

European Bahá'í Archives Workshop



Bahá'í National Centre
Frankfurt, Germany
1-3 June 2001



[Click to enlarge](#)



[Click to enlarge](#)



[Course photos!](#)

Index to Documents

Please note that all of these documents are in Adobe Acrobat Portable Document Format (PDF). A free PDF viewer compatible with most computer systems can be downloaded over the Internet from <http://www.adobe.com/products/acrobat/readstep.html>

Lecture Notes:

- Session I [The Nature and Purpose of Archives](#)
- Session II [Basic Functions of the Archivist](#)
- Session III [Fundamentals of Working with Bahá'í Archives](#)
- Session IV [Archives in the Local Community](#)

Handouts:

- Intro - 1 [Quotations on the Importance of Bahá'í Archives](#)
- Intro - 2 [Important Contacts](#)
- Intro - 3 [Helpful Websites for Archivists](#)
- I - 1 [Categories of Archival Materials](#)
- I - 2 [Questionnaire for Institutional Self-Evaluation](#)
- II - 1 [Storage and Preservation of Archives](#)
- II - 2 [Mandate for National Bahá'í Archives Committee](#)
- II - 3 [Separation Record](#)
- II - 4 [Records Retention and Disposition Schedule](#)
- II - 5 [Receipt for Transfer of Organizational Records](#)
- II - 6 [Accession Sheet](#)
- II - 7 [Deed of Gift](#)
- II - 8 [Archives Processing Card](#)
- II - 9 [Archives Budget](#)
- II - 10 [Sample Job Descriptions](#)
- II - 11 [Archives as a Career](#)
- II - 12 [Archives Schools in Europe](#)
- II - 13 [Access Policy](#)
- II - 14 [Records Request Slip](#)
- II - 15 [Copyright Statement](#)
- II - 16 [Statement of Conduct and Ethics](#)
- II - 17 [Canadian Bahá'í Archives Policy Statement](#)
- III - 1 [Guidelines for the Protection of Archival Materials](#)
- III - 2 [Sources of Archival Supplies](#)
- III - 3 [Sample Inventory for a Manuscript Collection](#)
- IV - 1 [Biographical Questionnaire](#)
- IV - 2 [Guidelines for Bahá'í Book Collectors and Researchers about Personal Papers and Items](#)
- IV - 3 [Information Packet for Auxiliary Board Members](#)
- IV - 4 [Application for Research](#)
- IV - 5 [National Bahá'í Archives Reading Room Rules](#)
- IV - 6 [Information for Researchers Inquiring about the National Bahá'í Archives](#)
- IV - 7 [Local Bahá'í Archives Questionnaire](#)
- IV - 8 [Archival Standards for Spiritual Assembly Archives](#)

- IV - 9 [Spiritual Assembly Records in Local Bahá'í Archives](#)**
- IV - 10 [Personal Papers in Local Bahá'í Archives](#)**
- IV - 11 [Sample Bahá'í Marriage, Birth, Death, and Enrollment Registers](#)**
- IV - 12 [Donating Papers to the National Bahá'í Archives](#)**
- IV - 13 [Oral History Guidelines](#)**
- IV - 14 [Archival Standards for Bahá'í Schools and Institutes](#)**
- IV - 15 [Questions to Consider When Researching and Writing History of Local Communities](#)**

Last update: 12 August 2001
Please report any problems
with this site to
webmaster@nvdi.com

SESSION I: THE NATURE AND PURPOSE OF ARCHIVES

What are archives?

A body of original unpublished records or other source materials that document the history of an institution or a group of people.

In a Bahá'í community that would normally mean the official records of an Assembly, a Bahá'í school, committees, or other administrative bodies. These are records that are no longer in current use but that have permanent value and merit preserving. They are the primary storehouse of information about Bahá'í history. The exciting thing to remember is that we are living and making history every day. Everything that we do becomes part of the history of the growth and development of this wonderful Faith. But if we don't record and preserve what we do, there won't be anything for future historians to write from. The Archives is an integral part of the Bahá'í administrative order.

