What Digital Curators Do and What They Need to Know

A Brief Perspective from the Harvard University Library

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Harvard University Library

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**Digital positions**

Digital Acquisitions Program Librarian  
Digital Acquisitions Support Librarian  
Digital Cartography Specialist  
Digital Library Program Manager  
Digital Library Projects Liaison  
Digital Library Software Engineer (8)  
Digital Projects Analyst  
Digital Projects Librarian  
Digital Projects Program Librarian  
Electronic Reserves Librarian  
E-Resources Licensing Specialist  
HCL Librarian for Collections Digitization  
Metadata Analyst  
Preservation Librarian for Digital...  
Project Manager,  
  Open Collections Program  
  Harvard/Google Project  

**Curation positions**

Asian Bibliographer  
Associate Librarian for Planning…  
Bibliographer for American History  
Collection Services Archivist  
Preservation Cataloger…  
...Public Services Librarian  
Research Librarian  
Special Collections Librarian  
Technical & Reference Services Librarian  
University Archivist  

*etc. – other administrative, cataloging, curatorial and public services positions*
Digital stewardship

Managing digital objects, and sustaining usability, over the long term…

Content life cycle:

• assessment and selection (of content, significant properties, use requirements)
• acquisition and creation (of objects and metadata)
• deposit
• archive and preservation
• discovery, delivery, public service
Service obligations: collection managers

- **Digital stewardship**: Cooperate with DRS staff in exercising appropriate digital stewardship.

- **Intellectual property rights**: Manage legal rights necessary for DRS services, including rights to make one or more faithful copies of objects for backup purposes, the right to make derivative copies, and the right for public redistribution.

- **Metadata**: Provide appropriate administrative, technical, and structural metadata about their objects.

- **Discovery**: Ensure that descriptions of their objects are publicly available in online discovery systems.

- **Access**: Ensure that access to a version of their objects' content is available to members of the Harvard community.

- **Financial considerations**: Arrange payment for DRS service.
Service obligations: repository staff

- **Digital stewardship**: Cooperate with collection managers in exercising appropriate digital stewardship.

- **Preservation of usability**: Preserve the usability of stored objects over time.

- **Delivery services**: Deliver content to desktop client applications via standard web protocols.

- **Professionalism and sustainability**: Manage DRS in a manner that is administratively, financially, and technically sustainable.

- **Responsiveness and transparency**: Be responsive to the needs and concerns of the collection manager community and conduct DRS policy setting and planning activities in an open and transparent manner.
Systems design and maintenance is a key venue for curation
The Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. Collection on Muslims in China

Over 1000 photos of Muslims and Christian missionaries working among them in Western China in the 1920s and 1930s form the core of this collection, which is supplemented by several hundred books, pamphlets, broadsides, etc., in several languages. Gift of Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. in memory of Joseph Fletcher Professor of Chinese and Inner Asian History at Harvard University. The albums and photographs can be viewed in the VIA online catalog. A finding aid to the printed materials can be viewed in the OASIS online catalog.

Permission to publish any image, upon payment of a fee, is granted at the discretion of the curator (e-mail) upon receipt of an application for reproduction. Funding for the creation of the finding aid and the cataloging and digitization of photographs in the The Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. Collection on Muslims in China was provided by Harvard University's Library Digital Initiative (LDI).

- Biographical Note
- Finding Aid to the Collection
- View the Photographs in the VIA Catalog
- Search on Claude L. Pickens in Name and limit to the Harvard-Yenching Library.
Record 1 out of 1

Author: Pickens, Claudio L., 1900-1985.


Locations/Orders: Availability

Location: Harvard-Yenching


Description: 88 boxes

Description: Organized into four series: I. Samuel M. Zwemer; II. Isaac Mason; III. Rev. Claudio L. Pickens, Jr.; and IV. Additional books. See finding aid for sub-series listing.

History notes: Claudio L. Pickens, Jr. (1892-1983) and his wife, Elizabeth Zwemer Pickens were American Episcopal missionaries of the China Inland Mission (CIM) who had a particular interest in the category of China’s Muslims who are designated as “Hui” in China. Their interests were both evangelical and scholarly. For further information consult Pickens, Claudio L., Annotated Bibliography on Islam in China.

Summary: Collection contains correspondence, subject files, travel diary, published writings, photographs, albums, negatives, maps, posters, scrolls, and printed materials that constitute an historical and documentary record of Muslims in China, an ethnically and linguistically diverse group, and of Christian missionary activities among them in the early decades of the 20th century. Also includes materials on Muslims and Christian missionary activities in the Middle East and elsewhere.

Summary: Includes 25 notebooks containing notes on Islam in China, including manuscript of a Chinese-Muslim biographical dictionary and several photo albums depicting Muslim people and structures in China. Also includes related published materials in English, Chinese, and Arabic on Islam in China, a complete file of Friends of Chinese Muslims, a journal published by Pickens, among other materials. Also includes materials produced or collected by Pickens' father-in-law Samuel M. Zwemer (1867-1952), American minister of the Dutch Reformed Church and missionary to and scholar of the Muslim world; materials produced or collected by Isaac Mason (d. 1993), British missionary with the Friends’ Foreign Mission Association in China; and photographs taken by missionary Carter G. Hulston.

