

Photographs as Archival Material

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“While there is perhaps a province in which the photograph can tell us nothing more than what we see with our own eyes, there is another which it proves to us how little our eyes permit us to see.”

Dorothea Lange

Abstract

In the archival science and process photographs have their own unique position because there are special characteristics that result from their genre and/or chemical structure. Thus, it is of extreme importance that photographs be protected according to archival rules. In archival science there are two major important appraisal criteria for archival material; historical and evidential values. In other words, to be treated as archival material, the historical and evidential value should first be determined. At this point it is clear that photographs that have a primary historical and evidential value are one of the most important archival material which are unique and precious.

Photographs are unlike paper, audio-visual and/or electronic material. Specialist knowledge is required in order for archivists to evaluate photographs. Photographs are distinct in requiring expertise, not only for their storage and preservation processes, but for other processes too. Thus Photographs can also be considered to be one of the most compelling archival material for archivists to work with. In this study all the important points about photographs as archival material and the management of photographs through archival practice will be discussed.

Keywords: *Photographs; archival material; archival science.*

Öz

Fotoğrafların arşivcilik bilimi ve sürecinde doğaları ve/veya kimyasal yapılarının sonucu olarak ortaya çıkan özelliklerinden kaynaklanan kendilerine has bir yeri vardır. Bu nedenle fotoğrafların arşivcilik kurallarına göre korunması çok önemli bir unsurdur. Arşivcilik sürecinde arşiv malzemesinin değerlendirilmesi ile ilgili iki temel değerlendirme kriteri vardır; tarihi değer ve kanıt değeri. Diğer bir ifade ile arşiv malzemesi özelliğinin kazanılabilmesi için öncelikle göz önünde bulundurulması gereken unsurlar tarihi değer ve kanıt değeridir. Bu noktada tarihi ve bilgi değeri olan fotoğraflar tek ve benzersiz arşiv malzemelerinin en önemlilerindedir.

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Fotoğraflar, kağıt, görsel-işitsel ve/veya elektronik malzemeden farklıdırlar. Bu noktada arşivcilerin fotoğrafları değerlendirebilmeleri için uzmanlık bilgisine duydukları ihtiyaç ortaya çıkmaktadır. Bunun yanında fotoğraflar söz konusu olduğunda sadece depolanmaları ve korunmaları için değil diğer tüm süreçler için de uzmanlık bilgisi gerekmektedir. Bu nedenle fotoğraflar arşivcilerin ele aldıkları en zor ve uğraştırıcı arşiv malzemelerinden biri olarak da görülebilir. Bu çalışma kapsamında arşiv malzemesi olan fotoğraflar ile ilgili tüm önemli noktalar ve fotoğrafların arşivsel süreç kapsamında yönetimi incelenmektedir.

Anahtar Sözcükler: *Fotoğraf; arşiv malzemesi; arşivcilik bilimi.*

Introduction

Hendriks (1984, p. 1) expresses the importance of photographic materials with these words:

“Photographic procedures and the images made by them have found application and use in nearly every type of human endeavour. Whether they are used in science and technology, the exploration of space and in aerial photography, in radiography or as motion picture film, as a means of preserving the information content of paper documents through microfilm or as a recording medium for historical events, as a medium for artistic expression or as a record of social and family life by millions of amateur picture takers throughout the world photographic images are produced in very large numbers every year. While not all of them need to be preserved, many are now or will become records of outstanding importance that will attest to historically or technically important events and achievements. As such they form a principal part of the holdings in archives and libraries.”

Photograph may be defined as:

- Any method of producing a visible image by the action of light on a light sensitive material, including blue print methods, diazo systems, Kalvar or vesicular photography, such electro-photographic methods as Xerography, and thermographic imaging systems (Hendriks, 1977, p. 93).

