



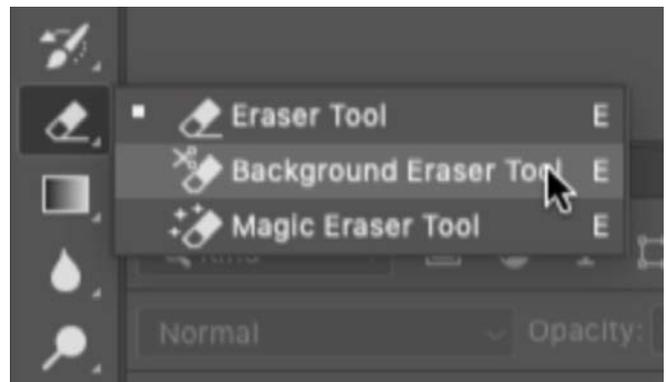
Background Eraser for Sky Replacement

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In this lesson, we're going to learn how we can use the Background Eraser Tool to replace skies in our images. The Background Eraser Tool has been in Photoshop for a long time, but I find that very few people seem to use it. I'd like to get you more comfortable with the settings relating to the tool so that you might start using it more often. In the process, you'll also learn many other Photoshop features that can be useful for combining two images together.

Getting Started with the Background Eraser (Timestamp 1:00)

We're going to use the Background Eraser Tool to remove the sky in this image that contains an oil tower and large sculpture. The Background Eraser Tool can be found in the Toolbar on the left side of the interface. It is grouped with the regular Eraser Tool. If you click and hold on the Eraser Tool icon, you will get access to the other tools grouped with it. From this menu, you can select the Background Eraser Tool.



The Background Eraser Tool is grouped with the regular Eraser Tool in the Toolbar.

With the Background Eraser active, a series of settings relating to it will appear in the Options Bar above the main image window. We'll use the brush settings to choose a large brush with a hard edge. When we hover the mouse over the image, the cursor will appear as a round brush with a little crosshair in the middle.



With the Background Eraser Tool active, the cursor appears as a round brush with a crosshair in the middle.

When we click the mouse button, Photoshop is going to look at what color is found underneath that crosshair and it's going to delete areas that are similar to that color from within the circular brush tip. We can click and drag and the tool will continue to delete content that is similar to what is found under the crosshair. This will work well for removing this sky in this image, as long as I don't allow the crosshair to go over something I want to keep.



When we click with the Background Eraser, the tool will erase everything that's similar to what's found directly beneath the crosshair.



We're continuing to paint around the sky using the Background Eraser Tool, making sure that the crosshair doesn't touch any content that we want to keep.

Contiguous vs. Discontiguous (3:55)

This image contains a large portion of sky that is broken up into smaller chunks by the parts of the oil tower. It is not uncommon to have the content you want to remove broken up into smaller areas by another item in the image. This commonly happens with trees and skies. You'll want to remove the sky, but parts of the sky will be visible between tree branches.

With default settings, the Background Eraser will not remove content that has been separated by the area under the crosshair. It only deletes one continuous chunk from the image. This is known as being contiguous. If you're dealing with an item that's made up of more than one piece, it's referred to as discontiguous.

The Limits setting can be found in the Options Bar above the image window. This is where you can choose between Contiguous and Discontiguous. This menu is set to Contiguous by default. When set to Contiguous, we can use a huge brush that covers most of the oil tower, but when we click on part of the sky that's contained within the structure, it's only going to erase the piece of sky that is uninterrupted by the metal of the tower. If we set this menu to Discontiguous, we can click within the tower and it will erase all parts of the sky that are contained within the circular cursor, regardless of whether they're connected or separated by other objects in the image.



Here, the Background Eraser is set to **Contiguous**. When we click within the bars, it **only erases one chunk of sky**.



Here, the tool is set to **Discontiguous**. When we click within the bars, it **only all areas of sky within the round cursor**.

After using the Background Eraser Tool, we'll zoom in on the image and inspect the results. We can see that some of the checkerboard background is visible through the structure, which means that it's partially transparent. This may or may not be a bad thing. Since we're replacing the sky with another sky, it might not be noticeable in the end result.

Replacing the Background (5:26)

With the sky removed from the image, we can now place a new sky in its place. We'll select the new sky image from within Bridge and double-click on it to open it in Photoshop. We want to place this sky into the oil tower image so we'll activate the Move Tool, click within the image and drag it to the tab containing the oil tower image. The oil tower image will come to the forefront and we can move the cursor into the image window and release the mouse button in order to place the image in this document. If you also hold down the Shift key when moving the image, it will center the photo within the document. The sky layer will be on the top and we need to place it beneath the oil tower layer, so we'll drag the sky layer thumbnail beneath the oil tower layer in the Layers panel.

After doing this, we can see that there were a few issues with the old background removal, as there are bits of the original sky still visible. We can use the Background Eraser again to touch up these areas.



A new sky image was placed beneath the oil tower layer and we can see that there are some remnants from the original sky that need to be removed.

Looking at the area where the tower had become partially transparent, we can see that it's unnoticeable when placed on a new sky layer.



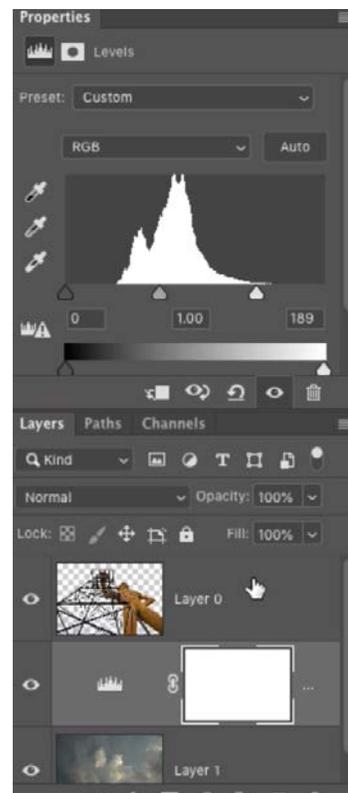
After removing the sky, we can see that some of the structure became partially transparent.



We replaced the sky with a new one and the area that became partially transparent is no longer noticeable.

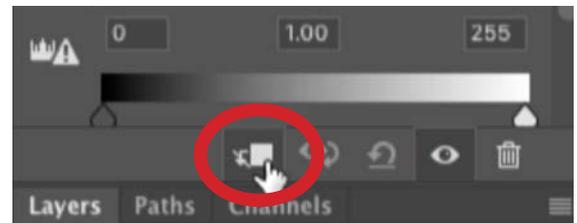
Adjust Individual Layers (7:30)

The other thing we might want to do is adjust the two layers separately so that they look like they better belong together. We'll activate the underlying sky layer and then we'll click on the Adjustment Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers Panel and choose Levels. The Levels adjustment layer will be placed directly above the sky layer and the Levels settings will appear in the Properties panel. There are three sliders beneath the Levels chart and we'll drag the Whites slider to the left in order to lighten the brightest parts of the sky layer. We'll also adjust the Midtones slider until the layer looks most natural. Know that this adjustment will be different for every image.

