



TEXAS HISTORICAL COMMISSION

real places telling real stories

How to Take Photographs for Historic Resources Surveys





Photographs

Essential part of survey data

- “A picture is worth a thousand words”
- Capture current moment in time
- Should be clear, well-composed, and provide accurate visual representation of resource and its significant features
- Number of photographs needed depends on type of survey being conducted and type of resource being photographed



Photographs

If survey is for National Register of Historic Places nomination purposes:

- Must follow photographic requirements outlined in NPS *National Register Photo Policy Factsheet*
- Maximum or largest pixel dimension camera allows
- Minimum: 2000 x 3000 pixels at 300 dpi
- TIF or RAW format
- If TIF or RAW formats are not available, then JPG is acceptable
- Must be taken digitally in color
- 8-bit (or larger) color format
- Do not modify images in any way



Photographs

If survey is being conducted for purposes other than National Register of Historic Places nominations

- JPG format is acceptable
- Other digital camera requirements are the same as for NR photo policy on previous slide



Safety in the Field

Use common sense when doing survey work

- Carry identification
- Contact local law enforcement
- Prepare for weather (sunscreen, hats, water, etc.)
- Watch out for traffic
- Look both ways before crossing street
- Wear brightly colored clothes
- Don't work alone in unfamiliar neighborhoods
- Don't trespass on private property
- Carry a letter explaining project to show to interested persons (may need Spanish translation)



Photo Log

Keep a photo log during the survey process

- Helps keep track of what photos were taken of which resources
- Reduces confusion
- Mental reminders about the resources
- Coordinate the photo log with survey map to track resource numbers

What should be on a photo log?

- Address, brief physical description, site number, and photo number



Photograph Labeling

Photographs should be labeled in a logical manner as to be identifiable in isolation from the survey

THC uses a photo labeling protocol

- The Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL) has abbreviated all of Texas' county names into 2 or 3 letters (<http://www.utexas.edu/research/tarl/curation/TxCountyAbbreviations2005-01.pdf>)
- TX-CountyCode-City-Streetname-Streetdesignation-Ordinal-Address#-2digitphoto#.format



THC Photo Labeling Protocol

Examples:

The first photo of a building at 103 East Marshall Street, Pittsburg, Camp County, Texas would be:

TX-CP-Pittsburg-Marshall-St-E-103-01.jpg

If there is no ordinal, leave it out; there is no need to keep the extra hyphen in there.

TX-CP-Pittsburg-Marshall-St-103-01.jpg

If there is a “half” address, it can be indicated with a point-five: 103 ½ East Marshall

TX-CP-Pittsburg-Marshall-St-E-103.5-01.jpg



THC Photo Labeling Protocol

Examples continued:

A unit number/letter can be added to the end of an address:
103B East Marshall

TX-CP-Pittsburg-Marshall-St-E-103B-01.jpg

If the address cannot be verified after research and/or during survey, then a general number of the block can be used: the building is on the 100 block of Marshall Street.

TX-CP-Pittsburg-Marshall-St-E-100blk-01.jpeg

If there is a two-word city or street name, run the words together but distinguish with capital letters. PortArthur, JoeSayers, LiveOak



Photo Labeling Protocol

THC photo labeling protocol is not required, but something similar should be utilized so that the images can be identified in isolation from the survey

- It is not helpful to label photographs as
381.jpg
22Main.tif



Primary Image

Primary image refers to the main photo taken of resource

- Seen in survey inventory
- Seen on survey form
- Shown first if in series of images
- Should show as much of building as possible
- Provide accurate visual representation of resource
- Should illustrate qualities discussed in description and statement of significance



Primary Image

Primary Image for Stand-alone Building

- Take photograph from angle to show main façade and side elevation





Primary Image

Primary Image for Building in Row

- Take photograph from front to show main façade as well as some of buildings flanking resource for physical context





Primary Image

Primary Image for Corner Building

- Take photograph from angle to show main façade and side elevation





Primary Image

Unacceptable as Primary Images





Secondary Images

Secondary images refer to additional images taken of resource

- To show other elevations of resource
- To show details not be clearly visible in primary image
- To show historically significant features
- To show alterations that may affect resource's integrity
- To illustrate qualities discussed in description and statement of significance



Secondary Images

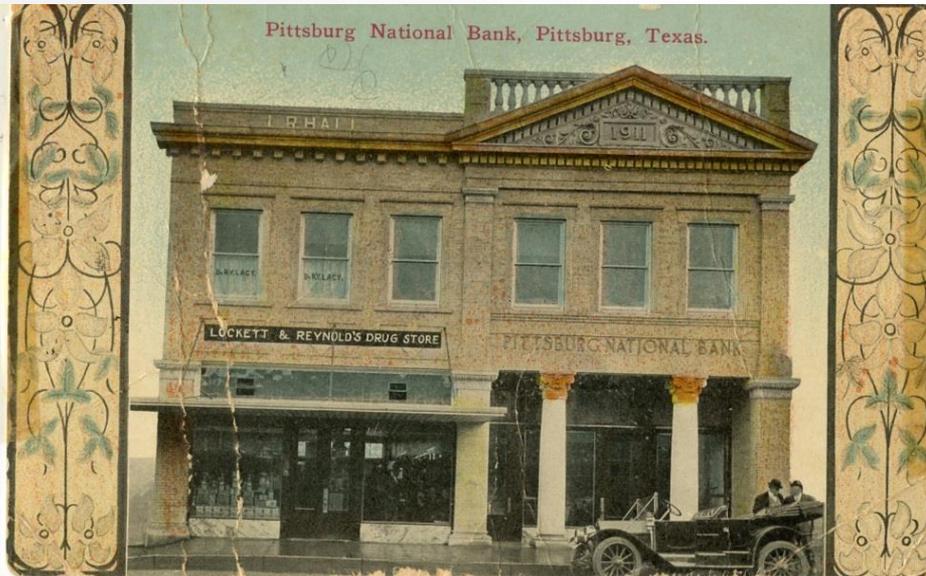




Research

Look for historical images of resources

- Illustrate changes that occurred over time
 - *Additions*
 - *Replacement materials*
 - *Partial demolitions*
- Photographs, postcards, sketches, 3-D maps





THC Survey Packet

THC Historic Resources Survey Packet includes:

- THC Historic Resources Survey Manual
- THC survey form
- THC Access database
- TARL Texas County Abbreviations
- THC photo labeling protocol

To receive a THC survey packet, please contact

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Source Information

Texas Historical Commission (THC)

- Historic Resources Survey website
 - <http://www.thc.state.tx.us/preserve/projects-and-programs/historic-resources-survey>
 - Historic Resources Survey Coordinator: Leslie Wolfenden
 - 512.463.3386 leslie.wolfenden@thc.state.tx.us

NPS National Register Publications

- National Register Photo Policy Factsheet
 - http://www.nps.gov/history/NR/publications/bulletins/photopolicy/Photo_Policy_update_2013_05_15.pdf
- Guidelines for Local Surveys: A Basis for Preservation
 - <http://www.nps.gov/history/NR/publications/bulletins/nrb24/>

Texas Archeological Research Laboratory (TARL)

- Abbreviated County Codes
 - <http://www.utexas.edu/research/tarl/curation/TxCountyAbbreviations2005-01.pdf>