Aside from official records, an archives also contains papers of individual believers, photographs, scrapbooks, printed matter like newsletters and other publications, and artifacts. So, archives are more than just the secretary's records. The holdings of a Bahá'í archives, collectively, documents the complete history of the Bahá'í community.

Make a distinction between museum work, library work, and archival work. In early Bahá'í communities the lines between these three professional fields have often been blurred, and individuals or committees have performed valuable work, doing whatever was needed at the time.

Many Bahá'ís associate the word archives with the International Archives Building on Mt. Carmel and therefore think of archives as more of a museum function. The Archives Building that you visit when on Pilgrimage or a visit to the Holy Land a museum that contains holy relics and writings associated with the Central Figures of the Faith. Museology (the collecting, preservation, and display of material artifacts) is a distinct profession in itself.

In Haifa, the Archives Office is part of the Department of Library and Archival Services. The Archives Building and its contents are under the jurisdiction of the Department of Holy Places, with whom the Archives liaises to arrange for conservation of items or photographic work.

In general, however, archivists work primarily with paper documents, and more specifically with unpublished materials

What is special about Bahá'í archives?

The reason that Bahá'í archives are particularly special is that this is the first time in history that man has the opportunity to document the growth of an independent world religion from

its very beginnings, with the words and records of the Founders of the faith through all the stages of the growth of the administrative order.

Shoghi Effendi has stated that in the future every Hazíratu'l-Quds will have an archives as one of its component parts. He speaks of 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.” **(HANDOUT Intro-1)**

“The importance of the institution of Bahá’í Archives is not due only to the many teaching facilities it procures, but it 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 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 the community at large.

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.”

History of archives in the Faith

The Greatest Holy Leaf assumed responsibility for collecting and safeguarding many of the early materials of the Faith and is credited with beginning the Bahá’í International Archives.

The Guardian, of course, was meticulous in his efforts to document every facet of the growth and development of the Faith. He systematically assembled archival material in the late 1920s and early 1930s at the World Center by collecting and organizing the Writings of the Central Figures and historical objects associated with the Báb and Bahá’u’lláh, their families, and early Bahá’í history.

During the 10 Year Crusade he planned the construction of the International Bahá’í Archives building on Mount Carmel, which was begun in 1955 and completed the year following his death, in 1958. It was the first edifice to be erected on the arc, the cornerstone upon which the world administrative center of the Faith was to be established.

Under the Universal House of Justice the work of properly protecting and preserving the official records of the Faith was formalized with the hiring of the first professional archivist, Ms Judith Oppenheimer, in 1981, dedicating space for proper storage, establishing records management procedures for records created at the Bahá’í World Centre, and calling for the preparation of detailed finding aids and retrieval mechanisms to

make full use of the records, plus making provisions for preservation and restoration of records (conservator). At present the Archives Office has a staff of nine, three of whom are professional archivists. Their principal efforts are devoted to building up a database containing an item level inventory and electronic texts of documents in the core collections (Tablets of Bahá'u'lláh and 'Abdu'l-Bahá and the correspondence of Shoghi Effendi). That area of work employs two Persian-speaking document analysts for the inventory work, two Persian/Arabic typists, and two full-time Persian/Arabic proofreaders.

In America, National Archives began in 1903 under the National House of Spirituality. Mr. Albert Windust was the first keeper of the records. He collected sacred writings and relics primarily. Eventually a National Archives Committee was appointed. It was most active during the 1930s - 1950s when a great body of material was collected. In the 1940s the collection was moved from a Chicago bank vault to the basement of the House of Worship, where it remains today.

Mr. Roger Dahl was hired as the first professional archivist in 1974—since then the size of the collection has grown tremendously. Having a trained archivist working full-time, dedicated to developing, organizing, and preserving the archives made all the difference. He established schedules for transferring official records to the archives, began actively pursuing personal collections, and began organizing and creating findings aids for the archives in an organized fashion. For many years he was also in charge of the National Reference Library, which has now been spun off, and also functioned as an unofficial Research Office, which has also now been spun off. The U.S. now employs two professional archivists. Resources will be dedicated to the archives as part of the current Kingdom Project.