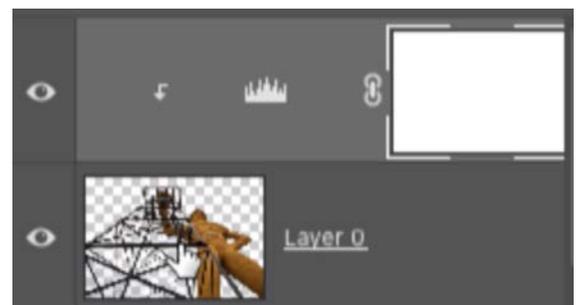


A Levels adjustment is being used to brighten the light areas in the sky layer.

We'll also adjust the oil tower layer, so we'll make sure that the layer is active and we'll again click on the Adjustment Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel and we'll choose Levels from the pop-up menu. This will place the Levels adjustment layer above the oil tower layer, at the top of the Layers panel. Because this adjustment layer is at the top of the Layers panel, it will affect ALL of the layers beneath it. We only want the adjustment layer to affect the oil tower layer, so we need to clip the adjustment layer to the underlying layer. We'll click on the clip icon at the bottom of the Levels Properties Panel and this will make it so the adjustment layer only affects the layer directly beneath it. (The clipping icon looks like a square with a downward-pointing arrow next to it.) In the Layers panel, the adjustment layer thumbnail will become slightly indented and a downward-pointing arrow will appear to the left of it. Now I can use the Levels adjustments and it will only affect the oil tower layer and not the sky layer. We'll just use the Levels slider to make an overall brightness adjustment so that the tower layer looks like it belongs with the sky layer as best as possible.



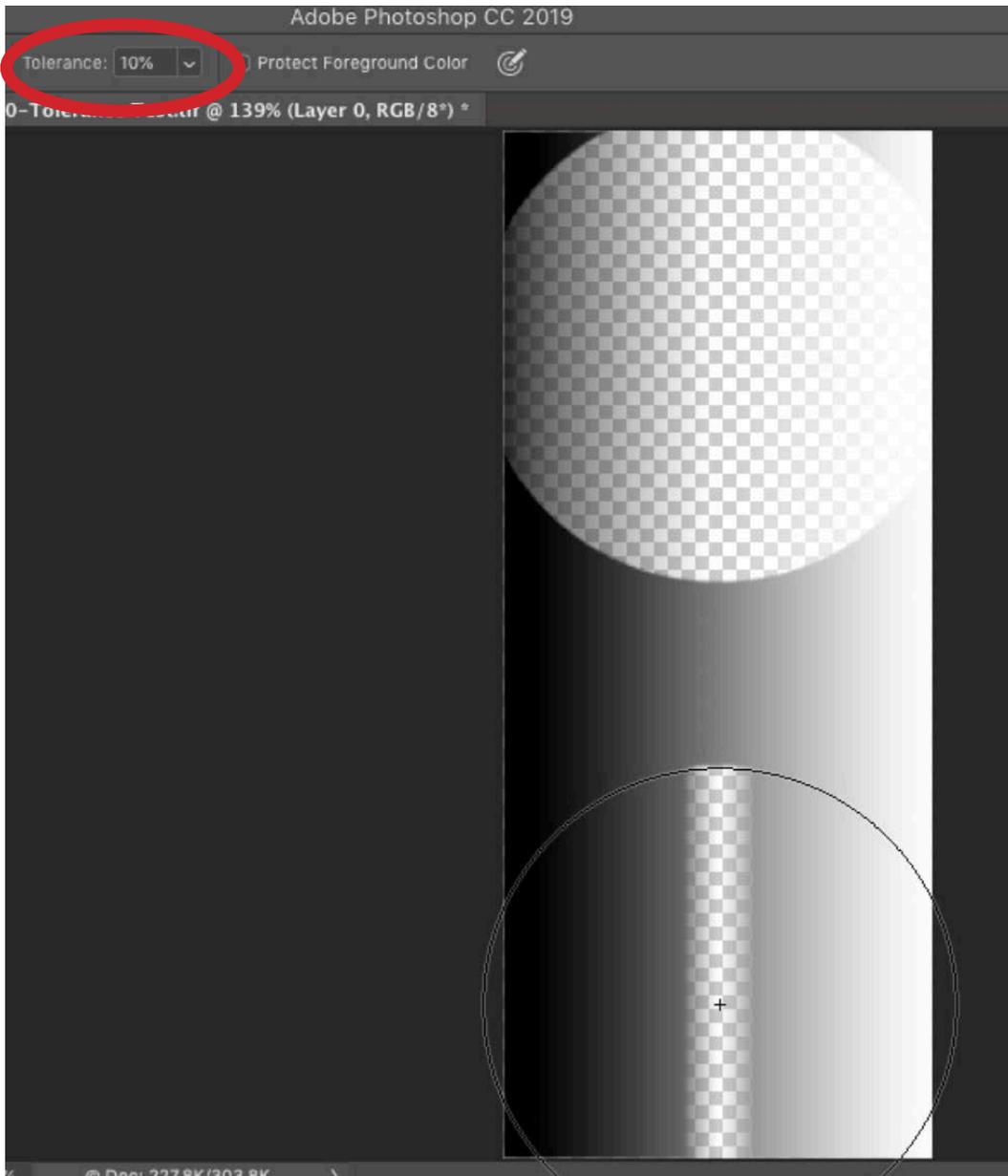
Click this icon at the bottom of the adjustment layer properties panel and the adjustment layer will only be able to affect the layer directly beneath it.



The adjustment layer has been clipped to the underlying layer.

The Background Eraser Tolerance Setting (8:54)

One of the Background Eraser settings is called Tolerance and it can be found in the Options Bar above the image window (when the tool is active). The Tolerance setting determines how much the tool can deviate from the color that is found under the crosshair when we click and drag with our mouse on the image. By default, the Tolerance is set to 50% and this will delete a pretty wide brightness range in relation to the area where you click. If we change the Tolerance to 10%, it will delete a much narrower brightness range when we click the mouse button.



