

GUIDELINES FOR BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

Compiled by the National Bahá'í Archives of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States

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CONTENTS

PREFACE.....	5
1. THE BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES.....	6
Why a Bahá'í Archives?.....	6
Where are Bahá'í Archives?.....	7
What Kinds of Records Does a Bahá'í Archives Contain?.....	7
What is the Role of the Archivist?	8
Administration of the Archives	8
What Basic Principles Must an Archivist Understand and Use?	8
The Organization of Archival Material	10
What Happens to a Collection In an Archives?	12
2. ACQUISITION AND ACCESSIONING OF ARCHIVAL MATERIAL	13
Acquisition	13
Accessioning.....	14
Division of the Archives by Type of Archival Material	15
The Collection Log For Spiritual Assembly Records and Personal Papers	16
Titling a Collection.....	16
Assigning a Collection Number.....	16
3. APPRAISAL AND ARRANGEMENT OF SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY RECORDS	17
Appraisal and Weeding of Spiritual Assembly Records	17
Arranging Spiritual Assembly Records.....	19
Confidential Information	21
Electronic Records.....	21
4. APPRAISAL AND ARRANGEMENT OF PERSONAL PAPERS	23
Appraisal of Personal Papers.....	23
Arranging Personal Papers	23
Arranging Correspondence.....	24
Separation or Disposal of Material From Personal Papers.....	25
Small Collections of Personal Papers.....	25
5. PROCESSING OF BOTH RECORDS AND PERSONAL PAPERS	26
Refoldering Records and Papers	26
Preparing Finding Aids.....	27
Shelving a Collection	27

6. PROCESSING MATERIALS OTHER THAN UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS.....	28
Sacred Writings, and Letters From Shoghi Effendi and the Universal House of Justice.....	28
Relics, Artifacts and Works of Art.....	28
Photographs	29
Subject Categories Used At the National Bahá'í Archives, United States	30
Published Material.....	32
Tape Recordings and Motion-Picture Films	32
Microfilm and CD-Rom	33
7. FINDING AIDS.....	35
Card Catalog.....	35
Inventory.....	35
Calendar.....	36
Guide	36
Computer-Generated Indexes.....	36
Descriptive Standards.....	37
The Research Process.....	37
8. ARCHIVES REFERENCE SERVICES.....	38
Reference Services	38
Access Policy.....	38
9. EXHIBITS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS.....	40
Oral History	40
10. QUARTERS	42
11. PRESERVATION.....	43
Man.....	43
Fire.....	43
Water	44
Temperature and Humidity.....	44
Acid	44
Light	45
Mold	45
Insects and Rodents	46
Cleaning and Restoration	46
Archival “Dos”	46
Archival “Don’ts”.....	47
12. SUGGESTIONS FOR SMALL ARCHIVES	48
What to Keep.....	48
13. THE CHALLENGE OF ARCHIVES.....	51

ADDENDA.....	52
A. Glossary and Index To Definitions In the Text	52
B. Bibliography	56
C. Archival and Conservator Organizations.....	57
D. Sources of Supplies	58
E. Figures.....	59
1. Deed of Gift	59
2. Receipt.....	60
3. Retention and Disposal Schedule	61
4. Accession Sheet.....	62
5. Archives Processing Card.....	63
6. Collection Log	64
7. Folder Label.....	65
8. Box Label	66
9. Location Card	66
10. Catalog Card.....	67
11. Inventory.....	68
12. Reference and Service Request Slip.....	69
13. Records Request Slip.....	70

PREFACE

This manual is published by the National Bahá'í Archives, United States, as a guide for Local Spiritual Assemblies seeking to organize their community archives according to accepted archival standards. The manual can also be used by National Spiritual Assemblies that wish to develop their own National Bahá'í Archives. It is also designed for use at archival training courses sponsored by the National Bahá'í Archives.

In some cases the procedures described in the following chapters differ from conventional archival practice because they have been tailored to the specific needs of Bahá'í archives. In all cases, however, application of these basic principles and procedures will provide a foundation of good archival practice for the current organization and future growth of Bahá'í archives. Archivists in older communities that have amassed sizable amounts of material should find the techniques used at the National Center directly applicable to their local community archives. It is primarily with these communities in mind that this manual has been prepared.

This manual does not assume that the Bahá'í archivist has had any previous training or experience in archival work. An attempt has been made to define all terms and clearly outline all procedures. What will be most useful, however, is a sincere enthusiasm for Bahá'í history on the part of the archivist and an eagerness to provide a very valuable service to present and future Bahá'í communities, administrators and researchers.

Special reference materials have been included at the end of the manual: a glossary of archival terms not defined in the text, combined with an index to terms that are defined in the text; a bibliography of books and pamphlets, of which the Society of American Archivists' *Basic Manual Series* will be the most useful for general procedures; a list of professional archival organizations; and a list of archival suppliers. Figures 1 through 13 are samples of forms used at and referred to by the National Bahá'í Archives. These are discussed in the text and may be adapted to the special needs of the individual archives.

It is hoped that the information contained in this booklet will give Bahá'í communities the encouragement and confidence they need to adopt active and effective archives programs to preserve the history of the Bahá'í Faith in their respective localities.

The archivists staffing the National Bahá'í Archives welcome telephone calls or letters and are glad to offer advice about the preservation of records. They can also give referrals to past participants in archival workshops or Bahá'í archivists who may provide assistance.

National Bahá'í Archives, United States

1. THE BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

WHY A BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES?

For the first time in history man has the opportunity to document the growth of an independent world religion from the earliest days of its Founders to the present time. A Bahá'í archives, whether international, national, or local in scope, is presented with this singular, unique opportunity.

The purpose of the Bahá'í archives is to ensure that all records of permanent administrative, historical, doctrinal, or sacred value are preserved and made available for research to present and future historians and to the administrative institutions of the Faith. Shoghi Effendi has stated that in the future every Haziratu'l-Quds will have an archives as one of its component parts.¹ To ensure that the vital records and sacred material of the Faith are preserved, the Guardian called for "the establishment of National Archives for the authentication, the collection, the translation, the cataloguing, and the preservation of the Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and for the preservation of sacred relics and historical documents."²

In a letter written on his behalf in 1936 to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, Shoghi Effendi details the significance of Bahá'í archives:

The importance of the institution of Bahá'í Archives is not due only to the many teaching facilities it procures, but is essentially to be found in the vast amount of historical data and information it offers both to the present-day administrators of the Cause, and to the Bahá'í historians of the future. The institution of the Bahá'í Archives is indeed a most valuable storehouse of information regarding all aspects of the Faith, historical, administrative as well as doctrinal. Future generations of believers will be surely in a better position than we are to truly and adequately appreciate the many advantages and facilities which the institution of the Archives offers to individual believers and also to the community at large.

Now that the Cause is rapidly passing through so many different phases of its evolution is the time for the friends to exert their utmost in order to preserve as much as they can of the sacred relics and various other precious objects that are associated with the lives of the Founders of the Faith, and particularly the Tablets They have revealed.

Every believer should realize that he has a definite responsibility to shoulder in this matter, and to help, to whatever extent he can, in rendering successful the valuable work which national and local Bahá'í archives committees are so devotedly accomplishing for the Faith in America.³

¹Shoghi Effendi, *God Passes By*, rev. ed. Wilmette, IL.: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1974, p. 339.

²*Ibid.* p. 342.

³Shoghi Effendi, *Directives from the Guardian*. New Delhi: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1973, pp. 4-5.

WHERE ARE BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES?

Shoghi Effendi himself undertook the first systematic assembling of archival material in the late 1920s and early 1930s at the World Centre, when he began collecting and organizing the Writings of the Central Figures of the Faith and historical objects associated with the Twin Founders of the Bahá'í Faith, Their families, and early Bahá'í history. This was the beginning of the International Bahá'í Archives. Between 1955 and 1958 the International Bahá'í Archives building was constructed on Mount Carmel, the first edifice to be erected on the arc upon which the world administrative center of the Faith is being established. Beginning with the archival materials painstakingly assembled by Shoghi Effendi, the Archives at the World Centre is growing with the addition of sacred texts, as well as many writings of Shoghi Effendi and documents⁴ related to the work of The Universal House of Justice and the functioning of the World Centre.

Throughout the world, national Bahá'í archives are the repositories⁵ for the records of each National Spiritual Assembly and its committees and offices, as well as documents relating to 'Abdu'l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, and the history of the Faith within that country.

Bahá'í schools and institutes may also have their own archives to ensure the preservation of records documenting their history and development.

On the local level, the Bahá'í archives is the repository for the records of the Local Spiritual Assembly and of all materials relating to the history of the Bahá'í Faith in the locale under the Assembly's jurisdiction.

WHAT KINDS OF RECORDS DOES A BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES CONTAIN?

The word "archives" is used to refer to a body of original unpublished records or other source materials that have been preserved because they document the history of an institution or a group of people. The term "archives" is also applied to the place in which this material is kept. A Bahá'í archives is the repository for the official records of its parent institution, whether that institution be The Universal House of Justice, a National Spiritual Assembly, a Local Spiritual Assembly, or a School Council. Such official records include all documents that are no longer in current use but that have permanent value. These may concern the functioning of the institution, its officers, committees and offices.

In addition to official records, an archives may preserve other records of Bahá'í history, such as papers of individual believers, photographs, scrapbooks, audiovisual material, electronic records, newsletters, other printed matter, and newspaper clippings, as well as sacred relics. In short, the holdings of a Bahá'í archives should document as complete a history of a community or institution as possible, without wasting valuable space on records not essential to the understanding of some aspect of that history.

⁴See Glossary.

⁵*Ibid.*

It is worth pointing out the distinction between archival institutions and libraries and between archives and museums. While each may contain old or even ancient materials, archives contain unpublished works, that is bodies of documents that are the natural residue of the activities of an institution or individuals. Each body or collection are the whole of the records of a records creator, structured according to the organization and activities that created them. Libraries, on the other hand, manage published works, that is, discrete documents (books, pamphlets, videos, etc.) that are consciously compiled with the purpose of transmitting certain information to the public. Museums manage collections of artifacts, that is three-dimensional objects. The nature of the materials are different, and therefore different principles and practices are employed in their management. However, archives, museums and libraries have related functions, and they are often placed together within an organization, especially in small organizations, and the archivist may find herself in charge of a library or artifacts, or a librarian in charge of the archives, or a curator in charge of archival materials. While this manual is focused primarily on archives, the bibliography contains other texts that could be referenced for the management of published materials and three-dimensional objects.

WHAT IS THE ROLE OF THE ARCHIVIST?

The responsibility of the archivist, whether an individual or a committee, is twofold. First, he must ensure that records having permanent value are preserved. This includes taking steps to see that such records, whether from its parent institution, other institutions or from private individuals, are deposited in the archives, rather than destroyed, and that they are protected from damage or deterioration once they are placed in the archives. Documents that have already been damaged may have to be restored professionally. Preservation would be pointless, however, if the records are not used. The second responsibility of the archivist, therefore, is to make the records available for use. The archives' clientele must know what records exist in the archives and must have access to them. Hence the archivist must arrange the records, prepare finding aids⁶ that adequately describe them, advertise the fact that the records are available, and provide facilities in which administrators and researchers can work.

ADMINISTRATION OF THE ARCHIVES

Where the Archives will fit in the administrative structure of the agencies of its Spiritual Assembly will vary. Sometimes the Archives will report directly to the Spiritual Assembly secretary and other times it may be part of a larger department. The Archives should be making regular reports to the Spiritual Assembly, providing statistics and information on acquisitions, accessioning, processing of archival material and reference services. It can also outline needs relating to staff, quarters, supplies, etc. The Archives should also, if possible, prepare its own budget and annual report for consideration by the Spiritual Assembly or department.

WHAT BASIC PRINCIPLES MUST AN ARCHIVIST UNDERSTAND AND USE?

There are two important principles underlying the work in archives, “provenance” and “original order.” Provenance means that the archivist keeps together all records created or accumulated by one source, whether administrative or individual. Thus the archivist should never break up collections and classify them according to his own scheme. Rather he should treat a collection created by a

⁶See Glossary.

particular institution or individual as an organic whole. An archives, unlike a library, is not organized along a predetermined system of subject classification. The archivist should not create artificial collections grouped around a particular subject, theme, or person, nor should the records of one collection be intermingled with those of another unless those records were originally together but have been separated. Examples of bringing collections back together would be reuniting a Local Spiritual Assembly's records that had been stored in several places or the papers of an individual that had been scattered among several heirs. The application of the principle of provenance in a local Bahá'í archives means keeping the records of the Local Spiritual Assembly separate from the collections of individuals, and individual collections separate from each other.

The second principle, original order, refers to the maintenance of records in the same order or arrangement in which they were placed by the creator of the records. This preserves the relationship between the various parts of the whole and their evidential significance. The records creator may have had several different categories of records, for example photographs organized by subject, correspondence with friends, organized chronologically, correspondence with business associates, organized by name, and personal diaries, organized chronologically. If an order can be found for each of these categories, it should be preserved because it provides evidence of how that person carried out his activities. The order is part of the records' context of creation. To take apart that order can destroy evidence. This is an area where the archivist must use his or her professional judgment. There may be cases, particularly for heavily used collection, where the original order causes so high a cost in terms of time required for retrieval or access that changes are needed in the arrangement. There may also be policies regarding confidentiality or restrictions of access that would necessitate some changes in original order. In these cases the changes should be documented so that knowledge of the original order is still preserved.

On the other hand, sometimes papers arrive at the archives in a jumble and no order can be found. In such cases, the archivist applies an order that would make sense for what she knows about the creator of the records, his activities, and how he might have carried them out. Only in cases where materials meet different research requirements or need special care for preservation, as in the case of original sacred Writings, relics and artifacts, photographs, film, tapes, and so on, should parts of a collection be separated from the rest; however, even in these cases, the archivist must take care to maintain the integrity of the collection by recording the items that were separated in the inventory.

A mistake often made by those familiar with libraries, and unaware of these two principles, is to treat an individual document as they would treat a book. For example, the archivist's initial reaction might be to file individual documents according to subject matter, just as books dealing with the same subject would be shelved together. If a parallel is to be drawn, however, it should be between a book and an "archival collection"—that is, a collection of records created by one particular source. Both are the basic units of description, listed in a card catalog or computer program under author (for the book) and records creator (for the archival collection). Just as a librarian would not take books apart, chapter by chapter, and rearrange them into a new classification scheme, so the archivist tries not to disturb the integrity of a collection.