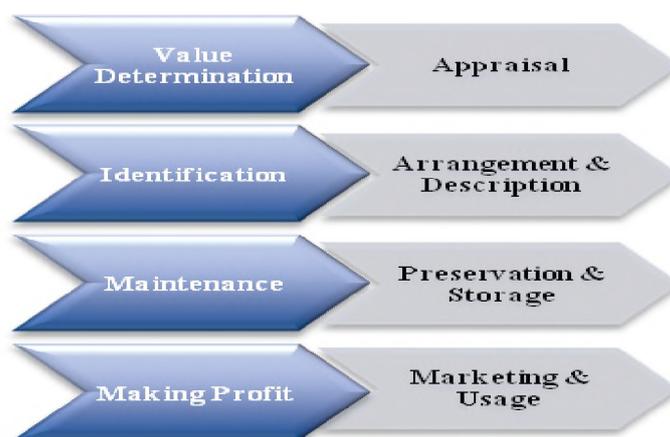
- 1. A still picture formed on a light-sensitive surface using an optical system and fixed by a photochemical process. 2. An image rendered using a camera (Moses, 2005, p. 294).

The first descriptions of photographic processes by Talbot and Daguerrein in 1839 were the culmination of many years of experiments with the light sensitivity of various chemicals. Daguerre conceived of the print as an extension of an artistic process, but Talbot realized the value of being able to print multiple copies and his direction was the one followed by subsequent photographers (Forde, 2007, p.18). Photographs have become one of the important types of archival material following these developments.

Archivist deals with various types of archival material when undertaking archival practice and photographs can be considered to be one of the more distinctive archival materials. In archival science there are two important facts about photographic material. First, as mentioned before photographs are structurally different from other types of archival material like paper, audio-visual and electronic material. Thus the archivist requires specialist knowledge in order to undertake archival processes in relation to photographs. Secondly, photographs usually come as part of private archives collections and as such photographs usually have historical value attached to them.

Photographs as Archival Material

Archival practice entails a comprehensive process that involves all steps from the appraisal of archival material to bringing the material into usage. This process generally has the same road map for all types of archival material. However, photographs have their own process road map. The steps of archival practice for photographs are shown in Figure 1.



(Figure 1): Archival Practice - Photographs

This study undertakes the discussion of the processes of appraisal, arrangement, description, preservation and storage of photographs.

There have been some developments in the field of photography since the 1800s that have ran parallel to technological developments. As a result of these developments, there have been some changes in the structural features of photographs. Archivists now have access to a wealth of photographic collections covering a long time span. Archivists in addition have the responsibility to be well-informed about the archival materials in their custody. As is the case for all types of archival material, the archivist must possess knowledge on the type, media, size and quantity of photographs. It follows that being knowledgeable on the archival material is a direct result of following all of the archival practice steps. In addition, the archivist makes decision on the preservation of material according to the information about the type and medium of material.

Appraising Photographs

Archival material which are the main elements managed in archival practice are determined in the first phase which is appraisal. In appraisal archivist decide on the value of material. In other words archivist clarifies if the material will survive or destructed. Besides at the end of appraisal archivist provide tangible data on the quality and quantity of material in other words material are identified. The strategical importance of appraisal process results from this situation.

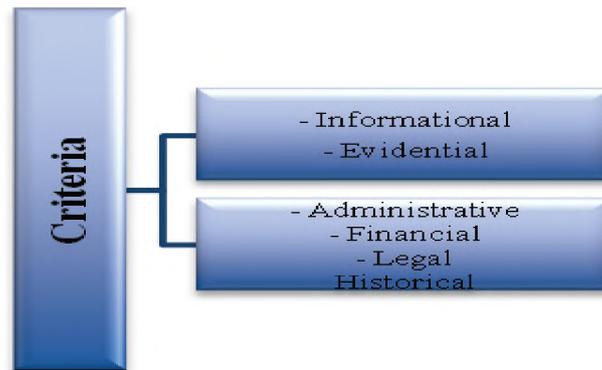
Duranti (1994, p. 329) defines appraisal as ‘the process of establishing the value of documents made or received in the course of the conduct of affairs, qualifying that value, and determining its duration’.

The appraisal of photographs is the process of determining archival value. Archival value is the evidential, administrative, financial, legal, informational and historical values that justify the continuing retention of records as archives (Queensland State Archives, 2010, p. 5).

