

# **The Archives: Exposed**

By: Brigette C. Kamsler

Project Archivist

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

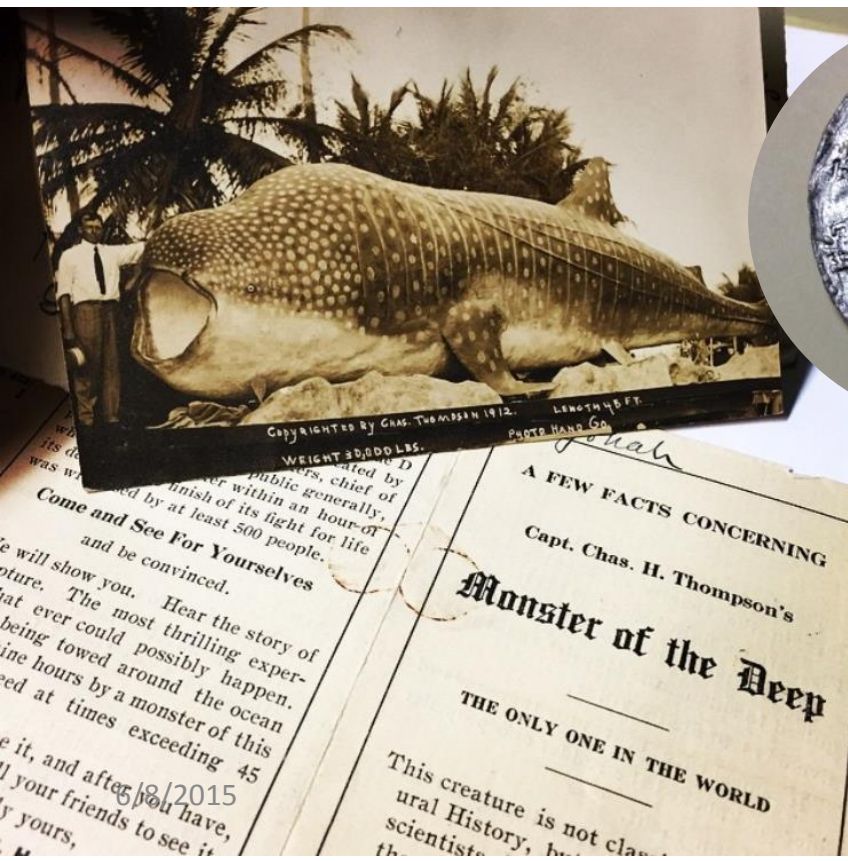
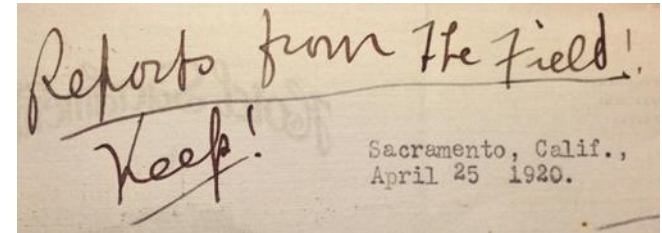
# Overview

- Who are archivists? What do we do?
- What is an archival collection?
- Archival theory
- Archival methods and current best practices
- Archival processing



# What are archives?

- Non-current records
- Enduring Value





# Who Are Archivists?

- More than just people who love “old stuff.”
- Not covered in dust all the time



6/8/2015

## Historical Society offers scrapbook program

FOR THE FREDERICK NEWS-POST

Scrapbooks have long been a part of our culture. While collecting and preserving memorabilia into albums has been around for centuries, it was the advent of paper photographs and inexpensive cameras in the late 1800s and early 1900s that caused the popularity of scrapbooking to explode. Although that popularity declined in the mid-20th century, a modern scrapbooking boom began in the late 1980s and has yet to subside.

The Historical Society of Frederick County will explore scrapbooks in American life at its ongoing Learning Lunch series from noon to 1 p.m. Thursday, April 7, at the Museum of Frederick County History, 24 E. Church St. in Frederick.

“The history of scrapbooks and scrapbooking can be traced back to the 1600s with the Commonplace Book, used by Renaissance men as a memory aid and notebook,” said Brigette Kamsler, Historical Society archivist. “Today, scrapbooks are still

with us but wrought with conservation concerns. Anyone who has seen a scrapbook filled with crumbling newspaper clippings, faded photos, and yellowed, dried adhesive tape has experienced that.”

Kamsler will lead a discussion of the issues that arise from combined elements, construction and everyday wear and tear of scrapbooks. Examples from the Historical Society’s collection will be displayed and recommendations for the care of scrapbooks will be provided. “We will be offering some practical tips that will help people enjoy their scrapbooks for many years.”

