

## **GENERAL INFORMATION ABOUT HISTORICAL ARCHIVES**

The definition of archives is: "...the body of documents of all kinds, regardless of date, created or received by a person or body in meeting requirements or carrying on activities, preserved for their general information value."

Ensuring the management of records to constitute historical archival fonds (Note: in archival science, a fond is a **group of documents that share the same origin** and that have occurred naturally as an outgrowth of the daily workings of an agency, individual, or organization) and collections is a way of bearing witness to the history of a Congregation's members, associates (groups, committees, etc.) and events. Religious communities and organizations have a central secretariat or an archive services, which is responsible for preserving historical documents. Contact your organization to know how it works to ensure the best possible collaboration.

Records that no longer have administrative or legal value for their proprietor can either be destroyed or preserved if they are of historical value. Several organizations use a retention and disposal schedule for identified those documents. All types of records can be preserved. The most common are textual records (sheets of paper, ledgers, etc.), graphic material (photographs, drawings, etc.), audiovisual material (film, video and audio tapes) and various types of digital records.

Below find examples of themes and types of documents that could be preserved.

### **General Notes on Storage**

The term "archival quality" or "acid-free" are terms used to designate materials or products that are permanent, durable, and/or chemically stable and, therefore, can be safely used for long-term preservation and conservation purposes.

When selecting archival supplies for collection storage, buy only from reputable suppliers of archival products. Many commercially available folders, sleeves, and envelopes are acidic. Plastics may be contaminated or have harmful coatings or plasticizers, and adhesives are often acidic and can stain permanently. Only some kinds of plastic storage are recommended, as some build from specific kind of polyester (from companies as Coroplast, Mylar, Print-File, etc).

The effects of light damage are cumulative! Turn off direct sources of light, such as table lamps, when items are left unattended. Use UV light filters on lights and windows. Always protect valuable items from exposure to sunlight, moisture, dust and dirt. However, avoid containers that seal tightly and trap moisture. Avoid rapid fluctuations in temperature and humidity.

Books should not be exposed to sunlight. The damaging effect of UV rays can be minimized with the application of Brodart Book Jacket Covers.

### **Identification / Provenance of Material**

Prepared by Congregation de Notre Dame Archive Services, Montreal, Canada.  
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Since, document records have greater value when correctly identified, the origin and history of each item should be as clear as possible and should include:

- Author/ Creator
- Date and Location
- Context /Purpose / Use
- Names of those in any pictures
- Additional supporting information about material.

A standard form that requests the above identifying information should be created. This form would be completed and then submitted with each item. See Example provided below.

### **Handling**

Handle archival materials as little as possible.

- To handle paper records, manipulate them after handwashing with soap. For other mediums, use cotton gloves to protect archival material from oily fingerprint transfer.
- Do not eat or drink in storage, exhibition, or work areas. Liquids are easily spilled and will stain archival materials. These stains are often difficult, if not impossible, to remove.

### **Preparing Material for Storage**

Gather and organize material to be preserved.

- Do not use metal paper clips or rubber bands to secure objects together. Use plastic paperclips or cotton twine.
- Avoid using pen or markers on or around archival materials. Pencil is best suited in most circumstances as it is removable.
- Individual folders or sleeves offer a better way to organize and combine multi-sheet records.
- If you choose to use plastic page protectors, purchase them from a recognized archival products company. Many "PVC-free" plastics that are available through discount stores are not archival.
- Attach your photographs, postcards, and other items with archival photo corners or choose an acid-free adhesive. This will prevent discoloration of tape and materials.

### **Photographs**

Photographs should be kept out of direct sunlight and away from harmful UV rays to avoid fading and yellowing. Storing your collection in appropriate photo storage boxes, envelopes, sleeves, and albums will protect against light, dust, handling and air pollutants. Avoid rapid fluctuations in temperature and humidity.

- Store slides in a cool, dark, low humidity environment to avoid fungus growth. Avoid long exposure to any light source including daylight, fluorescent lamps, illuminated viewers and light boxes.
- All negatives and prints require protection from finger oils, acids, dust, dirt, pollution, and abrasion. Use of cotton gloves when handling your negatives and prints will protect against damage.

- Photo storage should be made of strong, durable and chemically stable material. Do not store photographs in commercially available "magnetic" photo albums. Choose acid-free materials and pages.
- Extend the life of your photo album by using archival material. The ideal photo album would be constructed with 100% archival materials including a protective cover, a hinge that allows the book to comfortably expand, and size that is easy to shelve or store.

