

Workshop 2: Prepping content

COMMUNITY-DRIVEN METADATA, FILE ORGANIZATION, AND
PREPARING YOUR ITEMS

Goal: Prepping community contributions for the digital archive

- **Steps**

- Think about metadata and its community value
- Transcribe oral history interviews
- Crop and edit photos

- **Why not just go straight to Github?**

- **Shared community representation**

- To give communities time and space after a community event to talk about how the digital exhibit reflects community memories and values, *in aggregate*

- **Technical efficiency**

- Prep work outside of Github makes it easier to transfer info about each community contribution to the Github digital exhibit web page.

Metadata

Crafting Metadata in Community Settings

In technical terms, metadata is

- **Info about something** that we can see before we open that thing
- **Flexible but structured.** Just a file name, or lots of info in lots of different categories
- **Easily searchable** to make that thing easier to find.

In community archive processes, metadata lets us

- Confirm who we are and what matters to us
- Have a say in how we are represented online, both to our community members and to other people

Three points in time for conversations about metadata

- **Before oral history interviews:** craft an interview process that lets community members contribute their own metadata
- **After interviews are done:** remind us of how metadata contributes to community representation
- **If no interviews were done:** thoughtfully represent metadata from community members about their contributions to the archive



Add a Caption

Look Up **Cat**

Wednesday, **Oct 22, 2025** 4:42 PM [Adjust](#)

IMG_9672

Apple iPhone 15 Pro Max

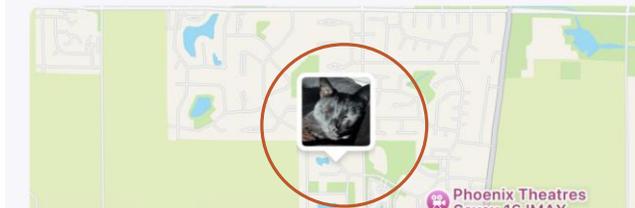
HEIF

Main Camera — 24 mm f1.78

12 MP • 4032 × 3024 • 1.6 MB

RICH COOL

ISO 100 | 50 mm | 0 ev | f1.78 | 1/79 s



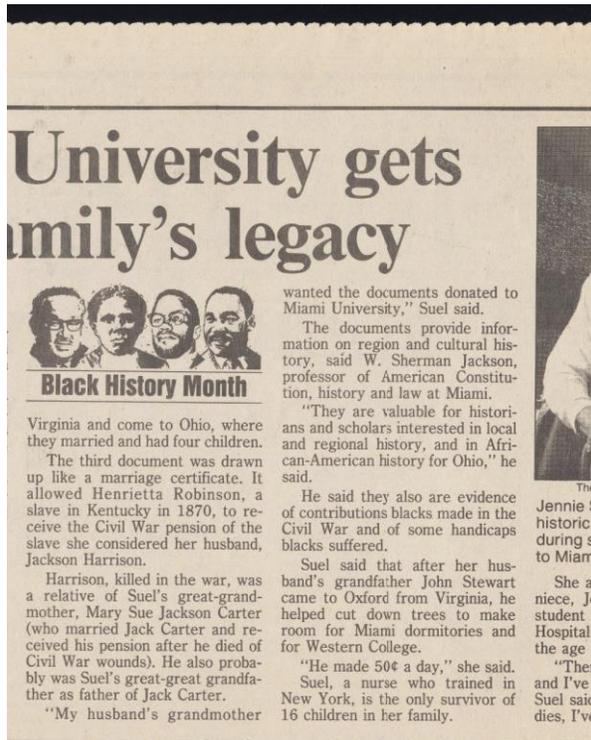
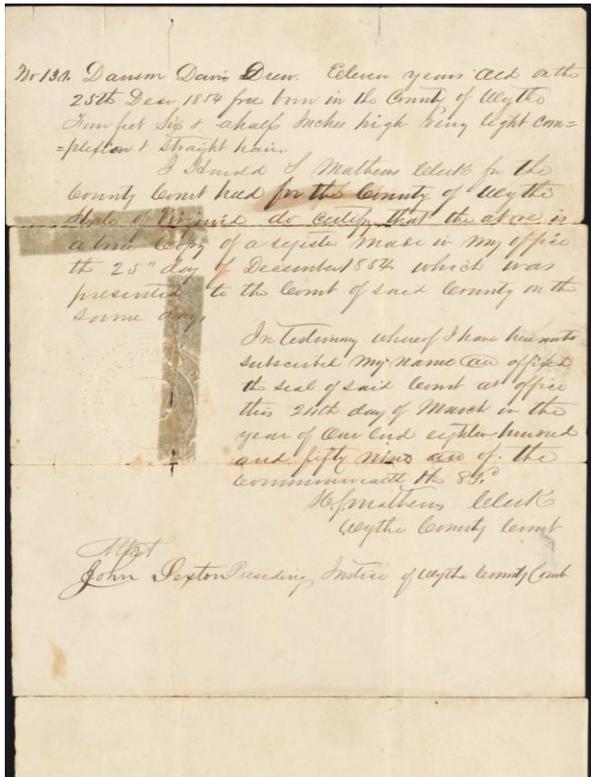
[Save](#)



