

# **Pennsylvania Center for Folklore**

## **Archival Access and Use Policy**

Artifacts and archival materials are particularly susceptible to damage from handling and storage. Safe handling and storage practices go hand-in-hand—you can handle archival materials very carefully, but if you put them back into improper and/or crowded storage conditions, rapid degradation, and damage is inevitable.

### **What Should I do Before I Arrive?**

1. Researchers should consult relevant finding aids to better acquaint themselves with the scope and content of the records they wish to access.
2. Researchers should contact the archivists at 717-948-6094 or by email at [folklore@psu.edu](mailto:folklore@psu.edu) to schedule a visit. While this is not required, it will help the staff ensure that the records you would like to access are unrestricted and can be made available as quickly as possible.

### **What can I bring to and use in the archives?**

1. The following items are not allowed at research tables or in research areas: food, drinks, coats, briefcases, handbags, pens, markers, highlighters, or any materials that could be destructive to archival materials. Any materials can be prohibited from research areas at the discretion of the archivist.
2. All personal belongings not allowed in research areas can be stored in secure cabinets near archivists' workspace, with the exception of food or drink. These items are not allowed anywhere in Center spaces.
3. The following research items are allowed for research use in the archives: pencils, paper, laptop computers.
4. At the discretion of the archivist, cameras or other photographic devices may be used to photograph collection items, unless material is restricted. Flashes may not be used. All researchers wishing to take photographs must complete a photography request form.

## What rules do I need to follow as I work with Center materials?

1. All artifacts and collection materials must remain in the center at all times.
2. You must work at a designated research workspace.
3. You will be provided only one container to work with at a time. Additional containers will be provided when you have completed work on the previous one. When you remove a folder or subcontainer from a container, carefully mark its place in the container using the dividers provided by archival staff. Similarly mark the place of an item or document you remove from a folder or subcontainer. Handle one item or document at a time, always using two hands.
4. Wear gloves when handling archival materials, if asked to do so by archivist.
5. Items should be kept flat as much as possible and supported in such a way that they do not bend. Do not write, lean, or place any object on the surface of any collection materials.
6. Refrain from marking, defacing, or altering items in any way.
7. If an item is large or unwieldy, use a secondary support such as weights, blocks, book cradles, and other supportive tools for aiding in handling and for image capture. These items will be provided by the archivists.
8. If items are stuck together, never force them apart—consult the archival attendant for solutions to separate these materials.
9. Many types of fasteners degrade over time, causing damage to archival material. You may remove fasteners, but only if can they can be removed without damaging the archival materials. Leave the fasteners in place if not possible. Consult the attendant if you are uncertain if fasteners should be removed.
10. Unfold documents if this can be done without splitting, breaking or damaging them. If documents are very fragile, leave them folded.
11. If any mold growth or pest activity is seen, isolate materials, label, and consult the attendant.
12. Unless you are otherwise instructed, archival material must be kept in the **order** in which they are found. If the material appears to be out of order, do NOT rearrange them. If you find material damaged or out of proper order, report the problem immediately to the attendant.
13. When rehousing, do not overfill folders or boxes. Items should fit comfortably enough to be well supported, but not be compressed.

14. Use common sense—if you start doing something that you think might cause damage, please stop immediately. If you are unsure about how to handle a specific artifact, please consult the attendant.

I agree to abide by the following terms and policies while working with the archival collections at the *Pennsylvania Center for Folklore*.

Name\_\_\_\_\_ Date\_\_\_\_\_