

December 19, 2023

Style Guide for Images for *History@Work* Contributors and Editors

This guide is for writers and editors of the National Council on Public History blog *History@Work*. We welcome feedback and comments at any time: historyatwork@ncph.org.

Does each *History@Work* essay need an image?

Yes! Each *History@Work* essay needs at least one image. We ask for this because social media platforms we use to help promote your post pull images from your essay in its preview. Please select an image (or images) that advances the argument or impact of your essay, and be sure to interpret your images in the text (rather than have the caption do that work for you).

How many images should authors use?

Every *History@Work* essay is different, but most will look best with 1-3 images. When authors select images for inclusion in their essay, they should indicate approximately where they would like them to appear in the essay. Avoid placing images at the very beginning of the essay (before the text begins) or at the very end. Our layout capabilities are fine but basic, and your images and essay will look best interspersed throughout the text. If you want to use more than three images, we encourage you to link to those additional images (assuming they're available online) instead.

Should authors include images with their first draft?

Yes! We consider images a part of your essay and want to edit your essay knowing what kind of images you want to include. Sending them along with your first draft will help your editors make sure we have what we need from you to publish.

Do you have technical requirements for your images?

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Please try to use images that are 300DPI or more. Editors should verify this technical detail prior to uploading the images to the WordPress platform. If you're not sure how to check DPI, this resource from Carleton University should help: <https://carleton.ca/theprintshop/story/how-to-find-your-image-properties/>. 72DPI is usually good enough for screens, but some folks do print blog posts (and 300DPI is usually better for print). If 72DPI is the only option, we can usually use it. If you have a really high-resolution image you'd like to point people to also, feel free to do so. We probably won't be able to publish hi-res images like TIFs on the blog since those images can take a while to load, but we can link to them.

Do authors need to provide image captions, credits, and permissions?

Yes! For captions, please use our in-house caption and credit style. We prefer that the captions are not interpretative. Save the interpretation for the essay! The caption should provide enough information that the reader can determine where to get the original; who the artist or creator is; and the nature of the permission to publish. Therefore, please include as much as you can from this list in this order: creator (if known), title or description of image/object/art, date created, where created, medium, dimensions (usually optional depending on context), credit (sometimes called "courtesy"), repository, donor information, object number (if there is one).

Be sure to also provide a link back to the digitized image if available.

We will use "credit" in our caption unless the repository requests something else. If no courtesy or credit language is specified, you need only list the repository.

Examples (edited from originals on the blog itself for consistency):

Opening reception of the *Out on Campus* exhibit on August 19, 2022, Historic Harrisburg Resource Center, Harrisburg, Pennsylvania. Photo credit: LGBT Center of Central PA History Project.

Picnic at Marche Lake, ca. 1906, Marche, Arkansas, featuring many original settlers and the community's second priest. CALS Butler Center for Arkansas Studies, Donated by Joseph Gubanski, 37653015509477.

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It is the responsibility of the author to secure permissions or to prove they are not required (in the case of an image being open access, having a creative commons license, etc.). Be sure to work on this step once you have selected your images. As you may be aware, securing and/or verifying permission can sometimes take a while. Share this information with your editors. We will not send an essay to our copyeditors until image permissions are verified with the Lead and Affiliate Editors.

Do authors need to provide alternative text?

Yes! Authors should submit alt text (or alternative text) for all images, and editors should ensure alternative text is included in the metadata. There are many websites that cover how to write alternative text. One method is to create alternative text of an image in the same way you might describe a picture to someone over the phone. Alt text, captions, and access copies should work together to provide all readers with access to visual content.

To learn more about alt text practices and philosophies, check out this guide from the digital accessibility office at Princeton (<https://accessibility.princeton.edu/how/content/alternative-text>), the Perkins School for the Blind (<https://www.perkins.org/resource/how-write-alt-text-and-image-descriptions-visually-impaired/>), and Alt-Text as Poetry (<https://alt-text-as-poetry.net/>). Editors should check editorial guidelines for instructions on adding alternative text in WordPress.

Do authors have a chance to look at the essay laid out with images prior to publication?

Yes and no. We are happy to honor this request to see proofs if you want! Please indicate your wish to see proofs when submitting revised content so that we know before we send the essay to the copyeditors and can build that review into our editing process.

Do you have any other tips or guidelines for working with images in essays?

Yes! Please review our tips and guidelines below.

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Relate images directly to the text and/or the argument. Sometimes authors suggest using an image that is, in fact, about the subject of the essay, but it depicts a component of the project they are writing about that isn't mentioned. This can be confusing for readers. Please illustrate your essay with images directly related to your writing.

Images should have an obvious relationship to the text, or your essay should clearly explain how images are related to your text.

Alternative ways to include images in your essay. If you cannot include an image in your essay due to cost, space, or something else, consider hyperlinking to artifacts and images instead. If you are looking for images to use, check out repositories that have open access/public domain images such as certain museums, the Library of Congress, etc. If you are stuck, you can always ask your editors for ideas as to where to look.

Image alterations. Editors should never alter images (or add images not provided by the author) without discussing those plans with an author. If originals are edited, whether by authors or editors, certain alterations should be noted in the caption (for example, increasing an image's contrast to help improve clarity, or whether the published image is a detail of a larger image). Alterations such as selective cropping to eliminate people or things who should not be published (such as children), excess empty space, etc., is usually OK not to mention as being part of an image alteration.

Abstract images. If you use an abstract image in your essay, explain it in the text and/or alternative text (see above).

Stock photos or images. Please do not use stock photos or images in your essay. If you are having trouble illustrating your essay, work with your editor to find something appropriate. We like our essays to have some visual personality.

Memes. Avoid using memes as illustrations unless they are the subject of the blog. Memes are very complex images that need a lot of space to explain and interpret. Typically, there is not enough space in a *History@Work* essay to do a meme justice. This is a particular concern

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since many readers may not be familiar with the meme you want to publish, and they can often read as snide, inside jokes – or worse.

Online Conferencing Screen Shots. Since the COVID-19 pandemic started and more and more people have been meeting online, many authors want to use meeting screen shots that show individuals' likenesses. We prefer you try to illustrate your essay with something other than a zoom call screen shot, but we also know that sometimes it's all you have—or that it is particularly relevant. If you do choose to use a screenshot of this nature, please send us proof of permission from everyone pictured to use their likeness on the blog.

People in images. Please be sure to use images of people only if the photographs were taken in public space and/or in a place where you know people signed-off on being photographed. Verifying permission to publish people's likenesses on the blog is preferred. We do not publish contemporary photos of children unless you have permission to do so.

Thank you for reviewing this guide to publishing images on *History@Work!*
We are always open to improvements, so please get in touch with us at historyatwork@ncph.org if you have a suggestion.