[Adjust](#)



Lived Experience in Metadata: The Jennie Elder Suel Collection at Miami University



Miscellanea Collection

Collection Identifier: Mss. Coll. Miscellanea

Walter Havighurst Special Collections Finding Aids | Miscellanea Collection

Collection Overview | Collection Organization | Container Inventory

Dates

Creation: 1776-2002

Extent

6 cubic feet

Language of Materials

English

Collapse All

Finding Aid & Administrative Information

Title	Author	Date	Description rules	Script of description	Language of description	note
Guide to the Miscellanea Collection	Finding aid prepared by Betsy Butler	2007-2009	2016	Finding Aid Prepared Using Dacs	English	Code for undetermined script
						Finding aid written in English

Repository Details

edom certificate for Dawson Davis Drew Stewart, 24 March 1859

ton, John

rk Office of Wythe County Court; Mathews, Harold L.

sl, Jennie Elder

i4-12-25

rk Office of Wythe County Court

jinia--Wytheville

edom certificate of 11-year-old Dawson Davis Drew (Stewart). Dated December 25, 1854. The document describes a half inches high. Very light complexioned and straight hair. Dawson relocated to Butler County in prior to 1859

x 21 cm

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very

wart, Dawson D. (Drew)
thews, Harold L.
ton, John

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Institutional vs. Community-Centered Metadata Creation

Institutional Metadata

Planned early in project design

Built into data collection tools (e.g., oral history prompts, History Harvest forms)

Designed to serve institutional organization, access, and control

Emphasizes standards, compatibility, and consistency

Community-Centered Metadata

- Often emerges later, after materials have been collected
- Motivated by meaning-making, storytelling, and sharing within the community
- Driven by relationships, genealogical connections, and cultural context
- Serves the community's own priorities—not institutional systems

Key Differences

- Timing and purpose
 - Institutions use metadata to organize knowledge for preservation.
- Communities use metadata to interpret and reclaim knowledge for self-definition.

Community-Centered Collaborative Metadata

Title

- Prompt: "What would you call this item?"
- Intention: Community defined naming

Description

- Prompt: "Tell us the story behind this."
- Intention: Centering personal meaning

Date

- Prompt: "When was this from? Approximate is okay."
- Intention: Valuing memory over precision

People

- Prompt: "Who is in this photo/story?"
- Intention: Naming and honoring individuals

Place

- Prompt: "Where did this take place?"
- Intention: Grounding materials in place

Emotions/Significance

- Prompt: "How does this item make you feel?"
- Intention: Centering affect and cultural value

Permissions

- Prompt: "How should this item be used/shared?"
- Intention: Honoring agency and consent

Tags or keywords

- Prompt "What words would help people find this?"
- Intention: Enabling community-generated vocabularies

A quick metadata-prep walkthrough

You all have access to this at

<https://digitalarcplatform.github.io/documentation/docs/postEvent/metadata/>

It's long, so we'll do a quick walkthrough today to cover the big points.

Questions to ask as you start prep

What metadata is easy to get?

What metadata will need to be gathered in community?

Where will you store your prep work?

- Google Sheets
- In "Plain text" in Google Docs?

Transcription

Initial decisions

Do you have access to software that can transcribe for you?

- Microsoft Word and Google Docs have the capability of auto-transcribing audio, but with limitations.

What to include in the transcript?

- Do you want to include all sounds spoken, like “umm” or “like”?
- Will you include duplicated words?
- Will you represent non-verbal sounds like laughter?

How will you label the speakers in the text file?

- Keep in mind the contributor's consent at the time of the recording.

Will you include timestamps in the text file?

Steps

1. Download your audio file to your computer
2. Create a document for the transcription
 1. In Microsoft Word or Google Docs
3. Begin the transcription process
4. Clean up/ edit your transcript
5. Upload file to website
 1. This may include the audio file as well, depending on the contributor's consent

Recommendations when transcribing

Create a style guide that your community will follow. This will ensure consistency from one transcript to another.

