Developing Finding Aids for Unprocessed Collections in HAV

Spring Project:

NLM Associate Fellowship Program

National Library of Medicine

Sponsors:

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August 22, 2018

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Abstract

Background

Audiovisual material at the National Library of Medicine has historically been selected, duplicated, and cataloged at the item level. As a result of this process, there is a significant backlog of films. The length of the process is further elongated by the fact that U-Matics, which are most at risk for deteriorating, have priority for being copied to more stable formats. Although films can be scanned if patrons request them, researchers are unaware of the uncatalogued titles included in the National Library of Medicine's collection. Therefore, processing the films as archival collections and creating only collection level catalog records are viable options for arranging, describing, preserving, and providing access to NLM's extensive audiovisual holdings.

Methods

I created the finding aids using the History of Medicine inventory Microsoft Excel template and the EAD interface, where I imported the inventory as a .csv file and entered collection level information and access points. To check the validity of the xml and get a sense of how the final product would appear, I copied the code into oXygen and made necessary changes in the spreadsheet and EAD system. The catalog records were generated in Voyager.

Outcome

As a result of the project, I processed four collections: the Andrew G. Morrow Cardiovascular Research Film Collection, Nina Starr Braunwald Cardiovascular Research Film Collection, Arpen Childbirth Education Research Film Collection, and Northwest Film Forum Research Collection. I created three complete finding aids and four collection level catalog records for patrons to consult. There is hope that the scan-on-demand program will gain traction when researchers see what is available on the internet. I also developed cursory protocols for processing collections of published and unpublished films.

Project Background

Objectives

The goals of the project were to generate up to five finding aids and catalog records as well as document step-by-step descriptions of workflows necessary to create these products.

Methods

The first step in this process was conducting research on how to best describe audiovisual materials and establish what elements the National Library of Medicine deemed requisite to include in the records. I used the History of Medicine inventory Microsoft Excel template to note data about the films. For the two unpublished collections I was charged with processing, I edited the content that former intern, Rachel James, had written in an earlier iteration of the project, which significantly expedited the undertaking. Nevertheless, for both the published and unpublished films, it was frequently necessary to gather information through the Medical Arts and Photography Branch of the National Institutes of Health cards, internet, and viewing the media itself. In conjunction with performing subject analysis, I also transcribed notes that were found on the can and leaders of the films as well as recorded box numbers and the collection extent after arranging and packing the materials. I created finding aids in the EAD interface, where I imported the inventory as a .csv file and entered collection level information and access points. To check the validity of the xml and get a sense of how the final product would appear, I copied the code into oXygen and made necessary changes in the spreadsheet and EAD system. The catalog records were generated in Voyager.

Expected Outcome

When I began the project, I set out to process five film collections employing ArchivesSpace.

Results

Because of the delay in the National Library of Medicine implementing ArchivesSpace, I adapted the descriptions of the films to the categories of a template that was designed for manuscripts. The process involved more decisions and stakeholders than originally considered, which impacted the speed of the project. Nevertheless, it was more important to deliberate about aspects of establishing a procedure and producing a general guide than processing a fifth collection. Prolonged issues with the screening machines and the EAD system affected the completion of processing the Northwest Film Forum materials.

Discussion

With films, it is customary to include item level descriptions, which has fallen out of favor with manuscript and mixed collections. The challenge of this project was straddling the need to adapt to the ways collections are currently curated at the National Library of Medicine and the desire to abide by best practices of processing film collections. One of the first steps was conducting research online to get a sense of how other institutions have processed their film collections, look at how the National Library of Medicine has approached arranging and describing audiovisual material that have been part of larger collections, and consult the Society of American Archivists' *Arrangement and Description of Audiovisual Materials* course packet, Archive of American Art's Guidelines for Processing Audiovisual Materials, and Anthony Cocciolo's 2017 manual, *Moving Image and Sound Collections* for formal instruction. Despite

efforts to standardize the processing of audiovisual content, there is a significant amount of variation amongst institutions and even amongst how different collections held by the same entity are recorded over time. This reality allowed for experimentation during the project and provides leeway for the idiosyncrasies of new accessions.