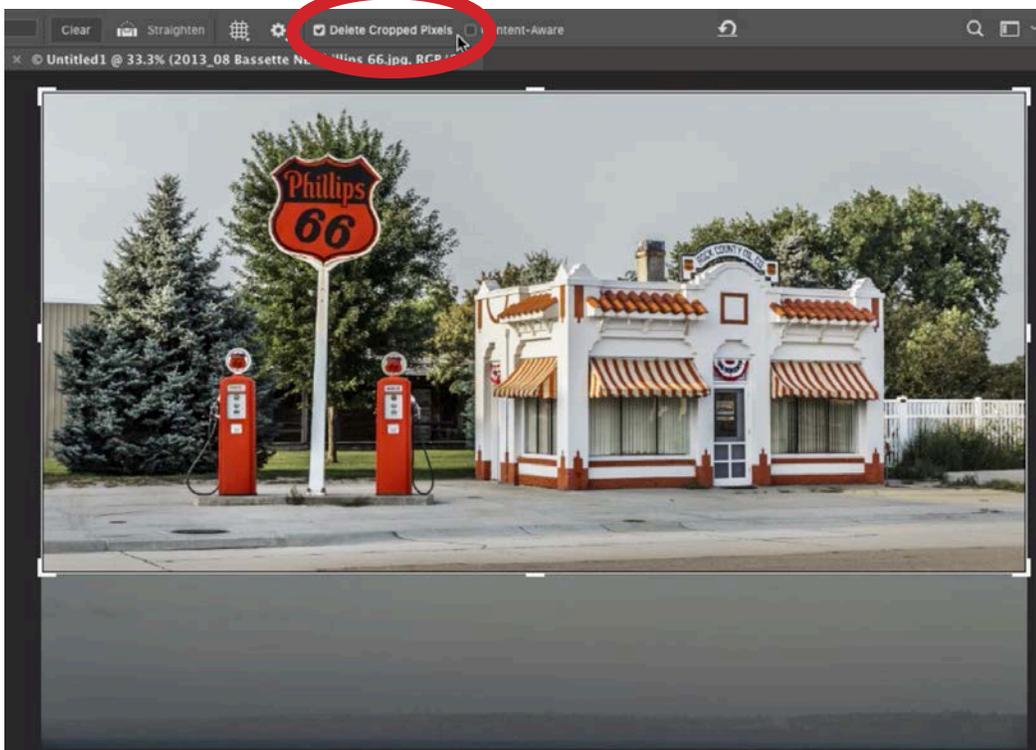
The Tolerance setting (circled in red) determines how far the Background Eraser Tool can deviate from the area under the cross-hair. In this document, we used a large brush and clicked on the top half with a Tolerance of 50%. This erased a lot. Then we clicked on the bottom half with a Tolerance of 10%. This erased a much narrower range.

Gas Station Example Image (11:00)

Let's replace the sky on another image. This time, we're going to select (within Bridge) both the image with the sky we're going to replace as well as the image containing the new sky. We'll click on the Tools menu at the top of the Bridge interface and choose Photoshop > Load Files into Photoshop Layers.

If you're using Lightroom, you would go to the main menu and choose Photo > Edit In > Open as Layers in Photoshop. Both images will be loaded as separate layers into a single Photoshop document.

Crop the image to the size of the gas station layer We can see that the two images are different sizes. The gas station image is shorter than the sky image. We're going to crop the image so that it has the dimensions of the gas station image. To do this, we'll start by creating a selection of the entire gas station layer. We can select the entire contents of a layer by holding down the Command key (Ctrl on Win) and clicking on the layer thumbnail. The entire layer will become selected, with the "marching ants" selection lines around it. Next, we'll activate the Crop Tool. When you activate the Crop Tool while there is an active selection, the crop handles will automatically snap to that selection. In the Options Bar (above the image window), there is a "Delete Cropped Pixels" check box. We'll make sure that this check box is turned OFF before locking in the crop. This will allow us to keep the part of the sky layer that extends beyond the new document bounds so that we can position it to our liking later. We'll hit the Return/Enter key to crop the image and remove the crop handles.



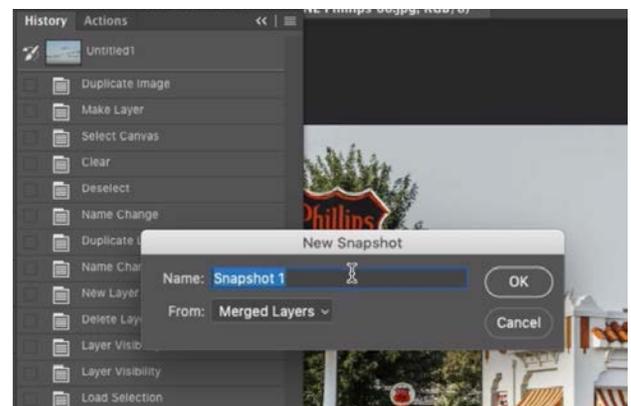
The two layers are different sizes so we're cropping the document to match the size of the gas station layer. We will turn off the "Delete Cropped Pixels" check box (circled) so that the part of the sky layer that is outside of the crop box will not be discarded.

The History Panel (13:38)

At this point, there are a couple of settings that we might want to change. I change these all the time when I'm using the Background Eraser tool.

History States We'll click on the Photoshop menu at the top of the screen and choose Preferences > Performance. Note that in Windows, the Preferences will be found under the Edit menu. The Preferences dialog will appear and the Performance category will be at the forefront. On the right side of the dialog is the History States setting. This determines how many undos you're capable of using. When using the Background Eraser, I find that I click a lot to remove different parts of the background, so there are a lot of history steps that need to be recorded. Because of this, I like to allot myself a lot of history states so I will put this setting at 100 and click OK to exit the Preferences dialog.

New Snapshot The next setting will allow us to bring parts of the image back if we accidentally erase some areas. We'll click on the Window menu and choose History. This will open the History panel. We'll click on the little menu in the top right corner of the panel and choose New Snapshot. The New Snapshot box will appear and we'll set the "From" menu to "Merged Layers," we'll name the snapshot "Original Subject" and click OK.



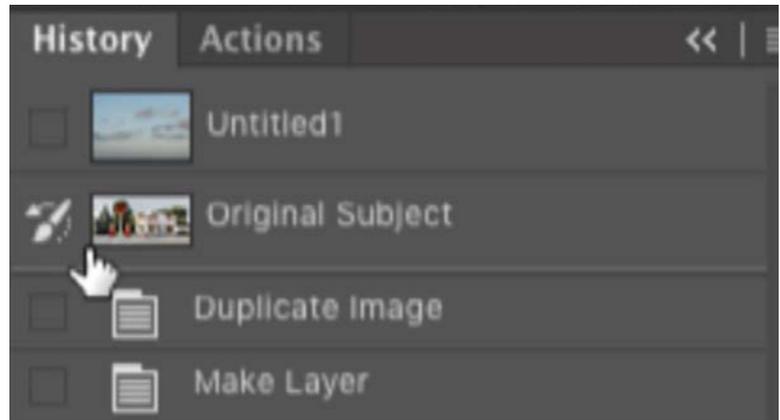
A new snapshot is being created from the merged layer view.

When you create a new snapshot, it's going to remember what your picture looks like at this particular stage. If you choose the Merged Layers option, it's going to act as if it's a flat image, with all the layers combined together.