The archivist's adherence to these two principles can be compared to the conservator's observance of the principle of "do no harm" (borrowed from the Hippocratic oath). The conservator preserves and restores documents and artifacts as much as is possible without causing irreversible damage, documenting her work so actions taken in the past are understood in the future. The archivist

preserves and provides access to the physical record and its context of creation. Like the conservator, steps taken to separate the materials, or to change their arrangement in a particular way (even if the change is just to give them order) should be documented so that past actions are understood in the future.

THE ORGANIZATION OF ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

Archival institutions initially organize their holdings by collections, that is, by the records and papers created by particular records creators. Institutional records are often referred to as “records” and those created by individuals or families referred to as “papers.” “Manuscripts” or “private or personal papers” are also terms used for papers of individuals or families. Following the principle of provenance, all the materials created by a particular records creator are arranged and described at several levels, with more and more detail being provided at each level, where appropriate: records creator (also referred to in some countries as “fonds”) or record group, series, file and item. Not all materials in the archives will be described at all of these levels, however, the structure should be understood.

The first level of description is the whole of the records created by a records creator, whether an individual or institution. Examples of a records creator may be an office, committee or agency of a National or Local Spiritual Assembly, an individual, or a family. The first level of description in some archives is at the record group level; in this case, records have been organized according to a broad function. This method is used primarily in large bureaucracies and will not normally be applicable in local Bahá’í archives but might be useful in national Bahá’í archives.

The second level is at the series. A series is defined as documents that are arranged systematically or maintained as a unit because they relate to a particular function or subject, result from the same activity, have a particular form, or because of some other relationship arising from their creation, receipt or use. Examples of a series for an individual might be correspondence, research projects, or photographs while the individual was pioneering in Africa. An Office of the Secretary’s records may include several series of minutes, annual reports, and correspondence with other Bahá’í institutions. Each of these series would contain several *files* that are organized in a particular manner, such as alphabetically, chronologically, by subject or numerically. For institutional records, decisions about retention of records is usually made at the series level.

The third level of description is at the file level. A file is defined as the smallest organic form of aggregation of archival documents. Using one of the series examples given above, the Assembly’s correspondence series may contain many files of correspondence with other Assemblies in which each Assembly has a file and is named according to the Assembly. All the *items* in the file have a relationship to each other. The Houston Spiritual Assembly’s file of correspondence with the Dallas Spiritual Assembly will contain original incoming letters from and copies of outgoing letters to the Dallas Assembly. They are related because they are all correspondence with the Dallas Assembly. The Houston Assembly may in fact have several physical folders for the Dallas file; these folders do not each constitute a file, but a portion of the whole file.

The fourth level of description is at the item level. An item is the smallest level of description, below which it is not useful to subdivide further. An item could be a photograph or a series of photographs, a letter or a letter with enclosures, a tape recording or a set of tape recordings. In each of these examples, it is best to not further subdivide the various parts that make up the item. An example lies in the letter with enclosures. The fact of the enclosures having been included in a covering letter creates a relationship; the enclosures without the covering letter may make no sense; likewise references to enclosures that cannot be found render the item incomplete.

As can be seen with these examples, there is room for flexibility and interpretation. In all likelihood, the complexity of description that might be required for a National Assembly's archives may not be required for the archives of a Local Assembly. However, it is important to have these levels of description in mind when trying to decide how and where to describe any material that comes into the archives.

In some cases intermediary levels of description, known as subseries or subfiles might be found: these are for more complicated situations and will not be covered here.

In addition to the records of individuals or institutions, that are created organically as the records creator goes about its activities, the Archives may also contain artificial collections. An artificial collection is an artificial group of materials from a variety of provenances, that have been brought together and organized in a way that makes them accessible according to their informational content. They are not a natural residue of activities. They may be organized by author, subject, language, medium or documentary form. Examples of artificial collections will be original Sacred Writings and letters from the Guardian, biographical information, newspaper clippings, audio recordings, pilgrims' notes, photographs of Bahá'í buildings, etc.—all of which were of interest to the individual or institution that created them, but were not created by that person as part of their normal activities. Of course, a department of the National Assembly whose job it was to record talks at national events hosted by the Assembly will likely contain audio and video recordings *series*. It might also contain a *collection* of audio and video recordings received from other sources. The former, series, should be maintained separate from the latter, collection, because the former is evidence of that Assembly's activities, while the latter is a collection of material of interest to the Assembly but is not evidence of its work. The term "collections" is also often used by archival institutions to refer to all of its holdings, and is used in this manual in that sense. The status of an individual body of records will be known by its title, whether "papers," "records," or "collections," as discussed further in Chapter 2.

Some Archives organize materials on the basis of type of material, for non-textual records, or for individual materials received. It is quite common for an Archives to receive individual donations to the Archives that do not merit being described at all of the levels noted above. Also, the medium and format in which some records are created, although part of a fonds, series or file as noted above, merit separating them. In such cases, their connection to the fonds, series or file out of which they came should be maintained to place it in the context in which it was created. Examples of these are provided in the next chapter.

WHAT HAPPENS TO A COLLECTION IN AN ARCHIVES?

There are four basic stages to the process of adding a collection to the archives:

1. The collection is acquired from the donor.
2. The collection is accessioned and processed.⁷
3. The collection is made available to administrators and researchers.
4. The collection is protected from damage. (Sometimes this occurs as part of step 2.)

The archivist's first responsibility is to make sure that sufficient records are preserved so that the history and development of the Bahá'í institution whose records are entrusted to his care can be adequately documented. In a local Bahá'í community, this would mean keeping all minutes, important correspondence, basic financial records,⁸ records of Assembly committees, publicity material, newsletters and bulletins. After this is done, the archives may be expanded to include personal or family papers.

When acquiring a collection, the archivist has many important decisions to make, and he must keep accurate records of all contacts made with prospective donors. In the long run, however, success depends not only upon the archivist's ability to discover the location of worthwhile collections and to persuade donors, but upon the reputation that the archives has developed among researchers and donors.

⁷These terms are defined later.

⁸Basic financial records include general ledgers, annual financial reports, financial audits and possibly other records.

2. ACQUISITION AND ACCESSIONING OF ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

The archivist first becomes concerned with a collection of institutional records or personal papers during negotiations with a donor or when an institution seeks to transfer some portion of its records to its archives. Often donors will of their own volition give a collection, but many times the archivist will find it necessary to contact donors first in order to suggest that materials in their possession have permanent value and should be preserved in an archives. During this initial period the archivist may have to make several important and sometimes difficult decisions.

ACQUISITION

Whether archival material is given to the archives by individuals or Bahá'í institutions, it is important that the archivist keep a detailed record of all negotiations with the donors and potential donors of archival collections. Hence the archivist should keep both a donor file and a lead file. The donor file can consist of an individual folder for each donor, arranged alphabetically, with all correspondence from each particular donor, even if it concerns several different gifts. Or if the archives deals with a large number of donors, a new set of donor files, arranged alphabetically by the first letter of the name, could be created each year. All correspondence and “deeds of gift”⁹ from the donor, as well as a copy of the collection accession sheet,¹⁰ are kept in the donor file.

The archives may wish to approach prospective donors and encourage them to donate or leave their private papers to the archives. The archivist may also approach donors regarding donations of photographs, books, audio or video tapes, artifacts, works of art and other items. The archivist should make a separate file for such “leads” on collections, using an index card or folder for each collection. On the card or in the folder he should record everything that he knows about the whereabouts of the papers, as well as the steps that have been taken to solicit them.

To acknowledge receipt of donations from outside donors to the archives, the archivist will need a deed of gift (see Figure 1). Standard acknowledgement letters for different types of material should also be prepared. The deed of gift is filled out in duplicate and sent to the donor. The donor should sign one copy and return it to the archives. The other copy will then serve as the donor's receipt. If possible, the archivist should consult a lawyer when drawing up the deed of gift form to ensure that the wording of the deed of gift conforms to the legal code. There may be certain types of material where a deed of gift is not necessary and a simple acknowledgement letter will suffice.

A deed of gift is not necessary for records that are being transferred to the archives from the parent Bahá'í institution or its officers or committees, as the transaction involves no transfer of ownership. Nevertheless, the archives should usually either issue a receipt (see Figure 2) to acknowledge the arrival of the records or send an acknowledgement.

In addition to soliciting papers from private donors, the archivist must also ensure that the permanent records of the parent Bahá'í institution are preserved. The archivist should consider suggesting to his Local or National Spiritual Assembly (or other institution) the possibility of creating a records

⁹See Glossary.

¹⁰*Ibid.*

management program. Such a program would determine when a group of records can be classified as noncurrent or inactive. Records are usually judged noncurrent when they are referred to no more than once a month, or sometimes longer for some organizations.

As noncurrent records take up valuable file space, it is to the advantage of a busy office to have them removed. After consultation between the archivist and the office personnel, a retention and disposal schedule (see Figure 3) should be drawn up for each series of records, detailing when the records will become inactive and what should be done with them after they are removed from the office. If the records have permanent value, they would then be sent to the archives; otherwise, the records would be destroyed immediately, or held as long as they are needed for legal or administrative reasons before they are destroyed. The archivist may also maintain a records center, where records that have been retired from the office and that are awaiting destruction or transfer to the permanent archives may be held. A records management program will ensure that records will not be destroyed before the archivist can examine them and give his approval and before he can verify that the records are not needed for current or future Spiritual Assembly decisions. Such a program enables the archivist to gain a clearer idea of the volume and types of records the archives can expect to receive in the future, as well.

The physical transfer of the records can occur by any of a variety of means: registered mail (for very small collections), courier service or a private trucking firm (for large collections) if collections are coming from long distances; delivery by a reliable person or the donor; or pick-up by the archivist. Often files are moved directly into archival record storage boxes from their previous location. If this is the case, care should be taken not to disturb the original order of the collection, and to make detailed labels or a container list. This will make processing easier later on and can allow some access to the collection before it is processed. To reduce the amount of reboxing required for new accessions, the archivist can provide archival record storage boxes to the offices of the Spiritual Assembly for use in sending records to the Archives.

ACCESSIONING

Once archival material has arrived in the archives, the archivist must begin to identify it and know where it is at all times. He does this by a process known as accessioning, which enables him to gain initial physical and intellectual control over the material. Physical control means that the archivist can locate the material at a moment's notice. Intellectual control means the archivist knows the nature of the new material: whether it is Assembly records, personal papers or other types of archival material, their subject content, their date range, and their physical condition.

When the archival material arrives, the archivist should prepare an accession form (see Figure 4) listing the accession¹¹ number, the name of the donor, the title or description of the material (if it is known at this time), a brief description of its contents including the date span of the material if it is known, any restrictions on the use of the material, and the size or volume of the accession, the date of the accession, and the name of the accessioner. This data may also be recorded as a log in a computer spreadsheet. The archivist acquires this data from information supplied by the donor and from examining the material itself. If the archivist is using computer software to record the accession into a database then the software can also be used to print out the accession sheet as a report. Three copies of the accession form are required for the archives. One copy is filed by the accession

¹¹An accession can be as small as an individual item or as large as many boxes.

number, the second copy goes into the donor file, and the third copy stays with the material until it is processed.

The accession number identifies the archival material and also acts as a convenient record of the number of accessions received by the archives. One frequently used numbering system employs a two-section number—for example, 151-100. The number 151 indicates the Bahá'í year (1994-1995), and 100 indicates that the accession was the one hundredth received during the year. To prevent any confusion, the accession number should be written on all containers holding the collection.

During the accessioning process the archivist briefly inspects the condition of the material. If there are any signs of insects or mold (if there is serious insect infestation, the archivist should keep the collection well isolated to avoid infection of other collections), or if the papers are damaged or brittle, the collection should be set aside for fumigation or restoration. At present Bahá'í archives do not usually have access to the specialized equipment and trained personnel needed for fumigation or restoration, but the archivist should keep this need in mind.

The archivist then decides if the collection should be processed immediately. If he is unable to do so, the collection should be stored on shelves set aside for holding collections that have not yet been processed. When the archivist has a backlog of collections to process, he will find it useful to create a processing card file. The archives processing card lists the collection title, the name of the donor, the accession number(s), quantity, location, and restrictions on use, if any (see Figure 5). On the back of the card the archivist makes entries to indicate what processing has been done. Any additions to a collection are entered on the card. These cards go into a to-be-processed, processing or completed processing drawer. Thus the archivist can see at a glance which collections require processing and which have been completed. The processing card file also serves as a central record of the origin of a collection, particularly since many collections are made up of a number of separate accessions, not always from the same donors.

DIVISION OF THE ARCHIVES BY TYPE OF ARCHIVAL MATERIAL

The Archives will most likely contain a fairly wide range of material besides manuscripts records and papers. Because of their different characteristics, non-manuscript materials are usually arranged and stored separately. For example, the National Bahá'í Archives, United States, uses the following system to classify different types of materials. Other Archives may have other systems. Each letter is followed by a consecutive number, assigned to each item as it is processed. A separate collection log is maintained for each type of material, and individual numbers are placed on the objects themselves whenever possible so that misplaced objects can be identified by referring to the log.

- A Tablets of 'Abdu'l- Bahá
- B Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and the Báb
- C Carpets and rugs
- CD Compact discs
- D Disc records
- E Special materials (film strips, puzzles, jewelry, slide programs, etc.)
- F Motion-picture films
- H Architectural drawings and blueprints
- K Microfilm

M	Manuscript collections M-1 (SC) would stand for a small manuscript collection
P	Photographs
R	Relics and Artifacts
S	Letters from Shoghi Effendi
T	Audio Tape recordings
VT	Videotapes
W	Works of art

Many such materials are candidates for being described at the item level of description.

THE COLLECTION LOG FOR SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY RECORDS AND PERSONAL PAPERS

Titling a Collection

Each manuscript collection must be given a title consisting of three parts. The first part is the name of the creator of the records, whether an organization or individual. The second part identifies the type of collection, as described earlier. The term “records” is usually used for organizations or institutions; the term “papers” for individuals or families; and “collections” refers to artificial groups of material that concern a single person, theme, event, or type of document. Always use the most specific applicable term. The third part of the collection title states the date range of the collection.