- Format of the document
- Punctuation
- How to note unintelligible language

Accurately represent what was said in the recording, avoid excluding anything, unless the contributor requests that a section be omitted.

Establish a workflow for checking the transcripts

- Who can assist when something is in another language or unintelligible?
- Who gives a final look over of the transcript?

Google Docs vs. Microsoft Word

Google Docs

- Pros
 - Free to anyone with a Gmail account
 - Can be stored in your community's Gmail account
- Cons
 - Speech-to-text is not very accurate. It requires very clear audio.
 - The speech recognition sometimes stops working all of a sudden

Microsoft Word

- Pros
 - Transcripts are more complete. Includes time stamps and can distinguish between different speakers
- Cons
 - Requires a paid subscription to Microsoft Office products

Break!

Take 5

Stretch, get water, do a little dance in the kitchen

Organizing Your Files

A.K.A “HOW TO KEEP TRACK OF THE NUMEROUS FILES THAT MAKE YOUR ARCHIVE POSSIBLE”

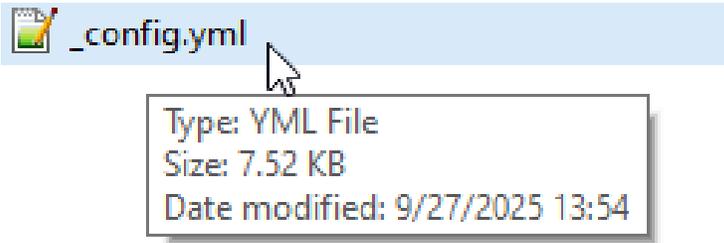
Naming Your Files

Anatomy of a File Name

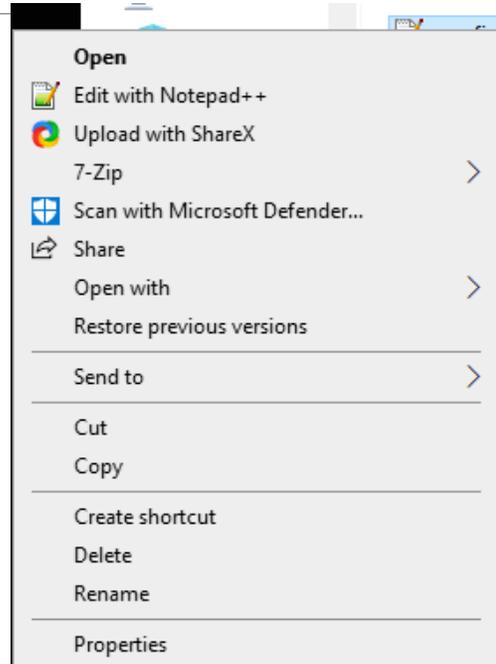


- The name you (the user) gives to the file
- Can and should change
- The file extension which sets the type of the file
- Generally do not want to change

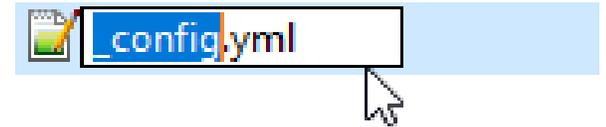
Naming Your Files



Step 1: Hover over your file in Explorer/Finder



Step 2: Right-click and select “Rename”



Step 3: Assign the file a new name **but** do not change the file type

Note: This holds across almost every major file platform (e.g. Google Drive, OneDrive, etc.)

