Developing Exhibits with Omeka

For questions/comments about this guide or for questions about this guide, contact Liz Woolcott (liz.woolcott@usu.edu)

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Introduction

Scope of the tutorial

These instructions will outline the basic steps for creating exhibits in Omeka using the Exhibit Builder plugin.

Tools Needed

Omeka: Open source content management system for displaying digital files and associated metadata. It also creates exhibits, maps, and timeline interfaces. Two versions of Omeka are available: a hosted version available online via omeka.net and the downloadable version available at omeka.org. To see an explanation of the difference between the two, please see: http://omeka.org/codex/Org_vs_Net . This tutorial will be most applicable to full, downloaded, locally hosted versions of Omeka, available through omeka.org. There may be significant differences with generally hosted Omeka.net instances.

This tutorial was based on the Omeka Exhibit Builder Plugin version 3.1.2. In addition to the main Omeka software, having the Geolocation plugin installed is also highly encouraged in order to use the Geolocation content block for exhibits.

Building Exhibits

Preparation

Prior to starting an exhibit, the creator will need to have two things accomplished:
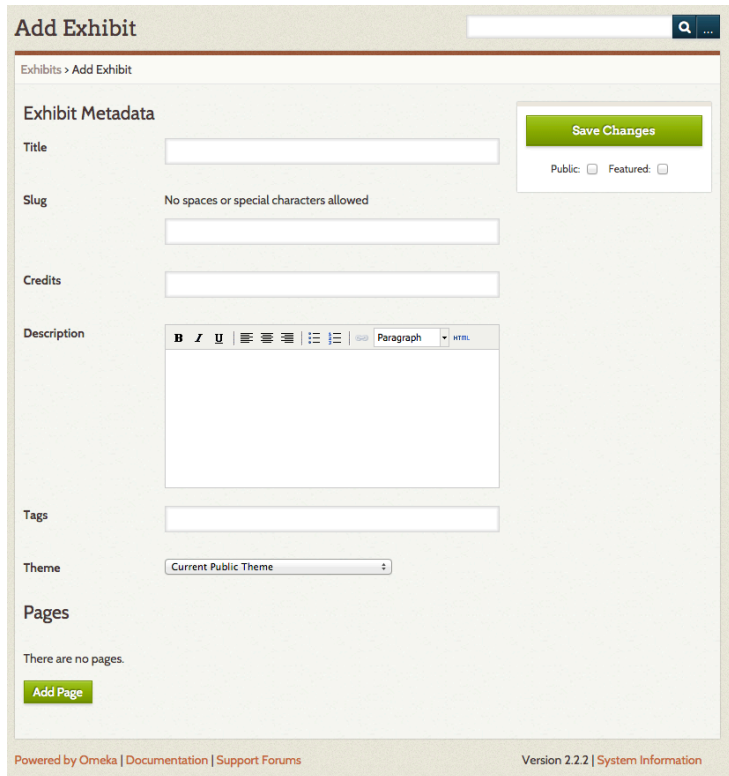
1. Outline of exhibit, including text and image/files needed for display

2. All digital files loaded into Omeka. For instructions on how to load content into Omeka, please see the Uploading Metadata and Digital Files Into Omeka tutorial.

Starting a New Exhibit

1. To begin an exhibit, click on "Exhibits" from the left hand sidebar

2. Then click on the "Add an Exhibit" button in green at the top of the page
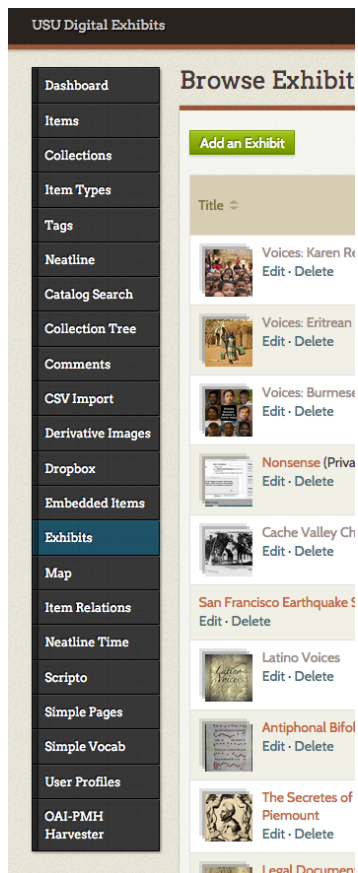
3. Provide metadata about the exhibit you will be creating, including the title, slug (descriptive portion of the URL that indicates the exhibit name), credits, a brief
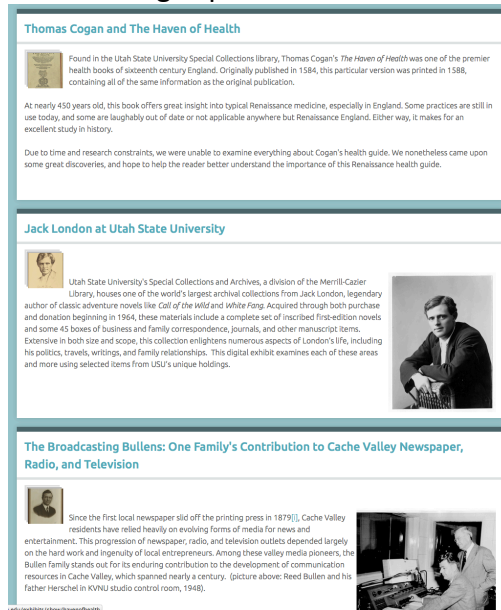


description of the exhibit, and tags that describe the exhibit.

    a. Note: The description will appear in the "Browse Exhibits" list created in Omeka's public interface. Keeping this text to a minimum will create a better

user viewing experience for the user later on.

4. At the top right hand corner, click on "Save Changes" to save the work done so far. Checking the box for "Public" or "Featured" will allow the exhibit to be viewable to the public or featured on the main page. These options can be selected at this time, if desired, but it is advisable to wait until after the exhibit is finalized to select these options.
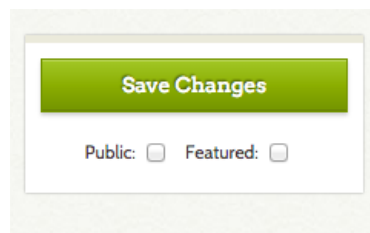
   a. Note: The exhibit creator has the option to "View the Public Page" at any point without making the exhibit public. This option becomes visible once the exhibit has been saved for the first time.

