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Article: Separation Anxiety: Kiss Your Acetate Goodbye! (Abstract)

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Separation Anxiety: Kiss Your Acetate Goodbye!

Nicole Christie, and Cindy Colford

Presented at the PMG session of the 2016 AIC Annual Meeting in Montreal, Canada.

The Peterborough Museum & Archives' photographic collections comprise nearly half a million images spanning more than 100 years. They provide an invaluable visual history of Peterborough's people, places and events. In 2008, an internal assessment indicated that many of the acetate negatives were in an advanced stage of deterioration as marked by the pitting, blistering and pronounced channeling that completely obscured the images. In order to preserve these irreplaceable images, techniques were developed and tested for separating the emulsion layer (image) from the acetate base. After several trials, a successful method was established and implemented. This presentation recounts the trials and tribulations encountered while stabilizing these deteriorated acetate negatives – an issue that many institutions must confront – and provides an update on the current state of these collections, now eight years later.

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