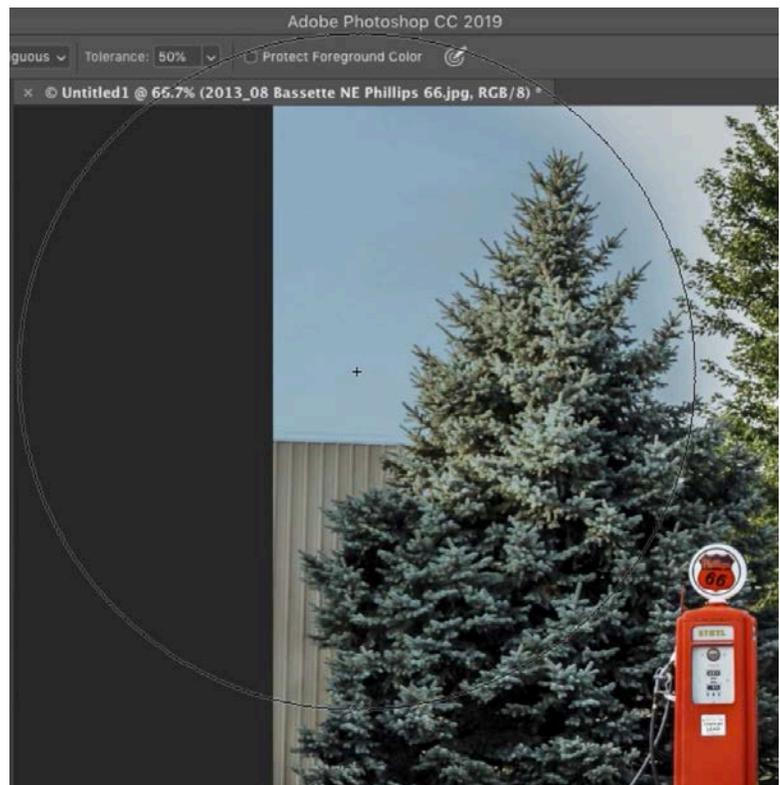
The History Brush We're going to be using the History Brush, which is going to allow us to paint on the image to bring the image back to how it used to look at a specific stage in time. We determine what stage that is from within the History Panel. The History Panel contains a list of everything we've done to the image. To the left of each history state is a little box and if we click on one of the boxes, it will

place a History Brush icon there. This means that if we paint with the History Brush, we'll be painting in that specified state in history. Any snapshots will appear at the top of the History panel and we'll click to the left of the snapshot we just created so that the History Brush icon is placed there. This tells the History Brush to paint with that snapshot.

Now let's try out the Background Eraser Tool to remove the sky in this image. We'll activate the Background Eraser and use a large brush to click on the left side of the image. When we do, we see that the current sky gets erased to reveal the underlying sky layer, but we can also see the building changing color a bit. This means that the Background Eraser is partially erasing the building, and that's not what we want. This is happening because the Tolerance setting is at 50%, which means that the tool can deviate a good amount from the color under the crosshair when erasing parts of the image. At the current setting, it thinks that the building



We clicked the box to the left of the Original Subject snapshot to place the History Brush icon there. This tells the brush to use that snapshot when we paint.



We started to paint over the sky with the Background Eraser Tool and we can see that the building is being affected as well. We'll need to use the undo command and then paint again using a lower Tolerance setting.

is close to the same color as the sky. We need to lower the Tolerance setting significantly so that it can't deviate very far from the blue of the sky. We'll set the Tolerance to 20% and try again. This is better, but it's still erasing part of the white cap on the building. That's going to be an area that we'll bring back later using the History Brush, so we'll continue painting over the sky with the Background Eraser, making the brush smaller as necessary.



We lowered the Tolerance setting and continued to paint over the sky area with the Background Eraser Tool.

There are areas where the building is very close to being the same color as the sky, so it's going to be very difficult to prevent part of the building from being erased, no matter how small of a brush we use. Because we're not working non-destructively (on a separate, empty layer), there are parts of the building that will be erased from the document. This is where we'll be using the History Brush and that snapshot we created to bring parts of the image back.



Parts of the building were accidentally erased with the Background Eraser Tool. We'll bring these areas back using the History Brush.



The History Brush can be found in the Toolbar.

Using the History Brush The History Brush can be found directly above the Eraser/Background Eraser Tools in the Toolbar on the left side of the interface. We'll click on it to activate it. We previously set up the History panel so that the History Brush would know which version of the image to paint with. We created a snapshot of the original image, and when we paint with the History Brush, it's going to be painting with that snapshot.

We'll turn off the visibility of the sky layer so that we're viewing the gas station layer on the transparent checkerboard background. This will help to see which parts of the building need to be restored. We'll use a small, hard brush and start to paint over the part of the building that had accidentally been erased.



The History Brush is being used to paint over the part of the building that had accidentally been erased.

Options Bar Icons (24:02)

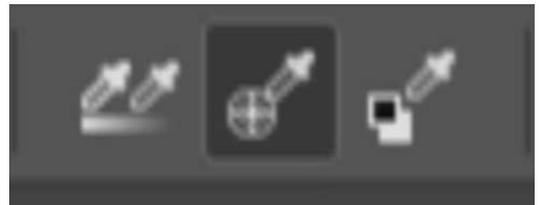
Zooming in on the image, I can see that there are a few areas between the leaves of the trees that had not been erased. We'll activate the Background Eraser Tool again so we can try to erase those areas. If we click once, placing the crosshair on part of the sky that shows through between the leaves, it will erase that piece of sky. If we click and drag, however, we'll be erasing part of the tree because the crosshair will have moved over the leaves, causing the tool to erase everything of the same color. There is a setting where we can change that, making it so the tool only erases areas that are the same color as the where the crosshair was initially clicked.

There are three icons in the Options Bar and the one on the left is active by default. With this setting, the Background Eraser will continuously monitor the color that's underneath the crosshair. The icon in the middle will tell the tool to only pay attention to what's under the crosshair ONCE, when you make that first click with the tool. It will then pay attention to only that color for the entire time you're dragging. When using this setting, we can click within the leaves of the tree, making sure that the crosshair is targeting a piece of sky, and drag around the tree area. This will erase all of the bits of sky between the leaves without erasing the leaves themselves.

The third icon in the Options Bar will tell the Background Eraser to delete anything that matches the current background color. This setting would be useful if you couldn't get to the color to click on it with the crosshair. This could happen if



With default settings, the Background Eraser will continue to remove whatever is similar to what's under the crosshair as we paint.



When the Background Eraser is active, these three settings will appear in the Options Bar.

the area is partially transparent so you could only see the tiniest hint of it.

Now we can toggle the visibility of the sky layer and see that the old sky has been successfully removed. With the sky layer visible, we can use the Move Tool to better position it so that the clouds appear in a desirable position.

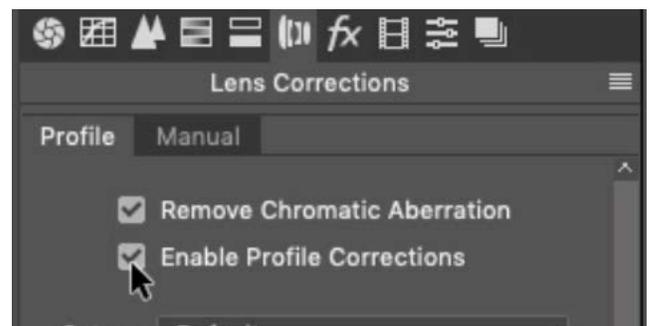


LEFT: The sky was successfully removed. RIGHT: The new sky layer was placed behind the gas station layer and positioned so that the clouds look ideal.

