

# *Alabama Mosaic F.A.Q.*

## **Joining Alabama Mosaic**

*Updated: March 2009*

### **Who is responsible for AlabamaMosaic?**

AlabamaMosaic is a public service of Alabama's academic institutions. They support AlabamaMosaic through their participation in the [Network of Alabama Academic Libraries](#) (NAAL). [Auburn University Libraries](#) operates and manages AlabamaMosaic on behalf of NAAL. AlabamaMosaic was created with a National Leadership Grant from the federal [Institute of Museum and Library Services](#) and matching funds from NAAL, the Alabama Department of Archives and History, Auburn University, and The University of Alabama.

### **What kinds of materials are included in AlabamaMosaic?**

AlabamaMosaic is a collection of digital copies of historical materials held by Alabama repositories. Many of the original items are unique, highly valuable, or fragile. Digitizing them makes them available for use. AlabamaMosaic stores, manages, and presents online digital copies for such items as photographs, letters, manuscripts, postcards, books, maps, and slides. AlabamaMosaic has the capability to manage other formats such as newspapers, but none have been contributed. Most sites have contributed digitized copies of photographs or other images on paper. Some sites have also contributed records for audio and video files they host on their local servers. Go to [Browse Collections](#) on AlabamaMosaic, click on the name of a contributor to see the collections and the kinds of materials that are in AlabamaMosaic.

### **Who can contribute to AlabamaMosaic?**

Any repository with materials related to Alabama can apply to contribute. This includes museums, archives, libraries, schools, even individuals. **There are no charges** to contribute digital materials to the database or to use AlabamaMosaic. All digital files in AlabamaMosaic must be made available for educational and research use at no charge to the user.

### **We are a small institution with few resources and little digitization experience. Can we still participate in AlabamaMosaic?**

Yes. AlabamaMosaic was created to help repositories create a digital collection. AlabamaMosaic is a statewide effort, and its current contributors assist other sites by giving advice on planning and creating digital collections. Most can also provide some training. An advantage of participating in AlabamaMosaic is its commitment to assist smaller repositories with creating digital collections so they do not have to first invest in new equipment or special digital file management software. You will be able to store

your collection in AlabamaMosaic so you do not have to initially invest in digital file management software or a server.

### **If I want to contribute, what do I do first?**

First, complete and submit the [JOIN US](#) online form posted on the AlabamaMosaic website. We will review your completed form and respond with information about any limitations related to AlabamaMosaic or any concerns we have about your proposal. Once your repository has been accepted as a contributor, we will make every effort to help you. We will give you instructions to download and install the AlabamaMosaic [client software](#), which is provided at no cost to you. You can request advice on planning your digital collection, selecting appropriate scanning equipment, training on using CONTENTdm, creating Dublin Core metadata, or other topics. For assistance you can contact the volunteer trainers listed in the [Directory of AlabamaMosaic Trainers](#) posted under Resources.

Our most frequent advice is to start small. Do not try to create and contribute large digital collections until you gain experience in selecting and scanning materials for the collection as well as expertise in creating metadata.

### **Does AlabamaMosaic provide training to use the client software?**

Yes! We use [CONTENTdm](#) software from OCLC. When you download the software, you will be given a link for an online tutorial at OCLC. In addition, current contributors volunteer to help new contributors learn to use it. From time to time, OCLC also sponsors online training sessions. To learn more, read the [CONTENTdm Overview](#).”

### **Can we participate in AlabamaMosaic if we already have CONTENTdm?**

Yes! Several contributors have their own CONTENTdm installations. AlabamaMosaic includes the CONTENTdm MultiSite server to search your CONTENTdm files at the same time it searches the files on the AlabamaMosaic server. The user sees a fully integrated set of results. Contact the Network of Alabama Academic Libraries [Network of Alabama Academic Libraries](#) if you will allow AlabamaMosaic to include your digital collections by searching your CONTENTdm server.

### **Can I use AlabamaMosaic to host my collection indefinitely?**

The hosting service of AlabamaMosaic is intended as a first step for repositories that wish to create digital collections. They can postpone an investment in equipment or special digital file management software by using AlabamaMosaic to learn about digital collection building. However, repositories with technology systems staff should always plan to eventually host their own digital collection.

### **How long can I use AlabamaMosaic to host my collection?**

There is no pre-determined time for how long a repository can leave its collection on AlabamaMosaic. Our server space is limited, so as collections grow, some contributors may be asked to move their collections to their own digital file management systems.

### **How will AlabamaMosaic decide which repositories will be asked to move collections from its server?**

A purpose of AlabamaMosaic is to help repositories start a digital collection. As long as the server has space, these initial collections can remain in the AlabamaMosaic server. However, if space is needed for new contributors, repositories with the largest collections and local systems staff will be asked to move to their own systems. If this has to be done, repositories will be given advance notice with sufficient time to migrate to another server.

AlabamaMosaic intends to continue to host the small collections of repositories that do not have the capability to sustain an in-house digital collection. However, if a repository has professional staff with technical expertise, then it should plan to add and maintain its own digital file management software.

