

Minnesota Reflections New Metadata Entry Guidelines

Creating Descriptive Titles

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Welcome! My name is Greta Bahnemann and I am the Metadata Coordinator at the Minnesota Digital Library.

Handouts & Links:

Click to view:

[Tutorial Handout and Script](#)

[Minnesota Reflections Metadata Guidelines](#)

Here are two links that may prove to be useful from today's presentation:

The first link is a copy of today's presentation and my script:

<http://www.mndigital.org/training/tutorials/TitleTutorialHandout.pdf>

The second link will take you to a PDF of the MDL Metadata Guidelines, located on the MN Digital Library's website.

In the guidelines, you can find additional information on creating descriptive titles on pages 6, and pages 7: <http://www.mndigital.org/digitizing/standards/metadata2010.pdf>

Creating Descriptive Titles:

- What is a descriptive title?
- What is NOT a descriptive title?
- Creating a descriptive title for:
 1. people & portraits
 2. houses & buildings
 3. city & town views
- View examples in Minnesota Reflections
- Enter data in Excel Spreadsheet

In this short tutorial we are going to review how to create a descriptive title for items in the Minnesota Reflections database.

I will first define what a “descriptive title” is and what is not a descriptive title

I will provide some suggestions on how to create descriptive titles for the 3 most common image types in Minnesota Reflections:

1. People and portraits
2. Houses and buildings
3. City and town views

We will then look at some examples of descriptive titles in the Minnesota Reflections database

And finally, I will show you where to enter this information in the Excel spreadsheet that you will use to eventually submit your metadata.

Descriptive Title FAQs:

When do I create a Descriptive Title?

When an item does not have a formal title.

What makes a good Descriptive Title?

A benchmark of a good descriptive title is “Specificity.” Specificity means creating a title that uniquely and specifically describes what is in the image.

How long should a Descriptive Title be?

Limit your description to a phrase that will enable users to locate the item.

What grammatical rules should I follow?

Capitalize the first word in the title. Proper names of individuals, companies, and place names should also be capitalized.

When do I create a Descriptive Title?

Descriptive Titles are created when an item does not have a formal title. A formal title is used when an item has been previously assigned a title – like a published book, booklet or report. Most items in Minnesota Reflections do NOT have a formal title.

What makes a good Descriptive Title?

You will need to create a brief descriptive title that will assist users in locating the item and determining its content. A benchmark of a good descriptive title is “Specificity.” Specificity means creating a title that uniquely and specifically describes what is in the image.

How long should a Descriptive Title be?

Try to limit your description to a phrase that will enable users to locate the item. A more detailed description of the object should be recorded in the Description field.

What grammatical rules should I follow?

Capitalize the first word in the title. Proper names of individuals, companies, and place names should also be capitalized.

What is **NOT** a descriptive title?

People	Women
City view	Children
Crowds	Outside
Men	Streets
Clothing	Animals
Trees	Buildings
Main Street	House

Here are some examples of item titles that are NOT descriptive.

These titles are not descriptive because....

- They lack specificity
- They do not describe the item
- And they don't assist users in their search for relevant information.

Descriptive titles for people & portraits

- Identify people by both first and last name.
- Include the city OR township OR county name to help create specificity in the title. Do NOT include all three.
- The city, township or county name should then be followed by the state name.

Title Order:

FIRST and LAST NAME, CITY or TOWNSHIP or COUNTY, STATE

Examples in Minnesota Reflections:



Let's spend a few minutes talking about titles for People. Whenever possible try and differentiate between professional studio portraits and informal photography. A studio portrait is one taken by a professional photographer, often within a photography studio. Informal snapshots are usually taken by family or friends in a variety of settings – these photographs can often be further identified by activities – such as holidays, recreation activities or by place names.

- Identify people by both first and last name.
- Include the city OR township OR county name to help create specificity in the title. Do NOT include 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.
- The city, township or county name should then be followed by the state name.

So to recap – the title order looks like this.

FIRST and LAST NAME, CITY or TOWNSHIP or COUNTY, followed by STATE

When you see a thumbnail image, know that you can click on it to view the item record in Minnesota Reflections. We are going to look at the first example together – but you can come back and view the other images at any time.

The first example is a studio portrait of an individual:

<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/ste,1056>

The second example is an informal snapshot of a group of unidentified people at a State Park: <http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/was,363>

Portrait of Carolyn Schlattman, Morris, Minnesota



We're now in the Minnesota Reflections database. You can see here that we're viewing a studio portrait of Carolyn Schlattman, located in Morris Minnesota (<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?ste,1056>).

The title is her first name, followed by her last name, followed by the city, and then the state.

Descriptive titles for houses & buildings

- Include the building's identifying information such as the name of the building's owner and/or the street address if known.
- Include the city OR township OR county name to help create specificity in the title. Do NOT include all three. The city, township or county name should then be followed by the state name.

Title Order:

BUILDING NAME and/or ADDRESS, CITY or TOWNSHIP or COUNTY, STATE

Examples in Minnesota Reflections:



Let's spend a few minutes talking about descriptive titles for houses & buildings.