Adjustments to Prepare an Image for Sky Removal (27:13)

Before opening an image into Photoshop for sky removal (or other background removal), it can be useful to determine if there is anything we can do beforehand in order to get more optimal results. Let's look at what kinds of adjustments we can do before moving to Photoshop. From Bridge, we can open a raw file in Camera Raw simply by double-clicking on it. If the file is a jpeg, we could go to the File menu and choose to Open in Camera Raw.

In Camera Raw, we want to make sure that there is no artifact around the edges of objects that would affect the performance of the Background Eraser. We'll click on the Lens Corrections tab on the right side of the interface. (The icon looks like the separate elements of a lens.) At the top of this panel are two check boxes. The first is titled "Remove Chromatic

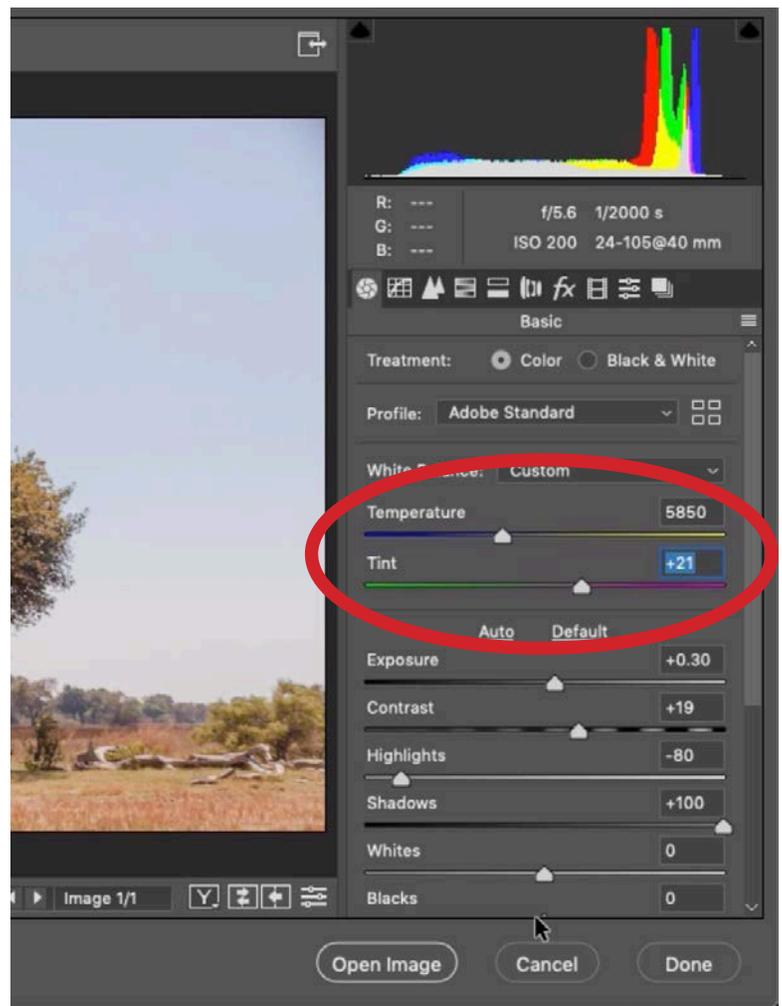


We're turning on the two check boxes in the Camera Raw Lens Corrections Tab.

Aberration.” Chromatic Aberration is the colored halo that can appear along the edges of high contrast objects, like trees against a bright sky. We’ll turn this check box on to remove this artifact. We’ll also turn on the “Enable Profile Corrections” check box because it will remove any distortion caused by the lens.

If the image was shot with a high ISO setting, we’ll also want to do some noise reduction. The noise reduction settings can be found under the Detail tab in Camera Raw (The icon looks like two triangles overlapping.)

The last adjustment we’ll want to do before moving to Photoshop is to make sure that the white balance is appropriate. If there is any kind of color cast to the image. It will be difficult to remove the background using the Background Eraser because the background will be similar in color to the subject. The Temperature and Tint sliders collectively control the white balance and they can be found under the Basic tab in Camera Raw (the left-most tab). If the Temperature slider is too far to the right, the image will look yellow and if it’s too far to the left, everything will look blue. We’ll move the slider back and forth, stopping at the point where we see the most separation in the colors. We’ll do the same thing for the Tint slider.



The Temperature and Tint sliders are being adjusted to ensure that the image’s white balance is correct before removing the sky in Photoshop.

After making these initial adjustments, we'll click the Open Image button at the bottom of the Camera Raw interface. This will open the image in Photoshop.

Tree Image Example (30:06)

The image we're working on in the video example has a large tree with a cloud-less sky behind it. We're going to remove the sky and replace it with a different sky that contains clouds. We'll first bring the new sky into the document, placing it on a separate layer that is positioned beneath the tree layer.

We'll activate the Background Eraser Tool and adjust the settings that we want the tool to start with. We'll set the Tolerance to 40% and make sure that the left-most icon is selected, which will tell the tool to continuously monitor the color that's beneath the crosshair in determining what to erase. We'll then use a large brush to paint over the sky and around the tree. As we paint to remove the current background, the new background sky will start to become visible in the underlying layer.



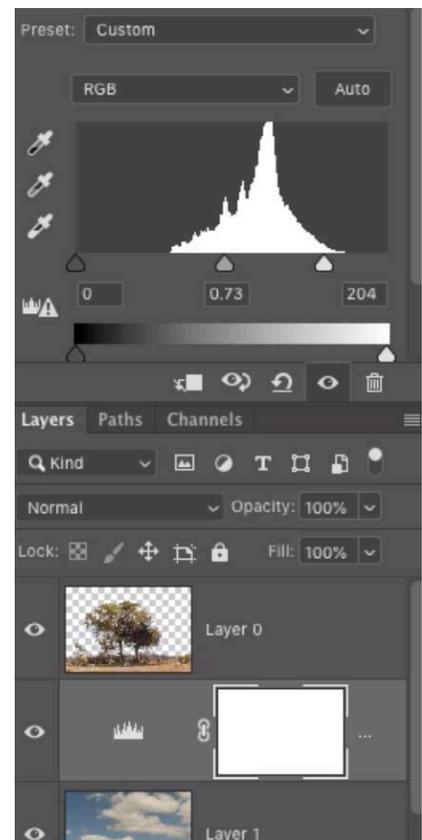
We're painting over the sky with the Background Eraser and we can see the underlying sky layer come into view.

After painting all the way around the tree, we'll make the brush very large (large enough to encompass the tree) and place the crosshair in a small patch of sky somewhere within the tree. We'll click once to remove the sky from within the tree area. If this deletes part of the tree itself, we'll use the Undo command and lower the Tolerance setting before trying again. In the video example, we set the Tolerance at 20%.

