

# Preserving District History

## Developing a Digital Preservation Plan for DDOT's Library & Archive

### Digitization & Preservation

**Problem:** How do we safeguard DDOT Library's growing, digitized, historic photograph collection?

- DDOT's Library has thousands of historic photographs, manuscripts, and other documents that require preservation.
- Since 2014, the Library has been digitizing its archival holdings in an effort to preserve the content of these items.
- Many of the digitized images can be found on the DDOT Back in Time website, which can be found by scanning the QR code below.
- Digitized copies of analog items do not replace the originals and also require preservation.
- Digital files can be corrupted, accidentally deleted, become obsolete and unable to be opened, or lost due to other manmade or natural disasters.
- It is necessary for archives and digital repositories to have preservation plans in place that deal with both analog and digital files to ensure long-term usability.



SCAN ME

Cars driving down South Capitol Street toward the Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge during the afternoon rush. Photo taken 1957.



A postcard featuring a view of the Washington Harbor and the Potomac River. Sent on June 27, 1917 at 6 p.m.

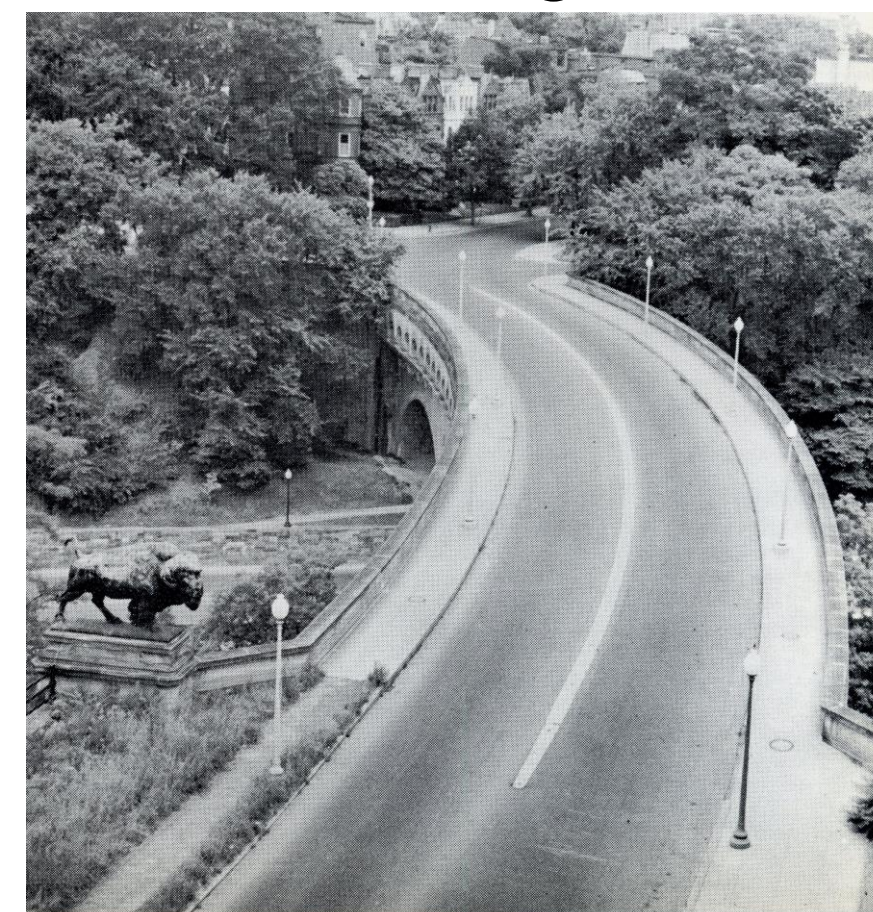


Loew's Palace Theater was built in 1918 and showed both films and stage plays before being closed in 1978 and torn down in 1979. Photo taken circa 1971.

Bystanders on Wisconsin Ave., facing K St. NW and the Whitehurst Freeway after flooding from Hurricane Agnes. Photo taken June 24, 1972.