The place of archives in Bahá'í administration

Why do we save these records? Basically, we do this for three reasons:

1. For administrative purposes:

They represent the institution memory of our communities and document the growth and development of the Faith.

They preserve previous decisions and hopefully help us learn from our experiences and avoid reinventing the wheel.

They enable us to be independent of individual memory for a knowledge of the past

They provide an answer to the challenge of an ever-changing membership of Bahá'í institutions and communities

2. For legal reasons - to protect legal rights and interests, property records, to document previous transactions, Bahá'í cemetery records, marriage registers, etc.

3. And for use by future historians. A rich mine of historical information for posterity. Creates a spiritual link between past, present, and future generations of Bahá'ís.

What is the role of the Bahá'í Archivist?

The responsibility of the archivist, whether an individual or a committee, is threefold:

First, to ensure that records having permanent value are preserved. This includes taking steps to see that historically significant records are deposited in the archives and that they are protected from damage or deterioration.

Second, to make the records available for use. The archivist arranges the records, prepares finding aids that adequately describe them, and provides facilities in which researchers can work.

Third, education. Educating institutions and individual believers about the existence and importance of archives and promoting the continuous growth and development of the archives. Archives begin with good record-keeping practices, and archivists can be very helpful in instructing Assembly members about effective procedures for creating and maintaining important records.

Bahá'í archivists are interested in collecting two types of materials necessary to document the growth and history of the Faith:

1. Administrative records that document the history of our institutions
2. Personal records that pertain to the body of believers

So, what kind of records are we talking about? (**Handout I-1**)

Letters and other correspondence (incoming and outgoing)

Diaries and personal recollections

Manuscript materials, such as drafts of books, articles, talks, deepening materials, poetry, music

Personal notes, for deepenings, talks, etc.

Financial records, ledgers, check registers, accounting reports, etc.

Legal records, deeds, wills, leases, passports, court cases, birth certificates

Printed matter like books, pamphlets, programs, newspaper articles, Bahá'í newsletters, periodicals

Photographs, family and Bahá'í oriented

Artifacts, such as relics, jewelry, clothing, meaningful mementos

Art work, paintings, sketchings, drawings, prints

Professional files from work life

Bahá'í committee or Assembly files related to service on administrative bodies

Audiovisual materials, like films, slides, film strips, audio tapes

Computer-generated records in all their various formats

Architectural drawings and plans

Examples of personal collections in U.S. Bahá'í Archives: Martha Root, Juliet Thompson, Robert Hayden, Louis Gregory, Horace Holley, Lydia Zamenhof, construction of House of Worship,

The many uses of archives:

- Teaching work
- Administration of the Faith
- Scholarship
- Displays and inspirational exhibits
- Documentation of Bahá'í schools and institutes
- Source of history for study of history of the Faith
- Photographs are very popular and constantly used

Relationship of different Bahá'í archives to each other

There are different levels of Bahá'í archives. Local, national, sometimes regional, and international. Common sense applies in deciding what is the most appropriate repository for specific materials.

Each local community should have its own archives, containing the records of its Assembly, the history of its community, and the personal papers of members of the community, unless they are nationally-significant figures. As a general rule, if a community loses its Assembly and does not reform within two years, the archives should be boxed and sent to the National Archives for safekeeping until the Assembly is reestablished. All communities, large and small, should keep in mind that the archives is an institution of the Faith that will only continue to grow in importance.

National Bahá'í Archives preserve the records of the National Assembly and its committees, the papers of nationally prominent Bahá'ís, and documentation on teaching campaigns and activities of national importance.

By and large, the International Archives, aside from the Sacred Writings of the Central Figures of the Faith and records of the Universal House of Justice and World Center agencies like the International Teaching Center, preserves the personal papers of Hands of the Cause, International Bahá'í Council member, Universal House of Justice members, Counsellors serving at the International Teaching Center, and long-time staff members of the World Centre. (See **BWC Archives Brochure**)

The value of professional self-evaluation

Using tools published by professional archival organizations to gauge the progress of the Bahá'í Archives and its adherence to professional standards and procedures can be very valuable.