This is also a good example of where we could use the third icon in the Options Bar. This is the one that would cause the Background Eraser to delete the specified background color in the area where we paint. Because the patches of sky within the tree are so small, it's hard to get the crosshair to target the correct blue. If we set the background color to a similar blue, we could use that third icon setting to remove the blue that we set as the background color.

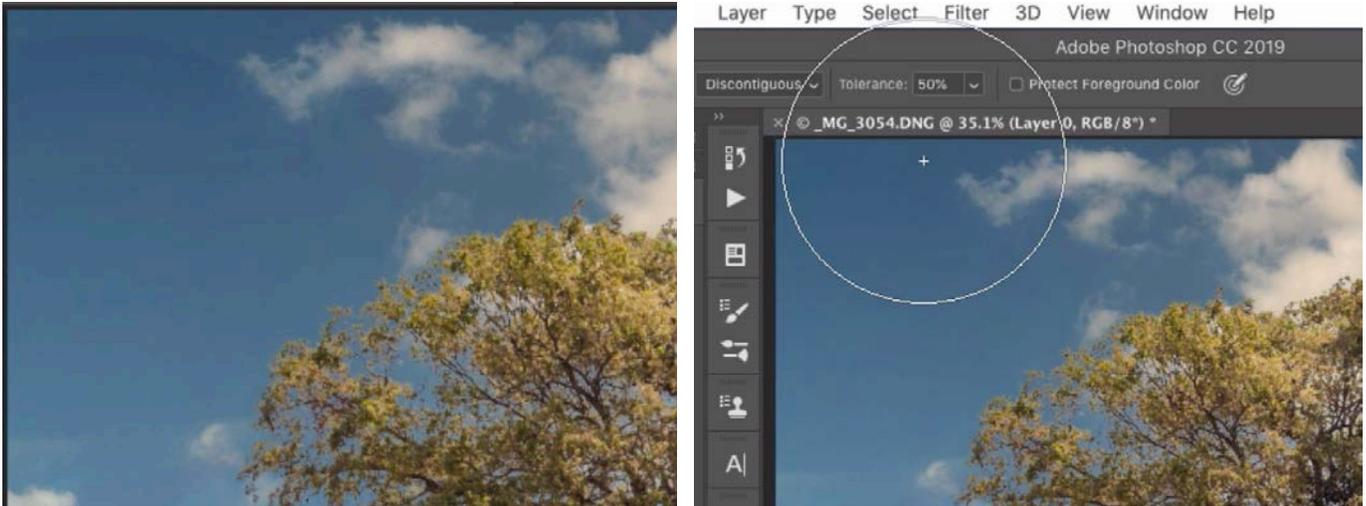
Reset the tool After using the Background Eraser Tool, it's a good idea to set the tool's settings back to normal, with a Tolerance of around 40% and the left-most icon setting selected in the Options Bar. This just makes it so that the next time you use the tool, you're starting with standard settings.

Now that the sky has been replaced, we can see that the new sky looks a little dull and doesn't look quite like it belongs with the rest of the image. We'll use an adjustment layer to make it look better. With the sky layer active, we'll click on the Adjustment Layer icon at the bottom of the Layers panel and choose Levels from the pop-up menu. This will add a Levels adjustment layer directly above the sky layer in the Layers panel. Within the Properties panel, we'll adjust the Levels sliders to make the bright areas even brighter, dragging the whites slider to the left until the sky layer looks like it has enough pop to match the foreground layer.



A Levels adjustment layer is being used to make the sky layer pop a little more.

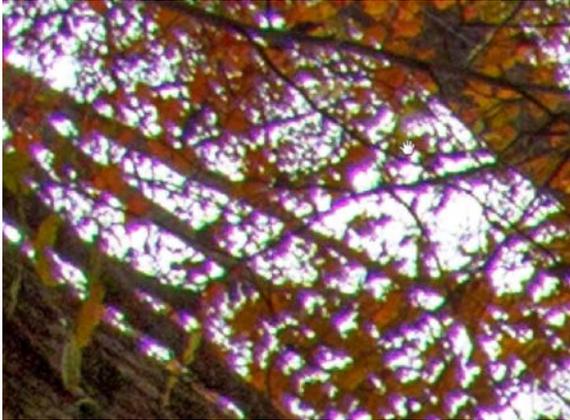
At this point, we'll examine the image and we can see that there is some residue left over from the use of the Background Eraser Tool. We can see the shape of the brush in parts of the sky. When this happens, we'll need to return to the Background Eraser Tool to fix it. We'll activate the tool and re-paint over the area, making sure the crosshair overlaps the problem area. If it doesn't show any improvement, we'll need to increase the Tolerance setting and try again.



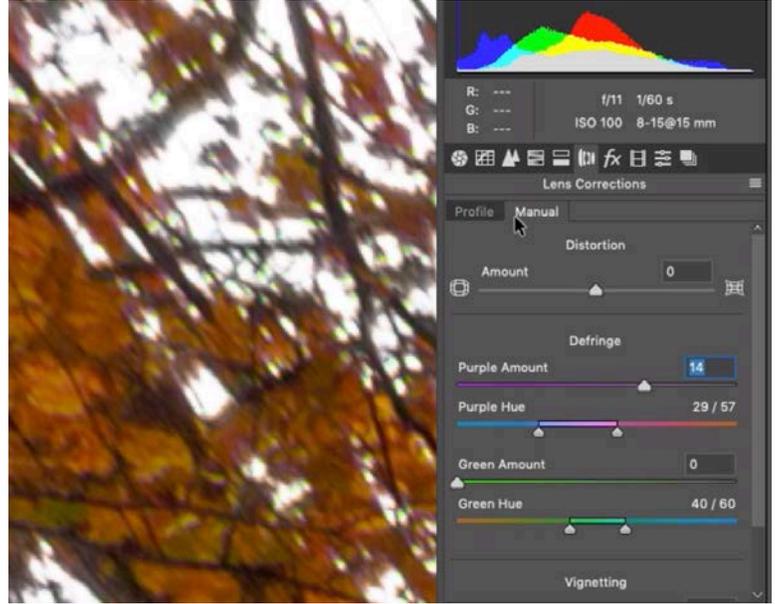
LEFT: The Background Eraser left a little residue that you can see as a circular brush shape.
RIGHT: We are painting some more with the Background Eraser to remove the residue.

Fall Foliage Sky Replacement (38:07)

Let's look at another image. In the next example, we have a photo of some trees with fall color against a blue sky. It's a raw image that we're viewing in Bridge so we'll double-click on it to open it in Camera Raw. This is where we'll do some initial adjustments before replacing the sky in Photoshop. Zooming in on the image, we can see that there is a lot of chromatic aberration where the leaves meet the bright sky. This is in the form of undesirable purple and green halos around the leaves. To correct for this, we'll click on the Lens Corrections tab on the right side of the Camera Raw interface and we'll turn on the "Remove Chromatic Ab-



ABOVE: Colored halos appear around the leaves. RIGHT: In the Lens Correction tab of Camera Raw, the Manual settings are being used to remove the chromatic aberration.



erration” check box. This caused the green halos to go away, but the purple ones remain. We’ll need to remove these manually. At the top of the Lens Corrections panel, we’ll switch from the Profile tab to the Manual tab. Here, we’ll find some settings where we can tell it the range of colors it can work on and an Amount slider, which determines how much it should try to reduce that particular color range. We’ll adjust these sliders and drag the Purple Amount slider up until we can see the halos disappear.

