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A PUBLICATION OF THE AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY

Archive Basics

BNDL001

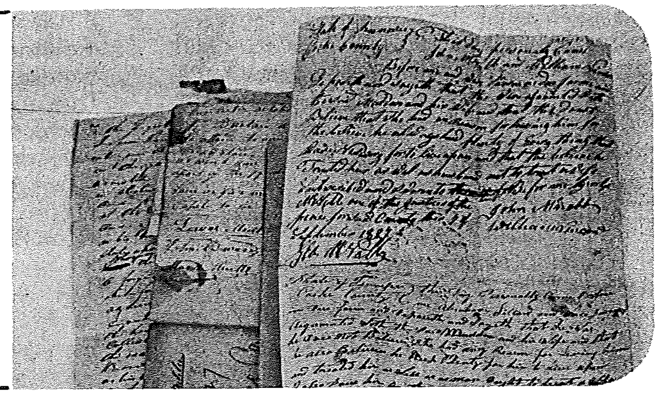
Do you need help for your archival collection or help establishing good archival practices in your institution? AASLH's bundled resources of archival technical leaflets are a great way to enhance your reference library.

TL086– Conserving Local Archival Materials on a Limited Budget (1975)
TL121 – Local Historical Records: Programs for Historical Agencies (1979)
TL131 – Manuscript Collections: Initial Procedures and Policies (1980)
TL179 – Archival Materials in a History Museum(1992)
TL188 – Storage Solutions for Oversized Paper Artifacts (1994)

This bundle may help institutions achieve the standards as set forth under the Stewardship of Collections the Management section of the AASLH StEPS Program.

TL #86

technical leaflet



CONSERVING LOCAL ARCHIVAL MATERIALS
on a limited budget

By George M. Cunha

New England Document Conservation Center

Local manuscripts and records can provide valuable information about the early political history of a community. These documents should be retained and properly preserved. Ideally, there are funds to hire professional archivists and build safe storage facilities. Practically, few small organizations have the resources for a full-fledged archives program of this nature.

Yet the small society can do much to conserve the materials in its care with a relatively small outlay of money. The first step is to create an effective long-range conservation program. Then you can use the techniques discussed in this leaflet to initiate protection and treatment procedures.

PLANNING A PROGRAM

To start your program, designate a records conservator who can coordinate the work. His first responsibility will be to minimize the conditions that cause deterioration. Otherwise the ever-present combination of acid, heat and humidity fluctuations, air pollution, insects and fungi, light, and normal wear and tear will eventually result in the loss of many if not all of the records. Then he can organize a treatment program for repairing and restoring already damaged materials.

The records conservator—whether volunteer, part-time, or the director-coordinator himself—should proceed as follows:

—Examine the environment in which the records are kept, evaluating its suitability for document storage and identifying conditions causing deterioration.

—Determine and implement measures to improve the environment and prevent further damage, within potential or present budgetary limitations.

—Examine the records to determine their present physical condition and establish priorities for treatment.

—Differentiate, perhaps with two lists, those records that can be treated on the premises from those requiring professional attention.

—Establish a "work room" within your building for remedial treatment that you can do yourself, and equip it with the necessary tools, furnishings, and supplies.

—Supervise simple on-the-premises repairs and restoration.

—Establish a working arrangement with a professional conservator for the treatment of badly damaged or particularly valuable documents.

—Keep informed on new conservation theories and techniques.

The small organization with minimal funds may not be able to hire the professionals to build the storage facilities or restore the documents as well as it would like. But a responsible records conservator can establish a program that emphasizes preventive maintenance—at the very least—to conserve these unique materials.

EXAMINING THE ENVIRONMENT

Begin by surveying the building in which your archives are kept. Does the roof leak and is the cellar dry? Can you find evidence of rodents or insects? Are there burglar alarms, either connected to the police switchboard or sufficiently strong so they can be recognized rapidly if they are activated? Is there any automatic fire detection or extinguishing system that is monitored at the local fire station or by a security guard? Is the electrical wiring in good condition? Are the heating and cooling systems sufficient to control humidity and temperature, and are they regularly checked to ensure adequate, safe operation?

Consider the pollution problems in your area. Sulfur dioxide from industrial chimneys and nitrous oxide from automobile exhausts penetrate even the innermost areas of most buildings. Paper absorbing these gases gradually disintegrates. Although smaller communities suffer less from acid contamination, none are absolutely safe from this danger. Ask whether some authority in your area monitors pollution and can recommend possible controls. You can also buy sulfur dioxide test papers (available from Gallard-Schlesinger Co.) to indicate whether this particular pollutant is penetrating an area. They are inexpensive enough to use in many places throughout your building.

Make an especially careful examination of the records storage area. How is it lighted? Too much illumination is a major source of deterioration. Large uncurtained windows and banks of fluorescent lights, while undoubtedly providing reader comfort, are harmful to documentary materials. Be sure that your storage areas are protected from both sunlight's ultraviolet radiation and the damaging radiation emanating from fluorescent tubes.

Where are radiators, air ducts, or air conditioners located? Can you measure and regulate extremes in temperature and humidity during the year? Is there evidence of water leaks or danger from faulty pipes, either steam or plumbing?

Attics and basements are all too often considered suitable areas for keeping old records. In fact, they are a serious source of trouble, for the temperature and humidity variations therein are often extreme in winter and in summer.

Does the storage area have a vault-type door or, at least, special locks to prevent burglary? The local police will assist you in determining general building security. They are often willing to let you install burglar alarm indicators in their headquarters and can also advise you on the type of system most practical for your area.

Any survey of the environment should include an evaluation of the building's vulnerability to fire. The National Fire Protection Association (NFPA) has several pamphlets that can help you evaluate your present quarters. Another reliable source is the local fire department, which will inspect your building for safety hazards on request. The fire resistance rating of vaults, safes, and file cabinets can be obtained from the manufacturer.

Lastly, in appraising the environment, be sure that the shelving (preferably steel) is standing clear from the floor and walls to allow good air circulation throughout. Also, be sure that file cabinets used for storage are in good working order and close tightly to keep rodents out.

IMPROVING THE ENVIRONMENT

The best places to store library and archival materials are windowless rooms, illuminated by tungsten lamps, on intermediate floors of air-conditioned buildings. Fortunate is the small society in which records are kept in an air-conditioned environment, for nothing will give a greater return for the conservation dollar than an investment in this equipment. Air conditioning is essential to maintain constant temperature and humidity on a year-round basis, thus minimizing the dimensional changes in paper that are caused by fluctuations in temperature, and the equally damaging movement of water in paper caused by humidity fluctuations. Humidity control devices are not expensive, and a dehumidifier insures against the growth of molds as well. Buildings which cannot be air conditioned but are well insulated and have good heating systems can be kept within acceptable limits of relative humidity by using strategically placed householdtype humidifiers and dehumidifiers. Even if you designate only one room for isolated-area humidity control, it is a major preventive conservation measure.

Indicators are useful for determining problem areas where temperature and humidity controls are needed. Mercury thermometers are inexpensive enough to be used in every room. Dial humidity indicators, available in any hardware store, give a general if not extremely accurate indication of the moisture present in the air. Place one in every room if you can. Inexpensive paper relative-humidity indicators (available from Gallard-Schlesinger Co.) can be used by themselves or as a check on the dial indicators. It is a good idea to keep a daily record of the temperature and humidity, particularly in the storage area. A marked change in either is a warning that trouble is imminent.

Light in storage areas should be kept to the essential minimum. If possible, install tungsten lights, with timers on their wall switches to automatically turn off the lights after a brief time. Windows should be kept heavily curtained and preferably blocked out with masonry or wood. If the storage area is lighted by fluorescent tubes, shield them with ultra-violet filtering sleeves (available from Solar Screen).

Evidence of rodents requires a minute inspection of the floor, walls, and ceiling to locate and block any means of access to the storage area. For further protection, call in a local exterminator to destroy any rats or mice that might have found havens in the book stacks, cabinets, or file drawers.

Even large numbers of insects are readily eliminated by professional exterminators. These pests will not return if the conditions that encourage them (i.e., warmth, moisture, and untidy housekeeping) are corrected.

When funds permit, conservators should give serious consideration to the halogenated fire extinguishing systems recommended by the NFPA. These systems are the only ones now available that will quench flames instantly without the undesirable aftereffects resulting from use of the more common chemical, water, or foam systems.

Stored records of any sort should be kept well clear of radiators, hot air ducts, and electric heating devices. Plumbing and heating pipes in a storage area are dangerous because of the hazard of breaks or leaks. They should never pass through vaults specifically designed for storage of valuable documentary materials. Whenever possible, pipes now in storage areas should be rerouted.

EXAMINING THE RECORDS

After surveying the environment, you will need to make a detailed examination of the records. Keep lists of their present physical condition and the location of each damaged document. Then later, when you establish priorities, you will be able to locate documents for either on-the-premises or professional treatment.

Review Kane and Santen and Crocker for general guidance in sorting and evaluating records. Horton, Kathpalia, Langwell, and Minogue are especially valuable for understanding the technical considerations that are involved in selecting records for treatment.

This is the logical time to begin cleaning documents and records. Loose dust and dirt can be wiped away with a clean, lint-free cloth during the examination. Some records can be vacuumed; but before attempting this potentially damaging method, study Horton's suggestions for cleaning.

Now is also a logical time to open tightly folded bundles of records. Use care, for they may be brittle. If such is the case, relax the paper before unfolding as recommended hereafter in the section "On the Premise Treatment." After unwrapping the records, take notes on their condition, and place them in acid-free folders, pending further treatment. This will minimize further deterioration and allow you time to consider later remedies.

There is no infallible way to simply identify all of the many types of paper damage. But by studying the literature, you can learn to distinguish the major causes for deterioration, the first step in determining needed treatment. Records are generally afflicted with some combination of six types of deterioration. Watch for the signs as you examine documents.

Insect damage: The species of insects infesting the paper can be determined by the type of damage they do even if the insects themselves are not in evidence (see Cunha). This is important because the different habits of these pests require different controls. Damage by rodents can be mistaken for insect damage, although the difference is easily discerned by the trained conservator.

Mold (fungus) damage: Little experience is needed to recognize even minor fungus damage (see Cunha and Kathpalia). Badly infested paper becomes soft or limp, is easily torn, and will ultimately crumble. Even without physical handling, such paper can disintegrate. Acid embrittled paper, on the other hand, will generally remain intact until handled. In its early stages, mildew appears as a light efflorescence of spores on exposed surfaces. These can be dusted off with a clean cloth with little aftereffect. If disregarded, the spores send their root-like hyphae deep into the paper, seriously damaging the cellulose fibers. Even at this stage, prompt remedial action can arrest and minimize the damage, obviating the need for expensive restoration later.

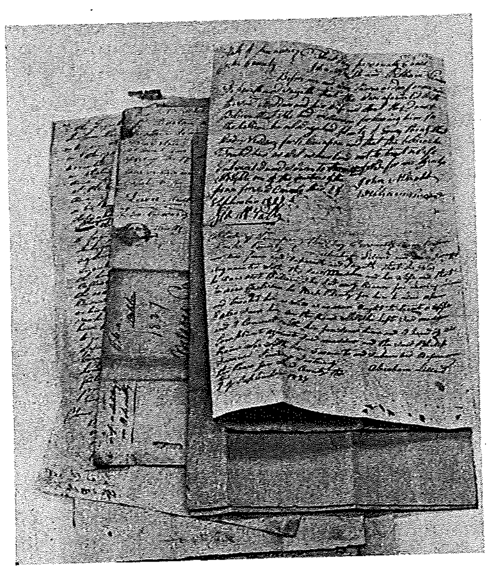
Water damage: Any time water penetrates paper, a potentially serious problem exists. But a prompt remedial treatment can limit the damage to stains and warping. Remove wetness promptly by blotting; then air-dry damp documents slowly. Keep the temperature below 65° F; otherwise, mold will exacerbate the problem.

Acid contamination: Study the information in Cunha, Kathpalia, and Langwell to become familiar with various types. You can also determine the degree and some types of acid contamination by using simple chemical tests provided in the Barrow Test Kit (available from Applied Science Laboratory). These chemicals identify contamination caused by alum/rosin sizing or residual lignin in the paper and the extent of contamination. If the tests for alum and lignin are negative, acid damage is probably caused by air pollution.

Although acid-damaged paper is often discolored and brittle, paper often "looks good" even though acid hydrolysis has drastically reduced the strength of the cellulose fibers in it. Although laboratory instruments may be used to determine acid damage in its early stages, acid indicators, such as in the Barrow Test Kit, or an archivist's pen (available from TALAS) will tell you the approximate "pH" of paper. The paper is safe if it is 6.0 or more, while a pH of less than 6.0 indicates that acid is present in the paper in undesirable amounts. Paper that is uniformly brown stained and brittle is in an advanced state of acid deterioration. Set any such documents aside for special treatment, because the damage has gone beyond the point where deacidification will suffice.

Photo-chemical action: Some brown staining is due to the action of light. Newspapers discolored by the sun are excellent examples of photo oxidation. Most historical records will not have suffered from over-exposure to light; but when in doubt about the cause of the staining, check the possibility.

Heat exposure: The early effects of heat can only be discerned by laboratory examination. Prevention is the best alternative. Paper damage can be caused by prolonged exposure to medium heat (overheated rooms, bookshelves over radiators, etc.), brief exposure to high heat (usually from fire), and daily and seasonal temperature fluctuations typical of many climates. Assume that any records subjected to these conditions have been damaged. They should be referred to a professional conservator for examination and treatment if necessary.



Detailed examination of the documents in a collection is necessary to determine which can be treated on the premises and which require professional attention.

PREPARING A WORK ROOM

Examining the records will give you a general idea of the problems you face. Normally persons without special training should concentrate their activity on preventive aspects of conservation. If circumstances dictate that "in-house" repairs are needed, you should, if possible, obtain assistance from a practicing conservator who will be able to help you decide what can be treated on the premises and what must be done by trained professionals. Be most conservative in what you decide to do on your own. Never attempt to bleach paper, remove stains with solvents, or rebind journals, for example. Nor should you attempt sophisticated paper repairs.

Within limitations, there is still much that can and should be done in a prepared work area by the designated records conservator and carefully supervised volunteers. Such procedures include cleaning and tape removal; relaxing, opening, and flattening bundled records; deacidification and simple paper repairs; and refurbishing the covers of bound volumes of documents.

The amount of work you can do yourself will depend on your understanding of the physical and chemical properties of archival materials, your skill with your hands, and on the adequacy of your space and equipment. Work rooms can be anything from a separate room replete with tools and supplies to a table in a corner of the storage area. Guidance in selecting equipment is included in many of the books listed in the further readings.

ON THE PREMISE TREATMENT

Repairing paper: Horton's *Cleaning and Preserving Bindings and Related Materials* gives excellent guidance on how to make simple book repairs. The instructions for repairing records in Minogue's thirty-year-old *Repair and Preservation of Records* are still basically sound, too, although they do not include recently developed techniques for using nylon webb and mylar encapsulation, for example.

Dry cleaning: Surface soil on paper not embrittled by acid can often be removed with the help of the ground art gum cleaning pads available at draftsmen's supply houses or TALAS. Banks's article and a slide kit on cleaning paper (available from the Smithsonian Institution's Office of Museum Programs) provide further guidance.

Relaxing records: Tightly folded documents should be relaxed before opening and flattening. Place them in an improvised humidity chamber made by putting damp blotters in the bottom of a cookie tin, old fashioned bread box, or any other container with a relatively tight cover. After several hours or even a day in such a homemade "pettifogger," even the worst cases can be safely unfolded. Then place the records between slightly damp blotters under a light weight for several days to flatten them. Lightly folded and moderately wrinkled documents can by-pass the "pettifogging" and simply be placed between damp blotters for relaxing and flattening.

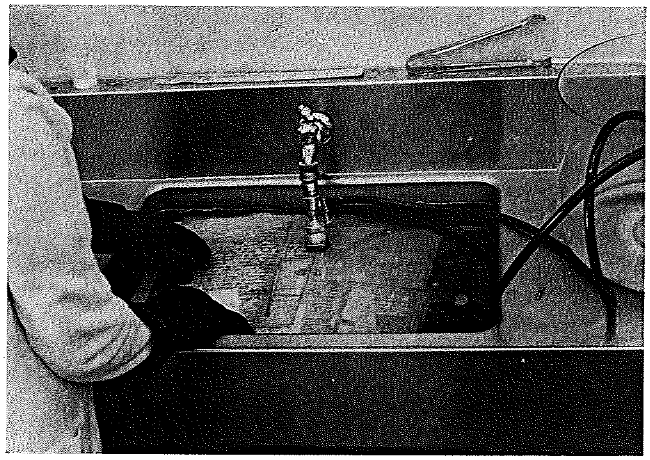
Tape removal: Remove extraneous tape from documents. Library tape has a water-soluble adhesive that often separates by itself. If not, immerse the document in a tray of water (after testing the ink for water solubility) until the tape floats off. The document can then be dried between blotters or kitchen paper towels.

Pressure-sensitive tapes are a different and more serious matter, and they must always be removed from records you intend to retain. Buy some toluene, a safe volatile solvent available from chemical supply houses. Apply it to the edges of the tape with a small brush or a bit of cotton on the tip of a toothpick until a corner of the tape can be lifted with tweezers. Gently pull the tape away from the paper, continually applying more toluene at the line of separation. After the tape is off, remove any residual adhesive on the paper by sponging with toluene.

