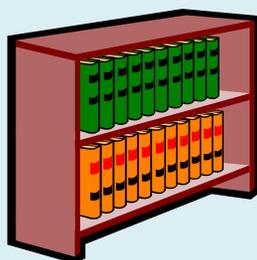


The Tennessee FFA Collection

Basic Archival Procedures Guide



Arranging and
Describing



Reference and
Access



Preservation and
Conservation

A Manual For
The Tennessee FFA
Archival Collection

Prepared by Dr. Kevin Cason

2014

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Overview of the Procedures Manual

Across Tennessee, many farm families have generations of associations with the Future Farmers of America (FFA) county chapters as well as the state and national organization. The FFA organization had its origins dating back to 1917 when Congress passed the Smith-Hughes Act. The act not only provided funds to states for high school courses in vocational education, but it also led to the idea of an organization known as the National Future Farmers of America. By 1928, a group of vocational agriculture student who met in Kansas City, Missouri for the third annual National Vocational Agriculture Students began to develop ideas for the organization. On November 20, 1928, 33 of those students from 18 states met at the Baltimore Hotel in Kansas City and formed the Future Farmers of America organization. Since that time, the FFA has been an important student leadership organization that helps prepare students for successful careers in agricultural related fields.

Since July 2011, the Center for Historic Preservation at Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) has served as a partner in preserving the historic records of the Tennessee Future Farmers of America (FFA) organization. The project is coordinated by Dr. Kevin Cason who has a Ph.D. in Public History from MTSU. Under the leadership of the FFA Association and the Tennessee FFA Historic Preservation Project Steering Committee, Cason has organized the Tennessee FFA collection to be more accessible by sorting the items and categorizing the materials by dates and subjects. He has also helped preserve

the collection for future generations by re-housing the items into acid-free boxes, sleeves, and folders.

While Cason has organized the Tennessee FFA archival collection to be more accessible and better preserved, it is important for future generations to understand the fundamentals of collections management and how to best preserve the resources in their care. This manual is a basic procedures guide for understanding how to create and maintain archival collections. Since the archival collection of the Tennessee FFA has been arranged, described and rehoused in new folders and archival boxes, the manual also serves as an explanatory guide on the arrangement and sorting of the collection, the format for describing the resources, and why archival resources need to be properly preserved and conserved.

While all archival collections vary in format and the types of media they have, there are some common principles and procedures that most archives follow. This manual is divided into six sections. The first section provides insights about the importance of establishing a mission statement and collection policy. After this section, the manual offers tips on accessioning new items to the collection and pays particular attention to establishing legal custody of items. The third section examines the ways collections are arranged and described. The next section offers procedures for reference services and access to the collection. In the fifth part of the manual, preservation and conservation techniques are considered. Finally, the manual offers some contact information and references for further use.

Mission Statement and Collection Policies

All cultural institutions establish a mission statement that clearly defines the vision and purpose of the archival program and what items that they are going to be collecting.

According to the authors of *Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories*, there are four basic questions that every mission statement should answer. These are:

1. What groups, activities, or experiences does the archives document?
2. Why was the archival program initiated?
3. What does the archive collect?
4. What groups or interests does the archive serve?

One possible mission statement for the Tennessee FFA archival collection could be:

The main purpose of the Tennessee FFA Collection is to collect, preserve and make available for research the resources that document the history of the Tennessee FFA.



Accessioning

Keeping Accession Records

Archival materials should be tracked from the moment they enter the archives. One way to keep track of the newly acquired records is to have a form that documents the donor of the items, the date of acquisition, the types of items that are being donated and any issues that are associated with the collection such as preservation issues or restriction concerns. Most archives have a general form that the staff can fill out when they acquire new items. To understand the typical format of this type of form, a sample form has been provided on the following page.

Deed of Gift

In addition to establishing control over the items that are acquired, it is important to secure legal custody of the records. Typically, archives create a “Deed of Gift” form that clearly cedes all property rights and any copyrights held by the donor. Furthermore, the deed of gift provides information regarding access to the items that are donated that was agreed upon between the archives and the donor. A sample page is provided in the following pages of this manual.



