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# **What Digital Curators Do and What They Need to Know**

## ***A Brief Perspective from the Harvard University Library***

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Weissman Preservation Center  
Harvard University Library

19 April 2007

## ***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

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# 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

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# 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.

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Systems design and maintenance  
is a key venue for curation



## The Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. Collection on Muslims in China



*Do Not Divide Moslems and Chinese*

"Along the Old Silk Road to Europe. East Gate, Hao Tien"  
(CP02.29.03) from *The Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr., Trip to Northwest China*, photograph album, p. [29]

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](#)
- [Islam in China: A Selected Bibliography of English-Language Publications](#)
- [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.


◀ [VIEW OTHER COLLECTIONS FROM THE HARVARD COLLEGE LIBRARY](#)

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**Harvard University**

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**Author :** [Pickens, Claude L., 1900-1985.](#)

**Title :** [Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. collection on Muslims in China, 1858-1984.](#)

**Locations/Orders :** [Availability](#)

**Location :** [Harvard-Yenching](#)  [Holdings](#) [Availability](#)

**Finding aids :** Electronic finding aid available <http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:hy100001>

**Description :** 38 boxes

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

**History notes :** Claude L. Pickens, Jr. (1900-1985) and his wife, Elizabeth Zwemer Pickens were American Episcopal missionaries of the China Inland Mission (C.I.M.) 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, Claude 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 Moslems, 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. 1939), British missionary with the Friends' Foreign Mission Association in China; and photographs taken by missionary Carter D. Holton

**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.

Done



Pickens, Claude L., 1900-1985. Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. collection on Muslims in China: A finding aid. - Mozilla Firefox

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http://oasis.harvard.edu:10080/oasis/deliver/deepLink?\_collection=oasis&uniqueId=hy100001

IMDb

Harvard University Library

**OASIS: Online Archival Search Information System**

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[Persistent ID: [nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:hy100001](http://nrs.harvard.edu/urn-3:FHCL:hy100001)]  
Harvard Yenching Library, Harvard College Library, Harvard University

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## Pickens, Claude L., 1900-1985. Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. collection on Muslims in China: A finding aid.

Harvard Yenching Library, Harvard College Library  
Harvard University, Cambridge, MA 02138

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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):** 1858-1984.  
**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. Zwerner (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. Zwerner or Isaac Mason were grouped into separate series or subseries based on provenance.

### Acquisition Information:

Gift of Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. in memory of Joseph Fletcher (1934-1984), professor of Chinese and Inner Asian History at Harvard University. Deed of gift: Dec. 13, 1984. Additional materials received later from Elizabeth Zwerner Pickens and Mary Ellen Alonso.

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From the search **pickens in (Anywhere) and northwest china album in (Anywhere)**

Save entire record...

Work



Save this...

**Title:** Western Suiyuan. A Mongolian family.  
**Work Type:** photographs  
**Creator:** **Pickens** Jr., Rev. Claude L. (1900-1985), 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 Bayan 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. \[64\]](#)  
[Finding aid for Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. collection on Muslims in China](#)  
[In search of Moslems in China, April 30th to July 2nd, 1936 \[unpublished trip diary by Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr.\]](#)  
**Repository:** Harvard-Yenching Library  
 CP02.64.08

