

1. Welcome! This tutorial will show you how to assign titles to historic photographs for digital collections included in the Recollection Wisconsin search engine.


This tutorial covers:

- How to assign short descriptive titles to historic photographs for inclusion in Recollection Wisconsin.
- Using existing titles
- Characteristics of a good title
- A simple formula for creating titles for photos of...
 - People
 - Buildings
 - Activities

2. In this tutorial, we'll first take a look at locating and transcribing existing titles from historic photos. Then we will look at tips for creating titles for photographs that do not have existing titles. We'll look at the characteristics of a good title and we'll show you how to create a new title based on a simple formula. We'll share a number of examples so you can see how titles are created for different types of images, including photos of people, buildings, events and activities.

Existing titles


If the photograph contains a title or caption, transcribe it.



3. First, let's look at photographs that already contain a title. Existing titles are usually assigned by a photographer or a publisher. You might find an existing title printed on a postcard or handwritten on a photograph. If an image contains an existing title, you should transcribe it exactly.

Existing titles

If the photograph contains a title or caption, transcribe it.



Birds-eye-view,
No.4, 1908, Barneveld,
Wis.

4. In this example, we can see a handwritten title at the lower right corner of the image. So we'll copy it down as written, "Birds-eye-view, No.4, 1908, Barneveld, Wis." And that will be our title for this photo.

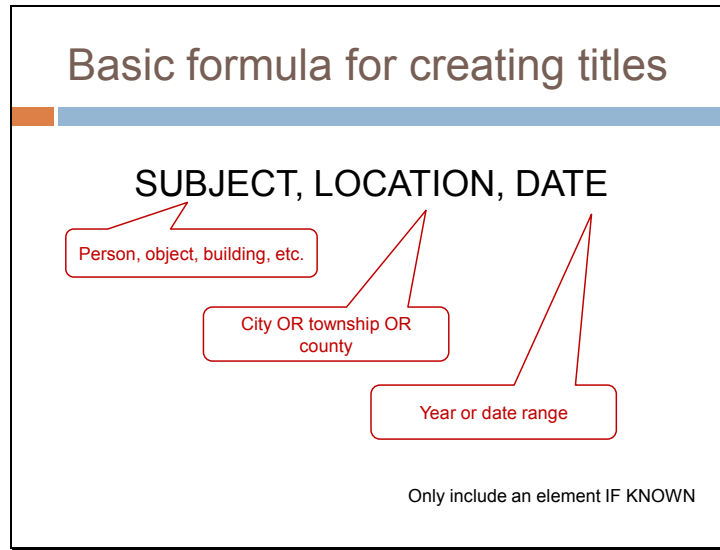
What makes a good title?

If the photo does not already have a title, you'll need to create one.

- Descriptive and specific
- Brief
- Follows specific formatting rules
 - ▣ Capitalize first word and proper names (people, places, institutions)
 - ▣ Don't start with "a" or "the"
 - ▣ Period not needed at the end

5. Of course, most historic images do not have existing titles. If no title exists, you'll need to create one. So what makes a good title? In general, it should be descriptive, specific and relatively short. Keep in mind that your title is your user's first point of access to a photo, so make your titles informative and specific. At the same time, keep your titles short and simple—the place for more detailed information is in your description and other metadata fields.

There are also some formatting rules to keep in mind when creating titles for photos in a digital collection. First of all, capitalize the first word and proper names, such as people, places and institutions. But, do not capitalize every word in the title. Secondly, try to avoid starting your titles with the words "a" or "the." And finally, there's no need to add a period at the end of your title.



6. So what kinds of information should you include when creating a title? Here's our simple formula: Subject – Location – Date. Start by identifying the subject of the photo. Who—or what—is in this photo? Identify any people, buildings or locations that are depicted as the main subjects of the image. Then, identify the location where the photo was taken. Include the name of the city OR the township OR the county—but not all three. So for example, if the city name is known, include it. If the city is not known, record the township name or the county name.

