What are Archives?

Archives are the non-current records of individuals, groups, institutions, and governments that contain information of enduring value. Formats represented in the modern archival repository include photographs, films, video and sound recordings, computer tapes, and video and optical disks, as well as the more traditional unpublished letters, diaries, and other manuscripts. Archival records are the products of everyday activity. Researchers use them both for their administrative value and for purposes other than those for which they were created. For example, historians and genealogists rely on archival sources to analyze past events to reconstruct family histories.

Archives & Preservation

Visit the Local History Room of the Plainfield Public Library NJ
800 Park Avenue
Plainfield NJ 07060
908-757-1111 ext. 136
E-mail: localhistory@plfdpl.info
Website: www.plfdpl.info

Mary Ellen Rogan
Library Director
Tina Marie Doody
Assistant Director
Sarah Hull
Head of Local History

Basic tips for getting started

Consider making your personal papers available for research at the Plainfield Public Library
HELPFUL TIPS

- Store records between 60-70 degrees F; 40-50% relative humidity (RH); with clean air and good circulation.
- Keep away from light. Don’t laminate.
- Do not use fasteners such as paper clips, staples, pins, strings, or rubber bands.
- Use archival quality storage items - low lignin, or lignin-free, buffered (pH 8.5 or above).
- Archival quality boxes provide protection from light and dust.
- Archival quality folders should be large enough for unfolded records to be completely covered by the folder. Do not allow documents to protrude beyond the edges of a folder, and never cut documents to fit the size of a folder.
- Store oversized items such as maps, flat within oversized folders, and store these folders in flat files.
- If oversized items have been previously rolled, they may be rolled around a wide diameter, archival tube (3-6 inches) that extends beyond the length of the record.
- Use metal shelving rather than wood.

USEFUL WEBSITES

- Care & Preservation basics
  http://www.loc.gov/preservation/

- NEDCC List of preservation leaflets
  http://www.nedcc.org/resources/leaflets.list.php

- Caring for your family archives
  http://www.archives.gov/preservation/family-archives/

- Film preservation
  http://www.filmpreservation.org/preservation-basics

- Establishing a local history collection
  http://www.ala.org/rusa/resources/guidelines/guidelinesestablishing

- Creating a synagogue archive
  http://americanjewisharchives.org/publications/starting.php

- Brief guide for congregation archives
  http://www.synodresourcecenter.org/admin/operations/archives/0001/guide_archives_cong.html

- Grants & funding for archives
  http://www.loc.gov/preservation/about/foundtn-grants.html

ARCHIVAL SUPPLY VENDORS

- University Products
  http://www.universityproducts.com/

- Hollinger Metal Edge
  http://www.hollingermetaledge.com/

- Pfile (formerly ArchivalUSA)
  http://www.pfile.com/

- Archival Methods
  http://www.archivalmethods.com/

- Also check out Gaylord and Brodart.

ARCHIVAL ORGANIZATIONS

- The National Archives & Records Administration
  http://www.archives.gov/preservation/

- Society of American Archivists
  http://www.archivists.org/

- Northeast Document Conservation Center
  http://www.nedcc.org/home.php

- Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference
  http://www.lib.umd.edu/MARAC/

- Plainfield Public Library’s Local History Collections Index
  http://www.plainfieldlibrary.info/Departments/LH/LH_collections.html