Examples of collection titles:

Office of the Secretary Records, Local Spiritual Assembly Yourtown, U.S., Files, 1924-1929.
Thornton Chase. Papers, 1899-1912.
Woodrow Wilson. Collection, 1892-1926.

Assigning a Collection Number

After the collection has been titled, it is given a collection number and entered into the collection log (see Figure 6). The purpose of the collection number is to allow the archivist to identify a collection by a number rather than a cumbersome title. This number can be a combination of a letter and a numeral. Numbers are assigned consecutively in the order in which collections are received—for example, M-1, M-2, M-3. The letter refers to the section of the archives to which the collection will belong (e.g. M = Manuscripts), and the number identifies the specific collection. Some Archives just use numbers, the first number indicating whether the records are of an individual or institution. A separate collection will be assigned to each office of the Spiritual Assembly. Each records of each office will be broken down into record series.

Accessions that are additions to an existing collection, which may be received some years after the original donation, are added to that collection and given its collection number.

3. APPRAISAL AND ARRANGEMENT OF SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY RECORDS

APPRAISAL AND WEEDING OF SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY RECORDS

Ideally much of the work of appraisal would be done before accepting material into the Archives, but this is often not practical for an understaffed archives. Thus most of the appraisal work will be done when the archivist is processing records and deciding what material to be kept and what can be disposed of. This requires a knowledge of Bahá'í history and a good estimation of the needs of current and future administrators and researchers. It should not be carried out too casually or by those without adequate training, as damage can be done that is irreversible.

Spiritual Assembly records are transferred to the Archives when they become inactive and are no longer needed for the current business of the Assembly. Eventually records retention schedules will be developed for all Spiritual Assembly records, identifying the specific record series and listing their disposition (disposal, disposal after a period of time, or permanent retention in the Archives). But with the small staff and limited volume of records for most present Spiritual Assemblies, a formal records management system is probably not necessary or effective at present. Instead the archivist should work with the various Spiritual Assembly offices to ensure that all inactive records are transferred to the Archives. Nevertheless, developing a records management program should be embarked upon before the scale of records being managed grows too large. It may be effective to start a records management program with one office and gradually expand it to other offices.

The process of evaluating institutional records or personal papers to determine the value of their contents is called appraisal. Appraisal is based upon the potential administrative, legal, fiscal or historical use that the records or papers may have, their research value, their relationship to other records, and their arrangement.

Besides items that have an intrinsic value,¹² such as the Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the archivist is primarily concerned with two types of historical value in records: evidential value and informational value. Records with evidential value provide evidence about the records' creator, whether an organization or a person. Records with informational value contain information about other people, organizations, events or things.

The archivist will need to determine which records series contain the most valuable information. With Local Spiritual Assembly records these are usually the minutes, annual reports, local bulletins, unique correspondence with other institutions and individuals and financial reports and ledgers of expenditures and contributions. If the Local Spiritual Assembly has committees or offices then the correspondence and reports between the Spiritual Assembly and its offices will have high value.

For National Spiritual Assembly records the high value records series are often:

Office of the Secretary: minutes; annual reports; files for the World Center, Hands of the Cause and Counselors, and other National Spiritual Assemblies; files for each office or committee; files on

¹²Intrinsic value resides in the artifactual or documentary characteristics of a document.

individuals; convention files; conference files

Office of the Treasurer: financial ledgers of expenditures and contributions; reports to the National Spiritual Assembly, budget files.

Other Offices and Committees: File of correspondence with the National Spiritual Assembly; files for the key operations and functions of that office (although these may change over time).

Records series that contain limited information or where the information is transferred to another records series are candidates for disposal. These may include financial records such as paid bills, check requests and bank statements; routine correspondence and notices and junk mail; the logistical and housing portion of convention and conference files; payroll, vacation and travel forms for staff. Summary records are usually retained. Records that are candidates for disposal containing sensitive information should always be shredded, while other materials can be thrown in the trash.

Some other characteristics of records that may affect the archivist's decision are:

Age: The scarcity of records from the early days of the Faith poses a different appraisal problem as distinguished from the criteria used to appraise the bulk of contemporary records.

Volume: Where large quantities of records are involved, the archivist must evaluate them on a broad level. He cannot examine each item. He must judge whether the total volume of records is sufficiently important to warrant the valuable storage space it will take up in the archives. For large volumes of similar material it may be possible to reduce the bulk of the records by saving a representative sample of the records. The need for such precaution would rarely occur in a small archives.

Functional Characteristics: A frequently used technique of evaluation for records is functional analysis—that is, by the function the document performed in the work of the agency and its relationship to significant activities of the creating agency. For example:

Administrative uses. Often records that document policy formation, give statistical or accumulated information, or analysis of that information, or records that document the interaction between an agency and its constituency, are more important than other administrative records. In a local Bahá'í community these would be the Spiritual Assembly's policy file, annual reports, Feast reports, and Feast recommendations. Publicity material is valuable as an indication of efforts to proclaim the Faith in an area. In any organization, public documents (such as a mayor's proclamation of World Peace Day) have important symbolic meaning and can be used as proof of Bahá'í loyalties. The importance of these documents is illustrated by the fact that Shoghi Effendi chose to include many of them in the *Bahá'í World* volumes.

Legal values. The Universal House of Justice has stressed the importance of maintaining "vital statistics" regarding birth, marriage and burial.¹³ In addition, a Bahá'í institution or its archives may be responsible for holding deeds, mortgages, or other property-related documents, including

¹³Letter dated April 17, 1981, to all National Spiritual Assemblies.

insurance policies, articles of incorporation, the wills of believers residing in its jurisdiction, or other documents of legal value. Again you may consult the *Bahá'í World* volumes for examples of these types of documents.

Research values. Archivists keep records for use by scholars in the Faith in the belief that research will give Bahá'ís a new and better understanding of themselves and that the recorded past remains a usable guide for the future. The archivist's task is to select those records with sufficient value to justify the cost of processing, preservation, and retention. Factors that can be considered are uniqueness, credibility, understandability, the time span covered, accessibility (are the records to be restricted so heavily that no one will ever use them?), projected frequency of use, and relationship of the records to others that the archives already holds.

ARRANGING SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY RECORDS

The records of National and Local Spiritual Assemblies will be divided first by the office that created them and then into record series and, if needed, sub record series. The number and title of offices will vary depending on the particular Assembly. All Assemblies will have an office of the secretary and office of the treasurer. Other offices will relate to external affairs, teaching, properties, education, archives, library, pioneering, etc. The title of the office will vary depending on whether it is an office, committee, task force, etc.

Some Spiritual Assemblies may periodically reorganize their offices. Sometime this involves merging offices and creating new ones and sometimes it mainly involves changing office titles or moving from a committee to a department. The archivist will need to determine how to handle the arrangement of the records of the new offices. If the functions of the offices have not changed and only involve a name change, then the records may be kept together. Otherwise the new offices are treated as separate collections. Local Spiritual Assembly records will usually not be as complex as National Spiritual Assembly records.

Likely Record Series for a Local Spiritual Assembly Office of the Secretary

1. National Spiritual Assembly Files
2. Counselor or Auxiliary Board Files
3. Committee Files
4. Other Local Spiritual Assemblies Files
5. Annual Reports Files
6. Minutes Files
7. Local Bulletin Files
8. Local Center Files
9. Personal Status Case Files
10. Publicity Files
11. Legal Files

Likely Record Series for a Local Spiritual Assembly Office of the Treasurer

1. General Ledger Files
2. Contribution Files
3. Treasurer Reports Files

Likely Record Series of a National Spiritual Assembly Office of the Secretary

1. Minutes Files
2. Bahá'í World Centre Files
3. Hands of the Cause and Counselors Files
4. Other National Spiritual Assemblies Files
5. National Committees and Agencies Files
6. Auxiliary Board Files
7. Local Spiritual Assemblies Files
 - a. LSA Annual Reports Files
 - b. LSA Incorporation Files
8. Files on Individuals
9. Personal Status Case Files
10. National Convention files
11. Unit Convention Files
12. External Affairs/Government Offices Files
13. International Conferences and Conventions Files
14. National Conference Files
15. Deed Files
16. General Mailings Files
17. Secretary Weekly Reports Files
18. Personnel Files
19. Non-Bahá'í Organizations and Companies Files
20. Enrollment and Death Notices Files
21. Commemorations/Anniversary Observance files
22. Covenant-Breaker Files

Likely Record Series for a National Spiritual Assembly Office of the Treasurer

1. Budget Files
2. Financial Ledgers and Journals
3. Audited Financial Statements Files
4. Estate Files

Likely Record Series for other National Spiritual Assembly Offices, like a National Teaching Committee, Public Information Office or Publishing Trust

1. Production Files
2. National Spiritual Assembly File
3. Press Releases File
4. Staff Reports Files
5. Statistics Files
6. Programs, Projects and Activities Files
7. Newspapers Articles Files
8. Institutes and Workshop Files
9. Training/Deepening/Educational Programs files

CONFIDENTIAL INFORMATION

If the archivist is to retain the confidence of the Spiritual Assembly it is important that confidential information in the Archives be identified and protected. The archivist will need to determine what the Spiritual Assembly considers confidential and what the restrictions are governing access to it. For Local Spiritual Assemblies this will primarily be personal status cases involving violations of Bahá'í law and personal problems brought to the Spiritual Assembly in confidence and records of contributions giving the names of the donors. National Spiritual Assemblies will likely have a wider range of confidential matters besides personal status cases and contributions, involving Covenant-Breakers, protection of the Faith at home and abroad, relations with governments, and legal matters. For those Spiritual Assemblies with staff their personnel files should also be considered confidential. The archivist will often have to physically separate the confidential documents from the non-confidential records, as this is frequently not done in the filing system of the office. Carefully mark each portion of the records that is removed and make note of such separations in the main collection and the inventory.

ELECTRONIC RECORDS

As electronic records require both a computer and computer software to be read, they are vulnerable to both the hardware and software becoming obsolete and unavailable after just a few years. Therefore electronic records can not be just put on the shelf and forgotten or they risk being lost through the inability to read them. Electronic records have to be constantly managed by moving the electronic records to each new generation of computers and computer programs. So the Archives will need to consider the costs of maintaining electronic records indefinitely. One alternative would be to transfer the electronic records to either paper or microfilm. Neither are dependent on electronic equipment to be read and both are known to last for hundreds of years or more if cared for properly.

The archivist should not accept computer diskettes as the only copy of institutional records. Assembly minutes, especially, should be printed in hard copy and signed by the secretary to verify that they were approved by the Assembly. The archivist should insist on receiving paper copies of records, or if that is not feasible immediately print out copies after receiving diskettes.

Records are kept in electronic form for at least three major reasons:

- They were created electronically to print or send.
- The user needs to continue to be able to search electronically for the records and information in them.
- The record is only complete in electronic form, such as a portion of an accounting software package that serves as a general ledger. It may not be possible to reproduce it in print form.

Records under the first two categories may need to be kept in electronic form only for convenience, and will not need to be retired to the Archives in electronic form. Records under the third category should be identified and determined if they must be kept for a long time and migrated forward. In such cases it will be necessary for the Archives to acquire the metadata about the records. Metadata, which is simply defined as “data about data,” is information that assists in the identification, authentication, description, contextualization, and provision of access to records and other data. While metadata, of which archival descriptions are a type, could be applied to records in any form, they are usually used in describing electronic records.

One strategy for preserving electronic records is for the records creator to retain custody of them as opposed to retiring them to the Archives. This will help ensure that records they need to maintain in electronic form will be migrated forward. The Archives should, however, help the records creator identify and distinguish records of enduring value from those that can be disposed of after a time. Ideally the management of electronic records should begin before they are created, with filing systems set up so that when records are created staff know where to file them. A records schedule should take into account both paper and electronic records, and filing systems set up to aid both retrieval and retention. The filing location should help identify records with a series and file and therefore help determine its lifespan.

There are many other issues related to the creation and preservation of records in electronic form that are beyond the scope of this manual and are a great challenge to the professional archives and records management communities. Other resources can be found in the bibliography and on the Internet.

4. APPRAISAL AND ARRANGEMENT OF PERSONAL PAPERS

APPRAISAL OF PERSONAL PAPERS

When talking or corresponding with donors one can sometimes determine that particular items are not needed by the Archives and decline to accept them. But unless a donor lives nearby, one usually has to take a collection sight unseen with the hope that it contains valuable material. In that case, most of the appraisal work will be done when processing the papers and deciding what material to be kept and what can be disposed of. This again requires knowledge of Bahá'í history and a good estimation of the needs of current and future administrators and researchers.

ARRANGING PERSONAL PAPERS

After titling a collection and assigning its number, the archivist next examines the collection, noting the types of materials represented in it. This information determines the most logical arrangement scheme for the records. Often the original order of the collection may be retained with little or no change. But sometimes a collection arrives in disarray, or its original order is too inconvenient for the collection to be used by researchers. In such cases the archivist will need to make changes to the organization of the collection.

Prior to embarking on arrangement, the archivist must remember the principle of original order and observe it wherever possible. If no original order can be found, the archivist studies what she can about the life of the individual and tries to ascertain likely record keeping habits. An assessment of the probable arrangement is made from this. If it is impossible to make such an assessment, the following procedure may be observed, whilst noting in the description that order was imposed.

When arranging a collection, the archivist traditionally places the most important items first, the least important last. But there are no hard and fast rules about the order of a collection of personal papers. Materials with the same physical characteristics, such as correspondence, diaries, or ledgers, are usually grouped together. Subject files, however, that often contain different types of documents such as correspondence, reports, and printed matter, should be kept intact. The archivist may also find it desirable to subdivide a collection. For example, the papers of an early Bahá'í who managed one of the first Bahá'í magazines would contain many files concerning the magazine. These files could constitute a subdivision separate from the individual's personal papers. Since collections vary widely, the archivist must determine each collection's arrangement individually. There are no rules of arrangement that will fit every case. Care must be taken when rearranging records because an item may often be identified or its date determined only by its association with other documents.