(Handout I-2) I have available copies of a questionnaire (essentially a checklist) used by the Society of American Archivists as part of their professional accreditation program. Some of the questions are pertinent and some or not, but it will get you thinking about the types of analysis all Bahá'í Archives should eventually use to evaluate their programs.

SESSION II: BASIC FUNCTIONS OF THE ARCHIVIST

(Or, What Can You Do Until You Have A Full-Time Professional Archivist?)

There are limits on the amount of work you can do, in terms of organizing and processing the collections in your archives, until you have a professional, trained archivist who can work with you. But in the meantime there are many basic things that you can accomplish to further the work of the archives. Perhaps most importantly, you can give your National Spiritual Assembly assurance that the archives are being properly safeguarded and prepared for future work. Expect your progress to be gradual and be patient.

Let's presume that you have just been appointed by the National Spiritual Assembly to take care of the archives. (Hopefully many are far beyond this point.) What are your first and most important priorities?

1. Make sure the archives are securely and safely housed.

If possible, consolidate all archives in one location, preferably not in a basement or attic. Make sure the room is lockable and know exactly who has keys.

It should be a place that is not prone to flooding or seepage, not near heat sources or electrical generation equipment.

Preferably it should be air-conditioned.

Use metal rather than wooden shelving. Bottom shelf should be at least 6" off the floor.

2. Ensure physical preservation of the records. (Handout II-1)

Inspect the physical conditions of the room with an eye to long-term preservation of records and make notes on what needs to be fixed or improved.

Do everything possible to control temperature and humidity conditions.

If there are windows, block them to prevent damage from ultraviolet light.

If possible, have a well-lit room for work areas and a second room that can be kept dark for archival storage.

If your work area has fluorescent lighting, buy ultraviolet sleeves for the tubes.

Examine closely for evidence of insect or rodent infestation.

Install smoke detectors and fire extinguishers.

All the while you are determining the requirements for the archives, be making notes that can be used to build a comprehensive report to the National Assembly, as well as a budget for materials, facility improvements, and other needs.

4. Decide whether to establish a National Archives Committee. If so, develop a mandate for the committee and identify potential members. (Handout II-2)

Pros: More people to consult with and bounce ideas off of

Ability to recruit people with expertise in different areas

More hands to help—at the National Centre and in local communities

More individuals to act as ambassadors and promoters of the archives

Look for people who have experience in scholarship, publishing, library work, teaching, records management. Examples: a history teacher, a librarian, a sociologist, a published scholar/author

Sample Archives Committee mandate is provided in book

Every Bahá'í endeavor benefits from good, strong consultation. Ask the BWC for help, if you need it, and keep them apprised of your efforts. I will be available this evening if you would like to have private one-on-one consultations about the status of archives in your countries.

5. Conduct a basic inventory of the archives (Handout - Günter's Inventory)

Archives are practically useless if you don't know what you have and where to find it. Also identify what records *should* be in the archives but are missing. Search for those items.

List items by type and date range.

Goes faster with two people and a laptop computer

Assign a logical numbering system to shelves and storage containers, so you can indicate the exact location of each item

Take continuous notes about corrections/changes that need to be made

Set aside an area for oversize materials and photographs and have separation records on hand. Or make detailed notes on locations of photographs. **(Handout II-3)**

As you go, you can take steps to safeguard things and correct harmful storage situations.

Look for: NSA records, committee records, annual reports, minutes and proceedings of National Conventions, correspondence files, financial records, legal records, property records, teaching materials, deepening materials, materials from Bahá'í conferences, personal papers of individuals, pamphlets, Bahá'í newsletters, photographs, scrapbooks and publicity files, artifacts or relics, artwork, carpets, audio and video tape recordings and films, maps and architectural drawings, wills and other legal papers from individuals, computer disks and printouts

Some archives will contain two copies of each publication produced by their publishing trust. Ideally, published material should be kept in the National Bahá'í Library.

Your NSA should be taking parallel steps to establish a National Bahá'í Library and employ professional librarians to aid in its organization and development. This job can get complex, with the plethora of pamphlets, brochures, deepening materials, etc. Sometimes the lines between what belongs in the library and what belongs in the archives can get a little blurry.

