



University of Kentucky

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From the Selected Works of Ruth E. Bryan

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February 10, 2023

# The Archives and You: Why Your Memorabilia Matters

Ruth E Bryan



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Available at: <https://works.bepress.com/ruthbryan/41/>



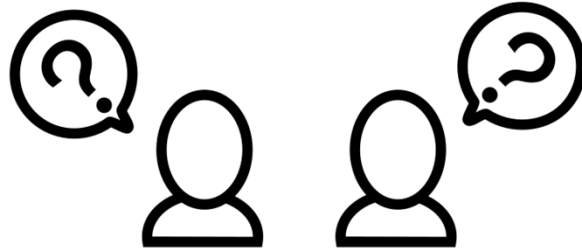
# The Archives and You: Why Your Memorabilia Matters

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Ruth E. Bryan  
University Archivist  
University of Kentucky Libraries

For the Friday Forum at The Forum at Brookside  
February 10, 2023

# What Are Archives?

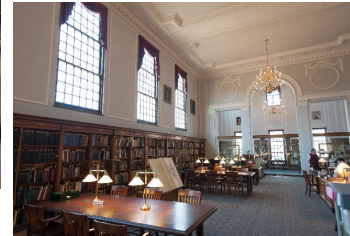
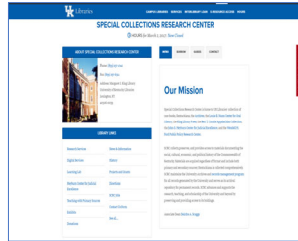


Created by Silviu Ojog  
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questioning by Silviu Ojog from [Noun Project](https://thenounproject.com/browse/icons/term/questioning/ "questioning Icons")

# What Are Archives?

- A place
- An organization
- A profession
- Stuff of history



## The Stuff of History

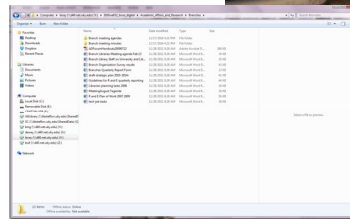


Archives are made up of lots of different physical and digital formats:  
Papers, electronic records, photographs, audio recordings, film  
Created by or come from individuals, families, or organizations as they go about their daily lives and work

That have historical value

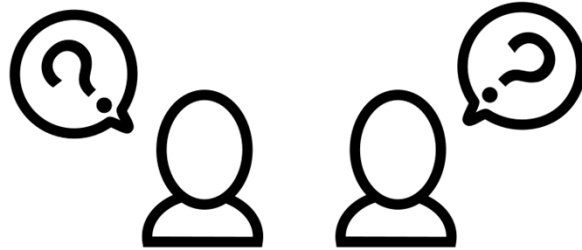
# What is “Historical Value?”

- Created for a primary purpose
- “Eye-witness accounts” of current events, people, and locations
- Can be used later for secondary purposes



Examples of documents created for a primary purpose but that can have secondary purpose: newspaper, letter, home movies; same for documents in digital formats.

## Why do Archives Matter?



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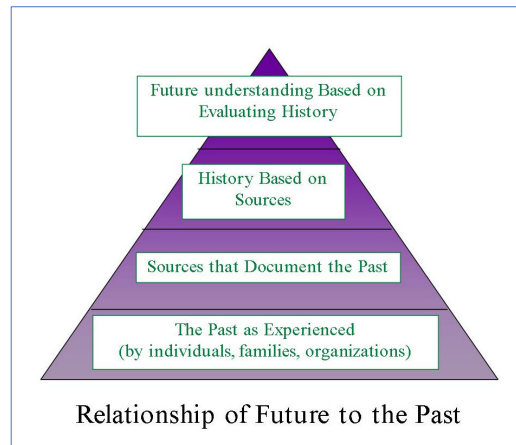
questioning by Silviu Ojog from [Noun Project](https://thenounproject.com/browse/icons/term/questioning/ "questioning Icons")

## Why do Archives Matter?

- One important way to understand and evaluate the past for future understanding

Eyewitness  
accounts!