Deacidification: After the records have been cleaned and flattened, determine whether they must be deacidified by testing them with an archivist's pen or the phenol solution in the Barrow Test Kit. Treat borderline cases with Langwell's acid-inhibiting papers (available from Interleaf, Inc.), by either interleaving them in bound volumes of records or placing them in the boxes with loose records.

Records that are definitely acid can be deacidified with a nonaqueous chemical. Use the Wei T'o Aerosol Spray or the less expensive liquid solution (available from Wei T'o Associates). (See HISTORY NEWS, Dec. 1973, p. 274).

A third procedure involves deacidifying documents in a water solution. Before settling on this method, consult a trained conservator or familiarize yourself with the physical properties of the paper and inks to be treated. Some records react negatively to aqueous treatment, but it is the least expensive of the methods for the deacidi-



Familiarity with the physical properties of the inks and paper to be treated is essential before deacidifying documents in a water solution.

fication of paper if the documents can withstand immersion in water.

For the "soda water" process, add to one quart of carbonated water a crushed milk of magnesia tablet or one tablespoon of milk of magnesia emulsion. Recap tightly and let stand overnight. To use the mixture for deacidification, pour the solution into a photographer's tray or shallow baking pan. Place the paper to be deacidified in the solution, seeing that each sheet is well saturated before adding the next. Let stand two hours. Dry the deacidified papers on blotters or paper towels. This mixture will effectively neutralize acid in paper, but its buffering is not as great as with Wei T'o.

It is best to send paper badly damaged by acid, mold, pressure-sensitive tape stains, heat, insects, and so on to a professional workshop for the expert treatment required. Slightly damaged paper can be mended with torn strips of Japanese mulberry paper applied on the reverse side with wheat paste (never library paste or the white glues so abundant in hardware and stationery stores and library supply catalogs).

Nylon gossamer webb reinforcement can safely be applied to the backs of single-sided documents. This requires the use of another heat-sensitive nylon webb as the adhesive, a flat iron as the heat source, and a supply of silicone release paper to facilitate the ironing process. All of the materials required are available from TALAS. With a little practice, one can make quite workmanlike, invisible reinforcements to worn documents or those weakened by acid. A leaflet describing this technique is available from the New England Document Conservation Center.

The mylar encapsulation process for worn and torn documents developed by Peter Waters at the Library of Congress is another safe process that parish records conservators should master. This process is described in the *Guild of Book Workers Journal* (Vol. XI, No. 3, Spring, 1973) and is also available in a pamphlet prepared by Jane Greenfield at the Yale Library Restoration Laboratory.

Cleaning books: If your records collection includes books, the following cleaning procedure is safe and satisfactory. Remove the books from the shelves one rack at a time and place them on shelves in the work area. *Keep in order.* Thoroughly vacuum and scrub the shelves and racks as well as the adjacent floor, walls, and ceiling. Then clean each book individually with a vacuum. Do be sure the books are sturdy enough—or the vacuum cleaner is sufficiently gentle—to clean in this manner. Rare or fragile books can simply be dusted with a clean cloth.

Leather-bound volumes: Carefully clean preliminary pages, the end sheets, and interior pages as necessary, using ground art gum. If mildew is evident, spray with a 10 percent solution of Thymol in methyl alcohol. Unless the leather is powdering, wash covers with castile soap suds froth (*not* liquid). Let dry. Sponge covers with a 7 percent aqueous solution of Potassium Lactate. Let dry for 24 hours. (It is pointless to lactate the cover if the leather is powdering, for it is then too late.) Now apply leather dressing, and let stand for 24 hours. You can make an inexpensive dressing by melting a mixture of six parts anhydrous lanolin and four parts neat's-foot oil over a low heat. Polish the leather with a flannel cloth. Repeat every 24-30 months to keep leather in good condition.

Vellum-covered books: Clean exteriors and interiors, checking for mildew and treating texts with Thymol if necessary. In the unlikely event that the vellum covers are mildewed, remove the spores by sponging the contaminated area with a cotton swab moistened with alcohol. Then polish the covers with saddle soap.

Cloth-bound books: Clean exteriors and interiors, checking for mildew and treating with Thymol as necessary. If the covers are worn and frayed, spray with an acrylic resin (Krylon 1301 is recommended).

CONCLUSION

The combination of time and conditions (see diagram below) that has created a situation which now imperils the records of our heritage need not be a catastrophe. It is well within the capability of the keepers of these records to save them from destruction. The first requirement is a modest expenditure of funds and considerable effort to create environments in which the enemies of books and documents cannot exist. Second, programs for the restoration of already damaged materials must be established. These programs, often long range by necessity, must be common sense in house repairs, as well as sophisticated treatment by professional conservators. In each instance, the required decisions, the funding, and the overall supervision of the programs are the responsibility of the custodian. The buck comes to a stop on his desk.

SOURCES OF SUPPLIES

Applied Science Laboratory
218 North Adams Street
Richmond, Virginia 23220

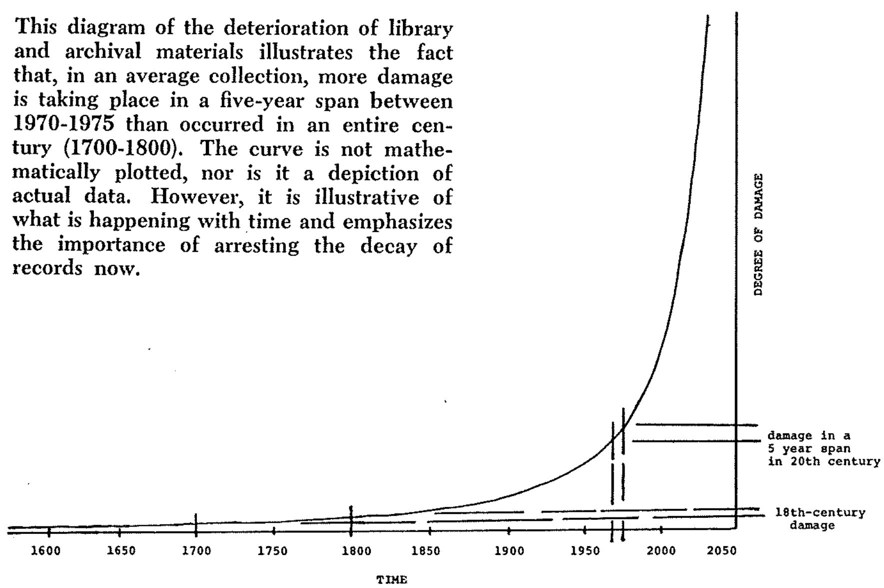
Gallard-Schlesinger Chemical
Manufacturing Co.
1584 Nineola Avenue
Carle Place, New York 11514

Interleaf, Inc.
2300 East 26th Street
Minneapolis, Minnesota 55406

Solar Screen Bulb Jackets
Solar-Screen 53-11
105th Street
Corona, New York 11368

TALAS
104 Fifth Avenue
New York, New York 10011

Wei T'o Associates, Inc.
224 Early St., P.O. Box 352
Park Forest, Illinois 60460



This diagram of the deterioration of library and archival materials illustrates the fact that, in an average collection, more damage is taking place in a five-year span between 1970-1975 than occurred in an entire century (1700-1800). The curve is not mathematically plotted, nor is it a depiction of actual data. However, it is illustrative of what is happening with time and emphasizes the importance of arresting the decay of records now.

FOR FURTHER READING

Banks, Paul N. "Paper Cleaning." *Restaurator* I (1) 1969, pp. 52-66.

Barrow, W. J. *The Barrow Method of Restoring Deteriorated Documents.* Richmond, Va.: W. J. Barrow State Library Building, 1966.

"The Cleaning of Prints, Drawings and Manuscripts on Paper: Dry Methods." One of several Conservation Information Program Slide Presentations available from the Office of Museum Programs, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, D.C. 20560.

Cunha, G. M. and D. G. *The Conservation of Library Materials.* 2nd ed. Metuchen, N.J.: Scarecrow Press, 1971.

Greenfield, Jane. "Mylar Envelopes." *Guild of Book Workers Journal* XI (3) 1973.

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Guldbeck, Per. *The Care of Historical Collections: A Conservation Handbook for the Nonspecialist.* Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1972. The sections on setting up a workshop and first aid for paper are especially helpful.

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Kane, Lucille M. *A Guide to the Care and Administration of Manuscripts.* 2nd ed. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1966.

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Santen, Vernon and Howard W. Crocker. *Historical Society Records: Guidelines for a Protection Program.* Technical Leaflet #18. Nashville: American Association for State and Local History, 1972.

Wardle, D. B. *Document Repair.* London: Society for Archivists, 1971.

Waters, Peter. "Emergency Procedures for Salvaging Flood or Water-Damaged Library Materials." Copied manuscript. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress, 1972.

George M. Cunha brings to the writing of this leaflet considerable expertise in the field of conserving archival materials. He has been director/conservator of the New England Document Conservation Center, in North Andover, Massachusetts, since it was established in 1973. Prior to that time, he was chief conservator at the Library of the Boston Athenaeum.

Cunha is co-author of *The Conservation of Library Materials,* a two-volume manual and bibliography on the care, repair, and restoration of library materials, and has served as a conservation consultant for numerous historical societies.

He holds membership in the International Institute for the Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works, the American Institute for Conservation, and the International Council of Museums. He is also vice president at large of the Guild of Book Workers.

TECHNICAL LEAFLET 86

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American Association for State and Local History

Technical LEAFLET

Local Historical Records: Programs for Historical Agencies

by Bruce W. Dearstyne
New York State Archives

Introduction

It is helpful to begin by defining some basic terms that are sometimes used interchangeably. "Records" include any recorded information, regardless of physical form or characteristic, made or received by an individual, institution, or organization. The term is often narrowly construed to mean information existing in only one or a few copies. Thus, newspapers and other multi-copied sources are not strictly "records" despite their potential historical research value. "Historical manuscripts" are handwritten or typed records with historical significance. "Archives" are the records of an organization or institution that warrant preservation because of their historical research value. Local historical records include manuscripts, archives, and other records containing significant information on the history of a community or its people.

Records have been called extensions of the human memory, mirrors of society, clues for understanding the human experience, and grist for the historian's mill. They may be the best and most useful sources for historical evidence about what actually happened in the past. Historians rely on local records to find eye-witness historical accounts, to capture the flavor and meaning of life as it was actually lived, to measure the influence of local institutions, and to understand regional, state, or national historical themes. Recently, practitioners of the so-called "new history" have intensified their use of local sources in preparing innovative studies of communities, minorities, and other social groups, and for testing some of the old, accepted interpretations of American history. Popular interest in local records has been sharpened by the Bicentennial and the widespread search for personal and family "roots." However, too often even the most valuable local records are fragmented, disorganized, unknown to researchers, or simply destroyed. This leaflet explores some ways for local historical agencies to preserve and make available to researchers the information in these significant records.

Defining the Role of Historical Agencies

Local historical agencies can play a variety of constructive roles to ensure the survival and use of historical records in their localities. However, successful historical records programs require careful, thorough planning in the following areas.

Objectives. The goals of any records program should be clear from the beginning. Just what is the program's mission? What is it expected to accomplish?

Support. Records programs require serious and substantial commitment from trustees and administrators. Too often, historical records projects, especially collecting efforts, begin in bursts of enthusiasm for saving historical records but lose momentum as the glamour wears off and the difficulties become apparent.

Budget. Historical records efforts can be costly, particularly if records are to be purchased, preserved, and properly cared for. Initial financial support may be sought from government agencies or foundations for start-up money or support for specific projects; however, long-term, continuous, and adequate funding should be assured before launching large-scale programs.

Targeted researchers. Historical records programs should ultimately serve the cause of historical or other research projects. You may choose to give priority to the needs of genealogists, high school or college students, or other historical researchers, for example, but in order to build a successful program, it is essential to identify the major client or patron group or groups to be served.

Staff. Historical records work requires special training, experience, and dedication that may overtax the often limited staff in historical agencies. Realistically tailor programs to available staff or else plan for additional support through staff expansion or use of volunteers.

Cooperation. Records programs should not compete with or significantly overlap the efforts of other community history agencies. Cooperation and free exchange of advice and assistance will ultimately serve the cause of local historical record preservation better than competition.

Developing Historical Records Advisory Services

Local historical agencies may initiate several types of historical records programs that do not involve actually collecting materials. In fact,

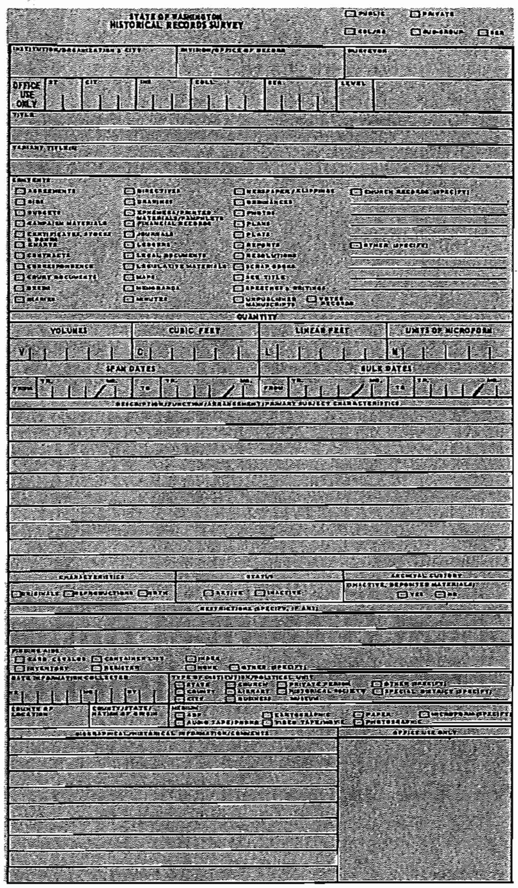


Figure 1. Example of a detailed form for surveying and analyzing historical records, courtesy of Washington State Historical Records Advisory Board.

noncollecting efforts may help preserve and disseminate historical information even more effectively than collecting programs. Offered here is a list of some additional roles the historical agency may play.

Public awareness. Publications, informational displays and exhibits, lectures, "history fairs," and other presentations may be used to increase public awareness of the existence and historical research value of local records.

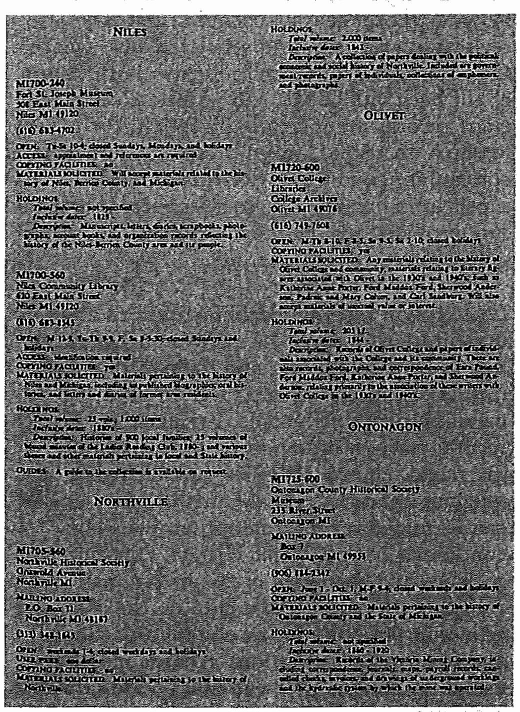
Advice for records custodians. Historical agency personnel may work directly with key records custodians such as local business administrators, church secretaries, and municipal clerks to improve records management, security, and protection. The historian can help identify records of historical value, explain the importance of preserving these materials, and suggest special projects such as microfilming selected, significant records.

Training in historical records techniques. Local historical agencies may sponsor workshops and conferences to teach appraisal and conservation methods to custodians of historical records and to alert historical researchers to the availability and research potential of local materials.

Finding homes for historical records. Local historical agencies can sometimes play an intermediary role in locating appropriate repositories and arranging for the transfer of historically significant records no longer needed or wanted by those who have them.

Educational use of historical records. Imaginative use of historical records or facsimilies can enliven and extend the classroom learning experience. Agencies might encourage teachers to use these potential teaching tools to illustrate discussions of community history, social relationships, economic development, and other historical themes.

Surveying and locating historical records. Projects to locate and make known the existing



NILES

MI700-240
Fort St. Joseph Museum
508 East Main Street
Niles MI 49120

(616) 683-4702

OPEN: Tu-Sa 10-4; closed Sundays, Mondays, and holidays
ACCESS: appointment and references are required
COPYING FACILITIES: no
MATERIALS SOLICITED: Will accept materials related to the history of Niles, Berrien County, and Michigan.

HOLDINGS:
Total volume: not specified
Inclusive dates: 1825-
Description: Manuscripts, letters, diaries, scrapbooks, photographs, account books, and organization records reflecting the history of the Niles-Berrien County area and its people.

MI700-560
Niles Community Library
620 East Main Street
Niles MI 49120

(616) 683-8545

OPEN: M 12-8, Tu-Th 9-8, F, Sa 9-5:30; closed Sundays and holidays
ACCESS: identification required
COPYING FACILITIES: yes
MATERIALS SOLICITED: Materials pertaining to the history of Niles and Michigan, including unpublished biographies, oral histories, and letters and diaries of former area residents.