Organization

In the finding aids, the films were arranged in either chronological or alphabetical order. They were packed roughly in the order they were listed in the finding aids but consideration was given to the size of the reels to make the best use of space and for preservation purposes. The Andrew G. Morrow Cardiovascular Research Film collection proved to be the most complex of the four collections I processed during the course of the project as many of the titles consisted of different parts. Occasionally, it was unclear when these parts were created and how or even if these disparate rolls related to the same title.

Notes

In keeping with the practices of the National Library of Medicine, I documented information about the creation of the finding aid. Because the EAD template automatically displayed linear feet as part of the extent field, I listed the approximate number of linear feet followed by the number of reels associated with a collection and number of boxes. I added other details such as the dates of the items in the collection, the collection number, MeSH access points, and the creator of the collection. With the Arpen Childbirth Education Research Collection and the Northwest Film Forum Research Collection, their creators were not part of the National Authorities File, which presented issues with the finding aid, where it is expected to employ controlled vocabularies, and especially the catalog record. There was discussion about whether to create authority records, which was difficult as these individuals were not prominent. Other options included leaving out the 100 field in the catalog record entirely or calling the assemblers of these two artificial collections custodians, which was the choice ultimately made. The access restrictions and copyright notes have a drop-down menu in the EAD system that elicit a corresponding message associated with a response; debate ensued about creating more possibilities to select to represent the complexity of audiovisual collections or amend the current language of the messages to give the historic audiovisuals manager more control.   In addition to these standard fields, I wrote an abstract, collection level note, a biographical note when appropriate, and item level scope and content notes. Information about arrangement, custodial history, and related collections that can warrant their own notes according to DACS was incorporated in other collection level descriptions.

The item level scope and content notes were meant to capture the essence of the film though descriptions vary depending on whether I watched the film, copied the summary from the inside of the can, or obtained the information online. Given the limited space available for item level description and the desire for uniformity, I chose to note only the writer and the producer. This information is not as clearly defined on WorldCat as it should be, and therefore in some situations, the names listed should be seen as contributors.

Formatting

The formatting of the finding aids was particularly important to integrating the film information into a template designed for manuscripts in visually appealing manner. Because the amount of information in the item level note and physical description, I wanted to make reading as easy as possible, which meant eliminating extraneous characters like commas, brackets, and parentheses in already busy text.

Unfortunately, italics at the item level did not work. With the Morrow and Braunwald collections, it was necessary to shorten the notes to fit the layout online. Footnotes were left out of the final versions in order to comply with NLM procedures, and the bibliography was removed due to formatting challenges. For all of the finding aids after much experimentation, I placed the number of reels at the beginning of the item level note followed by important contributors, the type of footage included in the can, the note itself, and finally any remarks made on the can. Skillful use of spacing and punctuation created a semblance of structured sections within a free-form field. There were similar considerations for the physical description field that included information pertaining to color, sound, length, and in two collections, type of film. Standardizing the order of these selected attributes will help researchers parse through all the details associated with audiovisual materials.

Next Steps

There are immediate and long-term goals that result from the project. In the next few weeks, it is imperative to pack the Northwest Film Forum Research Collection and import the spreadsheet and notes into the EAD interface. The catalog record will also need to be adjusted. All of the collections that I processed will have to be made live online. In the future, I believe that audiovisual materials will continue to be processed as archival collections; however, with the arrival of ArchivesSpace in the Fall, it is unclear whether the specific steps developed during this project will apply to this new content management system.

Acknowledgements

I would like to acknowledge the assistance of Sarah Eilers, John Rees, and Jason Anderson with this project.

