

Trials and Tribulations:

Introducing the New Jersey State Library's Efforts to Digitize Historic Court Documents

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The New Jersey State Library



The New Jersey State Library Today

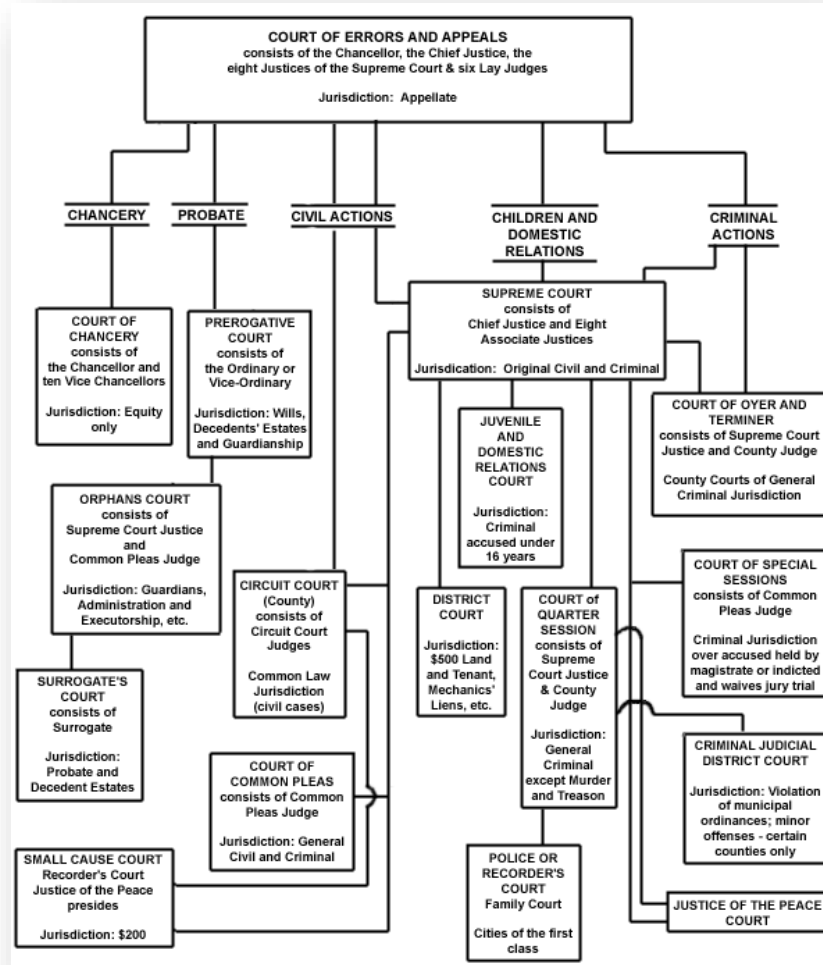


Court of Errors and Appeals Collection



- 1910 volumes, ~2.6 million pages, ~15,000 cases

What was the Court of Errors and Appeals?



- Highest appellate court between 1844-1947
- Large court that oversaw final appeals for wide range of case

What Cases Did They Hear?

- Divorce/Custody
- Wills and Estates
- Land disputes
- Civil rights and suffrage
- Railroad and labor history
- Political issues
- High crimes

Locker, Archie J. v. Metropolitan Life Insurance Company (1930)

Volume 1162 case 7

<https://hdl.handle.net/10929/142194>

Part A Application to the METROPOLITAN LIFE INSURANCE COMPANY Form 985 E. 2 OFFICIAL COPY. TO BE FILLED WHEN AND WHERE APPLIED FOR IS OVER 18 YEARS OF AGE OR AN INTERMEDIATE

