

# ARCHIVAL BASICS

## AN INTRODUCTION TO ARCHIVAL MANAGEMENT: APPRAISAL, ARRANGEMENT, AND DESCRIPTION

**Beth Bensman**

Archives Specialist

NARA – Philadelphia

[beth.bensman@nara.gov](mailto:beth.bensman@nara.gov)

# I. Introduction

- A. Overview, Glossary, and Bibliography
- B. Important Terms
- C. Library v Archive
- D. Basic Concepts – “Think Like an Archivist”

© Original Artist  
Reproduction rights obtainable from  
[www.CartoonStock.com](http://www.CartoonStock.com)



"Welcome aboard, Bob. Your job is to figure out what the hell happened here."

## **II. Collection Policy**

---

**A. Defines scope**

**B. Gives you authority**

**C. Provides guidelines for appraisal**

# III. Appraisal

---

## **A. Intellectual value**

Evidential

Informational

## **B. Intrinsic value**

## **C. Other considerations**

Administrative, age, uniqueness, physical condition, accessibility

## **D. Ethics**

# **IV. Acquisition and Accession**

---

## **A. Acquisition (legal transfer)**

Deed of Gift

Transfer

## **B. Accession (physical control)**

## **C. Deaccession (permanent removal)**

# V. Record Keeping

**A. Accession  
Records**

**B. Collection Files**

**C. Donor Files**

**D. SGA Forms Site**



# VI. Processing Overview

## A. Processing

What you do to ready collections for use



# VI. Processing Overview

---

## B. Includes

Arranging

Housing

Labeling

Describing



# VII. The Process of Processing

---

## A. Processing plan

The significance of the collection/creator  
to the repository

Potential use of the records

Size of the collection

Amount of staff and other duties

# VII. The Process of Processing



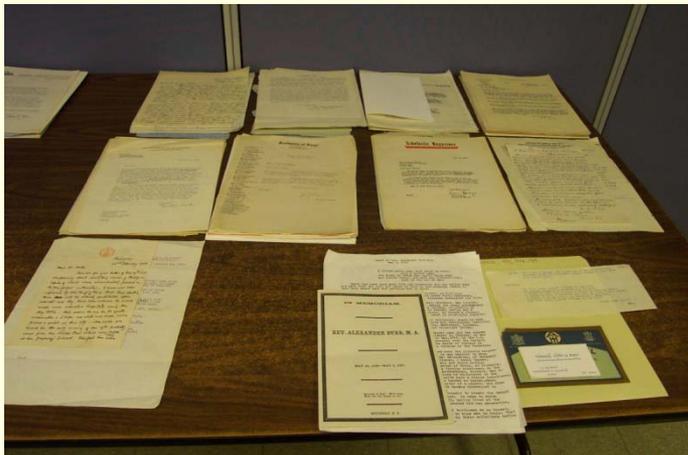
## B. Collection survey

Review all information on the collection

Survey all materials

Size and type of materials

Possible preservation problems



# VII. The Process of Processing

---

## **C. Physical Arrangement**

Original order?

Determine arrangement

type of material

alphabetical

chronological

## **D. On-line Tutorial/Archival Primer/Getty Institute**

## **E. “More Product, Less Process” Mark A. Greene and Dennis Meissner**

# VIII. Basics of Boxing and Foldering

---



- A. Hardware**
- B. Weeding**
- C. How much**
- D. Labeling folders and boxes**



# VIII. Basics of Boxing and Foldering



- E. Oversized materials (larger than legal)**
- F. Undersized materials (smaller than letter)**
- G. Newspaper/other highly acidic papers**

# IX. Levels of Control/Arrangement

---

- A. Repository**
- B. Records Group**
- C. Series**
- D. File Unit (Folder)**
- E. Item**



# IX. Levels of Control/Arrangement

---

<b>Repository Level</b>		Personal Papers
<b>Record Group</b>		Smythe Family Papers, 1932-1965
<b>Series</b>		Poetry
	<b>File</b>	Poems, 1945-1961
		<b>Item</b> Poem for My Dog, 1955
<b>Series</b>		Photographs
	<b>File</b>	Photographs, 1941-1945
	<b>File</b>	Photographs, 1946-1950
	<b>File</b>	Photographs, n.d.