### **Audiovisual Material**

Preserving audio and video recordings can be a challenge because it sometimes requires specialized knowledge and equipment. The storage conditions mentioned above are adequate their preservation pending deposit to the general secretariat or the archive services. However, here are some peculiarities:

- Store magnetic tapes vertically in their boxes. Do not stack tapes on top of one another.
- Store magnetic tapes away from anything that can create an electro-magnetic field. This includes loudspeakers and other articles containing magnets, and also high voltage lines and surge protectors.

### **Digital Media**

Digital media requires ongoing attention. The types of computer file formats are changing rapidly, as are the physical media on which they are saved. These are also particularly fragile. The only safe way to be sure you can access your material is to transfer on another support (CD, external disk, USB key) each 5 years or backs up your files in a cloud digital service.

- Conserve photography file in JPG or TIFF format and text documents ideally in PDF.
- Store optical media (CD, DVD) vertically in their plastic cases.
- Do not use adhesive labels or solvent-based permanent markers on the discs (markers specifically made for archiving optical discs are available).

### **References**

The U.S. National Archives and Records Administration, *Preservation* :  
<https://www.archives.gov/preservation> (visited on May 20, 2020)

## EXAMPLES OF THEMES AND TYPES OF DOCUMENTS FOR HISTORICAL ARCHIVES

<b>ADMINISTRATION AND ORGANIZATION</b>	
Documents that relate to the organization and structure of administrative entities and committees: planning, assessment, agreements.	Policies, procedures, directives, minutes, reports, five-year plans, studies, orientations, master plans, plans for broad and specific objectives, annual reports, review and prospects, agreements, contracts, documentation, etc.

<b>MISSION AND OBJECTIVES</b>	
Documents that relate to the mission and demonstrate involvement: ministries, pastoral and social activities, retreat facilitation and spiritual gatherings. History, memories and tributes.	Annual reports and appendices, historical accounts (and all complementary narratives), minutes, registers and records of students' accounts, correspondence, documentation, press clippings, photographs, plaques, medals, addresses, prospectuses, events programs, etc.

<b>DEVOTION AND CHARISM</b>	
Documents that relate to founder or other saints and blessed persons, historical figures who are connected to the Congregation's charism and spirituality.	Holy pictures, photographs, prayers, novenas, liturgies, etc.

<b>HUMAN RESOURCES</b>	
Documents that relate to work organization and employee management: endowment, movement of employees and members, external resources, quality of life.	Job descriptions, organizational charts, members and employees lists, members files (in accordance with confidentiality – signatures allowing the conservation of personal documents as historical archives), etc.

<b>MOVABLE AND IMMOVABLE ASSETS</b>	
Documents that relate to the management of movable and immovable assets belonging to the organization: records regarding their purchase, maintenance and disposal and inventories, interior layout and use of space.	Inventories (furnishings and real estate), property titles, plans of the house and property (small and large), contracts: acquisitions, sales, leases, dormant leases, etc.

<b>FINANCIAL ASSETS</b>	
Documents that relate to the management of financial assets: budgetary planning and follow-up of the community and its different administrative levels.	Financial statements, budgets, accounting ledgers.

### **INTERNAL AND EXTERNAL RELATIONSHIPS**

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Documents that relate to internal and external communications:	
<b>Identification and representation</b> Documents that represent the organization.	Signs, official stationary, business cards, etc.
<b>Official celebrations and special events</b> Documents that relate to activities meant to gather the members of the organization in order to celebrate events linked to the Congregation.	Guest lists, guest books, books of official visits, photographs, invitation cards, promotional material, roll call registers, programs, addresses, speeches, transcripts of conferences, summaries, reports, honours, press clippings, souvenir albums, etc.
<b>Media</b> Documents that relate to relationships between the organization's various entities and the media: advertising campaigns, promotional activities, press reviews.	Guest lists, invitation cards, communication plans, programs, articles, press clippings, radio and television programs, texts from periodicals, including those posted on the website, etc.
<b>External Relationships</b> Documents that relate to relationships with various public and private organizations, religious entities (ecclesial authorities, religious communities, ministries, etc.) and with the general public.	Correspondence, thank you, greeting and invitation cards, obituary notices, etc.
<b>Publications</b> Documents that relate to publications published by the organization.	Monographs, articles, writings, newsletter, leaflets, brochures, directories, images and posters, etc.

**EXAMPLE OF A SUBMISSION FORM:**

**ASSOCIATE RELATIONSHIP**  
**Deposit to Archive Services**

This package is being sent on \_\_\_\_\_  
Date

By: \_\_\_\_\_  
Name

Role: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Province /Region: \_\_\_\_\_ Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Coordinator: \_\_\_\_\_

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**Description:**

Source /Origin: \_\_\_\_\_

Date / Years Covered (Example: From June 2003 to January 2008)

\_\_\_\_\_

Context and other relevant information such as Provenance – History of item(s):

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Print and send with the material you are depositing.**