Tennessee FFA Archives Accession Form (Internal Use for Archival Staff)

Collection Name: _____
Accession Number: _____
Accession Type:

Date Received: _____
Received By: _____

Gift	Loan	Deposit	Purchased	New	Addition	Other
-------------	-------------	----------------	------------------	------------	-----------------	--------------

Provenance:

Donor: _____
 Address: _____
 (Street or P.O. Box #, City, State and Zip Code)
 Phone: _____
 E-Mail: _____

Description of Collection:

Approximate Volume or Linear feet of Space: _____
 Date Range(s) of Collection: _____
 General Subject Matter: _____
 Creator/Actors: _____

Material Type (Provide the number of items or number of boxes):

Book(s) _____	Manuscripts _____	Maps _____	Microfilm _____	Newspapers _____
Object(s) _____	Periodicals _____	Photographs _____	Posters _____	Scrapbooks _____

Other (describe): _____

Physical Condition Notes: _____

Restriction Notes (if any): _____

Location of Item(s) (Provide Specific Room and Shelf Name):

Temporary Storage: _____	On Display: _____	Permanent Storage: _____
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Checklist for Steps to be Done: (Initial and Date Upon Completion):

Control File	Acknowledge	Appraisal	Deed of Gift	Loan/Deposit Agreement	Conservation & Preservation	Other
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Preliminary Plans for Processing (Recommendations about Arrangements & Description, Preservation, etc.):

***Model Deed of Gift Form for the Tennessee FFA Archives
(For Donor to Sign and Give Back to Archives Staff for Record Keeping)***

I, _____ of/as legal agent for _____ own
and desire to give/am empowered to give to the Tennessee FFA Archives the following
described item(s):

Description of Materials Donated:

I agree that this material may be made available for research subject to normal Tennessee FFA Archives policies, and additional restrictions which may be listed below.
Unless specified otherwise, the Tennessee FFA Archives will retain the following:

*Property Rights: Upon Transfer to the Tennessee FFA Archives, the above described items are granted irrevocably and absolutely to the Tennessee FFA Archives.

*Copyrights: Any copyrights that the donor may possess in this property or in any other property in the custody of the Tennessee FFA Archives are hereby dedicated to the public.

* Additional Restrictions:

Donor Signature: _____

Date: _____

Accepted By: _____

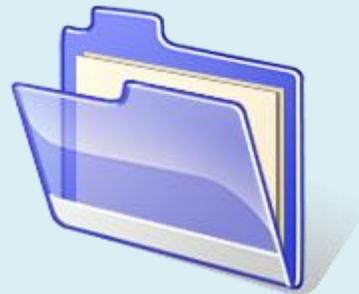
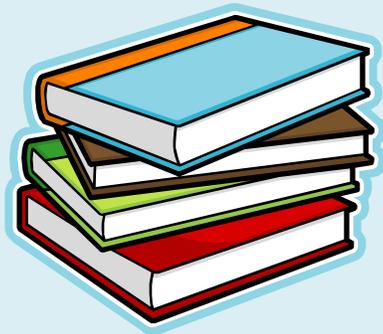
Date: _____

Arrangement and Description

One of the fundamental principles in archives is to have physical and intellectual control over the collections that are housed at a particular institution. Physical control involves knowing the quantity of materials and the exact location of the resources. Intellectual control is having a basic understanding of the scope and contents of the collection.

Analyzing the Resources

In order to make a collection more “user friendly,” archivists first analyze and make notes about the collection to gain an overall understanding of the types of materials that are there and the groupings that have been made by the previous owner or creator.



Arranging the Collection

After analyzing the resources, the collections manager will usually discover common themes or groupings within the collection. As a basic principle, items should be left in their original order, unless it is determined that there is no logical order.

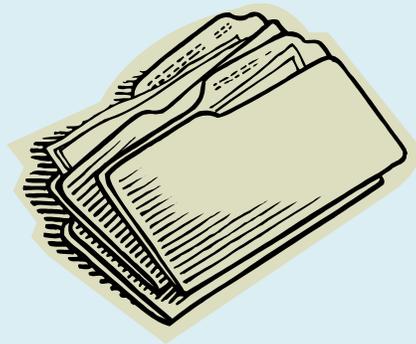
When organizing the collection, sometimes the collection “speaks for itself.” For example, with the Tennessee FFA collection, a large group of magazine publications such as the *Tennessee Future Farmer* were stored together in storage boxes. So these items were foldered and arranged in a chronological order and placed in the “Publications” series.