5. At this point, or any point later on, it is possible to change the layout of the exhibit using the "Theme" option on this main page. The default is set to the "Current Public Theme" which means that the exhibit will have the same layout and theme as the main Omeka website.
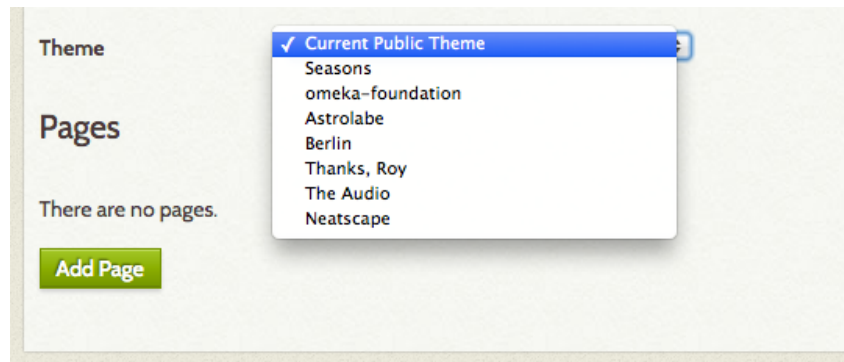
    a.   Additional theme options are based on what themes have been loaded onto your Omeka site, similar to how plugins are added.

6.   Once the exhibit is saved, a "View Public Page" button will appear below the "Save Changes" button. This allows for immediately viewing the collection as a patron would view it.
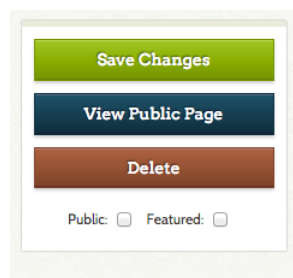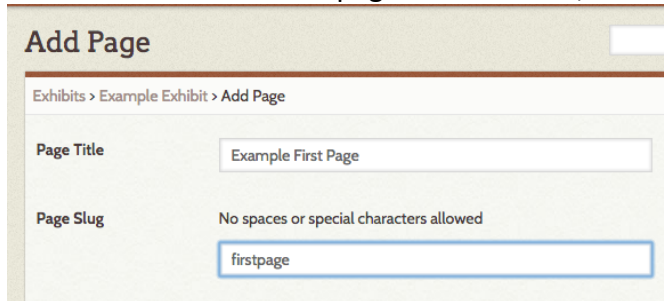

Adding Pages

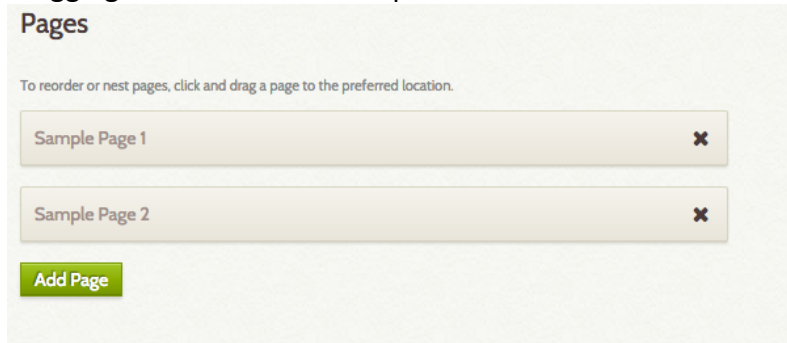1.   To begin the actual exhibit portion, click on "Add Page" at the bottom of the main exhibit page.
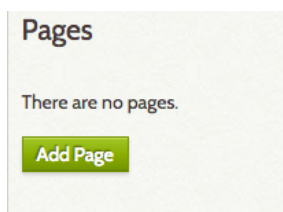
2. Create a title for the first page in the exhibit, as well as the slug and "Save Changes".
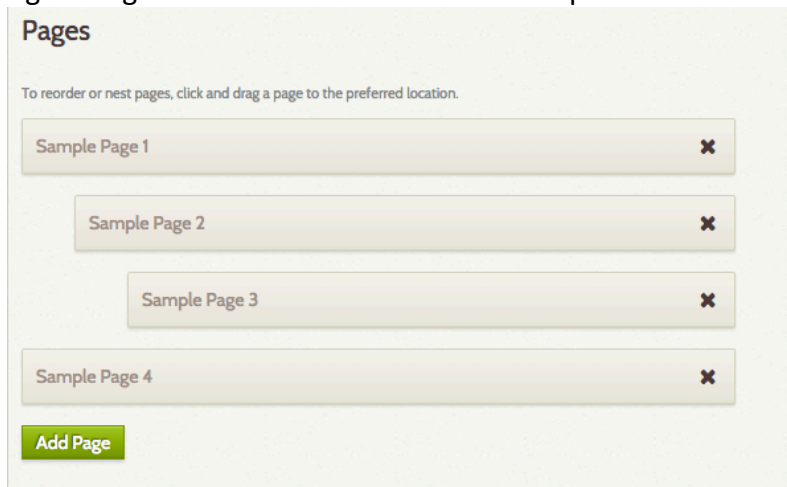
Add Page

Exhibits › Example Exhibit › Add Page

Page Title   Example First Page

Page Slug   No spaces or special characters allowed

firstpage

3. This step will be repeated for all subsequent pages. From the main exhibit pages, the list of pages created will display at the bottom. Pages can be reordered by clicking and dragging them to the desired place in the list.

Pages

To reorder or nest pages, click and drag a page to the preferred location.

Sample Page 1   ✖

Sample Page 2   ✖

Add Page

4. Pages can be nested by clicking on the page title and dragging the box slightly to the right. Pages can be nested three levels deep.

Pages

To reorder or nest pages, click and drag a page to the preferred location.