Restrictions: At least one location has information and/or restrictions on access. Click on the holdings link(s) for specific information.

Language note: Materials are in English, Chinese, Arabic, French, and other languages.
Harvard Yenching Library, Harvard College Library, Harvard University

Descriptive Summary

Repository: Harvard Yenching Library, Harvard College Library, Harvard University
Creator: Pickens, Claude L., 1900-1985.
Title: Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. collection on Muslims in China,
Date(s): 1888-1984.
Quantity: 38 boxes.
Abstract: Collection made by American Episcopal missionary Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. (1900-1985) documenting Christian missionary activities and Muslim communities and publications in China. Also includes materials produced or collected by Pickens' father-in-law Samuel M. Zwemer (1867-1952), American minister of the Dutch Reformed Church and missionary to and scholar of the Muslim world, and materials produced or collected by Isaac Mason (d. 1939), British missionary with the Friends' Foreign Mission Association in China.

Processing Information:

Materials that were identified by the inclusion of bookplates, inscriptions, stamps, or marginalia as originally produced or collected by Samuel M. Zwemer or Isaac Mason were grouped into separate series or subseries based on provenance.

Acquisition Information:

Title: Western Suyuan. A Mongolian family.
Work Type: photographs
Creator: Pickens Jr., Rev. Claude L. (1908-1985), United States
Date: 1936
Dimensions: 5.5 x 5.5 cm.
Topics: families; men; women; girls; portraits
Nationality/Culture: Mongolian
Materials/Techniques: gelatin silver process on paper
Location: Inner Mongolia, China
Road from Esen Gol to Linhe, Inner Mongolia, China
Related Work: Part of Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. collection on Muslims in China
Related Information: From the photograph album [Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr.'s trip to northwest China], p. [61]
Finding aid for Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. collection on Muslims in China
In search of Moslems in China. April 30th to July 2nd, 1935 [unpublished trip diary by Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr.]
Repository: Harvard-Yenching Library
Call No.: 64-68
Record Identifier: ahvwork173221
Table of Contents


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Descriptive Summary

Repository: Harvard Yenching Library, Harvard College Library, Harvard University
Creator: Pickens, Claude L., 1900-1985
Title: Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. collection on Muslims in China
Date(s): 1858-1964
Quantity: 39 boxes

Abstract: Collection made by American Episcopal missionary Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. (1900-1985) documenting Christian missionary activities and Muslim communities and publications in China. Also includes materials produced or collected by Pickens' father-in-law Samuel M. Zwemer (1867-1952), American minister of the Dutch Reformed Church and missionary to and scholar of the Muslim world, and materials produced or collected by Isaac Mason (d. 1939), British missionary with the Friends' Foreign Mission Association in China.

Processing Information:

Processed by Judy Greene, January 2004.

Materials that were identified by the inclusion of bookplates, inscriptions, stamps, or marginalia as originally produced or collected by Samuel M. Zwemer or Isaac Mason were grouped into separate series or subseries based on provenance.

Acquisition Information:

Related Links


**Related Links** take you to information outside of PDS that relates to the displayed document. E.g., a link to a description of the document in HOLLIS, to a finding aid in OASIS, or to a specialized web site with additional information.

- HOLLIS 0603673
- OASIS finding aid

In Search of Moslems in China, April 30th to July 2nd, 1936 [unpublished trip diary by Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr.].

Done
I left Hankow at five minutes to midnight with five friends, the two new Swedish missionaries, Zor-Buiyen, two C.I.M. missionaries for Shanghai and Tsinghai, and one S.A.M. missionary for Shanxi. The first two sat on the train at Changchow while the rest of us changed to the Tsinghai R.H. and went to Sian, Shanxi.

May 1st

CHU HUA TANG. King and I walked through the town trying to find the mosque. Because of the rain we did not go far, so returned to the station and talked with some of the Moslem food vendors. They said there were three mosques, one near the west gate.

HENGHANG. The Moslem near the station told us there were four old Sout and one New Scot mosques with about 800 families in the city. There were a number of Moslem restaurants and meat shops near the stations.

HENGCHOW. Mr. Syrdal, Vickers and Jensen came down to the train to see me. Syrdal leaves tomorrow for Amchur. He has finished the article for the "Moslem World" on "Jesuit Christ in Chinese Islam." Mr. Vickers kindly invited me to stay with him during the conference at ikunghen.

CHENGCHOW. We were here at 8:10 a.m., but there is no one here with a white air raid on Kaifeng, Laying and Chengchow so I'll leave here tomorrow.
What ‘content’ is in the archive?
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</table>
Will “digital curators” be prepared to:

- Manage content?
- Manage context?

... over lifecycles of unpredictable duration?
What do digital curators need to know?

- Curation requires knowledge of information theory and management.
- Curation requires an understanding of audiences and needs.
- Digital curation requires an understanding of all units of content and object management.
- Digital curation requires an understanding of all (local) systems and their capabilities.
- Stewardship and lifecycle management require collaboration.
Curation in an ARL library

- An environment of:

  *multiple* systems for discovery and delivery

  one or more robust repositories

  diverse and demanding users

  heterogeneous content, at a very large scale

  obligations to perpetuate use for the very long term

  specialists with deep domain and technical expertise (which increases value of generalists)