1. FULL NAME of person whose life is to be insured. (Print) Anna Cavanagh

2. Residence. If a country, state it. If U. S. state, city and county. Boston, Mass. 192 Street Front, Boston, Mass. 192

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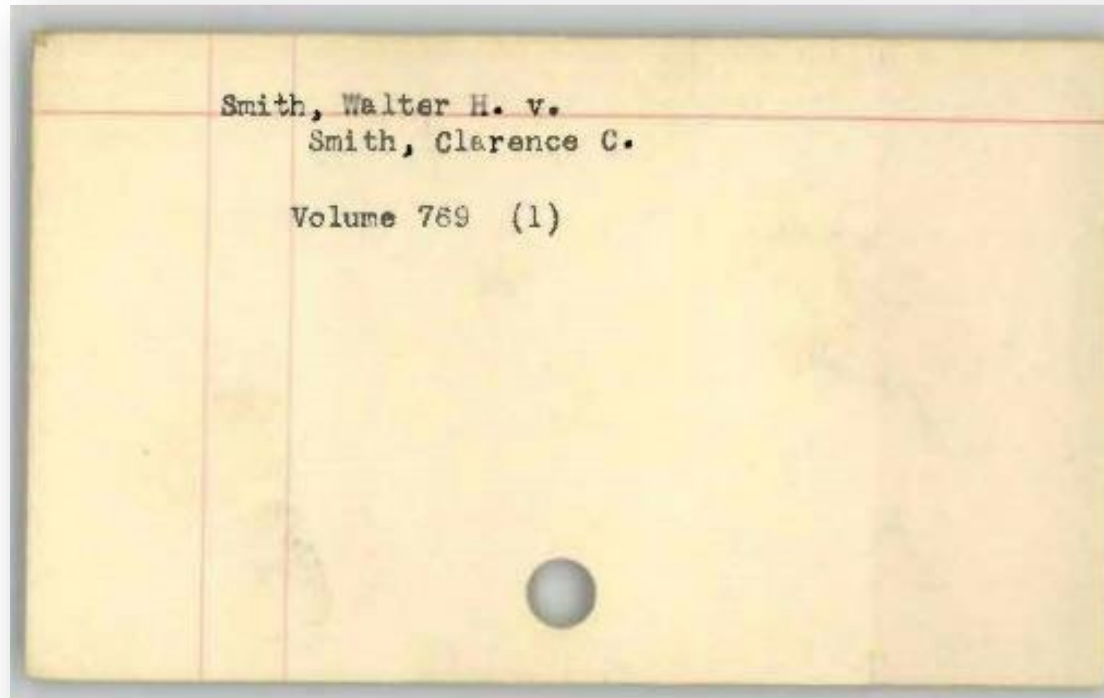
100. Name of last. 1908

A Hidden Collection

- Limited access outside of the NJSL
 - State Archives
 - Summary content available
- Difficult to find *within* the NJSL
 - Limited indexing
 - Homegrown organization



Physical Index Cards



- Abbreviated
- Human-Interpreted
- Internal numbering system

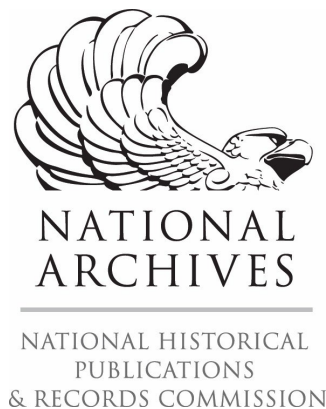
Unique Issues



- Fragile materials
- Spine widths range from 2-10 in.
- Arranged in questionable order
- Mixed media stuffed between pages

Digitization and Preservation

- “Telling New Jersey’s Untold Stories”
- Funding for equipment through NARA’s National Historic Publications and Records Commission
- Equipment will be used to digitize 3 hidden collections :
 - Court of Errors and Appeals
 - Collections of the Port Authority of NY/NJ
 - Documents related to NJ land use and development



Behind the Scenes Work

- **Completed:**
 - Index cards transcribed
 - Volumes cleaned and evaluated
- **Ongoing:**
 - Partnering with Backstage Library Works to digitize offsite
 - Dividing PDFs into case files
 - Writing metadata, case by case
 - Added to digital repository
 - Quality control

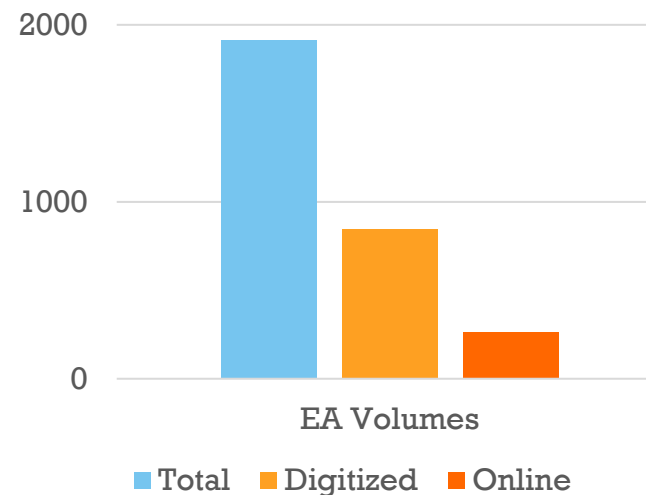


Current Status:

- Pages digitized: 1.18 million
(843 volumes)
- Pages online: 240,000
(262 volumes,
2,000 cases)

- Free to access and download
- Full-text searchable
- Names indexed and browsable
- Content added daily

<https://hdl.handle.net/10929/52564>



The Road Ahead

- Project will continue over the next 3 years
- Metadata will be reviewed and improved
- Volumes will be evaluated for long term preservation



Errors and Appeals Digitization Project

Christopher Graham
Lead Imaging Technician

cgraham@njstatelib.org

How I Prepared for the E&A Project

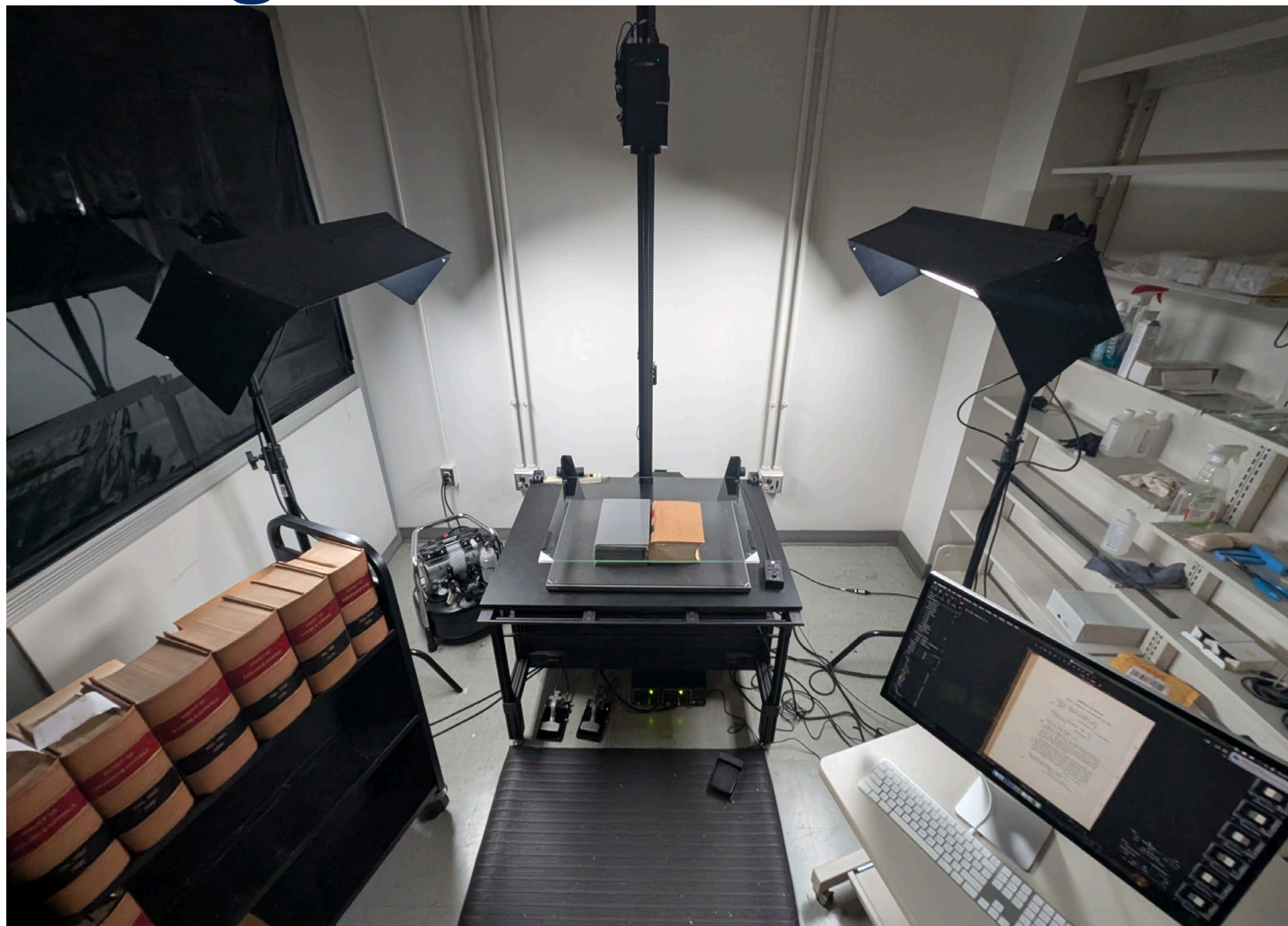
Bio:

- Christopher Graham
- Technical Services management background
- Currently a Professional Services Specialist at the New Jersey State Library
- Experience with flatbed scanning and fast scanning
- Experience with photography
- One of my roles at the State Library is lead imaging technician for the digital archive studio

Digital Studio and Training

In 2023 the library was awarded a grant for digitization equipment.

The NJS� Digital Archiving studio was born.





A closer look at the Phase One IXH:

- FADGI 4-star, Metamorfoze Strict, and ISO 19264 Level A image quality standards
- Can capture 4ftx3ft item at 300ppi or a film negative at 6500ppi
- Engineered to hang over and object without gravity pulling on lens and altering focus

Capture One Cultural Heritage Software



Capture One Cultural Heritage Edition software is fully integrated with the IXH camera and external lightning.

Federal Agencies Digital Guidelines Initiative (FADGI) and Validation



FADGI is a metric we follow to ensure image quality and the uniformity of image specifications.

- GoldenThread is used for image analyses.
- The software analyzes image data, and the user interprets the data.
- Validation is important for quality control and uniformity.

Errors & Appeals (E&A): Setup, Challenges, Improvements, and Evolution of Workflow

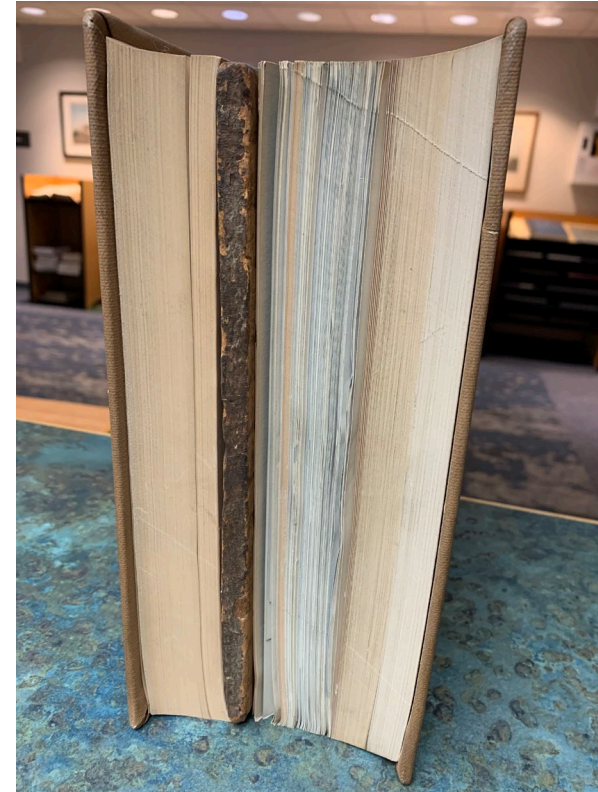


- Started digitizing the E&As in July of 2023.
- Decided to use an external glass press to accommodate the volume size.

E&A: Challenges

Problems to address:

1. Multiple pullouts in a volume
2. Large pullouts in a volume
3. Extremely large volume size and page count
4. A variety of issues related to binding
5. Objects in volumes?



E&A: Challenges

Solutions:

- When a volume has multiple pullouts, capture the volume pages first. When done, start a second session for the pullouts. Once finished, merge the pullouts into the Volume Session.
- Oversized Pullouts take two or more people to work with them. They need multiple image captures taken, so they can be stitched together. They are stitched in Capture 1 or manually in a 3rd party software.
- Glare and light bounce have occurred in some of our volumes because of the volume size. To fix this occurrence, we adjust the book orientation and make orientation adjustments in the software.