The Learning Lunch programs are offered the first Thursday of each month. Upcoming topics include wedding dresses and other cherished fabrics on May 5, and a history of photography and types of early photographs on June 2. The programs are free.

For information about these programs and other upcoming events, visit [www.hsfinfo.org](http://www.hsfinfo.org) or call 301-663-1188.



Courtesy photo

Brigette Kamsler, archivist with the Historical Society of Frederick County, will lead a workshop on the history and care of scrapbooks.



# Other tips

- Be prepared to work in an archives that's completely unorganized!
- It can be exciting, but also boring!  
Removing paperclips, staples, etc...



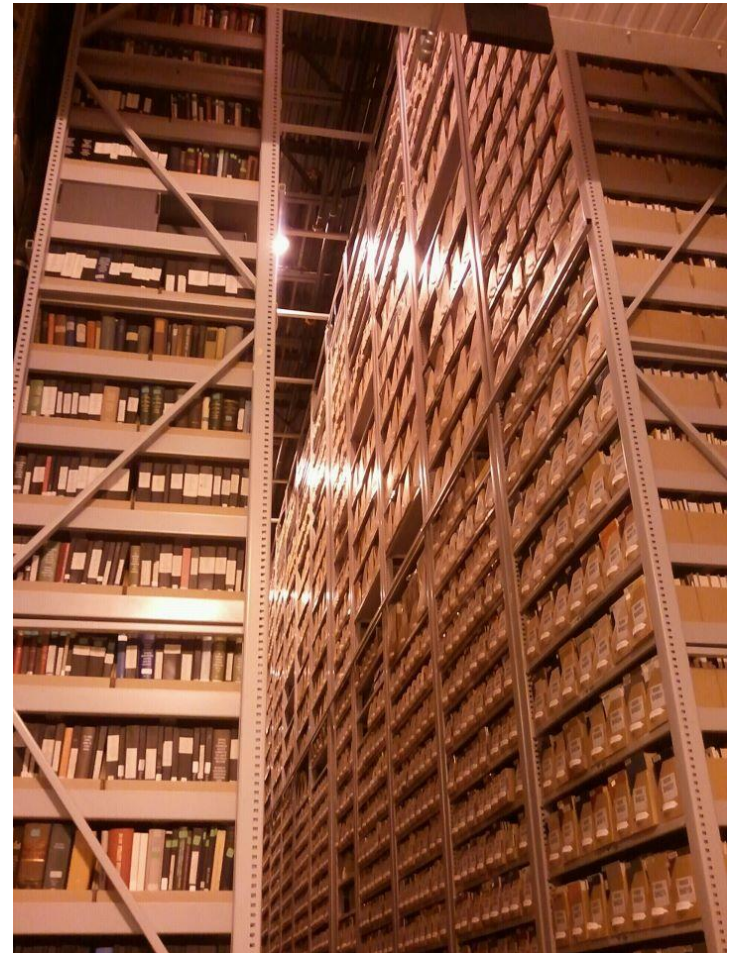


# What is an archival collection?





# What do archival collections look like?



# What do archival collections look like?

## University of Pittsburgh



## Historical Society of Frederick County, Maryland





# Functions

- Appraisal
- Acquisition and Accessioning
- Processing
  - Arrangement, Description, Preservation
- Access and Reference
- Outreach and Advocacy



# Archival Theory

- History of archival theory span century and millennia. Greatest hits of last hundred years:

**Dutch Manual**

**Sir Hilary Jenkinson**

**T.R. Schellenberg**

**More Product, Less Process (MPLP)**



# Principles

- **Provenance**: materials from same creator (person, family, organization) be kept together and not intermingled.
- **Original Order**: keep material together in order, not rearranging or reorganizing

# Processing

- Surveying, arranging, describing, preserving, and making it accessible to users
- No two collections are exactly the same
- No two archivists would process a collection in the same way
- General principles of provenance and original order to guide our work
- Follow national standards as well as local practice



# Key Concepts

Aggregates

Hierarchy

Context

# Aggregates

- Collection
- Series
- Subseries
- Files/Folders
- Items





# Hierarchy

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# Context

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# Standards: DACS

## Describing Archives: A Content Standard





# Arrangement and Description



# Where to Begin?

- Planning
- Identification
  - Survey
  - Inventory
  - Documentation
- Set Priorities



# Remember

- Anything you do is better than what it was
- Don't do anything you can't undo





# Thank you!

## Questions?

**Beth Bidlack**

**Brigette C. Kamsler**

Burke Library at Union Theological Seminary

Columbia University Libraries

