ARCHIVAL PROCESSING:
PRINCIPLES AND PRACTICAL STRATEGIES

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September 5, 2019
HI!
AGENDA

- Goals of the webinar (5)
- Arrangement (25)
- Description (25)
- Questions (30)
Only one:

To give you enough of an overview that you can start to think through processing at your home institution
WHAT IS ARCHIVAL PROCESSING?

Arrangement + Description = Processing

A collection is considered “processed” when an archivist has imposed enough physical and intellectual control to facilitate access.
“Arrangement is the process of organizing materials with respect to their provenance and original order, to protect their context, and to achieve physical and intellectual control over the materials.”

SAA, Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology
“Description is the creation of an accurate representation of a unit of archival material by the process of capturing, collating, analyzing, and organizing information that serves to identify archival material and explain the context and records system(s) that produced it.”

SAA, Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology
WHY ARRANGE AND DESCRIBE?

- To establish authenticity
- To establish intellectual and physical control
- To facilitate access
- To make sense of collections
PRINCIPLES OF ARRANGEMENT

- Provenance
- Original order
- Levels of arrangement
“1. The origin or source of something (also includes: custodial history, or the succession of ownership of the collection over its lifecycle). - 2. Information regarding the origins, custody, and ownership of an item or collection.”

SAA, Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology
“The organization and sequence of records established by the creator of the records.”

SAA, Glossary of Archival and Records Terminology
LEVELS OF ARRANGEMENT

- Repository
- Collection
- Series
  - (Sub-series)
- File
- Item
LEVELS OF ARRANGEMENT

For example:

- Rose Library/Emory University Archives
  - Student and Academic Services records
    - General office files
      - Student Services staff meetings, 1967-1971
        - Meeting agenda, 1971

PREPARING FOR ARRANGEMENT

- Background research
- Collection assessment
- Work plans
BACKGROUND RESEARCH

Photo courtesy of Rose Library/Emory Photo Video
COLLECTION ASSESSMENT

- Identify provenance and original order
  - Who created the material? Who donated the material? Are they the same? Can you trace the custodial history and any physical changes this may have caused?
  - Is there an original inventory? Are there original file folders? Are the relationships between documents still identifiable?
Condition assessment/physical inventory

Arrangement/original order? Conservation issues? Original housing?

Create a basic (broad and general) inventory of box contents
Collection level is baseline and an acceptable stopping place

Determining need for more granular arrangement

- Large, complex collection
- Lack of original order
- Significant preservation issues
- Only way to provide meaningful access
## DETERMINE LEVEL OF ARRANGEMENT

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level</th>
<th>Arrangement</th>
<th>Actions</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collection Level</td>
<td>Material is left in its original order</td>
<td>Rehouse into standard sized boxes—no rehousing of individual files. Check for mold, pests, and nitrate film.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series Level</td>
<td>Put series and boxes and/or volumes into rough order. Folder material that is not foldered, remove materials from binders if binders prevent the closing of boxes.</td>
<td>Rehoused into standard sized boxes. Check for mold, pests, and nitrate film. Note presence of A/V material and digital media.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File Level Condition 1 (when material arrives foldered)</td>
<td>Put series and folders or volumes in order within boxes. Do not order or arrange material within folders.</td>
<td>Materials rehoused into archival boxes; refoldering into archival folders only if originals are damaged or do not fit; Check for mold, pests and nitrate film.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File Level Condition 2 (when material does not arrive foldered)</td>
<td>Items identified, roughly sorted and placed into folders.</td>
<td>Materials rehoused into archival boxes; everything put into archival folders; Check for mold, pests and nitrate film.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item Level</td>
<td>Individual items arranged within folders or individually foldered.</td>
<td>Materials rehoused into archival boxes, items refoldered into archival folders.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
DETERMINE LEVEL OF ARRANGEMENT

KEEP IT SIMPLE!!!
WORK PLANS

- Document decision-making for ourselves and our colleagues
- Can be useful tools for communication
  - Students/volunteers
  - Supervisors
  - Curators/acquisitions archivists
WORK PLANS

