Aldis Pūtelis
Archives of Latvian Folklore
The Archives were started as characteristic paper archives in 1926. The “genre classification” foresees a single character code for all still images: both drawings and photographs are marked as “V”.

Originally the focus is on textual information – folklore recorded by means of writing on paper.

In the course of time the number of illustrations grows, the first dramatic change occurs in 1950's when photography becomes much more commonplace thanks to compact cameras and film; the second equally impressive change happens in this millennium, when digital photography becomes equally commonplace.

This presentation is devoted to hard-copy images.
There are several issues in image archiving:

- preservation of the originals (chemical processes, fading of colours, etc.);
- need to copy the images for use (e.g. in publications);
- viewing (browsing) of images is (though mildly) still a destructive activity;
- no image alone is a memory item - without some information about the portrayed scene and persons it is nothing more than a decoration.
The still images in collections of ALF appear in several different formats:

- photographs glued in albums with captions next to them (since 1950);
- photographs in the text notebooks, as illustrations to the texts recorded (since 1921);
- free standing photographs, sometimes placed in envelopes and boxes (beginning with 1980's);
- film negatives (since 1950's);

There are no glass negatives.
There are images without counterparts among negatives and vice versa.
There are images with detailed captions and both images and negatives with no information about them.
There are several registers of the image material:
- catalogue of film negatives, kept from 1950's until early 1970's, with general information regarding the frames (not every single frame is described);
These are the contents of the SHELVES.
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The **albums** might seem to be the best collections of images, as:

- they contain images arranged chronologically and by their content;
- there are captions explaining the scenes and listing the featured persons;
- the material is more or less clearly dated.
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But this might be counterweighted by the fact that:

- the images are glued to the pages;
- there is nothing to prevent wear from the opposite page;
- the albums are heavy and rather clumsy (especially obvious during scanning!);
- the captions may differ from other descriptions or facts told by the persons featured on the images;
- sometimes, probably because of some artistic intent, some images are overlaid over others.
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- in the notebooks used for recording the texts from informants (in pre-video era)
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- There has never been an in-house system of image development and making of prints at the Archives;
- scanning of negatives is a tricky matter, especially the colour ones;
- negatives cannot have any description integrally associated with them;
- inappropriate storage may render negatives hardly usable.
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Archives of Latvian Folklore - From Shelves to HDD

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What has been done by now. And how.
WHAT:
- The images in the albums have been catalogued to provide information on what is available (also constituting a basis of information for future comparisons);
- all of the album images have been scanned;
- most of the negatives have been scanned;
- the images in manuscript materials are being scanned; the work is hindered by incompleteness of material registers and the necessity to browse the manuscripts for images;
- a data base for description of all archive materials was developed in 2002; its web-accessible form was developed in 2004.
HOW:

- The captions of the images have been transcribed, lists of featured persons compiled, physical format of images measured;
- photographic prints and other images are scanned into *.tif format files at resolution 300dpi, no scaling;
- negatives are scanned into the same *.tif format files at 1200 dpi in order to reduce the impact of different consumer oriented algorithms included in the scanning software;
- the data base uses open-source Borland Interbase ver. 6, the system is gradually growing long in the tooth, though still providing sufficient search and description facilities.
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Ilustrācijas širkļa rediģēšana

[Image of a computer interface showing a database entry for Latvian folklore archives, including fields for author, year, location, and description.]
This brings us to the long-desired destination – the HDD. But also this technical medium, though facilitates access and duplication, cannot make an archivist perfectly happy because it is not perfectly fail-safe. Was it worth it, you may ask? **OF COURSE IT WAS!**
Still, paying much attention and investing much effort into digitisation, the analogue originals must not be forgotten.

The files on the hard disk are not a replacement, but a supplement to items on shelves!
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Paldies par uzmanību!
Thank you for your attention!

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