

ALABAMA MUSIC HERITAGE ARCHIVE

DIGITAL MATERIAL SUBMISSION GUIDE

Participant Copy

Your photographs, recordings, documents, and memorabilia can help tell your story long after the interview is completed. Whenever possible, the Alabama Music Heritage Archive prefers to receive these materials digitally.

PLEASE SEND THE BEST ORIGINAL FILE AVAILABLE

If you already have a digital photograph, recording, document, or audio file, please send the original or highest-quality version available.

Please do not reduce the file size, take a screenshot, convert the file, or download a lower-quality copy from social media when the original file is available.

If you have an important photograph, newspaper clipping, program, or other historical item that exists only on paper, please let us know before your interview. The Archive can arrange to digitize appropriate materials and normally return the original during the same session.

You do not need to be a computer expert. If you are unsure about a file, send what you have and we will determine whether a better copy is needed.

PHOTOGRAPHS

Photographs are especially valuable to the Alabama Music Heritage Archive. Please send the best-quality original digital image available whenever possible.

Preferred format: JPEG (.jpg or .jpeg) or TIFF (.tif)

Preferred quality: Original/full-size image. For scanned photographs, 300 DPI minimum is preferred for publication, with 600 DPI encouraged for small, old, or historically important photographs.

Please avoid screenshots, photographs copied from Facebook or other social media, or images that have been repeatedly compressed when a better original is available.

Do not crop, enhance, filter, sharpen, colorize, or otherwise alter an original historical photograph before sending it. The Archive prefers to receive the image as it exists and will prepare publication copies separately.

For each photograph, please provide as much information as you reasonably know: who is pictured; approximate year or date; where it was taken; what event, band, studio, venue, or occasion it shows; and who took the photograph or where it came from, if known.

If some information is unknown, simply indicate Unknown. Please do not guess.

When possible, send individual image files rather than placing multiple photographs into a Word document, text message screenshot, or collage.

If an important photograph exists only as a physical print, bring it to the interview by prior arrangement. The Archive can digitize appropriate materials and normally return the original during the same session.

NEWSPAPER ARTICLES, PROGRAMS, POSTERS & DOCUMENTS

Whenever possible, please submit the best-quality digital copy available.

Preferred format: PDF for documents and complete articles; JPEG or TIFF for individual photographs, posters, programs, advertisements, or similar materials.

For scanned materials, 300 DPI minimum is preferred. Higher resolution may be requested for small print, fragile originals, or historically significant material.

Please scan the entire item, including headlines, dates, captions, publication names, margins, handwritten notes, or other information that may help establish its historical context.

For newspaper or magazine material, please identify the publication and approximate date when known.

Please do not alter, recreate, clean up, or remove portions of historical documents before submitting them.

If an important item exists only in physical form, contact the Archive before your interview. Arrangements may be made to digitize it and return the original during the same session.

If you do not know where an item originated, simply indicate Unknown. Please do not guess.

MUSIC & AUDIO RECORDINGS

Music and audio recordings can provide an important part of the historical record. Whenever possible, please submit the original or highest-quality digital file available.

Preferred format: WAV (.wav)

Also accepted: High-quality MP3 (.mp3) or another original digital audio format when a WAV file is not available.

Please do not convert, compress, or alter a recording solely for submission to the Archive. If you are unsure about the format, send the original file you have and we will determine whether anything further is needed.

When possible, identify the song or recording title; artist, band, or performers; approximate recording date; studio, venue, or location; songwriter or composer, if known; record label, producer, or engineer, if applicable; and your connection to the recording.

Submitting a recording for historical review or preservation does not automatically mean that the Archive will publish, stream, reproduce, or publicly distribute the recording. Music and recordings may involve rights belonging to songwriters, performers, publishers, record companies, producers, or other parties.

The Archive will determine what additional permission, if any, is necessary before a recording is used publicly.

If you are uncertain about the ownership or history of a recording, simply provide what you know. Please do not guess.

WEBSITES, MUSIC LINKS & ONLINE MATERIAL

Participants are encouraged to provide links to personal websites, artist pages, online music, interviews, performances, or other digital material that may help document their story.

Please provide the direct link whenever possible and briefly identify what the Archive should review.

Providing a website or online link allows the Archive to review and reference the material, but does not by itself grant permission to copy, download, reproduce, publish, or distribute material owned by another person or organization.

When the participant owns or controls the original material, the Archive may request the original digital file for permanent preservation rather than relying solely on an internet link that may later change or disappear.

Participants may also identify particular songs, recordings, performances, or online materials they believe are especially important to their story.

PERMANENT DIGITAL RECORD

External websites and online links may be included as supplemental references, but they are not considered substitutes for materials preserved directly by the Alabama Music Heritage Archive.

Whenever historically significant material is available to the participant in an original digital form and the participant has authority to provide it, the Archive encourages submission of that material directly for permanent preservation under the Participant Release.

The Archive will maintain its own preserved records independently of external websites whenever reasonably possible. External links may change, move, or disappear over time and therefore should not serve as the sole permanent record of historically important material.

HOW TO SEND YOUR DIGITAL MATERIALS

Please submit digital materials in their original or highest-quality available format whenever possible.

Email: Smaller photographs, documents, and audio files may be sent by email. Please avoid reducing image or audio quality simply to make a file small enough to email.

Large files: If your files are too large for normal email, contact the Alabama Music Heritage Archive before sending them. The Archive will provide an appropriate method for transferring the original files.

File names: When practical, please use simple descriptive file names.

Examples:

Joe-Lewis-Mobile-1978.jpg

Joe-Lewis-Band-Unknown-Date.jpg

Joe-Lewis-Interview-Article-1985.pdf

Song-Title-Joe-Lewis.wav

You do not need to rename hundreds of files. The purpose is simply to help us identify and preserve materials correctly.

Please do not send the same photograph repeatedly in different sizes or formats. Send the best original version available.

HOW MUCH SHOULD I SEND?

Please select materials that genuinely help document your musical history rather than attempting to submit everything you have collected.

For photographs, approximately 10–15 strong images is a useful starting point. Additional photographs or materials may be requested when they are important to documenting the story.

The Archive will determine which submitted materials are appropriate for permanent preservation and which may be selected for a particular publication.

IF YOU ARE UNSURE

Send us a description of what you have before altering, converting, compressing, or discarding anything.

We would rather help you preserve an important historical item correctly than lose quality unnecessarily.