Appendices

Appendix A: oXygen Instructions

1. Save EAD file somewhere. You can also copy and paste the xml into oXygen if you are just trying to get a sense of how it will appear.
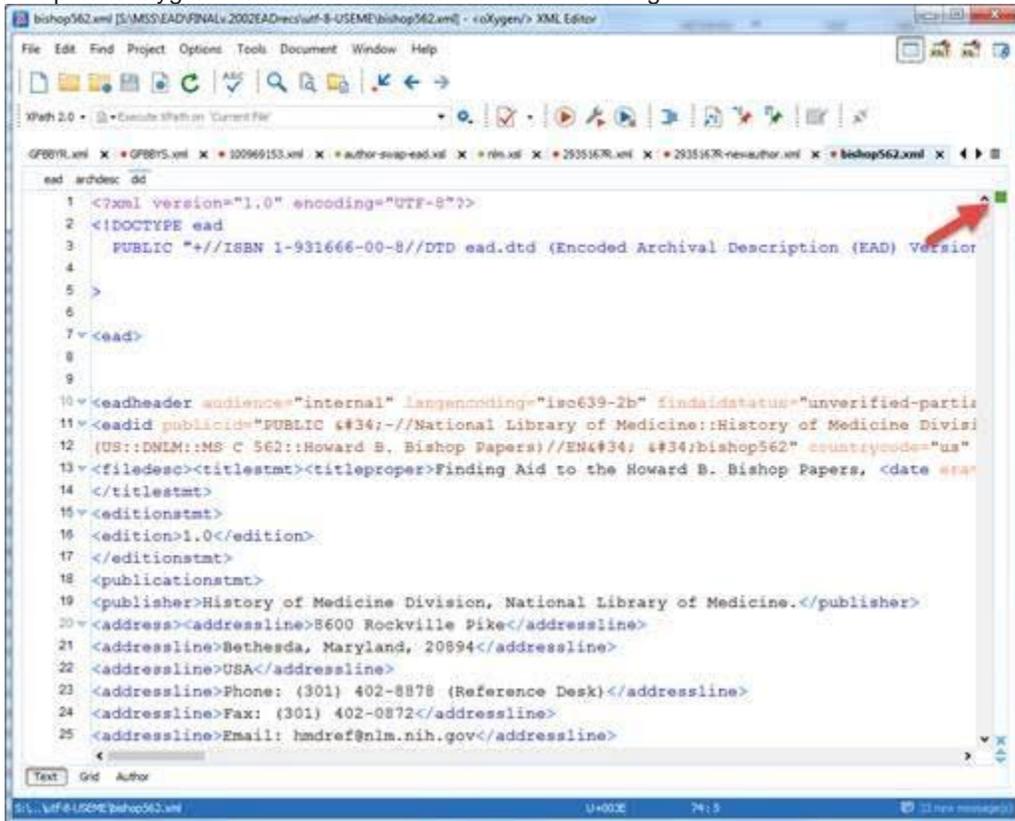2. Open in oxygen – make sure the validation indicator is green

Figure 1: oXygen Instructions

If it's red, check the error list on the bottom toolbar – there will at least probably be some empty <controlaccess> elements to delete
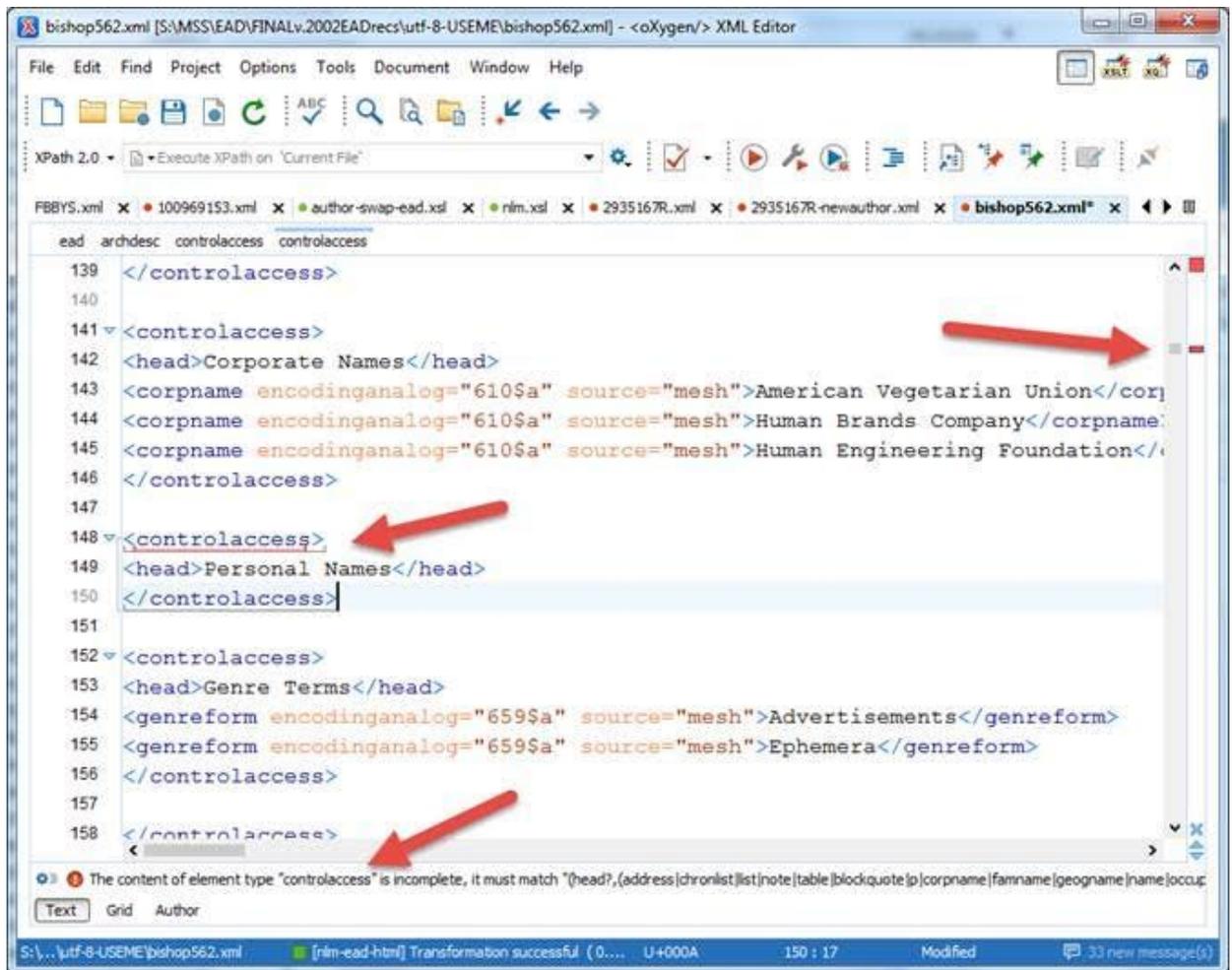
Figure 2: oXygen Instructions