# X. Description

---

## A. Gather information

During processing

From files

Secondary sources

## B. Descriptive tools

Catalog Record

Finding Aid

# **XI. Components of a Finding Aid**

---

- A. Call Number/Local Identifier**
- B. Creator and Title**
- C. Dates**
- D. Volume/Extent**
- E. Biographical or Historical Note**
- F. Scope and Content Note**
- G. Organization and Arrangement**
- H. Restrictions on Access/Conditions Governing Access**
- I. Restrictions on Use/Conditions Governing  
Reproduction and Use**
- J. Related Collections**
- K. Inventory – box or folder level**

# XII. Sample Finding Aids

---

**National Archives and Records Administration, Mid-Atlantic Region**

<http://www.archives.gov/midatlantic/holdings/rg-100-199.html>

**Presbyterian Historical Society, Bradley Family Papers**

[http://www.history.pcusa.org/collections/findingaids/fa.cfm?record\\_id=403](http://www.history.pcusa.org/collections/findingaids/fa.cfm?record_id=403)

**Richard B. Russell Library/University of Georgia, Hosea Abit Nix Papers**

<http://russelldoc.galib.uga.edu/russell/view?docId=ead/nixa.xml;query=;brand=default>

**Florida State University/Special Collections, Anvil Literary Society**

<http://www.fsu.edu/~speccoll/als/alscoll.htm>

**Repositories of Primary Resources**

<http://www.uidaho.edu/special-collections/Other.Repositories.html>

# XIII. Access, Security, and Reference

## A. Balancing Act

Preservation v Use

## B. Archival Policies for Researchers

Sign-in Log

Registration Form

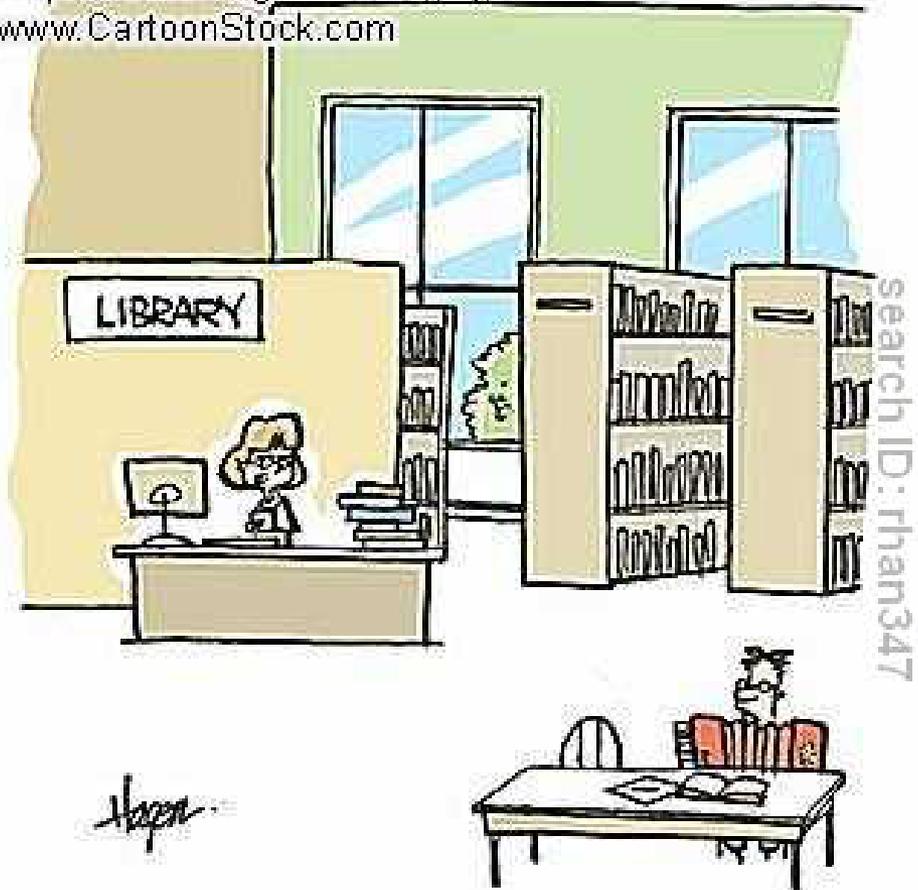
Closed Stacks

## C. Inform Users

Welcome Brochure

Policies on website

© Original Artist  
Reproduction rights obtainable from  
[www.CartoonStock.com](http://www.CartoonStock.com)



# IVX. Archival Associations and Continuing Education

---

## **Society of American Archivists (SAA)**

<http://www.archivists.org/>

<http://www.archivists.org/prof-education/index.asp>

## **Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference (MARAC)**

<http://www.lib.umd.edu/MARAC/>

<http://www.lib.umd.edu/MARAC/committees/marac-pubs.html#leaflets>

## **Delaware Valley Archivists Group (DVAG)**

<http://www.dvarchivists.org/>

## **Council of State Archivists**

<http://www.statearchivists.org/iper/rim/index.htm>

## **Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA)**

<http://www.certifiedarchivists.org/>