Possible arrangement of a collection of personal papers

CORRESPONDENCE

LITERARY MATERIAL

PRINTED MATTER

LEGAL RECORDS

FINANCIAL RECORDS

PHOTOGRAPHS

ART WORK

ARTIFACTS

MISCELLANEOUS

LIST OF MATERIAL SEPARATED FROM COLLECTION

ARRANGING CORRESPONDENCE

Since correspondence constitutes a major portion of most collections and because it can cover so many different subjects, the arrangement of correspondence is particularly difficult. Archivists have traditionally filed correspondence entirely chronologically, but the disadvantage of filing by date becomes apparent when the archivist must prepare finding aids for the material. In a finding aid for correspondence, the archivist should at least cite the names of the writer and recipient and the dates spanned. If the correspondence file is only chronological, description becomes difficult, if not impossible, as the same names are apt to appear many times over a given period of time, in no particular order except chronologically. When the traditional system is used, therefore, many chronological listings of correspondence in finding aids only give the names of the most important correspondents, if any names are given at all.

Where no order is apparent, the preferred way to file correspondence so that the filing lends itself to description in a finding aid is to arrange correspondence alphabetically by correspondent. Within each folder correspondence is then arranged chronologically. The researcher, then, by going over the folder titles given in a finding aid, would be able to determine with whom the records creator had been corresponding and what years the correspondence covered.

Consider the following possibilities in a situation where there was some original order to be found: the traditional system noted above of arranging correspondence chronologically may preserve evidence, especially where the creator herself had records arranged chronologically. Patterns can emerge at different times in a person's life, which may otherwise not be distinguishable if the records were rearranged by correspondent to suit the needs of the researcher. Perhaps the person moved every five years, and each time she moved, she changed the way in which she organized her correspondence, leaving the older correspondence in its previous arrangement. This might reflect an evolving sense of how she needed to access information herself. Seeing each set of correspondence would certainly give a good insight into her life in each period. Also, the relationship between documents may be important, such as one matter that was discussed with several correspondents during a particular period. Dismantling of this arrangement may lead to the loss of essential evidence.

On the other hand, arranging records by correspondent would give a better insight into the relationship between the two individuals. Each arrangement has its own advantages. It may in fact be possible to organize the correspondence according to the latter arrangement by correspondent, while at the same time preserving the original order in description. However, in recent years the use of computers have substantially improved the means by which finding aids can be prepared. It

should therefore be possible to easily construct an index by correspondent, which brings all the letters from that correspondent together, effectively creating this second arrangement. This would leave the original order intact. The key is to preserve, wherever possible, the order that the creator of the records had it, because that may be some indication of what was important and how that person operated.

SEPARATION OR DISPOSAL OF MATERIAL FROM PERSONAL PAPERS

Often non-manuscript material will be separated from the collection. For example, for preservation reasons, photographs may be transferred to the Archives Photograph Collection or audio tapes to the Audio Tape Collection. Books and other printed matter may be transferred to the Spiritual Assembly's Library. Whenever material is transferred, a separation slip should be inserted in the collection to indicate where materials have gone, and materials that are moved should maintain information about where they came from. This way the integrity of the whole can be maintained, at least in description.

Duplicate copies are usually disposed of. There may be other materials that have no permanent value that can be disposed of. This may be important if the collection is a large one and the Archives has limited storage space.

SMALL COLLECTIONS OF PERSONAL PAPERS

Some collections are very small, often containing only one or two items. Any collection that fills less than one document box should be considered a small collection and may be identified as such by writing "SC" after the collection number, e.g. M-12 (SC). Small collections can be processed as soon as they arrive, while large collections may have to wait. It is not necessary to use a separate box for each small collection. Small collections may be filed consecutively by collection number in one or more document boxes, but the box label on each box should list the first and last number of the collections contained within.

5. PROCESSING OF BOTH RECORDS AND PERSONAL PAPERS

REFOLDING RECORDS AND PAPERS

Once the archivist has completed the final arranging of a collection, the collection is refolded. This means that the papers are placed in acid-free folders and acid-free document boxes that retard the deterioration of the papers they hold. In so doing the archivist should take care to unfold all papers as much as possible and remove all paper clips, pins and rubber bands, because they can damage the papers. If time allows, staples should also be carefully removed.

It is important that documents not be attached together with regular paper clips or staples since they leave impressions or holes in the paper and will rust. When it is necessary to attach documents together, special aluminum or plastic paper clips or rust-free staples should be used to eliminate damage to the paper over a long period of time. If there are many legal-size (8½" x 14") materials in the collection, legal-size folders and boxes should be used. Otherwise, letter-size (8½" x 11") folders will do and also work for A4 paper. Sources for archival supplies developed especially for archival use are listed in the appendix at the end of this manual. (Should the expense of these special materials prove prohibitive, high quality bond folders may be substituted.) Another option is to create paper folders to hold together related documents within a file, for example, a letter that contained many enclosures stapled or clipped to it within a larger file of correspondence.

While the archivist is refolding the collection, he should weed out duplicate material and separate materials that are to be transferred to other sections of the archives, such as original sacred Writings or letters from Shoghi Effendi, relics and artifacts, books that have not been annotated, and photographs. Any separated material should be listed in the inventory. A separation sheet may be filled out and inserted in place of the removed material.

The archivist should remove all newspaper clippings from the files, as newsprint is highly acidic, decomposes rapidly, and causes everything it touches to deteriorate as well. If the clipping is important, it should be photocopied onto rag bond paper by a method that produces permanent copies. The copy should be placed in the collection and the original discarded or placed in a newspaper clipping collection.¹⁴

Telegrams, which are frequently found in Assembly records, are usually printed on highly acidic paper and should be photocopied onto more permanent stock, or, if this is not possible or the original is intrinsically valuable, should be interleaved between two pieces of rag bond paper or placed in stable plastic folders, such as those used for photographs. The same is true of carbon copies of letters if they are on acidic paper.

The archivist should also separate and discard material that, after careful examination, is judged to have no permanent value. However, if the records are voluminous and relatively small quantities of materials of no permanent value have been interfiled with more valuable documents, then it is frequently wiser to keep this material.

¹⁴See "Newsletters and Publicity" under chapter 12, *Suggestions for Small Archives: What to Keep*.

During the refolding process, the archivist labels each folder (see Figure 7) with the collection number and a title giving the folder's contents and date range. He also numbers the folder and the box in which it will be put. This labeling, like all other work in an archives, should be done in pencil to prevent permanent damage to the records from ink. The folder title should be as specific as space allows, for the folder titles provide researchers a description of the collection's contents.

All folders within each box are numbered consecutively according to the arrangement scheme. This numbering is done last, after the permanent box and file numbers can be determined and no further rearrangement is anticipated. The archivist may wish to make a stamp for the folder and box numbers, to speed up the numbering process. The folders are then placed in the boxes in numerical order. A box label, listing the collection title and box and collection numbers, is attached to each box. The archivist might consider having box labels printed up with the name of the archives on them (see Figure 8) or use the computer to print out box labels.

PREPARING FINDING AIDS

Once a collection has been boxed and labeled, the archivist prepares finding aids to allow quick access to the collection, or any part thereof, and to help researchers know what collections and documents are available in the archives. There are various kinds of finding aids, the most important of which are discussed in detail in the Chapter 7.

SHELVING A COLLECTION

Once the necessary finding aids for a collection have been drawn up and filed, the archivist is ready to give the collection a permanent place in the storage area. The archivist should not try to shelve the collections by a predetermined order, as he will find himself frequently having to move collections to make room for new ones. Because the archives storage area is closed to researchers, there is no need to have the collections physically arranged along alphabetical or subject lines, as in a library where patrons may browse in the shelves. Instead each room, row of shelves, section of row, and individual shelf in an archives should be assigned a letter or number. The archivist should prepare a location card (see Figure 9) for each collection. The location card lists the collection title and the location of the collection, including the letter or number of the row, section of row, and shelf. The location cards are kept in a file organized by collection titles. The archivist consults this file when he must find a particular collection. This system enables the archivist to make the best possible use of storage space. If the archivist is using an archival computer software program, the location card information may be included in the computer database.

6. PROCESSING MATERIALS OTHER THAN UNPUBLISHED DOCUMENTS

The previous sections discussed the processing of collections of unpublished documents from the establishment of a collection log to the preparation of finding aids. A large Bahá'í archives will also maintain other divisions that contain other types of materials: original sacred Writings, relics, artifacts, works of art, printed matter, photographs, audio and video tapes, compact discs, motion-picture films, microfilm, and vinyl disc records. These materials come to the archives either alone or as part of collections of records or personal papers. If they arrive individually, they should be accessioned like any collection. If they are part of a collection of records or papers they are usually separated during processing and sent to the proper division, while maintaining a connection to their original context of creation. Each category of material requires its own system of arrangement and finding aids.

SACRED WRITINGS, AND LETTERS FROM SHOGHI EFFENDI AND THE UNIVERSAL HOUSE OF JUSTICE

Because of the great value of original Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh, The Báb, and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and the Universal House of Justice, the local archives, if it finds any in its possession, should send the original or a high quality photocopy (preferably the original) to the National Bahá'í Archives, which, in turn, will forward a copy to the International Bahá'í Archives at the World Centre. If an archives chooses to retain an original document, it should be placed in the most secure place available (if possible in a fireproof vault, safe or file cabinet). Each individual Tablet or letter, along with its envelope, should be placed in a separate acid-free folder. If the Tablet or letter was found within a file of correspondence, use a separation sheet in its place to indicate where the item has been moved. The envelope should be separated from the Tablet by a sheet of acid-free paper, which is available from the same sources as other acid-free supplies. The name of the recipient and the date should be written in pencil on each folder. Then the Tablets and letters should be arranged into divisions according to author. Within each division Tablets and letters should be filed alphabetically by recipient.

If possible, all sacred Writings should be microfilmed or photocopied and researchers allowed to use only the copies. Additional copies can be made from the microfilm or photocopies rather than from the originals. The originals should be used as little as possible, as each handling and exposure to light will damage them.

To assist the researcher in locating Tablets or letters, the archivist will need to create some specialized finding aids. A calendar giving a chronological list of Tablets or letters, or a recipient and subject card catalog, would accomplish this purpose.

RELICS , ARTIFACTS AND WORKS OF ART

Many Bahá'í archives possess personal objects associated with the lives and persons of Bahá'u'lláh, The Báb, 'Abdu'l-Bahá, the Greatest Holy Leaf, and Shoghi Effendi. The archives may also possess artifacts of other Bahá'ís or Bahá'í buildings or institutions. The archives should take great care to authenticate each relic.

A letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi has stated:

Regarding the preservation of relics associated with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, the general principle should be that any object used by Him in person should be preserved for posterity, whether in the local or the national archives. It is the duty and responsibility of the Bahá’í assemblies to ascertain carefully whether such objects are genuine or not, and to exercise the utmost care and caution in this matter.¹⁵

This principle should apply to all relics in the archives.

The archivist should keep a record of the process by which a relic is authenticated. The donor of the relic should be encouraged to put down, on paper or on tape, everything that is known about the item, in as much detail as possible, for in the future it will be impossible to obtain this information. Often the story associated with a relic gives added significance to the item and is itself worthy of being recorded for posterity.

Since relics and artifacts are made of many types of material, including paper, cloth, metal, and wood, their storage requirements vary. In the National Bahá’í Archives, United States, each relic is placed in a separate box or acid-free envelope. Large articles of clothing are laid flat in large drawers or acid-free boxes. Acid-free boxes and envelopes for microfilm and photograph negatives are about the right size for most relics.

Information about each relic should be entered into a log. The entry for each item should include a consecutive number assigned to it (R-1, R-2, etc.), a very brief description of the article and its historical associations, the donor, and the accession number. The log number should be written on the relic’s box, and, if possible, a small label with the number on it should be attached with string to the relic in order to identify it if misplaced. If possible, it is advisable to photograph each relic to provide a record of physical characteristics in case it is stolen or damaged and needs to be restored.

The archives may also receive works of art that have been given to the Spiritual Assembly or were among collections of personal papers. The works of art collection should also have a log similar to the relics log and a separate binder or file with information on each art work – listing artist, type of art work, title, donor, size, description, history and provenance.

As relics, artifacts and works of art are usually found in museums rather than in archives, more information on proper storage can often be found in periodicals and books on museums.

PHOTOGRAPHS

A good photograph section can be one of the most valuable parts of a Bahá’í archives. Photographs from the archives can be used for illustrations in books and periodicals, publicity releases, and exhibits.

¹⁵From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to the National Spiritual Assembly of the United States and Canada, July 28, 1936.

The archivist must organize photographs somewhat differently from other types of materials. Most photographs are of interest because of their subject matter, although in certain cases the photographer can be more important than the subject. Often photos are taken by amateurs who are often unidentifiable. Arranging photographs by subject matter, then, is sometimes the best system for the Bahá'í archives to use, although the archivist may choose not to break up sets of photographs taken by a particular photographer if these form an artistic or historical whole. Photographic archives containing the works of prominent photographers follow this procedure.

When organizing a photograph section, it is important not to make any system too complicated. Since an individual photograph can contain a variety of subject matter, it may often fit into more than one category. The archivist should allow the researcher to do much of the search for individual photographs himself.

The National Bahá'í Archives, United States, has arranged its photographs in the following manner. Each picture is assigned a consecutive log number (P-1, P-2, etc.), which is entered into the log book. The log entry also gives a brief description of the photograph, the name of the photographer if known, whether the picture is in black and white or color, collection number and the accession number. The assigned log number is written on a back corner of the picture in pencil. Any writing on the back of a photograph should only be done with a very soft lead pencil while the picture is resting on a piece of glass so that the writing will make no impression. Special pencils for writing on photographs can be obtained from archival suppliers. The photograph is then assigned to one of the following categories according to its main subject content.

Subject Categories Used at the National Bahá'í Archives, United States

- A. Bahá'u'lláh (including photographs, clothing, Writings, buildings
- B. The Báb and other items associated with the Manifestations)
- C. Previous Manifestations
 - C1. Muhammad
 - C2. Christ
- D. 'Abdu'l-Bahá
- E. Shoghi Effendi
- F. The Universal House of Justice
- G. The Greatest Holy Leaf
- H. Families and relatives of previous Manifestations
- I. Family of the Báb
- J. Family of Bahá'u'lláh
 - J1. The Purest Branch
 - J2. Navváb
 - J3. The Holy Mother
 - J4. Brothers of Bahá'u'lláh
- K. Bábís
 - K1. Letters of the Living
 - K2. Martyrs
- L. Hands of the Cause of God, Continental Boards of Counselors, Auxiliary Boards, Assistants to Auxiliary Board Members, etc.

