

Contributor

Guide & Benefits

PRESERVE · PROTECT · PERPETUATE

*“Your images documented history.
Now we ensure history documents you.”*



CONTRIBUTOR LEVELS

Basic

\$100/yr

Max. 100 images

Premium

\$250/yr

Max. 500 images

Legacy

\$500/yr

Max. 1,000 images

Bespoke

TBD

Large Collections

About the Obsidian Collection

Who we are, what we do, and why becoming a Contributor matters

OUR MISSION

The Obsidian Collection Archives is an Illinois 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization dedicated to preserving, protecting, and amplifying the life's work of Black photographers whose images have shaped the cultural and historical record of America and the world. We exist because Black visual history is irreplaceable, and the archives that contain it deserve the same professional care, legal protection, and global visibility as any great collection on earth.

WHAT IT MEANS TO BE A CONTRIBUTOR

Becoming a Contributor is entering a professional partnership built on one principle: your work is yours. At every level, you retain full copyright and ownership of every image. We do not acquire your work. We amplify, protect, and help activate it on your behalf.

Your Copyright Is Always Protected

Every archive agreement keeps ownership with you. No image is licensed, published, or distributed without your explicit permission. Licensing structures are clear, documented, and reviewed with you before any use.

Your Story Is Told to the World

Contributors connect to a global audience through seven storytelling platforms: digital archive pages, email campaigns, The Obsidian Stories podcast, blog features, social media, Google Arts & Culture, and cross-promotion with fellow Contributors.

Your Legacy Is Built to Last

We provide archival infrastructure, metadata development, digitization support, legal guidance, and long-term preservation frameworks that ensure your collection survives and remains accessible to future researchers, educators, and storytellers.

Ownership Always Remains Yours. Your authorship is protected, attributed, and never licensed without your explicit permission. Contributing to the Archive is a partnership. We protect your legacy and amplify your work on your terms, always.



\$100

per year

Basic Contributor

For photographers beginning their archival journey

LEVEL OVERVIEW

The Basic Contributor level is designed for photographers ready to take the first step in organizing and protecting their archive. This level establishes a secure digital presence, ensures your work is preserved and searchable for future generations, and connects you to the professional network and resources of The Obsidian Collection Archives.

WHAT IS INCLUDED

- Maximum of 100 images hosted within the archive
- Dedicated biographical page
- Links to your website and social media
- Professional scanning of up to 100 images
- Full metadata development including captions, dates, locations, and subject identification
- Ownership retention with a structured archive agreement
- Secure digital preservation, searchable for future generations
- Access to the Obsidian Contributor network

YOUR NEXT STEPS

- 1 Contact Us**
Email hello@theobsidiancollection.org. We schedule a brief call to learn about your collection and confirm the right contributor level.
- 2 Complete the Contributor Survey**
Tell us about your collection: size, condition, formats, and digitization status. This helps us design an archival plan for your needs.
- 3 Sign Your Archive Agreement**
We provide a straightforward agreement documenting your ownership rights and how your collection will be housed, preserved, and protected.
- 4 Submit Your Images**
Provide images digitally or allow us to scan physical materials. We handle metadata development, organization, and secure archival storage.
- 5 Go Live**
Your dedicated archive page and biographical profile are published, accessible to researchers, publishers, and audiences worldwide.

Ready to grow? Contributors can upgrade to Premium or Legacy at any time. Your archive and agreement will transfer seamlessly to your new level.



\$250

per year

Premium Contributor

Expanding visibility, storytelling, and global reach

LEVEL OVERVIEW

The Premium Contributor level is for photographers ready to move beyond preservation and into active promotion. At this level, your archive is expanded, your story is told across multiple Obsidian storytelling platforms, and your collection begins its journey toward responsible revenue activation through licensing.

WHAT IS INCLUDED

- **Everything in Basic Contributor, plus:**
- Maximum of 500 images archived
- Promotion on two Obsidian storytelling platforms
- Coordinated digital storytelling of your artistic journey
- Licensing pathway discussions for responsible revenue activation
- Expanded metadata and collection organization support
- Access to exclusive contributor video calls
- Priority scheduling for appraisal services launching Q4 2026

YOUR NEXT STEPS

- 1 Contact Us**
Email hello@theobsidiancollection.org to begin your Premium level. We discuss your collection goals and storytelling priorities.
- 2 Complete Your Collection Assessment**
We conduct an in-depth assessment of your archive: scale, condition, formats, existing digitization, and stories most ready for public engagement.
- 3 Sign Your Archive Agreement**
Your agreement documents full ownership rights, platforms your work will feature on, and terms of any licensing discussions on your behalf.
- 4 Begin Your Storytelling Profile**
We develop your biographical narrative, select signature images, and craft the stories accompanying your collection on Obsidian platforms.
- 5 Launch and Amplify**
Your archive page and storytelling content go live. We coordinate the campaign and provide metrics on reach and engagement.
- 6 Explore Licensing**
We open a structured conversation about candidates for responsible licensing and what revenue pathways make sense for your goals.

Premium Contributors receive promotion across two Obsidian storytelling platforms, reaching a growing global audience of history enthusiasts, educators, publishers, and collectors.



Legacy Contributor

Full collection preservation, global amplification, and long-term legacy planning

\$500

per year

LEVEL OVERVIEW

The Legacy Contributor level is our most comprehensive offering, designed for photographers with substantial collections ready to build a complete archival, promotional, and legacy framework for their life's work. The full power of The Obsidian Collection Archives is brought to bear on your collection.

