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THE CROWLEY COMPANY HELPS BRING *LIFE* TO LIFE AGAIN

Frederick, Maryland – Imagine seeing 75 years of history scroll across your screen every day for two years and not being able to talk about it. Such has been life (pun intended) for approximately 20 Crowley Company employees tasked with digitizing nearly 10 million images from Time Incorporated's *LIFE* magazine archives. Working since December of 2006 and led by project manager DeAnne Larsen, the Crowley staff has witnessed never-publicized photos of distinguished personalities and celebrities, world events, wars, scientific advances and the intimate drama of daily life. From rural towns to big cities to a dog with two heads, they've seen it all. With today's announcement by Time Inc. that the archive will soon be available on a new hosted image service from Google, the secret is out and the entire world will soon participate at <http://images.google.com/hosted/life>.

The Collection

Known as LIFE's Photo Archive, the project has been a photo digitization of the 70+-year-old collection of historic photographic images. The collection includes color and black and white negatives, transparencies, reflective prints and other photographic material. Nearly seven million images have been digitized by Crowley to date at a rate of approximately 14,000 per day. The LIFE Photo Archive featured on Google will be among the largest professional photography collections on the web and one of the largest scanning projects ever undertaken. The archives contain photographs from over 50 world-renowned photojournalists including Margaret Bourke-White, Ed Clark, Alfred Eisenstaedt, Nina Leen, Gordon Parks and others. LIFE's Photo Archive will be scanned and available on Google Image Search free for personal and research purposes. Copyright and ownership of all images remain with Time Inc. and high-quality photographic prints can be purchased at the site.

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THE CROWLEY COMPANY

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The Process

Andy Blau, LIFE's President, says, "Crowley was selected for the digitizing task because of their advanced photo-digitizing solutions, long corporate history of providing quality workmanship in a high-volume scanning environment and their staff's expertise with the handling of digital imagery and numerous types of analog photographic media."

"Working on this project has been a privilege," emphasizes Patrick Crowley, company vice president and Crowley service bureau chief. "Not only is it one of the most interesting archives we've digitized, it has propelled us to develop some creative production approaches, such as the designing and engineering of a custom camera stand that allowed for increased scanning volume and quality of 35 mm negatives." In addition to the sheer volume of images, Larsen notes that meeting the challenges of detailed tracking and quality control has been imperative to the success of the project. "We personally transport all of the images to and from our facility. Each piece of physical data is catalogued in an internal database to ensure that nothing is lost and to provide easy cross-reference. Each image is scanned and checked for the highest degree of quality that the original image will allow and then given a Digimarc (a digital watermark) for copyright protection."

When asked about the challenges of such a large project, Larsen says, "At this point, it's down to a science, although the early months offered a lot of learning opportunities. Every time we'd open a negative drawer, there was a 'size surprise' and we became quickly adept at having stations for every type of image – 35mm, 120 mm, 4x5's, 8x10's, prints, you name it." She continues, "It's impossible not to be awed by this collection. In the beginning there were a lot of 'Hey, check this out's.' We quickly realized that almost every photo in the collection had a wow factor."

Perspective

A photographer herself, Larsen has a unique appreciation for the quality and personality of the photography. "To be able to witness the progress of Margaret Bourke-White, the first female war correspondent, was incredibly inspiring. Alfred Eisenstaedt was equally amazing. He caught the personality of each subject and often had his own picture taken with those he was shooting. Watching him change over the years made us feel like we were along for the ride. The *LIFE* photographers were definitely not afraid to get their hands dirty!"

Crowley helps bring LIFE to life, p.3

Pat Crowley adds that of special interest was photographer Ed Clark, who is not only a former *LIFE* photojournalist, but was a Washington, D.C. resident and the father of Frederick, Maryland resident, Tom Clark, who is also a professional photographer. "It's a backyard tie-in to this little piece of history and helped to make the project personal."

About The Crowley Company

Similar Crowley scanning projects in scope and interest, if not in size, include those for The Library of Congress, The U.S. Holocaust Museum, The Smithsonian and the ongoing archives of SmallTownNewspapers. Incorporated in 1981, **The Crowley Company** is a leading digital and analog film technologies company headquartered in Frederick, Maryland with manufacturing divisions (Mekel, Extek and HF Processor brands) in Compton and San Dimas, California. With over 100 employees, The Crowley Company provides an extensive number of digital document and film **conversion services** to the publishing, commercial, government and archive sectors and also **manufactures, sells and services** high-speed microfilm, microfiche and aperture card scanners, microfilm duplicators, film processors and micrographics equipment.

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For more information: www.thecrowleycompany.com • <http://images.google.com/hosted/life>