- M. National Spiritual Assemblies¹⁶
- N. National Committees, Offices, and Publishing Trusts
- O. Regional and District Administrative Institutions
- P. Local Spiritual Assemblies
- Q. Local Committees, etc.
- R. International Conventions
- S. International Conferences and Congresses
- T. National Conventions
- U. District Conventions
- V. National Conferences and Congresses
- W. Regional Conferences
- X. Local Conferences
- Y. Holy Places at the World Centre
- Z. Houses of Worship and Dependencies
- AA. National Hazíratu'l-Quds¹⁷
- BB. Local Hazíratu'l-Quds
- CC. Bahá'í Schools
- DD. Bahá'í Institutes
- EE. Local Communities
- FF. Individuals
- GG. Covenant Breakers
- HH. Non-Bahá'í Conferences and Congresses
- II. Photograph albums

This system is one example of the way that photo archives may be organized. Alternatively, sequential numbers may be assigned to photographs irrespective of subject. In some cases, some sorting and analysis might be necessary to connect photographs to their context of creation, including the roll or set from which they came, and the records creator. In other cases the origin will be clear, as the photo will have an accession number. Subject terms can then be assigned in description, and through the use of a database or indices, a virtual subject collection similar to that above can be generated to assist the researcher.

The archivist may want to create a specific card catalog or computer database for the photograph section. After the researcher has discovered whether the archives has photographs in the area in which he is interested, he will have to go to the files to look at the actual photographs to see if there are any fitting his purpose.

The National Bahá'í Archives of the United States stores its photographs and negatives in acid-free folders in acid-free boxes stored flat rather than on end. Photographs should not be stored on wooden shelves as the wood gives off peroxide that can damage the photographs. All boxes, folders, or envelopes used to store photographs and negatives should be acid-free, for acidic containers give off chemicals that cause photographs to fade. When handling photographs, both staff and researchers should wear cotton or plastic gloves. This will prevent oils from the hands from damaging the photographs.

¹⁶Filed alphabetically by country

¹⁷Filed alphabetically by country or location

Do not keep photographs or negatives in glassine holders, such as those previously used by commercial photo-processing firms to return negatives to the customer. Acetate envelopes should also be avoided. Glassine envelopes emit plasticizers, while acetate ones can trap moisture. Acceptable storage options for photo envelopes and pages can be found in archival supply catalogues.

Negatives are kept in a separate file coded with the log number of the corresponding photograph. If a researcher wishes to copy a particular print, the negative should be used. If no negative is available, one may be made from the original print. This new negative becomes the property of the archives. The researcher uses it to have whatever size prints he wants made. Do not loan original photographs to researchers.

PUBLISHED MATERIAL

Customarily, an archives does not hold large quantities of published material, although a basic library of reference material is often kept for the archives staff. An archives does not separate annotated books from the collection of the annotator. Books that have been autographed by Bahá'ís or that would make good exhibit material may also be retained. Most other printed material is usually separated and sent to a library or otherwise disposed of. Such actions are necessary due to space constraints in the archives. Collections of personal papers often include the individual's personal library, and administrative bodies have many books, pamphlets, and periodicals among their files. In small communities, the same person may be designated by the LSA to be responsible for both the library and the archives, although it is normally preferable to divide those responsibilities.

Since researchers will want to consult both published and unpublished sources in the course of their work, often starting with published works, it is highly advantageous to have a Bahá'í reference library located near the Bahá'í archives. Printed material received by the archives can be transferred to the reference library, enhancing the library's holdings. If printed material is retained by the archives, it should be organized using library procedures of cataloging, shelving, and so on.

The National Bahá'í Archives, United States, is using a classification system developed by the Library at the World Centre in Haifa for the National Bahá'í Library, which it is responsible for. Copies of this classification system are available by writing to the National Bahá'í Archives, United States.¹⁸

TAPE RECORDINGS AND MOTION-PICTURE FILMS

The arrangement of tapes and films is similar to that of relics. A log should be made for each type of material, listing the title, the number of reels, the type or size of the reels and the speed at which recorded, the donor, the accession number, and any other pertinent technical information. Consecutive numbers should be assigned to each title, as in all other logs. The number should be written on the box or can used to house each reel.

¹⁸Classification systems that have been adapted for use by Bahá'í libraries are available on the website of the Network of Bahá'í Librarians and Archivists, at <http://members.cox.net/bahai.libraries.archives/Classification/classification.html>.

Magnetic tape, either audio tape or video tape, only lasts a few decades. It is necessary for the archives to review the condition of its tape holdings at least every five years and re-record them as necessary. Sound recordings should never be stored near strong magnetic fields, such as those created by major electrical cables running through walls. When placed in storage, the tape should be wound loosely on its reel (i.e., not fast-forwarded or rewound onto the reel). Otherwise, deformities will occur as the tape expands and contracts with humidity changes. Before a tape is used, it should be rewound through a recorder to relieve any tensions that may have built up in storage. The best way to accomplish this is to play the tape through at normal speed and then store it “tail out,” thus requiring the researcher to rewind the tape before using. Once a tape has been used, rewind it fully without stopping to remove the tension that inevitably is introduced with starts and stops of play. Store tapes vertically so that they are supported on the central core, never flat.

Cassette tapes will last fewer years than reel-to-reel tapes and are subject to breakage, since the magnetic tape in cassettes is thinner to allow more feet on the reel. Cassette tapes of permanent value should be re-recorded onto heavier, more durable tapes.

Any motion-picture film kept for archival purposes should be of acetate base stock. Film produced before 1952 was often made on nitrate base stock, which is very unstable and highly flammable. Nothing can be done to arrest the slow decomposition of nitrate film; hence all nitrate film should be copied on acetate film, and the nitrate copy destroyed. One way to determine whether a film is nitrate is to burn a one-inch strip. Nitrate burns rapidly with a bright yellow flame while acetate film is difficult to ignite and will not burn completely. Acetate film usually has the words “safety film” printed on one border.

Motion-picture film, unlike magnetic tape, should be stored horizontally (flat) in film cans in metal cabinets or shelves, and not up on end. Color motion picture film should be stored in cold storage, such as a frost-free freezer, to slow down color fading. When removing the film for viewing allow it to come completely up to room temperature before putting it on a projector.

MICROFILM AND CD-ROM

While microfilming is not the total answer to problems of preservation and space, it is a useful tool. An archives may buy runs of newspapers on microfilm or a compact disc, thereby reducing the need to keep large clipping files. Since newsprint generally lasts only a few years, most libraries have converted their newspaper holdings to microfilm copies or have subscriptions to CD research services such as ProQuest, SIRS, or others. It is now possible for Bahá'í archives to purchase most major newspapers and many smaller ones on microfilm or CD-ROM. In the future it will be possible for Bahá'í archives to purchase microfilm or CD-ROM copies of archival collections concerning the Bahá'í Faith held by other institutions. Finally, a Bahá'í archives may decide to microfilm its own collections or write them to CD-ROM. This is a good security precaution against destruction and is invaluable to prove ownership of items in case of theft. Valuable or fragile documents, such as sacred Writings, should be removed from general use after they are microfilmed or digitized. Researchers should then use the microfilm copy. Paper copies may be made from the microfilm or CD-ROM.

Microfilm may be arranged alphabetically by subject or consecutively by log number. Catalog cards or inventories should be made for each title.

It has been discovered that peroxide in paper containers can cause blemishes on microfilm. Therefore, if possible, microfilm should be stored in metal or inert plastic containers. It is also important not to store microfilm under conditions of high temperature or humidity.

7. FINDING AIDS

The final task in processing an archival collection, whether it consists of unpublished documents or other materials, is the preparation of finding aids. Finding aids are designed to provide the researcher and archives staff with information on a collection's contents. With such detailed information at hand, the researcher can ask for specific materials concerning the people, institutions, or subjects he is researching and not waste time on unnecessary searches. Although the archival profession has created many kinds of manual finding aids, the four main types are the card catalog, the inventory (or register), the calendar, and the guide.

With the widespread use of computers, inventories and guides can be prepared using any standard word processing software or databases and kept as computer files. The inventories and guides can be printed out for use by researchers. Paper copies of the inventories can be mailed to researchers or sent as email attachments.

CARD CATALOG

A card catalog provides basic information about what records and manuscripts can be found in an archives, much as a library's card catalog provides information about what books are available in the library. The card catalog contains at least one card for every collection filed by title as well as cards giving subject references covering the major subjects, persons, places, and institutions about which the different collections have material. The information on the card is part of the first level of description, as described in chapter one.

To prepare a card catalog, the archivist types a 3"x 5" card for each collection, listing the collection title, quantity of material, collection number, donor, and a brief description of the types of materials in the collection. The subject reference cards should be typed with the subject at the top and the reference "see: (title of collection)." Examples of cards listed by collection title and by subject reference are given in Figure 10. All the cards, whether by collection title or by subject, are interfiled alphabetically in a general card catalog. Specialized card catalogs may also be developed for other divisions of the archives—for example, a recipient and subject card catalog for any original sacred Writings or letters of Shoghi Effendi. Archives with larger numbers of collections may wish to only maintain inventories and guides. This would avoid duplication of information between the card catalog and inventories.

INVENTORY

Inventories are, as the name suggests, descriptions of the types of material in a collection and the subjects covered (see Figure 11). Inventories can be as brief or as detailed as the research potential of a collection warrants or the archivist's time allows. They should be prepared for all of the archives' collections of records and personal papers as an internal aid for the archivists and as a finding aid for future researchers. The inventory may include one or all of the levels of description described in chapter one under "Organization of Archival Material."

The inventory should begin with a few paragraphs, usually called a "Scope and Content" note, giving the collection's title, volume, history, donor and a brief description of the types of material in the collection. The descriptive paragraph at the beginning of the inventory can be used to elaborate on the various types of materials and their informational content, as well as any special strengths of

the collection that may be of interest to the researcher. Anything unusual about the collection, including time gaps, should be noted in this paragraph.

After the introduction a listing of boxes and folder titles within these boxes follows. The list of folder titles can give the researcher considerable information about the contents of the collection. If time and staff allow, the archivist may wish to add a listing of all letters, in chronological order, to aid researchers who are interested in all correspondence during a specific period. A section at the end of the inventory should list all materials that have been separated from the collection and their disposition/location. Researchers can use the inventory to pinpoint which parts of a collection will be useful to their work so that they can ask for specific boxes rather than an entire collection.

Once the inventory for a collection has been drawn up, it is placed in a binder or file folder. A copy of the inventory may be kept with the collection at the front of the first box. Any separation sheets listing materials that have been removed from the collection and placed in other parts of the archives should be filed with the inventory of that collection. All inventories, in their folders, are kept together in a special file so that they may be referred to easily, although it is sometimes handier to keep all inventories together in a three-ring binder.

CALENDAR

A calendar is a list, usually chronological, of individual documents, including all of the following information: names of writer and recipient, date, place, summary of contents, type of manuscript, and page or leaf count. The list can be either comprehensive or selective. Because calendars list their documents chronologically, they require an index for easy use. Since calendars are time consuming to produce, most archives compile them only for their most valuable documents. In a Bahá'í archives a calendar would be a useful finding aid for any sacred Writings and letters of Shoghi Effendi or The Universal House of Justice. The data for a calendar may be similar to that prepared for the smallest level of description, the item.

GUIDE

A guide, which is often published and distributed outside the archives, list all the collections located in an archives (or a major division of an archives), with a brief description of each collection. The entry for each collection lists the title, quantity, donor, restrictions on use of the collection, and a short description of the contents. By informing researchers about collections that would be of interest for their work, guides allow them to plan much of their research before they arrive at the archives.

COMPUTER-GENERATED INDEXES

While there are specialized archival computer software programs, archival databases can be developed using commercial database programs, like Microsoft Access. The National Bahá'í Archives has developed a name (but not subject) database for all of its inventories. It has also developed specialized databases for other types of material, such as audio tapes, films, posters and proclamations. The Archives should be prepared to keep migrating its databases to the newest type or version of database programs so that it can remain accessible. If the Spiritual Assembly has an Information Services type department then they can handle the necessary software upgrades.

DESCRIPTIVE STANDARDS

Many archives around the world are increasingly using standards for the description of their holdings. Standards help ensure consistency in the creation of information and also permit the sharing of information about holdings with related archival institutions. Several different standards have been developed by professional organizations in different countries. In the United States, *Describing Archives: A Content Standard* is a set of rules for descriptive practice; in Canada the *Rules for Archival Description* published by the Association of Canadian Archivists are used by most repositories. A *General International Standard of Description (ISAD(G))* developed by the International Council on Archives is also available for use by archives and is highly recommended for Bahá'í archives. Using a standard description permits the exchange of information between archival repositories. As Bahá'í archival institutions evolve, it will be found that having a common standard of description will greatly facilitate the exchange of information. The international description standard includes the following general elements: an identity statement area; context area; content and structure area; conditions of access and use area; allied materials; notes area; and description control area. The descriptions can be used to generate inventories, guides and indices. Consult the bibliography for a link to the online guide.

Additionally, the use of authority lists for the entering of personal and corporate names, geographic names and subjects is of great use. This is especially true as finding aids are used online.

THE RESEARCH PROCESS

Researchers trying to locate specific materials they need would probably first consult a printed guide to the complete holdings of the archives to make sure that the information sought is indeed located there. By the time they reach the archives, they will usually have already consulted published works that led them there. Once in the archives, the researcher would consult the card catalog or archivist for specific collection titles and further information about the collections of interest. The researcher might also use the subject heading in the card catalog to identify other records he does not already know about. His next step would be to look at the inventories or calendars of the collections he would like to use, in order to find the specific records he needs. At this point, he would tell the archivist which boxes he would like to see. In this way the finding aids work together to help the archivist and researcher locate materials. The archivist must always be sensitive to the potential needs of researchers while preparing finding aids, using potential search terms especially in scope and content notes.

8. ARCHIVES REFERENCE SERVICES

REFERENCE SERVICES

The archivist will likely want to provide research services to the Bahá'í institutions that he serves, as Bahá'í administrators are often too busy to do the research themselves. Once the various offices realize that they can promptly get historical or other information from the Archives the frequency of requests will likely increase. As the person most familiar with the collection, the archivist is also often in the position to suggest materials in the archives that would be helpful to an Assembly, committee or institution in the course of its deliberations. This will increase the visible benefits of the Archives to the Spiritual Assembly and its offices and may help to increase the staff and financial resources given to the Archives. Therefore the archivist needs to be aware of what types of archival material will be most useful to various offices and use that knowledge to help plan the Archives' acquisition and processing priorities.