Finally, include the year the photo was created, if that's known. Use a specific year or a date range, not general terms like 19th century or late 1900s. If you can't be specific or include a date range within about 20 years, for example 1920-1940, just leave out the date. You might not always be able to identify the subject, location and date for each photograph in your collection, but that's OK. Just leave out any parts of the formula that you don't know.

People & Portraits



- Identify the person's name (first name, last name)
- Identify the location to the most specific level possible (City OR Township OR County)
 - do not include state
- Identify the date (Specific year? Date range?)

7. Let's take a look at our first example. This one's pretty straightforward—it's a portrait of a single individual. Following our formula, we're going to identify the person's name, the location of the photo, and the date.

Albert Townsend, Clintonville, 1927

SUBJECT, LOCATION, DATE



8. In this case we know our subject is Albert Townsend, the location is Clintonville, and the date is 1927.

People & Portraits



Identify...Who? Where?
When?

- Women
- Children
- Babies
- Carriages
- Stores/shops
- Boardwalk
- 1890 – 1900
- Manitowoc County


9. This next example is a little more complicated. There's a lot happening in this photo—how can we break this down to create a useful title? Let's look first at the who, where and when—we can see a large group of women and children lined up on a sidewalk, in front of some shops. From our records we know that this photo came from somewhere in Manitowoc County between about 1890 and 1900.

Women and children with babies in carriages, → SUBJECT,
 Manitowoc County, → LOCATION,
 1890-1900 → DATE



10. If we put that all together, we've got our subject—women and children with babies in carriages--our location –Manitowoc County-- and our date range—1890-1900. More specific details, like the board sidewalk and the names of the shops, do not need to be included in the title. That information can be added later in our description.

Buildings and cityscapes




- Identify the name of the building
- Identify the location to the most specific level possible (Campus OR City OR Township OR County)
 - do not include state
- Identify the date (Specific year? Date range?)

11. Photos of buildings follow a similar pattern to photos of people. We'll start with the subject—the name of the building. If the building has an official name, use that. If there's no official name for the building, use a descriptive name, like Smith house or Episcopal church. Next, identify the location of the building—the name of the city or the township or the county. Since many of the building photos in Recollection Wisconsin come from university collections, we included “campus” as an option here too. Finally, identify the date of the photograph, if that's known.

Albert Sivyer Memorial Hall, Milwaukee-Downer College

SUBJECT, LOCATION, DATE



12. In this example, we have Albert Sivyer Memorial Hall as our subject and Milwaukee-Downer College as our location. The date is unknown so we leave that out.

Buildings and cityscapes



- Identify the name of the street or view
- Identify the location (City OR Township OR County)
- Identify the date (Year? Date range?)

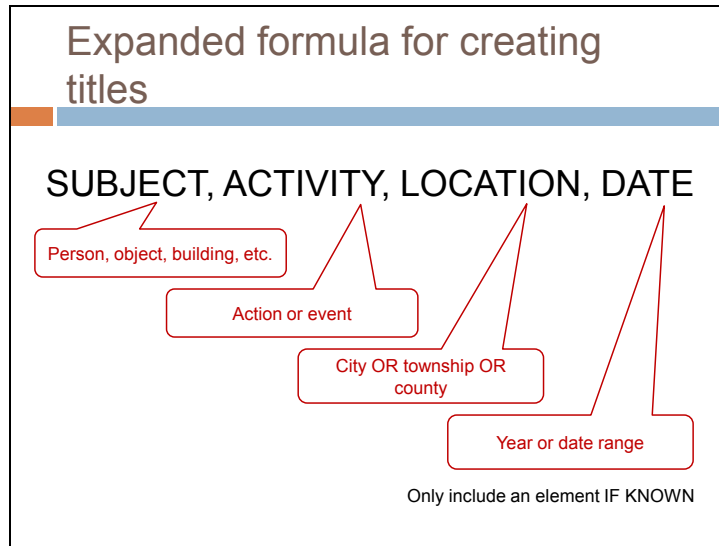
13. Here's another example of a building photograph—but this time it's not just a single building but a view of a street. Again, we'll identify the subject—the name of the street or block or other view—the location—and the date.