Sample Page 1   ✖

Sample Page 2   ✖

Sample Page 3   ✖

Sample Page 4   ✖

Add Page

Building an exhibit page layout

Depending on the desired outcome, the creator will select the corresponding content block. The options are listed below. The next section in this tutorial will discuss the specifications of each content block.
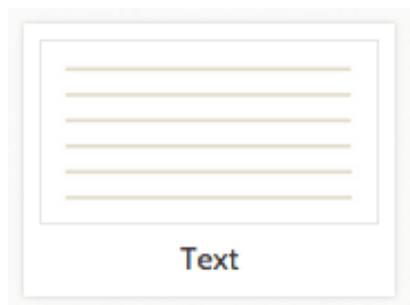
File with Text: Digital file that can be anchored left or right with surrounding text.

File with Text
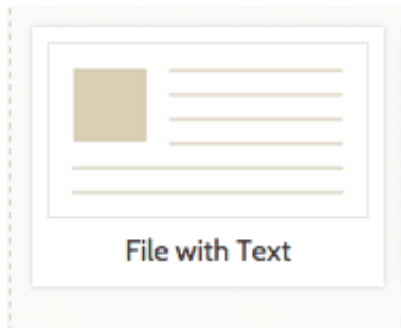
Gallery: Layout concentrates on digital files, but some text is allowed.

Gallery
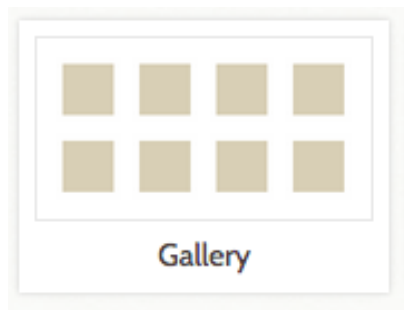
Text: Layout includes text only, with no associated digital files.

Text

Geolocation Map: Map with pinpoints showing where digital files are located on a map.

A single exhibit page includes one or more content blocks that can be "stacked" one above the other to create a page with multiple format types. For instance the following screen shot shows a "File with text" content block on top of a "Geolocation Map" content block:
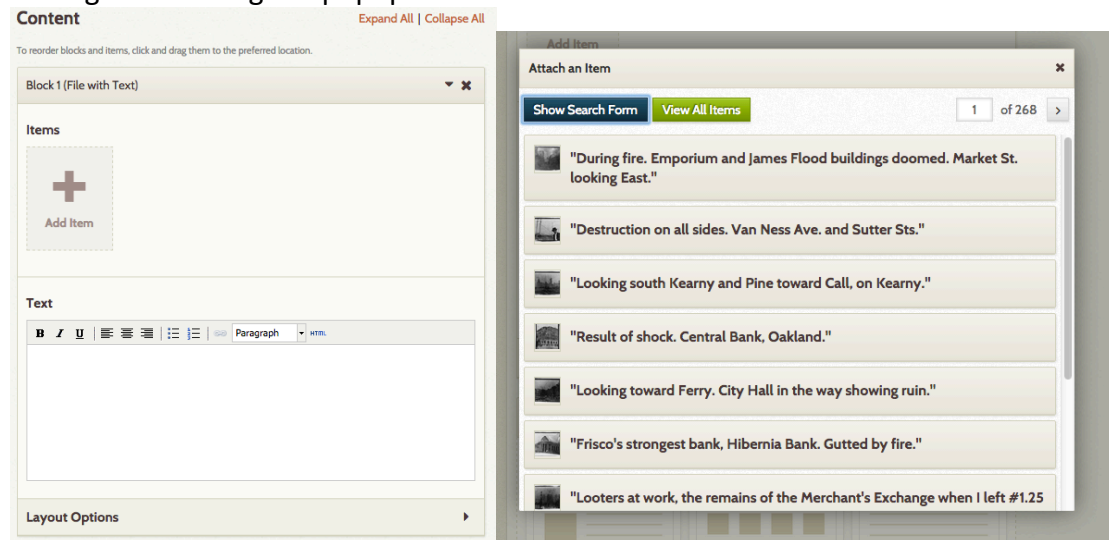

Adding Content Blocks

1. To add a content block, select on the block type and then click on the green bar that reads "Add new content block". (Please see section "Content Block Types" for more

information on the different types of content blocks available to use.)
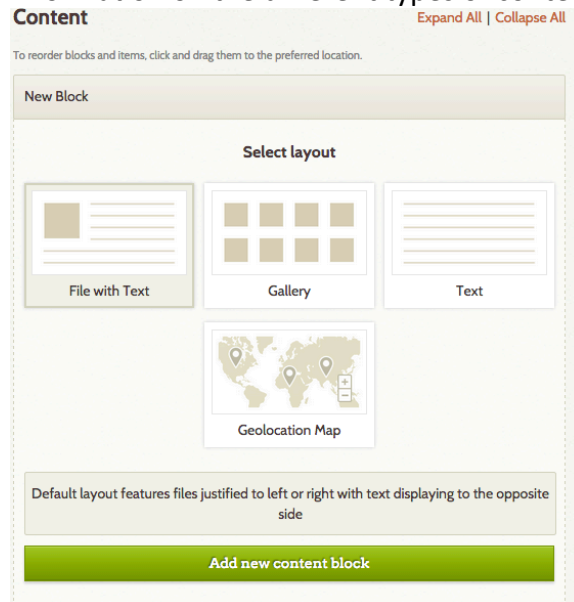
2. Add in the information for that content block. For content blocks that display or link to digital files, select the desired files by clicking on the "Add Item" icon and searching for the digital file using the popup search menu .


3. When adding digital files to a content block, you will have the option to select the specific digital file you want (if more than one is attached to a record) and include a

caption. Then click on "Apply."
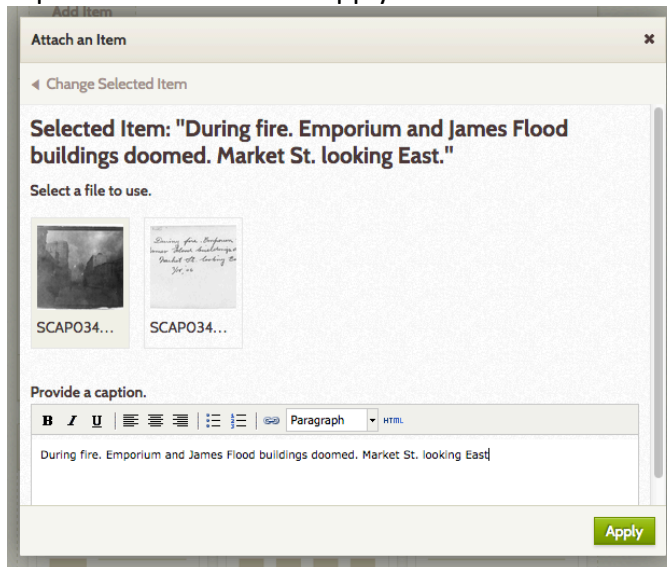
4. Repeat this process until all digital files needed for the content block are loaded. Digital files can be rearranged by clicking and dragging the thumbnails. They can also be deleted by clicking on the "x" in the upper right hand corner of the thumbnail.