3. When green,
    a. select the run transformation scenario triangle in the toolbar
    b. Tick the nlm-ead-html button in the Transform with dialog window
    c. Click Apply Associated button
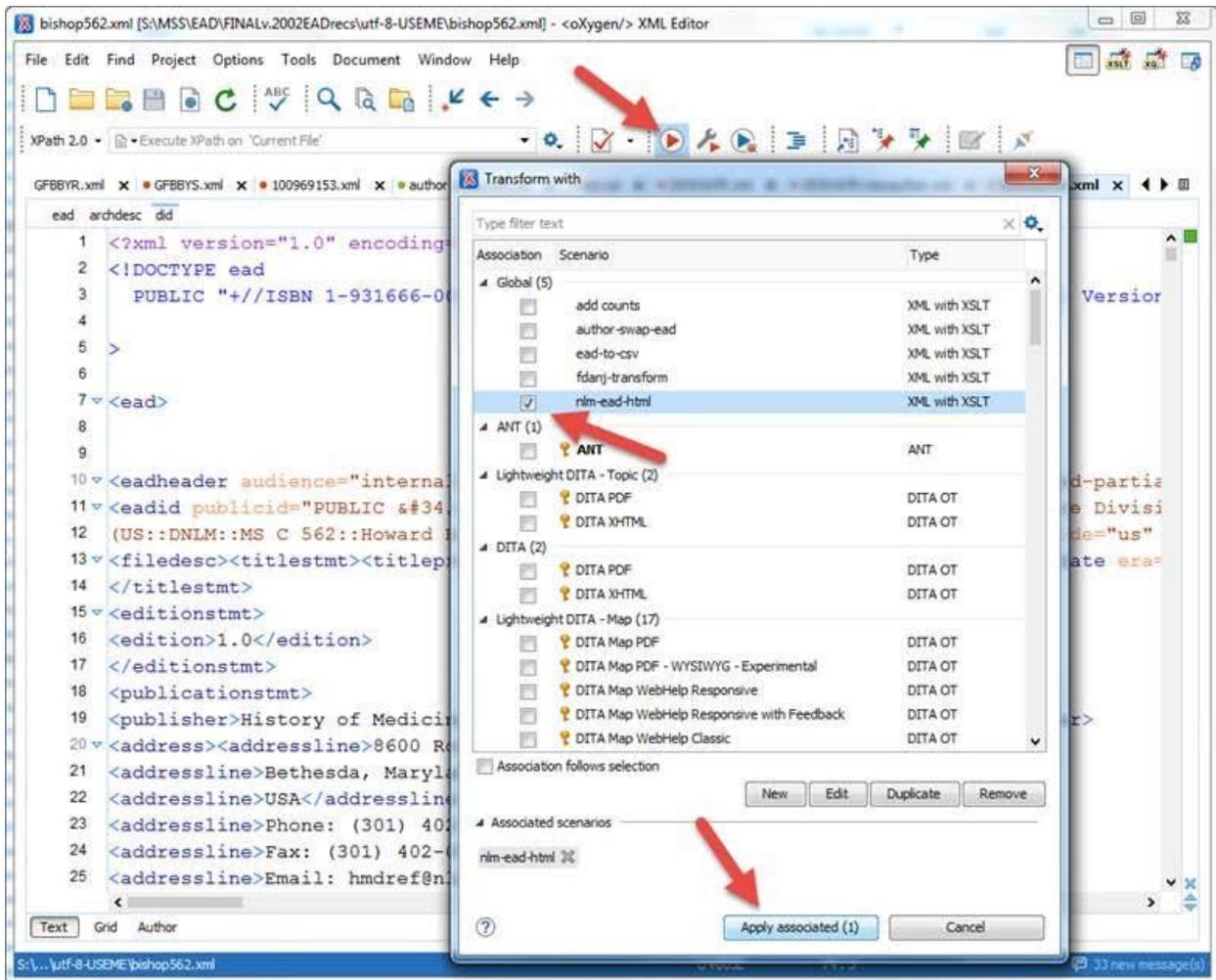
Figure 3: oXygen Instructions

