

INDEPENDENCE NATIONAL HISTORICAL PARK

LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES

**REPORT ON A SURVEY OF HOLDINGS AND OPERATIONS
OF THE ARCHIVES**

Karen D. Stevens, Archivist

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INTRODUCTION: PAST, PRESENT, AND FUTURE

In 1983, two park Rangers were detailed to collect and organize the archival materials of Independence National Historical Park into a central research repository. Under the aegis of the Office of History, the project team consulted archivists in nearby institutions for guidance on archival practice as well as former park historians and current staff on the provenance and context for the records. They "conducted a roundup" of records from various park offices, arranged them into series collections, and shelved them in a locked stack in the Library Reading Room.

To provide access to the archives, the team compiled Guide to the Archives of Independence National Historical Park, an inventory that remains the sole physical and intellectual documentation of the collections. The 1983 Archives Report summarizing the work of Lee Dickinson and Daniel Law includes a User's Guide with research guidelines "intended to insure the integrity of the material" in the Appendix.

Responsibility for curatorial care and reference use of the archives was assigned to the Library Technician, Shirley A. Mays, under the supervision of the Chief Historian, David C.D. Dutcher. Although park archival and manuscript collections are normally managed as part of the museum collections, from its beginnings the INDE Archives has been viewed as the park's research archives separate from museum collections, an adjunct library program, and a staff resource with circulating privileges.

The Library had been organized in the late 1970's under a professional librarian within the Office of History, the same organizational niche it occupies today. Ms. Mays continued to maintain the archives until April 1995 when Karen D. Stevens was appointed the first INDE Archivist and Manager of the Library under the recently appointed Chief Historian, Diann Jacox. By 2000, INDE expects to relocate a reorganized and professionalized library and archives unit to a renovated Merchants Exchange along with most Cultural Resource Management Division staff, park administrative units, and Division managers.

HOLDINGS: PRESENT SIZE, CONTENT, AND SCOPE

The Archives contains more than 500 cubic feet of materials of all record types and categories. There are five 5-drawer flat cases of architectural drawings; ten drawers in the Photostat Master File flat cases; 15 5-drawer filing cabinets with mounted photographic prints and their negatives housed separately; three Multiplex cabinets and 53 ring binders containing master slides and duplicates; four double-aisle card cabinets for the Research Notecard File with approximately 150,000 cards; one storage cabinet with more than 100 reels/cassettes of audiovisual materials; and a cabinet with 600 rolls of microfilm. Some 360 cubic feet of archival collections stored on seven aisles of shelving include textual, photographic, audiovisual, architectural, and electronic records, often intermingled in the same box/folder.

These archival materials document the administrative, research, educational, and cultural resource

management activities of Park staff from the early beginnings of Independence National Historical Park in the late 1940's to the present. They also document the story of local efforts from the 1920's to the 1950's to promote Independence Hall as a national shrine and establish a national historical park of sites associated with the 18th century events in Philadelphia instrumental in the birth of the United States of America and the development of the early republic.

The records are divided into the normal museum archival and manuscript collections categories: personal papers, organizational archives (acquired archives), assembled manuscript collections, resource management records (including associated records), and sub-official records (copies and duplicates). These are non-records, material defined by the National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) as non-official records and, therefore not subject to NARA authority. These collections preserve the documentary research and field investigation products required to manage the park's cultural resources and serve as valuable resources for purposes from planning to interpretation, exhibits to public affairs, educational program development to scholarly publication.

Other associated archival and manuscript collections owned by, or under the custodial care of INDE, pre-date the organization of the Archives and reside in the museum collections under the jurisdiction of the Museum Branch. When the Archives relocates to Merchants Exchange, plans allow for transfer of physical care and research access for these collections to shift to the Archives.

THE ARCHIVES: FACILITY, EQUIPMENT, AND CONTAINERS

1. Structure

The Archives of Independence National Historical Park is located on the third floor under the roof of the First Bank. A brick and marble Neoclassical structure with a columned portico built 1795-1798, the building has undergone several renovations and rehabilitations to accommodate changing owners and functional requirements. The Library and Archives unit occupies a light and spacious suite of nearly 2000 square feet divided into five adjacent areas of varying sizes surrounding the top of the dome of the building with windows on three of the four exposures.

