



**For Immediate Release**

**Contacts:**

Marc Osborn, Corbis  
(425) 649-4552  
marco@corbis.com

Traci Paulk, Edelman PR  
(206) 223-1606  
traci.paulk@edelman.com

## **Corbis® Opens New Film Preservation Center that Rescues and Preserves Access to America's Most Famous Images**

*Corbis Ensures Preservation of American Icons Such As Rosa Parks, the Kennedys, Franklin Roosevelt, Ernest Hemingway and Marilyn Monroe*

**SEATTLE (April 29, 2002)** — Who knew that one day Marilyn Monroe and Albert Einstein might reside side-by-side — today, and a thousand years from now?

Corbis ([www.corbis.com](http://www.corbis.com)), a global leader in digital photography and imagery, today announced the opening of a state-of-the-art, cold storage film preservation facility in western Pennsylvania to house the world-renowned Bettmann Archive. The archive includes 11 million pictures, photographs, illustrations and memories that capture moments in history and feature cultural icons such as Rosa Parks, the Kennedys, the Beatles and Marilyn Monroe.

The new 10,000 square-foot storage archive, digitization lab, and research work area will preserve these fragile original negatives and prints, rescuing them from deterioration. It will also preserve worldwide access to them for customers, researchers, clients and others who use historic pictures.

“We are thrilled to see our six years of work to preserve this valuable archive and to open it up digitally come to fruition,” said Leslie Hughes, Corbis President, Markets and Products Group. “These priceless images will now be saved and accessible for the long term. This not only benefits Corbis and our clients, but also future generations because this rich collection of our history will be preserved for them to see and experience.”

Last year, Corbis took a major step in its six-year initiative to ensure long-term preservation and access to the rare collection by transferring it to a new Corbis facility at Iron Mountain/National Underground Storage in Western Pennsylvania. Failure to preserve the images in a secure, environmentally sound location would have ensured their decay, destruction and disappearance forever.

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## **Preservation**

Prior to acquiring the collection in 1995, leaders at the Bettmann Archive recognized that significant deterioration due to heat, humidity and handling had occurred in the collection. A team was assembled and plans implemented to care for the Bettmann Archive photographs where they resided in New York.

When Corbis purchased the Bettmann Archive in 1995, the company expanded and accelerated these efforts to include locating facilities that would provide permanent preservation, but also enable the pictures to be accessible.

Working with a number of outside consultants – most notably Wilhelm Imaging Research of Grinnell, Iowa – Corbis selected Iron Mountain/National Underground Storage in Pennsylvania as the site for the new, long-term storage facility based upon its unique environment that is ideal for film preservation. The archive was moved to this new location between summer 2001 and March 2002.

The new Corbis facility at Iron Mountain is environmentally controlled with conditions that have been calculated to maintain photographs in an essentially unchanged state for thousands of years. [The collections storage area will be maintained at *minus* 20 degrees C (*minus* 4 degrees F) and 35% RH.] These conditions preserve the inherently unstable cellulose acetate film base used with the great majority of photographic films, as well as the generally very unstable dye images of the color transparencies and color negatives found in historical collections. Although some effects of degradation are already present and cannot be reversed, the goal is to arrest color fading and film deterioration so that the original images will be preserved for future access and digital restoration.

## **Access**

While the search went on for a permanent home for the archive, Corbis conducted an unprecedented edit of the 11 million-image collection, viewing 1.3 million of the 7 million original negatives and prints, including all images known to have previously circulated or sold. Corbis digitized more than 225,000 of these – all of which are currently available Online through Corbis to creative professional, editorial, business or personal customers. This means that more images from the Bettmann Archive are more easily accessible than ever before. Further edits and digitization are possible now that the archive is in its new home. To ensure access after the move, Corbis also developed a sophisticated cataloging and on-line digital archive system, and installed a high-resolution film digitization lab at the new facility in Pennsylvania.

Specifically, access to the pictures in the Bettmann Archive is now achieved through three primary methods:

- First, anyone can search, find and license 225,000 images from the archive online at [www.corbis.com](http://www.corbis.com).
- Second, for clients who require an image yet to be scanned, Corbis employees at the new facility will find it, retrieve it, scan it and fulfill it digitally. This ensures the originals stay safe, but clients get what they need quickly.

- Third, as was the case when the archive resided in New York City, in-person visits by clients will be accommodated with advance notice and appropriate arrangements made.

By housing the collection in a secure preservation environment, by offering so many of the images online, by being set up to digitize and fulfill orders through an on-site lab at the storage facility, and by offering in-person access when appropriate, Corbis is able to achieve its two key goals – preserving the collection and preserving access to it.

#### **About the The Bettmann Archive®**

With 11 million images (7.5 million original objects, 3.5 million duplicates), the Bettmann Archive is the world's most comprehensive and renowned collection of 20<sup>th</sup> Century historical images. Began in 1933 after founder Otto Bettmann left Nazi Germany for New York City with two trunks full of pictures, the collection contains many of the most iconic and memorable images, but also includes many rare and never-published images that are invaluable records of American and world history. The collection also includes other major collections such as the United Press International Photo Collection. Corbis purchased The Bettmann Archive in 1995. Corbis acquired the archive and all the collections in it in 1995. Prior to its move to the new Corbis film preservation facility in Pennsylvania, it resided at Corbis' office in midtown Manhattan.

#### **About Corbis®**

Corbis® is the definitive destination for photography and fine art in the digital age. With 65 million images—2.1 million on line—it is the leading provider of digital images to the creative professional, business and consumer markets. Headquartered in Seattle, the privately owned company has offices in New York, Chicago, Los Angeles, London, Paris, Tokyo, Hong Kong, Dusseldorf and other locations worldwide. For more information about Corbis and its products and services, call 1-800-260-0444 or (425) 641-4505, fax (425) 746-1618, or visit the Web site at [www.corbis.com](http://www.corbis.com).

#### **About Wilhelm Imaging Research, Inc.**

Wilhelm Imaging Research, Inc. ([www.wilhelm-research.com](http://www.wilhelm-research.com)) conducts research on the stability and preservation of traditional and digital color photographs and motion pictures. Included among its activities is consulting to museums, archives, and commercial collections on sub-zero cold storage for the very long term preservation of still photographs and motion pictures.

The company's founders, Henry Wilhelm and Carol Brower, are the authors of the landmark 744-page book, *The Permanence and Care of Color Photographs: Traditional and Digital Color Prints, Color Negatives, Slides, and Motion Pictures*.

Henry Wilhelm is a founding member of the American National Standards Institute/ISO subcommittee that is responsible for developing standardized accelerated test methods for the stability of color photographs and digital print materials; for the past eighteen years he has served as Secretary of the group. Wilhelm is also an active member of the ANSI/ISO subcommittees responsible for storage standards for black-and-white films and prints. He was a founding member of the Photographic Materials Group of the American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works.

Wilhelm has been a consultant to the Museum of Modern Art in New York and other institutions on issues related to the display and preservation of both traditional photographic prints and digital print media. Since 1995 he has been an advisor to Corbis on the long-term preservation of the Corbis photography collections.