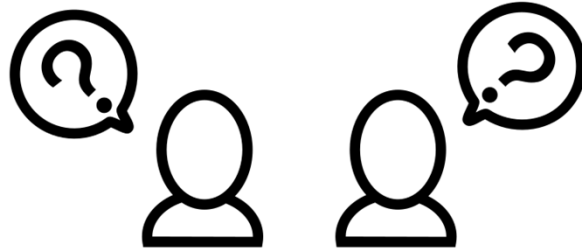
Primary Sources!



So, archives are places that preserve and provide access to the stuff of history.



## Why does the Past Matter?

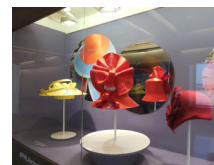
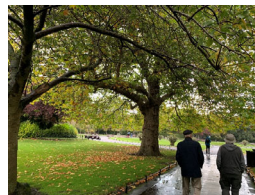


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## Why does the past matter?

- Cultural heritage (physical and intangible)
- Comparisons between past and present
- Teaching and scholarship
- Help plan for the future
- Enable democracy through open/transparent records

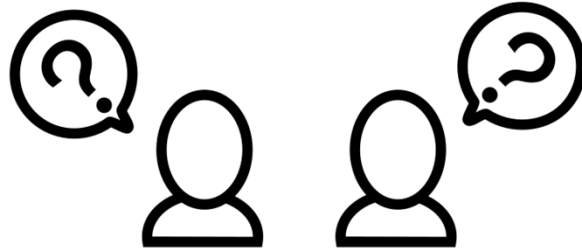


Physical and intangible attributes of a group or a society that the current generation inherits from past generations.

These attributes help give the current generation its identity as a group distinct from other groups

Physical cultural heritage includes documents, objects, artwork, buildings, animals and plants, and landscapes

Anyone Read  
Any History  
Lately?

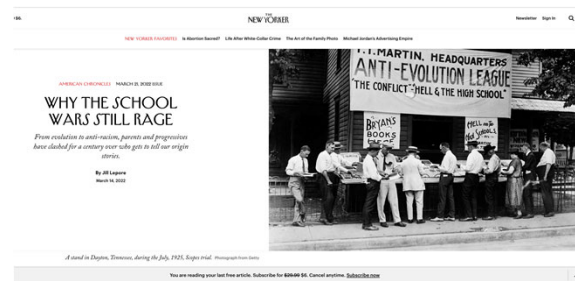
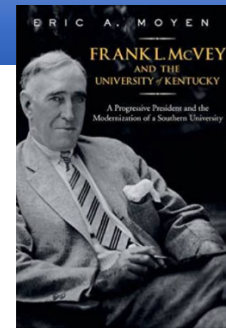


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## Biography => Frank L. McVey papers

- UK president 1917-1940
- (1869-1953)
- What in the collection is used for research:
  - Correspondence and memoranda
  - Speeches, reports
  - Newspaper clippings
- Research topics: biography, development of the university and higher education in Kentucky, political controversies

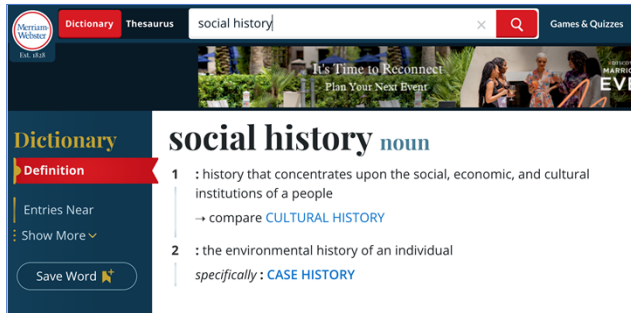


The University of Kentucky. Office of the President: Frank LeRond McVey papers (dated 1880-2012; 97.49 cubic feet, 57 record storage cartons, 82 document boxes, 36 photograph boxes, 27 oversize boxes, 1 wrapped item) comprise correspondence and memoranda, reports, writings and speeches, notes, subject files and newspaper clippings, diaries, and photographs documenting Frank L. McVey's professional and personal life, including as presidents of the University of North Dakota and University of Kentucky.