5. Add text, if needed.
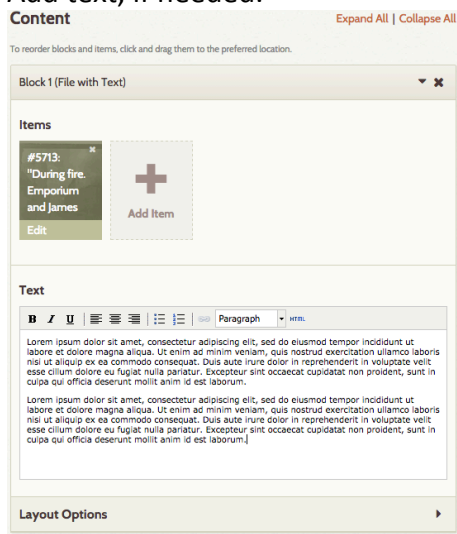
6. Save the exhibit periodically using the Save Changes button in the top right hand corner of the screen.
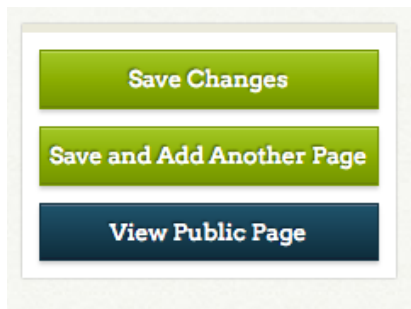
7. Continue to add additional content blocks as needed, by repeating these steps.

Content block types

File with Text content block

The File with Text content block allows the exhibit builder to add one or more digital files with explanatory text that wraps around the digital file. Layout options for the File with Text block can vary. Layout positions are available under the "Layout Options" at the bottom of the content block.
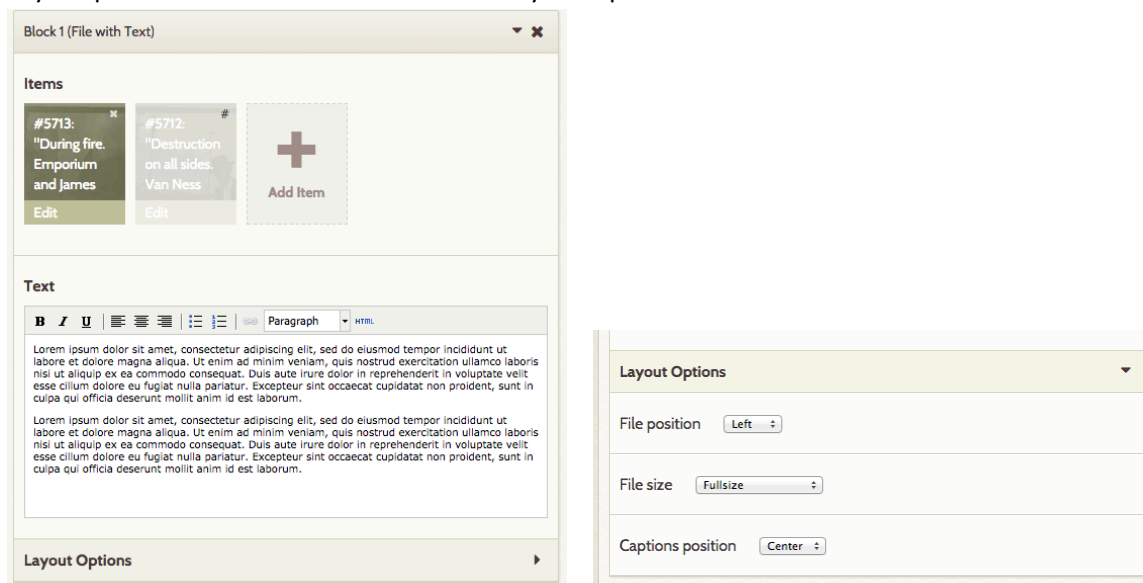
Options for layouts include:

File Position

File position allows the exhibit builder to select if the digital file(s) will appear left or right in the content block.

If the digital file is located on the left, the layout looks like this:

If the digital file is located on the right, the layout looks like this:

If adding more than one file, please note that the Omeka Exhibit Builder will stack the images one above the other, with the orientation according left or right, according to the what is indicated in the layout options

To get digital files to line up horizontally across the content block or to be shown in a gallery, consider the "Gallery" option.

File size

File size allows the exhibit builder to select what size the file should be displayed : Fullsize, Thumbnail, or Square Thumbail.
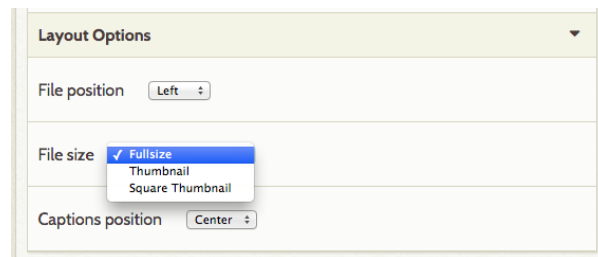
Fullsize displays the full size of the image.
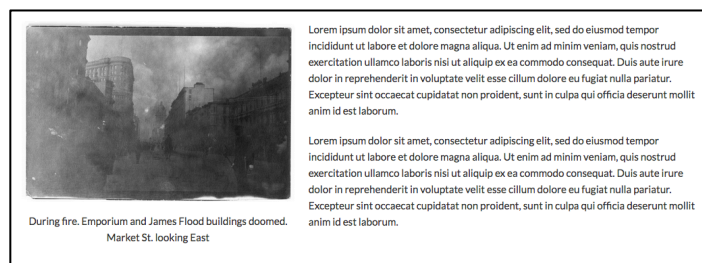
Thumbnail displays a scaled down version of the image.
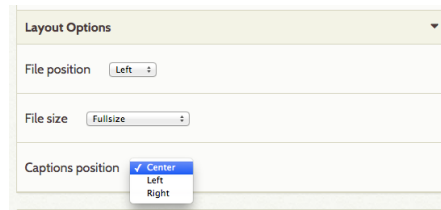
Square Thumbnail displays a scaled down version of the image, cropped to a square format. This can be useful for grouping digital files of differing height and width.