**Record Identifier:** olvwork173221

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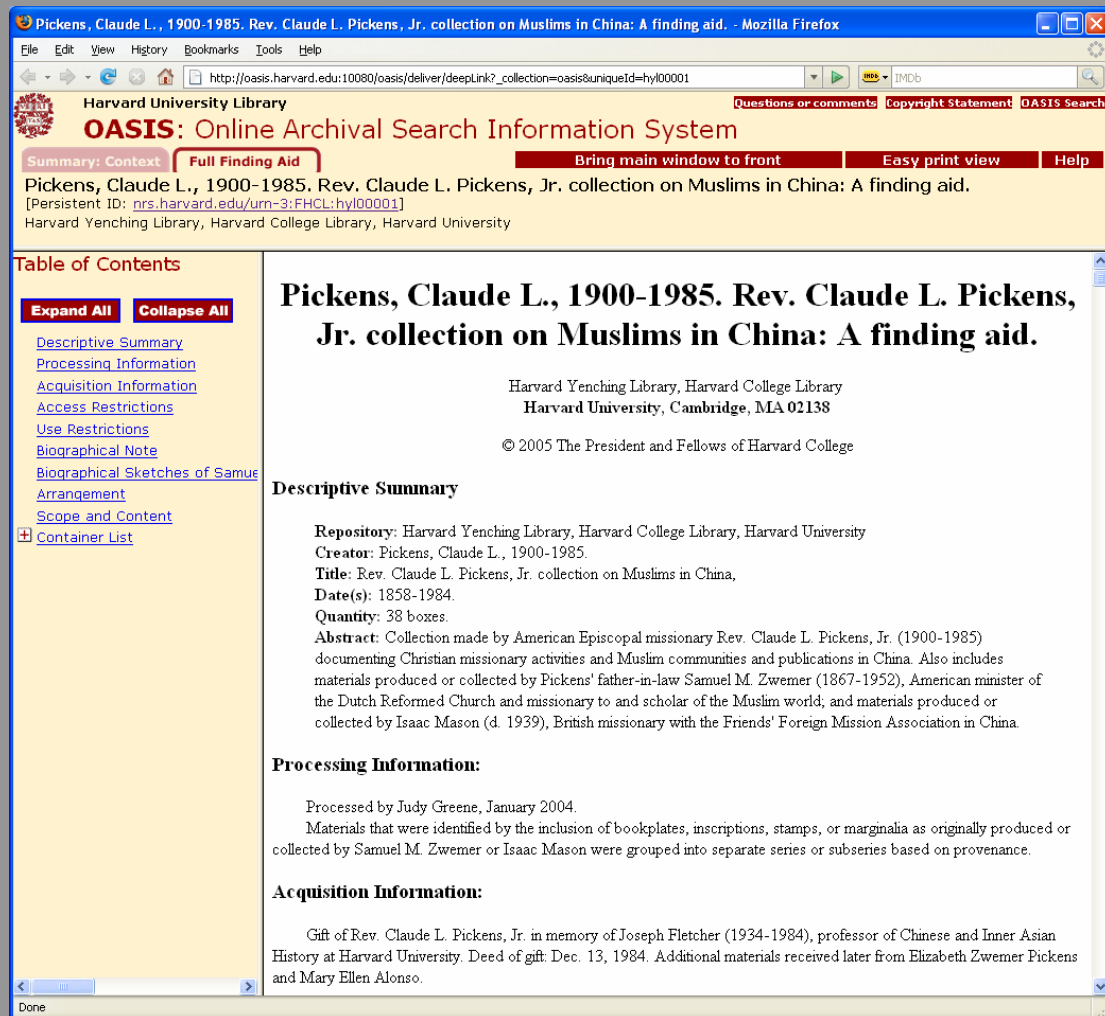
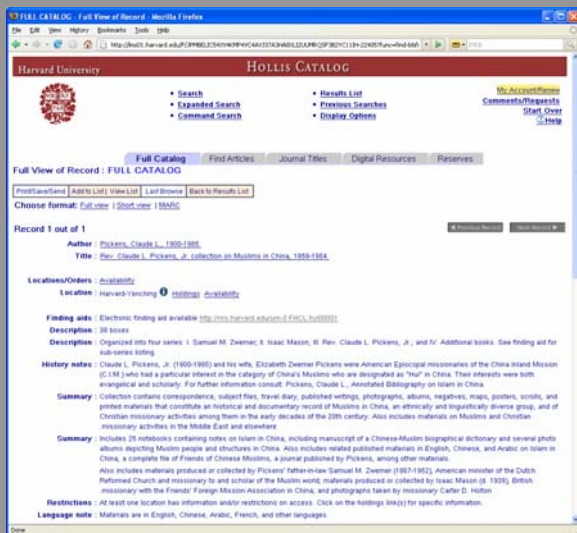
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[Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr.'s trip to northwest China]. Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. collection on Muslims in China, album 2, ca. 1936.  
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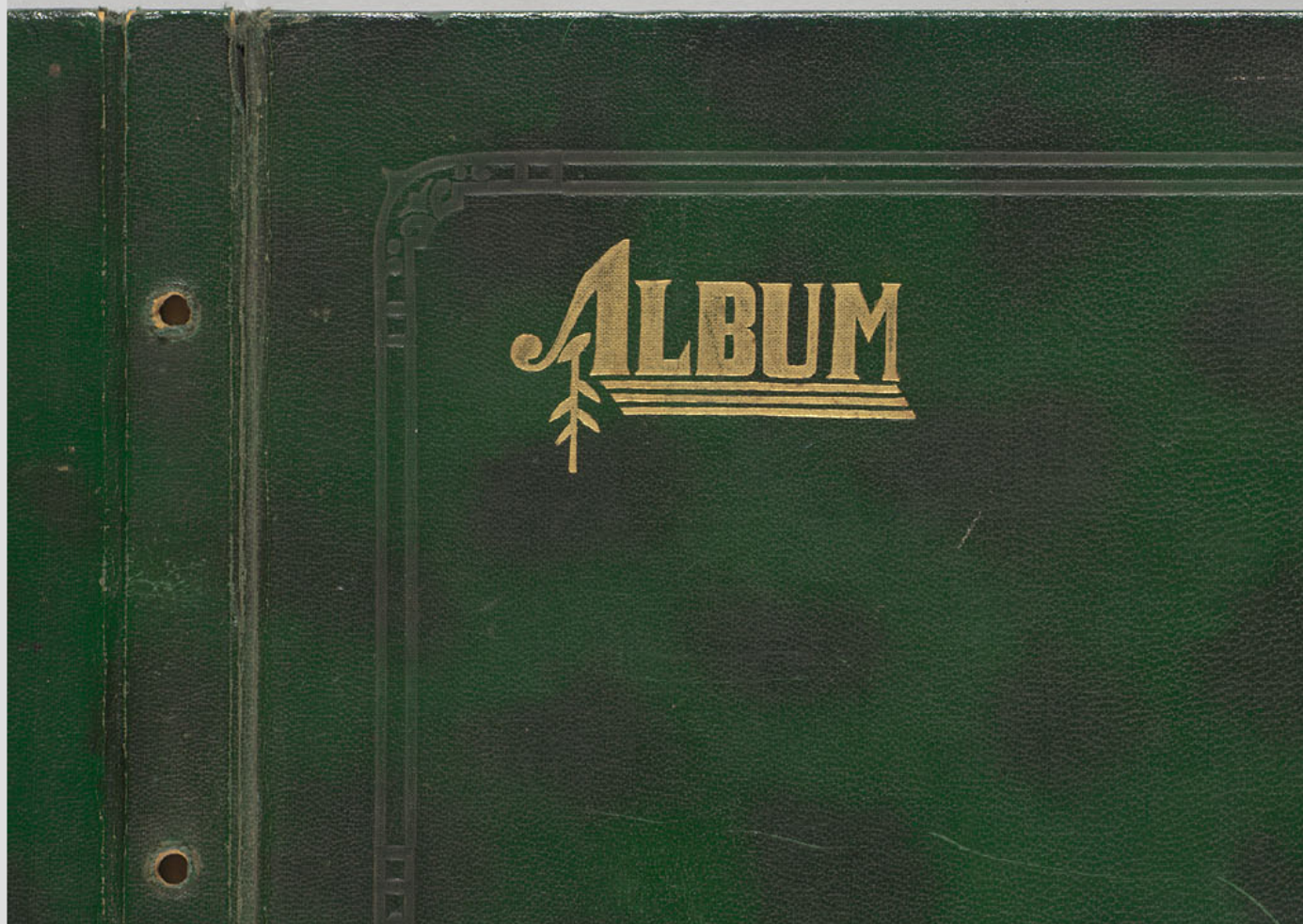