HOLDINGS:
Total volume: 25 vols., 1,000 items
Inclusive dates: 1830's-
Description: Histories of 900 local families; 25 volumes of bound minutes of the Ladies Reading Club, 1880- ; and various theses and other materials pertaining to local and State history.

GUIDES: A guide to the collection is available on request.

NORTHVILLE

MI705-860
Northville Historical Society
Griswold Avenue
Northville MI

MAILING ADDRESS:
P.O. Box 71
Northville MI 48167

(313) 348-1845

OPEN: weekends 1-4; closed weekdays and holidays
USER FEES: one dollar
COPYING FACILITIES: no
MATERIALS SOLICITED: Materials pertaining to the history of Northville.

HOLDINGS:
Total volume: 2,000 items
Inclusive dates: 1845-
Description: A collection of papers dealing with the political, economic and social history of Northville. Included are government records, papers of individuals, collections of ephemera, and photographs.

OLIVET

MI720-600
Olivet College
Libraries
College Archives
Olivet MI 49076

(616) 749-7608

OPEN: M-Th 8-10, F 8-5, Sa 9-5, Su 2-10; closed holidays
COPYING FACILITIES: yes
MATERIALS SOLICITED: Any materials relating to the history of Olivet College and community; materials relating to literary figures associated with Olivet in the 1930's and 1940's, such as Katherine Anne Porter, Ford Madox Ford, Sherwood Anderson, Padraic and Mary Colum, and Carl Sandburg. Will also accept materials of unusual value or interest.

HOLDINGS:
Total volume: 203 l.f.
Inclusive dates: 1844-
Description: Records of Olivet College and papers of individuals associated with the College and its community. There are also records, photographs, and correspondence of Ezra Pound, Ford Madox Ford, Katherine Anne Porter, and Sherwood Anderson, relating primarily to the association of these writers with Olivet College in the 1930's and 1940's.

ONTONAGON

MI725-600
Ontonagon County Historical Society
Museum
233 River Street
Ontonagon MI

MAILING ADDRESS:
Box 7
Ontonagon MI 49953

(906) 884-2347

OPEN: June 1 - Oct. 1, M-F 9-4; closed weekends and holidays
COPYING FACILITIES: no
MATERIALS SOLICITED: Materials pertaining to the history of Ontonagon County and the State of Michigan.

HOLDINGS:
Total volume: not specified
Inclusive dates: 1860 - 1920
Description: Records of the Victoria Mining Company, including correspondence, journals, maps, payroll records, cancelled checks, invoices and drawings of underground workings and the hydraulic system by which the mine was operated.

Figure 2. Sample page from Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States published by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission in 1978.

historical records in a given geographical area or on a specific historical topic can be most useful to researchers. This task can be facilitated by use of specially developed records survey forms for taking down essential information on originator, title, inclusive dates, subject or contents, quantity, and location of records. See figure 1 for a sample form.

Guides or directories to historical records. The results of records surveys may be used as a basis for publishing guides containing important information gleaned from the survey forms or directories of local repositories and their most notable holdings. Figure 2 is a sample from the *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States* recently published by the National Historical Publications and Records Commission.

Appraising Local Records for Historical Value

Only a small percentage of the records that are created by human activity have enduring historical research value. Historical imagination, experience, and an understanding of the origin, nature, and probable research use of records all enter into appraisal judgements. It is particularly important to distinguish between the antiquarian or "artifact" value of a record, which is dependent on its physical form, appearance, and age, and its "informational" value, dependent on its content and potential role in reconstructing local history. It is generally advisable to consult experienced archivists, manuscript curators, or historical experts for advice on making appraisals. Listed here are some general considerations and questions that may be helpful in evaluating specific records.

Purpose of creation. Why were the records created? Usually records originate to document an act, to keep track of something, to inform, or to fill some other deliberate purpose and, therefore, serve personal, social, administrative, or other functions for their originator.

Nature of originator. What person, group, institution, or government agency created the records? How important was the creator in the community or in the institutional hierarchy where the record was created? Was the creator competent, unbiased, and accurate so that the records are likely to be reliable?

Best source. Are the records the best sources of evidence available? Is their information duplicated, summarized, or available elsewhere in a better or more usable form?

Evidential value. Some archivists use this term to refer to information in records on the activities of the person or the internal operation of the organization that produced them. How well do the records document policies, procedures, achievements, and failures?

Information value. Historical researchers frequently mine historical records for information that is not directly related to the activities and purposes of the creator of the records. How much information do the records provide on the community, its people, and developments and events beyond the originator's concern?

Prominent citizens. Every community has certain "famous" politicians, educators, business people, or other individuals who have been especially influential in local history. How much information do the records contain on the careers and contributions made by these exceptional individuals?

Nonelite. How much information is there on the everyday activities of ordinary people, minorities, the poor, the uneducated, and other nonelite? Often these people—the vast majority of any community—are the most difficult for historians to study because they generate few systematic records and leave behind little in the way of historical evidence. However, these groups are the focus of much contemporary historical and other scholarship, increasing the demand for records containing information on their lives and experiences.

Unique community traits. How much information do the records contain on geography, natural resources, settlement patterns, economic, social, political, and other characteristics that distinguish a particular locality from others?

Regional or national themes. Though each community is unique, some local records help to define its place in the mainstream of broader social, economic, and political trends or to furnish information for regional or national comparative studies.

Past use. How often have these or similar records been sought or used by researchers in the past and for what purposes?

Research value in relation to quantity. How much useful information do the records contain in relation to their quantity? Small series with much useful data are valuable; bulky series with only scattered historical information are less useful.

Specific Types of Records

Records vary greatly from community to community, and the following discussion is indicative of the research value of only four categories of records.

Local government records. Official municipal government records include information on the evolution of government functions, characteristics of social groups, and data on the community as a whole. Often they are the best sources for reconstructing local history. For instance, official minutes provide basic information on issues, policies, and government administration. Treasurers' records and other financial materials document changing spending patterns as well as prices paid for commodities and services. Maps, real property records, and tax books can be used to document land locations, changes in ownership, use of property, dates of construction, and value of structures. Election records trace political changes. Highway superintendents' records illustrate expansion of the local transportation network. Local census schedules, military registration records, and vital statistics, where they are open for research, furnish information about both individuals and groups. Police and court records are increasingly sought for research on crime, law enforcement, and general community conditions. Records of welfare supervisors demonstrate social concerns and the care provided for the poor, orphans, and other unfortunates.

Organization records. Local institutions and organizations have always played a significant role in community life, and their records can furnish significant information on both the community and its people. For instance, church records have information on births, deaths, marriages, church activities, and changing religious concerns. The records of labor unions can be mined for information on working conditions and economic change. Agricultural societies and chambers of commerce may create records with considerable data on the changing economic structure of the community. Social and fraternal organizations' records may be useful for studying recreational and leisure-time activities.

Business records. The records of local businesses may be very useful as sources for information valuable to the study of history. For example, ledgers of early general stores may show names of customers, available commodities, prices, mediums of exchange such as barter, credit, or money, and information on the overall standard of living in the areas. With the passage of time and the organization of more complex business enterprises, such as factories, more elaborate organizational records were created; company minutes may show how policies were formulated, and administrative files may indicate how those policies were carried out. Financial records reveal growth or decline of the company and sidelights on economic fluctuations. Personnel records can yield information on recruiting, hiring, salaries, promotions, dismissals, strikes and other disturbances, and general working conditions. Production department files demonstrate the development of products and processes while advertising records show changes in sales techniques.

Personal and family records. Individuals write letters, keep diaries, take photographs, and create accounts and other personal records for their own purposes. The thoughts expressed and recorded may provide insights into the originators' motivations and behavior, the activities of people with whom they had contact, and community institutions and events. For instance, a student's letter sent home from college can be used by the educational historian interested in curriculum development or the influence of campus life. A despairing entry in a Depression-era diary may be useful in resonstructing the personal and social impact of that economic cataclysm on the community. A politician's letter to a friend can reveal more about strategy and philosophy than public pronouncements. A family photograph album containing shots of significant buildings may be invaluable to an architectural historian.

Collecting and Servicing Local Historical Records

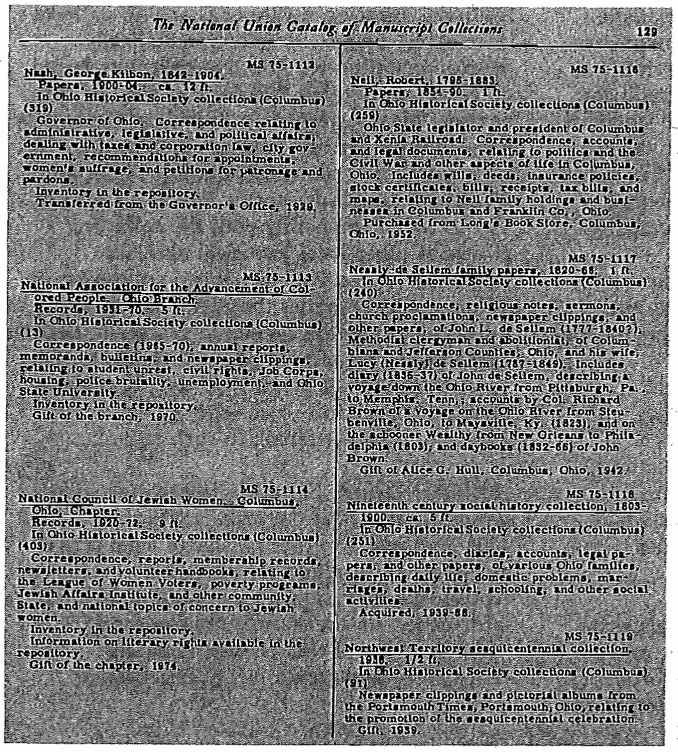
The decision to actively collect historical records and make them available for research carries special responsibilities. While this leaflet cannot undertake to discuss in such short space all aspects of these important questions, this section focuses on some often overlooked essentials.

Collections policy. It is best to avoid haphazard and indiscriminate records collecting. Records should not be sought simply because they are "old," would make nice display pieces, or are signed by a prominent person. Instead, historical agencies, aware of changing patterns of research interest, should systematically develop priorities for selective collecting based on geographical area, historical topics, or time periods. Ideally, records collected by the society will reinforce existing holdings so that the entire collection grows along preconceived lines and the agency develops specific research strengths. Try to avoid competing with the collecting efforts of other local historical agencies. Remember that a well-developed collections policy not only guides the agency in collecting but also permits the agency to gracefully decline unwanted items offered by local residents. One special caution—it is not legal to collect some government records, so be sure to check local and state laws pertaining to such records.

Accession record. Formally "accession" every group of records at the time of their acquisition. This term refers to the transfer of legal as well as physical custody of the records to the repository. Accession documentation includes information on the source, volume, and inclusive dates of the records, research restrictions, and conditions of purchase or donation.

Arrangement. There is no "right" way to arrange historical records, and the approach to arrangement will depend on the volume and nature of the records, available staff time, and the nature and intensity of probable research use. However, most archivists and manuscript curators generally accept certain basic rules: (1) records should be maintained in their original file and organizational order whenever possible; (2) as a corollary, records should be organized according to their originating function, and the records of one originator should not be intermingled with those of other creators; (3) if records arrive at a repository in complete disorder, it will usually make sense to organize them as simply as possible, for instance, alphabetically or chronologically; (4) it is seldom advisable to try to separate records artificially according to the subject of each item; and (5) it is not desirable to reorganize records to make them fit preconceived classification schemes.

Description. Collections lacking finding aids are virtually inaccessible. Finding aids may be brief such as an entry in a card catalog describing an entire collection, or detailed and elaborate, such as an item-by-item subject index. The purpose of any finding aid is to give the researcher reasonably easy access, a goal that can often be accomplished by preparing summary, undetailed



The National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections 129

MS 75-1112
Nash, George Kilbon, 1842-1904.
Papers, 1900-04. ca. 12 ft.
In Ohio Historical Society collections (Columbus) (319)
Governor of Ohio. Correspondence relating to administrative, legislative, and political affairs, dealing with taxes and corporation law, city government, recommendations for appointments, women's suffrage, and petitions for patronage and pardons.
Inventory in the repository.
Transferred from the Governor's Office, 1929.

MS 75-1113
National Association for the Advancement of Colored People. Ohio Branch.
Records, 1931-70. 5 ft.
In Ohio Historical Society collections (Columbus) (13)
Correspondence (1965-70), annual reports, memoranda, bulletins, and newspaper clippings, relating to student unrest, civil rights, Job Corps, housing, police brutality, unemployment, and Ohio State University.
Inventory in the repository.
Gift of the branch, 1970.

MS 75-1114
National Council of Jewish Women. Columbus, Ohio, Chapter.
Records, 1920-72. 9 ft.
In Ohio Historical Society collections (Columbus) (403)
Correspondence, reports, membership records, newsletters, and volunteer handbooks, relating to the League of Women Voters, poverty programs, Jewish Affairs Institute, and other community, State, and national topics of concern to Jewish women.
Inventory in the repository.
Information on literary rights available in the repository.
Gift of the chapter, 1974.

MS 75-1116
Neil, Robert, 1786-1883.
Papers, 1854-90. 1 ft.
In Ohio Historical Society collections (Columbus) (259)
Ohio State legislator and president of Columbus and Xenia Railroad. Correspondence, accounts, and legal documents, relating to politics and the Civil War and other aspects of life in Columbus, Ohio. Includes wills, deeds, insurance policies, stock certificates, bills, receipts, tax bills, and maps, relating to Neil family holdings and businesses in Columbus and Franklin Co., Ohio.
Purchased from Long's Book Store, Columbus, Ohio, 1952.

MS 75-1117
Nessly-de Sellem family papers, 1820-66. 1 ft.
In Ohio Historical Society collections (Columbus) (240)
Correspondence, religious notes, sermons, church proclamations, newspaper clippings, and other papers, of John L. de Sellem (1777-1840?), Methodist clergyman and abolitionist, of Columbiana and Jefferson Counties, Ohio, and his wife, Lucy (Nessly) de Sellem (1787-1849). Includes diary (1836-37) of John de Sellem, describing a voyage down the Ohio River from Pittsburgh, Pa., to Memphis, Tenn.; accounts by Col. Richard Brown of a voyage on the Ohio River from Steubenville, Ohio, to Maysville, Ky. (1823), and on the schooner Wealthy from New Orleans to Philadelphia (1803); and daybooks (1832-66) of John Brown.
Gift of Alice G. Hull, Columbus, Ohio, 1942.

MS 75-1118
Nineteenth century social history collection, 1803-1900. ca. 5 ft.
In Ohio Historical Society collections (Columbus) (251)
Correspondence, diaries, accounts, legal papers, and other papers, of various Ohio families, describing daily life, domestic problems, marriages, deaths, travel, schooling, and other social activities.
Acquired, 1939-68.

MS 75-1119
Northwest Territory sesquicentennial collection, 1938. 1/2 ft.
In Ohio Historical Society collections (Columbus) (91)
Newspaper clippings and pictorial albums from the Portsmouth Times, Portsmouth, Ohio, relating to the promotion of the sesquicentennial celebration.
Gift, 1939.

*Figure 3. Samples of entries in the **National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections.***

descriptions. In any case, it is usually not desirable to describe some collections down to the item level while others remain untouched due to a lack of staff time. A summary finding aid, generally called an "inventory," should be adequate for most collections. An inventory ideally will include: (1) introduction; (2) information on the history and activities of the person, group, or other originator of the records; (3) discussion of the types of materials in the collection; (4) analysis of the information in the records; and (5) listing of each series and of each container, box, folder, or other file unit. The manual by David Gracy noted in the "suggested readings" section is highly recommended for the related subjects of arrangement and description.

Publicity. For maximum benefit to researchers, historical records repositories should make their holdings known through notices in scholarly journals and their own publications and reports. Publishing summary guides with information about each collection for deposit in the state library, historical society, or other places researchers might seek such guides is helpful also. Significant collections should be reported to the Library of Congress, *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC).* This important nationwide listing of historical collections is periodically updated and is elaborately indexed (see figure 3). For more information and forms for submitting entries, write the editor, *NUCMC*, Descriptive Cataloguing Division, Library of Congress, Washington, DC 20504. The National Historical Publications and Records Commission has recently published a *Directory of Archives and Manuscript Repositories in the United States* which summarizes the holdings of over 3,200 historical records repositories (see figure 2). *NUCMC* and this *Directory* are excellent tools for locating local history records that are being held outside of your community.

Grants for Historical Records Projects

Long-term, ongoing historical records programs require continuous funding through the historical agency's regular budget process. However, local benefactors or foundations may be willing to provide funding and support for special projects tied to their particular interests and funding priorities. In addition, at this time, at least two federal agencies provide significant funding for historical records projects.

National Historical Publications and Records Commission (NHPRC) is a federal agency that makes grants to state and local governments and nonprofit institutions for projects to preserve and enhance the use of historical records. NHPRC grants are available to survey, collect, preserve, reproduce, and prepare finding aids to historical records, to develop new archival techniques, and to make feasibility studies. The program is administered in each state through a historical records advisory board and a coordinator in the state archival or historical agency. NHPRC publishes a statement of preferred approaches and funding priorities, and each state board also has its own statement of priorities. The commission encourages cooperative applications from groups of small historical agencies. NHPRC is also attempting to develop a nationwide data base containing information on historical records and has published the *Directory* noted above. For more information about this agency, write the historical records coordinator in your state or NHPRC, National Archives Building, Washington, DC 20408.