Once the items are grouped into the various series, they can be refoldered and rehoused into proper acid-free archival quality folders. Each folder usually

indicates the box number, folder number, series name, the title of the folder and the date range(s).

The Finding Aid

After the collection has been sorted and organized, the next step is to provide a descriptive guide or a finding aid. Archives have different methods and levels of providing descriptions of materials for researchers. One of the best and most useful tools for guiding researchers and staff to archival records is through a finding aid. The finding aid has two major sections that help the researcher understand the scope and contents of the collection. The first part contains a narrative section that provides an overview and series descriptions or “themes” that can be found in the collection. The second part of the finding aid is a listing of the files. Following in the format of the finding aids done at other repositories, the Tennessee FFA’s collection provides an overview, series descriptions and a database listing of the individual files.



Reference and Access

Keeping Records of Users and Visitors of the Collection

One of the fundamental procedures for reference services is keeping a record of the visitors and users of the collection. Usually, a visitor log will contain spaces where users can provide their names and contact information such as addresses and phone numbers. Many archives use the visitor log as a way to measure how many visitors they receive in a certain month, year or over time. A sample visitor log information sheet is found on the following page.

While recording who comes to see the archival collection is one way of record keeping, archives also record what items are used more frequently to learn what most visitors are interested in researching.



Finding Aids, Digital Guides and Other Resources

As described in the “Arrangement and Description” section of this guide, collection managers create finding aid resources that help staff and visitors to locate the materials and understand the scope and contents of the collections in their care. For the Tennessee FFA collection, a finding aid for the archival documents, photographs and other media has been created to provide easier access.

In addition to the finding aid, archives often create digital resources that can be accessed through computer databases and programs. With the Tennessee FFA collection, some of the photographs have been scanned and placed on CDs. In addition scrapbooks and other materials that were on temporary loan have been scanned and are available in a digital format. By having digital versions of the images, visitors and staff can locate the images in a faster way than having to go through the files. While easier access is important, having scanned images also helps with the preservation of the resources because there will be less handling of the images.

Tennessee FFA Archives Visitor Log Sheet (Internal Use for Archives Staff)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Phone Number: _____

Date of Research: _____

Reason(s) for Research: _____

Boxes and Items Used for Research (Indicate Box No. and folder(s))

Accessing the Collection

Archives develop rules and procedures for accessing the collections in their care. One part of accessing the collection is to establish times and days that the archives will be accessible to the public. While some archives are open certain days and times, others require appointments to see the resources. For the Tennessee FFA, establishing appointment times with a designated person might be the best option, since there are not frequent visitors who want to view the collection.

Archival collections should be stored in a secure place that is off-limits to visitors and patrons. In order to maintain control over what visitors are using, staff members should be the only ones to obtain the materials for the researcher. Researchers can use the finding aids provided and ask a staff member to view a certain box with files.

Copying Policies

Another part of reference services and access to the collection involves establishing a copying policy. Usually, archives establish a certain fee for preparing digital images or photocopying the materials. The original materials in the collection should not be taken away from the institution. Instead, photocopies or scans can be provided if a user wants a copy of the items.

In addition, archives often indicate that they should be given proper credit for housing the items. Since archival resources can be used for a variety of purposes such as historical research papers, exhibits and publications, the Tennessee FFA staff should inform the user to properly cite the collection.

For research papers and publications the Tennessee FFA might suggest the following format.

**“Tennessee FFA State Convention 01.” Box 20, Conference Series.
Tennessee FFA Archival Collection.**

For exhibits the Tennessee FFA might use the following example.

Courtesy of the Tennessee FFA Archival Collection

Loaning Policies

For the most part, archives do not allow the original documents, photographs and other media to leave the archives. However, sometimes items may be borrowed for a certain amount of time for use in an exhibit. When items are loaned, it should be documented in a loan form, instead of relying on a staff person's memory. By having documentation of loaned items, the archives continues to have intellectual control over what items are missing and when those items will be returned.

The loan form usually indicates the name of the borrower, the borrower's contact information, a description of the item or items being borrowed and indicates the date when the items will be returned. In addition, the loan form requires the signatures of the borrower and a representative from the archives that formally agrees upon the loan process and the rules and regulations regarding the items that are being loaned. For an example of the loan agreement form see the next page.



