Double Take Webinar Series

“When Was This Photograph Taken?”

Welcome! We’ll get started at 4PM ET.
Welcome!

Use the chat box to introduce yourselves. Let us know:

- Your first name
- Where you’re joining us from

- Be sure to select *All Panelists and Attendees* in the chat.
We’re glad you’re with us (virtually)!

“The Library of Congress Thomas Jefferson Building”
(photograph by Shawn Miller, Library of Congress photographer)
Double Take:
When Was This Photograph Taken?

Kristi Finefield, Reference Specialist
Prints & Photographs Division
Library of Congress
How do you know when a photograph was taken?
Sources for Date Information:

- Copyright or publication date
- Date written on object (photo, negative)
- In accompanying logbook, caption card file
- Event taking place in the photo
How could we date this photo?
Harding arrives. Photo by Bain News Service, [1921 April 19].
http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ggbain.32252
Event taking place in the photo: Photo shows the motorcade of President Harding arriving at the dedication of the Simon Bolivar statue at Bolivar Hill, Central Park, New York City, on April 19, 1921. The statue was made by Sally James Farnham (1876-1943). (Source: Flickr Commons project, 2018)
More Sources of Date Information:

• Life dates of the sitter, in a portrait photograph
• Photographic process
• Textual research about the photo, photographer, event, etc., in newspapers, publications, letters
How could we date this photo?

Life dates of the sitter

Abraham Lincoln. President of the United States, assassinated April 14th 1865 / engraved and published by John C. McRae, 105 Cedar St. New York, [1865?]. [http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pga.07619](http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/pga.07619)
Photographic process

Popular Photographic Print Processes Represented in the Prints and Photographs Division: https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/coll/589_intro.html
Abraham Lincoln, Congressman-elect from Illinois. Three-quarter length portrait, seated, facing front
Daguerreotype by Nicholas H. Shepherd, 1846 or 1847. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/ppmsca.53842
Even More Sources of Date Information:

- Technology present: transportation, street furniture
- Clothing & hair styles
- Buildings & other landmarks present or missing
How could we date this photo?
Look Closely

- Look closely, front and back.
- Zoom in on details, if digital.
- Take note of unusual features.
- Take note of what's present and what's missing.
Library of Congress on Capitol Hill

Jefferson Building: Opened November 1897

Adams Building: Completed Jan 1933

Madison Building: Construction began 1971
Library of Congress on Capitol Hill

What other buildings are missing?

U.S. Capitol is here
Supreme Court: Construction began 1932

Folger Library: Construction began 1929
Supreme Court + Folger Library

What other buildings are present?
What other buildings are present?

Cannon House Office Building, completed in 1908
Current date range, based on what is present and what is missing:

1908
Cannon House Office Building is completed

1929
Folger Library construction begins
Look closely!
[Aerial view showing construction of the east front extension of the Library of Congress]. Photo, 1933. http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.pnp/cph.3b20862
Southeast bookstacks: Opened Jan. 1910

East Front extension: Completed Jan. 1933
Look even more closely!

Northeast bookstacks not yet present. Added in March 1927
Date range, based on what is present and what is missing:

1910
Southeast bookstacks of Library of Congress are completed

1927
Northeast bookstacks of Library of Congress are not yet built.
Thank you!

Questions?

Kristi Finefield, Reference Specialist
Prints & Photographs Division
Library of Congress
Learn More:

Ask a Prints & Photographs Librarian:
https://ask.loc.gov/prints-photographs/

Prints & Photographs Online Catalog:
https://loc.gov/pictures/

Researcher’s Toolbox:
https://www.loc.gov/rr/print/resource/researchertool.html

- Guides to dating photographs by clothing and hairstyles
- Guide to photographic processes
- Visual literacy exercises