2. Spaces

Office, research, and work areas are intermingled with storage space. The Archivist's office serves not only as the archives processing room/archival supplies store able to accommodate a project archivist, but also houses the museum paint chip collection in eight large cabinets. The Library office contains the reference/circulation desk and photocopier, the Library Technician's office/work room, and the photograph collection. Two small rooms to one side house the Research Notecard File, the Master Photostat File, the Architecture Branch photograph collection, the Microfilm Collection, a microfilm reader/printer, the locked

cabinet with the valuable book collection, the library supplies cabinet, and the Archives holding area. The Reading Room contains the book and archives stacks.

Although there is a generous square footage adequate for the program's current needs, fire code

regulations, security equipment, and load-bearing capacity preclude adding more furnishings. Despite the floor space to do so, it is not possible to rearrange furnishings to separate storage from other program functions. These circumstances create difficulties for compliance with museum collection management standards regarding dedicated storage space.

3. Environment

The mechanical, electrical, and utility systems date from the 1960's when the first floor was converted into a temporary visitors center for the park. Although there are adjustable control units in other parts of the building, the heating and air conditioning systems do not allow regulation of temperature and humidity in individual areas on the third floor. A review of the Reading Room hygrothermograph charts indicates that temperatures ranged from 62-82 degrees and humidity from 20-80% over the past six months (November-April). It is impossible to maintain temperature and humidity standards under these conditions.

There are windows in every room of the facility except the small room housing the microfilm, archives holding area, valuable book collection, and library supplies. The windows in the archives stack and the second small storage area may not have been filmed or shaded to protect collections due to historic structure considerations.

Routine housekeeping has been an ad hoc proposition. Washing floors and surfaces is done by work order for scheduling by Maintenance. There is no predictable timetable for dusting and vacuuming in the daily housekeeping service nor any formal plan for regular cleaning of shelves, boxes, books, furnishings, and equipment. Responsibility for this task is at the discretion of Library staff.

4. Security and protection

The Library and Archives suite recently instituted a revised physical access policy. Prior to the arrival of the Archivist, the entry door to the Library shared a key core with several other staff accessible buildings in the park. Copies of the key to the archives stack were readily available in the CRM Division and resided on the Library circulation desk. The Library and Archives areas were accessible to staff 24 hours a day. In March 1996, the entrance door key core was replaced with one it shares with no other door in the park; besides Protection and Security, three keys are assigned to Library and Archives staff. All outstanding archives stack keys have been recalled; three keys have been issued to Library and Archives staff only.

There are adequate security and fire protection measures in force. In addition to regular patrol by Protection Division, there is an intrusion system located in the hallway outside the suite and inside the Reading Room which is monitored by the central security pod. Fire protection is assured by smoke detectors and a Cardex Halon 1301 suppression system.

5. Equipment

Furnishings and equipment housing the archival collections are distributed throughout the Library and Archives rather than confined to a dedicated storage area. The archives stack, the cabinet of film, and the flat cases for architectural drawings are located in the Reading Room along with the

The storage cabinets containing microfilm, film reels and cassettes, valuable books, and the notecards are full. At the moment, there are no anticipated additions of microfilm or film reels; the research notecard project ended in the 1970's. All these collections require evaluation for holdings maintenance needs.

6. Containers

In the recent past, the Library began purchasing standard and specialized containers suitable for storage of particular formats. There is no formal holdings maintenance Standard Operating Procedures. The Library Technician recently began using archival materials for mounting and housing prints and negatives; protecting fragile books that could not be bound in phase boxes ordered from the bindery; and shelving pamphlets and unbound journals in the stacks. The boxes for the microfilm reels need to be replaced by archival stock.