Eric Moyer, 2011 biography, Frank L. McVey and the University of Kentucky: A Progressive President and the Modernization of a Southern University.

Harvard historian Jill Lepore, March 14, 2022, New Yorker article

## Social History Matters, Too



Wikipedia: “Social history, often called the new social history, is a field of history that looks at the lived experience of the past.”

Oxford Bibliographies: “Social historians see the history of ordinary people as contributing greatly to an understanding of the past, and often they argue that ordinary people display more independent initiative than was commonly assumed by conventional historians.”

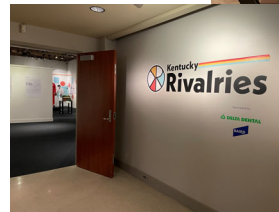
<https://www.merriam-webster.com/dictionary/social%20history>

<https://www.oxfordbibliographies.com/display/document/obo-9780199756384/obo-9780199756384-0131.xml>

[https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social\\_history](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Social_history)

## Frazier Kentucky History Museum exhibit => Ben Reeves Collection

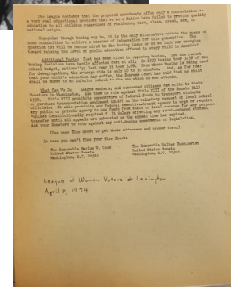
- Ben Reeves (1947-2014) was a teacher in the Garrard County School System, the librarian at Garrard County High School, and an employee of the Central Record newspaper.
- What in the collection is used for exhibit:
  - Buttons, game tickets, scrapbook
- Research topics: Kentucky Rivalries, sports in society



The Ben Reeves Artifacts and Memorabilia Collection on University of Kentucky Athletics (1962-2013, undated; 8.5 cubic feet; 12 boxes, 1 folder, and 1 tube) comprises primarily three-dimensional objects, photograph albums, and videocassette tapes documenting the play, publicity, and marketing of the individual athletes, games, and tournaments of the University of Kentucky football and men's basketball teams from the mid-20th century through the early 21st century.

## Lexington organizations=> Abby Marlatt papers

- Abby Marlatt (1916-2010) was a UK home economics faculty member (1956-1985) and a human rights and social justice activist and volunteer
- What in the collection is used for research:
  - League of Women Voters, 1945-2007
  - Micro-City Government, 1968-1999, 2007
  - Congress of Racial Equality (CORE) Lexington chapter, 1947-1981
- Research topics: civil rights movement, history of St. Paul African Methodist Church, busing exhibit



The Abby Marlatt papers (dated 1945-2007, undated; 42.38 cubic feet, 41 record storage cartons, 1 document box, and 2 flat boxes) comprise University of Kentucky and Lexington, Kentucky-related papers of Human and Environmental Sciences professor Abby Marlatt, primarily from 1959-2007. Collection consists of the files of progressive and social justice organizations in which she was involved, usually as a volunteer (22 boxes); personal correspondence, honors, and awards, including her life with her partner, Norma Perry (10 boxes and 2 oversize boxes); academics/courses taken (2 boxes); Lexington open housing and Congress of Racial Equality files (CORE), 1940s-1970s (5 boxes); and personal photographs and slides (2 boxes).

## Lexington landscape=> Johanna Rice van Outer family scrapbooks

- Johanna Rice van Outer (1911-2006) and her family lived in Clifton Heights neighborhood
- What in the collection is used for research:
  - Snapshots of the van Outer home and neighborhood
- Research topic: urban development of Lexington over time, especially around the university
- Used in conjunction with many other collections



The Johanna Rice van Outer scrapbooks contain photographs, newspaper clippings, marriage certificates, birth certificates, death certificates, school certificates, a naturalization certificate, deeds, and wills pertaining to the van Outer family. The materials pertain primarily to Johanna van Dort van Outer (Johanna Rice's mother), Cornelis van Outer (Johanna Rice's father), Cornelis van Outer (Oldest son), Johanna (van Outer) Rice, and Henry van Outer (Youngest son). The family lived in the Clifton Park neighborhood which is the area that the Young Library (University of Kentucky) is now located. The content came from one small scrap book which contained newspaper clippings and items #1-30; and 1 large scrap book which contained everything from item #31 forward. The photographs are casual snapshots of the family and their life. The descriptions contained within quotation marks were taken directly from the pictures.