For important records such as minutes, legal records, and property records, make sure that a security copy is maintained off site and give consideration to microfilming the collection.

6. Work with the NSA Secretariat to establish a records management program and schedules for retiring inactive records to the archives.

Your most important customers will be the National Spiritual Assembly and offices at the National Centre

Good archives begin with good record-keeping practices

Offices need to keep active records for a certain period of time, for use as reference in their day-to-day activities. This period can vary from one year to five or ten years, depending on the nature of the records.

At the end of their useful life as active files, those records that have permanent value should be transferred to the archives for permanent retention.

The archivist should meet with each office and committee associated with the National Centre, develop an inventory of the types of records that they create, evaluate each type of record for retention value, and establish a schedule for transferring records to the archives. **(Handout II-4)**

Once a year, the archives should receive records that are ready to be retired. Keep a stock of acid-free record center cartons on hand for offices to use. Hopefully, offices will box their own records and prepare a list of everything that is included. Some may need reminders or assistance in getting this done.

Issue an Archives Receipt and prepare an Accession Record for each collection of records as it is received, keeping one copy for your Accession Files and giving the other to the office for their records. **(Handouts II-5 and II-6)**

Shelve the material for later processing by an archivist, making careful note of the location.

7. Establish procedures for accessioning materials into the archives.

Prepare a collections policy and follow it. Be aware of what kinds of records best belong in which repositories.

We talked about accessioning Institutional records into the archives. Now let's talk about personal records, more commonly referred to as manuscript collections

Created and accumulated by a specific person or family

Personal records can help fill gaps in institutional records sometimes

Tell the entire story of a person's life, including professional life, Bahá'í growth

Accessioning manuscript collections – gaining initial physical and intellectual control over materials when they first arrive in the archives. The archivist must know what he or she has and where it is at all times. Intellectual control means that the archivist knows about the nature of the collection, the type of records, their subject content, their range of dates and their physical condition.

First the materials are given a collection number and a title. (May be addition to an existing collection.)

Issue a Deed of Gift **(Handout II-7)**. Maintain correspondence (with donor or next of kin)

Create individual files for each donor – contents will be Deed of Gift, correspondence with donor, biographical info, copy of archives receipt and accession record

Do an initial inventory to accompany the Deed of Gift—be thorough. As you complete the inventory, you can do basic preservation work and make notes on actions that need to be taken later.

Keep a master Accession Notebook with copy of Deed of Gift and inventory filed by collection number

Maintain processing cards to track progress of collections **(Handout II-8)**

Gather biographical information about the person the papers belonged to

Question of restrictions

Question of privacy and sensitive materials

(Show Sample Set-up: Donor box, Accession notebook, Inventory Book, Processing cards box, Reference card box, Records management book (schedules & receipts))

8. Develop policies related to operations of the archives.

It is the Assembly's (National or Local) responsibility to preserve records entrusted to its care and make available the human, physical, and financial resources to properly protect and utilize the archives

Space – Spell out your requirements for processing space, storage space (allowing room for anticipated expansion), shelving, furniture, equipment, archival materials, and supplies)

Budget – **Handout II-9** is a sample budget that lists some of the common things you may want to include

Personnel – Members of the Archives Committee and eventually a full- or part-time trained archivist. Perhaps you or a member of the committee is willing to pursue formal training. (**Handouts II-10, 11, and 12. American schools in notebook**)

Access – (**Handout II-13**) Basically, researchers or individuals who wish to conduct research in the National Bahá'í Archives must request access through the National Assembly. Access should be denied to unprocessed collections. You will need to establish a working relationship with NSA members and staff of the National Centre who will occasionally need access to materials in the archives when the archivist is not around. Establish a check-out procedure and encourage them to respect the fact that the archivist is working to organize and manage the archives and that, when possible, it is better to let the archivist retrieve materials that are needed. (**Handout II-14**) Your Access Policy will most likely develop and change over time, as the state of the archives improves.

Deed of gift – Every archives needs to develop its own Deed of Gift, reviewed by your legal advisor. A sample is at Handout II-7. The purpose of the Deed of Gift is to officially transfer free and clear ownership of the records to the archives.