Captions position

The Captions position feature allows the exhibit builder to select if the captions for the digital file will be center, right, or left.

Choosing center will display the digital file caption directly underneath the image and centered with the frame of the digital file.

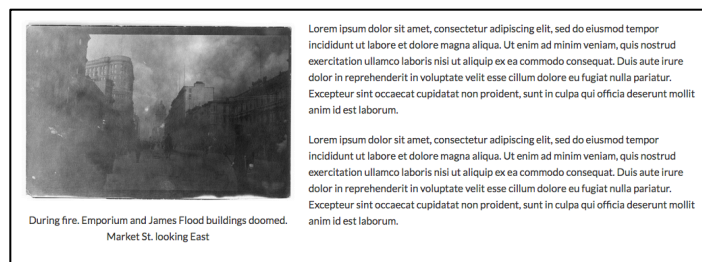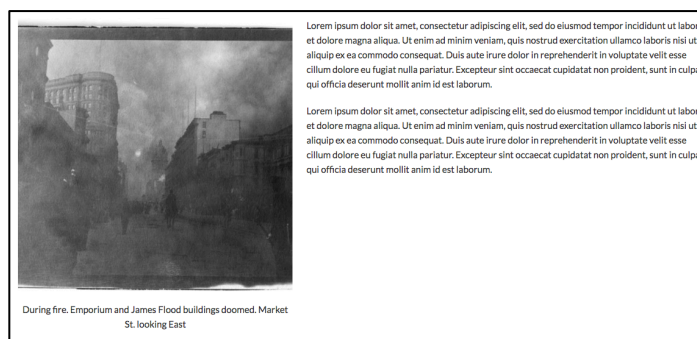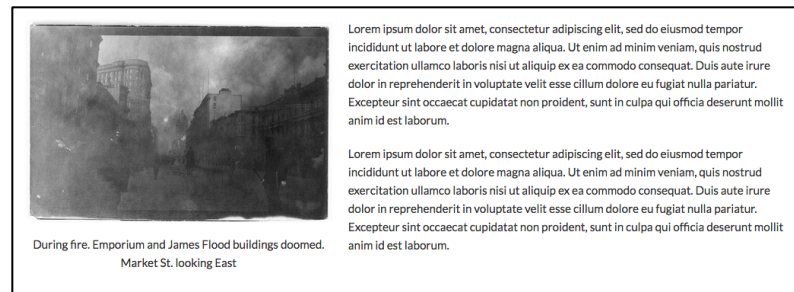Choosing left will display the digital file caption directly beneath the image with the edge of the text starting at the left hand of the digital file frame.

Right will display the digital file caption directly beneath the image with the edge of the text starting at the right hand of the digital file frame.

Gallery content block

Gallery content blocks are generally used to display more than one digital file, but this is not required. This content block provides more flexibility for layout and includes the option of text. A gallery that does not include text looks can look like this :

During fire. Emporium and James Flood buildings doomed. Market St. looking East.
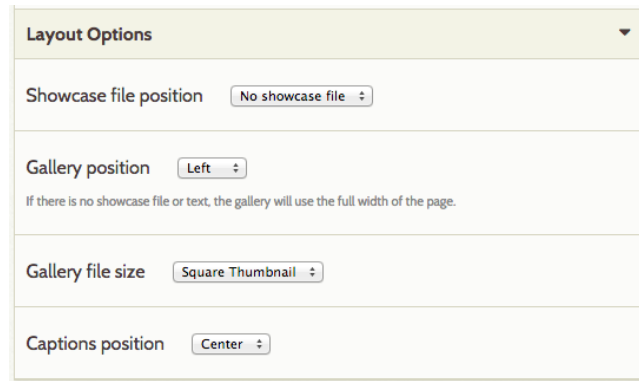
Destruction on all sides. Van Ness Ave. and Sutter Sts

Looking south Kearny and Pine toward Call, on Kearny

Looking toward Ferry. City Hall in the way showing ruin.

Adding text will change that gallery layout to:

During fire. Emporium and James Flood buildings doomed. Market St. looking East.

Destruction on all sides. Van Ness Ave. and Sutter Sts

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Looking south Kearny and Pine toward Call, on Kearny

Looking toward Ferry. City Hall in the way showing ruin.

For purposes of demonstration, this tutorial is including text in the gallery to demonstrate how the layout options change the look of the content block. Options for adjusting layout include: Showcase file position, Gallery position, Gallery File Size, and Captions position.

Showcase file: The first digital file that is selected will be displayed larger than the rest.

Gallery Position: Anchors the digital files either right or left on the webpage. This setting is overridden by the setting for the showcase file, for the first item only.

Gallery file size: Determines what size files will display. Options include: Fullsize, Thumbnail, and Square thumbnail. Please refer to the "File with Text" content block for a discussion of the differences.

Captions Position: Determines whether the captions are centered underneath the digital file, or anchored to the right or left. Please refer to the "File with Text" content block for a discussion of the differences.