Two example photographs from the van Outer family scrapbooks, around 1918. Photo on left from the Edward Louis Nollau Nitrate Photographic Prints, 1919.



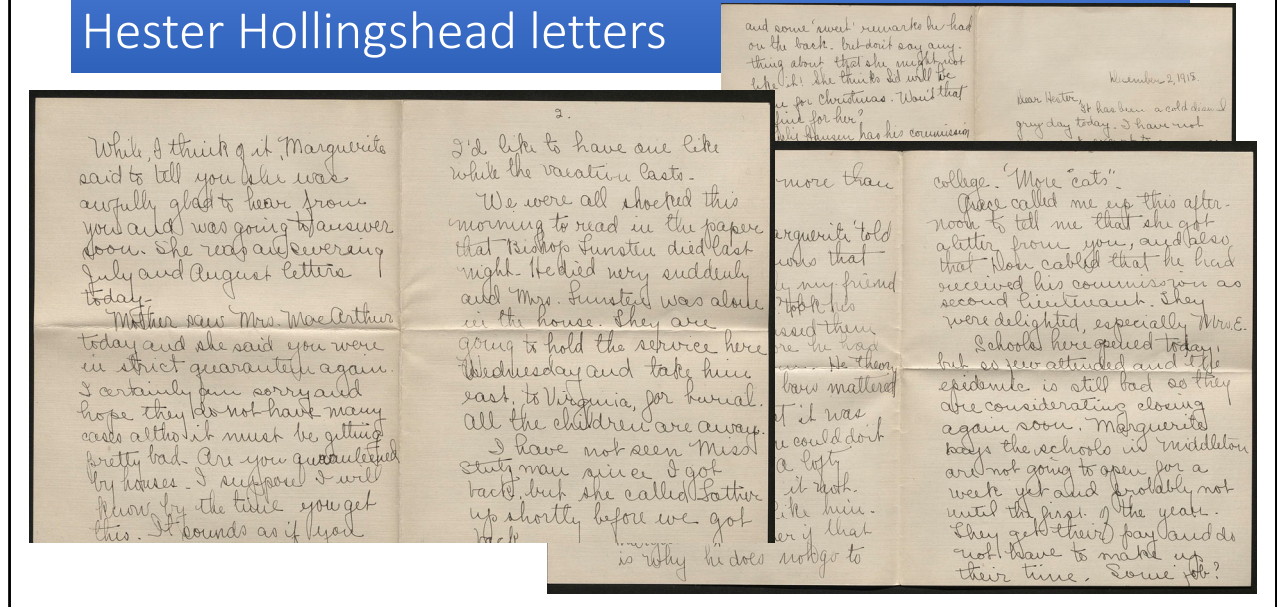
## 1918 flu pandemic personal recollection=> Hester Hollingshead letters

- Hester Hollingshead (1898-1983) was in college and far away from her family in 1918-1919
- What in the collection is used for research: Letters
- Research Topic: personal impact of influenza pandemic
- Outreach Topic: explaining our “In This Together” project
- Used on conjunction with many other collections
- Part of the Wade Hall Collection of American Letters

The Hester Hollingshead letters (dated 1918-1919; 0.15 cubic feet; 4 folders) comprise correspondence from her mother and father in Boise, Idaho, sent to her while she was attending Smith College in Northampton, Massachusetts. The letters primarily discuss the Spanish influenza outbreak and the end of World War I, including quarantines, restrictions on activities, inoculations, and the possibility of Americans with German sympathies aiding in the spread of the Spanish flu. Also included are a few letters revealing romantic friendships between Hester and former college roommates.

The Hester Hollingshead letters are part of the Wade Hall Collection of American letters, which includes correspondence and diaries from all over North America covering the time period of the Civil to Korean Wars. The materials were collected by Wade Hall and document everyday men and women.

## 1918 flu pandemic personal recollection=> Hester Hollingshead letters



Example letter from Mary (I think a sister) to Hester dated December 2, 1918.

