

CONTRIBUTING METADATA

Hello and welcome to the training for Contributing Metadata

We have heard from many of you that you are anxious to contribute your unique knowledge of life and work in the Panama Canal Zone to the items in our Panama Canal Museum Collection (or PCMC).

We welcome your valuable contributions!

Images Live in Two Places

As you may know, digital images of items in the collection are visible in two places: the Panama and the Canal Digital Collection (within the University of Florida Digital Collection, often referred to as UFDC) and The Collection Blog.

The best way to help us enrich the historical context for the PCMC is to add your knowledge into the comments section of our collection blog.

The blog has been active for about three years, and during most of that time we had the support of a large IMLS grant that allowed us to support posting images to the blog several days per week.

Now that the grant has ended, the frequency of the posts is less regular and more “as needed” as a communication tool for co-curating exhibits, and other projects.

You may also choose to send metadata contributions directly to our staff for inclusion in the object record.

In This Training, You Will Learn...

In this training we will show you

1. How to provide descriptive and contextual information (or metadata) for objects by adding comments to existing blog posts,
2. How to suggest items from UFDC that you would like to see posted on the blog for others to comment on and
3. How to send metadata contributions directly to the library.

We will take a look at both the Blog and UFDC websites, explore their features and functions, and walk through the process step-by-step.

What You Need

If you are watching this webinar, you already have everything you need! Contributing metadata requires three things:

1. A computer (or tablet)
2. An internet connection
3. A valid email address

And that's it! You do not need to create any accounts, usernames, or passwords. Participation is open to anyone who can access the blog and digital collection.

Web Addresses

It may be helpful for you to follow along with this training by opening another window or tab with these web addresses:

ufdc.ufl.edu/pcm
ufpcmcollection.wordpress.com

You may also want to open your email in another tab, so that you can walk through the full process

What is Metadata?

The title of this training is "Contributing Metadata", so what *is* Metadata?

The word "metadata" refers to the information about an object in the collection. It can be a date, location, size of the object, a or person's name.

We also aim to collect any other information that describes or contextualizes a specific object in the collection.

Even personal stories about an object or photograph can help us fill in an object's metadata. We may not use every part of the story, but personal memories often contain a lot of useful information about the objects in our collection, such as dates, locations, and historical context.

We know that life in the Panama Canal Zone was a unique experience. So while we, at the library, may be able to research objective metadata like dates or locations, we cannot add the stories, memories, and contextual information that you have, because we did not experience it firsthand. Sharing your stories and memories with us through email or blog comments is very valuable in placing the Panama Canal Museum Collection in a rich historical context, which is especially important when using the collection materials with students, or when creating exhibits and publications.

Websites We Will Use

We will be working with two websites today: The Panama and the Canal Digital Collection on UFDC, and the Panama Canal Museum Collection Blog.

The UFDC site is part of the University of Florida's Smathers Libraries and is managed by UF staff.

The PCMC Blog is not a UF website. It is an external site, hosted by a website called Wordpress, which is a blogging site that anyone can use to create their own blog.

We use the Blog as a tool to collect information from you all about the objects in the collection. But it is not connected directly to the Digital Collection.

In other words, UFDC and the blog can't talk to each other without the help of a person.

As you contribute metadata to the blog, staff and volunteers at the Smathers Libraries will take that information and add it to UFDC. This process will be explained a little later in the training.

Let's Start With the Blog

For now, let's start with the blog

You can find it at: ufpcmcollection.wordpress.com

PCMC BLOG

This site may be familiar to some of you who have followed our project for a few years. Past users may notice that the blog looks a little different these days. We recently redesigned it to show less text and more images on each page. But all of the past posts are still there.

Under each image is the title of the blog post, which is usually the title of the featured object.

If you hold your mouse over an image, you will see the date of the post appear.

If you click on an image, it will bring you to the full blog post. You may see some text describing the object, as well as some questions about it. These questions are just intended to get the conversation started. The objects on the blog have often been selected because we have very little information about them. So any information you can share may be helpful. It is not necessary to stick to questions asked in the post.

To contribute your knowledge to an item, scroll to the bottom of the post. You will see a box that says “Leave a Reply”.

Click inside the box and begin typing.

After making your comment, you must enter your name and email, so we know who made the comment.

