

Photo Print Options

All photographs accompanying National Register nomination forms must be 5 x 7 inches in size and meet a 75 year archival standard. This means that special printers, papers, and inks must be used to print the photos.

Self Printing

You may print your National Register images yourself **if** you have archival quality equipment. However, this equipment is somewhat difficult to identify because most companies do not use the word “archival” to describe the printing equipment and products available today. Instead, they refer to archival quality products as “professional grade.”

For *black and white* prints, this means using:

- professional grade printers
- professional grade fiber-based paper or paper specifically designed for black and white silver based prints
- professional grade ink jet inks

For *color prints*, this means using:

- professional grade ink jet printers
- professional grade, resin coated ink jet photo paper
- professional grade ink jet inks

Remember:

- manufacturers should identify professional grade products as such on their packaging
- most personal ink jet printers will not produce professional quality, archival prints
- standard ink jet papers and inks do not meet the archival quality requirement
- some resin coated papers are not of archival quality.
- regular copy/printer papers are unacceptable
- no chromogenic papers or inks are allowed

Professional Photo Printing

Another option for obtaining archival quality prints of digital images is to use the services of a professional photo lab. If choosing this option:

- Because a certified lab will use the best inks and papers, verify that the business is a certified professional lab using certified professional products.

Both the lab and the paper should be certified. These requirements are more likely to be met by a business that focuses only on photography.

- Make sure the Lab knows that you need archival prints meeting the 75 year standard.
- Ask to see samples of digital photographs the company has printed and try to verify their archival quality before placing your order (see below for verification tips).

Remember:

- Chromogenic processing (C-41) is unacceptable.
- The prints produced by drugstores, supermarkets, and super stores may not meet the National Register's archival requirements. Before authorizing these providers to do the work, verify through a supervisor that their printers, papers, and ink are of professional quality. Young clerks may not be sufficiently trained to understand the difference between professional grade and standard equipment and prints.

Tips for Recognizing Problem Print Quality

- If producing your own prints, do some research on the Internet to verify that the paper and ink you are using meet the 75 year standard. Both the ink and paper must meet this standard.
- Look for Professional Paper Watermarks on the back of some papers.
- If the ink smears when the photo is touched, the print is not of archival quality