OH,

WHAT A NIGHT

YOU'RE GOLDEN

EXPLORE A NEW WORLD EVERY DAY.

Creating by Lorin Jackson & Alison Sielaff

WHAT'S ON THE MENU?

Beginner's Guide to Archives

or

Fantastic Items and Where to Find Them

Time waits for no one. So if there's stuff you want to know, find out.

-Stevie Nicks
What is an archives?

Archives are for everyone!

Archives can be scary.

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The archivist is here to help you.

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What is an archivist?

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Acknowledgements

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What is an archives?

Archives are information centers where records about the past—including diaries, financial records, photographs, and emails—are made available to researchers.

Researchers use primary sources because they provide a firsthand account of events or conditions during a particular period in time.

Many documents used as primary sources were recorded contemporaneously by participants or observers.

Primary Sources & Archives Reflect thinking and understanding at a moment in time.

Consider also sources from organizations (e.g. colleges, activist groups)
Archives are for everyone.

Both the Friends Historical Library and the Swarthmore College Peace Collection are open to everyone, including the general public. Swarthmore students are especially welcome.

Archives are not just for academic history research. Disciplines as varied as English Literature, Linguistics, Peace & Conflict Studies, even Astronomy, have used our collections in recent years.

Every archives holds a wealth of information that is unavailable elsewhere, and it is up to the researcher to decide how best to incorporate it into their work. Archives are not just for academic history research. They are open to everyone.

Archives are for everyone.

Including you. We want you to know that archives are for everyone.

Archives are for everyone. Including you. Including the general public. Including the Friends Historical Library.

Both Alison and Lorin wanted to create an accessible, fun way for undergrads (but, really, anyone!) to become better acquainted with archives. Alison Sielaff is an archivist at the Friends Historical Library. Lorin Jackson is a Research and Instruction Resident Librarian at Swarthmore College.

About Us

Who are we and why did we make this zine?
Digitization: The process of scanning physical materials (paper), and usually putting the scans online. This labor intensive process requires careful handling of often fragile materials, and detailed cataloging work, as well as an ongoing commitment to maintenance, upgrading online interfaces, and digital preservation. Contrary to popular belief, only a very tiny percentage of our collections have been digitized, and it is unlikely that we'll ever manage to digitize everything.

Extent / Linear feet: How “large” a collection is, typically measured in linear feet, as in amount of space the collection occupies on a shelf. A typical estimate is 1,500 pages may comprise a linear foot. The number of boxes or number of pages is often also given.

Finding aid: A description to help you find an archival collection or locate items within it. Typically contains both an overview of the collection (who created it, what topics it covers, etc.) as well as an inventory of its contents.

Manuscripts: A handwritten or unpublished document. Often abbreviated as MSS.

Series: A group of similar materials within a collection.

Journalists use archives to establish context for contemporary events and to hold people and groups accountable for their actions.

Artists and fiction authors find historical details in archives to add texture to their works of art.

From the History Channel to the Halls of Justice, the information archives hold shapes the world in which we all live.

Genealogists find traces of their ancestors in archival records.
Archives can be scary.

Key terms

Archives: Here to help YOU! A professional responsible for preserving materials of historical value and providing access to them for research.

Archivist: A combination of letters and numbers used to uniquely identify an archival collection or item. Examples: SFHL-RG5-050 or SCPC_DG_07.

Call number/identifier: A combination of letters and numbers used to uniquely identify an archival collection or item. Examples: SFHL-RG5-050 or SCPC_DG_07.

Catalog: A systematically arranged list of items held by the repository.

Collection: A group of similar materials, usually all created by the same person, family, business, or organization.

Call slip: Fill out this piece of paper with the information the archivist will need to retrieve an item for you. Typically asks for the call number, collection name, and box number.

Catalog: A systematically arranged list of items held by the repository.

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Other Local Archives

In the Philadelphia area

There are dozens of other archives in the Philadelphia area, many associated with historical societies, universities, museums, churches, municipal governments, or businesses.

Across the U.S.
Visit ArchiveGrid, [https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/](https://beta.worldcat.org/archivegrid/).
First time? No, I’ve been nervous.
Lots of times.

First time? Yes. What time is it?

This is called paging. Then getting them yourself.

Ask other staff for documents; rather than getting them yourself.

Table service: You’ll ask the archivist or the archivist’s assistant to ask you.

If so, make sure you bring a photo ID.

It’s OK to ask questions. In fact, we love it!

If you’re a first-time visitor, usually, you will just be asked to sign in.

After your first visit, usually, you may be asked to register.

(No, seriously, ask us stuff.)

It’s OK to ask questions. In fact, we love it!

Swarthmore College Peace Collection (SCPC)

Hours: 8:30-4:30 Monday-Friday.

Location: McCabe, lower level.

Email: peacecollection@swarthmore.edu

Website: https://www.swarthmore.edu/library/peace/

Swarthmore College Peace Collection (SCPC)
If only more resolutions were this easy to start.

Archives @ Swat

Swarthmore has two archives: the Friends Historical Library and the Swarthmore College Peace Collection.

Friends Historical Library (FHL)
Website: [http://swarthmore.edu/friends](http://swarthmore.edu/friends)
Email: friends@swarthmore.edu
Location: McCabe, first floor
Hours: 8:30-4:30 Monday-Friday, 10a-1p

Swarthmore College Archives (part of FHL)
Website: [http://swarthmore.edu/archives](http://swarthmore.edu/archives)
Email: archives@swarthmore.edu
Location: Friends Historical Library, in McCabe
Hours: same as Friends Historical Library

Typically, it's OK to use:
- Pencil and notebook
- Phone (for photos)
- Laptop

But while using rare materials, no:
- Food or drinks (including water bottles)
- Backpacks (can usually store)
- Pens or highlighters

Plan for times to eat, drink, and caffeinate yourself ahead of time if possible. Food is not allowed in most reading rooms!

When citing your sources, you'll need to know where you found them:

**Example citation:**
Booth Tarkington to George Ade, 8 May 1924, Box 10, Folder 5, George Ade Papers 1878-2007, Purdue University Archives and Special Collections, Purdue University Libraries.
Compared with main libraries, archives hours are more limited, and far less material is available online. The way their collections are arranged and described can be confusing. The catalog may contain unfamiliar jargon and inventories may be vague. We have good reasons for all of this, but we know there is a downside: it makes it harder to come into the archives. That is why we have archivists to help you. We are here to make your life easier! Please never hesitate to ask us for help; we have archivists to help you! It makes it harder to come into the archives. That is why we have archivists to help you. We are here to make your life easier! Please never hesitate to ask us for help; we have archivists to help you.

The archivist is...
How to request materials

It helps to know what collections you want to look at beforehand, but is not necessary. The archivist will help you find what you are interested in!

Fill out a call slip. Each collection has a unique identifier that will help the archivist locate the specific box you want.

The archivist is here to help you.

Talk to your archivist. Archives staff know their collections well. They're an invaluable resource for any researcher. Let them know what you're interested in - you may get suggestions you'd never have found otherwise.
Archives etiquette 101

Use pencils. Pens are the bane of the archives world! Notebooks and laptops are perfectly fine to have with you. Use caution when handling fragile materials. Try to use only one folder at a time so materials don't get mixed up. Keep items in the order you found them in.

Let archives staff know that you're planning to visit. (Some documents may be kept off-site and take a few days to request.)

Use caution when handling fragile materials.