The Archives can also provide references services to other Bahá'í institutions and to researchers unable to visit the Archives. Requests will come by phone, mail, email and fax. The archivist should keep records of all reference requests. A reference log can be created in a spreadsheet. Sometimes it will be valuable to know what has already been provided a researcher so as not to duplicate research. Research statistics should be kept. These statistics can indicate what subjects are most in demand and may help in determining acquisition strategies and processing goals. They can also indicate who are the main users of the Archives. See Figure 12 for a simple reference request slip used by the National Bahá'í Archives, United States.

There is often a demand for biographical information that is not always readily available in the records of the Spiritual Assembly. A special collection may need to be created where copies of any biographical information found can be placed.

To make the most efficient use of the archivist's time, it may also be wise to create computer databases for information that may be frequently requested, such as lists of all members of your Local or National Spiritual Assembly or a list of Local Spiritual Assembly formation dates.

For those Spiritual Assemblies that have active media services or periodicals departments, the Archives collections of photographs and biographical information will be very valuable for their productions of videos, magazines and other programs. For Local Spiritual Assemblies the Archives can be a useful resource for proclamation events or newspaper articles.

ACCESS POLICY

In the arrangement, preservation, and description of archival material the archivist should have one goal: making it possible for researchers to use the collections. One of the most important aspects of the archivist's work, therefore, is working with researchers and providing them access to the holdings of the archives. The researchers may be Bahá'í administrators, their staff or committees, or scholars, writers, and other private researchers. The archives, in consultation with the institution it serves, will need to develop rules outlining who is eligible to use the archives. Regardless of who is allowed to use the archives, the archivist must maintain strict control over access to the holdings.

Because so many of the archives' records are unique, this control must be much stricter than in a library, where materials are for the most part replaceable.

A record must be kept of everyone who uses the archives and when. This can be done by having the researcher fill out a card or form when he begins his work, giving the date, name address, reason for and topic of research, and by requiring him to sign a patron register every day. Researchers should work only under the supervision of the archives staff. The archivist needs to keep a record of which collections are used, when, and by whom. This may be done by having the researcher fill out a records request slip (see Figure 13) for each set of records desired. With the collapse of the old world order, theft has become a serious threat to archives of all kinds, and the archivist must take precautions to safeguard the collections that are his responsibility.

Since many researchers are unfamiliar with archives and their use, the archivist should prepare a written set of policies and rules to be given to the researcher when he arrives. Included among these rules should be prohibitions against food, beverages, and smoking in any area where records are used. The use of pens should be also be forbidden while working with manuscripts, as damage done to documents with ink could be disastrous. The researcher should be informed of any rules regarding copyrights, literary rights, and bibliographical citation of the materials with which he is working. This information may be provided in the inventory. The archivist should make it clear that it is the researcher's responsibility, and not that of the archives, to obtain the permission of the holders of the literary rights to any unpublished manuscripts in order to publish any part of these manuscripts. The holder of the literary rights to a manuscript is usually the writer or his or her descendants.

The archives may wish to restrict access to certain records to protect confidential material or the privacy of individuals. The archivist should work with the Spiritual Assembly to develop access policies for its records. Often Spiritual Assembly records that are not already public are sealed or closed for a specific number of years, usually not more than fifty, or else permission to use the records must be obtained from the Spiritual Assembly or its secretary. For personal papers the donor may specify restrictions at the time of donation. The archives may also wish to restrict access to records that are very valuable, fragile, or in need of restoration. Such materials should be photocopied or microfilmed and researchers allowed to use only the copies. The archival profession in general, however, prefers to impose as few restrictions as possible, since it believes that scholarly research is best served by having free access to information.

The archivist must remember that he is there to serve the researcher, but not to do the actual research for him. Although this is not usually a problem at present, the Bahá'í archivists of the future will have to make decisions about what kind of services their limited time will allow.

9. EXHIBITS AND OTHER EDUCATIONAL PROGRAMS

The Bahá'í archives should not be merely a passive institution waiting for people to come to it. The archives should, through an active program of exhibits and other programs, inspire the Bahá'í community by educating it about its heritage. The archives may wish to open an exhibit area where it may display sacred Writings or relics from its collections, or it may wish to develop exhibits around a particular theme, event, or person. To reach larger audiences, traveling exhibits can be shown at conventions, conferences, or other Bahá'í activities. Exhibits can also be valuable proclamation tools. A variety of materials may be used—relics, manuscripts, photographs, tapes, films, and slides. When original materials are exhibited, care should be taken to preserve and secure them. They should not be displayed for long periods of time, since proper environmental controls are usually lacking (see Chapter 11 on Preservation). Sunlight, especially, should be avoided. Often it is best to use only copies of original materials in exhibits, particularly if the exhibit will be shown outside the archives.

Great dignity and restraint should be maintained in exhibiting sacred Writings and relics. They should be displayed in an appropriate and respectful manner. Although an archives may have numerous items in its holdings, it is not necessary to exhibit everything at once. The purpose of an archives exhibit should be to give the observer an inspiring experience—not a complete tour of the archives' holdings. A carefully selected exhibit of a small number of objects, displayed with the greatest dignity and respect, may be far more successful in achieving the desired effect than an extensive display.

Archival material is also effective when used in Bahá'í schools and deepening classes. One has a different perspective of history after viewing and working with original letters, documents, and relics, and the excitement of this experience should be shared with as many Bahá'ís as possible.

ORAL HISTORY

Since much of Bahá'í history is never written down, the archives can establish an oral history program as another method by which to preserve information about the Bahá'í community. In an oral history program, individuals are interviewed and their recollections preserved on either audio or video tape. Oral history can fill gaps in a community's written historical sources. Such interviews can be invaluable, if well done. They provide the opportunity to record the views and experiences of people who cannot or will not write down their personal stories and to capture the speech and mannerisms of the individual. If the interview is to have real substance and value, however, the interviewer must research his subject thoroughly before beginning the interviews and have a meaningful list of questions to ask to elicit information not already in the written records. When the tapes are received in the archives it is a good idea for someone to listen to them to make notes on the contents. As a result, oral history programs can be very time consuming. They also can be expensive, especially if someone is paid to prepare written transcripts of the tapes. If possible, interviews should be taped on reel-to-reel tapes rather than on cassette tapes, which tend to deteriorate. If cassettes must be used, re-record the interview onto longer lasting reel-to-reel tapes as soon as possible. Digital tape recorders are also becoming increasingly available.

Despite the cost, a well-run oral history program can immensely enhance the holdings of an archives and be of inestimable value to researchers in the future. Two excellent reference sources on conducting oral history interviews are those by Willa Baum and William Tyrrell listed in the bibliography of this manual.

10. QUARTERS

A Bahá'í archives may be housed in quarters ranging from private homes and Bahá'í Centers to archives buildings. Regardless of the type or size of the quarters, the archivist must allocate space for the following needs: a work area, a storage area, and an area for researchers.

In the work space the archivist receives, accessions, and processes records. It should include desk and table space where correspondence and reference requests can be handled. Storage space should include metal shelving, file cabinets, and so on, for the archives' holdings. There must also be an area, separate if possible from the archives staff work area and the storage area, where researchers can work. In archives that have only one room, these areas should be clearly distinguished from each other to guard against misplacement or mingling of records.

Wherever the archives are housed, the archivist must be alert to the potential dangers of theft, fire, flood, heat, humidity, insects, pollution, and light, which are discussed in detail in Chapter 11.

As the archives grows, in addition to separate rooms for offices, work areas, storage areas, and a reading room, there will be spaces for microfilm filming and storage, restoration and photography laboratories, conference rooms, staff lounges, exhibit areas, vaults, and fumigators.

11. PRESERVATION

The archivist must constantly fight the battle to preserve the archives' holdings for as long as possible. Archival material, whether made of paper, cloth, wood, plastic or other substances, has a number of implacable enemies: man, fire, water, temperature, humidity, acid, light, insects, rodents, mold, and time. It is vital that the archivist create and maintain an environment that will protect the archives' holdings from these enemies. Archives that are housed in private homes are at a disadvantage when compared to those located in buildings owned by Bahá'í institutions, but the archivist must still strive to maintain the best environment possible. A resourceful archivist, using the limited local resources available, can go a long way in developing the necessary protection. He must consider how best to adapt the suggestions in this chapter to his particular situation.

There is a great deal of research being conducted on preservation, especially the preservation of paper. Hence it would be wise for the archivist to keep informed of any new developments by reading archival literature.

The following paragraphs offer some general advice concerning the various enemies of archives. The bibliography at the end of this manual lists a number of sources for more specific information about archival preservation procedures.

MAN

Man, through theft and his unconscious or conscious mistreatment of records, is one of the worst threats to an archives. The archives staff must be vigilant and guard against both threats to an archives. To prevent damage to records due to poor handling, all research must be supervised. The archives staff should observe how researchers physically handle the records and if necessary explain to them why documents need to be treated with care and respect.

To guard against theft, access to collections should be strictly controlled. The archivist should keep records of all use of archival material, whether in or outside the archives. Archives material should be allowed to leave the archives only on special occasions. Researchers should be allowed to use records only in a specially designated area, under supervision, and should not be allowed in the stacks, where records are stored. The archives should be kept locked and care taken to control who has keys.

FIRE

There is considerable literature available on fire protection, including publications from the National Fire Protection Association.

The archivist can consult such publications for specific ways to prevent and fight fires. The archives should at least have fire extinguishers. The archivist should keep the archives clean and rubbish-free and be alert to potential fire hazards, such as worn wiring. In a fire, the first fifteen minutes are crucial if that fire is not to become a major blaze. Thus it is important to detect and put out any fire as quickly as possible. More affluent archives, particularly those housed in Bahá'í buildings, should install smoke or heat detectors and a sprinkler or other automatic extinguishing system. Archivists should also avail themselves of training to prepare a disaster preparedness plan for the archives, often available from local communities or universities.

Very valuable items, such as sacred Writings and relics, can be stored in fireproof safes, insulated file cabinets, or bank safe-deposit boxes for added protection.

WATER

All records should be kept in a dry place, away from any danger of leaking or flooding. Do not place boxes of records directly on the floor, in case water does enter. Be aware of all potential sources of flooding and know the location of pipes overhead or in walls, as well as drains.

TEMPERATURE AND HUMIDITY

It is important to maintain both temperature and humidity at a constant range twenty-four hours a day. Hygrometers and sling psychrometers are two instruments that can be used to determine the temperature and relative humidity. There are now small digital hygrometers that can be plugged into the computer to produce charts of the temperature and humidity readings.

High temperatures are dangerous because heat accelerates the chemical deterioration of paper and is conducive to the growth of mold. Research indicates that the cooler the temperature, the longer records will last. Keeping the temperatures between 60° and 70° Fahrenheit is very important. 60° is preferable but the comfort of those working in the archives has to be taken into consideration. Therefore the work areas and reading room might be kept at 68° and the shelves at 60°. It is wise, however, not to have to great a contrast between storage areas and reading rooms lest condensation forms when records are brought out of the cold into a warmer room.

High relative humidity (over 68 percent) must be avoided because it will encourage the growth of mold. For this reason, as well as the danger of flooding, archives should not be kept in basements unless the humidity is well controlled and danger of flooding minimized. Every attempt should be made to maintain humidity at a consistent level, ideally between 45 percent and 60 percent.

To maintain constant temperature and humidity the archivist should give air conditioning high priority on his list of needs. Air conditioning can also be used to filter out the aerosols and noxious gases of air pollution, especially sulfur dioxide. If a permanent air conditioning system is not feasible, the archivist can use portable air conditioners, humidifiers, dehumidifiers, and silica gel. Of course, temperature and humidity control in the storage areas should be given first priority.

If items are to be stored in a bank safe-deposit box, make sure that the bank has adequate humidity control in its vault. Older banks, especially ones with vaults located below ground level, may not have adequate humidity control. In general, avoid using safe-deposit boxes located below ground level. One way to check the humidity in the bank vault is to go into the vault on a hot summer day and run your hand over the outside of the safe-deposit boxes. If beads of moisture are present, choose another bank, for eventual damage to archival material is virtually assured.

ACID

Acid is one of the leading causes of destruction of archival material and unfortunately is a problem inherent in most paper itself. Since acid damage is gradual, it is easily overlooked.

The acid existing in most paper breaks down the fibers and causes the paper to become brittle and discolored and eventually to turn into dust. Acid can be introduced into paper in a number of ways: from the manufacturing process, through exposure to sulfur dioxide in polluted air, through iron gall ink used on the paper, and through migration from neighboring materials. Acid can remain in paper after it is manufactured if the paper is made by processes involving groundwood containing lignin, alum sizing, or residual bleaching chemicals. The cheapest form of paper, like newsprint, contains groundwood, while most types of bond paper, which are not 100 percent cotton rag, or the new permanent/durable papers, contain alum sizing. Iron gall ink forms sulfuric acid that migrates into the paper. Carbon inks, like India ink, are not acidic, although many other modern inks are. Because of the danger of acid migration, highly acidic items, such as newspaper clippings, should not be placed next to other materials, unless the clippings have first been deacidified. An alternate approach is to make photocopies of clippings and telegrams on bond paper. If a telegram is inherently valuable, it may be interleaved between two sheets of rag bond paper.

To fight acid migration, archivists use acid-free folders and boxes to store all records. The only permanent way to counteract acid in paper is through deacidification. The process of deacidification introduces an alkaline agent into the paper to neutralize any acidity present and keep acid from attacking the paper through migration.

Acidity is measured by the pH level of the paper. On a scale of 1 to 14, 1 to 7 is acidic and 7 to 14 is alkaline. There are tests which the archivist can run to determine the approximate pH level of this records or supplies.

LIGHT

The ultraviolet rays in sunlight and fluorescent light weaken paper and other archival materials. Never leave any archival materials in direct sunlight. If fluorescent lights are used, UF-1 or UF-3 plexiglass filters will filter out most of the ultraviolet ray content. Incandescent lighting, because of its low ultraviolet ray content, is the least destructive. However, incandescent lighting generates a great deal of heat. If it is used in exhibits, the light should be placed outside the display cases to avoid raising the temperature excessively. Care should be taken that valuable items on display are not exposed to intense light for long periods of time. For exhibits, five foot-candles, approximately one 150-watt light at three or four feet, is the maximum light that should be allowed.