Appendix B: Voyager Instructions

1. Go to search and open a HAV record. You can search for a record in a variety of ways. If you only know some of the details, type the words you do know in the builder option.

Figure 4: Builder Tool in Voyager

2. To copy the record in order to not start from scratch, hit "Record" on the top most toolbar. Then select "Make a Copy."
3. Delete the 035 field and hit "Save to Database." At this point it is also helpful to make some other changes to distinguish it for the copied record.
4. Amend according to the collection. Here is the catalog record of the Nina Starr Braunwald Cardiovascular Research Film Collection and the Arpen Childbirth Education Research Film Collections as examples.

Tag	I1	I2	Subfield Data
035			‡9 101726991
040			‡a DNLM ‡b eng ‡e rda ‡e dacs ‡c DNLM
041	0	9	‡a eng
044			‡9 United States
060	0	0	‡a HMD HAV ACC ‡b 2018-07
100	1		‡a Braunwald, Nina Starr, ‡d 1928-1992, ‡e creator
245	1	0	‡a Nina Starr Braunwald cardiovascular research film collection.
264		0	‡c 1960-1965
300			‡a 18 reels, (1 box)
336			‡a two-dimensional moving image ‡b tdi ‡2 rdacontent
337			‡a projected ‡b g ‡2 rdamedia
338			‡a film reel ‡b mr ‡2 rdacarrier
506			‡a Unprocessed collection. Access requires production of viewing copies; 30 days notice required. Please contact Historical Audiovisuals manager for
520	2		‡a The films depict Dr. Nina Starr Braunwald performing heart surgeries at NIH, particularly the experimental implantation of artificial heart valves of her
540			‡a The National Library of Medicine believes these items to be in the public domain.
541	1		‡c Transfer; ‡a National Archives and Records Administration-Washington National Records Center; ‡d 1999 ‡e Acc.# 2018-03.
545	0		‡a Nina Starr Braunwald received her bachelor's and medical degrees from New York University, underwent a residency at Bellevue Hospital, and con completed a post-doctoral fellowship in the laboratory of Dr. Charles Hufnagel, a pioneer in the development of artificial heart valves to treat cardiac dise team that first replaced a human heart valve in 1960, using a device of her own design. She worked with Dr. Morrow to create an artificial mitral valve wi the Braunwald-Cutter valve, which was used in thousands of patients during the 1960s and 1970s.
555	0		‡a Finding aid available electronically.
610	2	2	‡a National Heart Institute (U.S)
610	2	2	‡a National Heart, Lung, and Blood Institute
610	2	2	‡a National Institutes of Health (U.S.)
650	1	2	‡a Cardiovascular Surgical Procedures
650	2	2	‡a Heart-Assist Devices
650	2	2	‡a Thoracic Surgery
650	2	2	‡a Heart Valve Prosthesis Implantation
651		2	‡a Maryland
655		2	‡a Documentaries and Factual Films

Figure 5: Nina Starr Braunwald Cardiovascular Research Film Collection Catalog Record

Tag	I1	I2	Subfield Data
035			‡9 101728691
040			‡a DNLM ‡b eng ‡e rda ‡e dacs ‡c DNLM
041	0	9	‡a eng
044			‡9 United States
060	0	0	‡a HMD HAV ACC ‡b 2016-14
100	1		‡a Arpen, Sandra, ‡e custodian
245	1	0	‡a Arpen childbirth education research film collection.
264		0	‡c 1970-1989
300			‡a 18 reels, (4 boxes)
336			‡a two-dimensional moving image ‡b tdi ‡2 rdacontent
337			‡a projected ‡b g ‡2 rdamedia
338			‡a film reel ‡b mr ‡2 rdacarrier
506			‡a Unprocessed collection. Access requires production of viewing copies; 30 days notice required. Please contact Historical Audiovisuals manager for more information.
520	2		‡a These18 titles were produced by foundations, academic institutions, and companies to educate the American population about pregnancy, childbirth, and infant care. Man exercise and discuss common complications women face during pregnancy. Some titles focus on preparation for childbirth, the delivery-room experience, or aspects of life or
540			‡a These items may be under copyright protection. Please ask copyright owner for permission before publishing. ‡5 DNLM
541	1		‡c Gift; ‡a Sandy Arpen; ‡d 20161001 ‡e Acc.# 2016-14.
555	0		‡a Finding aid available electronically.
650	1	2	‡a Pregnancy
650	2	2	‡a Pregnancy Maintenance
650	2	2	‡a Pregnancy Complications
650	2	2	‡a Obstetric Surgical Procedures
650	2	2	‡a Obstetrics
650	2	2	‡a Labor, Obstetric
650	2	2	‡a Breast Feeding
650	2	2	‡a Parturition
650	2	2	‡a Prenatal Care
655		2	‡a Documentaries and Factual Films
992			‡p H3 ‡e EA ‡a 20180103
993			‡a SRE ‡b 20180531

Figure 6: Arpen Childbirth Education Research Film Collection Catalog Record

5. Some "Helpful Hints" include:
   A. All of the subject headings must be MeSH.
   B. The amount of terms that can be applied is theoretically unlimited for archival records. Choose the terms that best describe the topics of the collection in its entirety. For large collections that discuss many subjects, select around ten access points that cover the main themes. Include synonyms for a collection that focuses on a specific topic, and add qualifiers when appropriate.
   C. MeSH Tree Structures can provide ideas for terms if stuck.
   D. It is ok to include both the old and new names of NIH institutes in the catalog record and finding aid.
   E. Use creator or custodian. The term collector has a particular context.
   F. It is NLM's practice not authorize unprocessed collections so you do not need to fill out the 994 or 995 fields.

Appendix C: Tips for Processing Published and Unpublished Films

General

1. Remain consistent about titling and know there can be slight differences between what the film states, what is on the can, and what the accession form says. Correct issues when possible.
2. Be meticulous in dating revised versions of spreadsheets and importing the newest iteration in the EAD system.
3. Type directly into the EAD interface to avoid complications from copying and pasting from Microsoft Word. If one does copy and paste from Microsoft Word, replace commas and eliminate any trailing spaces.
4. For the "&" to display in xml, type "&." It is also ok to replace "&" with the word "and."
5. "</p><p>" creates line breaks.

Unpublished

1. For NIH created content, refer to the Medical Arts and Photography Branch of the National Institutes of Health cards and "MAP Films Under Consideration" inventory.
2. There may be films listed that are not readily findable. Note these titles but do not include in the finding aid or catalog record.
3. Check for PHI.

Published

1. To gather information for film descriptions, go to WorldCat and select by film. One can also go to YouTube, American Archive, or conduct a general Google search.
2. If a program was part of a series, note the series in the description.
3. Disregard articles that lead titles according to one's best judgement for physical and intellectual organization.