National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) is another federal agency that has a broad mandate to fund a wide range of projects to build up materials and resources for humanistic research. NEH grants may be obtained to catalogue, inventory, arrange, or otherwise process significant historical records. The NEH also makes grants to the state-based humanities committees in each state to provide support for special projects. NEH and NHPRC often fund similar projects, and a statement on the differences between the two programs is available from either agency. The address for NEH is 806 Fifteenth Street, N.W., Washington, DC 20506.

Applying for historical records grants. This leaflet cannot attempt to provide complete guidelines for grant applicants. The best advice is to obtain all of the relevant descriptive information from the funding agency well in advance of filing deadlines and to consult with agency personnel, if possible, as the application is prepared. The following points are especially critical when applying for historical records grants:

Describe the records as completely as possible, including identity, volume, dates, and bulk dates.

Make a convincing case for the research value of the records. What significant information do they contain? Why is this information needed or sought by researchers? How will availability of the material be increased if the project can be carried out?

Provide a complete explanation of procedures. Just how will the records be arranged, described, preserved, copied, or otherwise affected by the project? It is important to show that the procedures are sound and in line with what is generally accepted as good practice by experienced archivists and manuscript curators.

Prepare a defensible budget. There is intense competition for grants, and applications that precisely describe why funds are needed and how they will be spent have an advantage.

Show that the personnel who will carry out the project are sufficiently well qualified, either through education or training, to carry out their work competently.

Seeking Help With Records Programs

Guidance and assistance other than grants may also be sought from several sources.

Other local historical agencies. Local historians who have "learned through doing" or have special training often can offer the best practical advice on thorny questions like appraisal, collecting, and services to researchers. Groups with common interests in this field may find it useful to form historical records organizations at the community or regional level.

State authorities. Most state libraries, archives, or historical societies have archivists or manuscript curators on their staffs who can provide advice, answer questions, suggest readings, and help solve historical records problems. Some states have formal training, outreach, or aid programs tailored to the needs of local historical records or conduct in-house workshops and training sessions.

Professional organizations. Regional, state, and national associations of archivists and manuscript curators can furnish information and advice on techniques and procedures through newsletters, journals, meetings, and training seminars. The Society of American Archivists (SAA) is the best known and largest organization of this type. It publishes the *American Archivist,* a journal with outstanding articles on historical records administration and technical developments in the field. For more information on SAA programs and publications, write the SAA at 330 South Wells Street, Suite 810, Chicago, Illinois 60606.

Training courses. Several colleges and universities, some state archival and historical agencies, and the National Archives and Records Service offer formal training courses in historical records methods. The *Education Directory* published in 1978 by the SAA lists some of the more prominent courses.

Suggestions for Further Reading

The Society of Americn Archivists has published six basic manuals:

Arrangement and Description by David Gracy, II,
Appraisal and Accessioning by Maynard J. Brichford,
Surveys by John A. Fleckner,
Reference and Access by Sue E. Holbert,
Security by Timothy Walch,
Business Records: An Introduction by Edie Hedlin.

Additional manuals are being prepared on administration, automation, exhibits, fund-raising, public programs, cartographic and architectural records, and reprography. The manuals are written for nonprofessionals by experts in a clear, concise style and have excellent bibliographies.

The SAA has also published *A Basic Glossary for Archivists, Manuscripts Curators, and Records Managers,* edited by William L. Rofes and *Modern Archives and Manuscripts: A Select Bibliography,* compiled by Frank B. Evans. The *American Archivist,* the society's quarterly journal, may be helpful, as well.

Three additional books are particularly useful. Kenneth W. Duckett's *Modern Manuscripts: A Practical Manual for Their Management, Care, and Use* (AASLH, 1975) explains how to run a manuscript repository. Enid T. Thompson's *Local History Collections: A Manual for Librarians* (AASLH, 1978) is directed toward the historical society or library faced with a small budget. Theodore R. Shellenberg, author of *The Management of Archives* (New York, 1965), is a recognized authority on archival theory and arrangement and description of historical records.

Bruce W. Dearstyne has spent over six years working with custodians of historical records in New York State, first with the Office of State History and currently with the New York State Archives. He has made numerous presentations on appraising, protecting, and caring for historically significant local records and is the author of AASLH Technical Leaflet 96, *Microfilming Historical Records: An Introduction.*

American Association for State and Local History
1400 Eighth Avenue, South
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

TECHNICAL LEAFLET 121

Technical Leaflets are published by the American Association for State and Local History for the purpose of bringing useful information to persons working in the state and local history movement. The selection of subject matter is based upon varied inquiries received by the Association's home office. The leaflets, which are detachable from the magazine, are copyrighted © 1979 by AASLH and should be catalogued as part of HISTORY NEWS.

American Association for State and Local History Technical Leaflet 121, HISTORY NEWS, Volume 34, Number 11, November, 1979. *Local Historical Records: Programs for Historical Agencies.*

Reprints are available. For information on prices, write to the Association at 1400 Eighth Avenue, South, Nashville, Tennessee 37203.

American Association for State and Local History

Technical

LEAFLET

Manuscript Collections: Initial Procedures and Policies

By David H. Hoober

Curator of Manuscripts
Arizona Historical Society

Arriving in New Mexico Territory in 1869, a new governor expanded his quarters by removing the territorial archives to an outhouse on the grounds of the Governor's Palace. The new territorial librarian, Ira M. Bond, was directed to give some of the papers to local residents for whatever use they wished, while the remainder was sold to local merchants for wrapping paper. Over one hundred years later, a curator in another western state discovered among the manuscripts in his charge three large cartons of form letters appealing for charitable donations, encouraging credit applications, and promising winnings from countless contests—the product of dozens of computer-generated mailing lists. The collection was marked "Processing Priority: I."

If these were isolated, uncommon illustrations of the work of collectors and preservers of historical manuscripts, we could ignore them. In fact, they suggest a serious consideration of what we are doing and why we do it.

Historical agencies supporting research programs need to consider some basic questions about their purpose and capacity. Should an institution collect manuscripts, or, if the process is underway, should it continue? A "yes" to that question resolves nothing and forces the confrontation of even harder questions: What should be collected? How is solicitation directed? How is a program sustained by maintaining good relations with donors? All of these queries are summarized when we ask about the benefits of a collecting program.

Why Have a Manuscripts Program?

Edward C. Kemp, who compiled a notable record in building the University of Oregon's manuscripts library collection, points to the advantages of such an effort. He suggests that solicitation broadens the curator's knowledge of the community, and, as a result, members of the community become more aware of the repository. It is logical to expect, according to Kemp, that this process will produce a stronger manuscripts program, an aware, interested community, and an improved position for the manuscripts division within the parent body.

> OUR HERITAGE LIVES in the records of the past. But history has no value unless it is written truthfully, with access to the necessary raw materials. Obviously this cannot be done unless private manuscripts and public records, the "raw materials," are preserved and made available to the researcher and interested citizen. Our goal: to make this possible.—*Excerpt from the Nebraska State Historical Society solicitation brochure "Manuscripts In the Archives."*

What are the possible liabilities associated with a manuscripts solicitation program? Kemp suggests three conditions must be met before the institution can proceed. First, a historical records program must have suitable storage facilities. The repository should be fireproof and have a properly controlled environment. Second, its collections must be accessible at an established location and on a regular schedule. A repository that is open by appointment only or on an irregular, unpredictable basis does not meet these criteria. Finally, to justify all of the effort, the materials in the repository must be administered by a curator who can ensure professional care for them.

Each piece of paper brought into the institution is accompanied by ethical and economic responsibilities. Ethically, material that cannot be cared for properly and made available to researchers should not be accessioned. Nor should the monetary constraints be ignored. Preserving manuscripts can be expensive. An organization devoted to operation of a museum, for example, should not aspire to manuscript collection without accepting the implications of that decision. The costs of collecting, processing, and providing reference service from the materials and the potential effect of those activities on other functions of the museum must be acknowledged.

Selecting Materials: The Collections Policy

The agency and solicitor, given the first green light, then must decide what to gather from the great mass of "historical" materials in the field. Ideally, a decision on goals and an ability to meet them is made at the program's inception. The need to continually revise these assumptions means that every institution will be touched by the process of formulating a collecting policy.

Such a policy statement has two parts. The first is a general statement of the institution's purpose. The second part describes specific means of implementation. These include establishment of collecting fields, description of methods of accession and disposition of materials, and assignment of staff responsibility for solicitation.

What is the value of a collecting policy? Consider the policy as a road map through a jungle of paper. Like many others in the repository's collection, this map may be marred by the absence of some landmarks which might help the collector find some valuable manuscripts. The scale might not be exact, requiring him to occasionally adjust his perspective and modify his goals. The point is that the collections policy is not rigid and absolute; rather, it is the best guide for the curator and the solicitation program.

Collecting fields may be restricted to a particular by geographic area, designated themes, or chronological units, with frequent combination of two or all three.

Geography is the most frequent collecting focus for historical societies, from the municipal to the state level. In addition, state historical societies often will express interest in materials that transcend state boundaries and relate to a specific region.

Specialized agencies which aim to document particular subjects are becoming increasingly popular. This is reflected by the establishment of special interest repositories collecting materials relating to women, ethnic groups, and social and economic interest groups. Sometimes these institutions appear to fill an apparent gap in the activities of established, traditional agencies such as state historical societies.

Whatever the reason for the decision to collect in particular geographical, subject, or chronological areas, the basic considerations remain the same for all institutions: definition of purpose; good facilities for storage and use of materials; assurance of accessibility of manuscripts at a designated site at regular times; and provision of professional care for the materials in the repository's custody. Reports of organized collecting programs and accessions should be submitted to professional publications and national guides such as the *National Union Catalogue of Manuscript Collections.* This information serves potential researchers and enhances the collecting institution's visibility within the profession.

Edward Kemp suggests a few obvious questions that need to be asked during appraisal of materials offered for donation. Will the materials appeal to the repository's users? Would acceptance push the institution into competition with other, perhaps stronger programs? Will the staff and supply budget be adequate to ensure care for the materials? Does the institution have complementary collections of papers and printed matter to support broad research? Will these additions to our collection cause a change in our emphasis? Without a rational consideration of these questions the manuscripts repository is destined to become a resting place for unrelated ephemera and unmanageable files.

Procedure for Execution of Archives Policy

- The Instrument of Donation will include language to allow for trade or sale, or other disposition of donated materials.
- The society is under no obligation to accept everything offered by a donor.
- There will be no guarantee of exhibit or special treatment of materials donated.
- Loans-in: Normally, loans of original material will not be accepted, except for purposes of copying or pre-determined research purposes. Expense of copying will be negotiated by Arizona Historical Society and loaner. NO PERMANENT LOANS will be accepted.
- Loans-out. These are not considered acceptable. Special cases will be referred by the archivist to the director.
- We will fully process and catalog all manuscript materials according to nationally established archival procedures.
- Guarantees of immediate cataloging will not be given.
- Items in a donated collection will not necessarily be kept together as a cataloged unit. The archivist will record any transfer of material to other sections and divisions to maintain the integrity of the accession.
- It is not the policy of the Society to buy manuscript collections from private owners.

Once the collections policy was formulated, the Arizona Historical Society established the above guidelines for implementing that policy.

The Financial Investment

The cost of administering manuscripts is a legitimate consideration of one anticipating a solicitation program. The California State Archives, in a 1977 study recently published by the Society of American Archivists, determined that an archivist could process one cubic foot of records in 6.25 hours. (Clerical support for the processing function is a separate cost factor.) A 1978 American Association for State and Local History salary survey revealed that the average salary for a beginning professional in an institution with a budget of $75,000 or less was $9,000 or $4.32 per hour. Salary for the 6.25 hours required for processing places the cost of this work on one cubic foot of records at $27.00. The Arizona Historical Society calculated storage costs in mid-1980 for one cubic foot of manuscripts at $4.50 per year, plus the cost of storage containers. The cost of reference service for these materials contains a number of variables which preclude an accurate cost figure. Some institutions might be able to reduce the costs cited here by use of volunteer or lower-salaried staff and the sacrifice of a storage facility with proper temperature and humidity controls. These factors notwithstanding, the data offered here may be considered in assessing the value and cost of a solicitation program.

The Ethical Considerations

The financial cost of a manuscripts program is matched by the ethical investment required of the curator and the repository. The Society of American Archivists' "Code of Ethics for Archivists" stipulates that archivists and manuscripts curators are concerned with more than physical preservation of historical documents. "Excessive delay in processing materials and making them available for use," the code advises, "would cast doubt on the wisdom of the decision of a certain institution to acquire materials." The code concedes that an accession might have been solicited in good faith with the expectation that resources for processing would be available, but the central point cannot be avoided: a repository ethically cannot acquire materials it cannot care for and make available.

The financial and ethical factors considered in a manuscripts program underscore the need for employing a good collector or team of collectors. It is important to have the assignment of responsibility for soliciting stated explicitly in the collecting policy.

Selecting a Program Director

Who is best qualified to direct a solicitation program? The responsibility may fall to an accessions committee, the curator, or a specially designated field representative. Unfortunately, this question often does not receive the thorough consideration it should, or the lines of authority, once established, are blurred in practice.

Kenneth W. Duckett describes this potential problem in *Modern Manuscripts: A Practical Manual for Their Management, Care and Use.* Duckett characterizes two examples of "unsupervised collectors" who may do greater harm than good for the repository. The first, the "campus curator," is the bane of the university archivist or special collections head. This individual is the academic specialist competent in his chosen field of scholarship, but ill-prepared to make decisions about the appraisal, arrangement and description, and physical care manuscripts require. The "campus curator's" counterpart in the historical society may be the board of trustees, whose members might urge the accession of certain materials for "political" or other uncomfortable reasons. Either type of "unsupervised collector" might make promises the institution cannot keep or, through ignorance, accept materials without gaining clear transfer of copyright to the repository. This kind of collecting promises administrative problems and the possibility of "ethically dubious" accessions.

A strong argument can be advanced for employing accessions committees that consider possible accessions and vote to accept or decline. This often is suggested as a safeguard against specialized collecting based on the interests of the curator. The committee members presumably bring a wider range of interests and certainly expertise than one curator might be expected to have. The committee concept provides a practical, polite means of getting the curator off the spot in a sensitive situation. Citing an accessions committee's vote to decline a donation "after very serious consideration" may be comfortable to the curator who must inform and the potential donor who must accept the will of the institution.

In many cases, the individual curator will be the principal collector, taking leads from interested members of the community. This is particularly true of smaller institutions with a staff of one or two. Surely it is the wise individual who seeks all of the expert help available, from the local rare book dealer to, even, the "campus curator" or the historical society board of directors.

Some institutions permit the luxury of a field representative who spends most or all of the time traveling and searching for desirable materials. Clearly, the field representative must know the collections as well as the curator. Thus, the acceptance of materials inappropriate to the collecting themes, or of marginal research value, and that cannot be acquired without administrative problems, such as unclear copyright or burdensome restrictions, is avoided.

The qualities of a collector are an important consideration in a solicitation program. What does it take to be an effective manuscript solicitor? Basic research skills and an awareness of what research is being done in the field(s) are a must. To judge the research value of what is being solicited or offered, the solicitor must be skilled in the appraisal of papers, be well-grounded in past historical research, and have the ability to try to anticipate the needs of researchers fifty to seventy-five years hence. Obviously, the job is a challenge.

Technical ability and awareness of the field are only a portion of what the solicitor must bring to the task. He or she must believe in the program and be resourceful, flexible, and patient. Integrity must match intellectual curiosity. The collector must be a good salesperson, knowing when to speak and when to postpone delicate negotiations. Edward Kemp summarizes the characteristics of a good collector, taking in all of the above and concluding, "The passive curator can remain at his desk and receive whatever is offered. The intelligent, aggressive curator opens new areas of study through his work, securing new collections by means of his expertise and research."

The abilities and good traits of the collector are not necessarily reflected in the cubic feet of accessions included in annual reports. The quality of materials added to the shelves constitutes the yardstick the collector is measured against, not the quantity. The research value of the collections is the key to assessing the repository and the success of the solicitor.

Choosing Manuscripts

The solicitor should seek out unique, original historical documents and published materials that relate to them. Manuscripts, including correspondence, minutes, diaries, speeches, memoirs, daily calendars, and address books are most useful. Scrapbooks, catalogs and relevant books, and periodicals and pamphlets are also important grist for historical research. Photographs are of enormous value and often are used by historical writers to illustrate articles or to give information not included in the written word.