MOLD

Mold or mildew are small fungi that live on organic matter, including paper. If mold is allowed to grow it will stain paper and ultimately reduce it to pulp. Mold requires dampness and heat to grow. Therefore it is important to keep the humidity under 68 percent and the temperature under 75°, and to provide good ventilation to eliminate stagnant air. If humidity cannot be controlled, fungicides should be used, though with great care since fungicides may cause damage to records.

Records being donated to the archives should be inspected carefully for mold and mildew. If mold or mildew have reached advanced stages in some records, the archivist should consider whether the documents are valuable enough to warrant bringing such contaminants into the archives, because they will spread. It may be possible to photocopy more important documents onto rag bond paper rather than accepting the damaged originals. Any damaged materials that are accepted should be kept well isolated from other boxes of documents, and efforts should be made to contact a state

historical society or other professional archives to make arrangements for having the documents treated to kill the organisms. Keeping the archives at the proper humidity level will help arrest any further growth.

INSECTS AND RODENTS

Among the many insects and rodents that destroy archival material are cockroaches, silverfish, termites, book lice, bookworms, moths, mice, and rats. It is important to seal any openings that might permit these pests to enter, to keep the archives clean, and to prohibit any food or beverages into the archives. Again, precautions should be taken to inspect records for signs of infestation before they are accepted into the archives and steps taken to remedy the situation.

CLEANING AND RESTORATION

The archivist can learn to clean documents and perform simple repair work by consulting the works listed in the bibliography. If the archivist does decide to repair items himself, he must plan every step carefully before he begins work. The cardinal rule to follow is: Never do anything irreversible to a document.

It is wise to practice repair procedures on expendable items before trying to work on a valuable document. Many items have been greatly damaged because inexperienced people used the wrong material or methods in restoration work. For example, pressure-sensitive tape, such as scotch or cellophane tape, should never be used to repair valuable material because of the damage that the adhesive will ultimately cause to paper. Since restoration work requires a detailed technical knowledge of the physical characteristics of the item needing restoration (its paper, inks, and so on), a knowledge of the properties of the materials being used in the work, and a well-equipped laboratory, the archivist should contact a professional conservator for any major restoration work.

A list of archival “dos” and “don’ts” concerning the preservation of archival materials is provided below. Many of these precautions are very simple and require little expense. Putting them into action can increase the life of archival materials considerably, if not indefinitely.

ARCHIVAL “DOS”

1. Do use only pencils when working with archival material.
2. Do unfold documents as much as possible during processing, and use the proper size folder allowing for the least amount of folding of documents.
3. Do remove all regular paper clips and pins from documents, and if paper clips are necessary, use only aluminum or plastic ones.
4. Do remove all rubber bands from documents and other articles.
5. Do use acid-free containers and folders, wherever possible, to store materials.
6. Do encourage parent institutions to use high-quality paper, preferably of the permanent/durable type (rag bond), in creating records that will eventually become part of the archives.
7. Do use only water soluble archival repair tape to make simple repairs on documents.
8. Do turn out unnecessary lights in the archives to protect documents.
9. Do keep archival materials away from heat sources and direct sunlight.
10. Do keep the temperature in the archives between 60° and 70° F if at all possible.
11. Do keep the humidity between 45 and 60 percent.
12. Do check periodically the condition of materials in vaults, safes, and safe-deposit boxes.

13. Do keep the archives clean and rubbish-free.
14. Do rewind tapes through tape recorders before playing them.
15. Do watch for fire hazards such as worn wiring.
16. Do check periodically for signs of insect and rodent damage and take appropriate measures to stop it.
17. Do install fire extinguishers in the archives.
18. Do keep careful track of who uses which collections for research purposes.
19. Do copy valuable or fragile documents and have researchers use only the copies.
20. Do pick up photographs by the edges only and use cotton gloves.

ARCHIVAL “DON'TS”

1. Don't use scotch tape or other brands of pressure-sensitive tape to repair documents. This ban includes “magic tape” as well.
2. Don't use glassine or acetate envelopes to store negatives.
3. Don't place or leave newspaper clippings next to other materials.
4. Don't write on photographs unless it is done with a soft pencil on top of glass.
5. Don't place records with visible signs of the presence of mold, mildew, insects, or rodents with other records without fumigating the contaminated records.
6. Don't store tapes near magnetic fields.
7. Don't keep nitrate motion-picture film or nitrate photograph negatives; have them copied on acetate safety film.
8. Don't store records directly on the floor.
9. Don't use fluorescent lights without filters for ultraviolet light.
10. Don't allow researchers to work unsupervised.
11. Don't be afraid to speak to researchers about any mishandling of records.
12. Don't allow researchers into the storage area.
13. Don't allow food, beverages, or smoking in the archives.
14. Don't use or allow the use of ink pens while working with records.
15. Don't use original documents in displays outside the archives unless necessary.
16. Don't attempt major restoration work on important documents; consult a professional conservator.
17. Don't force open tightly rolled photos: they often need to be humidified properly first.

12. SUGGESTIONS FOR SMALL ARCHIVES

Archivists in small communities may feel somewhat bewildered at the thought of applying the procedures outlined in this manual to a very small amount of material. Often the archivist in a new community has little more than a few years of Spiritual Assembly records, *Bahá'í News*, *The American Bahá'í*, *World Order*, newsreels and newspaper clippings to arrange. However, it is important to establish good habits early in the history of a community! Here are some concrete suggestions about what should be done.

1. The Spiritual Assembly should appoint an archivist to be in charge of its inactive records. This can be the Assembly secretary or a member of the community.
2. The Spiritual Assembly should require that the archivist make an annual inventory of the inactive records and submit the report to the Assembly. The inventory should be compared to the previous year's inventory to ensure that no records have been lost or misplaced.
3. The Spiritual Assembly should establish an access policy for its inactive records. The Assembly will need free access to its records when researching questions before the Assembly. Private research should require permission from the Assembly or the person in charge of the Assembly records. Confidential records (also called personal status case files) should have been maintained separately from non-confidential records. They should be restricted and require special permission from the Assembly to see. A record should be kept of all persons using the inactive records and of all files borrowed to ensure that all material is returned.
4. Usually the inactive records will be kept in the home of the archivist. If there is a local Bahá'í center, then a room or other storage space should be set aside for the inactive records. (see Chapter 10, Quarters, and Chapter 11, Preservation). The Spiritual Assembly may also consider renting commercial storage space, such as a safe deposit box or storage locker. These can often provide better control and better environmental protection for records than a private home.
5. Some Local Assemblies will be given the personal papers of Bahá'ís. These may consist of letters, books, photographs, relics, diaries, personal recollections or manuscripts. Any collections of personal papers should be kept intact and not interfiled with the Assembly records.
6. If possible, records of a Spiritual Assembly which is unable to reform should be stored by a former Assembly officer or member. If this is not possible, the records may be stored by a nearby Local Spiritual Assembly, the Regional Bahá'í Council office, or a responsible member of the community. As a last resort, the records may be shipped to the National Center for storage in the National Bahá'í Archives. No matter which alternative is used, the National Spiritual Assembly should be notified of the location of the records and the person responsible for them. If the Assembly does not re-form after two years, the Assembly records and other archival material should be sent to the National Bahá'í Archives at the Bahá'í National Center. The Assembly's library, including back issues of *The American Bahá'í*, *Bahá'í News* and newsreels, should not be sent to the National Bahá'í Archives, United States.

WHAT TO KEEP

Annual Reports and Minutes. These should ideally be typed on high quality bond paper. If the minutes are on poor quality paper, handwritten or show deterioration, the archivist may wish to photocopy them onto better paper or ask the Assembly about having them retyped. If minutes are handwritten be sure the ink used is not water soluble. This can be tested by wetting a small portion,

like the tail of a letter, to see if the ink runs. Minutes should be checked for completeness when they are transferred. If any are missing it may be possible to locate them if not too much time has passed. Minutes printed with a computer printer are acceptable, provided the paper is of good quality. However, the permanent copy of an Assembly's records should not be kept on a floppy disk.

Legal Documents. Deeds, stocks, bond, titles that are in effect, and incorporation papers should be stored in a safe deposit box at a local bank.

Membership Records. The Universal House of Justice stressed in both the Seven- and Six-Year Plans that each Assembly should keep a register of births, marriages, and deaths. Copies of certificates should also be maintained.

In filling out registers, water soluble inks, like those found in felt-tip pens, should be avoided. If possible, type the entries. If ink is used, it should be tested first by immersing a sample in water to see if the writing smears or runs.

Use bond paper with 100 percent rag content or as near to 100 percent rag content as possible. There is a type of permanent durable wood pulp paper equivalent to 100 percent rag paper, but it is less frequently found in stationary stores. If the rag content is not listed on the package, it is often part of the paper's watermark and can be seen by placing a sheet to light.

If possible, store the register and certificates in a minute book binder with tough, heavy sides that will not easily warp or bend, instead of a three-ring binder. This will provide the protection needed for the records inside.

Each Assembly should also maintain a log of declarations in its community, with dates and complete names. Copies of address lists and directories should be kept in the archives as well.

Correspondence. Correspondence with the National Spiritual Assembly, national committees, other Bahá'í institutions, individuals or non-Bahá'ís concerning the activities of the Spiritual Assembly and its community should be kept. Correspondence, including programs and flyers, that do not concern the activities of the Spiritual Assembly and its community may be discarded.

Personal Status Case Files. Personal case files should be maintained separate from the Assembly minutes and when inactivated should be placed in the archives.

Financial Records. Keep cash journals, contribution receipts and annual financial reports. Contact the Office of the Treasurer for more detailed information.

Photographs. Date and identify all photographs with soft lead pencil on the back, preferably in a corner. Store flat. Keep the negatives also, if available.

Newsletters and Publicity. Keep a complete run of local newsletters, as well as a written record of teaching and community events for future historians. Publicity releases, clippings, and photographs should be kept in chronological order as much as possible. Photocopy newspaper clippings onto high quality bond paper, making sure they are dated and identified by source. Originals may be discarded, as newsprint is very acidic and will disintegrate. If the Assembly wishes to keep special clippings of

historic importance they may be interleaved between sheets of rag bond paper to prevent the acid from migrating to adjacent materials.

Personal Papers and Interviews. Tape recorded oral history interviews with older believers or those with interesting experiences and written recollections from believers are often valuable additions to institutional records. This also presents a good opportunity to remind Bahá'ís to make provisions for the disposition of their Bahá'í papers and printed matter when making or revising their wills and to encourage them to consider leaving their papers to the Local Spiritual Assembly for its archives.

The archives work to be accomplished in many small communities involves laying the groundwork for the building of a larger collection in the future, rather than actual arrangement and description of existing collections. The concern of the archivist in a small community, then, should be to see that efforts are being made to preserve documents of historical and administrative importance and to encourage both institutions and individuals to produce records that will be of use in the future. In carrying out the latter task, the archivist might consult with the Local Spiritual Assembly about the importance of following the practices described above.

Once the archives, no matter how small, is established, the archivist must deal with all records in a methodical manner. The methods may differ somewhat from archives to archives, but they should meet standards of good archival practice from the beginning. In particular, this means following the principles of provenance and original order (see Chapter 1). The archivist in a small community sets precedents for later archivists and will wish to make future work as easy as possible. If the archivist develops methodical procedures at the outset, the transfer of information to future archivists will be much easier and more effective.

All communities, large and small, and their archivists should keep in mind that the archives is an institution destined to grow in importance through its service to the teaching, administration, and scholarship of the Faith.

13. THE CHALLENGE OF ARCHIVES

It is hoped that the information contained in this booklet will give all Bahá'í communities, small and large, the encouragement and confidence they need to adopt active and effective archives programs to preserve the history of the Bahá'í Faith in their localities. This opportunity to document the growth of an independent religion throughout the world is yet another example of the uniqueness of the day in which we live.

This opportunity is also a challenge—a challenge involving a great deal of hard work in an unfamiliar field. This is why the responsibility of the preservation of Bahá'í history does not fall on the shoulders of the community's archivist or archives committee alone. If the effort is to succeed, this responsibility must be taken up by Local and National Spiritual Assemblies and by every individual believer as well. In a letter written on his behalf, Shoghi Effendi stressed the role of the individual:

Every believer should realize that he has a definite responsibility to should in this matter, and to help, to whatever extent he can, in rendering successful the valuable work which national and local Bahá'í archives committees are so devotedly accomplishing for the Faith in America.¹⁹

The manual represents only the beginning of the development of archival programs for the preservation of our Bahá'í heritage. As the Faith grows, its history grows in richness and color as well as in length, and the institution of the archives will continue to develop as well. Bahá'í archivists and their supporters must now prepare for the future by doing the work that is before them today.

¹⁹Shoghi Effendi, *Directives from the Guardian* (New Delhi: Bahá'í Publishing Trust, 1973), pp 4-5.

ADDENDA

A. GLOSSARY AND INDEX TO DEFINITIONS IN THE TEXT

Access. The availability of or permission to consult records, archives, or manuscripts.

Accession Number. A control number given to a group of archival material received. It is often a two-part number, the first identifying the year and the second a sequential number within the year, indicating the nth accession received in a year.

Accession Form or Sheet. A form that lists the accession number, name of donor, title or description of material, brief description of contents, restrictions on use of material, size or volume of the accession, date of accession and name of accessioner. See Figure 4.

Accessioning. Formal acceptance into custody and recording of an acquisition. Accessioning establishes initial physical and intellectual control over the material.

Acid-free paper, boxes and folders. Archival supplies with a pH level of 7.0 to 8.0; that is, in a mildly alkaline or near neutral condition.

Administrative value. The capacity of records to serve the continuing needs of the organization that created them.

Appraisal. The process of evaluating institutional records or personal papers to determine the value of their contents for the purpose of continuing preservation.

Archives. a) The whole of the documents made and received by an organization or individual in the conduct of affairs, that are preserved. b) The institution responsible for acquiring, preserving and providing access to archives. c) The place where permanent archives are kept.

Arrangement, archival. The organization of the materials within a collection so that they may be described and used.

Authentication. Determination that a record or relic is what it purports to be.

Calendar. A finding aid that lists, usually in chronological order, individual documents of a collection or other grouping.