EMORY UNIVERSITY
STUART A. ROSE MANUSCRIPT, ARCHIVES, AND RARE BOOK LIBRARY

ARRANGEMENT AND DESCRIPTION WORK PLAN

Jack Nelson papers—Processing Plan
Prepared by Sarah Quigley
March 2019

➢ BASIC ACQUISITION INFORMATION

Collection Name, Dates: Jack Nelson papers
Size: 20 linear feet (24 boxes), 1 oversized papers box and 1 oversized papers folder (OP), 1 oversized bound volume (OBV)

Source of Acquisition:
Gift of Barbara Maysow Nelson, widow of Jack Nelson

Biographical Background:

Jack Nelson (1929-2009), Pulitzer Prize winning investigative journalist, was the Los Angeles Times Washington, D.C., bureau chief from 1975-1996, and the paper’s chief Washington correspondent until his retirement in 2001. His first job as a reporter was for the Biloxi Daily Herald in the late 1940s. Throughout the 1950s and 1960s, Nelson reported on news all over the South and became known for breaking exclusive stories. In 1960, while working for the Atlanta Constitution, he won the Pulitzer Prize for uncovering abuse at a Milledgeville mental hospital. In 1964, the editor of the Los Angeles Times recruited Nelson to open the paper’s Atlanta bureau. He is best known for his coverage of the murder of Viola Liuzzo, the Orangeburg Massacre, the F.B.I.’s use of agents provocateurs in Meridian, Mississippi, and the Watergate scandal.
COLLECTION LEVEL ANALYSIS

Importance/Value to Rose Library [intellectual/research value?]:

The collection documents civil rights journalism in the south, a particular collecting strength of the Rose Library.

Scope of Collection:

The collection includes writings by Nelson, subject files, personal papers, and audiovisual material. The majority of writings are speeches; though there is some material present documenting Nelson's more well-known articles, it is fairly minimal.

Current State:

The collection is currently in good condition. There are folders in most of the boxes, but not all. Material isn't always in an appropriately sized folder and existing folder titles vary in both legibility and informational value. Materials will be refoldered and reboxed to improve preservation conditions and impose consistency in file level description.

Preservation Needs:

There are no preservation concerns with the manuscript material in the collection. All born digital material has been processed already. There is a significant amount of audiovisual material, only some of which has been digitized for patrons.

Restrictions:

There are no access or use restrictions in deed of gift.
Appraisal and Separations:

The Rose Library is obligated to retain all original newspaper clippings of articles written by Nelson (or photocopies of same if the originals become too brittle for public use). There are five books that I recommend be weeded from the collection and not cataloged as part of Rose Library’s rare book collection.

There will likely be no other appraisal decisions in this collection. There is very little duplication and no large sections of seemingly extraneous material.

Proposed Arrangement:

- Series 1: Personal and professional papers
- Series 2: Speeches
- Series 3: Other writings and subject files

My team will be able to process approximately 25 hours per week during this collection. Processing, including reboxing and folder numbering, should be completed between May 30 and June 30 depending on how quickly the whole team is focused on series one.

Additional Processing Decisions:
SERIES LEVEL ANALYSIS [Repeat Section for each series]

Series Title:

Series Extent:

Processing Level:

- Series level
- File level
- Item level
- Hybrid

Importance/relationship to rest of collection (???):

[How does this series relate to the other series in the collection? How much research value do you anticipate this series having?]

Estimated Processing time (using Project Processing Rate based on processing levels document):

Actual Processing time:
Beginning date: ___________ Scheduled end date: ___________Actual end date: ______

Processing Team Member Assigned:

Processing decisions:

[Please include here a summary of significant processing decisions (including disposition and arrangement descriptions, changes in thinking about how the material relates to other material) and their rationale. Update as work proceeds on series]
PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT

- Sorting
- Arranging
- Rehousing
PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT

Go from this:
PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT

To this:
PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT

To this:
SORTING
PHYSICAL ARRANGEMENT

- Elements of minimal processing
  - No preservation photocopying
  - No hardware removal
  - No separation by format
  - No sleeving photos
  - No item level arrangement
REHOUSING
Focused on aggregates
Concerned with context
Most important
Archival description expresses professional ethics and values