Increasingly, the solicitor is being called upon to consider non-textual materials, including audio-visual items and machine-readable (computer) records. Surely the institution should accept taped oral history interviews if it has equipment on which to play them, adequate storage space for them, and provisions for at least a limited index. Most historical societies have access to a tape recorder and so audio tapes can be used, but should videotapes be accepted without a video tape player or reasonable assurance that one will be available? A solicitor serves neither the institution nor scholarship by accepting items which cannot be used. Machine-readable records have created both problems and advantages for researchers and archivists. At this point whether the advantages outweigh the disadvantages is not clear. Any institution, regardless of size, should pay careful attention to developments in this field. The solicitor would do well to read Charles Dollar's summary article, "Appraising Machine Readable Records," in the October 1978 issue of *The American Archivist.*

> HISTORICAL MATERIALS consist of diaries, correspondence, memoirs, scrapbooks, institutional and organizational records. They include sound recordings and films, as well as more traditional paper materials. The Archives seeks a wide variety of records to document all aspects of Nebraska's past—*Excerpt from the Nebraska State Historical Society solicitation brochure "Manuscripts in the Archives."*

Business records are an enormously useful source for historical research. The solicitor must weigh collecting opportunities in this area with caution. The large volume of materials involved in business records is a factor to consider. Can the institution's program survive the sheer weight of a large local business's records? Should it collect these records or provide expertise in helping a business establish its own records program?

The solicitor must ask a series of questions to determine the value of records so that a decision can be made on their place in the program. Six points to be considered in appraisal are suggested in a Society of American Archivists' manual on this topic. These include uniqueness of material; reliability of information contained in the records; understandability of the information; time span covered—the longer the better; accessibility—an institution cannot provide dead storage for a heavily restricted collection; frequency and quality of use—are the materials used and does this use result in a worthwhile product? Application of these criteria helps the solicitor review materials offered for donation.

Collecting Procedures

How should the institution collect? Armed with an institutional collecting policy, the curator or curators are prepared to start collecting. How does one locate material, negotiate with potential donors, and keep track of all of the proceedings so that the material may be brought safely to the repository for processing and, finally, used by researchers?

Leads, the collector's precious tips about manuscripts, come from a variety of sources. Everyday observation can provide suggestions of potential donors. Researchers themselves who come in to study manuscripts often can supply leads. Newspaper and magazine articles are obvious sources of information. The announcement of an award to a local citizen might prompt an inquiry about records created in the course of the award-winning endeavor. News that an old building is about to be torn down alerts the collector to inquire of the owner about business records, not only those relating to the owner and the building, but also from earlier tenants who may have left material behind. It may seem gruesome, but the collector has to become a regular reader of obituaries. The daily newspaper is the most common source, but one should not ignore professional or interest-group journals, which often carry death notices of their members.

Established donors are vital links to new donors. If there were no other reason for maintaining good relations with friends of the institution, this would justify the effort.

Board members, because of wide contacts and inherent interest in the institution, are an excellent source for leads and subtle help in negotiations with the potential donor. Keep in mind, however, that board members should not be permitted to make commitments for the curator or accept items without the curator's knowledge and, hopefully, approval.

Two representative types not related to the institution—manuscript and rare book dealers and bank trust officers—can perform a valuable function in the process of collecting. Dealers have intimate knowledge of who collects and what is collected and might be willing to act as an intermediary between a private collector or the estate and the institution. Trust officers are often in a position to help the institution preserve historical documents by suggesting to heirs that some items be donated to the local historical society or the special collections department of the deceased's alma mater. In doing so, the value of the estate might be enhanced by the tax deduction such a gift to a non-profit organization might warrant.

Special contacts such as those described above can be matched by leads developed from sheer imagination. Edward C. Kemp suggests that city directories be used to identify homes inhabited by the same families for a number of years in hopes that an accumulation of family papers may be resting in an attic or basement.

A publicly visible institution often will be sought out by potential donors and the solicitor should seek attention from local newspapers, regional magazines, and radio and television stations to help raise visibility. The accession of an interesting collection might be the basis for a news story about the donor, with reference to the papers involved. Good relations with the local media may make press releases a valuable tool.

Special literature, such as a brochure directed toward potential donors, is very useful. The brochure should include a brief description of the institution, its history and purpose, an explanation of what it can offer the donor, and examples of the kinds of materials desired. Historical photographs, particularly those taken from existing manuscript collections, are a visual lure to the reader.

Contact with Donors

The solicitor must prepare for specific collecting efforts. Individuals who are suggested as possible donors must be investigated. The solicitor must know about the potential donor's career and interests to intelligently appraise the materials that might be offered. If a particular donor's collection appears to be the building block of a thematic collection, the donor's colleagues will become targets for collecting. Whether the first donor was involved in local partisan politics or national trade unionism, the solicitor may seek related collections to form a research base. Kenneth Duckett realistically notes that few collecting themes are rationalized in advance of the pursuit of collections. The solicitor normally recognizes a key collection and decides to move toward obtaining related collections.

Forethought in recording information about individual leads will help keep the curator on track while working with a number of potential donors, possibly over several months or years. A "donor lead file," consisting of 3x5 cards with pertinent information about each case must be kept. In addition to the contact's name, address, and occupation, one should include the source of the lead and a suggested course of action, a record of notification by telephone or letter, an indication of a response to the notification, as well as a running commentary on what action is being contemplated by the curator. It is a rare curator who can remember to check systematically the entire file on a regular basis, so a reminder or annotated calendar should be

State:

Name:

Address:

Source:

Suggestions:

Action Taken:

Date:

A sample donor lead card.

used. Time consumed in preparing this aid will be quickly justified by the order it imposes on the curator's schedule.

The initial contact with the potential donor is crucial—it may set the tone for all future negotiations, or, if not handled well, it may be the final communication. An introduction by a mutual acquaintance is an ideal ice-breaker, but not something to be counted on. The first overture should be, and is most frequently, by letter, so that the solicitor and the institution are introduced without question or interruption. There is no danger of overwhelming the donor who may need to read the letter more than once or investigate the institution before deciding to respond. If the donor is familiar with the solicitor or the institution, this problem does not arise, but often appeals will be sent to strangers. Include personal references to the potential donor and make clear your interest in him or her. Under no circumstances should a form letter or any device that resembles one be circulated. They are rude and objectionable to those who receive them.

Keep records of your contacts and be persistent. Make a note of the first letter, and, if necessary, after an appropriate waiting period send a second inquiry. How long should you wait? Unfortunately, there is no patented answer or tested formula for this and decisions must be made for each individual. The importance of a follow-up letter when the first has been met with silence is critical. One curator has a rule of thumb which suggests that all is well if the institution receives an accession within two years of initial contact with the donor. Intuition and experience are the best guides in this phase of the manuscripts pursuit.

With determination, skill, and an element of luck, the curator will be able to schedule a personal interview with the prospective donor. In this visit the solicitor can explain fully the nature of the program: why the materials under consideration are believed to be valuable; what will be done when the collection is processed; the care it will receive from the staff; and the use it will get from researchers.

Over the past few years collectors have encountered a resistance to donation of original materials. Many owners of historical manuscripts wish to retain original copies of material, but are willing to share them with institutions by permitting reproduction, either by microfilming or photocopying. As archivists and manuscripts curators have become active seekers of records, unwilling to wait for materials to drift toward their institutions, they have accepted the two-edged phenomenon of

ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
MANUSCRIPTS DIVISION

SOLICITATION NOTES DATE ____

SOURCE ____________ TELE ____

ADDRESS ____________

COLLECTION NAME/SUBJECT ________

DESCRIPTION OF MATERIALS

- TYPE SUBJECT
- VOLUME
- PHYSICAL CONDITION
- RESEARCH VALUE
- ANTICIPATED AVAILABILITY
- SUGGESTED ACTION
- COMMENTS

AHS STAFF ________ DATE ______

Solicitation notes for manuscript collections should include all of the above information.

the modern-day plain paper copier. Many crumble at the first signal of apprehension or resistance from the donor and offer to borrow materials for copying. Accepting copies when the originals are unavailable does serve scholarship by ensuring preservation, but the decision to accept copies should be weighed carefully and the collection must truly merit that degree of attention.

The potential donor should understand the importance of maintaining intact bodies of records and the solicitor should not encourage the dismemberment of papers among a number of institutions. The records have integrity which must be protected and the solicitor should be willing to pass up the opportunity to obtain a share of the donor's generosity if it means that the papers will not stay together.

Much of this discussion is based on the assumption that the solicitor has been given a good lead and that the materials are desirable. But the curator's career also includes misunderstandings and disappointments. Adherence to the collecting policy is the surest protection from filling a repository with inappropriate documents. There should be a recognizable prospect that material accessioned does or will have research value. Again, the

Arizona Historical Society
founded by Arizona pioneers in 1864
949 East Second Street • Tucson • Arizona 85719 [illegible]

June 28, 1979

Jarvis Harriman
Executive Director
The Tucson Festival Society
8 West Paseo Redondo
Tucson, Arizona 85705

Dear Jarvis:

It was a pleasure to talk to you this morning about the Tucson Festival Society and the manuscripts program at the Arizona Historical Society. We are both dedicated to an appreciation of Tucson's culture. The Historical Society is anxious to help document your organization's contribution to this effort. I welcome the opportunity to describe the nature and scope of the Manuscripts Division and appreciate your interest in us as a good home for your non-current records.

The Manuscripts Division of the Society is a major repository of historical records in Arizona. We have attracted several hundred collections on the basis of our reputation and the service we provide. We provide acid-free boxes and file folders to reduce deterioration of paper records and the records are stored in our locked, environment controlled stack area. A detailed inventory is prepared for each collection. Donors are provided with copies of this inventory and a guide for retrieval should you need any of the materials placed here. Researchers also have the benefit of this finding aid to assist their work in the collections.

The records of the Tucson Festival Society can provide a unique insight into the character of our city. Social historians need access to the written and photographic evidence you have accumulated over the past twenty-nine years. A series of oral history interviews with individuals associated with the Society could easily expand the scope of the collection.

Please consider designating the Historical Society as the official repository for the records we examined this morning. It is another way in which we can serve Tucson and Arizona. Please call on me if I can provide further information.

Sincerely,

Dave

David H. Hoober
Curator of Manuscripts

Initial contact with a potential donor should be made through a personal letter so that the solicitor and the institution are introduced without interruption.

costs of accepting inappropriate materials may be measured in ethical and economic terms.

Additional Benefits

The donor may offer to pack and ship the materials, but this can result in delay in obtaining them and might mean that the donor will have a change of heart and never send them. The solicitor or a representative should supervise the boxing and shipping of the donation if possible. Attention should be paid to the order of the materials as they are packed. This order should be retained and boxes numbered to reflect the order the donor had maintained. Careless or thoughtless packing can produce a nightmare for the staff member who must process the manuscripts and it may delay their accessibility to researchers.

The solicitor should keep in mind the possibility of obtaining financial support for the administration of the new donation. Often funding is out of the question, but some individuals and businesses would not object to extending financial support for the preservation of papers documenting their historical contribution to the community. The support need not be cash. Often a donor will provide supplies or a student intern's salary to assist in processing the materials. Again, the decision to ask for aid, and how far to press the issue, can only be determined on a case-by-case basis.

Similarly, the solicitor should not feel bashful about asking for items that can be used by other departments or staff members. If the papers that are being donated are stored in a file cabinet, the curator might ask for the cabinet as well. Books and periodicals that complement the documents are necessary to support a research effort and they too should be solicited for the institution's library. Similar items that bear no relationship to the donation but which could be used somewhere else within the institution should be requested if they are available. No historical agency budget should permit being too proud to ask. After all, the situation was created initially by asking for something else.

Often potential donors will seek an appraisal of materials to be donated. The curator should

AGREEMENT BETWEEN ____________ AND THE ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY REGARDING ____________ HISTORICAL PAPERS.

____________ hereby donates and commits to the Arizona Historical Society, as a permanent part of its collections to be kept and preserved for all time, ____________ ____________.

All copyright in unpublished materials in the Papers is hereby assigned to the Arizona Historical Society. The Papers are to be preserved, administered and used by the Archives Division, Arizona Historical Society, for historical, educational and scholarly research in accordance with its customary practices, subject to the provisions listed below. The Papers will be deposited with the Society with the understanding that the Society shall:

1. Maintain the same in an archivally secure storage area in such a manner and location as to provide ready and convenient access thereto.

2. Arrange, collate and catalog the papers in accordance with the highest professional and scholarly standards.

3. Prepare a thorough inventory of the Papers and provide a copy thereof to ____________.

4. Make the Papers available for use by ____________ or its authorized representative at any time.

5. The Arizona Historical Society is authorized to dispose of any duplicate or unwanted material in the Papers which it determines to have no permanent value or historical interest, provided that return of such material is first offered to ____________.

The Arizona Historical Society accepts the Papers subject to the foregoing provisions and agrees to exercise due care in their preservation.

Signed this ____ day of ______, 19__, by:

____
Arizona Historical Society

____
Donor

This donor agreement form specifies the institution's responsibilities in caring for the manuscripts.

refer the donor to a disinterested third party to perform the appraisal. This will avoid any appearance of a conflict of interest and will result in an appraisal that the Internal Revenue Service will likely accept. Normally, the IRS will not accept an opinion from the institution receiving the gift.

Donors of self-created papers may claim a physical value for the expense incurred in creating them, such as paper, typewriter, and other supply expenses. The IRS will not permit a claim for the "fair market value" of the papers, which is normally much higher than their physical value, while their creator is alive. This has had the effect of drying up a number of prominent donor sources, even though the tax advantage to the estates of these individuals is significant.

Transfer of Ownership

Successful negotiations must be capped by a formal transfer of title to the manuscripts to be donated. This can be done by one of three common methods: letter, will, or deed. The instrument of donation, the document conveying legal title and ownership to the institution, should cover a number of points. Trudy Huskamp Peterson has compiled a list of questions that should be answered in the donative agreement. The following list is taken from her article, "The Gift and the Deed" in January 1979 issue of *The American Archivist.*

Who is the donor? The person who created the materials, his or her heirs, someone who purchased the material?

Who is the recipient? A governmental historical agency may be a part of a larger structure. On whose behalf should the materials be accepted?

What is the date of the transfer of title? This information is necessary if an income tax deduction is anticipated.

What is the material conveyed by the deed? The creator of the material, its volume and inclusive dates should be noted. Perhaps a detailed inventory should be appended to the agreement.

Who holds the copyright? This is crucial because it distinguishes physical property from intellectual property. A donor can transfer copyright only if the material was created by him or transferred to him.

What are the restrictions on use?

Who can impose restrictions? The donor, the donor's designated representative, or the institution accepting the gift may stipulate restrictions on access.

To whom do the restrictions apply? Routine processing and preservation measures by the staff should not be prohibited.

Who can lift restrictions? Again, the donor, his designated representative, or the archivist are authorized to act on this.

Who has disposal authority? It is essential that disposition rights be conveyed to the institution. Most institutions, as a matter of course, offer to return unwanted items to the donor or endeavor to place them in another repository, with physical destruction the last resort.

What provisions cover subsequent gifts? It is best to have a single deed include terms under which additional materials may be donated to the institution.

The agreement is a legal contract and its terms must be adhered to. Unacceptable stipulations cannot be permitted with the intent of ignoring them after the material is accessioned. To do this risks breach of contract and loss of the respect of potential donors.

Legal implications aside, the curator should recognize the inherent ethical obligation in dealing with a donor and must anticipate the harm such an action would do to the institution if it were made public.

Maintaining Donor Relations

Manuscript repositories and solicitors have no unique formula for success. The best reminder of an institution's gratitude is appropriate recognition of donors. For some, a quiet thank you is sufficient and anything more could prove embarrassing. Most donors, however, prefer to feel an identification with their institution. It is certainly to the institution's advantage to encourage and nurture this involvement.

Solicitation is the process of matching the needs of a donor with the goals of one's collecting policy. Evert Volkersz of the State University of New York at Stony Brook has described four ways in which a manuscripts repository responds to donors' needs, particularly to donors of self-created papers. The first need is assurance that a collection will be preserved properly and that it fits into a consciously developed collecting scheme. Another need is satisfied when visible results are seen, that is, the papers are processed and a finding aid is produced. (It is a good policy to furnish copies of finding aids to donors, not only to provide a complete inventory of their donation, but also to put in their hands a tangible product based on their papers.) A third desire is the feeling of satisfaction the donor can experience by identifying with a "significant

ARCHIVES
ARIZONA HISTORICAL SOCIETY
949 EAST SECOND STREET
TUCSON, ARIZONA 85719
(602) 882-5774

Accession No. ____________
Manuscript No. ____________
(to be completed by AHS)

INSTRUMENT OF DONATION

Name of Collection ______________________ Date Received ____________
Name of Donor ______________________ Phone ____________
Address ____
Street City State Zip

I hereby donate the items and materials described herein to the Arizona Historical Society to become its permanent property. The items and materials will be housed in the ______________________ to be administered in accordance with the Society's established policies. I agree that this material may be made available for research on an unrestricted basis subject only to those restrictions which may be specified below:

Access: ____
Copyright: ____
Other: (attach extra sheet if needed) ______________________

Any items within the collection which are not retained shall be: (donor to initial choice)
Returned to donor: ________ Discarded: ________ Other: ________________

Donor signature ____________ Date ____________

Accepted by: ______________________ Repository ______________________
Abstract of the Donation: (attach extra sheet if needed)

Cu. ft. ________ No. of boxes ________ No. of vols. ________ No. of items ________ Add to Coll. ________

TO BE COMPLETED BY AHS STAFF:

Loaned for Copying ____ Xerox ____ Microfilming ____ Duplicate ____ Copies for ______________________
Loan Period ______________________ Return originals to ______________________
Special instructions: ____
Collection acknowledged: by letter ____________ by certificate ____________ date ____________

The instrument of donation conveys legal title and ownership of the manuscripts from the donor to the institution.

venture," having a part in a worthwhile endeavor. The final need is satisfied when the donor realizes that the manuscripts repository values ideas and affiliation, as well as papers.