Schellenberg (1956, pp. 139, 148) describes the evidential and informational value as follows:

Evidential value refers to the evidence public records contain of the functioning and organization of the government body that produced them. It is a value that depends on the importance of the matter evidenced the organization and functioning of the agency that produced the records. Informational values derive, as is evident from the very term from the information that is in public records on persons, places, subjects, and the like with which public agencies deal, not from the information that is in such records on the public agencies themselves.

Audio-visual records have archival importance almost exclusively because of their informational value. They rarely provide unique evidence about an organization’s operation, although there are occasional exceptions to this rule. Audio-visual materials are worth preserving in an archives, therefore, in direct proportion to the extent that the appraiser can anticipate researcher interest in the information they contain (Leary, 1988, p. 107).



(Figure 2): Appraisal Criteria of Photographs

Photographs are distinct from textual documents in that their most important value is informational. This means that archivists cannot resort to their traditional methods when beginning an appraisal for the selection of photographs; that is to say the assessment of the evidential value of the documents which reflects their bond with the creator of the fonds. Furthermore, archivists, like their fellow-citizens, feel a more profound attachment (sometimes close to irrational) for photographs than for other information media since they evoke memories through images of people, events, and objects (Charbonneau, 1999, p. 120).

In assessing the informational value of photographs these factors should be taken into account (Roberts, 1993, p.388):

- Subject
- Age
- Uniqueness
- Quality
- Identification and
- Quantity

In the process of appraisal, the first and most important factor is archivists' own knowledge. Archivists must have information on the following before appraisal process:

- an intimate knowledge of the provenance of the fonds and of the context of creation of the documents under appraisal;
- an understanding of the entire fonds;
- a background in history (this does not mean that archivists must be historians; rather, they must have an interest in history and familiarity with its methodology) to allow a judgement of the value of the documents, their evidential value with respect to the context of their creation, and their informational value within the larger context of the documentary resources available for research;
- an awareness of the needs of users who consult photographic archives for their informational value; and
- sufficient knowledge of the history of photography and its techniques in order to identify the physical characteristics of the documents and their uniqueness, the importance of the photographer, etc (Charbonneau, 1999, p. 121).

Besides the informational and evidential value there are some other criteria for the appraisal of photographs. These are as follows (Charbonneau, 1999, p. 122):

- The intelligibility of information or the quality of the medium
- User needs
- Subject
- The intentions of the participants in the creation of photographs
- Accompanying documentation
- Uniqueness or originality of the information
- Age of the medium and of the information

- Aesthetic quality and significance to the history of the art and science of photography and
- Accessibility/restrictions

Photographs should have some features to be created as archival material. These qualities that archivists appraise photographs for are as follows (Archives Association of British Columbia, p. 1999):

- the potential use of the record
- the uniqueness of the image the process by which it was produced (vintage print, glass plate negative, and so on)
- its physical condition
- its technical quality (clarity, density, and so on)
- its informational content, including how well documented it is in terms of subject, date, location, and so on
- its age
- the importance of the photographer to your community or organization
- the quantity of photographs and
- the photograph as an art form

Appraisal is a strategically important process because materials that are not appraised appropriately may undergo destruction by error or may even be appraised as having long-term value even though they do not possess archival quality. In order to prevent these two worst scenarios, archivist should determine the appraisal criteria of photographs in detail and appraise them very carefully.

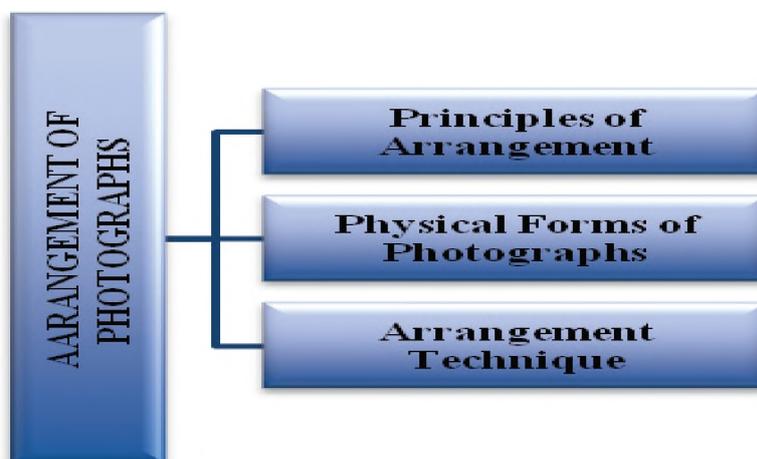
Arrangement and Description of Photographs

The arrangement and description of photographs are the processes take place following the identification and appraisal process. Arrangement and description are both important but at the same time, time consuming steps of archival practice. Arrangement is simply ensuring physical control and description is ensuring intellectual control over archival material.

