



Pro Photo Colorizing with GIMP

Phillip Whitt

Apress®

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Phillip Whitt
Columbus, Georgia, USA

ISBN-13 (pbk): 978-1-4842-1948-5
DOI 10.1007/978-1-4842-1949-2

ISBN-13 (electronic): 978-1-4842-1949-2

Library of Congress Control Number: 2016949451

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*This book is dedicated to my lovely wife, Sally,
and my wonderful daughter, Myra.
They demonstrated a great deal of patience with me
for isolating myself for many weeks as I worked on this book.*

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About the Author



Phillip Whitt is a professional digital retouch and restoration artist, graphic designer, writer, and author. His love for everything related to photography began when he was ten years old. His favorite aunt gave him her old Kodak Brownie camera, and the joy he felt upon seeing his first developed photographs sparked a new hobby. His foray into digital image editing began in the 1990s with the purchase of his first flatbed scanner, which came bundled with a basic image-editing program. Fixing a few family photographs soon led to a new passion and profession which he continues to enjoy to this day.

Mr. Whitt has digitally edited countless photos and has served a number of professional clients over the years, such as photographers, photo labs, and camera outlets.

About the Technical Reviewer

Garry Patchett has worked in IT and engineering for more than twenty years designing products, creating software, and administering and documenting systems. With a master's degree in project management, he is a dedicated "systems nerd" whose interests vary from the technological to the philosophical. Garry is currently working freelance and is involved in various open-source projects.

Acknowledgments

I'd first like to thank Ben Renow-Clarke for the opportunity to create this work. I'd also like to thank Nancy Chen for her invaluable assistance during the process of writing this book—she's a professional of the highest degree.

I'd also like to thank Garry Patchett for his professional and expert guidance as technical reviewer. Mr. Patchett is highly skilled and very thorough in his work, and this book is the better for it.

Introduction

The pioneering of photography in the 1800s was a technological leap for that time. For the first time it was possible to freeze moments and capture imagery the way it actually appeared—at least for the most part. As photography grew more commonplace, the cameras of the time became capable of capturing images with remarkable clarity and detail. I'm often amazed at how sharp the detail is in photographs from that time period.

The missing element in those early days of photography was, of course, color. Most photographs in those days were black and white (called *grayscale* in the world of digital imaging). Adding color by toning (such as sepia) became more common, but the image was still monochromatic, meaning it was comprised of one color.

While not in widespread use, there were several techniques developed that did indeed produce color images of varying quality shortly after the advent of photography. In fact, one of the first color photographs was created in the mid-1800s.

In the early 1900s, a Russian chemist and photographer named Sergey Prokudin-Gorsky produced a number of photographic images in stunning color. He used a method of photographing the subject through red, green, and blue color filters onto glass negative plates. The three color separations were then projected through color filters, creating a color composite—a photographic image in living color. To see samples of Sergey Prokudin-Gorsky's work, just log on to this page at the Library of Congress website: <http://www.loc.gov/pictures/collection/prok/>.

It would still be some time before color photography became widely available. Before it did, a common method of adding color to photographs was by applying tinted oils (Figure I-1). Although not very common today, hand tinting photographs is still practiced and offered as a specialty service (a company called Marshall still manufactures photo-colorizing oils specifically for hand tinting).