WHAT IS INCLUDED

- **Everything in Premium Contributor, plus:**
- Maximum of 1,000 images archived
- Five Obsidian storytelling platforms (e-story, blog, podcast, social media, print, collectible book)
- Priority licensing and partnership placement
- Dedicated collection management consultation
- Preliminary valuation conversation for your collection
- Long-term legacy planning and estate succession discussion
- Priority appraisal scheduling launching Q4 2026
- Consideration for the Obsidian Annual Collectible Book

YOUR NEXT STEPS

- 1 Contact Us**
Email hello@theobsidiancollection.org. We schedule a dedicated call with Angela Ford to map out a personalized archive plan.
- 2 Comprehensive Collection Assessment**
We conduct an in-depth review of your archive: scale, condition, formats, existing protections, and stories ready for the world.
- 3 Sign Your Legacy Archive Agreement**
Your agreement documents ownership rights, storytelling platforms, licensing terms, and legacy planning provisions.
- 4 Full Archive Build**
We digitize, catalog, and organize a maximum of 1,000 images with complete metadata for preservation and discoverability.
- 5 Multi-Platform Storytelling Launch**
Your archive features across five Obsidian storytelling platforms simultaneously, creating a coordinated national and global narrative.
- 6 Valuation Conversation**
We open a structured discussion about the cultural and financial value of your collection for licensing and estate planning.
- 7 Legacy Planning**
We develop a long-term stewardship plan: who cares for your archive, how it is licensed, how it reaches future generations.

"Your images documented history. Now we ensure history documents you."

To join: hello@theobsidiancollection.org · theobsidiancollection.org



Bespoke Contributor

For photographers with extraordinary collections and unique preservation needs

Contact Us

Custom pricing

Some archives are too significant for a standard plan.

If your collection exceeds 1,000 images, spans multiple formats, or represents a body of work with exceptional cultural and financial significance, we want to build a solution around you, not ask you to fit into one.

WHO THIS LEVEL IS FOR

- Photographers with collections of more than 1,000 images requiring expanded archival capacity
- Artists whose archives span film negatives, prints, slides, digital files, and physical artifacts across multiple decades
- Photojournalists whose collections include significant historical events requiring specialized contextual treatment
- Estates and foundations managing a photographer's legacy requiring comprehensive stewardship planning
- Photographers seeking a multi-year partnership with phased digitization, storytelling, and licensing activation

WHAT WE CAN BUILD FOR YOU

- Expanded hosting beyond 1,000 images
- Phased multi-year digitization planning
- Full archival storage coordination
- Multi-platform storytelling across all seven channels
- Dedicated collection manager assigned to your archive
- Licensed professional appraisal services
- Estate and succession planning
- Institutional partnership introductions
- Custom licensing structures for your catalog
- Print and publication strategy including Obsidian Magazine
- Google Arts & Culture exhibition curation
- Annual Collectible Book priority placement

HOW TO BEGIN

- 1 Reach Out**
Email hello@theobsidiancollection.org with a brief description of your collection, its size, formats, and primary goals. No obligation required.
- 2 Discovery Conversation**
Angela Ford schedules a dedicated call to learn about your archive in full before any plan is proposed.
- 3 Custom Proposal**
We prepare a personalized proposal outlining archival scope, storytelling, pricing, and timeline built specifically around your collection.
- 4 Partnership Agreement**
We formalize a partnership agreement documenting every element of the plan and your full ownership rights.



Everything We Do for Contributors

A complete directory of all services and capabilities

The Obsidian Collection Archives offers a comprehensive suite of services to protect, amplify, and activate your life's work. The following directory outlines everything we do or can do for Contributors across all levels.

Archival Preservation

- Secure digital hosting and long-term file preservation
- Physical archival storage in climate-controlled environments
- Redundant backup systems to protect against loss
- Archival-standard digitization of film negatives, prints, and slides
- High-resolution scanning at publication and exhibition quality
- Organized filing and retrieval systems for your entire collection

Cataloging & Metadata

- Full metadata development for every image
- Captioning with contextual historical information
- Date, location, and subject identification
- Keyword tagging for global searchability
- Collection-level organization and finding aids
- Metadata review and approval process with the photographer

Legal & Copyright

- Structured archive agreement protecting full ownership
- Copyright protection documentation and attribution
- Licensing agreement development and review
- Permission-based usage tracking and management
- Referrals to distinguished intellectual property counsel
- Guidance on trademark protection for photographic brands

Appraisal & Valuation

- Preliminary valuation conversations for significant collections
- Licensed professional appraisal services (launching Q4 2026)
- Appraisals suitable for estate, insurance, and donation filings
- Market analysis for licensing and institutional sales

Storytelling & Promotion

- Dedicated digital archive page within the Obsidian platform
- Email campaign features reaching subscribers nationally
- The Obsidian Stories podcast interview and feature
- Blog profile with extended biographical narrative
- Social media campaigns across Instagram, Facebook, and LinkedIn
- Google Arts & Culture co-branded exhibition page
- Cross-promotion with fellow Contributors in the network
- Print features in Obsidian Magazine
- Inclusion in the Obsidian Annual Collectible Book

Licensing & Revenue

- Licensing pathway conversations and strategy development
- Permission-based image licensing to publishers and institutions
- Revenue activation discussions tailored to your collection
- Institutional partnership introductions
- Museum and gallery placement exploration
- Documentary and media licensing coordination

Legacy & Estate Planning

- Long-term stewardship planning for your archive
- Estate and succession planning conversations
- Archive transition and transfer documentation
- Guidance on charitable donation of collections
- Introductions to institutions seeking permanent collection homes

Community & Access

- Access to the Obsidian Contributor network
- Exclusive contributor video calls with industry professionals
- Private member presentations on legal and archival topics
- Summit participation in the Obsidian Legacy five-city series
- Peer connection with fellow photographers in the archive
- Access to resources, guides, and educational materials