

ASK AN ARCHIVIST!

Take Notes Like a Pro

Some of your note-taking and technology management will depend on what resources an archives has and what they allow in terms of photos/scans/copies.

- ☆ Be thorough & fastidious about noting where photos/scans come from. Take a picture of the box or folder label or call slip before taking a series of images from that box/folder. You & your citations will thank yourself later!
- ☆ Be prepared for technology failure! Bring chargers, cords, back-up flash drives, and have ideas for contingency plans. Back up your data to the cloud with Drop-box or other file-sharing services.
- ☆ Make a plan for organizing your photos/scans/notes and use a system you are comfortable and familiar with rather than trying something new.
- ☆ Take ALL THE NOTES! You can't take too many notes! Write down which boxes you saw, boxes you skipped—and why, boxes to return to later, etc.
- ☆ Additional ideas: <http://stuartschradler.com/advice-graduate-students-embarking-archival-research>

Though we have been portrayed as quite stodgy in the media (or as tattooed hipsters), archivists are (mostly) human. It's true we do favor cardigans, but sometimes it's chilly in the reading room. Our whole job is to help you with research, so please don't hesitate to ask questions (preferably in advance). Here are some tips for currying favor with us.

☆ Read the website and/or do a little catalog searching first before you ask basic questions. We know it's confusing and complicated to do research with primary sources, but we also like to see a little effort. We can hand hold, but won't do your research for you. (We might be able to suggest someone who freelances though.)

☆ Sometimes we'll have suggestions for additional collections you might not find on your own, and sometimes we will not be experienced in your field of study.

☆ Are some collections are digitized (you can probably find this out online, but it's not always obviously) or available on (dreaded) microfilm for loan? Can the archives scan material for a fee? Sometimes this is more cost & time effective than planning a trip.

☆ If you have a good experience, thank your archivist with a kind note (and preferably chocolate). And spell their names correctly in your acknowledgements. (We check.)

☆ In the reading room: Do they allow cameras/scanners or other equipment? Do they have a scanner/camera/copier for researcher use? What can you bring vs. what is not allowed? Can you bring a notepad and laptop? Is there public wifi?

Best Laid Plans

Every archive is different—that's why they call us special collections! Maximize your time in the reading room and get the most out of your research trip by planning ahead! Don't just show up after driving 8 hours to find out that the library is closed for renovation, or that the collections are not available immediately (based on a true story!). Most of this info should be on the institution's website or travel/visitor info sites, but it doesn't hurt to ask as well.

☆ Things to consider when making travel plans: Are there holidays or other closures? Major sporting or other campus events that affect lodging/parking? Irregular hours at the reading room? Don't waste 2 hours of precious research time looking for a parking space during a basketball game!

☆ Getting around town: Is there public transportation or a hotel shuttle? Do you need to rent a car? What's the parking situation? How close are your lodgings? Is there food nearby? How close is the airport?

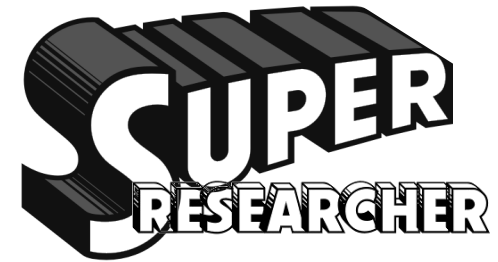
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Doing archival research is hard work despite what it might look like! Don't forget to take care of your body and your mind.

- ☆ Plan breaks for water, coffee, snacks
- ☆ Move your body—stretch, get some fresh air, rest your eyes
- ☆ *The Archive of Feelings* isn't just a book by Ann Cvetkovich—you may be moved or upset by the human stories you encounter, or just frustrated and exhausted
- ☆ Get good rest if you're at the archives for a few days
- ☆ Take advantage of good food and local attractions if you have time

How to be a



(Or at least fake it)

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