The showcase file and the gallery position play important roles in the layout of the Gallery content block. When they are both set to the same side of the webpage, images will be stacked. When set to opposite sides of the same webpage, images will stretch across the page. For instance:
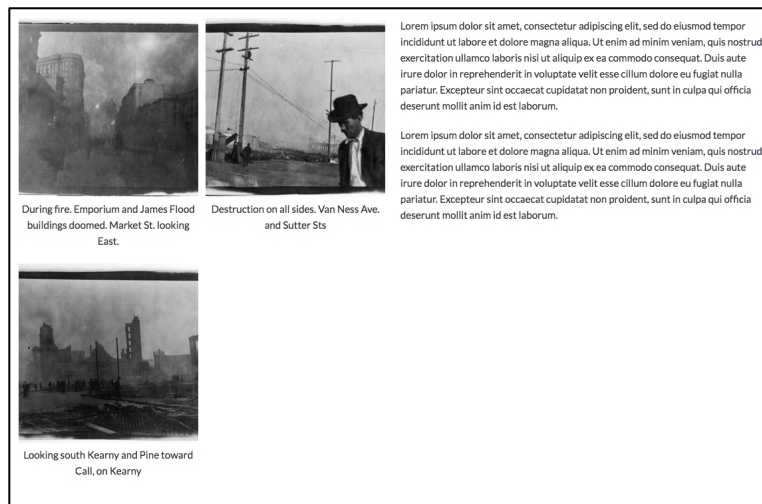
Showcase file position
Showcase file allows for the first digital file listed in the "Items" section of the content block to be displayed larger than the rest of the items. By default, it is set to have "No showcase file", which without text looks like this:
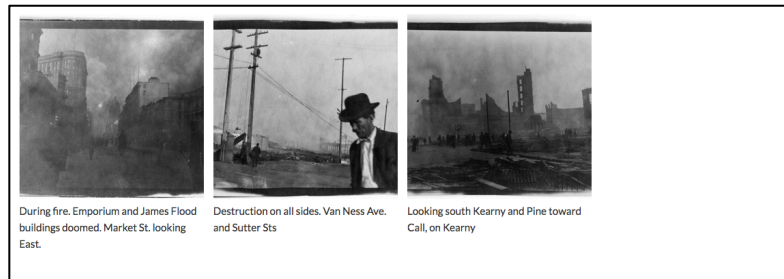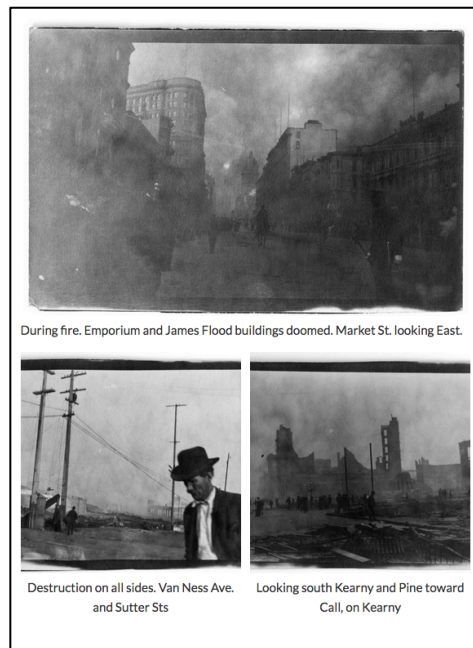
And with text included, will look like this:

Setting a position of left or right for the showcase file will do two things:

1) Make the first digital file listed for the gallery larger and nest the remaining files underneath the first, so that they look like this:

During fire. Emporium and James Flood buildings doomed. Market St. looking East.

Destruction on all sides. Van Ness Ave. and Sutter Sts

Looking south Kearny and Pine toward Call, on Kearny

2) Anchor that first file either to the left or right, depending on the setting. Text will be appear on the opposite side of the digital files. For example, if the above exhibit block were set to have a Showcase File on the left AND the gallery position is also set to left, the exhibit block will look like this:
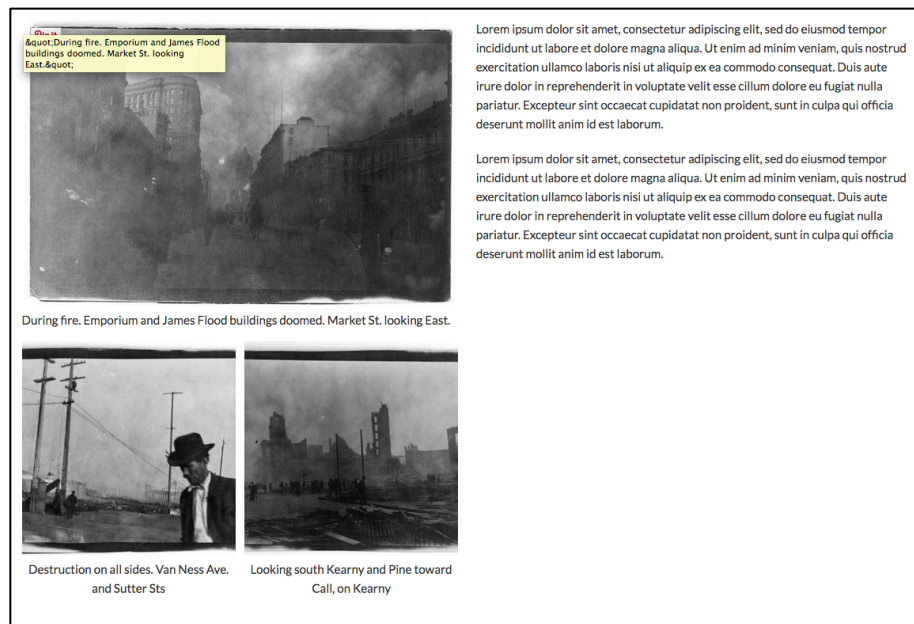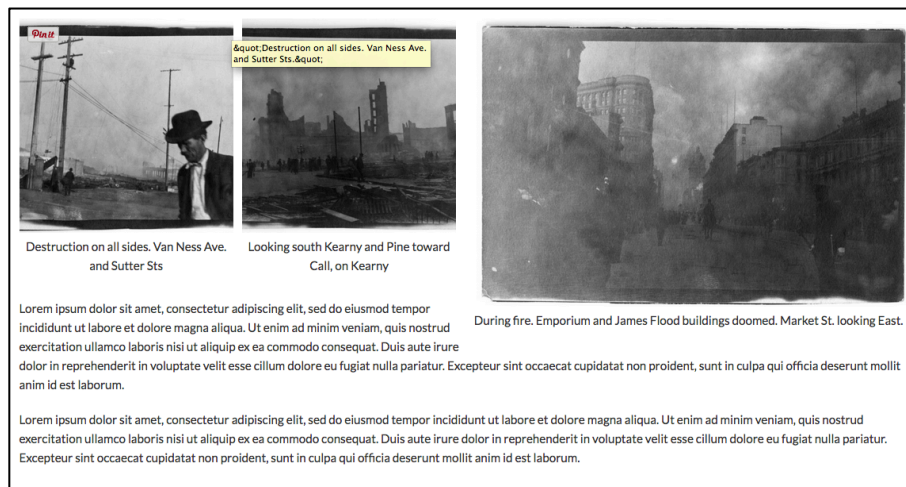