Left: "Mother saw Mrs. MacArthur today and she said you were in strict quarantine again. I certainly am sorry and hope they don't have many cases although it must be getting pretty bad. Are you quarantined by houses."

Right: "Schools here opened today, but so few attended and the epidemic is still bad so they are considering closing again soon. Marguerite says the schools in Middleton are not going to open for a week yet and probably not until the first of the year. They get their pay and do not have to make up their time. Some job?"

# 1918 flu pandemic personal recollection=> Hester Hollingshead letters

**SPECIAL COLLECTIONS RESEARCH CENTER**  
© HOURS for November 11, 2020: By Appointment Only

**In This Together: Documenting COVID-19 in the Commonwealth**

University of Kentucky Libraries is launching a project to document the personal experiences of those who live, work or study in Kentucky during the COVID-19 pandemic of 2020. Your stories will be preserved in the UK Libraries Special Collections Research Center along with other records about this time period. We invite all Kentuckians to share your real histories, audio recordings, written stories, diary entries, photographs, videos, and other documentation about the COVID-19 experience.

**LIBRARY LINKS**

- Contact Us Here
- Doing Research
- Events and Parking
- Circulation Initiatives
- Learning Lab Internship
- Teach with Primary Sources
- Records Management
- Exhibits
- Donate
- Digital Services

**In This Together: Documenting COVID-19 in the Commonwealth Collection**

**Abstract**  
In This Together: Documenting COVID-19 in the Commonwealth Collection (dated 2020, 1st MS, 1st digital file) comprises digital photographs, diary entries, and personal narratives that document the effect of the COVID-19 Pandemic on Kentucky.

**Descriptive Summary**

**Title**  
In This Together: Documenting COVID-19 in the Commonwealth Collection

**Date**  
2020

**Extent**  
1st MS

**Subjects**  
Coronavirus infections -- Social aspects -- United States -- Kentucky  
COVID-19 (disease)  
Epidemics -- Kentucky  
Diaries -- United States -- Kentucky

**Arrangement**

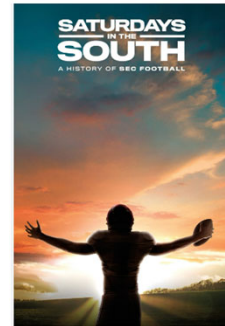
**Table of Contents**

**Abstract**  
Descriptive Summary  
Collection Overview  
Preferred Citation  
Contents of the Collection  
Restrictions on Access and Use  
Contents of the Collection

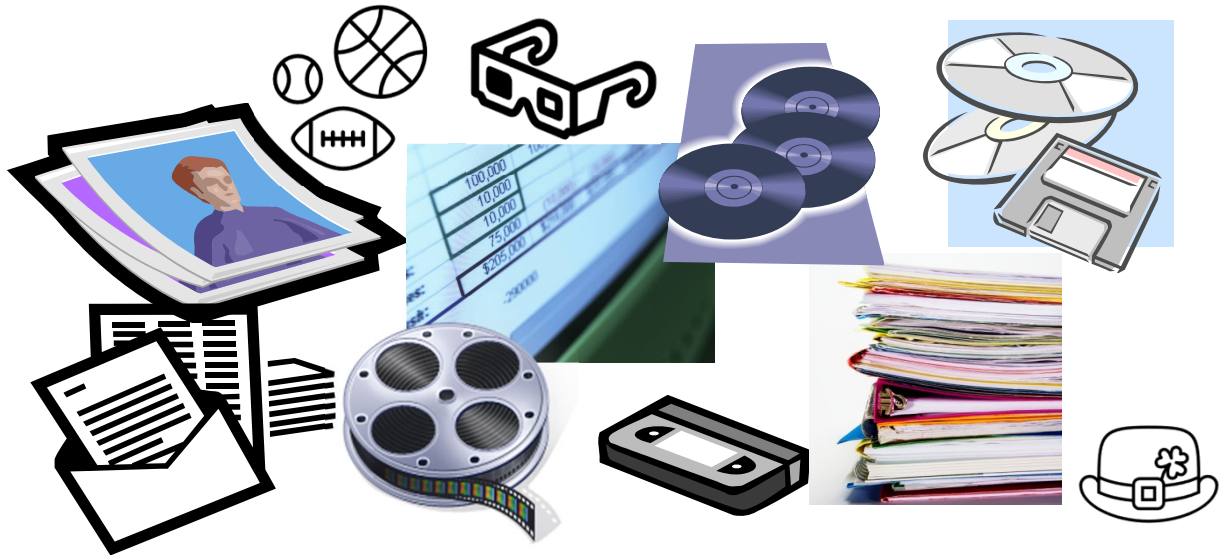
- Anonymous 1, 2020 May
- Anonymous 2, 2020-2021 May
- Bailey, Rita, 2020 May-June
- Bryant, Ruth, 2020 April 16-22
- Chen, Yanyan, 2020 May 12
- Christensen, Tracy, 2020 Spring
- Cornish, Rachel, 2020 March-May
- Coulton, Melissa, 2020 May 24
- Daly, Stephen, 2020 April 20
- Fitch, David, 2020 July
- Guthrie, Joseph, 2020 May 1
- Hollingshead, Hester, 2020 May 1

