

HOW TO LIVE FOREVER: Creating Your Sisterhood Archives

TIPS & RESOURCES

ARCHIVAL MATERIAL: Documents/objects that have intrinsic historical value
Any materials that identify the kind of organization, what they did, what was most important, events, decisions, things that marked a moment. Some of the items on the list will be applicable to congregations but not to sisterhoods and regions

Announcements
Audiovisual material
Calendars
Cemetery records and tombstone data
Commemorative material
Conference material
Correspondence
Ephemera/memorabilia
Events-related materials: Flyers, invitations, programs
Financial documents (fundraising, donor information, budgets, etc.--can be restricted from public access when/if necessary)
Legal documents
Meeting minutes
Membership records
Newsletters & bulletins
Pamphlets
Papers, diaries and correspondence of clergy, presidents, professional and lay leadership of the organization
Photographs
Press releases & newspaper articles
Program-related material (adult education, etc.)
Real estate and construction documents
Scrapbooks
Textiles

ARCHIVAL SUPPLIES:

- Acid-free boxes and folders are two of the most important supplies you can get. Be careful of items simply listed as “archival.” When it comes to paper-based supplies, like boxes and folders, look for words like “acid-free” and “lignin-free” and/or a PH above 7.
- Avoid plastic and PVC. When it comes to supplies like photo and document sleeves, look for ones made of polyester, polypropylene, or polyethylene. Look for words like “PVC Free” or “inert and stable.”

- Make sure you have pencils and at least one extra-fine point Sharpie (a Micron works as well).
- Some companies that specialize in archival supplies are:
 - Hollinger Metal Edge – hollingermetaledge.com
 - Gaylord Archival – gaylord.com
- Supplies you should avoid are pens, glue, tape, metal staples and paper clips, and rubber bands.

SERIES (MAIN CATEGORIES) SUGGESTIONS:

Administration

Board and/or committee meeting agendas and minutes
 Correspondence to/from Women's League (includes email)
 Policies and planning materials
 Financial Records
 Charter or other founding documents
 Annual reports

Leadership

Board lists
 Information on specific leaders (presidents, founders, those who made an impact)

Committees

(Material can be divided by committee)
 Correspondence (includes email) and memos
 Policies and organizational charts
 Publications, press releases, reports
 Financial records

Programs and Events (including anniversaries, conventions & conferences)

Invitations and promotional material (flyers, emails, etc.)
 Planning materials (meeting minutes/notes, correspondence, guest lists, etc.)
 Programs
 Photographs or audio/video recordings
 Region badges

Media

Photographs, videos, scrapbooks
 Artwork
 Digitized sound or video

Do not include:

Inaccessible media (floppy disks, cassette tapes) when the same content is available in another format

Publications

Bulletins, newsletters, pamphlets, magazines, etc.

Special topics

For those items that don't fit in any of the categories

Labeling:

- **Printed photos:** Be sure to make sure the back of photographs are labeled with names, dates, and location/events. Only write in pencil, unless the photo is glossy-backed, in which case you can lightly use an extra-fine point Sharpie (never use a ball-point pen).
- **Digital photos:** Include the information in the file name of the photo. For example: “1982-11-18, Convention , installation, Selma Weintraub & Goldie Kweller” Save the photo as either a TIF or JPG file
- **Electronic documents:** The file name should reflect what the document is. Each document should be saved as a PDF. Each document should be placed in folders and sub-folders using the same system for physical documents.

Folder: Convention

Sub-folder: 2020 Convention

Sub-folder: Program Committee

Sub-folder: Minutes

File name: 2020 Convention, Program Committee, Minutes,
2019-11-22

Labeling Folders:

The labeling of each folder is best done by hand with a No. 2 pencil, writing directly on the extended labeling tab of the folder itself. Folder labeling should include several pieces of information, arranged something like this:

1. Top left: name of the collection
2. Top right: Folder number and Box number.
3. Top middle: Series number & name, Contents of folder

Folder Labels

Name of Collection	Series Name and Folder Contents	Folder and Box Number
Beth El Sisterhood	Series IX: Board Minutes January - June 1930	Folder #5 Box 3

DONATING TO AN ARCHIVAL REPOSITORY

Why contribute to an archive?

One of the most lasting things you can do is contribute your own historical materials to repository such as an archive, special collections library, historical society, or museum.

A repository can:

- Provide long-term preservation of your materials,
- Allow current and future researchers such as genealogists, writers, and students to better understand and analyze history.
- Enrich your community’s collective memory.

TIPS on what to do when considering donating your materials to an archive:

1. Materials: Identify with the repository what kinds of materials they will want

2. Organize and Describe

- Organization of a collection is often best handled by the repository. The “original order” of materials can provide helpful clues to future researchers.
- It is helpful if you can provide contextual information (the who, what, when, and where), such as names of people who appear in photographs or the stories behind significant items that document personal or family history.
- You can choose to include letters and labels with your items to describe the items, just be careful to not cause damage. Do not use paperclips or tape that will rip materials.