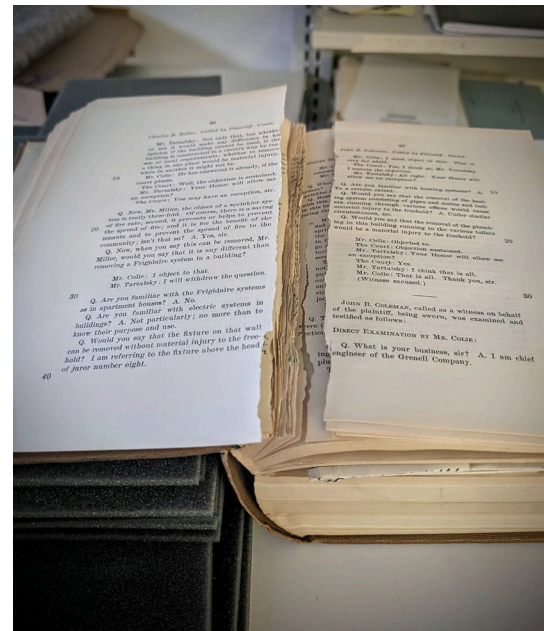
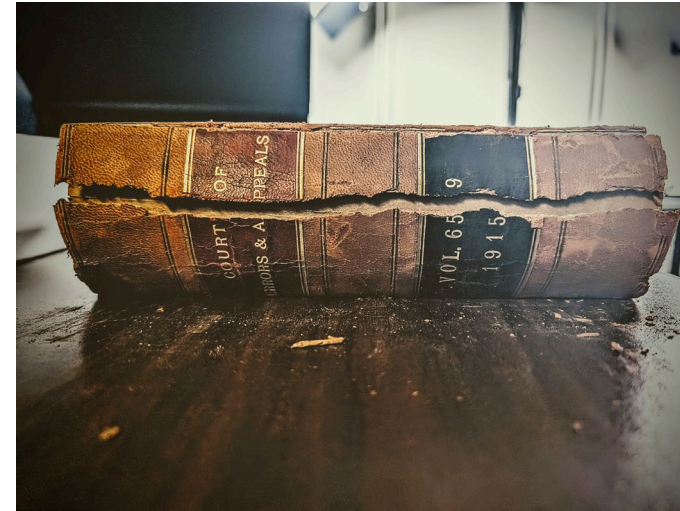


E&A: Binding Challenges and Solutions

Binding was and IS the most challenging aspect of working with these physical volumes.

Solutions:

- Adjusting the book placement under the glass helps preserve the binding.
- Having the appropriate foam padding, to keep the book level under the glass, helps preserve the binding.
- If a sections binding is too tight, section off the tightly bound section and come back to it at the end of the session. Capture the image and insert them in the correct image number order.



E&A: Improvements and Workflow Evolution



Page blocking is used to hide the book fan!

E&A: Improvements and Workflow Evolution

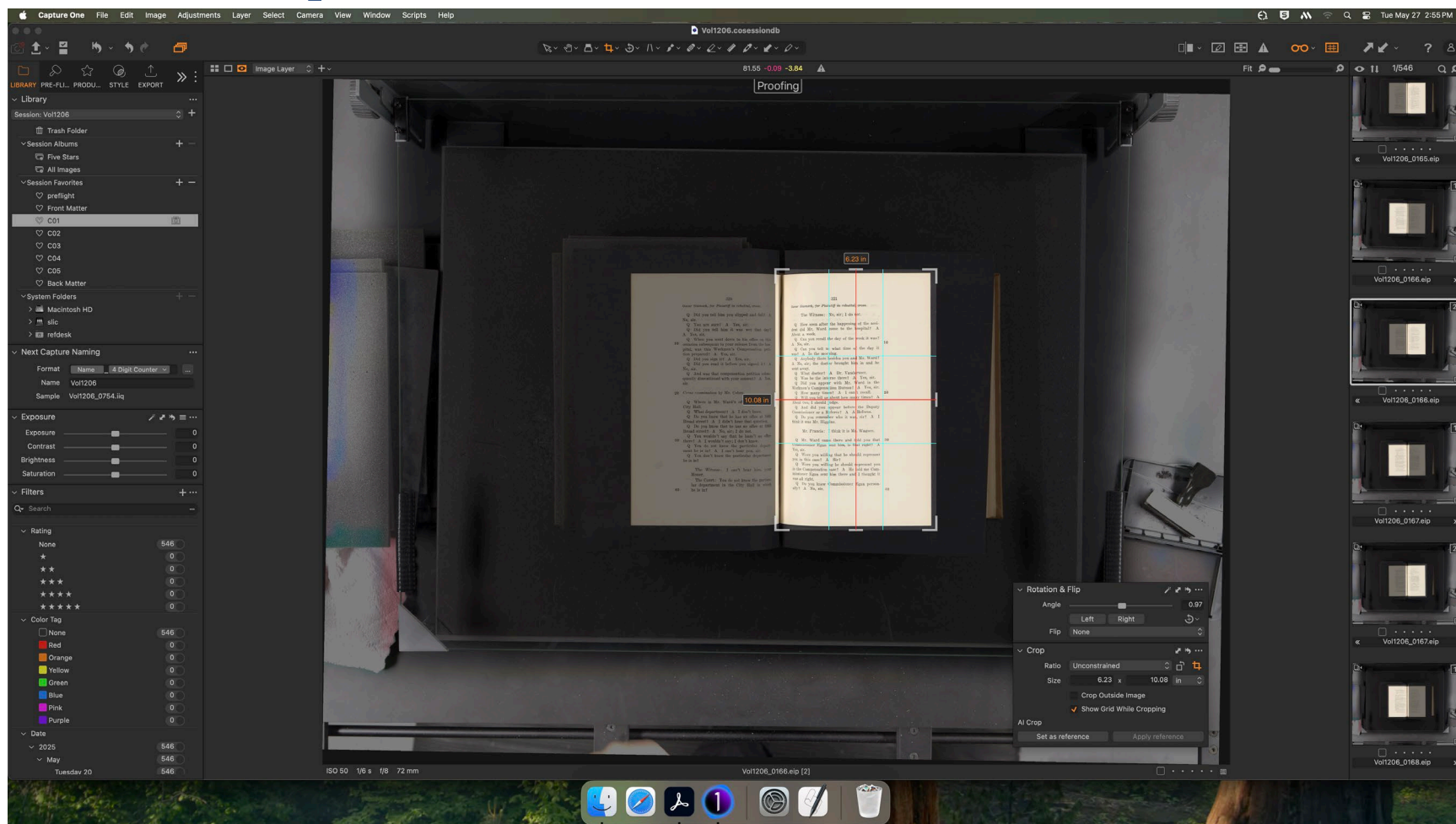
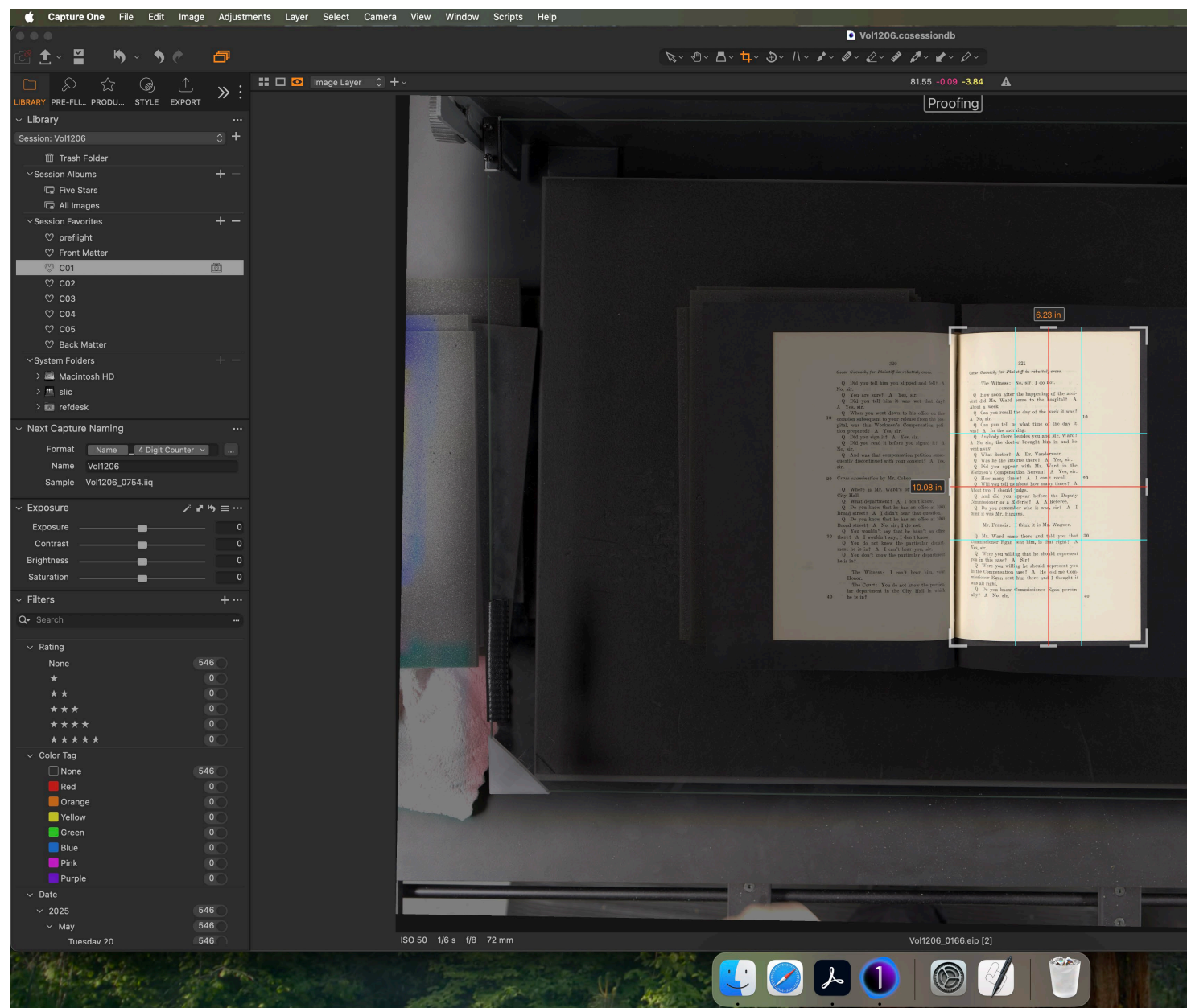