Arrangement

Arrangement is the process of physically organising records in accordance with the accepted archival principles of provenance and original order. Behind this physical process are a number of documentation processes which record the context of the records. Examining the records to determine their original order is the first phase of arrangement. The second phase is the physical organization into that order, which may involve reboxing, labeling and shelving the records (Brunton&Robinson, 1993, pp. 222-223).

The arrangement process of photographs is shown in Figure 3.



(Figure 3): The Arrangement Process of Photographs

In archival science there are two main principles that should be taken into account when arranging archival material. These are “The Principle of Provenance” and “The Principle of Original Order”. These two principles should be applied to every type of archival material including photographs.

The Principle of Provenance means that archives of all kinds which have their origin (provenance) in an administrative unit, an organization or an individual should be kept together as a single entity, and not mixed with those of different origin; this single entity is known as the record group or archive group of that administrative unit, organization or individual (Duchain, 1985, pp. 85-86). The information about a photograph’s provenance is important for interpreting pictures, identifying time and place at they were produced and their subjects (Schellenberg, 1984).

The Principle of Original Order requires that records should be maintained in the same order as they were in while in active use: a kind of internal provenance. It states that even if the original order appears to be chaotic it should still be retained as evidence of how the individual or organization operated and is part of its provenance (Williams, 2006, p.77).

Archivist should have information on the type and composition of photographs. This is one of the important points in arrangement of photographs.

The main physical forms of photographic materials are (Roberts, 1993, p. 387):

- Prints (unmounted, mounted, framed or encased)
- Negatives (glass plates, unjacketed or jacketed flexible negatives) and
- Transparencies (lantern slides, 35mm projection slides, large slides)

Photographic prints consist of two layers: one provides the support and one holds the image. The support layer is usually made of paper but may also be made of glass, metal or other materials. The image layer is made up of a variety of chemicals. Black and white photographic images consist of silver, embedded in a binder, called the emulsion layer, which may be made of substances such as gelatin, albumen or collodion. Colour images are composed of a number of organic dyes embedded in layers of gelatin (Millar, 2010, p. 89).

Like photographic prints, negatives are made up of support layer and an image layer. The support is generally polyester, cellulose acetate or cellulose nitrate film. The image layer of a black and white negative is usually made of silver particles in gelatin. The image layer of a colour negative also contains silver, but the particles may have been bleached during development, adding acid to the negative and making it less stable (Millar, 2010, p. 90).

Slides like photographic prints and negatives consist of a support layer and an image layer. The chemical dyes used to produce slides can destabilize the slide over time (Millar, 2010, p. 90).

The archivist should determine the arrangement technique according to the type and composition of photographs. This is another important point in the arrangement process. In determining the arrangement technique the *quantity* and *content* of photographs are also important criteria that should be taken into account.

There are three main techniques that can be used in arranging photographs. These are as follows (Schellenberg, 1984):

1. Arrangement by provenance
2. Arrangement by subject and
3. Numerical arrangement

Classification is an important process in arrangement. The process of identifying and arranging records and archives in categories according to logically structured conventions, methods and procedural rules represented in a classification system (International Records Management Trust, 1999, p. 7).

Numbering is also an important step that ensures easy access to photographs after storing has been completed with the appropriate equipment. Numbering correcting is paramount and should be carried out with the upmost care because it can prove to be difficult and even impossible to find photographs in a repository if indexing has not been undertaken properly.

Special cases during the numbering of photographs and the solution suggestions are as follows (Taylor, 1980, p. 115):

- If a collection consists of either negatives or prints of uniform size, archivist should number consecutively,
- If a collection consists of negatives with a few prints, archivist should number the negatives consecutively and give corresponding prints the same number and
- If the prints do not correspond, archivist should number the whole collection right thorough consecutively.

There are two main strategically important factors in arranging photographs in addition to the technical details. These are: 1. Deciding on which collection to deal first and 2. Determining the maximum time for arrangement.

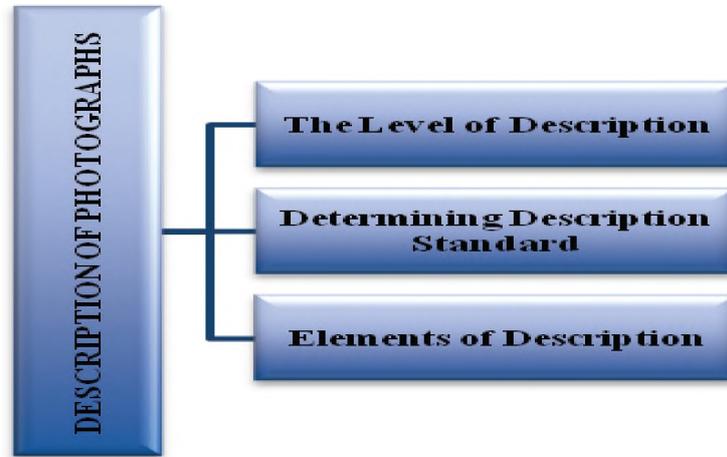
Description is the next step in archival practice after arrangement. Photographs are classified appropriately in the arrangement process and are therefore ready to undergo description.

Description

Description is a time consuming process that deals with taking intellectual control over archival material.

Archival description is the process of capturing and representing the content and context of an archival collection and the catalogue is the prime tool for doing this. It enables both intellectual and administrative control and is the prime source of any subsequent finding aids (Williams, 2006, p. 89).

The description process of photographs is shown in Figure 4.



(Figure 4): The Description Process of Photographs

Determining the level of description is the first step of description process. The description can be done in:

1. Collection Level
2. Series Level and
3. Item Level

It is important to take a right decision on the level of description of photographs. Archivist should take some important factors into account at this step. These factors are as follows:

- The quality and quantity of the photographs and
- The information seeking behavior of users

It is important to arrange and describe photographs at collection level in order to ensure better physical and intellectual control. However the archivist needs to consider how to best decide on the description of photographs at collection or item level. Malan (1984, p.184) has composed these questions as follows:

- Are the photographs the work of one photographer?
- Were they created by an individual or firm?
- Are they a common size or physical type?
- Do they depict the same subject, time period, or geographic area?
- Are they linked physically, as albums, negatives, or other papers that would be difficult to match with the photographs if they were not kept as a unit?
- Does keeping them together aid identification? and
- Do they have an internal order, an arrangement by subject, number, date or some other sequence?

The second important point in description is determining the description standard that is appropriate for the material. The description standards for archival material are plentiful. Some of them are as follows; ISAD (G), MARC, MAD, ISBD. However the most important point in determining the description standard is choosing the one appropriate for photographic material in hand.

Description standards provide the basic elements of description that archivists should employ. It is not always necessary, however, to apply a descriptive standard. Archivist can determine descriptive elements without using a standard. Some common elements of the description of photographs exist. These are:

1. Publication Area
 - *Name of Publication*
 - *Date of Publication*
 - *Page Number*
 - *Name of Page*
 - *Author*
2. Main Area
 - *Date*
 - *Type of Material (Negative, Digital and etc.)*
 - *Resource*
 - *Colour*
 - *Envelope Number*
 - *File Number*
 - *Archivist*
 - *Category*
 - *Description (People, subject, scene and etc.)*

Benson (2009, pp. 152-153) describes the process of appraising, arrangement and description of photographs briefly as follows:

- Process: The process of appraisal, taking possession of photographs, accessioning, collating, analyzing,
- Purpose: The purpose of providing administrative control over collections of photographs and providing researchers with access and retrieval capabilities; and
- Product: Creating representational artifacts including finding aids, index cards, inventories, and other devices for describing content, location, provenance, original order, and context.