Your email will never be made public—this is so the blog moderators can respond to you if necessary.

There are also some options here to be notified of comments on this post, and to receive notification of new posts by email.

If you already subscribe to the blog by email, there is no need to click the second box. When you are finished, click the “Post Comment” button.

That’s it! It is very easy to share information with us through this blog.

If you do not follow the blog by email and you would like to, scroll up the page and find the section on the right that says “Follow Blog Via Email”. Enter your email and click the “follow” button.

No one at the UF libraries can add you to the email list or remove you. Only you can manage your subscription to the blog. If you ever choose to unfollow—that is, to stop receiving the emails—you can do so by clicking “unsubscribe” in any of the emails you receive. You can also re-subscribe at any time.

UFDC

The Panama and the Canal Digital Collection showcases a representative sample of items in the collection. To view the digital collection, go to: ufdc.ufl.edu/pcm

You can also find a link to the digital collection on our collection website: uflib.ufl.edu/pcmc, where you found this training.

The front page or, landing page, has some general information about the collection, as well as links to some of the sub-collections like, the stereographs or oral histories.

There are a few ways to view digitized items. If you want to browse through every item in the digital collection, hover your mouse over “View Items” and click “View All Items”.

You can see here that you are now viewing all 1,417 items—this number will continue to grow as we keep digitizing more materials. With 20 items per page, click “next” to keep moving through all of the pages.

If an item says, “Access Restricted”, this usually means it is still in the process of being scanned and will be made available soon.

You can also search the digital collection for specific items or topics, using the search bar on the landing page.

You can return to the landing page at any time by clicking the Panama and the Canal Banner.

For example, if you have a particular knowledge about railroads, you may choose to search specifically for railroad materials that you could add metadata to. Or you may browse the whole collection.

Suggesting Objects for the Blog

As you look through the digital collection, you may find items that you would like to add some metadata to.

When you find an item like this, the next step is to let us know about it, so that it may be posted on the blog for everyone to discuss. Or so that we can make changes to the metadata.

Either way, you will need to share the item with us by email. To do this, click on the object’s title in UFDC (this is the blue text). This will bring up the image of the item. Then click the “Description” tab in the upper left to bring up the item’s description. There is no need to select anything from the dropdown menu—just click the word “Description”.

Now, you can see all of the metadata fields that have been completed for this object.

The top field says, “Permanent Link”. This link is what allows us to find the object in the digital collection. In fact, this is the *only* way to identify objects in the digital collection. Some items have the same title, or similar descriptions. So it’s very important to provide the Permanent Link to ensure that we are all talking about the same item.

Next, copy the Permanent Link and note the object’s title.

To copy: highlight the text, right click, and select copy.

EMAIL

Send us an email, which includes this Permanent Link to the object and its title, to special@uflib.ufl.edu.

Please reference the Panama Canal or something about the item in the subject line, so that your email gets directed to the right place.

Also in the email, tell us a bit about why you would like to see this item featured on the blog—Is it especially rare or interesting? Maybe it has significance to you, personally or you have a story about it.

Tell us if you would like others to comment on it or perhaps identify some aspect of the object.

Just include a little something about the item and why you want to share it on the blog so that it has some context.

We will post the object, along with anything you have written in your message about the object.

If you have objective, factual information about the item that you think should be added to its record, like a date or location, please include that information in the email.

We may still post your selected item on the blog for others to discuss. But we can take that metadata information directly from your email and edit the metadata in the object's record.

Capturing Zonian Knowledge

So you've seen there are three big ways to help contribute metadata to the collection.

First, you can view the collection blog and comment directly on blog posts.

Second, you can identify items from the digital collection that you think *should* be discussed on the blog. So your friends, family, and community can all participate together.

Or, thirdly, you can just email your metadata contributions directly to us.

Through these processes, you are acting as the connection between the collection and the Panama Canal Zone community by opening up the avenues for discussion about these item and the stories they contain.

This will help to ensure that the metadata is thorough and correct—and that your stories and the historical context surrounding these items are recorded and connected.

Thank You

We recognize that the Zonian community possesses a unique knowledge about these items and we are pleased to collaborate with you to add valuable metadata to the records in the Panama and the Canal collections.

Thank you for participating in this training.

If you have questions about this process, please contact our staff at: special@uflib.ufl.edu