When we’re satisfied with the initial adjustments, we’ll click the Open Image button in the bottom right corner of Camera Raw’s interface. This will open the image in Photoshop. We’ll find the image that is going to be used as the new sky and we’ll open it in the same Photoshop document. In this example, the tree image is horizontal and the sky image is vertical. Before moving the sky image into the trees document, we’ll click on the Image menu and choose Image Rotation > 90 degrees clockwise. Now, when we move the image into the other document, both layers will be at the same orientation.

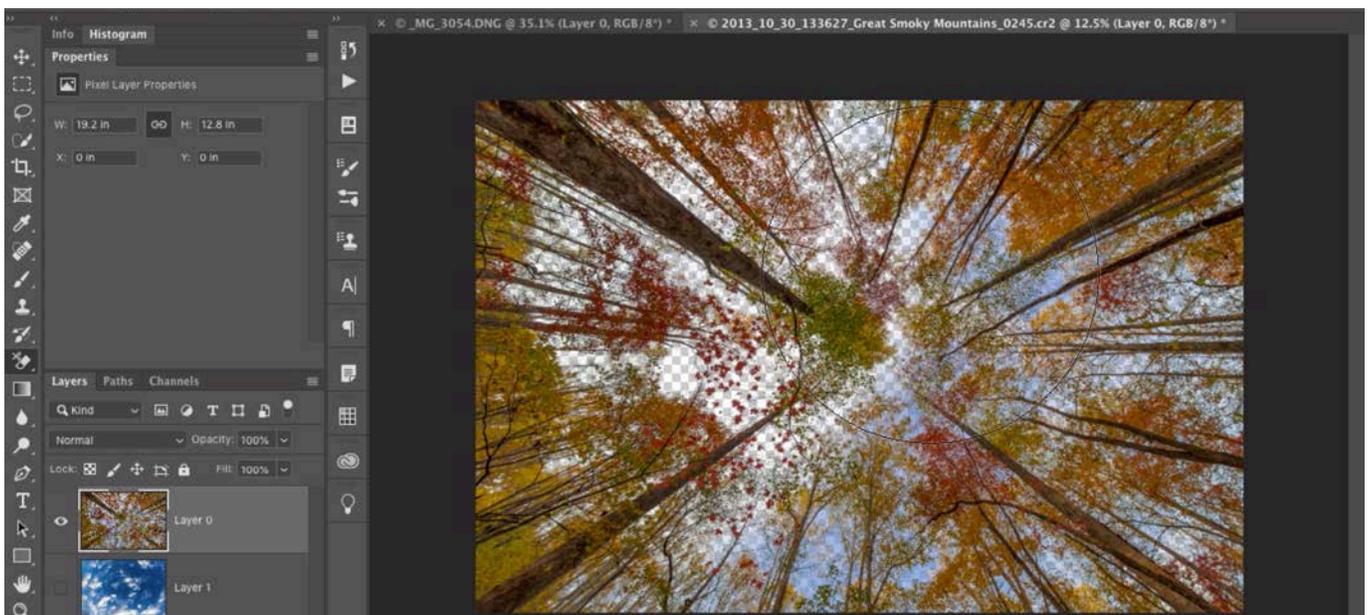
The sky image contains some land, so we’ll need to scale the layer up so that it’s only sky that’s filling the frame. We’ll click on the Edit menu and choose Trans-

form > Scale and the transform handles will appear around the layer. We'll click and drag on these handles to scale the image up so that the land disappears from the frame. We'll tap the Enter key to lock in the transformation.

The sky layer is currently positioned above the trees layer, so we'll switch that to make sure that the trees are the top layer and the sky is the bottom layer.

We'll activate the Background Eraser Tool. For this particular image, it's going to be difficult to use the tool with the left-most icon selected in the Options Bar. This is the one that will tell the tool to constantly watch the color that's beneath the crosshair and erase whatever color that is. This image contains so many trees that it will be hard to paint without the crosshair moving over the leaves. We'll click on the second icon, which will tell the tool to erase only the color that's under the crosshair when we initially click within the image.

Using a large brush, I'll position the crosshair over a light part of the sky and I'll click and drag to paint around the image, keeping the mouse button held down as I do so. We'll start to see the underlying sky image come into view in the areas where the current sky is being removed. To get a better view of what is being erased, we'll turn off the visibility of the sky layer so that we see the checkerboard background instead.



We're painting to erase the sky using the background Eraser Tool. The underlying sky layer has its visibility turned off so that we see the checkerboard showing through.

Now we'll position the crosshair over part of the background area where we can still see some blue sky left over. We'll click and drag around the image to erase everything that is that shade of blue. It looks like we've done a good job of removing the original sky, so we'll turn the visibility of the underlying sky layer back on and zoom in to inspect. Looking closely at the leaves, we can still see residue from the old sky left over. It's appearing as a border around many of the leaves, so it's going to be hard to target with the crosshair. This is another example of where the third icon setting in the Options Bar will be useful. This is the setting that tells the tool to erase anything that is similar to the current background color. We'll set the background color to match the old sky residue as closely as possible and then we'll start to paint over the image. This does a much better job of cleaning up what's left over from the original sky.



LEFT: There is some residue from the old sky around the edges of the leaves. RIGHT: We set the background color to match the old sky residue and used the third icon setting in the Options Bar to paint over the sky, removing everything that matches the background color.

The "Protect Foreground Color" Feature (45:53)

In the next image of a scene from Africa, we again placed a new sky layer beneath the Africa layer and we used the Background Eraser to remove as much of the sky as possible.

When we get to the area around the trunk of the tree, we run into some problems because the tree trunk is similar in color to the sky in that area of the picture. We end up deleting too much, so we'll undo and try a different technique for this area. We'll hold down the Option key (Alt on Win) to temporarily access the Eyedropper Tool and we'll click within the bright area in the tree trunk. This will sample the color and set it as the foreground color. We'll then turn on the "Protect Foreground Color" check box within



The Background Eraser Tool ended up erasing part of this tree trunk. We'll need to undo and use the "Protect Foreground Color" feature to prevent this.

the Options Bar above the image window. Now we'll try the Background Eraser again and we'll find that it does not delete part of the tree like it did previously. Whenever you use that "Protect Foreground Color" setting, just remember to turn it off when you're done because it could potentially create problems when using the tool in the future.