It can be tempting to name images of buildings with general titles such as "Street view" or "Town building." It is easy to assume that you don't need to NAME or IDENTIFY things that seem so obvious to you. Such as repeatedly identifying the same building many times in a series of photographs or indicating that a given Post Office or public library is located within the city limits of a specific town. Things that are obvious to you and your co-workers will not be so obvious to users in another city or county of Minnesota – not to mention our users located in other states or countries.

Try and remember that your title is the user's first point of access. So while it may seem redundant to name something that a viewer could easily identify such as a hospital or a school – it is critical for helping users find and retrieve the items they are interested in.

- Include the building's identifying information such as the name of the building's owner and/or the street address if known.

- Include the city OR township OR county name to help create specificity in the title. Do NOT include all three. The city, township or county name should then be followed by the state name.

So to recap, the title order looks like this: BUILDING NAME and/or ADDRESS, CITY or TOWNSHIP or COUNTY, STATE

So now we're going to jump back to the Minnesota Reflections database and look at an example of a descriptive title for an individual building.

Links on the slide include:

Post Office in Winger Township. (<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/penn,146>)

An unnamed public school building in Hancock (<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/ste,1118>)

A private home located in Morris. (<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u?/ste,1072>)

The Post Office, Winger Township, Minnesota

Post Office, Winger Township, Minnesota



Title Post Office, Winger Township, Minnesota
Description Exterior view of the Post Office, a group of people are gathered on the front porch. A sign on the building advertises "We sell Mayer Shoes."
Date of Creation 1907
Minnesota Reflections Business and industry

This is a descriptive title for a building, and you can see here that this example uses a township rather than a city name, because no city name is available.

It's the Winger Township post office, so the word post office is listed first, followed by the township, and concluded by the state of Minnesota (<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?/penn,146>).

This is also a good example to show additional information can be recorded in the Description field.

Descriptive titles for city & town views

- Include street names, business names, and the directional view if known.

Title Order:

VIEW or STREET NAME, CITY or TOWNSHIP, STATE

Examples in Minnesota Reflections:



The last type of descriptive title we are going to look at is one for city and town views.

- When describing city and town views include the street names, business names, and the directional view if known.
- The title order should look like this: The VIEW or STREET NAME, followed by the CITY or TOWNSHIP, followed by the STATE

City and Town view titles can also include activities such as parades, celebrations, expositions, weather events such as storms and blizzards, holiday activities, and so on.

We're now going to jump back to the Minnesota Reflections database for the last time and look at a descriptive title for a city.

The first example on the slide is Main Street after a blizzard, Chokio, Minnesota (<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?/ste,1368>).

The second example on the slide is Corn and Alfalfa Exposition, Morris, Minnesota (<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?/ste,1040>).

Main Street after a blizzard, Chokio, Minnesota

Main street after a blizzard, Chokio, Minnesota



Title
Description

Main street after a blizzard, Chokio, Minnesota
View of Chokio's Main Street after blizzard.

We're now looking at an example of a city view in the Minnesota Reflections database:
<http://reflections.mndigital.org/u/?/ste,1368>

This is a view of main street in Chokio, MN. Here the title has been further defined and identified by mentioning the weather event, the 1917 blizzard. That is followed by the city name, and finally the state name.

Practice Cataloging:



Pioneer Mine
Shaft A
Ely
Oliver Mining Company
Minnesota

Oliver Mining Company, Pioneer Mine, Shaft A, Ely, Minnesota

Let's take a minute and complete a practice cataloging exercise.

This is the photograph we are going to use for our practice cataloging. What you see is a image of the Pioneer Mine, located in Ely, Minnesota from the collection of the Northeast Minnesota Historical Center in Duluth, MN.

The image is displayed on the left and the various known facts about the image are listed on the right.

How do you take these title elements and create a descriptive title?

In this case, start with the most general information about the company and end with the most specific.

- Oliver Mining Company – this is the most general information that we have about this image.
- Pioneer Mine – this is a mine, located within Oliver Mining Company.
- Shaft A – the greatest level of specificity for the Mine

Then conclude the title with the city and state information:
Ely, Minnesota

Your descriptive title should look like this:
Oliver Mining Company, Pioneer Mine, Shaft A, Ely, Minnesota.

Let's go to the Excel spreadsheet – just the like the one you will be using to enter data.

Practice Cataloging: Entering Title into Excel Spreadsheet

Title	Creator	Contributor	
Oliver Mining Company, Pioneer Mine, Shaft A, Ely, Minnesota			

This is a spreadsheet you will use to record descriptive metadata
For photographs, postcards, maps, and other single page items.

We've just completed the practice cataloging, and now here is where I enter that information into the Excel spreadsheet into the Title Column.

Questions? Comments?



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[Minnesota Reflections Metadata Guidelines](http://www.mndigital.org/digitizing/standards/metadata2010.pdf)

We have now reached the conclusion of today's tutorial. To briefly recap:

- Descriptive titles are unique and specific.
- They identify the major elements in the image – including people, events, and place names.
- Descriptive titles make it easier for our users to find what they are looking for in Minnesota Reflections.

Don't forget to refer to the Minnesota Reflections Metadata Guidelines available in PDF form on the Minnesota Digital Library website. You can access the Guidelines by clicking on the link shown here (<http://www.mndigital.org/digitizing/standards/metadata2010.pdf>).

And finally, don't hesitate to contact me – either via telephone or e-mail – if you have any questions.

Thanks for listening!

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