3. Find a Repository

- An archive or repository is run by archivists, curators, or librarians whose priorities are the selection, the preservation, and the accessibility for research of historical materials. They will discuss with you the historical significance of your records and advise you which repository would be best for your records. Most repositories have a collecting policy that informs their decisions about what to accept. Historical societies and museums may also collect materials such as yours.
- If you are unsure how to contact a repository in your area, start with your state or local historical society or state archives. The Society of American Archivists can also provide you with suggestions.
- You may need to provide access to your collection for consideration, through physical inspection or photocopies/scans

4. Things to Consider

- **Donations vs. Loans:** Most archives can only invest materials and labor in the preservation of items that they own, and will not accept items on loan. Donors are asked to sign a deed of gift form, which formally signifies that the materials become the property of the archives.
- **Access** to donated materials is governed by the repository’s policies regarding availability, duplication, and publication. As a prospective donor, you should become familiar with such policies and discuss any special needs or concerns with the archivist or curator before completing the deed of gift. Final description of the collection may not occur immediately and repositories vary in the speed with which description of the collection is posted online.
- **Restrictions on Use** If you are concerned that material considered confidential or private may be represented in your personal and family records, be prepared to discuss with the archivist the possibility of restricting part of the collection for a period of time.
- **Copyright** Assignment of copyright is often complex and you should work with the repository staff to clarify issues of copyright ownership.

DO...

- DO provide context to the materials, like names of people represented, stories behind materials, etc.
- DO research an institution or repository before contacting their archivist about a potential donation.
- DO hire a professional appraiser or accountant for help with a potential tax deduction for your donation.
- DO ask the archivist questions about housing, storage, preservation, and access protocols at the institution.

DON'T...

- DON'T just drop off a collection at a repository without first consulting with their archivists.
- DON'T rearrange or remove materials after signing the deed of gift without consulting with the archivist at the repository of your choice.
- DON'T ask an archivist or curator for an appraisal.
- DON'T insist on unnecessary restrictions to access of your materials when signing the deed of gift.

Consider contacting JTS and AJHS regarding information for donating your archives:

Jewish Theological Seminary (JTS): For information about donating your archives contact: Naomi M. Steinberger (email: NSTEINBERGER@jtsa.edu)
Director of Library Services
Library of The Jewish Theological Seminary
3080 Broadway
New York, NY 10027

American Jewish Historical Society (AJHS): For information about donating your archives contact: Melanie Meyers, Director of Collections and Engagement
15 West 16th Street
New York, NY 10011
phone: 212-294-6160
email: mmeyers@ajhs.org

Articles, Publications & Resources (Just a few)

Archives: Free online intro course - Archivist's Tools and Tips

<http://archivetools.weebly.com/course.html>

(circa 1995)

Syllabus and notes for a free online introductory course. Course Overview: This is an introductory study of archival theory and practice.

Several pages from the Society of American Archivists (SAA-the main professional org) on basic concepts:

[What Are Archives?](#)

[Donating Your Organization's Records to a Repository](#)

[Donating Your Personal or Family Records to a Repository](#)

[What Are Archives and How Do They Differ from Libraries?](#)

Library of Congress:

[Your Personal Archiving Project: Where to Start?](#)

A good overview from the Unitarians:

[Archiving Church Records: What Items to Keep and How to Catalogue Them](#)

Synagogue-focused publication:

[Starting from Scratch: Creating the Synagogue Archives](#)

Excellent resource

HOW TO LIVE FOREVER: Documents and Photos TIPS AND RESOURCES

Compiled by Robbie Terman, Director, Leonard N. Simons Jewish Community Archives

terman@ifmd.org; 248-203-1491

<https://www.wlcj.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/12/DEALING-WITH-ALL-THOSE-PICTURES-AND-DOCUMENTS.docx.pdf>

How to Properly Organize Your Photos

<https://photographylife.com/how-to-organize-pictures>

Don't Throw It Away, Sandra Florand Young, with revisions by Douglas Bicknese and Julia Hendry Special Collections Department, The University Library, and Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, College of Architecture and the Arts, The University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006

An electronic version of the booklet is at: <https://library.webhost.uic.edu/libweb/DTIA.pdf>

Donating Your Materials to an Archive Good overview for donating personal archives with helpful information from University of North Carolina's Wilson Library

[https://library.unc.edu/preservation/donating-your-materials/#:~:text=Most%20archives%20can%20only%20invest,the%20property%20of%20the%20archives.](https://library.unc.edu/preservation/donating-your-materials/#:~:text=Most%20archives%20can%20only%20invest,the%20property%20of%20the%20archives)

Guide to Donating Archival Materials

Helpful article with good points to consider from the Black Metropolis Research Consortium

<https://bmrc.lib.uchicago.edu/resources/legacy-management-resources-portal/guide-donating-archival-materials/>