Tennessee FFA Archives Sample Loan Agreement Form

LOAN AGREEMENT BETWEEN THE TENNESSEE FFA ARCHIVES AND

Name: _____

Institution: _____

Address: _____

City: _____ State: _____ Zip Code: _____

Person Responsible for Borrowed Item(s): _____

Telephone Number: _____ E-mail: _____

Purpose of Loan: _____

Items will Be Returned no Later Than: _____

Description of Items Borrowed: _____

Signature of Borrower: _____

Date: _____

Signature of Tennessee FFA Archives Representative: _____

Date: _____

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CONDITIONS, RULES, AND REGULATIONS FOR ITEMS ON LOAN

1. Objects or items must be returned to the Tennessee FFA Archives by the date agreed upon.
2. All loaned materials must be properly handled at all times and should not be exposed to extreme levels of light or heat. If the items are loaned for exhibition, the Tennessee FFA Archives asks that filters be applied to any ultraviolet lights in the exhibition area.
3. The borrower should also take care of the items by making sure that the items on loan are not lost, damaged or deteriorated.
4. All costs of shipping, packing, transportation, and insurance will be assumed by the borrower.
5. Each item that is used must be properly cited that it comes from the Tennessee FFA Archival Collection.

Preservation and Conservation

In order for an archival collection to last for future generations, steps must be taken to preserve and conserve the materials that are housed. The following information provides some important ideas that must be considered when maintaining an archival collection.

The Macro Environment

Stable Physical Environment

One of the best ways to maintain records for a long time is to have them in a stable physical environment. The optimum conditions for archival paper records are between 55-65 degrees Fahrenheit and between 30-40% relative humidity. Regardless of the type of media in the collection, low temperatures and relative humidity have been shown to be the best for the conservation and preservation of collections. Although it may be difficult to have a low temperature or humidity level, it is important to prevent daily or weekly fluctuations in temperature and relative humidity because the constant changes causes a faster deterioration of the resources in your care.

Protection from Ultraviolet Light

While a consistent temperature and humidity level is important for the longevity of your collection, the materials should also not be exposed to ultraviolet rays of light for an extended amount of time. Extended exposure of ultraviolet light from the sun or fluorescent lights contributes to documentary deterioration and causes ink to fade and paper to become brittle. Ideally, all archival resources should be stored in areas that are windowless or not exposed to a lot of light.

Fire Prevention and Protection

In order to prevent fire, archival collection should not be located near kitchen ovens, boilers, incinerators, smoking lounges or other sources of heat and fire. Ideally, smoke detectors should be near the collection to alert any staff about the fire.

Although some collection rooms are protected by a sprinkler system, one of the more inexpensive ways to protect the collection from fire is having a fire extinguisher nearby. Studies have shown that the chemicals in the fire extinguisher actually are less harmful for the documents and photographs than water.

Housekeeping

To avoid the introduction of insects and rodents, archival collections should not be located near staff lounges, kitchens, or trash receptacles. In addition, food and drinks should not be allowed near the collection. This procedure helps prevent accidents such as spilling a drink on documents or photographs or leaving crumbs that might attract animals and insects. If new archival materials are introduced to the collection, it is important to inspect them to make sure that you are not introducing bugs to your collection.

Security

Archival collections should be stored in a secure place that is off-limits to visitors and patrons. In order to maintain control over what visitors are using, staff members should be the only ones to obtain the materials for the researcher. Researchers can use the finding aids provided and ask a staff member for a certain box with a file or files. Materials from the collection should not be taken away from the institution. Copies of documents and photographs should be made on the site for the patron.

The Micro Environment

In addition to maintaining control over the macro environment, steps must be taken to preserve the micro environment of the collection. The Tennessee FFA archival collection mainly consists of documents, photographs, artifacts and banners, so the following information pertains to those types of resources.

Preserving Documents

Archival materials composed of paper are best stored in acid-free buffered, lignan-free sleeves, folders and boxes. Lignan is an element in wood now thought by preservation experts to be a major cause of deterioration in paper. In time, acid-free folders and boxes also become acidic and should be replaced. By purchasing acid-free, lignan free file folders and boxes, they will last longer and take longer to acidify than plain acid-free supplies.

