# Creating & Using A Signature File
# To Add A Signature To Your Photographs
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This technique may be best for preserving texture or any variability in color intensity due to differing pen pressure, paper texture, or other differences. You can use it to add your signature to one of your pictures, or any other document you can drag into Photoshop. Although the keystrokes will probably be different, this technique should work with any other editing software that uses layers.

## Create A Signature File

1.    Write your signature with your favorite pen or marker (black would probably make your work easier later) on a plain piece of paper.

2.    Scan it into a file accessible to Photoshop (.tiff or .pdf files would be better than .jpg). Using a higher resolution in the scan will give you more flexibility in changing the size as needed later without looking ragged.

3.    Open the file in Photoshop.

4.    Create a duplicate layer (click on "Layer" in the top menu, and then on "Duplicate Layer...". Name appropriately.

5.    Deselect or hide the Background layer. The main reason for working with the duplicate layer is that when you erase its background, the result will be transparent instead of white. Having the untouched original handy when you screw up also has its advantages.

6.    Back on the duplicate layer, use the Magic Wand Tool. Make the Tolerance just large enough to handle variances in the paper color. Uncheck Contiguous, and uncheck Sample All Layers. Click anywhere on the background.

7.    Use the Eraser tool to erase the background. Use a large brush with 100% Opacity and Flow to speed things up.

8.    To make things more convenient every time you use this file, find the image width by clicking on "Image" ➜ "Image Size ...". The width will be the first number on the "Dimensions" line. Then measure the signature length in pixels (keep in mind, this will be less than the image width). You can either measure in inches and multiply by the number of pixels per inch, or just use the Ruler tool. It doesn't need to be that precise. Write these dimensions down using either the Note tool or with the Text tool on a hidden layer. Also measure and record the absolute signature height. Since the highest point on your signature

is probably not directly over the lowest point, drag a horizontal guide over the highest point and another guide over the lowest point and measure the distance between them.

9.      Save as a Photoshop (.psd) file for later use.

## Using Your File

1.      Open the file that needs the signature.  Measure how many pixels long your signature needs to be (see Step 8 of "Create A Signature File" above).  There may be cases where the height of the signature is the limiting factor, not the length.  If it is, measure that instead and replace "signature height" for "signature length" in all instructions below.

2.      Open your signature file.  Get the image width and the signature length.

3.      Click on "Image" in the top menu, and then "Image Size".  Put a check in the Resample box. Change the units on the Width to Pixels.  Multiply the image width by the needed signature length from Step 1 and divide by the existing signature length from Step 2.   Enter that number as the new image width.  Hit "OK".

For example, if in Step 1 you determine that the space where you are to place your signature is 500 pixels wide, and in Step 2 you find your signature length is 750 pixels of the current signature file width is 800 pixels, then you would enter

$$800 * 500 / 750 \cong 533 \text{ pixels (this field only accepts whole numbers)}$$

4.      Click on "Window" in the top menu, then "Arrange", and then pick one of the tile options so you can see both files at once.

5.      Drag the layer that has the signature from your signature file (not the background layer) to the destination file.  Make sure that layer is above the document layer.  Use the Move tool to put the signature where you want it.

6.      You can rearrange your windows back to the way you had them earlier, if you like (possibly by clicking "Window" in the menu, followed by "Arrange", followed by "Consolidate All to Tabs").  Go ahead and close your signature file *without* saving.

7.      If you want to change the color of this signature, see "Changing The Color Of A Signature In A Signature File [colormatchpart2.html].

8.      Print or save the file of your photograph (or whatever).  If you are sending the file to somebody instead of a print, you may want to "Flatten Image" or "Merge Visible", both of which are part of the "Layer" submenu.