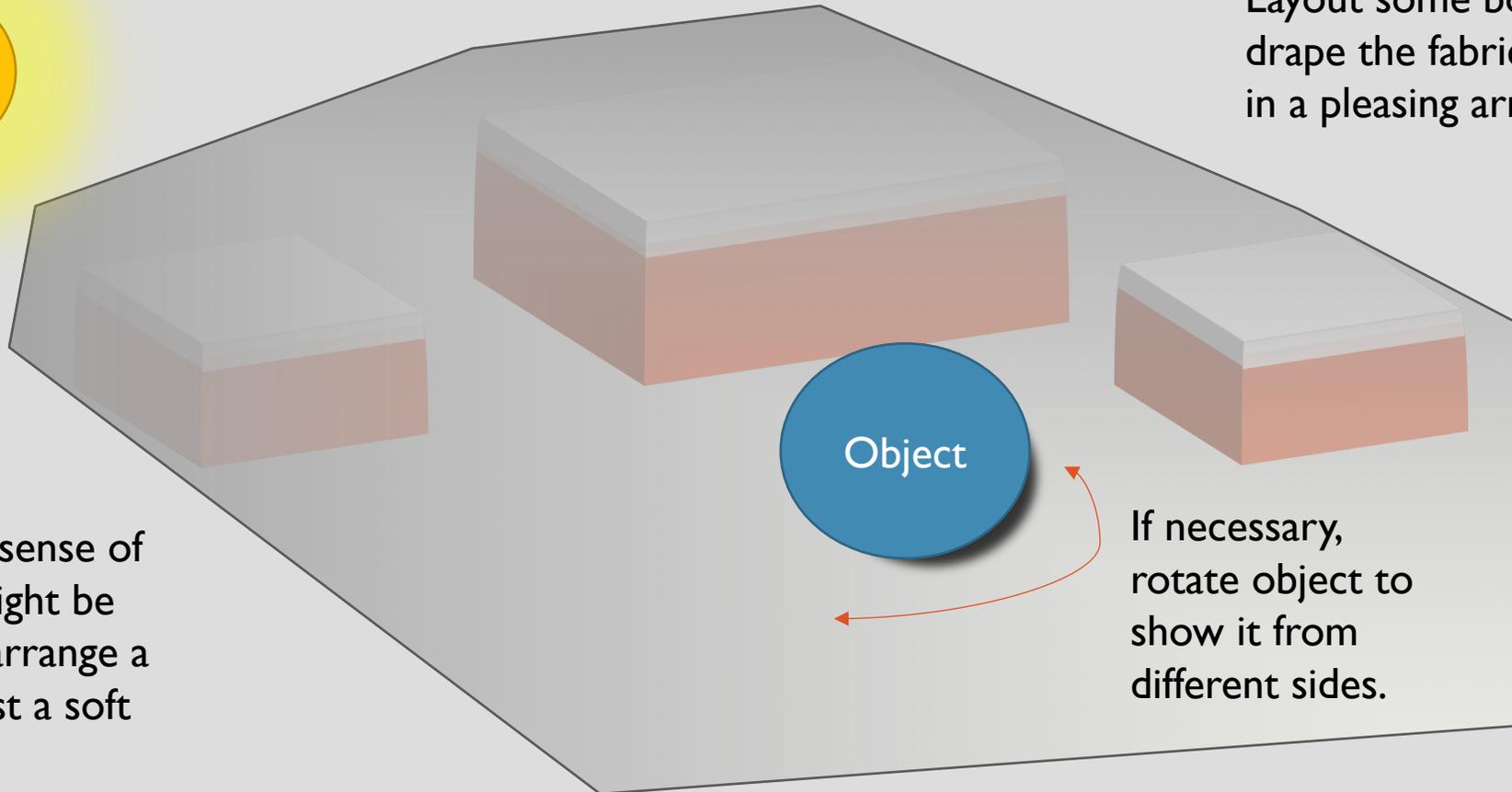
<https://doi.org/doi:10.7282/T3HM56SN>

Equipment used:

- Digital SLR
- Camera card
- Camera tripod
- A few yards of fabric, preferably in a neutral color
- Various small boxes
- Table

PHOTOGRAPHING 3-DIMENSIONAL OBJECTS (PART 2)

Layout some boxes and drape the fabric over them in a pleasing arrangement.



To show a sense of depth, it might be helpful to arrange a lamp to cast a soft shadow.

If necessary, rotate object to show it from different sides.

WHAT CAN'T YOU DIGITIZE ON A DIME? MOTION PICTURE FILM



South Amboy Tercentenary Parade, Reel 2

<https://doi.org/doi:10.7282/T3V09441>

- Motion-picture film, e.g. 16 mm, requires a vendor to digitize it. The process of converting film reels to digital or analog tapes is referred to as “telecine.”
- If you do decide to pay a vendor to digitize motion picture film, do not have it converted to play in a set-top DVD player. That is a compressed format that isn’t good for migrating the content in the future.

HOSTING COLLECTIONS ONLINE

- Unlike digitization, hosting collections is a regular expense – be it monthly or annually.
- You can post digital objects on your library’s website or a blog. Some libraries use Flickr. However, other options like Omeka (<http://www.omeka.net/>), CONTENTdm, and the NJ Digital Highway (<https://njdigitalhighway.org/>) will allow the objects’ metadata to be harvested and accessible via other sources, e.g. Digital Public Library of America (<https://dp.la/>).
- \$ - Omeka.net: If you only need to host 2 GB of data and want only 2 sites, you could pay \$35/year for the cheapest subscription option (<https://www.omeka.net/signup>). There are other subscription options if you need more sites and more storage.
- Why DPLA? NJ and DE are working together to start a DPLA hub.

STORAGE – LOCAL AND ONLINE

- Back-up your original files, e.g. uncropped TIFFs, and presentation files, e.g. JPEGs and PDFs, in more than one place.
- There are cloud-based services, including Dropbox (www.dropbox.com/) and Google Drive (www.google.com/intl/en/drive/).
- You can also use external hard drives for back-ups. Hard drives can fail after about 5 years. Be ready to migrate your files to a new drive before that happens. If you use hard drives, it's recommended to have copies in other geographic locations. Maybe swap a back-up with another library?
- NOTE: File formats change. Be prepared to migrate files when change happens.

WHEN YOU'RE READY TO SPLURGE



- Flatbed scanner that scans at 4800 x 4800 pixels (+/- \$100)
- Flatbed scanner with transparency unit that scans at least 4800 x 4800 pixels (+/- \$130)
- Color patches and grey scale (\$50+)
- Digital SLR camera + lens (\$400+)
- Tripod for digital SLR (\$30+)
- Adobe Photoshop Elements (\$100)
- Adobe Photoshop Elements + Premiere bundle (\$150)

THANK YOU

Slides available at:

<http://hdl.handle.net/20.500.12164/86>

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