Image cropping in Capture One!

E&A: File Management and Exporting

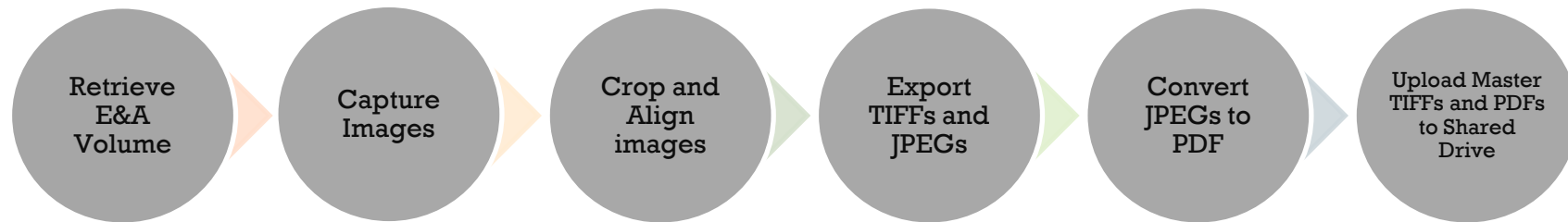
- File management is important!
- Volumes are broken up by cases
- Cases are turned into PDFs
- PDFs are uploaded to the shared drive





In Capture One, I can assign image capture to any folder I choose!

E&A Workflow



Quick Facts

- Each volume averages about 1,600+ pages with a 5-inch binding or larger.
- One Capture One session file can be around 130GB.
- It can take anywhere from 4-7 hours to capture a volume depending on condition and size of volume.
- It can take about 6-8 hours to align, crop, export, convert to PDF, OCR, and upload files to shared drive.
- A Volume's master folder (16-bit uncompressed TIFFs) averages 45GB.

Thank you!

When people ask me why I
don't go outside



Why Should Researchers Care about the Court of Errors and Appeals?



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Why? Legal History

- Still Valid
- Evolution of Legal Standards
- History of Law Firms and Lawyers of Note



Warning: Negative treatment is indicated. The red Shepard's Signal indicator indicates that citing references in the Shepard's® Citations Service contain strong negative history or treatment of your case (for example, overruled by or reversed).



Warning: Negative treatment is indicated for statute. The red exclamation point Shepard's Signal indicator indicates that citing references in the Shepard's Citations Service contain strong negative treatment of the Shepardized™ section (for example, the section may have been found to be unconstitutional or void).