## Football documentaries=> University of Kentucky coaching film

- University of Kentucky coaching film, 1940s-1980s
  - Shot from the press box
  - To analyze game play
- Research Topic: Stories of individual athletes and highs and lows of the sport in the state and the South



## Almost Anything Can be of Historical Value



So, how do  
you know if an  
archives wants  
your stuff?

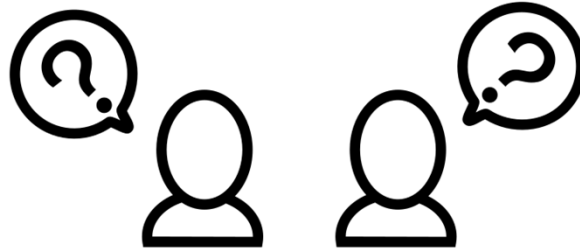
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Created by Andrew Doane  
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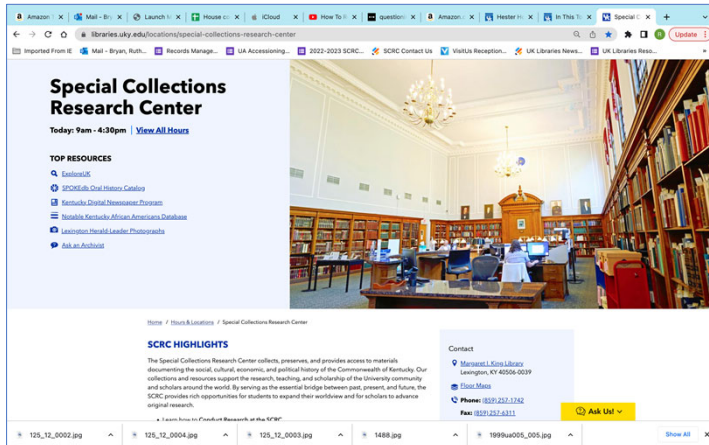
## Match to an Archives' Collecting Policy

- What do all of the UKY collection examples have in common?



Created by Silviu Ojog  
from the Noun Project

# UK SCRC Collecting Policy



The Special Collections Research Center collects, preserves, and provides access to materials documenting the social, cultural, economic, and political history of the Commonwealth of Kentucky.



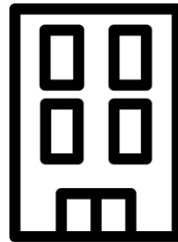
# Types of Archives

## Collecting Repositories (Theme)



Created by Dinosoft Labs  
from Noun Project

## Institutional Repositories (Parent Organization)



Created by Iconesla  
from Noun Project

## Hybrid Repositories (Both)(ex: UK SCRC)



Created by DesignHawk  
from Noun Project

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The collecting repository exists to document a theme external to the organization that established the repository. That theme is usually based in geography, a subject, a specific event, individual, group, or era, or format.

The second type is the institutional archives, which exist to document their parent organization.

The third type is the hybrid repositories, which exist to document their parent organization and an external theme or themes.