What are the vehicles for staying in touch with donors and developing better relations? Traditional letters and certificates of acknowledgment may seem trite, but they work. Special affairs should be scheduled at which donors are honored guests. It is common to make special acknowledgment of volunteers' efforts on behalf of an institution. Why not extend them to donors? Provide special tours of storage facilities to give the donor a sense of the unique treatment accorded paper records. This also presents an opportunity to make a plea for additional support for a program. The solicitor, after all, is speaking to an individual with an acknowledged stake in that program. Donors should be kept abreast of all activities of the institution—if there is a publications program, for instance, which relies on the repository's manuscripts, send copies of books and articles to the donor; if the museum's curator has drawn heavily on manuscript sources in preparing a new exhibit, the donor should be invited to a special viewing of the exhibit.

The Mandate

Experienced solicitors agree with Edward Kemp that a good collections program is based on a conscious decision to select manuscripts and to solicit potential donors very carefully. With the establishment of a viable collections policy, under the direction of a carefully selected, energetic program head, valuable manuscripts can escape banishment to the outhouse and useless documents will no longer be assigned "Processing Priority I." The curator who makes good use of available physical resources, planning, discipline, and imagination will build a valuable collection. And, through such a collecting effort, the historical agency can fulfill its mandate to preserve our heritage.

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David H. Hoober serves as curator of manuscripts at the Arizona Historical Society in Tucson, on the Arizona Historical Records Advisory Board, and on the council of the Conference of Intermountain Archivists. Manuscripts curator at the Nebraska State Historical Society from 1974 to 1978, he holds a master's degree in United States history from the University of Nebraska at Lincoln and earned credit as a participant in the thirty-first institute, "Introduction to Modern Archives Administration," conducted by the National Archives and Records Service, the Library of Congress, and American University in Washington, D.C.

American Association for State and Local History
1400 Eighth Avenue, South
Nashville, Tennessee 37203

TECHNICAL LEAFLET 131

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#179

A A S L H

TECHNICAL LEAFLET

AMERICAN ASSOCIATION FOR STATE AND LOCAL HISTORY

ARCHIVAL MATERIALS IN THE HISTORY MUSEUM
A Strategy for Their Management

by Paul Eisloeffel and Lisa Gavin

Though archival collections are typically an integral part of a history museum's holdings, their presence often spells trouble and confusion for the museum curator. By way of illustration, consider the following scenarios:

Scenario #1: You are the sole curator of a small history museum whose collections include artifacts and archival materials. As a museum-trained professional, you are well aware of the current wisdom on the management of museum artifacts, and you follow state-of-the-art procedures. But the archival materials throw you a curve; somehow they don't fit into the museum's artifact-oriented management system, and, though your museum regards them more as interpretive objects than as reference materials, you are still intimidated by accessions that contain more than just a handful of documents. Consequently, the museum's archival holdings are neglected.

Scenario #2: As registrar for a history museum's collections department, you are responsible for the paperwork for all artifact accessioning and cataloging. Many donors offer archival materials along with their artifacts. Because the archival acquisitions are handled by different methods and different staff members, maintaining the links between parts of a donation is often difficult. Sometimes this can undermine the completeness of your documentation and jeopardize your relationship with donors as they are forced to sign more than one accession document and deal with several staff members to expedite a single donation.

Scenario #3: You are a museum curator for a large regional historical society. You gladly accept an artifact that fits within the collecting scope of the museum. With the object comes supporting documentation: original papers of ownership, receipts, manuals, and so forth. These are archival materials, so you contact your counterpart in the society's archives. Though the documents provide outstanding and unique support to your artifact, the archivist declines to accept them, arguing that the materials offer little of regional significance to a scholarly researcher; in other words, they do not fit within the collecting scope of the archives. Consequently, you are forced either to decline the documents, take them without accessioning and add to your files, or accession them into the museum collections and add them to an ever-growing "archives" of your own.

As dissimilar as these situations appear, they are really just different horns of the same dilemma. They are symptomatic of the unfortunate fact that, in spite of fundamental similarities, museum and archives collection management practices have not developed in concert with one another. Consequently, even though archival materials are frequently part of a history museum's holdings, their presence confounds the artifact-oriented system, leading to inaccurate judgments about archival materials and inappropriate actions regarding their management. This problem generally begins with the segregation of that most basic collections management function—registration.

There are fundamental reasons for this schism. Standard registration practices of museums and archives appear at variance to one another and, to some degree, in direct conflict. Museum practices are the essence of precision, while management of archival collections requires an inherent flexibility. Without a thoughtful solution, the artifacts and archival collections of an institution are doomed to a cumbersome and unnecessary segregation.

The happy fact is that a solution exists. It is possible to accommodate archival materials in a standardized, integrated museum management system that does not compromise the spirit of either museum collections management or that of archives. This system addresses the needs of both simply and reaps surprising benefits. This strategy is the key to coping with archival materials in a history museum setting.

Any history museum or historical society that collects materials and artifacts according to a single mission statement would find this management system beneficial. The benefits would be most obvious in the small museum, where multiple and mutually exclusive management systems were never a reasonable option. Even large state historical societies, typically departmentalized so that the archives and artifacts are completely segregated, could gain in several ways that will be outlined later. Yet museum systems rarely indulge the needs of archival holdings, due mostly to ignorance of archival techniques. Interestingly, there are publications available to help the archivist deal with the odd artifact that invades the archives; but nothing addresses the reverse situation of how archival materials in a museum should be handled.

Archival Materials Explained

Archival materials are, generally speaking, documents. They can take many forms: letters, business account books, instruction pamphlets, road maps, tape-recorded oral history interviews, snapshots, reels of motion picture film. Because of their special physical nature, archival materials have unique storage requirements. That is one reason they are often separated from other museum holdings into an archives.

Archival materials fill a special place in the spectrum of what can be called *information sources*. On opposite ends of this theoretical spectrum are artifacts and library materials, and in between falls the stuff of which archives are made. These are generalizations, of course, but they are a fairly accurate representation of how the profession tends to look at matters.

Artifacts, on one end of the spectrum, are the life's blood of museums. They have *functional* value; that is, information is derived from them by studying their physical makeup, how and by whom they were made, and how and by whom they were used.

On the other end are library materials. These are published sources of information, generally not one-of-a-kind and often of a secondary-source nature. With the exception of published items that are particularly good examples of book production or have especially noteworthy provenance, library materials are generally valued for their *content* not their function. That is why microforms or photocopies of documents are perfectly appropriate in a library setting even though they are just images of the originals.

Archival materials land in the spectrum's middle ground. Like an artifact, a document has a unique physical character that speaks of its historical context, and, like a library item, it generally contains words or images that, of themselves, have meaning. Therefore, a document can, and often does, have both functional and content value. Thus we can learn about the look of a city street from a hundred-year-old photograph, but we can also learn about photographic technique and processes of the day.

A document can also conspicuously lack one or the other value yet still have legitimacy in a particular setting, which is why both museums and libraries house archival materials. Furthermore, its type of value can be determined by its setting, which explains why a document in a library is judged mostly by its content, while the same document in a museum would be considered an artifact. This subtlety can have a decided impact on an institution's descriptive practices; access to a document's content may command as much if not more consideration than its function.

But, so far, these distinctions, though important philosophically, offer no compelling reasons for a museum curator to treat archival materials much differently than artifacts in a collections management system. It must be assumed, no matter what values a museum places on its archival holdings, they are legitimate components of the permanent collections according to the institution's collecting policy. There must be more to account for the traditional segregation. The answer is found at the very heart of archives collections management theory.

The Nature of Archival Collections

In the museum world, collections management revolves around the *individual artifact*. There may be intellectual and functional links between two or more of them (maintained through the museum's collections records), but the artifacts are appraised, collected, numbered, cataloged, researched, and preserved on their own merits as separate testaments to social culture.

In significant contrast is the world of archives, where the operative unit is the *collection*—a body of documents, regardless of size or complexity, brought together and maintained as a single group.

Generally, such groups of documents are the product of the activity of a single source, a phenomenon known in the archival world as *provenance*. Provenance refers to the administrative or personal entity that originated, by creation or accumulation, a body of documents. It may be a group of relatives in the case of a collection of family papers or a corporate office in the case of a collection of business records. In every aspect of the collection's management, this focus on provenance is revered. It is what gives the collection its unique character, its historical context; it is what defines its functional value and provides the contextual framework for its content value.

Furthermore, archivists view the generation of the materials as only part of a collection's life cycle, a process of evolution that continues after the collection is accessioned. In its post-accession life, an archival collection may be weeded of superfluous or duplicate material that could not be identified at the point of accession. The collection may be so

The classic conflict: artifacts, which are managed as separate items, and archival materials, which often defy item-level control and are better managed in groups. *Photograph courtesy of Nebraska State Historical Society.*

vast as to require years of rearrangement and inventorying to achieve a reasonably accurate description. It may be merged with later donations of shared provenance, or, conversely, the materials of a single donation may be split into two or more collections as their provenance suggests.

To illustrate these dilemmas, consider the acquisition of the records of the XYZ Company. The first accession of fifty cubic feet came to your institution a decade ago, and, roughly each year since, the mother corporation has donated another few cubic feet. Staff constraints have made it impossible to make a detailed listing of even the first accession up until now. As you organize the collection, you find that many types of business records are represented, such as correspondence, minutes of meetings, reports, and financial records. You organize them according to office of origin, as a good archivist should; but you find that each separate accession contains records from all the offices, and, to be true to your organizational scheme, you must intermingle materials from the various accessions. You also find duplicates and some records of no historic value such as receipts and cancelled checks. These you discard to find that you have reduced the original bulk of the collection by nearly one third. Furthermore, you discover that the materials contain some personal boyhood papers of J. J. Jones, the first president of the company. Given Jones's stature in the history of your community, you decide to keep them, but you believe they would be better handled as a collection separate from the records of the XYZ Company.

This case illustrates, too, the potential complexity involved in documenting an archival collection. A description must evolve with the collection, often following a phased pattern of progress that begins with basic collection-level information (perhaps as simple as "fifty cubic feet of records of the XYZ Company") and advancing to more detailed listings as dictated by time, resources, and need. As with the above example, it may take years to achieve an item-level listing, and, in fact, that depth of detail may never be realized. These realities may strike fear in the hearts of museum-trained curators, who expect each item in a donation to be numbered and cataloged at or soon after the time of accession, but they are just the daily routine of archivists.

Considering this evolutionary perspective, the average archival collection seems to belie standard museum registration practices. Cataloging and numbering each item in an archival collection is not only unwieldy, it also obstructs its later evolution. If a standard museum collections management system was used, every single alteration of a collection down to weeding of the smallest duplicate document could well require detailed documentation for the collection records. Multiply this by the possible thousands of alterations needed for a given archival collection, and the prospects appear frightening. This is the crux of the traditional rift between the ways archival materials and artifacts are handled. Add to this the special storage requirements, the need for access to content as well as functional values, and the use of phased descriptive practices, and it is easy to see why the rift exists and thrives.

Fitting Archival Collections into the Museum Mold

To solve the problems that the rift creates, it is prudent to *be aware* of the differences but to *concentrate* on the fundamental similarities. Artifacts and archival materials are collected for the same reasons, they are generally used for the same purposes, they are stored and managed under the same conditions, they come from the same sources, and they often support and overlap one another. It follows, then, that they should enter an institution's holdings through the same procedural door.

This is not as prohibitively difficult as it sounds. The solution is an integrated management system, one that follows standard museum procedures for registration and cataloging yet accommodates the variant realities of the archives world. At the heart of such a system is one simple postulate: an archival *collection,* in its entirety and regardless of its size or complexity, exists as a *single physical and intellectual entity.* It is comparable to a single artifact, though it may contain several individual documents. Each accession that becomes part of a given archival collection can be regarded as one object in the context of museum registration and cataloging practices and treated as part of a single artifact at the point of accession and even afterwards. It can be compared to pieces of a machine that are acquired one at a time but are put together after acquisition to make a cohesive whole.

With this postulate comes a few important criteria that will help museum curators identify what should or should not be regarded, and therefore managed, as archival collections.

The first criterion has to do with historical context. It considers whether or not the materials in question are defined by provenance—that is, whether they are the product of the activity of a single source. As mentioned

ARCHIVAL COLLECTION INVENTORY

Acme Novelty Company. Lincoln, Nebraska
Records and Papers, 1925-1944
Lincoln, Lancaster County, Nebraska:
Retailer of novelty merchandise
Size: 3 cubic feet

BACKGROUND NOTE

The Acme Novelty Company was founded in 1925 by Milton Scheister (1894-1956). Scheister was born in Hoboken, New Jersey, but moved to Nebraska in 1912 after his parents won farmland near Lincoln, Nebraska, in a breakfast cereal promotion. Highly regarded for his sense of humor, he opened a small novelty and joke shop in 1925 called the Acme Novelty Company. Here he sold the products of other joke manufacturers, while unsuccessfully attempting to design marketable jokes of his own. While the business prospered during the Great Depression, the coming of World War II signaled the end of his business as materials used for manufacturing gags were needed for the war effort. In 1944, the Acme Novelty Company closed its doors, financially broken. Scheister entertained at children's parties and other functions until his death in 1956 at the age of 62.

SCOPE AND CONTENT

This collection contains records of the Acme Novelty Company and personal papers of its founder, Milton Scheister. The materials in this collection relate to the operation of the Acme Novelty Company, the novelty and gag industry, small business in Lincoln, Nebraska, the impact of the novelty industry in Nebraska during the Great Depression, and the life of Milton Scheister.

Accession Numbers: 1980.034.01, 1983.011.05, 1985.214.45. See also artifacts in collections.

DESCRIPTION

Series 1: Business Records, 1925-1944
- Subseries 1: Correspondence, 1925-1940
  1. 1925-1935
  2. 1936-1940
- Subseries 2: Financial Records, 1925-1944
  1. Receipts, 1925-1932
  2. Ledger, 1932-1940
  3. Ledger, 1941-1944
- Subseries 3: Photographs, 1925-1937
  1. Photos of building, 1500 R Street, Lincoln, Nebraska, 1925-1937

Series 2: Personal Papers, 1925-1942
- Subseries 1: Correspondence, 1927-1942
  1. Correspondence
- Subseries 2: Miscellany, 1925-1942 and no dates
  1. Diary, 1925-1942
  2. Clippings re: family members, c. 1930
  3. Family snapshots, no dates

This archival collection-level inventory illustrates a typical treatment of arranging and describing a group of documents (even from multiple accessions) that share provenance.

earlier, one cardinal rule of archives management is a vehement respect for the process that created a given set of records or papers. This process, says conventional wisdom, is intrinsically entwined with the materials themselves, helps define them as a distinct unit, and offers an understanding of the materials that would be lost by any other context. It is eminently important, therefore, to maintain this context when defining a collection. Provenance generally means a common source but more specifically can denote a corporate or governmental office of origin, an organization, a private individual, a family from which materials come, or an event or activity around which the materials thematically revolve. If you have groups of documents that can be defined and isolated by provenance, they probably merit management as archival collections.

To relate the principle of provenance to management of the XYZ Company records, it would be important to keep all of those records together because of their association with the company. They should not be divided according to object function as artifacts usually are. Correspondence of the XYZ Company, for example, would not be filed with the letters of other companies just because they are letters; they should be kept with other materials of the company from which they originated.

The second criterion has more to do with the practicalities of museum collections management. It considers whether the materials in question can be better managed as a group than as individual and distinct objects. At its heart, *archives* management is *group* management. If it is inappropriate or cumbersome to manage materials as a group, there is no reason to do so. This means that a museum may still manage individual documents unencumbered by contextual links to other documents as individual artifacts and not as archival collections, even though because they are documents they may physically conjure up thoughts of archives. Conversely, this criterion allows a curator to manage a group of documents as an archival collection, even if they cannot be linked by provenance but can be linked by something else, such as a commonality of document type or subject matter. Archives frequently house such "artificial" collections grouped around themes from agriculture to railroads, from broadsides to theater programs. An archival collection, then, may also be defined according to the logic and practicality of managing a set of documents as a group.

It is important to note that these two criteria should be applied in the order given here—in other words, maintaining provenance should be the curator's first and foremost concern. The archivist's traditional respect for it is ample testimony to the power of historic context that provenance represents.

Museum Registration and Cataloging of Archival Collections

Applying the above postulate to the task of museum registration and cataloging requires only a few additional considerations—variations in the standard data that is gathered, designed to accommodate description of archival collections.

Most obvious of these is the assignment of the object name. AASLH's Nomenclature Committee considered this issue and with *The Revised Nomenclature of Museum Cataloging*'s list of preferred terms for documentary artifacts offers this note:

> . . . [an archival] collection may be named in accordance with an archivist's "title" entry, using a collective noun such as PAPERS, RECORDS, LETTERS, DIARIES, MANUSCRIPTS, CORRESPONDENCE, etc.; a single item should be named using a term from the [list of preferred terms] or any other acceptable object name . . .

