



## Will the UM Libraries Digitize My Collection?

Digitizing archival collections is a great way to make them more accessible to a wider audience, but there are several factors to determine if digitization is feasible for a given collection. Even though the Library has hundreds of important archival collections under its care, only a small percentage of them will be digitized and made available online.

Digitization is a time-intensive and costly process when done according to recognized quality assurance standards. The scanning is the fastest and easiest part of the process. It takes 5 minutes to scan a photograph in the Library's digital lab, but it takes at least 20 minutes for that photo to go through the entire digitization workflow.

Before scanning, the materials must be organized, with a spreadsheet inventory listing each item, and a preservation review to ensure the items can be digitized safely. During scanning, high quality settings are used, and each image is edited so that it is an accurate representation of the original. After scanning, all of the images are reviewed for quality assurance. They are then uploaded into the online repository, where metadata descriptions are created for each item so that it is findable online. The digital images must also be preserved long-term, which is a separate cost in addition to preserving the original archival collection.

Copyright is an important consideration when determining which materials can be digitized. The Library cannot digitize materials and make them available online unless it holds the copyright or has permission from the copyright holder. Often, there are multiple copyright owners associated with an archival collection, and the donor may not hold the copyright to all of the materials in their collection.

The Library has policies to ensure that we are digitizing collections in a focused, strategic, and ethical manner. With so many materials that would benefit from digitization and finite resources carry out this work, we make decisions and set priorities based on the following criteria:

- Does digitization of this material support strategic goals of the Library and the University?
- Does it support a demonstrated research or teaching need?
- Does the Library have the capacity to complete the project in a timely and efficient manner?
- Will digitization promote access to high-use materials?
- Has copyright status been clearly defined and can the material be made broadly accessible?
- Is the material free of privacy issues?
- Can the materials be digitized safely without damaging the originals?
- Are the materials unique and, if not, have they been digitized elsewhere?

The Library values your collection and will give every consideration as to whether it fits our criteria for digitization. Thank you for your donation!