Created by Dinosoft Labs  
from Noun Project

## Collecting Repository example:

- Elna Nielsen Smith Melvin (1903-1992)
- 5 boxes => Danish American Archive and Library, Blair, NE



For example, we found 5 boxes under Abby's bed that turned out to be papers of Elna Smith Melvin, a friend of Abby's from the Unitarian Universalist Church. Elna was born in 1903 in Chicago, Illinois, to Danish-American parents, grew up in Blair, NE, and attended high school and college in Blair before receiving an English degree in 1925 from the University of Nebraska. She was married twice, married twice, did graduate and research work for various US governmental organizations in sociology and anthropology, and traveled and lived across the US and Korea and Japan. She landed in Kentucky in 1965. Elna was estranged from her children and grandchildren and Abby served as her executor. Elna and Abby had kept things like personal and academic correspondence, photographs, and Masonic objects. Turns out there's an archives in Blair, NE, that documents the experiences of all Danish Americans and their descendants, so this collection was a great fit for them.

<https://danishamericanarchive.com/jottings-january-2014/january-2014/>



Created by Dinosoft Labs  
from Noun Project

## Collecting Repository example:

- Honstead family (Carole Honstead Gnatuk), Manhattan, KS
- Clothing and decorative objects => Riley County Historical Society



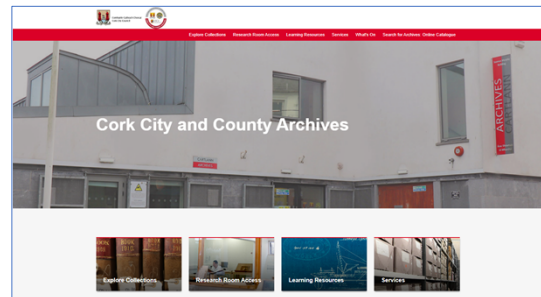
The Riley County Historical Society collects, preserves, and presents the heritage of Riley County and the State of Kansas, supporting, advocating for and promoting an interest and awareness of our local history, and the Riley County Historical Museum for the benefit of all.

[https://www.rileychs.com/mission\\_statement.cfm](https://www.rileychs.com/mission_statement.cfm)



## Hybrid Repository example:

- Bryan family, Balineen-Enniskeen, County Cork, Ireland
- 39, 8mm, home movies, 1961-1970 => Cork City and County Archives



The home movies taken by my father's aunt, Emily Frances Bryan, a nurse in the British Army. Seem to be primarily of family gatherings, events, or holidays in Ireland (with one trip to Scotland), although there are also some of her work in Cowglen Military Hospital and in Ghana.

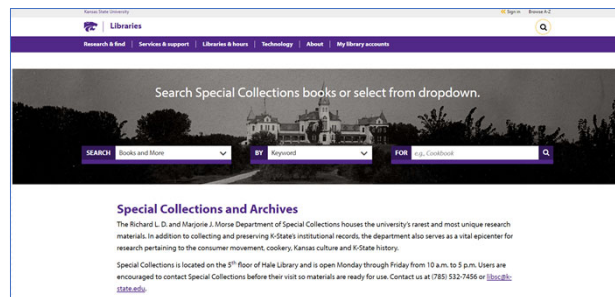
"Cork City and County Archives is responsible for preserving local archives from Cork city and county. Under the local government acts, it is a statutory function of the Council to acquire local archives, to ensure their proper management, custody, care and preservation, and to make them available for public research and inspection. Local archives includes local government records of enduring value, and deposited archives acquired by purchase, donation, bequest or loan."

[https://corkarchives.ie/services/deposit\\_archives/](https://corkarchives.ie/services/deposit_archives/)



## Hybrid Repository example:

- Carole Honstead Gnatuk
- 11 boxes/crates, 1942-2015 => Kansas State University Richard L. D. and Marjorie J. Morse Department of Special Collections



Mom's collection includes scrapbooks she kept from first grade through her early married life; letters she wrote to her mother while she and our family were living in Venezuela and Spain; and writings, presentations, evaluations, reports, and research material from her work as an extension specialist at Eastern KY University and the University of Kentucky. Mom was raised in Manhattan, Kansas, and attended Kansas State University for her bachelor's degree.