### Ensuring Long-Term Access Digital Preservation Strategies



View of Dumbarton Bridge, or "Buffalo Bridge," carrying Q Street NW across Rock Creek and its Parkway. The iconic bronze bison were designed by sculptor H. Phinister Proctor.

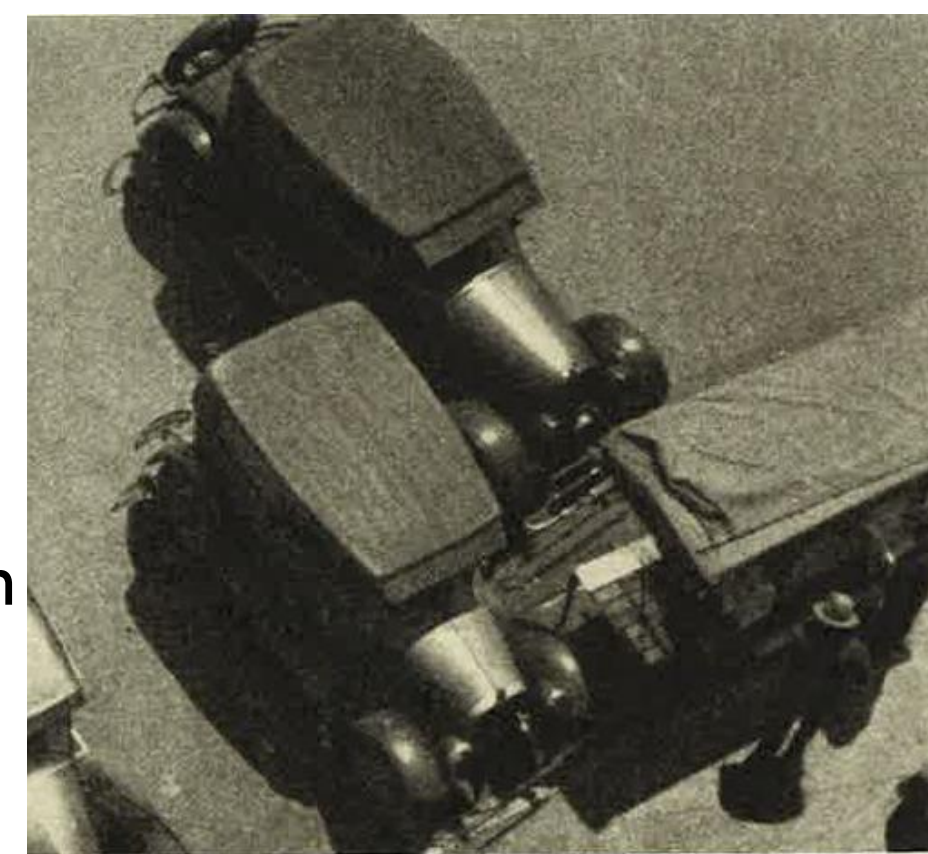
- Just like the preservation of physical objects, digital preservation requires a unique set of tools to be effective.
- Digital files can lose their integrity, or fixity, over time and become corrupted.
- Luckily, each file has its own unique fingerprint called a checksum, which can be verified to check for corruption.
- The program Fixity by AVP automatically verifies the stability of checksums and generates reports on a set basis.
- If the fixity of a file is corrupted, it can be replaced by a back-up.
- Back-ups to internal servers, external hard drives, and off-site cloud storage are also ways to preserve digital files.

### Recommendations & Next Steps

**Solution:** Digital preservation strategies that work for DDOT's unique collection

- Implementing a set preservation schedule to check for fixity of files and completing routine back-ups to an external hard drive would offer a solid foundation for the continued growth of the Library's digital archives and future digital preservation efforts.
- Since external hard drives need to be replaced every three to five years, file migration would not be a regular occurrence.
- Once these foundational steps have been taken, off-site cloud storage, although more costly, can be considered as a next step to further ensure the Library's digital collections' preservation.

A view of older cars in an illegal parking situation from a 1930 report.



STREET OBSTRUCTION BY A DESPERATE PARKER

A man standing outside a pool hall at the intersection of Florida Avenue and 9th Street. Date unknown.



A streetcar on the 7th Street to Brightwood line. Photo taken circa 1890.