Naming Your Files

PC > Downloads ▼ 🔄

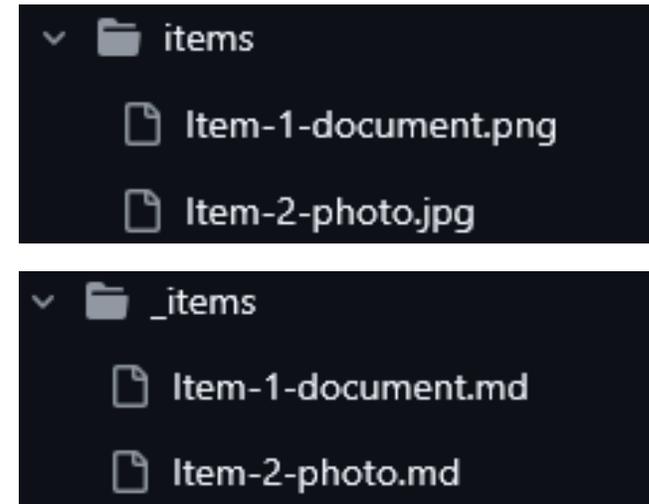
Name	Date modified	Type	Size
 464027715_10230186726004899_87616096...	10/19/2024 11:39	JPG File	75 KB
 464029623_8331673440241805_161277309...	10/20/2024 18:25	JPG File	60 KB
 464072893_1263391544690201_817656477...	10/25/2024 16:45	JPG File	745 KB
 464085247_8873112252719857_820322770...	10/21/2024 14:02	JPG File	115 KB
 464101964_8629725643751069_628486027...	10/19/2024 23:43	JPG File	115 KB
 464143473_10101007301314017_90909909...	10/20/2024 12:15	JPG File	96 KB
 464214508_957902693036649_7424446612...	10/26/2024 12:12	JPG File	476 KB
 464227741_965806362246500_8414588766...	11/2/2024 21:15	JPG File	131 KB
 464275083_2190335551351959_158878888...	10/24/2024 08:37	JPG File	97 KB
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 464383545_540887542239140_8132480683...	10/24/2024 20:16	JPG File	64 KB
 464384902_1090760999333758_841400520...	10/25/2024 16:40	JPG File	218 KB
 464391570_10235041442720185_84676509...	10/24/2024 20:41	JPG File	130 KB
 464399768_965806268913176_2862537696...	11/2/2024 21:15	JPG File	161 KB
 464568359_1023963862863322_839813345...	10/26/2024 23:13	JPG File	45 KB
 464578464_10162005836136940_77243289...	10/31/2024 17:21	JPG File	58 KB
 464580647_27357620983881511_35785129...	10/26/2024 15:15	JPG File	174 KB
 464614597_9004328459619041_489237469...	10/26/2024 23:19	JPG File	469 KB

- Unclear Names
 - Also too long
- Not Organized
- Consistent(ish?)
- How do we improve?

Naming Your Files

Principles

- 1. Be specific
 - e.g. date_itemid.ext : 2025-10-25_01.jpg
- 2. Be consistent
 - DigitalArc *depends* on this
- 3. Be organized
 - Have a system in place for where to keep images, audio, etc. and metadata files

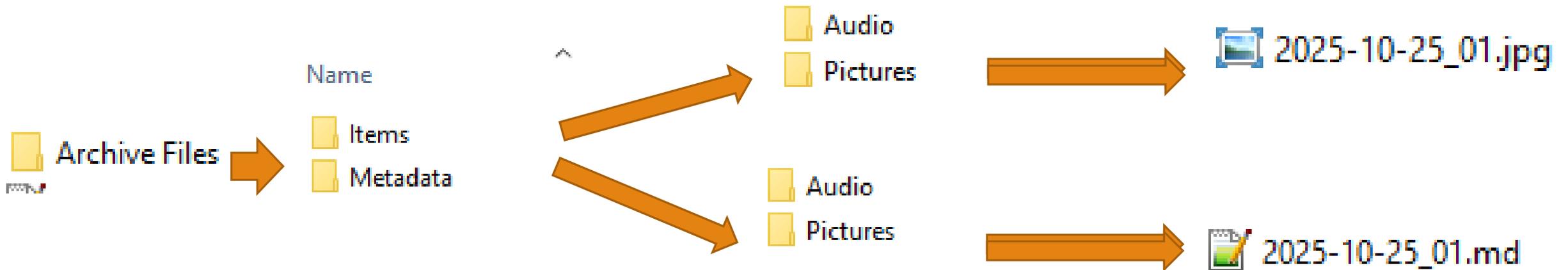


Note: You can change the names of text files in GitHub, **but not images or other media**

Staying Organized

How do you keep track of all the files?

Consider:



Remember: The more work you do before uploading to GitHub, the less you have to do afterwards!