### **What is metadata, sometimes called “indexing” or “tagging”?**

Each digital file must be tagged or indexed with search words that enable the user to find what is needed for a homework assignment or a research project. CONTENTdm includes a template that you use to add words to describe your digital files.

AlabamaMosaic uses basic Dublin Core Metadata for these records. Then, when a user enters words for a search, such as “Montgomery,” all digital files in the database with this indexing word added will be included in the search results.

### **What do I need to know about copyright?**

Digital resources contributed to AlabamaMosaic are available to the public for educational and personal research use. This means that users can print or download copies without obtaining prior permission.

Most participating repositories contribute materials that are in the public domain (not covered by copyright). If you want to contribute an item covered by copyright, you assure AlabamaMosaic that the repository has rights to “copy” the original and distribute that copy. Review the AlabamaMosaic [FAQ about Copyright](#) for more information about copyright.

### **Can I include information about using my digital materials?**

Yes. First, remember that you are posting these files for public use. AlabamaMosaic is designed to support educational and research purposes, and you will have little or no control of users once they download a file from AlabamaMosaic. You can include a **RIGHTS** statement in your Dublin Core Metadata to advise users about acceptable uses

for other purposes. AlabamaMosaic includes only low resolution files, and these are not suitable for uses that require high resolution copies such as published books or articles.

### **Can I sell prints or high resolution copies of items contributed to AlabamaMosaic?**

Yes. Your acceptable use policy statement can include information about acquiring copies of any materials you add to AlabamaMosaic. Many repositories charge fees to provide copies or for use of their materials in published works. Here is one example of a rights statement:

*Reproduction of materials for publication, broadcast, or commercial use requires written permission of (repository) holding the physical item from which this digital version was derived. To acquire print, photographic, or higher quality digital copies of this item, contact (repository contact information)*

### **Are you sure I will not have to pay anything to use AlabamaMosaic for my collection? Who supports AlabamaMosaic?**

No fees are charged to participate because AlabamaMosaic is a public service of Alabama's academic institutions. Auburn University Libraries hosts the server and provides staff support. This public service by Auburn University Libraries is the primary financial support of AlabamaMosaic. The Network of Alabama Academic Libraries funds ongoing hardware and software costs.

### **Can you provide funding to help me create my digital collection?**

Sorry, no. AlabamaMosaic is a collaborative effort, and institutions fund their own digital collections. AlabamaMosaic does not have any funding to assist contributors. Alabama public libraries can contact the [Alabama Public Library Service](#) for information about applying for federal funds provided to Alabama through the federal [Library Services and Technology Act](#) (LSTA)

### **Are there restrictions on what I can contribute?**

You may only contribute materials related to Alabama. AlabamaMosaic was developed to enrich [Alabama Moments in American History](#) a curriculum guide for K-12 schools to use in teaching Alabama history. Contributors are encouraged to select materials that add content for the teaching units in the guide. However, contributors can add any material related to Alabama. AlabamaMosaic also supports scholarly research as well as individuals' personal research interests. Here are some suggested criteria for you to consider in selecting specific items:

- *Does this item have historical significance (and thus interest) for many Alabamians?* Visit the teaching units at [Alabama Moments in American History](#) for topic selection suggestions.

- *Will this item be easy to digitize?* Some materials are easier to digitize than others. The easiest are single-page, flat works printed on paper. Better scanning results are obtained if the item has high contrast print and uses a clean “crisp” type font. Handwritten documents may require many adjustments to obtain legible digital copies. Some handwritten documents may have to be transcribed to make them readable online. Bound volumes require more staff time to turn pages and scan page-by-page. Fragile items require special handling. Rare items require extra security. Oversize documents as well as audio and sound recordings require special equipment for conversion to digital formats.
- *Does the repository have rights to copy and distribute the materials?* Most sites start their digital collections with materials in the public domain. Repositories may own a physical item, such as a photograph or a letter, but not own the copyright. For more information about copyright, review the AlabamaMosaic [FAQ for Copyright](#).

### **If there a limit on how many digital files I can contribute?**

AlabamaMosaic does not currently limit the number of digital files a repository can contribute.

### **Who owns the files once they are contributed to the AlabamaMosaic server?**

The repository adding content to AlabamaMosaic always owns its digital files. A repository may elect to withdraw its content at any time.

### **Does AlabamaMosaic edit records or alter images that are contributed?**

No. AlabamaMosaic does not review or edit contributions. There are many spelling variations in original documents, and it is important to retain the original spellings. Occasionally, the technical support team at Auburn University Libraries may notice and correct an obvious typographical error in a metadata record, but will not otherwise change records.

### **Are there restrictions on the digital files that are accepted?**

AlabamaMosaic accepts only digital files optimized for web presentation. Files must be small so users throughout the state can view them. Many Alabamians lack high-speed Internet connectivity, so smaller files enable AlabamaMosaic content to be delivered to more online users.

### **Are there standards for scanning and file size?**

We strongly recommend that you contact one of the trainers listed in the [Directory of AlabamaMosaic Trainers](#) before you begin scanning. While AlabamaMosaic seeks to support the policies and procedures adopted for your own digital collection, some

guidelines need to be followed for the shared collections. For scanning information, review the [FAQ Scanning](#).