**Users are the fundamental reason for archival description**

Because archival description privileges intellectual content in context, descriptive rules apply equally to all records, regardless of format or carrier type

Records, agents, activities, and the relationships between them are the four fundamental concepts that constitute archival description

**Archival description must be clear about what archivists know, what they don't know, and how they know it**

Archivists must document and make discoverable the actions they take on records
PRINCIPLES OF DESCRIPTION

- Archival description is accessible
- Archival description should be easy to use, re-use, and share
- Each collection within a repository must have an archival description
- Archivists must have a user-driven reason to enhance existing archival description
- Archival description is a continuous intellectual endeavor
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
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<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Collection Level</td>
<td>Collection level record in Accessions Database, ILS, and EAD/Finding Aids Database (at least DACS single level minimum); General survey of multi-box collections conducted</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Series Level</td>
<td>Collection Level Record and finding aid with series/subseries identified and described. Description includes a box list that correlates boxes and series/subseries.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>File Level</td>
<td>Collection Level Record and finding aid with folder list.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Item Level</td>
<td>Collection Level record and detailed finding aid with a container list that lists individual items.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
MINIMUM REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- Reference Code Element
- Name and Location of Repository Element
- Title Element
- Date Element
- Extent Element
- Name of Creator(s) Element
- Scope and Content Element
- Conditions Governing Access Element
- Languages and Scripts of the Material Element
MINIMUM REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- Reference Code Element
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MINIMUM REQUIRED ELEMENTS

DESCRIPTIVE SUMMARY


Title: Ophelia DeVore-Mitchell papers, 1937-2010

Call Number: MSS 1224

Extent: 77.75 linear feet (149 boxes), 3 oversized papers boxes (OP), 16 oversized bound volumes (OBV), and AV Masters: 20 linear feet (20 boxes)

Language Note: Materials entirely in English.
MINIMUM REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- Reference Code Element
- Name and Location of Repository Element
- Title Element
- Date Element
- Extent Element
- Name of Creator(s) Element
- Scope and Content Element
- **Conditions Governing Access Element**
- Languages and Scripts of the Material Element
Restrictions on Access

Special restrictions apply: Use copies have not been made for all of the audiovisual material in this collection. Researchers must contact the Rose Library at least two weeks in advance for access to these items. Collection restrictions, copyright limitations, or technical complications may hinder the Rose Library's ability to provide access to audiovisual material.
MINIMUM REQUIRED ELEMENTS

- Reference Code Element
- Name and Location of Repository Element
- Title Element
- Date Element
- Extent Element
- Name of Creator(s) Element
- **Scope and Content Element**
- Conditions Governing Access Element
- Languages and Scripts of the Material Element
Scope and Content Element

- Narrative summary of the collection’s contents
- Collection level note should apply generally to the entire collection
- Should describe the primary foci of the collection, including names, places, and topics of note
- Should also describe any weaknesses, absences, or gaps of coverage
The collection consists of the papers of Ophelia DeVore-Mitchell from 1937-2010, including correspondence, personal papers, and the records of Ophelia DeVore Associates and its subsidiaries: The Columbus Times, Grace del Marco Models, the ODV Performing Company, Ophelia DeVore Cosmetics, The Ophelia DeVore Show, and the Ophelia DeVore School. Correspondence is both personal and professional and includes invitations, award letters, greeting cards, and business correspondence relating to Ophelia DeVore Associates. Personal papers contain DeVore-Mitchell's awards and certificates, identification and membership cards, passports, financial records, legal records, and medical records. The records of Ophelia DeVore Associates consist of administrative records, such as memoranda, agendas and minutes, and financial records, and promotional material, such as event programs and fliers for products and services. The records document the company's major functions and initiatives, such as charm school courses, model bookings, beauty pageants, and cosmetic sales. The records also document the work and contributions of staff members and leaders within the organization: James D. Carter, Carol Gertjegerdes, Camille Petty Dee Simmons, and Jacqueline Wellington. There is no significant documentation in the collection about DeVore-Mitchell's most famous clients. There are additional records of DeVore-Mitchell's involvement with other professional and political organizations, such as the National Newspaper Publishers Association; the National Black Republican Council; the New York Black Republican Council; and Top Ladies of Distinction, a service and educational organization of African American women. The collection includes numerous photographs and a significant amount of audiovisual material, particularly recordings of The Ophelia DeVore Show; various courses offered by the DeVore School; staff meetings and training; pageants; and meetings of the National Newspaper Publishers Association.
ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