Photo Editing: Fundamentals, Do's, and Don't's

layout: item

format: photo

title: Segway Tour

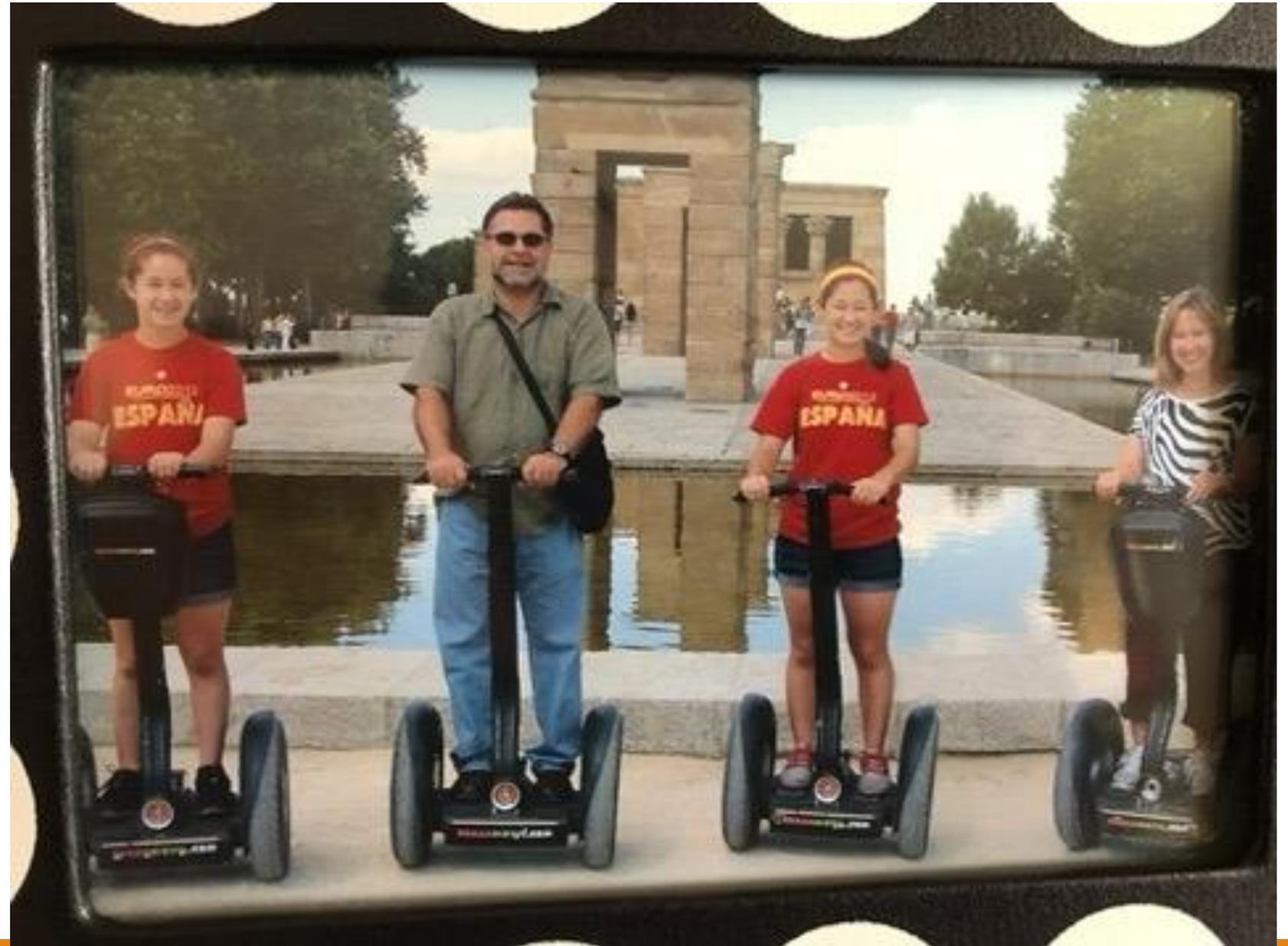
creator: Luis González

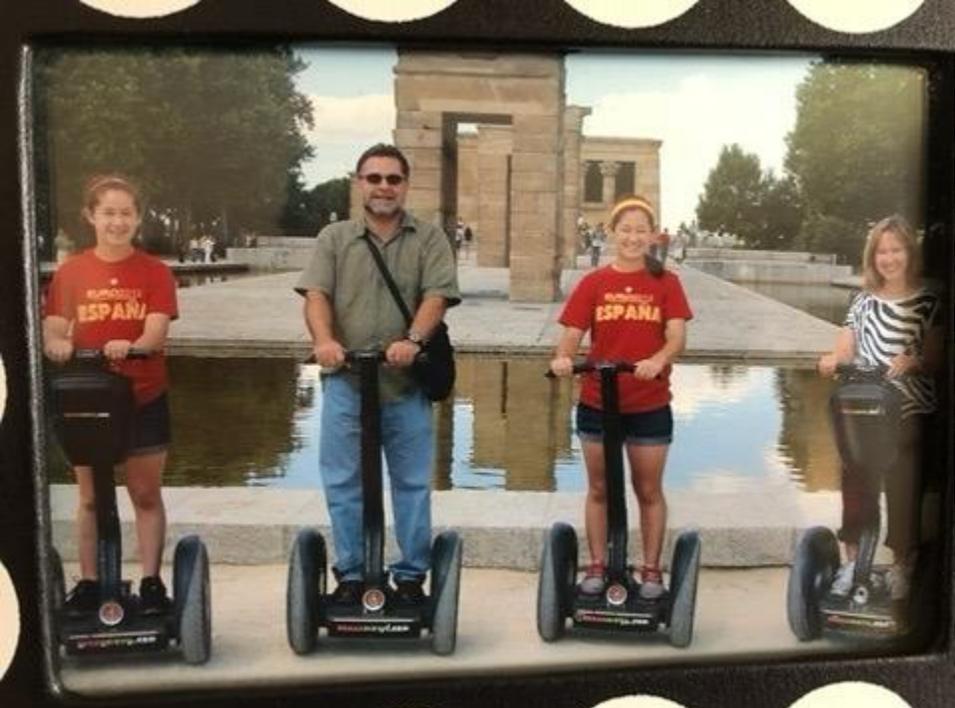
contributor: Luis González

creationdate: July 15, 2012