Photographs are ready for use after the processes arrangement and description. This leads onto the requirement of photograph preservation.

Preserving Photographs

The unique nature of photographs as archival material and the fact that photographs as archival material usually come about as a part of private archives collections and thus attract historical value has been discussed. Within this context preservation can be regarded as the most strategic phase of archival practice. The archivist must employ professional caution at this stage and should take additional professional support when required.

The preservation of archival material is a process that has been influenced by technological

developments. An awareness of and following the relevant technological developments is key at this stage. In addition, it is important to prepare a *'Preservation Policy for Archival Material'*. Within the preservation policy, strategies and techniques should be determined in detail and a road map for all the types of archival material should be prepared. It may be necessary in some cases to prepare a special *'Preservation Policy for Photographs'*. There are some important points that should be kept in mind whilst preparing a preservation policy for photographs:

1. The archivist, conservator and restorator should work in conjunction for such policy and
2. Road maps should be prepared individually according to the type and composition of the photographs

Preservation of archives is the means by which the survival of selected material is ensured for enduring access. Organizations must as a matter of policy look beyond their immediate requirements and utilize strategies and techniques to ensure that the originals, or if that is impossible the information contained in them will be available for as long as needed (Forde, 2007, p. 1).

The long-term stability of photographic materials relates to a number of interrelated factors (Ritzenthaler, 1993, p. 38):

1. The inherent stability of the component materials,
2. The quality of original processing, including proper or improper fixing and washing,
3. Exposure to an uncontrolled environment, including high temperature and relative humidity, light and pollutants,
4. Physical and chemical suitability of enclosure materials and
5. Handling and use procedures.

The most upmost caution must be taken to ensure the protection of photographs. The rules on the handling and physical use of photographs must be determined and employed for users. Hendriks (1997, p. 98) expresses the importance of handling and using photographs appropriately with these words:

'All custodians of photographic collections must keep in mind that the holdings will be used - the principal reason for their existence. Since the handling of any archival collection is an important factor in its longevity, a continuing process of educating users is necessary to create the needed consciousness of the fragility of archival records in any medium.'

The Archives Association of British Columbia (1999, p. 75) has laid out some prerequisite steps needed to preserve photographs, especially useful for archivists as they also contain technical detail.

- *Keep the temperature and humidity consistent*, ideally at about 19 to 20°C (66 to 68°F) with a relative humidity of no more than 40 to 45 per cent (ideally 30 to 40 per cent). When possible, keep photographic materials out of damp basements or rooms with no temperature control or air circulation.

- *Minimize ultraviolet and high energy light* in the storage area, placing curtains over windows, adding sleeves to fluorescent lights, or storing photographs in light-proof containers.

- *Use metal shelves and file cabinets* instead of wooden.

- *Always use pH neutral or acid-free paper materials or inert plastic materials*, made especially for use with photographs.

- *Always handle photographs carefully* and wear white cotton gloves at all times.

- *Never touch the face of a photograph or the emulsion side of a negative*; hold it by the edges or the underside.

- *Do not try to unroll large or long photographs* which resist; contact a conservator for advice and assistance.

- *Do not remove the frames from photographs without checking the type and condition of image first*. Some types of photographs (such as colour prints) may be removed from their frames, and others (such as daguerreotypes) ought to be kept in their containers.

• *Write gently on the backs of photographs, using only a soft lead pencil or crayon.* Don't press into the emulsion on the other side of the photograph. Place a piece of glass under the photograph to provide a firm base for writing.

• *Never eat, drink, or smoke near photographic materials.*

• *Avoid exhibiting original photographs.* Use copies instead. If originals are displayed, cover them with a sheet of UV3 plexiglas, which shields them from ultraviolet rays. Also keep the light level low and exhibit the images for as little time as possible.

• *Try to install appropriate filter systems or air conditioners* if the atmosphere is particularly polluted or dusty,

In archival practice preservation involves many important points all related to each other. The archivist, first of all, has to have keep in mind the technical factors listed above. In addition, are two main important factors for establishing an effective preservation process. These factors are:

-Determining the appropriate storing technique and equipment and;

- Having knowledge of on factors that can affect the preservation of photographs.