No rehousing has been done to archives stack collections since the Archives was centralized in 1983. Records are stored in their original folders in non-standard Bankers Boxes, the odd-sized boxes used to ship them, or loose on the shelves. Many boxes are packed either too full so that materials are damaged upon removal, or so loosely that folders slump and shift when moved.

When the photographic prints were organized, they were dry mounted on green acidic board. More recent mounts for additions to the collection have appropriate archival stock.

Negatives are stored in a sequential numbering scheme separate from the mounted prints. The Library Technician has replaced all of the outside sleeves with archival envelopes. Each envelope may hold several negatives as well as duplicate prints. Many negatives still have old glassine or acidic sleeves. Some frequently used prints and negatives have Mylar sleeves. The items are rehoused on an as needed basis for now.

Materials stored in flat cases either have no folders or inappropriate ones. There are rolled drawings and oversized photographs loose on the archives shelves or folded in boxes that need to be flattened, foldered and stored correctly.

In FY96, staff spent \$1,000 from Eastern National Park and Monument Association funds for basic archival supplies to have on hand when needed. All current accessioning and processing projects rehouse records of all formats in appropriate standard containers.

COLLECTIONS MANAGEMENT

1. Selection and Appraisal: Survey

The 1983 Archives Report offers no information about evaluating and appraising the original lot of records against NPS-19 Records Management Guideline to exclude materials inappropriate for a park archives. Nor is there any mention of removal of records inappropriate for the park archives to the Philadelphia Branch Federal Records Center. Thus, it is possible there may be

some material in those collections that belongs at NARA.

In the meantime, no acquisitions policy has been created to provide guidelines for collection development. NPS curatorial standards require collecting guidelines in the park Scope of Collections Statement for acquiring and appraising archival records that are appropriate to park mission, and its administrative, interpretive, research, and resource management programs. Subsequent additions to the Archives' collections arrived according to no particular plan, appear to have been accepted with no questions asked.

The Archivist's survey shows that few records have been sent to the Archives from terminated employees or Division offices since 1983. During the past year, the Archivist has responded to six requests from departing staff, offices, and the Friends of INDE for assistance in appraising and transferring records to the Archives to free up space for reassignment. Conversations and glimpses of records storage in administrative offices reveal a need for implementing a records management program to dispose of accretions of non-current files.

2. Accessioning: Inventory

When the archives was organized, no provenance or accession files were created documenting the acquisition of the collections and record groups established. This documentation normally includes a deed of gift, transfer form, receipt of property form, and related correspondence, that establish legal ownership and provide context. Control files of basic information about the records are essential for planning and managing subsequent archival functions.

Collections sent to the Archives since the initial organization arrived with little or no paperwork. Two notable exceptions are 28 boxes from Maintenance and 7 from a retiring historic architect; both include box container lists.

The Archivist has created a records transfer and inventory transmittal form for park offices requesting transfer of records to the Archives and requires the transferee to complete a box inventory before removal. For recent transfers to the Library suite, accession numbers are assigned, acquisition documentation is produced, and control files created. For the time being, those records identified by the Archivist for future transfer from park offices are stored in a variety of locations at 313 Walnut Street pending assignment of an interim holdings area for conducting preliminary appraisal of records and inspection for pest infestation.

3. Preservation: Holdings Maintenance

All archival collections in the stack and holding areas are in serious need of preservation and holdings maintenance. In addition to acidic housings, they contain staples and paper fasteners of many types; some are dirty, torn, folded, and rolled; many are duplicates from degrading photocopy processes; some slump in partially filled boxes; some are jammed to overflowing. Some records require photocopying and conservation treatment.

The Library developed no systematic housekeeping program to clean boxes, floors, and shelves in the stack and holding areas. A major cleaning of the stack is needed to maintain optimum

environmental conditions, create a favorable impression with visitors, and discourage pests. Recently, Maintenance assigned a full-time custodian to the First Bank who has begun to schedule routine cleaning tasks.

4. Processing: Arrangement and Description

From observation and the Archives Report, it is clear that the stack collections received minimal processing. No collection-level survey records were created to provide full processing documentation. Over the years no systematic plan was developed to improve the basic level of physical and intellectual access nor did new acquisitions receive that same level of processing.