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[Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr.'s trip



Speed is no object



A Roman Catholic Church Fort  
at  
Huang Yang Mu To Suiyuan



Timber for bridges



IN new country people often live  
half under ground



A Hollander is Priest here



Looking for the ec  
June 19, 1936





## Related Links

**Links relating to:** [Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr.'s trip to northwest China]. Rev. Claude L. Pickens, Jr. collection on Muslims in China, album 2, ca. 1936. Harvard-Yenching Library.

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

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In Search of Moslems in China, A

Tangut country May 19 - June 1

Inns 22  
Caves 6  
23

Nights in inns 28  
By horse 16 days  
" cart 9 "  
" bus 5 "  
" train 6 "  
36 "

**IN SEARCH OF MOSLEMS**  
in China  
April 30th to July 2nd  
1936  
-----  
April 30th

I left Hankow at five minutes to midnight with five friends, two new Swedish missionaries for Suiyuan, two C.I.M. missionaries for Shensi and Ysinghai, and one S.A.M. missionary for Shensi. The first two continued on the train at Chengchow while the rest of us changed to the Lunghai R.R. and went to Sien, Shensi.

May, first

CHU MA TIEN. 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 a New Sect. Told us the mosques were near the southgate.

YENCHING. The Moslems near the station told us there were four Old Sect and one New Sect mosques with about 800 families in the cit. There were a number of Moslem restaurants and meat shops near the stations.

HSUCHEANG. Mr. Syrdal, Vickner and Benson came down to the train to see me. Syrdal leave tomorrow for America. He has finished the article for the "Moslem World" on "Jesus Christ in Chinese Islam". Mr. Vickner kindly invited me to stay with him during the conference at Kikungshan.

CHENGCHOW. We were due here at 8:10 p.m. but there is a war game on with a fake air raid on Kaifeng, Leynag and Chengchow so all



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# What ‘content’ is in the archive?

	Collection	File	Format	Digital Object	Content Model	Version	Copy
submission agreement	X				X		
ingest				X			
normalization			X				
validation			X				
storage		X				X	X
backup		X				X	X
integrity checking		X				X	X
obsolescence monitoring			X		X		
preservation planning					X		
transformation				X			
dissemination	X			X		X	
deletion		X		X		X	X

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## Will “digital curators” be prepared to:

- Manage content?
- Manage context?

... over lifecycles of unpredictable duration?

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# 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.

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## 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)