

Another Look: Reprocessing Photograph Collections

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Abstract: In 2010, the National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) awarded the George Mason University Libraries a Detailed Processing Grant to reprocess two important photograph collections. The Oliver F. Atkins Photograph Collection and the Arthur Scott Photograph Collection both contain images of significant people and events in Washington, D.C., the United States, and abroad in the 20th century. Special Collections & Archives (SC&A) staff created detailed typewritten and handwritten inventories in the 1980s, but they never updated those inventories using Encoded Archival Description (EAD) and Describing Archives: A Content Standard (DACS). Thus, most of the contents remained hidden from researchers; and staff could not easily locate images to meet reference requests. The grant provided partial funding for SC&A staff to reprocess the two collections according to proper archival standards while also using previous description efforts where appropriate. The result is that both collections are far more accessible to the research community than they have ever been before. This poster will highlight the successes and the challenges as well as possibilities for other institutions to tackle similar projects.

About the author:

Jordan Patty is Processing Archivist/Librarian for the Special Collections & Archives Department, George Mason University Libraries. Since 2008 he has managed the accessioning, processing, and preservation of the university archives and the historical manuscript collections. From 2010-2011, he served as the interim head of the department. Prior to GMU, he worked as a processing archivist at The Catholic University of America Libraries from 2005-2008. His writings have appeared in the *Journal of Archival Organization*, *Archivaria*, and, most recently, in a chapter on writing newsletters in *Public Relations and Marketing for Archives* (2011). He holds a M.L.S from the University of Maryland, and is currently working towards a Ph.D. in history at GMU.