The 1983 Guide continues to be the sole physical and intellectual access tool. Its entries are limited to collection title, size, a box list of folders/items, and shelf location. An index to sites provides only minimal subject access. It is possible to satisfy most requests for specific documents. Success in locating information frequently means a time-consuming search of the entire guide. However, the full range of research potential is not apparent from the incomplete information in the entries and index.

At some point, the Guide was revised to indicate filing of minor additions to existing collections, new series acquisitions, and shelf shifts. It continued to list only those collections stored in the stacks. Most of the original 1983 lot totaling 188 cubic feet now reside in the first six rows. Some time after the revision, several sections of rolled architectural drawings were unrolled, removed to flat cases located near the stack, and a drawer listing compiled.

Since 1983, slightly more than a third of the 175 cubic feet of additions received cursory descriptive and location notations in the Guide. The remaining 100 cubic feet of material lack that basic physical and intellectual control. Some of the unlisted material was placed in the archives storage; some remains in the original shipping boxes on the railing around the

dome in the Reading Room; and some is temporarily located in a recently designated holdings area in the Microfilm Room.

The photograph collection was organized in 1981 according to codified guidelines and filing rules which were updated in 1993. It is arranged by building type, park site, organizational function, museum objects, and street address. Additions to this study and research collection of nearly 90,000 items continued to arrive from sources in-house and outside the park. Of special note are the park photographer's files transferred at the time that position was eliminated in the early 1990's.

Although the original systems for organizing prints, negatives, and slides have been maintained, there is a backlog of nearly 10 cubic feet waiting to be processed and filed. The majority of this material is from park staff and, in some instances, may need to be processed archivally rather than generally integrated into the collection. Plans to interfile slides from 3-ring binders with more recent shots housed in the Multiplex are on hold pending review of that decision since these are original images dating from the very early days of the park's creation.

There is little or no information available regarding deposits of audiovisual materials stored in the Film Cabinet and the stack. Recently a list entitled Audio-visual Materials Available in the Library, July 1979 surfaced that probably is an inventory for the cabinet in the Reading Room. The list includes filmstrips, motion picture film, park historical film footage, 1956-1974, sound records, and tape cassettes. There are some box lists for audiovisual items in the stack, but no inventory of unboxed materials.

5. Reference: Access and Use

Until April 1995, the Library had no formal policy statements and forms governing access and use of archival collections. There were few practices and regulations in place to guarantee security and preservation of the collections; access and use were permitted on the Honor System with nominal gatekeeping and no formal administration of reference services. A visitors log has been available for researchers to register, but registration and identification of users was not mandatory. No statistics on archival reference use were maintained nor reported to management. There were no policy statements and forms about research use of archival materials and reference services available for researchers.

Recently steps have been taken to conform with customary means to provide security and preservation of collections. In Fall 1995, park administration approved a written access policy for the Library and Archives. Weekday hours of operation were established and the key core was replaced for security and control. In March 1996 the policy was revised to accommodate research needs of Interpretation and Visitor Services weekend staff. The Archivist trained four library stewards to monitor use by park employees on Saturdays and Sundays and compiled a manual of procedures for weekend service.

Further steps are in process to ensure that users are informed about reference services, rules for access to collections, and use of archival materials. For the convenience of researchers, an all-purpose brochure to publicize the Library and Archives program is in the design phase. A temporary reader registration form created in April 1995 to track research use of archival collections will be revised in the near future that reflects use, statistics requirements, and experience over the past year.

Review of registration forms show that 141 researchers requested access to archival materials (defined here as non-book items) between 1 April 1995-31 March 1996. Statistics show that research use appears to be evenly divided between staff and non-staff users. Research requests from outside the park came from the United States as well as Canada, Germany, and Brazil. (As an aside, staff discovered that Internet was an important means for communicating with foreign researchers due to lack of telephone access outside U.S. borders.)