In addition to providing acid-free buffered folders, steps should be taken to remove metal pieces such as paper clips, staples and brads because these items eventually deteriorate and rust onto the documents over time. After the metal pieces have been removed from the documents, plastic paper clips or special non-rusting archival paper clips that are supplied by archival supply companies can be used to hold the items together.

Preserving Photographs and Other Images

Photographs, slides and negatives are best stored individually in chemically stable polyester sleeves. Some of the stable polyesters are mylar, polypropylene and polyethylene. Photographic materials have many special requirements for their preservation. Two works that provide a better understanding on the conservation and care of photographs are:

Mary Lynn Ritzenthaler. *Archives and Manuscripts: Administration of Photographic Collections*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1984.

James M. Reilly. *Care and Identification of 19th Century Photographic Prints*. Rochester, NY: Eastman Kodak Co., 1986.

In addition to proper storage, scanning the slides, photographs and negatives helps to provide quicker and easier access and less handling of the original resources. Since people have oils on their hands that contribute to the deterioration of documents and images, having digitized versions of the images will help preserve the items in the collection even more.

Preserving Oversize and Panorama Images

The Tennessee FFA archival collection has a wide variety of oversize and panorama size images from the past. Preservation and conservation studies show that the best method for storing these oversize items is to have them lay flat, place them in archival oversize folders, and put them in flat acid-free boxes. By having the photos lay flat it ensures less wear and tear than if the panorama photos were rolled up. In addition, it allows users to quickly see the oversize images without having to unroll the photos to see the content.

Preserving Artifacts

The Tennessee FFA archival collection has many different types of artifacts such as officer emblems, old Camp Clements mess hall kits, plaques, commemorative stuffed animals, mugs and framed items. Similarly to documents and photographs, artifacts need to be properly stored and conserved for the future. Artifacts are stored in acid-free archival boxes and wrapped with acid-free tissue paper. By wrapping the items in archival tissue paper, it helps protect them from breaking or receiving damage when they are moved from one place to another.

Preserving Maps, Blueprints and Banners

Maps, blueprints and banners that are oversize are typically stored in either map drawers or in acid-free tubes. However, some maps that are small enough can be placed in acid-free archival folders. For the Tennessee FFA collection, it probably would be most beneficial to store them in tubes. After they are stored in the tubes, they can be labeled to let people know the contents of the tubes. Like the other archival supplies, these tubes can be purchased through an archival supply company.



Contacts and References

Archival Supply Companies

Several companies specialize in providing conservation resources for archival and museum collections.

Hollinger Corporation

P.O. Box 8360
Fredericksburg, VA 22404
Phone: 1-800-634-0491
Web Address: www.hollingercorp.com
E-mail Address: hollingercorp@earthlink.net

University Archival Products

P. O. Box 101 South Canal Street
Holyoke, Massachusetts 01041
Phone: 1-800-628-1912
E-mail Address: info@universityproducts.com

Gaylord Brothers, Inc.

P.O. Box 4901
Syracuse, NY 13221-4901
Phone: 1-800-448-6160
Web Address: www.gaylord.com

Preservation and Conservation Organizations and Websites

Conservation On-Line

Website Address: <http://palimpsest.stanford.edu>

Northeast Document Conservation Center (NEDCC)

Website: <http://www.collectioncare.org>

Preserving My Heritage

Website: www.preservation.gc.ca

References for Archival Organizations

Society of American Archivists (SAA)
600 South Federal, Suite 504
Chicago, IL 60605
(312) 922-0140

American Association for State and Local History (AASLH)
172 Second Avenue North, Suite 102
Nashville, TN 37201
(615) 255-2971

Basic Resources for Archives

The following is some selected resources that provide basic procedures, policies and guides for archival collections and repositories.

Boles, Frank. *Selecting and Appraising Archives and Manuscripts*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005.

O'Toole, James M. and Richard J. Cox. *Understanding Archives and Manuscripts*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005.

Pugh, Mary Jo. *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005.

Ritzenthaler, Mary Lynn. *Preserving Archives and Manuscripts*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005.

Roe, Kathleen D. *Arranging and Describing Archives and Manuscripts*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 2005.

Wilsted, Thomas and William Nolte. *Managing Archival and Manuscript Repositories*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1991.

Yakel, Elizabeth. *Starting an Archives*. Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1994.