

EAP 1477: Methodology Report

The most significant decision taken and retaken during the course of this project was to seek additional support at key junctures. Without that flexibility, for which we thank EAP, we would not have been able to achieve the project goals. To take a few examples in chronological order:

A combination of security concerns and logistical difficulties required that changes be made during the project's first few weeks, affecting both our ability to mobilise the equipment needed and the training field-trip we had planned for the *Semillero de Jóvenes* that was the centrepiece of the vision brought to this project by Fundación Muntú Bantú. Modest amounts of additional support sought from the Universities of Michigan and Pennsylvania, as well as from Muntú Bantú, enabled us to acquire extra digitization equipment to accelerate the process and navigate an awkward start.

We decided to exclude from the submitted digital collection some materials from the physical archive, despite their being within our date range of 1860-1930. We did not digitise 307 case files of the 1,086 originally identified. This selection includes: (1) those documents in an extreme state of deterioration (35 case files). (2) Those documents that were not legal case files but rather referred to administrative activities of the court (121 case files). And (3) five boxes belonging to what we treat as the "General Series", which will require more time and funds to digitise and process (five boxes with 151 case files).

An early assessment of our first large set of images made the team suddenly aware of problems that derived principally from our inexperience. The decision was made to hire a detail-oriented professional able to manage multiple databases effectively and accurately; confirm that images were being accurately named; compile metadata, coordinate with Fundación Neogranadina; and complete the final transfer of everything to hard drives. This project would not have been completed without the invaluable work done by Kelly López Roldán during each of these phases.

As we got underway with cataloguing, project partner Muntú Bantú enabled a series of training and discussions that re-oriented the work done with our interns. The key change we made, which proved immensely valuable, was to move away from imagining the interns' participation primarily in terms of the production of metadata and towards understanding their work as also interpretative, so that the second half of each week they set aside to discuss case files they had been reading and to begin working toward producing their own interpretive short essays.

Our experiences with file transfers and the production of TIFF from RAW files then required us to realise that work that had been imagined as being done by Daniel and Ann themselves would need to be outsourced, as well. Recruiting technical experts from Library staff at the University of Pennsylvania proved crucial, particularly Chris Sabella of University computing and Chris Lippa of the Schoenberg Centre for Electronic Text and Image at Van Pelt Library.

In consultation with project partners Muntú Bantú and Neogranadina, we made the decision to catalogue both at the level required by EAP (per box) and that recommended by Neogranadina (per case file). However, the description of each box includes a list of the titles of the files that belong to each, including the opposing parties, the type of case, the year the trial started, and the numbering of images corresponding to each case.