Researchers use the archival collections for a broad variety of purposes. NPS staff seek information to prepare tours of park sites, to mount exhibits, to create educational programs, to make repairs to historical buildings, to plan special events, and to research planning documents.

Outside research projects range from the individual seeking a reproduction of a portrait of an ancestor hanging in the Second Bank, a city planner in Vancouver wanting concept and design documents for Franklin Court, to the graduate student researching a dissertation investigating Independence Hall and its place in American history and imagination.

Archival access for staff has been available primarily on a self-service basis since its organization. Materials were loaned to staff, particularly those reports, drawings, construction files, and photographs needed for programs, exhibits, documentary research, field investigations, maintenance and repairs, and duplication. Two logs, Photograph Signout Book and INHP Archives Use Record tracked these loans using the Honor System; no formal Standard Operating Procedures set policy nor insured timely return and accountability. Recently the Archivist has taken steps to track transactions more closely by instituting photograph loan procedures and loan forms.

With the accounting support from Eastern National Park and Monument Association, the Library Technician and ENP&MA book store staff maintained a Photograph Reproduction Services program. Between 1 April 1995-31 March 1996, the service satisfied 125 requests from park staff and outside researchers. Publishers, authors, staff, and the general public interested in reproductions of the portraits in the Second Bank galleries are the primary customers.

Recently, CRM decided to reorganize the photographic services program due to a significant increase in requests and the current international concerns about copyright and reproduction rights. Now the Library staff with only accounting service provided by ENP&MA manage photo sales. The Archivist set up a forms and files management system and created Standard Operating Procedures. Future plans provide for an evaluation of the fee schedules and preparation of an informational flyer for customers.

6. Managing and Planning

INDE's Archives was organized with the best of intentions, but given minimal provision for planning and management until recently. Consequently, research use, time, and inadequate care have created a situation requiring considerable resources to implement NPS curatorial program requirements for documentation, accountability, preservation, protection, and use. In 1995, park administration realized a long-term goal to hire a professional archivist to manage archival collections.

As part of the reorganization planning process for the Archives, in 1994 INDE CRM engaged Diane Vogt-O'Connor, Chief Archivist, WASO, to prepare Archival Assessment of Independence National Historical Park Archival and Manuscript Collections. Her recommendations followed the standards enumerated in NPS-28 Cultural Resource Management Guidelines for cultural resource planning documents and Museum Handbook, Appendix D, for collections care and management.

The report notes that the following planning documents should be prepared:

- Scope of Collection Statement
- Collections Management Plan and Action Plans
- Museum Collection Preservation and Protection Checklist
- Resource Management Plan project statements
- Collection Condition Survey
- Collection Storage Survey

Outlined below are specific collections management activities for the Archivist to develop for full implementation of an archival program:

- Access and use policy and forms
- Records survey
- Accession collections
- Collection-level records
- Collections development policy
- Records management program
- Finding aids and description program
- Backlog cataloging
- Integrated on-line information system
- Reference SOP's
- Collection guides and subject descriptive pamphlets
- Housekeeping/holdings maintenance program
- Disaster Preparedness Plan
- Integrated Pest Management Plan

Finally, the WASO Archivist makes suggestions for managing essential park information to prevent inadvertent loss of records that is common practice in the archival world at large. That is to appoint a joint information management team composed of staff with a vested interest in caring for, storing, and using records created by the park. This team would be responsible for records management activities and planning for an integrated online information system. An archives advisory committee, a sub-group of this body, might serve as an archives support group to assist the archivist with collections development and acquisitions policy review.

The next step in redressing past neglect of the research archives and planning for future collections management is a survey project funded by FY96 Museum Collections Preservation and Protection monies. A team of archivists from Boston Museum Services Center along with the Archivist will survey park records in July 1996 in order to identify non-official records for transfer to the Archives, locate official records for eventual transfer to the Federal Records Center, and develop an archival section for the park's Scope of Collections Statement. This survey is being conducted as part of a project to produce a Collections Management Plan and Action Plan to implement NPS curatorial standards for INDE's archival collections and prepare records for relocation to Merchants Exchange.