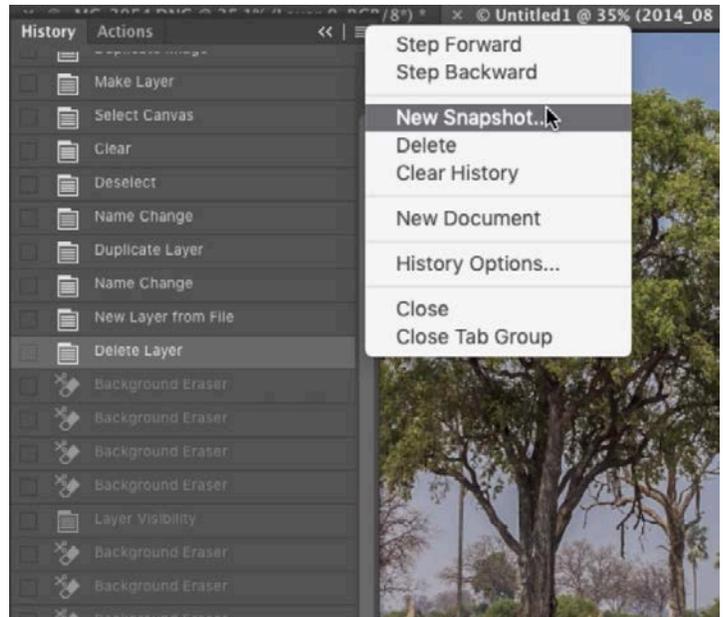
Setting up the History Brush (48:48)

The Background Eraser also runs into problems where the sky meets the ground. Part of the ground ends up being deleted. Here, we'll use the History Brush to bring the area back. We didn't previously set up the History Panel so the Brush would know what state of history to paint with, so we'll need to set that up before we can start painting with the History Brush.

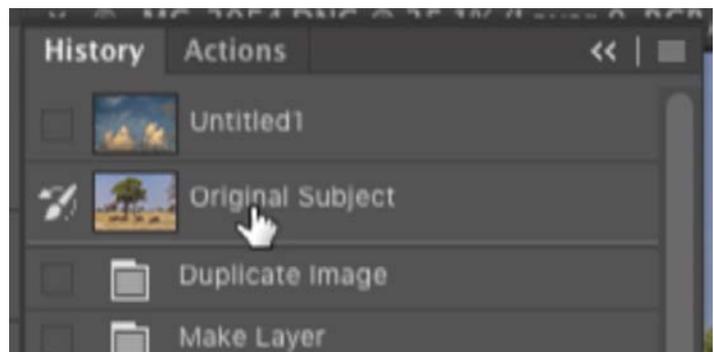
We'll open the History panel, which displays a list of everything we've done to the picture since we opened it. If we click back through the different steps, it will revert the image to what it looked like at that stage. We'll click back through the steps

until we find a stage that was before we started changing that Africa layer. With that step selected, we'll click on the little menu in the top right corner of the History panel and we'll choose New Snapshot from the pop-up menu. The New Snapshot dialog will appear and we'll set the "From" menu to Merged Layers. We'll type in "Original Subject" for the name and we'll click OK. The new snapshot will appear near the top of the History panel and we'll click the little square to the left of its thumbnail in order to place the History Brush icon there. This tells the History Brush to paint with this image state. Now we can click on the very last of the history steps so that the image goes back to looking the way it should after using the Background Eraser.

We'll activate the History Brush and paint over the part of the ground that accidentally got partially erased. This will bring back that part of the image to its original state. We can now activate the sky layer and use the Move Tool to position the clouds in the position that looks most ideal.



With the appropriate history state active, we clicked on the upper right menu in the History panel and are choosing to create a new snapshot.



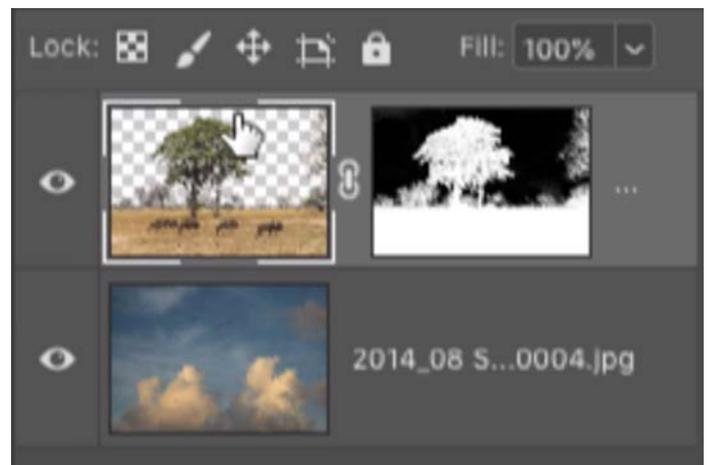
The snapshot appears at the top of the History Panel and we clicked to the left of the thumbnail to place the History Brush icon there.

Working Non-destructively with Layer Masks (54:19)

There are some times when you're going to want to convert this into a layer mask. A layer mask is nondestructive in that you can paint on the mask with white in order to bring back parts of the layer. The History Panel technique IS destructive in that the History list gets cleared out every time you close the file.

You should be aware, however, that any time you convert this into a layer mask, it won't look identical because we're shifting the colors around the edges a bit and we're going to lose that shift when we convert to a layer mask.

If you'd rather use a layer mask, go to the Layers panel when you're done removing the background on an image, hold down the Command key (Ctrl on Win) and click on the layer thumbnail. This will create a selection around the contents of the layer (everything that's not transparent). Next, click on the Layer Mask icon at the bottom of the Layers panel. This will convert the selection into a layer mask. In the Layers panel, click on the thumbnail for the image to make sure that it's active. You want the image to be active, not the mask. Little white brackets will appear around the thumbnail to indicate that it's active.



The results of the sky removal were converted into a layer mask. Here, we clicked on the image icon to make the image active. The white brackets around the thumbnail indicate that the image is active, not the mask.

Click on the Edit menu and choose Fill. The Fill dialog will appear and you'll want to set the Contents menu to History. This will do a similar thing as the History Brush, but instead of filling with history in the area where you paint, it's going to fill the entirety of the image with it. Click OK to exit the Fill dialog and the image will be filled with the history snapshot that we designated earlier. The layer mask

will limit the part of the layer that's visible to the subject and foreground (the part that wasn't erased with the History Brush).

If you convert to a layer mask and find out that the colors don't look quite right along the edges in the image, you may want to try one additional step. Go to the Layers panel and click on the layer mask to make it active. Little white brackets should appear around the thumbnail, indicating that the mask is active. Then, click on the Select menu at the top of the screen and choose Select and Mask. The Select and Mask window will appear and you'll want to change the View menu to On Layers. This will set the preview to show the layer as it appears on top of the underlying sky layer. Scroll down to the bottom and find the Output Settings category, which includes the "Decontaminate Colors" check box. This setting will look at the edges of the images and find any areas that are partially transparent. If it finds any residual colors from the old background, it will try to eliminate it. Turn this check box on and then work with the Amount slider directly beneath the check box. Drag this slider all the way to the left and then slowly bring it up, finding the lowest setting that fixes the edges in the image.



In the Select and Mask window, the "Decontaminate Colors" check box is being turned on, which is removing the colored residue around the edges of the mask.