Photographs should be stored individually in chemically neutral seamless envelopes, and colour photographs individually in moisture proof plastic packets. Photographic materials, especially prints can appear in a wide variety of sizes and with different sized mounts and cases. It is often necessary to make custom-sized phase boxes to store photographs of unusual or large size (Roberts, 1993, p. 392).

Photographic materials are best stored in inert polyester envelopes, these are available commercially in several sizes or can be tailored by conservators to individual requirements using an ultrasonic welder. Archivists should avoid paper or glassine envelopes where an adhesive has been used since this may affect the photograph inside (Forde, 2007, p. 108).

The method of housing and storing photographic collections is best resolved with the help of a photographic conservator. A conservator is familiar with the variety of images that can be found in a collection and can help devise a storage plan that will protect the images and also work best for the use that they will receive in the institution (Swartzburg, Bussey and Garretson, 1998, p. 175).

All photographic prints can be damaged by ultraviolet light, pollutants and dust. Black and white photographs are more stable than color photographs, the latter are much more sensitive to changes in light, temperature or humidity. Photographic prints are best stored in total darkness, with any exposure to light as minimal as possible; as with paper archives, a light level of 50 lux is acceptable for exhibitions. The most important factor in the preservation of photographic prints is to house them in an environment with stable temperature and relative humidity (Millar, 2010, p. 89).

Negatives and slides are damaged by light and heat; chemicals and pollutants; and high temperatures and humidity. Photographic negatives should be handled by the edges only and never with bare fingers. They should be stored in acid-free, non-buffered envelopes or folders; the enclosures used for prints are usually also suitable for negatives. Slides are best contained in inert plastic holders, never in glassine envelopes and never in enclosures containing coated plastics, nitrate or chlorinated plastics (such as PVC) or sulphur or adhesive (Millar, 2010, pp. 90-91).

Archivists should also possess information on the signs of photographic damage. Early intervention is critical.

The most commonly seen signs of damage are as follows (The National Archives, accessed: 06.02.2013):

- Images may be faded, discoloured, stained or tarnished, and surfaces scratched or dented.

- Binder layers may be cracked, flaking or stuck to another surface.

- Paper supports may be discoloured, torn, creased, curled or puckered. Glass supports may be chipped or broken, metal ones bent, tarnished or corroded, and plastics (commonly used for negatives) may have a pungent aroma, be wrinkled or sticky.

In brief, the important points about the preservation of photographs are as follows:

- The preservation and security criteria for archival buildings also applies for photograph storing areas.
- Black and White photographs should be separated from coloured ones and stored separately.
- The equipment used for storing printed photographs should be appropriate for long-term preservation.
- Each photograph should be stored in separate holders and/or envelopes and should be protected from dust, dirt, excessive physical handling and other damaging factors.
- The holders, envelopes and/or files should be acid free and should not contain lignin.
- Photographs should be stored at the appropriate temperature.
- Photographs should not be handled with bare hands. Cotton gloves should always be used.
- Photographs could be cleaned of metal matter such as paper-clips, stamps and etc.
- Cleaning material containing ammonia water and bleach that contains decolorant should not be used to clean the storage areas.
- All types of photographs should be protected from sunlight.

Preservation is a technical process as discussed. There are many factors that the archivist, conservator and restorator should take into account. The primary aim of preservation is for the appropriate precautions to be taken and for photographs to be protected from damage by external factors.

Digitisation of Photographs

Digitisation can be defined simply as the transfer of printed material to electronic media. Digitisation is one of the important techniques used in archives to protect unique archival material. In addition, the protection of material through digitisation ensures material is more accessible to more users. The digitisation of photographs as well as ensuring greater access, also preserves the original images.

James Bantin ve Leah Agne (2010, p. 244) emphasizes the importance of digitisation in archives as follows:

“Archival repositories bear an increasingly heavy responsibility for the selection and digitization of materials from their holdings. In addition to traditional archival functional expectations, users and administrators now expect archivists to provide extensive online access to the unique and often still relatively hidden primary sources contained in institutional collections. As a consequence, the creation of online content and effective digital reference service is now viewed as an additional measure of success of a repository.”