It easily follows that a collection consisting exclusively of multiple items of the same type may be described with the plural of the appropriate preferred term (for example, OBJECT NAME: Postcards). The XYZ Company materials noted previously may be categorized simply as "Records." Depending on the system and its indexing capabilities, it might be desirable to use a standard term for all archival collections and sub-term it with the appropriate single or plural of the type of item(s) included (such as "Archival Collection—Records").

In addition to *Revised Nomenclature*, there are other current sources for document-type terms (see attached bibliography). Institutions may opt to devise a manageable in-house list of their own, based on these sources and reflecting the specific needs of its collections, to help simplify and standardize descriptive practices.

True to museum cataloging procedures, the description should expand on the detail begun by naming the object. In the case of an archival collection, it is best to start the description consistently with a phrase such as "A collection of [papers, records, etc.] . . ." as a standard indicator of the object's nature and to continue with a general physical and topical portrait of the collection.

Other slight departures from artifact registration and cataloging routine will also be called for, such as the assignment of a collection number and title that identifies each collection regardless of the number of accessions included therein, allowance of spans to date a collection, cubic footage or number-of-items measurements to indicate size, and multiple storage locations. Most good archives management manuals will describe all the typical data elements needed to manage and track an archival collection.

Post-Cataloging Procedures for Archival Collections

In a museum, description of an artifact essentially ends after it is cataloged. Later research may yield more information that can be added to the catalog record, but intellectual control over that object has already been achieved in the cataloging. In contrast, intellectual control over an archival collection may still be out of reach after the cataloging process. To identify an object as a desk and then to describe it as an oak mission-style desk, with two drawers on the proper left side and a two-shelf slat-sided bookcase on the right, might serve as a useful enough description for an artifact. A fifty-cubic-foot-plus archival collection of XYZ Company records, however, would require a more detailed description to render it useful to a researcher who might need to know if there are letters, minutes, or ledgers.

The initial cataloging of the archival accession as a single object is a good start and may suffice for small, uncomplicated, static collections made up of only a single accession. However, as mentioned earlier, archival collections have an evolutionary nature. The institution that commits to housing them must be prepared to document each collection's life-cycle. This could include additions, weeding, rearrangement, and other changes to the original collection.

The operation of bringing an archival collection to a serviceable form is called "processing." In processing, the raw materials of a collection are refined into a useful resource. Processing typically includes the tasks of logical arrangement of the materials in the collection, weeding, basic conservation actions, storage, preparation of a collection inventory, and indexing. Such things often need to be done with an archival collection in addition to the basic registration and cataloging performed on archival materials and artifacts alike. Remember the XYZ Company records. Consider also the case in which two or more accessions are combined, either according to the principle of provenance or because of the existence of an "artificial" collection, into a single archival collection; cataloging of each accession will not produce a description of that collection as a whole, so a further descriptive step is necessary.

On the face of it, the prospect of post-cataloging description may seem overwhelming to already overburdened museum curators. It is indeed part of the price of collecting and maintaining archival materials, but there are realistic

CATALOG WORKSHEET

Accession number: 1983.011.05 **Accession date:** 02/15/83
Date of receipt: 02/15/83
Source: Scheister, James
Address: 1234 Main Street, Omaha, Nebraska 68108
Method of acquisition: [x] Donation [ ] Purchase [ ] Bequest [ ] Internal transfer
[ ] Loan for copying (Date returned: ______________)
Object classification: Archival materials
Object name: Papers
Object date(s): 1925-1942
Description: Diary of Milton Scheister, personal correspondence, snapshots, newspaper clippings

Materials: Paper

Size: *Object dimensions:* H: _______ L: _______ W: _______ D: _______ Diameter: _______
Archival dimensions: Cubic footage: 0.5 **OR** number of items: _____
[ ] Presence of oversized materials

Archival collection number: AC007 **Archival collection name:** Acme Novelty Company
[x] Add to existing archival collection [ ] New archival collection

Maker: Scheister, Milton **Maker's dates:** 1894-1956 **Location:** Lincoln, Nebraska
User: Scheister, Milton **User's dates:** 1894-1956 **Location:** Lincoln, Nebraska

Provenance/background: Personal papers of Milton Scheister, founder of Acme Novelty Company, Lincoln, Nebraska. Donated by his son. Papers relate to family affairs, life of Scheister, and operation of Acme Novelty Company.

References: Information contained in documents within accession; information contained in documents in accession 1980.034.01.

Condition/alterations: Good

Conservation/preservation needs/treatments: Preservation photocopying of newspaper clippings, 02/20/83. Original clippings discarded.

Restrictions & conditions (including copyright): None.

Comments/see also: See also 1980.034.01

Index terms: Scheister, Milton; Businesses; Lincoln, Nebraska; Acme Novelty Company; Scheister Family.

Location(s): 03/04/12/02 **Dates:** 02/16/83
Status change: **Dates:**
Value: **Dates:**

The catalog record in an integrated collections management system must accommodate the special needs of archival description.

ways to approach it. The best, sanest way is the "skin-of-the-onion" technique. First, achieve the most basic level of control over all collections or their components—this is accomplished with basic museum-type cataloging; then, selectively and as resources allow, peel away at the collections until each is brought to its own best level of control, the level at which that collection becomes reasonably usable. Large as it is, the XYZ Company records would probably be made as useful as necessary if they were simply grouped by office, then by date, and listed by type of record and corresponding date span. If the records were in a logical and usable order when received, all the better. In any case, there is no need for individual item-level description here, even if the resources with which to do it were available.

This illustration points out the two significant facets on which the skin-of-the-onion technique is based: 1) Many collections will not require item-level description to render them useful, and 2) chances are that resources will not allow all collections to be processed to the item level anyway. In the archival world, it is understood that the curator need only do as much as necessary to preserve a collection and to make it reasonably accessible; the burden of research, the task of digging through a collection item by item for information, rests with the researcher. By cataloging the archival collections as part of an integrated collections management system, the most basic level of control has *already* been achieved. At that point, archival collections are accessible, albeit in a simplistic way, by means of the same system that makes artifacts accessible. Further steps to achieve greater control over each collection can be taken with discretion.

As mentioned above, it is important to document all post-cataloging steps taken with an archival collection, since any such steps may affect the makeup of the original accession or combine more than one accession. Typically, this is done on a processing worksheet or processing control form, a checklist for keeping track of processing activities. Many archives how-to books illustrate good examples of these. Automated management systems, too, have fields that can be used to track activities.

Another way archival collections differ from artifact collections is in the numbering of items. With artifacts, it is standard procedure to mark each item with an accession number; but, with large archival collections, this is impossible. For museum-trained professionals, this seems anarchistic. How can individual items be tracked if they are not numbered? The solution to this predicament is for museum curators to accept the realities involved with archives management and to realize that this is not a *registration* issue but a *security* issue. It is essential to maintain a secure environment for the use of archival collections lest items become displaced without identifying marks. In special circumstances of separating items, such as for exhibit use, conservation treatment, loan, or other such purpose, it is appropriate to mark the items with an identifying number at that time and then to replace them in the collections temporarily with surrogates—separation slips or removal slips—as you would for artifacts.

Benefits of an Integrated Management System

In the three opening scenarios, the museum professionals involved had reason to curse the archival materials in their midst. An integrated management system can go a long way toward turning their frustrations into curatorial proficiency.

The curator in Scenario #1 need not be intimidated by archival collections too large to number individually. Registered and cataloged as single "objects," those collections fit snugly into the museum's management system and stand ready for further processing if needed.

In Scenario #2, the registrar also has little about which to worry because the integrated management system streamlines the total acquisition process by avoiding duplications of effort. This cuts down on paperwork and avoids unnecessary occupation of file space. There is only one accession form awaiting signatures no matter what the donation includes. Best of all, donor and background information relating to donated materials need be gathered only once and then can be applied to various parts of the donation.

An integrated system encourages easy use of the registrar's files. With such a system, there is but one source for accession and cataloging data. This makes searches easier, and it is a godsend at annual report time. It is natural here to mention automation again; a single system helps to ensure the consistency needed when working with computers.

An integrated system takes the guesswork and pain out of those tough "what-to-do-with-this-item" dilemmas. In the case of the object in Scenario #3, the museum curator was faced with less-than-attractive options for dealing with the accompanying documents, mainly because the institution was divisively departmentalized. If the systems are departmentalized, it's probable that the collecting criteria are, too. Each department will follow its own agenda on what to collect and what not to collect, even while under the umbrella of a common mission statement. An integrated system has a homogenizing effect on an institution's collecting practices because materials are collected more for their worth to the institution as a whole than for the current needs of just one department. Any search of the records on the accessioned object will turn up cross references to the accompanying documents and vice-versa. With such a system, that museum curator can relegate the documents to the most appropriate place—the archives—and be assured of good access from either direction.

Quite simply, an integrated system is the strategy needed to bridge the gap between artifacts and archival materials in the history museum. Regardless of any post-cataloging treatments or physical separations of materials, the common accession number serves as the one needed link. Thus the most fundamental process in the museum setting—registration—becomes the key to every subsequent procedure.

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Listed and annotated here are a few publications available to help guide the museum curator through the archival world.

Archival Forms Manual. Chicago, Illinois: Society of American Archivists, 1982.

A compilation of forms used by existing archives, this book provides inspiration for designing functional archival management tools.

Art and Architecture Thesaurus. New York, New York: Oxford University Press, 1990.

Compiled by the Art History Information Program of the J. Paul Getty Trust, the "document types" hierarchy of this ambitious work is by far the most complete source of archival nomenclature in existence. This is a real help for devising an in-house authority list of document types, and it includes terms for aggregate collections such as family papers and corporation records.

Blackaby, James R., Patricia Greeno, et al. *The Revised Nomenclature for Museum Cataloging: A Revised and Expanded Edition of Robert C. Chenhall's System for Classifying Man-Made Objects.* Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History, 1989.

This needed update of the old standby is much kinder to archival materials than was the original. It contains many more "preferred terms" for the description of documents (under the general category of "Communication Artifacts") and even allows the existence of aggregate archival "collections."

Deiss, William A. *Museum Archives: An Introduction.* Chicago, Illinois: Society of American Archivists, 1983.

While making a case for museums to keep their own historically significant corporate records, this work offers a good foundation for maintenance of archives in a museum setting.

Dudley, Dorothy H., Irma Bezold, et al. *Museum Registration Methods.* Washington, D.C.: American Association of Museums, 1979.

While it does not deal with archival collections, this book is considered the undisputed "bible" of museum registrars.

Hensen, Steven L. *Archives, Personal Papers, and Manuscripts: A Cataloging Manual for Archival Repositories, Historical Societies, and Manuscript Libraries.* Second edition. Chicago, Illinois: Society of American Archivists, 1989.

This book has deservedly gained a following among archivists for its detailed approach and copious examples of descriptive data for archival materials.

Inventories and Registers: A Handbook of Techniques and Examples. Chicago, Illinois: Society of American Archivists, 1976.

This book offers a smorgasbord of inventory formats, helpful if you are shopping for one that fits your needs.

Kane, Lucile M. *A Guide to the Care and Administration of Manuscripts.* Second edition. Nashville, Tennessee: American Association for State and Local History, 1988.

This is another good basic piece on the post-accession lives of archival collections.

Library of Congress Subject Headings. Fourteenth edition. Washington, D.C.: Library of Congress Cataloging Distribution Service, 1991.

This source, like the Getty *Art and Architecture Thesaurus*, has document-type terms, although not as many, and they are dispersed throughout the general subject headings. However, the LC work and its previous editions are commonly used and readily available in most libraries, so it may be more accessible than the Getty tome.

Pederson, Ann, ed. *Keeping Archives.* Sydney, New South Wales, Australia: Australian Society of Archivists, 1987.

This textbook on the archival profession offers museum curators a better understanding of the archival frame of mind.

Ritzenthaler, Mary Lynn. *Archives and Manuscripts: Conservation.* Chicago, Illinois: Society of American Archivists, 1983.

This work deals with the care and storage of collections from an archival point of view.

Society of American Archivists' Archival Fundamental series.

This new series appends and in some cases supplants the Society of American Archivists' old Basic Manuals (see below). Germane to the museum curator are two entries in particular that are already available: *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts* and *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts.*

Society of American Archivists' Basic Manual series.

This time-tested series includes separate works on many aspects of an archivist's routine. Some of these have been succeeded by SAA's new Archival Fundamental series (see above), but copies of the Basic Manuals are still floating around. Particularly pertinent to a museum curator dealing with archival materials are Gracy, David B. II. *Archives and Manuscripts: Arrangement and Description* (Chicago, Illinois: Society of American Archivists, 1977), which covers fundamentals of archival post-accession processing; and Brichford, Maynard J. *Archives and Manuscripts: Appraisal and Accessioning* (Chicago, Illinois: Society of American Archivists, 1977), which has only a small section on accessioning, but the museum curator might find the similarities and differences to museum practices educational.

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A A S L H

TECHNICAL LEAFLET

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STORAGE SOLUTIONS FOR OVERSIZED PAPER ARTIFACTS

by Mary Todd Glaser

Maps, posters, large prints and other oversized paper objects pose storage problems for any collection. These sheet materials can be unwieldy and vulnerable to damage especially if, as is often the case, they are not backed or mounted. Large paper objects are best stored flat in map case drawers or large covered archival quality boxes. Inside the drawers or boxes objects should be given the additional protection of folders or other suitable enclosures. Since most collections contain sheet materials larger than the available drawers, other storage solutions must also be found. This technical leaflet is intended to offer suggestions for possible storage options.

STORAGE FURNITURE

MAP CASES (FLAT FILES)

Map cases or flat files composed of wide, shallow drawers are essential for collections with oversized material. Like all furniture for the storage of works of art or archival materials, map cases should be carefully chosen. It is important to avoid cases made of materials that may contribute to the deterioration of paper. Metal cases are much less damaging than those made of wood, but not all metal cases are 100 percent safe. Even steel cases finished with baked enamel, once the furniture of choice, can be problematic. If the enameled steel has not been baked long enough or at a high enough temperature, it may emit formaldehyde and other volatile substances that are potentially damaging to paper.

A test is available to determine if your baked enamel steel furniture is safe. However, it requires sophisticated analytical equipment. A simple if less conclusive test has been suggested by B.W. Golden of the Interior Steel Equipment Company of Cleveland, Ohio. Saturate a cloth with methyl ethyl ketone (MEK) and rub vigorously over an inconspicuous part of the metal case. Use a dark cloth if the case is light in color, a white cloth if the case is dark. Rub the same spot back and forth thirty times in each direction. If much enamel comes off on the cloth, the coating may not be properly baked and should be tested further. Some enamel usually comes off, but if the amount is slight, there is no need for concern. Do not worry if the finish softens or discolors; MEK is a strong solvent and some alteration of the enamel is to be expected. Please note that MEK is toxic and flammable and must be used only in a well-ventilated area with appropriate protective measures.

Other types of metal storage cabinets appear not to offgas and are now preferred to those with baked enamel finish. Furniture made of anodized aluminum is excellent but expensive. This light-weight metal is both very strong and non-reactive. It is also uncoated and therefore does not emit gases. Furniture with solvent-free powder coatings of finely divided synthetic polymers are also believed to be safe for storage of valuable materials.

Wood has always been popular for storage cabinets, including flat files, but harmful acids and gases are emitted by wood in quantities far greater than those given off by improperly baked enamel. Even older wood cabinets are potentially damaging, especially if made of oak. If you have wood files and cannot afford to replace them, the wood should be sealed to minimize emissions. The drawers should also be lined with a barrier material.

Although no coating or sealant will completely block emissions, polyurethane will seal as well as any. It is important to buy water-based polyurethane, not the more common oil-modified type. Oil-based paints and other oil products should be avoided for archival storage. Not all water-based polyurethanes are safe. Check with a preservation professional for the brands currently recommended. Or better, test the polyurethane yourself. A simple procedure is suggested by Pamela Hatchfield at the Museum of Fine Arts, Boston, Massachusetts. Coat a clean glass slide with the sealant to be tested. Place the slide in a jar with a small clean piece of each of these metals: lead, silver, and iron. To ensure that the metal samples are clean and without corrosion or grease, rub each with 600 grit sandpaper or steel wool and wipe with acetone. Next place a piece of cotton dampened with distilled or deionized water in the jar. The cotton must not touch the slide or metal pieces; it may be put in a small beaker or glass vial. Cover the jar with two thicknesses of aluminum foil and secure tightly with wire.

As a control, prepare a second jar as above with metal samples but without the coated glass slide. Place both jars in an oven at 60° C for three weeks or in a warm spot such as a sunny window sill for as long as possible. Watch for changes in the appearance of the metals. Changes will usually occur in both the test and the control samples. If the changes in the former differ from those in the control samples, unacceptable substances are probably present in the sealant.

After the sealant has been applied, it should be allowed to air for at least three weeks. In addition, the drawers should be lined with barrier sheets of polyester film (Mylar), four-ply 100 percent ragboard, heavy aluminum foil, or a combination of these. Marvelseal, a laminate of aluminum, polypropylene, and polyethylene, provides the best barrier because, unlike Mylar or ragboard, it is completely impervious to gases. Aluminum foil may oxidize in an acidic environment, turning to metal dust. If aluminum foil is used, we recommend that it is checked periodically and changed if there is evidence of powdering. Because of the tendency of aluminum foil to undergo chemical change, no object should be left in direct contact with it.