- Biographical notes
- Arrangement notes
- Processing notes
- Related material notes
- Custodial history and source notes
- Appraisal notes
ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

- Biographical notes
- Arrangement notes
- Processing notes
- Related material notes
- Custodial history and source notes
- Appraisal notes
ADDITONAL ELEMENTS

- **Biographical notes**
  - Full name, married name, and pseudonyms
  - Life dates and places of birth and death
  - Family information, such as parents, spouse or partners, and children
  - Occupations and significant professional achievements
  - Education
  - Other significant relationships
  - All within the context of the collection itself
Biographical Note

Elaine Brown was born in Philadelphia, Pennsylvania, in 1943 and raised by her mother, Dorothy Clark. She attended a predominantly white, experimental elementary school where she studied ballet and classical piano. She graduated from the Philadelphia High School for Girls in 1961. She attended Temple University (Philadelphia, Pennsylvania) for one semester before moving to Los Angeles, California. Brown joined the Black Panther Party in 1968, eventually serving as the Party's first Chairwoman from 1974-1977. Brown left the Party in 1978 but has continued to work as a community activist. She founded Fields of Flowers in 1996, a non-profit organization dedicated to building a model education center for impoverished children. She is also active in the realm of prison reform and is a co-founder of both Mothers Advocating Juvenile Justice (1998) and the National Alliance for Radical Prison Reform (2003). She has run several campaigns for political office including twice for Oakland, California, City Council (1973 and 1975), once for Mayor of Brunswick, Georgia (2005), and once for the Green Party's nomination for President of the United States (2007). Brown is also an author, publishing her memoir, A Taste of Power (1992) and The Condemnation of Little B. (2002), a nonfiction work about thirteen-year-old Michael "Little B." Lewis, who was tried and convicted as an adult for murder in Atlanta, Georgia. She has one daughter Ericka, who was born in 1970.
ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

- Biographical notes
- **Arrangement notes**
- **Processing notes**
- Custodial history and source notes
- Appraisal notes
Arrangement Note

Organized into six series: (1) Writings by Blanco, (2) Personal papers, (3) Professional papers, (4) Writings by others, (5) Printed material, and (6) Born digital material.

Processing

Arranged and described at the file level by Dayne Alexander and Haylee Harrell, 2019. Archivists imposed the series arrangement and alphabetical file arrangement but retained Blanco's original order within files.
ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

- Biographical notes
- Arrangement notes
- Processing notes
- **Custodial history and source notes**
- Appraisal notes
Source
Purchase, 2010 with one subsequent addition of a letter and clippings from Ray A. Roberts.

Custodial History
The Rose Library purchased this collection from book dealer Glenn Horowitz in 2010. The original owner bought it in the early 1970s as the unknown contents of a trunk sold at an auction of abandoned items from a storage facility in Wellfleet, Massachusetts. During the 1960s, Brennan spent her summers in the town.
ADDITIONAL ELEMENTS

- Biographical notes
- Arrangement notes
- Processing notes
- Custodial history and source notes
- Appraisal notes
Appraisal Note

Acquired by Rosemary Magee, Director of the Rose Library and Curator of Literary Collections, as part of the Rose Library's holdings in poetry. One linear foot of duplicate publications, extraneous memorabilia, and out of date engineering texts and equipment was removed from the collection and returned to Blanco. Appraisal decisions were made by Manuscript Archivist Sarah Quigley and Head of Collection Services Carrie Hintz.
Some tips

- Should reflect your overall arrangement scheme
  - If arranging writings by a single author, start with title
- Make sure first word conveys content
  - *The Color Purple*, draft NOT Draft, *The Color Purple*
- Avoid abbreviations and spell out acronyms
- Avoid the use of “miscellaneous” and similar terms
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