If the both the Showcase file and the Gallery position were both set to the right, the exhibit block would look like this:
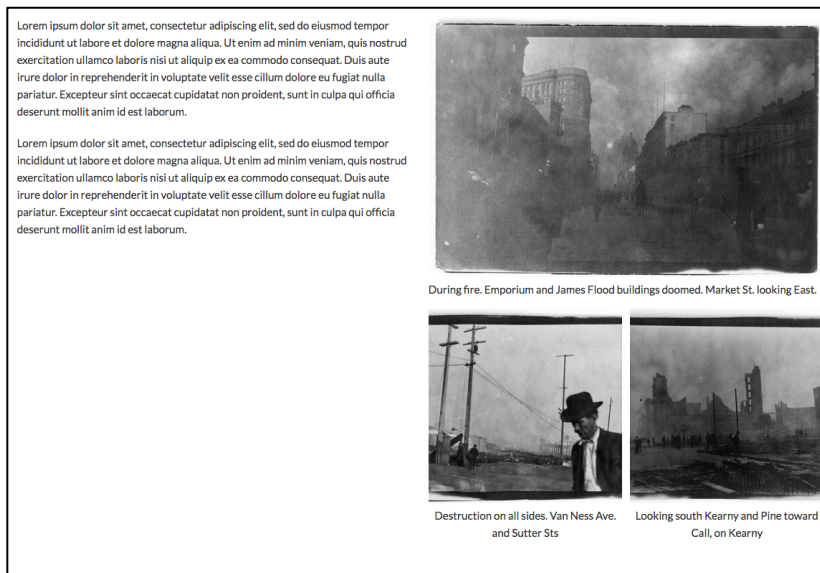
Gallery position

The Gallery position changes whether the digital files will be anchored on the right or left side of the webage.   When there is no showcase file or text, the gallery uses the entire width of the webpage and cannot be anchored to the right or left. When the showcase file is selected, the gallery position can be used to stack the images or stretch them across the webpage. If both the Showcase file and the gallery position are set for the same side (left or right), the digital files will stack on top of one another with the prominent showcase file at the top, as seen in the illustration above.

When the Showcase file and the Gallery position are set to opposite sides, the digital files stretch across the screen, with the first file displaying larger than the rest. However, if the gallery position is set to the opposite of the showcase position, the layout will stretch across the screen, with one item displayed larger than the rest. For instance, if the Showcase file is set to right and the gallery position is set to left, the content block will look like this:

Or, if the Showcase file is set to left and the Gallery position is set to right, the content block will look like this:

During fire. Emporium and James Flood buildings doomed. Market St. looking East.

Destruction on all sides. Van Ness Ave. and Sutter Sts

Looking south Kearny and Pine toward Call, on Kearny

Lorem ipsum dolor sit amet, consectetur adipiscing elit, sed do eiusmod tempor incididunt ut labore et dolore magna aliqua. Ut enim ad minim veniam, quis nostrud exercitation ullamco laboris nisi ut aliquip ex ea commodo consequat. Duis aute irure dolor in reprehenderit in voluptate velit esse cillum dolore eu fugiat nulla pariatur. Excepteur sint occaecat cupidatat non proident, sunt in culpa qui officia deserunt mollit anim id est laborum.

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Text content block

The Text content block is a straightforward section that allows only for text or HTML coding to be inserted. There are no other layout options beyond what can be inserted in the HTML
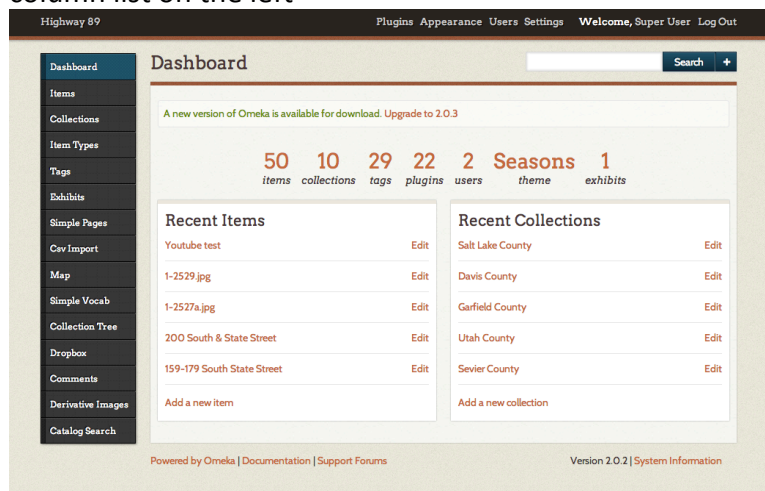
Geolocation Map content block