The sides of the drawers as well as the bottom should be sealed and lined. Marvelseal is heat sensitive and can be ironed onto most wooden surfaces. Other barrier materials can be applied to sides of drawers with 3M double-sided tape #415.

Drawers in flat files should be no more than two inches deep and should never be filled to the top. They should be equipped with dust covers or rear hoods to prevent objects from being damaged at the back of the drawer. Drawers should have ball bearings for smooth gliding and stops to prevent the drawer from coming out of the cabinet.

It is important to have a large empty surface close to the drawers where oversized objects can be examined. A large table or the top of the file serves well for this purpose. In storage areas it is often difficult to keep large areas clear, but one must do so for the safety of the collection during retrieval and inspection. Aisles should be wide enough to allow easy removal from the drawers.

Boxes

Although upright storage in Hollinger boxes or office files is satisfactory for documents of legal size or smaller, objects larger than about 15" x 9" should be stored flat. If the sheets are small enough, they can be stored horizontally in flat boxes instead of drawers. These should be the buffered lignin-free or low-lignin boxes available from conservation suppliers. Inside the boxes the objects are best kept unfolded in folders or other enclosures.

Boxes come in a variety of sizes and types. The sturdiest is the solander type box or museum case, which is heavy enough to hold a group of art works that have been matted. In addition, the thick walls of a solander box insulate well and give good physical protection. The lids of these boxes have lips that help seal the boxes and keep out airborne materials.

INSIDE THE DRAWERS OR BOXES: PROTECTIVE ENCLOSURES

Inside drawers or boxes, individual sheets need the additional protection of folders, polyester envelopes (encapsulation) or window mats. Folders are usually the enclosure of choice for archival collections, while window mats are often used by museums for works of art on paper. Polyester encapsulation is popular for fragile or much used oversized objects. Each type of enclosure has certain advantages. Choice depends on the needs of the collection and resources of the institution.

Folders

Use of folders is the least expensive solution. Like storage boxes, folders should be made of low-lignin or lignin-free stock. For most paper artifacts folders buffered with an alkaline material are recommended. Certain objects such as blueprints and other photographic materials, however, are alkali sensitive. For these, some conservators recommend pH-neutral lignin-free folders that have not been buffered. Both types are available from conservation suppliers or can be made in-house from archival folder stock.

Each folder should be somewhat larger than the objects inside. To keep the contents from slipping out, folders should be cut to the size of the drawer or box. Works of art with delicate surfaces, fragile sheets, or very large objects should be given individual folders. Other materials may share a folder. Interleaving with archivally acceptable paper or tissue is recommended, especially if the objects are subject to abrasion. The number of objects per folder and folders per drawer or box should be a matter of common sense, determined by the condition and size of the materials. As a general rule, do not over-crowd. Each object must be stored so that it can be retrieved without risk of damage.

If an oversized object is especially brittle, a folder made from a heavier, more rigid material such as four-ply archival board provides better support than one made from folder stock. Some recommend that folders be labeled along the fold and positioned in the drawer with the fold side at the front. This placement requires one to remove the folder from the drawer before looking through it and discourages casual rifling. If a folder is pulled out spine first, however, one runs the risk of leaving sheets behind. The collection manager must decide how to position the folders so that there is least risk. Folders should be clearly labeled in pencil or waterproof ink. Labels identifying the entire contents of the folder are recommended since they discourage rummaging. Self-adhering labels should be avoided as these often bear adhesives that stain so invasively they migrate into the folder. In addition, these pressure-sensitive adhesives often fail in time.

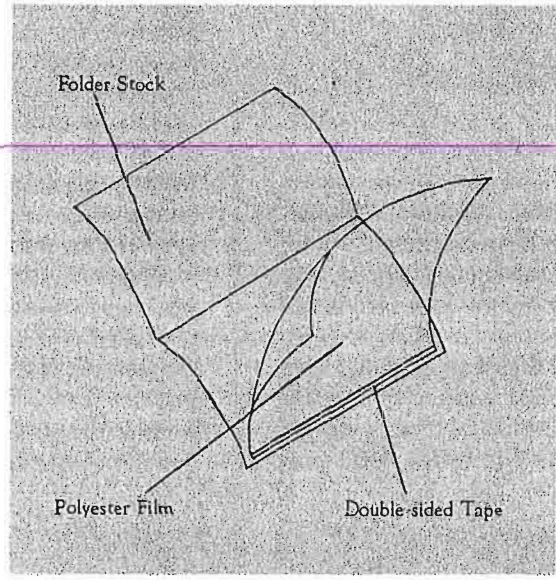

Figure 1. Folder with polyester cover inside.

Polyester Film Encapsulation

Encapsulation in polyester film, a clear, flexible plastic, is an attractive solution for oversized materials especially if they are brittle or frequently handled. Polyester encapsulation is often used for posters and maps. The object is sandwiched between two slightly larger sheets of film. The edges of the plastic are sealed either with special welding equipment or with double-sided tape. Polyester film, often called Mylar (the brand name of the DuPont product), not only protects but reinforces, giving better protection than that offered by a folder.

Encapsulation, however, is not suitable for untreated objects or those with friable media. Because polyester contains a static charge, pastel, charcoal, soft pencil, gouache, or insecurely bound materials are easily dislodged when in contact with this plastic. In addition, research at the Library of Congress has determined that acidic papers deteriorate faster within a closed environment such as a polyester envelope. Since most untreated papers are acidic to some extent, objects should be deacidified or at least washed prior to encapsulation. Washing or deacidification must be done by a conservator. Where treatment is not possible, placing a sheet of buffered paper inside the polyester envelope behind the object is an acceptable alternative. Encapsulation can be done in-house with 3M double-sided tape #415.

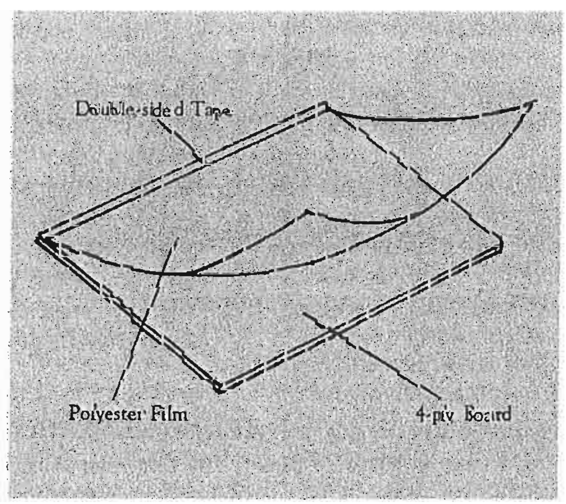

Figure 2. Archival board with polyester cover sheet.

Window Mats

Mats are more expensive than folders or polyester envelopes and they occupy more space. Making mats in-house saves money but requires an investment in a mat cutter and a supply of archival quality board. If making mats is to be an ongoing activity, a good mat cutter is an excellent investment. Mats for oversized materials should be made of four-ply or thicker board so they give adequate support. Once matted, an object is ready for framing and exhibiting. Another advantage to matting is that an object in a mat can be handled without touching. Mats also provide a more rigid support.

The standard museum mat is composed of two sheets, a window and a backboard, held together with a strip of cloth along one edge, usually the top. The object is hinged to the backboard usually at the upper corners. Japanese kozo papers and homemade starch-based paste adhesives are the conservator's choice for hinging. Commercial tapes should be avoided as most do not age well and many will stain.

Even archival tapes should not be used with objects of value as their ageing characteristics are still not known.

Folders with Polyester Film Inserts

Such folders combine the advantages of a plain folder and polyester encapsulation. They are constructed as shown in figure 1 with a sheet of polyester film attached inside the folder. This type of enclosure can be purchased from conservation suppliers or it can be made in-house using double-sided tape to attach the polyester. Such an enclosure is safe for untreated materials for which traditional encapsulation may be inappropriate. The object can be seen without handling and is held in place by the polyester. Like encapsulation, however, such enclosures cannot be used with friable media such as pastels. A variation on the above is an enclosure made of four-ply (or heavier) archival board with a cover sheet of polyester attached at the top with double-sided tape (figure 2). Because board is more rigid than folder stock, this type of enclosure is especially suitable for oversized materials.

STORAGE OF VERY LARGE PAPER ARTIFACTS

Rolling

For objects larger than the available drawers, rolling is a common solution. It is not ideal but may be the only practical means of preventing mechanical damage. Rolling saves space and is satisfactory for materials that are flexible enough to withstand unrolling and re-rolling. It is especially suitable for architectural working drawings and other items that are seldom consulted. Related items can be rolled together. It is important not to roll too tightly and to support the material. Conservators recommend rolling sheet materials around the outside of a tube at least 4 inches in diameter. The tube should be longer than the sheets so that their edges are supported. Low-lignin pH-neutral tubes are available from conservation suppliers. If these are not used, a barrier sheet of polyester film or buffered paper can be placed around a non-archival tube, between the tube and the material being stored.

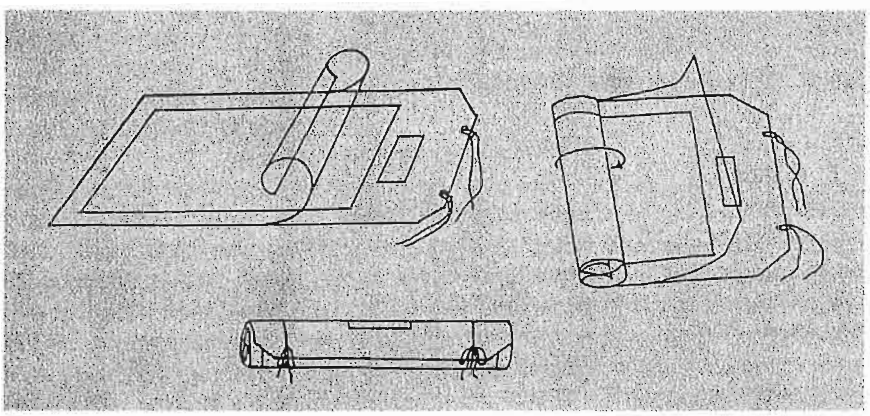
Figure 3. Rolled polyester folder.

Once the object is rolled on a tube, the assembly should be wrapped in archival paper or given a jacket of polyester film (Mylar) to protect against abrasion, dust and pollutants. The outer jacket may be secured with Velcro tabs or with ties of undyed fabric tape, white polyester ribbon, or strips of cloth. Tubes should be stored horizontally one layer deep. Shelves should be wide enough so the tubes do not extend into the aisles. They can also be stored by inserting a pole through the tube and resting the ends of the pole on brackets. For additional protection, tubes wrapped with archival materials can be placed inside larger tubes.

A rolled folder made of 4 or 5 mil polyester film provides an alternative storage solution (see figure 3). Rolled polyester folders, like encapsulation, reinforce and support oversized objects. As with encapsulation, acidic materials should not be placed in polyester rolls unless they rest against a sheet of buffered paper. Such folders can be made from a sheet of polyester film folded in half. The object is placed inside and the folder is rolled and secured with ties. The ties can be kept in place by feeding through holes punched in the end of the roll. A label of archival paper can be attached to the film with double-sided tape (3M brand #415). Labels should face out and not touch the object. To help protect against exposure to light, the object itself should face inward. Please remember that storing flat is greatly preferred to rolling. The latter should be reserved for objects too large to fit in drawers.

Many collections contain objects that have been rolled for years and are too brittle to unroll safely. If they are humidified, many of these papers will relax enough to be handled. A conservator can advise on how and when to humidify. Instructions for in-house relaxation and unrolling of nonvaluable materials are given at the end of this article.

Rolled objects awaiting unrolling should be wrapped and stored in a single horizontal layer on shelves wide enough to support them. For better protection, the wrapped rolls may be placed inside horizontally positioned wide-diameter tubes that are slightly longer than the rolled materials.

Folding

Folding damages paper and is not recommended. Some objects such as newspapers are meant to be folded once. Such sheets may remain that way but should not be folded a second time.

Hanging

Vertical hanging of paper artifacts is usually not recommended. Wall maps and other objects can be stored this way if they are specifically mounted for hanging, if that mounting is secure and conservationally sound, and if the objects can be protected from light and airborne hazards. Wall maps were traditionally backed with cloth and attached to rods at the top and bottom edges. In the case of old maps, these mounts are often failing but the maps can be treated, and given new backings and the protection of a polyester envelope. It is safe to store these vertically if they spend most of their time in a dark storage area. Plans for an inexpensive rack made of pipes and plumbers' fittings are available from the Northeast Document Conservation Center, Andover, Massachusetts.

Sectioning

At one time, libraries routinely cut maps into sections for easier storage. Sometimes the cut sections were mounted together on a single cloth that was folded and put inside a cover in a book format. These interesting early examples of map preservation are found in many libraries. Today maps are never cut. Some can still be sectioned, however. Many early materials, especially maps, are printed or drawn on two or more sheets of paper that have been joined together. In the course of treatment these sheets can be separated, treated, and kept separate. Sectioning in such cases is a radical solution but not an irreversible one. The component parts can always be placed together for viewing or permanently rejoined at a later time. Whether to section, like so many conservation issues, should be decided on an individual basis taking into account the object's aesthetic importance, its uniqueness, its original function, the amount of handling it will receive, and the feasibility of storage alternatives such as rolling. This is essentially a curatorial issue that must be decided by a curator and/or a collections manager with input from a conservator.

RELAXING BRITTLE MATERIALS BY HUMIDIFICATION

First, a word of caution. Humidification is not appropriate for all paper artifacts. Valuable objects should be handled by a conservator. Do not attempt to humidify papers with water soluble or friable media such as watercolor, felt-tipped pen, pastel, or charcoal. Some writing inks are also water-sensitive, especially modern ones. Media can be tested by placing a small water droplet on each ink or color. After a few seconds, press gently with a small blotter or other absorbent paper. If media shows on the blotter, it is water sensitive, and the object should not be humidified by an inexperienced person.

Do not attempt to humidify parchment or coated or varnished papers. Moisture can damage or visually alter these materials.

Relaxation can be done in a simple homemade humidification chamber. The necessary supplies are water, a large plastic trash can with lid, a tall plastic waste basket that fits inside the trash can, sheets of blotting paper, and a sheet of rigid material for weighting, such as plate glass or plywood. Cleaning is the first step in the humidification procedure. This is important because moisture can cause dirt to become fixed to the paper. Although thorough or overall cleaning is not possible with rolled materials, one should at least sweep the outside of the roll with a soft brush. Do not humidify heavily soiled papers.

Begin the humidification procedure early in the day as it may take several hours. First, place one or more rolled objects on end inside the waste basket and put the waste basket into the trash can. Place blotting paper sheets in the space between the can and the basket. This blotter layer should be at least as high as the waste basket and should surround it. Carefully pour hot tap water into the space between the containers to a depth of one to two inches. Do not allow water to touch the materials or get into the waste basket. The water will wick into the blotting paper causing the relative humidity in the chamber to rise.

Cover the trash can and wait. Check the materials every two to three hours. When they are relaxed enough to unroll, remove one item at a time and place it on a dry blotter. Carefully unroll it and put another blotter on top of it. Weight the blotter sandwich so the item will not curl while drying. If available, a sheet of plate glass works well as a weight. Ordinary glass (with edges polished or taped to prevent injury) or a sheet of plywood or masonite can be used with additional weight on top. Change the blotters after 15 to 20 minutes and leave the object weighted until dry. Several objects can be dried in a stack if blotters are inserted between each item.

Because damp papers can grow moldy quickly, do not leave objects in a humidity chamber for more than eight hours and never overnight. If in that time a paper does not relax enough to unroll easily, do not attempt to do so. Allow the object to dry in its rolled state, then wrap it and store until a conservator can unroll it.

SUGGESTED FURTHER READING

Alper, Diana. "How to Flatten Folded or Rolled Paper Documents," Conserve O Gram, Harpers Ferry, WV: National Park Service, 1993.

NEDCC Technical Leaflets (available from Northeast Document Conservation Center, 100 Brickstone Square, Andover, MA 01810).
"Storage Furniture: A Brief Review of Current Choices."
"Preservation Suppliers and Services."
"Storage Methods and Handling Practices."
"Storage Solutions for Oversized Paper Artifacts."
"Choosing Archival Quality Storage Enclosures for Books and Paper."
"Encapsulation in Polyester Film Using Double-Sided Tape."
"Relaxation of Brittle Paper Artifacts by Humidification."
"Matting and Framing Works of Art and Artifacts on Paper."
"How to Do Your Own Matting and Hinging."

Rhodes, Barbara, ed. *Hold Everything!* New York: Metropolitan Reference and Research Library Agency (Metro), 1990.

Ritzenthaler, Mary Lynn. *Archives and Manuscripts Conservation: A Manual on Physical Care and Management.* SAA Archival Fundamentals Series. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1983.

Preserving Archives and Manuscripts. SAA Archival Fundamentals Series. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, in preparation.

Mary Todd Glaser, a paper conservator and consultant for more than 30 years, is director of paper conservation at the Northeast Document Conservation Center in Andover, Massachusetts. Information in this leaflet is drawn from two NEDCC technical leaflets, "Storage Solutions for Oversized Paper Artifacts" and "Relaxation of Brittle Paper Artifacts by Humidification."