type: printed photograph in
frame

short desc: Luis, Arlene,
Maria, and Claudia take
segway tour of Madrid.





Don't: add filters!

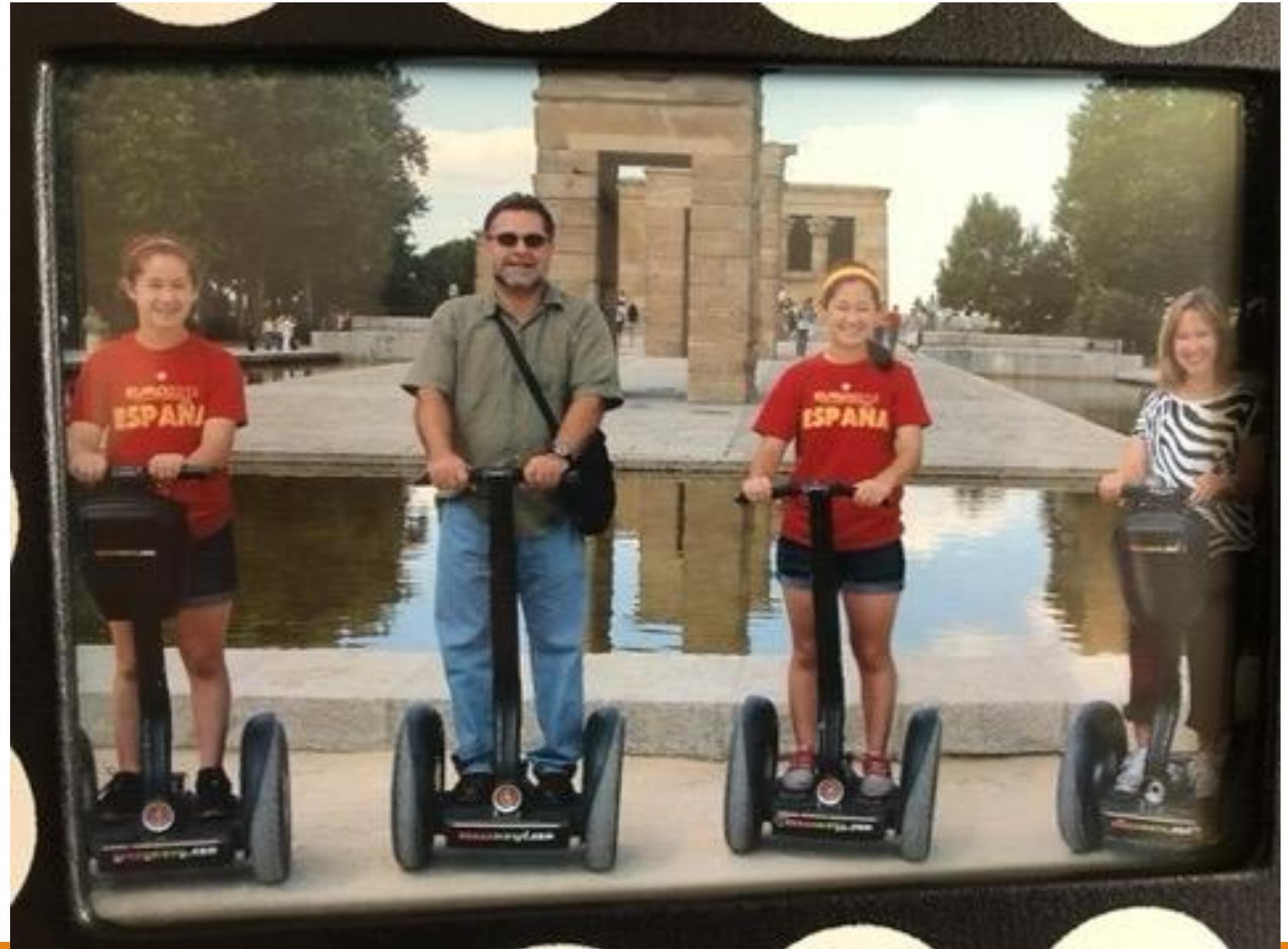
Filters can be distracting, and more importantly, erase key details about the photograph of the item.



Don't: save your photograph as HEIC or PDF

Do: save your photo as .jpg or .png

Consider making a copy of your photograph before editing it.



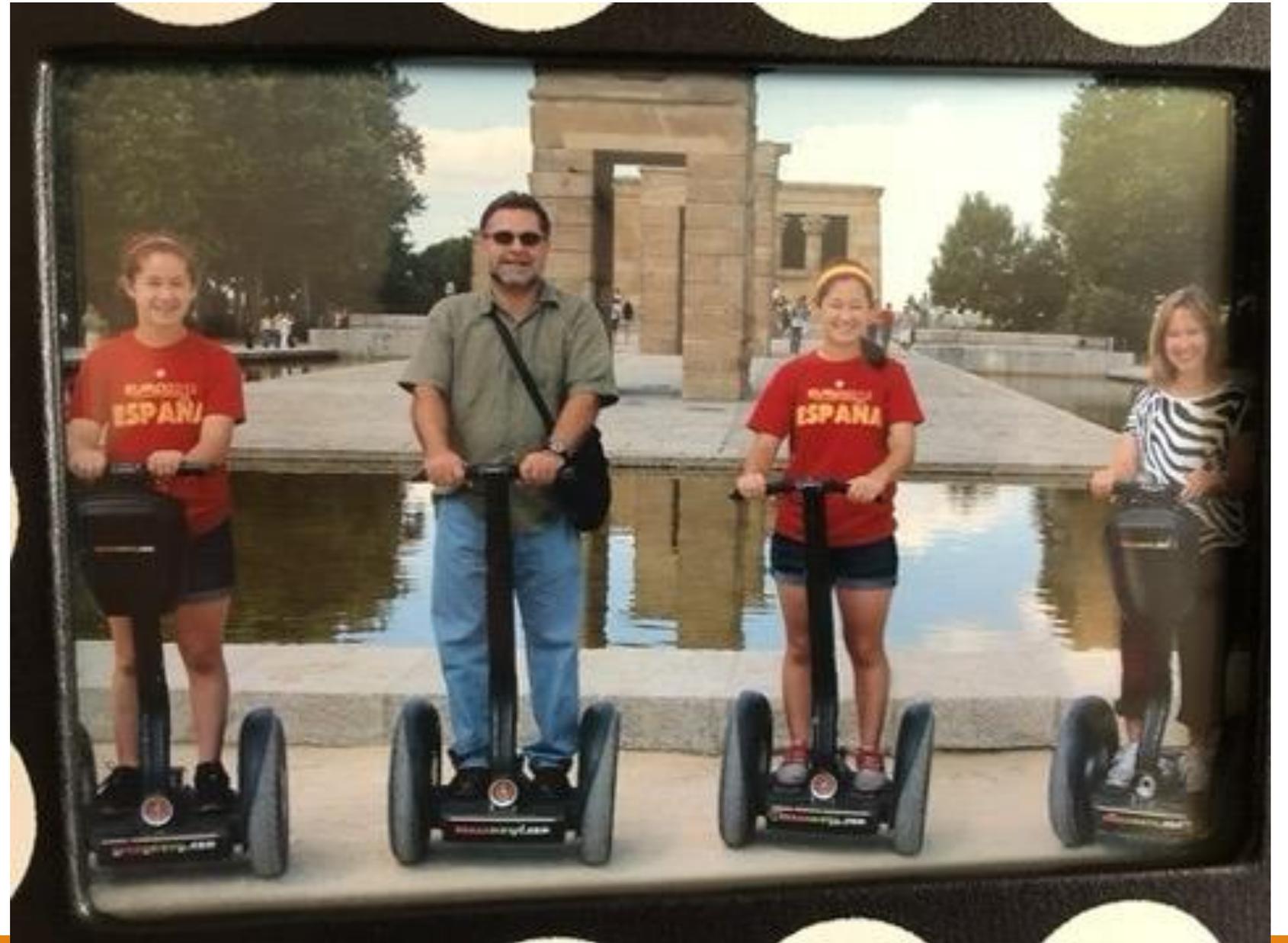
Don't: edit, crop, or blur out the image so much that it becomes misleading

Do: blur out sensitive material such as mailing or email addresses



Don't: save your photograph as HEIC or PDF

Do: save your photo as .jpg or .png



Don't: Use photos from the internet or other sources that do not come from you, your collaborators, or the participants in the history harvests





2024-12-30-000.jpg



2024-12-30-001.jpg

Do: use a naming convention

For example:
Yyyy-mm-dd-###

This includes saving the images together in a folder.