100 block of South Main Street, Fort Atkinson, 1940-1949

SUBJECT, LOCATION, DATE




14. So here we have our title: 100 block of South Main Street, Fort Atkinson, 1940-1949



15. Ok, so now that you’ve got the basic formula down, let’s make things a little more complicated. Here we’ll add activities or events into the mix. Again, we’ll start by identifying the subject of the photo. Who—or what—is in this photo? Identify any people, buildings or locations that are depicted as the main subjects of the image. Next, identify what’s happening in the photo. Is there an action, like running or dancing or reading? Or an event, like a parade or a lecture or a ceremony? Then, identify the location where the photo was taken. Include the name of the city OR the township OR the county—but not all three. Finally, include the date the photo was created, if that’s known.

Activities and events




Identify...Who? What are they doing? Where? When?

- Tailor and customer
- Measuring
- Two Rivers
- Date unknown – 20th century

16. Here’s an example of a photograph that includes an activity or action. We can see a tailor measuring a customer. We know that this photo is from Two Rivers, and we can assume it’s the 20th century, but we don’t know a specific date.


Tailor measuring a man in suit, Two Rivers

SUBJECT, ACTIVITY, LOCATION, DATE



17. So translating that information into a title, we might get: Tailor measuring a man in suit, Two Rivers

Activities and events

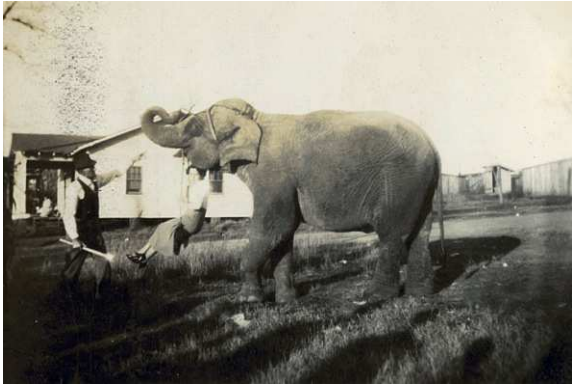


Identify... Who? What are they doing? Where and when?

- Circus elephant
- Trainer
- Woman on swing
- Evansville
- 1940-1949

18. Here's another example. The elements we can identify in this photo are an elephant, a trainer, and a woman on a swing. We know from our records that this photo was taken in Evansville, Wisconsin in the 1940s.

Trainer with circus elephant	→	<u>SUBJECT.</u>
holding a woman on a swing,	→	<u>ACTIVITY,</u>
Evansville, 1940-1949	→	<u>LOCATION, DATE</u>



19. So putting that into a title, we get our subject – “Trainer with circus elephant” – our action “holding a woman on a swing” and our location and date – Evansville, 1940-1949.

Review: What makes a good title?

- Descriptive and specific
- Brief
- Follows specific formatting rules
 - ▣ Capitalize first word and proper names (people, places, institutions)
 - ▣ Don't start with "a" or "the"
 - ▣ Period not needed at the end
- Formula:
Subject + Activity + Location + Date

20. To wrap up our title tutorial, let's briefly review the elements of creating a good title for a historic photograph. Your title should be descriptive, specific and relatively short. Keep in mind that your title is your user's first point of access to a photo.

There are also some formatting rules to keep in mind. First of all, capitalize the first word and proper names, such as people, places and institutions. But do not capitalize every word in the title. Secondly, try to avoid starting your titles with the words "a" or "the." And finally, there's no need to add a period at the end of your title.

Use our simple formula of Subject – Activity – Location – Date to help you build useful descriptive titles.

Need help?

- Recollection Wisconsin metadata guidelines
<http://recollectionwisconsin.org/guidelines>
- Contact us
<http://recollectionwisconsin.org/contact>



21. If you need more help with creating titles or other descriptive metadata for your digital collection, you can always refer to our full guidelines, available on our website at <http://recollectionwisconsin.org/guidelines>. If you have any questions, don't hesitate to contact us at <http://recollectionwisconsin.org/contact>.