Card Catalog. A finding aid giving basic information about what records are in the archives. Card entries are given by collection title and by major subjects covered in the collection. Specialized card catalogs may cover different sections of the archives, such as a catalog for subjects of photographs. Many archives are now converting card catalogs to computer records.

Collection. (1) A body of records forming a unit because it was created or accumulated by the same institution, person, or family. (2) A group of materials deriving from different sources artificially

collected by someone around a particular theme, subject, person, event, type of document, and so on.
(3) The entire holdings of an archival institution.

Collection log. A listing of all collections listed in the order in which acquisition or processing took place, giving the collection number and title. See Figure 6.

Collection number. A control number that enables identification of a collection by number rather than by title.

Cubic feet. A measurement of volume for records, archives, and manuscripts.

Deacidification. The process of counteracting the acidity in most papers by depositing an alkaline agent in the paper to neutralize any acid present and provide a reserve against acid which might migrate into the paper.

Deed of gift. A signed legal form transferring ownership of the gift from the donor to the archives. It may specify conditions or restrictions on the gift. See Figure 1.

Deposit. Archives or manuscripts placed in physical custody of an archives without transfer of ownership.

Description, archival. The process of creating finding aids for archival collections.

Disposal schedule. A document drawn up for each series of institutional records that specifies its authorized disposition. See Figure 3.

Document. A written or printed paper furnishing information or evidence. Any manuscript or record item.

Documentation. Evidence given, whether in written, pictorial, or audible form, of an event, function, existence, characteristic of people, and so on.

Document boxes. Acid-free boxes of varying dimensions with a fold-over lid, specially created for the storage of archival documents.

Donor file. Files maintained for each donor that contain all correspondence with each donor of archival material.

Evidential value. The capacity of records to provide evidence about the creator of records, whether an organization or a person. See also Informational value.

File. An accumulation of records maintained in a predetermined order. To place documents in a predetermined location according to an overall plan of classification.

Files. A collective term usually applied to all records of an office or agency.

Finding aids. Description of the archives' holdings, either in whole or in part, which are designed to assist the researcher and archivist in locating material needed.

Fiscal value. The capacity of archival documents to serve continuing financial needs of an organization.

Fumigation. The process of exposing papers, usually in a vacuum or other airtight chamber, to poisonous gas or vapor, to destroy insects, mildew, or other forms of life which could endanger them.

Glassine. Material used to make envelopes for negatives, used by commercial film-developing firms as containers for negatives when returned to customers. It emits plasticizers and should not be used for storing negatives or photographs.

Guide. A finding aid, often published and distributed outside the Archives, that lists all or part of its collections and a brief description of each.

Informational value. The capacity of records to provide information about people, organizations, events or things about which they speak. See also Evidential value.

Intellectual control. Control established over records by documenting the types of records, provenance, content, date range and physical condition.

Intrinsic value. Intrinsic value resides in the artifactual or documentary characteristics of a document.

Inventory. A finding aid that describes the documents in a collection, giving the title, volume, history, donor and brief description of the types of material in the collection. See Figure 11.

Lead file. A file that contains correspondence and other records related to prospective acquisitions of archival material to the Archives.

Legal-size. A standard paper size, 8½ x 14 inches, or a folder or box capable of holding legal size documents.

Legal value. The capacity of records to serve current and future legal needs of an organization.

Literary rights. The common-law right under which the author of a letter or manuscript or his heirs retain the right of first publication of the documents regardless of the location or ownership of the originals.

Location card file. A file of cards organized by collection title, indicating the location in the stacks of all collections which have been processed and shelved. See Figure 9.

Log. See Collection log.

Manuscripts. (1) A term used to distinguish a group of documents created by and related to a private individual (contrast Records). (2) May also refer to individual unpublished documents, whether private or public, especially those produced with the intention of having the contents eventually published.

Metadata. “Data about data”—information that assists in the identification, authentication, description, contextualization, and provision of access to records and other data. It usually is used in the context of electronic records.

Migration. The chemical transfer of molecules from one part of a document to another, from document to document, or from the air to the document. The migration of acid from ink into paper, from paper to paper, and from air to paper poses a particular danger to archival materials.

Nitrate film. Motion-picture film and photograph negatives made of stock that is highly flammable, and dangerous to store under almost any conditions. Such film, if of research value, should be copied on safety film.

Original order. One of two fundamental principles of archival science: the principle that archival documents should be maintained, wherever possible, in the same order as that given them by their records creator. Maintaining original order preserves evidence and organic relationships between the component parts. See also Provenance.

Original (Primary) source. Correspondence, documents, newspapers, manuscripts, interviews, or other forms of first-hand original documents or accounts. Used in the preparation of secondary histories or source works.

Papers. A term sometimes used synonymously with Records to refer to any sort of written document but often to refer more specifically to documents created and accumulated by an individual or family (public or institutional records, but private papers).

Physical control. Once records are accessioned, identifying the location of records so that they can be located immediately when required.

Processing. The act of preparing archival records for use. Several activities may be involved: appraisal, refolding or other preservation activities, weeding of duplicate material, separating records for preservation purposes to other collections, numbering and labelling of folders and boxes, preparation of finding aids and shelving of the collection.

Processing card file. The archives processing card lists the collection title, name of donor, accession number(s), quantity, location, restrictions on use, and processing to be done. Cards are filed in one of three drawers: to-be-processed, processing, or completed processing. See Figure 5.

Provenance. One of the fundamental principles underlying archival work: the principle that records created or accumulated by one records creator, whether an individual or institution, should not be intermingled with those of another. See also Original order.

Receipt form. A paper acknowledging the receipt of records sent to an office of the institution the archives serves when that office has transferred records to the archives; there is no change in ownership of the records in this case.

Records. A term used sometimes to refer to a group of any sort of written or other documents created in the course of a practical activity of an individual or institution. "Records" may also refer to documents created/accumulated by institutions or organizations (cf. Manuscripts and Papers).

Records management. The application of analysis and control to the creation, retention and disposition of records in the course of carrying out business.

Refoldering. Papers are placed in acid-free folders and acid-free document boxes that retard deterioration of papers. Paper clips, pins, rubber bands and other damaging fasteners are removed, and papers unfolded as much as possible.

Register. Same as Inventory.

Repository. A place where archives, records, or manuscripts are kept.

Safety film. Motion-picture film made of acetate base stock, which is difficult to ignite.

Secondary source. Books or works compiled from primary sources. Second-hand accounts.

Separation record. A form listing any items separated from their original collection for any reason and their destination.

Small collection. A collection filling less than one document box, processed by in the same manner as larger collections, but filed consecutively by collection number in document boxes with other small collections.

Unauthenticated. A document which has not been proven genuine.

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C. ARCHIVAL AND CONSERVATOR ORGANIZATIONS

American Institute for Conservation of Historic and Artistic Works

1717 K Street N.W., Suite 200
Washington DC 20006
Phone: 202-452-9545
Fax: 202-452-9328

Association of Moving Image Archivists

1313 North Vine Street
Hollywood, CA 90028
Phone: 323-463-1500
Fax: 323-463-1506
Email: amia@amianet.org
Web: www.amianet.org

Society of American Archivists

527 S. Wells Street, 5th Floor
Chicago, IL 60607-3922
Phone: 312-922-0140
Fax: 312-347-1252
Email: info@archivists.org
Web: www.archivists.org

D. SOURCES OF SUPPLIES**Gaylord**

PO Box 4901
Syracuse, NY 13221-4901
Phone: 1-800-448-6160
Fax: 1-800-272-3412
Web: www.gaylord.com

International Customers

Phone: 315-634-8221
Email: international@gaylord.com
Web: www.gaylordinternational.com

Canada

Phone: 1-800-841-5854
Email: Canada@gaylord.com

Hollinger Corporation

P.O. Box 8360
Fredericksburg, VA 22404-8360
Phone: 1-800-634-0491
Fax: 1-800-947-8814
Email: hollingercorp@erols.com
Web: www.hollingercorp.com

Light Impressions

P.O. Box 787
Brea, CA 92822-0787
Phone: 800-828-6216
Fax: 800-828-5539
Web: www.lightimpressionsdirect.com

University Products

517 Main Street
P.O. Box 101
Holyoke, MA 01041-0101
Phone: 800-628-1912
Fax: 800-532-9281
Web: www.universityproducts.com

E. FIGURES

FIGURE 1—DEED OF GIFT

ARCHIVES
of the
NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES

DEED OF GIFT

I/We _____, the undersigned, of

grant, convey, and transfer to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, a religious institution, all (my)(our) right, title, interest and literary property rights, including copyrights, in and to the following described personal property:

It is the intent of the undersigned that the above conveyance and transfer be a final and complete inter vivos gift upon delivery of the above described property.

Date _____ DONOR(S)

ACCEPTANCE AND RECEIPT

Acceptance and receipt of the gift of the above described property by and on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States is hereby acknowledged.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF
BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE UNITED STATES

By _____
Archivist

FIGURE 2—RECEIPT

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES
Wilmette, Illinois 60091

(847) 853-2359

Accession Number _____

Received from: _____

Address:

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

the following:

DESCRIPTION

By _____
Date _____

The National Bahá'í Archives wishes to express to you its thanks and gratitude for your donation of these items.

ARCHIVES OF THE NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF THE
UNITED STATES

FIGURE 3—RETENTION AND DISPOSAL SCHEDULE

WAYNE STATE UNIVERSITY

RETENTION AND DISPOSAL SCHEDULE For University Records		<u>Approvals</u>			
Division, Department or Office:		Departmental/Committee Official			
Department Head:		_____			
		(Signature)			
Date Prepared:		University Archivist			

		(Signature)			
The proposed Retention and Disposal Schedule meets the administrative, legal and fiscal requirements of this office and the University.					
Item No.	Description of Records	Retain in Office	Retain in Storage	Transfer to Archives	(For use by archivist)

INSTRUCTIONS

Prepare in triplicate. Department please sign original, return to Archives
 Retain second copy for your files
 Third copy in Archives suspense file

FIGURE 4—ACCESSION SHEET

Accession Number:

Title:

Contents:

Quantity:

Donor:

Location:

Restrictions:

Accessioned by:

Date Accession received:

Date of Accession:

FIGURE 5—ARCHIVES PROCESSING CARD

ARCHIVES PROCESSING CARD				
Collection Title:				
Donor:				
Date Received	Accession No.	Number of Boxes, etc.	Linear feet	Location
Description:				
[Front of card]				

PROCESSING RECORD			
	<u>Date</u>	<u>Initials</u>	<u>Remarks</u>
Processing started	_____	_____	
Arrangement completed	_____	_____	
Boxes labeled & shelved	_____	_____	
Inventories filed	_____	_____	
Guide entry filed	_____	_____	
Catalog cards filed	_____	_____	
Database entries made	_____	_____	
Restrictions:			
[Back of card]			

FIGURE 6—COLLECTION LOG

M-1	National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, Office of the Secretary, Records (included Canada until 1948)
M-2	Horace Holley Papers
M-3	International Goals Committee, Records
M-4	Thornton Chase Papers
M-5	John and Louise Bosch Papers
M-6SC	Louise M. Gregory Papers
M-7	Ella G. Cooper Papers
M-8	Louis G. Gregory Papers
M-10	Alfred E. Lunt Papers
M-11	Bahá'í Historical Record Cards
M-12	Bijou S. Straun Papers
M-13SC	Margaret Green, Letter from Lua Getsinger
M-14SC	Mary Lesley O'Keefe Long, letters from Isabella D. Brittingham
M-15SC	Frances O'Keefe, letters from Isabella D. Brittingham
M-16SC	Julie Culver, Correspondence
M-17	Orol Platt Papers
M-18	Keith Ransom-Kehler Papers
M-19SC	Alma Albertson, Letters
M-20SC	J. E. Esslemont, List of Names of the 72 Exiled to Akká
M-21	Albert R. Windust Papers
M-22	Louise R. (Shahnaz) Waite Papers
M-23SC	Henrietta Corrodi Papers
M-24SC	Ida Finch Papers
M-25SC	Esteban Canales Leyton Papers
M-26	Mary Smith Papers
M-27	Jose Gutierrez Papers
M-28	Robert White Papers

FIGURE 7—FOLDER LABEL

M-10 Correspondence - Edith Wennmouth	1917-1918; n.d.
BOX 10 FOLDER 39	

FIGURE 8—BOX LABEL

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES UNITED STATES	
ALFRED E. LUNT PAPERS	
COLLECTION NO.	BOX NO.
M-10	21

FIGURE 9—LOCATION CARD

LOUIS BOURGEOIS AND ALICE BOURGEOIS PEMBERTON PAPERS
Location: C-H-1-6

FIGURE 10—CATALOG CARD

M-4

**CHASE, THORNTON
Papers, 1898-1912
11 boxes**

**The Papers consists mostly of copies of outgoing
correspondence, copies of talks and articles and notes.**

See inventory

Donor: John and Louise Bosch

FIGURE 11—INVENTORY

GEORGE AND RUTH AUGUR PAPERS, n.d.

Extent: 1 box

Restrictions: None.

Preferred Citation: George and Ruth Augur Papers, National Bahá'í Archives, United States

Acquisition Source: Dr. M.C. Augur and Mamie Seto

Method of Acquisition: Gift

FOLDER LISTING

CORRESPONDENCE

'Abdu'l-Bahá

LITERARY MATERIAL

COPIES

Words of 'Abdu'l-Bahá

NOTES

Miscellaneous

STUDY MATERIAL

Ahmad Sohrab's Diary Notes

A Compilation of the Words of Bahá'o'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá, by Mrs. R.C. Ioas and Mary M. Rabb

MATERIAL SEPARATED FROM COLLECTION

1. Several Bahá'í books and several Bahá'í pamphlets
2. One photograph

Mss. Collection Number: M-273

The inventory was prepared on 6 May 2004.

FIGURE 12—REFERENCE AND SERVICE REQUEST SLIP

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES REFERENCE AND SERVICE REQUESTS

1. Name:

2. Date:

3. Nature of Requests:

4. Archives staff completing request:

5. Service rendered:

6. Date answered:

FIGURE 13—RECORDS REQUEST SLIP

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES, RECORDS REQUEST SLIP

Name _____ Date _____

Full Collection Title: _____

If Collection number has a "SC" write down collection number: _____

Box number: _____

List only one box per slip.

Records checked out by:

Location:

Records checked in by: