

# 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 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, and even Astronomy, have used our collections in recent years.



Every archives hold a wealth of information that is unavailable elsewhere, and it is up to the researcher to decide how best to contribute to our collective memory.

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.

LIMITED HOURS  
LITTLE ONLINE PRESENCE  
CONFUSING JARGON  
VAGUE INVENTORIES  
CURSED/HAUNTED MATERIALS



**The ultimate guide to a  
Less-Stressed Life**



**Get a deal.**



**Without the ordeal.**

First time?



**First time? No, I've been nervous lots of times.**

It's ok to ask questions. In fact, we love it!  
(No, seriously, ask us stuff!)

You may be asked to register  
as a first-time visitor.

If so, make sure you bring a photo ID.

After your first visit, usually,  
you will just be asked to sign in.

Table service: You'll ask the archivist or  
other staff for documents, rather  
than getting them yourself.  
This is called paging.

Typically, it's OK to use:

- Pencil and notebook
- Phone (for photos)
- Laptop

discover  
better

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!



Let's Talk!

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.

# The archivist is

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! Please never hesitate to ask lots of questions. We're here to make your life easier!

**We Want  
to Know**

**What's on  
Your Mind**

**COOLEST  
PEOPLE IN  
THE ROOM**

here to help you.

The archivist is here to help you.

Talk to your archivist

Archives staff know their collections well.

Let them know what you're interested in

- you may get suggestions you'd never have found otherwise.

you  
↓

THE  
ARCHIVIST →





### **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.)

**ASK  
ME MY  
PRONOUNS**



**Reading Room**

## 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.



Full Call Number  BX. 7766. F3 J7 1779	<b>Example</b>	<b>LIBRARY USE</b>	<b>Form 1a</b>
	Author	A. Quaker	
	Title	Quaker Stuff	
	Name	George Fox	
	Address		
Date	1/14/2019		
This slip entitles the borrower to use the book in the Library only.			



FRIENDS HISTORICAL LIBRARY  
MANUSCRIPTS REQUEST FORM

EXAMPLE

CALL # RG6-P007

COLLECTION Sigma Xi

ITEM/BOX # 1 + 3

REQUESTED BY Alison S.

SIGNED [Signature]

DATE 1/9/2019

NOTES \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE KEEP THIS SLIP WITH  
THE ITEM UNTIL RESHELVED!**

PULLED BY JD DATE 1/9/2019

RTND BY \_\_\_\_\_ DATE \_\_\_\_\_

**PLEASE PRINT LEGIBLY**

# 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>

**Email:** [friends@swarthmore.edu](mailto:friends@swarthmore.edu)

**Location:** McCabe, first floor

McCabe)

(first door on your left inside

**Hours:** 8:30-4:30 Monday-Friday,  
(check our website) 10a-1p

and select select Saturdays

Swarthmore College Archives (part of FHL)

**Website:** <http://swarthmore.edu/archives>

**Email:** [archives@swarthmore.edu](mailto:archives@swarthmore.edu)

**Location:** Friends Historical Library, in McCabe

**Hours:** same as Friends Historical Library

**find it**



Swarthmore College Peace Collection (SCPC)

**Website:** <http://www.swarthmore.edu/library/peace/>

**Email:** [peacecollection@swarthmore.edu](mailto:peacecollection@swarthmore.edu)

**Location:** McCabe, lower level

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



## Other Local Archives

In the Philadelphia area

Visit <http://findingaids.pacscl.org> for the Philadelphia Area Archives Research Portal, a regional finding aids database hosted by the Philadelphia Area Consortium of Special Collections Libraries (PACSCL).

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/>.



## Key terms

### Archives & Manuscripts

(<http://archives.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/>): Swarthmore, Haverford, and Bryn Mawr's shared online catalog with finding aids to our archival materials.

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

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-074.

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.

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

# Live Your

# Best Life

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.

## About Us

WHO are we and WHY did we make this zine?

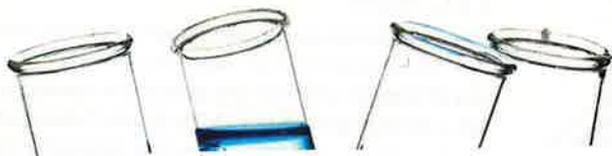
Alison Sielaff is an archivist at the Friends Historical Library.

Lorin Jackson is a Research and Instruction Resident Librarian at Swarthmore College.

Both Alison and Lorin wanted to create an accessible, fun way for undergrads (but, really anyone!) to become better acquainted with archives. We want you to know that archives for everyone. Including you.



**Material Girl**



### **Acknowledgements**

A lot of concepts, ideas, and language included in this this zine are because of these folks! Thank you!

#### **Celia Caust-Ellenbogen**

Archivist @ Friends Historical Library

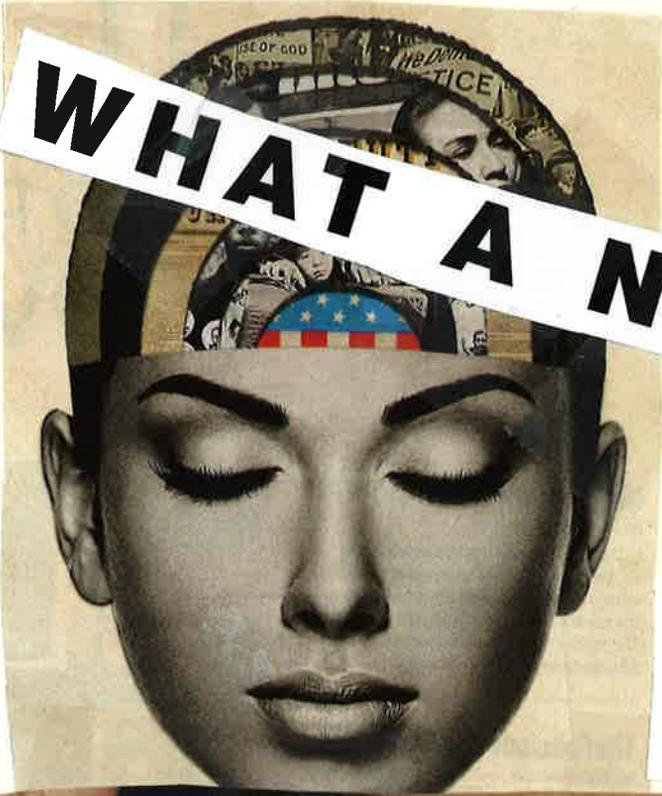
#### **Sarah Elichko**

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**WHAT A NIGHT**

**OH,**

Created by  
Lorin Jackson &  
Alison Sielaff



YOU'RE  
GOLDEN

EXPLORE A  
NEW WORLD  
EVERY DAY.