Questioned: Validity questioned by citing references. The orange Shepard's Signal indicator indicates that the citing references in the Shepard's Citations Service contain treatment that questions the continuing validity or precedential value of your case because of intervening circumstances, including judicial or legislative overruling.



Caution: Possible negative treatment indicated. The yellow Shepard's Signal indicator indicates that citing references in the Shepard's Citations Service contain history or treatment that may have a significant negative impact on your case (for example, limited or criticized by).



Positive: Positive treatment indicated. The green Shepard's Signal indicator indicates that citing references in the Shepard's Citations Service contain history or treatment that has a positive impact on your case (for example, "affirmed" or "followed by").



Citing references with analysis available: The blue "A" Shepard's Signal indicator indicates that citing references in the Shepard's Citations Service contain treatment of your case that is neither positive nor negative (for example, explained).

Why? Non-Legal Reasons

- Slice of life descriptions
- Genealogical Goldmine
- Work Life & Economics
- Baseball!
- Railroads
- Maps & Blueprints
- Even Pets



[Newark Avenue, Looking West, Jersey City, N.J.](#) – A postcard in our Digital Jerseyana Collection.



**State vs Bruno Hauptman (Lindbergh kidnapping)
1935, Volumes 1373-1376**

<https://hdl.handle.net/10929/133075>

State vs Bruno Hauptman 1935, Volumes 1373-1376



- Capital Crimes
- Theft/Felony
- Federal Kidnapping Act, 1932
- Access



State vs Baird
21 NJ Eq 384

<https://hdl.handle.net/10929/140510>

State vs Baird 21 NJ Eq 384

- “Claim of the Father... is paramount to the claims of the Mother”

1869

Precedent Set: When the court becomes involved, the only thing that matters is what is in the best interest of the child.

Since 2016, NJSA 9:2-4A Codifies this doctrine to include all of state government.

Extensive discussion of life and relationship of James H. and Adeline W. Baird from the time of courting, marriage, through multiple births, and to the dissolution of the relationship and beyond.





Berckmans v. Berckmans
17 NJ Eq 453

Real Housewives of 1864

“But I feel constrained to say that the evidence is not of that safe, satisfactory, and reliable kind, which is necessary to justify me in condemning this woman to perpetual infamy and disgrace.” – Justice John Van Dyke





Legal History

People and Firms

Law Firms & People!

- McCarter & English
- Riker Danzig
- Mary Philbrook
- William Stryker Gummere



Mercer County Court House, circa 1906 from our postcard collection

<http://hdl.handle.net/10929/17716>

Hook-Slide!



Subject Searching

More than you can possibly
imagine!

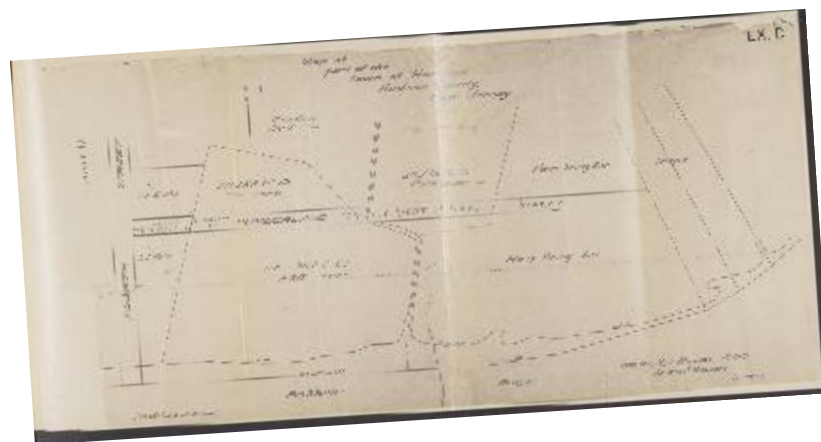


Baseball!

- Rabb v. W.P. Ellison, Inc., [90 N.J.L. 716](#)
- Baseball Bats
- Drelich v. Erie Railroad Company, [91 N.J.L. 600](#)



Railroads, Blueprints, Cars, Maps, etc.



Cats vs. Dogs.....



Eberling v. Mutillo

[90 N.J.L. 478](#)

New Jersey State Library



Law Desk:

Reflaw@njstatelib.org

Reference Desk:

Refdesk@njstatelib.org

Digital Collections:

<https://dspace.njstatelib.org>

Direct link to E&A Collection:

<https://hdl.handle.net/10929/52564>