The Geolocation Map content block creates a map showing the location that has been marked for the digital files that are selected for exhibit. The location is shown with pins that, when clicked on, display the digital file.
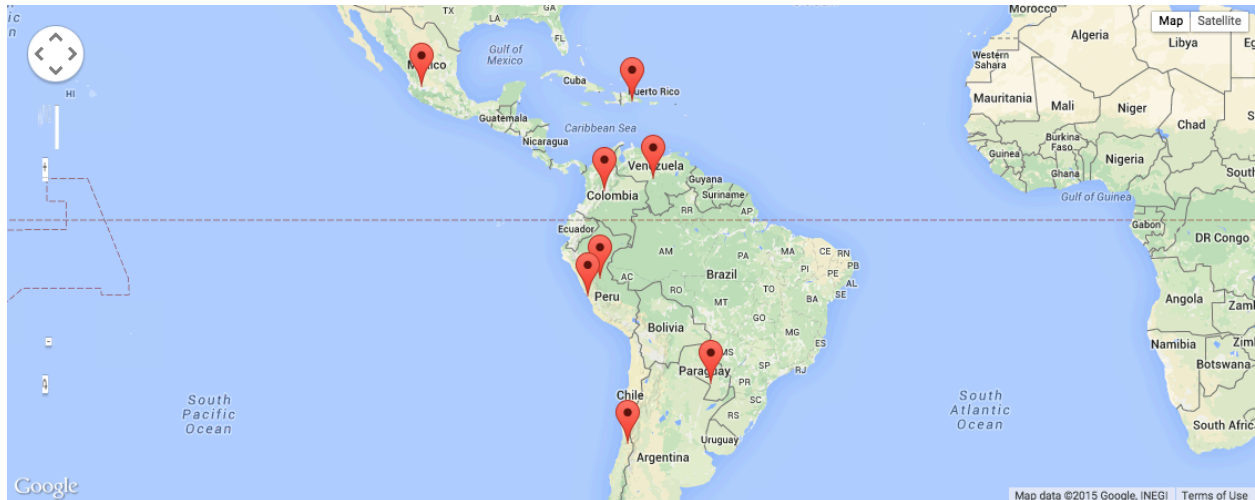
Selecting digital files for the Geolocation Map content block is the same process as described in the "Adding Content Blocks" section. However, in order for the Geolocation Map content block to work, the Geolocation plugin must be installed and enabled, and the items loaded into Omeka must have a location indicated in the Geolocation metadata, located in the "Maps" tab of the item records. Instructions for doing that are below. (Please note that simply indicating the geographic location in the Dublin Core section of the metadata will not result in a pin on the map. It must be recorded in the "Maps" tab.)

1. 1. To pin an digital file on a map, first go the Dashboard, click on the "Items" in the column list on the left

2. Select the item you want to edit from the list

3. Select the "Map" tab and type in the location. Google Maps will pinpoint it on the map. You can also zoom in and pick the most appropriate spot for your item.

Publishing, Featuring, Editing, and Deleting an Exhibit

Publishing/Featuring an Exhibit

Once finished, an exhibit can be published and featured by checking the "Public" or "Featured" box below "Save Changes." (see Ex. 1) Exhibits not marked as "Public" are listed as "(Private)" in the exhibit list. (See Ex. 2) Checking the "Featured" box will allow the exhibit to appear in the "Featured Exhibit" section on the main front page. Having more than one exhibit with the "Featured" box checked will mean that each time the main page is loaded a different featured exhibit will appear. Having only one exhibit checked with "Featured" will set the same exhibit be featured every time the main page is loaded.
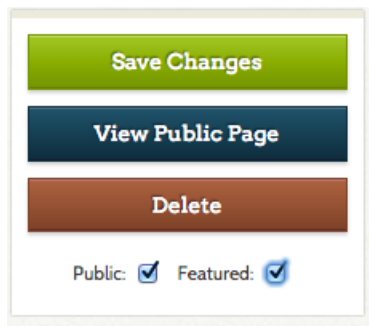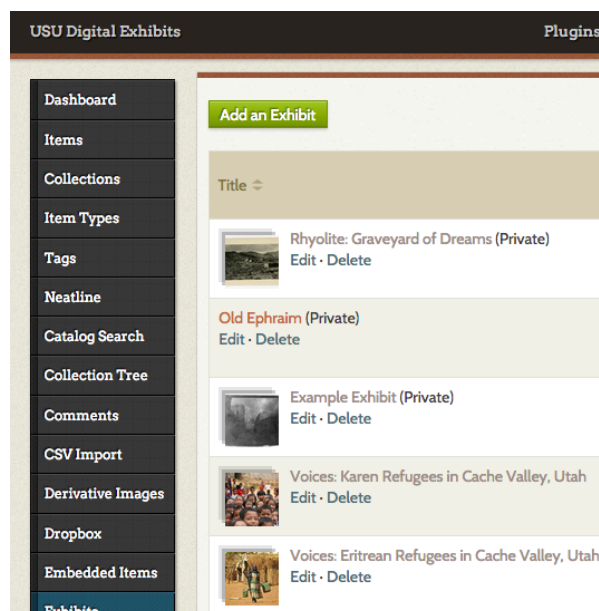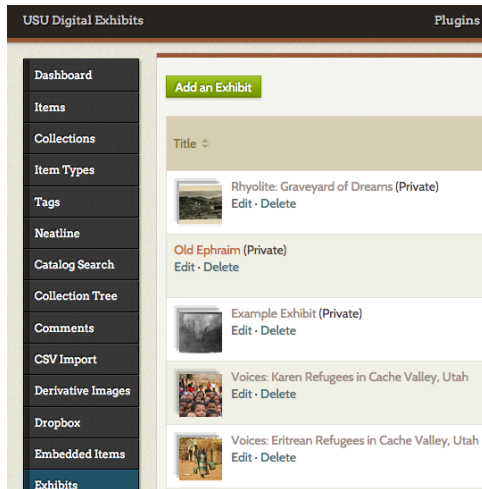

Ex. 1   Ex. 2

Editing an Exhibit

At any time, an exhibit can be edited by clicking on "Edit" below the title of the exhibit in the exhibit list.
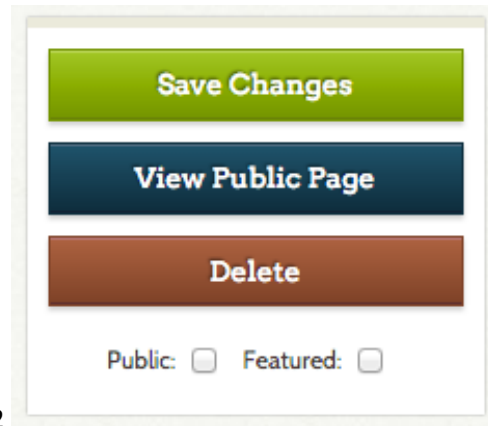
Deleting an Exhibit

Exhibits can be deleted from two locations: the list of exhibits (See Ex. 1) and from "Save Changes" box that appears on every page when editing an exhibit (See Ex. 2).

Ex. 1

Ex. 2