Digitisation can be defined as:

- The process of transforming analog material into binary electronic (digital) form, especially for storage and use in a computer (Moses, 2005, p. 120).
- The conversion of any type of original, be it paper, photographic prints or slides, three dimensional objects or moving images into a digital format. As technology has advanced, digitization has become an increasingly popular method of providing surrogates (Astle and Muir, 2002, p. 67).

The digitisation process of photographs normally consists of:

- Scanning printed photographs and
- Creating digital photographs by using digital cameras.

The digitisation of photographs should be regarded as a professional process and a road map should reflect this process accordingly.

Shepard (2004) determines six basic steps that the archivist needs to take into consideration during the digitization project planning process. These steps are as follows:

1. Selecting the images to be digitized,
2. Determining the needs of the users,
3. Allocating staff resources,
4. Assessing the costs of the digitisation process,
5. Choosing equipment and software, and
6. Deciding on arrangement and description of the photographs.

Digitisation is an important process for all archival material but especially for photographs. It is crucial when undertaking the digitalization process for photographs that the digitized copies are an accurate reflection of the original in order for users to best use them as archival material.

Conclusion

Ketelaar (2006, p. 188) defines the concept of archives with these words:

“Archives are memory because they are evidence. They are not only evidence of a transaction, but also evidence of some historic fact that is either part of the transaction itself, or that may be traced via the transaction, or that which is otherwise embodied in the record, or in the context of the archiving process.”

At the core of the archivist’s mission lies the need to ensure the continuity of the archival material entrusted to them. This is true for all types of archival material. Photographs occupy a special place in archival practice as archival material and therefore ensuring their continuity is strategically important and as Ketelaar emphasizes photographs as archival material are memory and they are the evidence of historical events.

In conclusion, photographs as archival material are not only for the use of archival users but also carry evidential value of the fruits of life. Therefore it is important that archival practice, especially description and preservation, is implemented for all photographs.

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Summary

Archivist deals with various types of archival material when undertaking archival practice and photographs can be considered to be one of the more distinctive archival materials. In archival science there are two important facts about photographic material. First, photographs are structurally different from other types of archival material like paper, audio-visual and electronic material. Thus the archivist requires specialist knowledge in order to undertake archival processes in relation to photographs. Secondly, photographs usually come as part of private archives collections and as such photographs usually have historical value attached to them.

There have been some developments in the field of photography since the 1800s that have ran parallel to technological developments. As a result of these developments, there have been some changes in the structural features of photographs. Archivists now have access to a wealth of photographic collections covering a long time span. Archivists in addition have the responsibility to be well-informed about the archival materials in their custody. As is the case for all types of archival material, the archivist must possess knowledge on the type, media, size and quantity of photographs. It follows that being knowledgeable on the archival material is a direct result of following all of the archival practice steps. In addition, the archivist makes decision on the preservation of material according to the information about the type and medium of material.

At the core of the archivist's mission lies the need to ensure the continuity of the archival material entrusted to them. This is true for all types of archival material. Photographs occupy a special place in archival practice as archival material and therefore ensuring their continuity is strategically important and as Ketelaar emphasizes photographs as archival material are memory and they are the evidence of historical events.

Archival material which are the main elements managed in archival practice are determined in the first phase which is appraisal. In appraisal archivist decide on the value of material. In other words archivist clarifies if the material will survive or destructed. Besides at the end of appraisal archivist provide tangible data on the quality and quantity of material in other words material are identified.

The second process of archival practice is to arrange the material. In archival science there are two main principles that should be taken into account when arranging archival material. These are "The Principle of Provenance" and "The Principle of Original Order". These two principles should be applied to every type of archival material including photographs. The third process is description and it is a time consuming process that deals with taking intellectual control over archival material.

The unique nature of photographs as archival material and the fact that photographs as archival material usually come about as a part of private archives collections and thus attract historical value has been discussed. Within this context preservation can be regarded as the most strategic phase of archival practice. The archivist must employ professional caution at this stage and should take additional professional support when required.

Photographs as archival material are not only for the use of archival users but also carry evidential value of the fruits of life. Therefore it is important that archival practice, especially description and preservation, is implemented for all photographs.