2024-12-30-002.jpg



2024-12-30-004.jpg



Original image: 2024-12-30-005.jpg

Do: crop the photo (but not too much)





2024-12-30-001.jpg

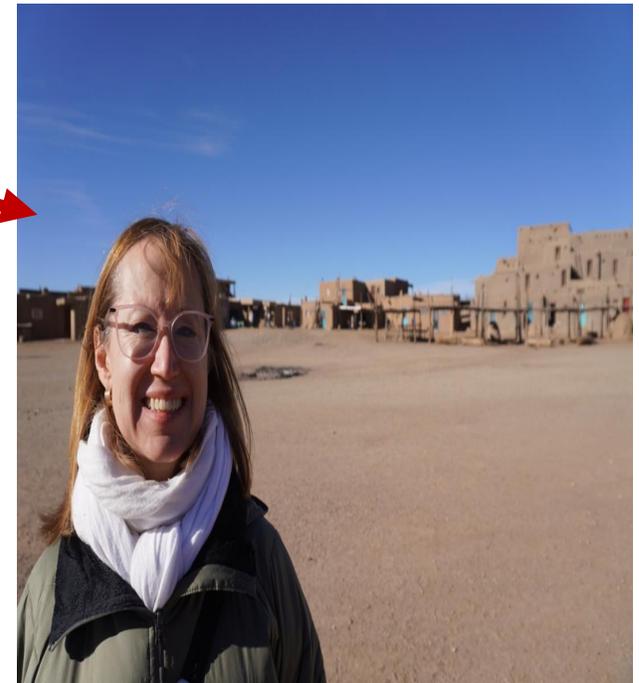
Tip: think of yourself as a photojournalist who is communicating information through photography, not an artist who is expressing herself.

Do: subtly adjust brightness, contrast, and saturation to bring out details of the photograph.





Don't: disrupt the aspect ratio.



2024-12-30-000.jpg



before



Do: rotate photos so that the horizontal and vertical lines in the photo are parallel to the edges.

after



Which Mac software lets you crop and save photos without downloading anything?

1. Photos app.



2. Preview.



Tip: these options are available to users with IOS 16 or later.

Official documentation on how to edit:

Apple: <https://support.apple.com/guide/iphone/edit-photos-and-videos-iphb08064d57/ios>

Android: <https://www.samsung.com/us/support/answer/ANS10003229/>

Documentation to support you

The DigitalArc Team has draft written instructions for everything we covered in today's workshop. You all have access to this information through the following links:

Post-Event Clean-up Overview

- <https://digitalarcplatform.github.io/documentation/docs/postEvent/>

File Naming

- <https://digitalarcplatform.github.io/documentation/docs/postEvent/naming/>

Transcription Editing

- <https://digitalarcplatform.github.io/documentation/docs/postEvent/transcription/>

Photo Editing

- <https://digitalarcplatform.github.io/documentation/docs/postEvent/photo/>

Creating Metadata

- <https://digitalarcplatform.github.io/documentation/docs/postEvent/metadata/>

Technical Support (Office Hours)

The DigitalArc Team is here to support you all in your technical needs. In the coming weeks, we will offer virtual technical support in case you have questions or need assistance.

Our availability is:

- **Tuesdays** 5-6 pm ET/ 4-5 pm CT & 8-9 pm/ 7-8 pm CT
- **Wednesdays** 11 am-12 pm ET/ 10-11 am CT
- **Thursdays** 9 – 10 pm ET/ 8-9 pm CT
- **Saturday, November 8**, 12-1 pm ET/ 11 am – 12 pm CT

Use this link to schedule a meeting with us:

- <https://calendly.com/digitalarcplatform/30min>

If our availability does not work with your schedule, please email us at digitalarcplatform@gmail.com to find an alternate meeting time.

Tell us we need to add documentation

<https://github.com/DigitalArcPlatform/documentation/issues/new>

Next Steps

In the coming weeks, we hope that you will be able to continue to apply what you learned today to some of the material that your community has been able to collect. Consider

The goal would be to process transcripts, images, and metadata for 2-4 objects in your collection.

Our next workshop will be sometime **in January** and will focus on taking the content that you've prepared for those 2-4 objects and **uploading to publish** on your community sites.

Exact date for workshop is not set yet; we are waiting on finalizing work schedules for the new year.