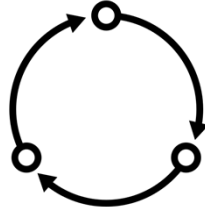
K-State's Special Collections collects and preserves the K-State's institutional records, the department also serves as a vital epicenter for research pertaining to the consumer movement, cookery, Kansas culture and K-State history. Photo is of Roger Adams, rare books librarian and interim Kansas Life and Culture curator.

<https://lib.k-state.edu/research-find/special-collections-and-archives/>

## Typical Donation Process



Sign a **donation** form



Created by Christopher Holm-Hansen  
from the Noun Project



**Selection** by  
archivists/librarians/ curators

Get the memorabilia  
**to the archives**

These steps can happen in any order:

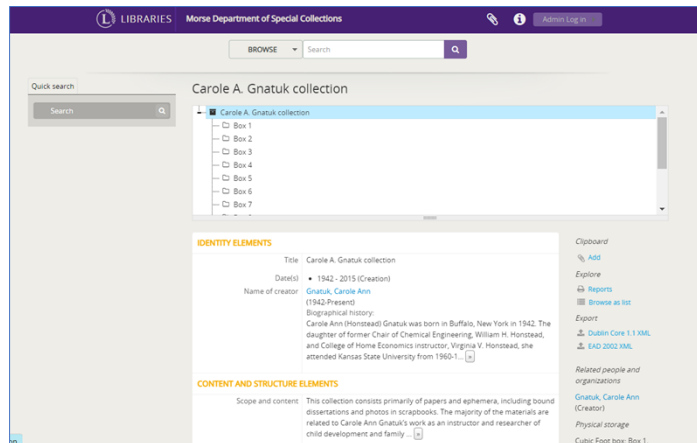
Signing a donation form: transfers ownership in property from you to the archives. Can be done in person or by mail. Photo is of Carole Gnatuk with Mary Ellen Ducey at the University of Nebraska Lincoln Archives and Special Collections in 2019.

Getting the memorabilia to the archives. In person, by mail or shipping.

Selection and decision-making by archivists, librarians, and curators. Photo is of Linda Glasgow and Corina Hugo at the Riley County Historical Society in 2017. Typically, museums and archives and libraries have different procedures.

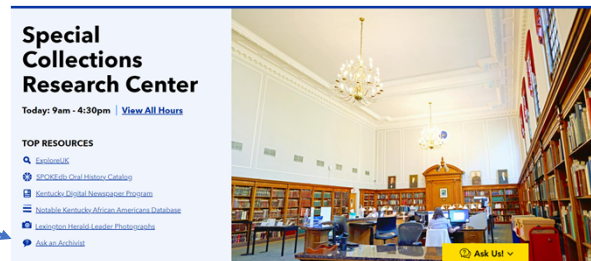
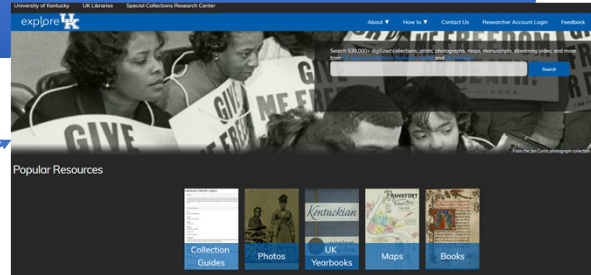
# What Happens After Donation?

- Accessioning: basic physical and intellectual “control”
- Processing (prioritization): detailed preservation and description
- Create a “collection guide” or “finding aid”



## How Do Researchers Find Stuff (the stuff of history)?

- Follow citations
- Word of mouth
- Search online/on the website
- You or your family can look at your memorabilia any time
- Digitization is often possible
- Ask an archivist!





## The Stuff of History



Just a reminder that the stuff of history is possibly your stuff, your memorabilia!

[ruth.bryan@uky.edu](mailto:ruth.bryan@uky.edu)



Boxes everywhere!

Feel free to get in touch with me!