Copyright and ownership – (**Handout II-15**) The NSA owns the copyright to its own records and to personal papers of individuals where the copyright was given to the NSA through the Deed of Gift. Generally, you want to have a liberal policy of permitting scholars to quote excerpts from your archival holdings to encourage scholarship, taking into account those collections that have restrictions. You will need to tell them writers how you want them to reference the fact that they got the information or photographs from you. Under certain circumstances, if you have a particularly valuable collection (an example being the Robert Hayden collection in the U.S.), the NSA might want to establish a schedule of royalties or fees to publish items from the archives. If someone wants to quote extensively from the archives, the request should be reviewed by the National Assembly.

Ethics – (**Handout II-16**) As trustworthy as Bahá'ís are, you must have guidelines in place for staff working in the archives. Staff members should not have any special privileges in using the archives and should follow the same rules for access when doing private research. Archives committee meetings should be treated confidentially, on the same basis as Assembly meetings. Committee members should not make any commitments for the archives without the permission of the

archivist. Archives staff should scrupulously avoid any appearance of conflict of interest in personal collecting of Bahá'í historical material. Archivists should under no circumstances accept money from researchers as payment for reference services performed. You might want to consider creating an Archives Endowment Fund with the National Treasurer, to receive earmarked funds that people want to donate.

Microfilming policy – The National Archives in the U.S. still uses microfilm for long-term storage. New technologies, while promising, have still not proven themselves for extended long-term storage and retrievability. They have the equipment to do some of the microfilming themselves and contract some of it out. Aside from microfilming NSA minutes and records, one project they undertook was to microfilm back issues of *The American Bahá'í* and make them available on microfilm.

Offsite storage – In the U.S. there are several large underground storage facilities, some in the mountains and some in abandoned salt mines. Rates are reasonable. Don't know if the same type of facilities are available in Europe, but they can be handy for long-term storage for large volumes material. For shorter-term secure storage try safe deposit boxes or bank vaults.

9. Prepare regular reports for the National Spiritual Assembly and keep it apprised of your progress.

Prepare regular reports for the NSA and keep them involved and interested in your work.

Prepare a work plan, with timelines, to accompany your proposed budget.

One issue that regularly comes up is the relationship between archives and library, publishing trust, and other committees.

Make your way. Cultivate productive working relationships with other entities.

Know clearly what your responsibilities are to the archives. Ask the NSA for clarification, as necessary.

The Archives at the Bahá'í World Centre suggests the following stages for development of the archives:

1. Appointment of National Archives Committee
2. Allocation of resources for the archives
3. Collecting and storing material for the archives
4. Appointment of a volunteer professional archivist
5. Practical work of “processing” the collections
6. Appointment of a full-time archivist and staff
7. Opening of the facility for use by researchers

The Canadian National Bahá'í Archives has developed a very comprehensive Policy Statement regarding its operations. (**Handout II-17**). It covers most of the things we have talked about above and would be a good starting point for developing your own policy statement.

SESSION III: FUNDAMENTALS OF WORKING WITH BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

This afternoon I'd like to share with you some of the mechanics of working in the archives. I'm not going to go into a lot of detail, because until you have a trained archivist on board you probably won't be using many of these techniques, but I think it's important for you to understand the principles involved and the context in which archivists work.

Developing professional contacts (Handouts: websites of interest to archivists, important contacts)

There are many allies you can call on when you have questions and need assistance. Begin now developing a network with these folks and don't be shy about asking questions.

Bahá'í World Centre Archives

U.S., Canadian, and U.K. National Bahá'í Archives

International Council on Archives

Regional, state, and university archives – develop contacts, visit facilities, and teach as you ask for advice. It's good exposure for the Faith. We should not only be growing our own archivists, but encouraging trained archivists to investigate the Faith, as well.

Cardinal rules of the archives

The archives profession has its own vocabulary, just as any other discipline. Some of the terms you'll hear archivists use are (in the most basic definition): (there are some differences between the U.S. and Europe)

Accessioning (official steps followed to bring records or papers into the archives)

Processing or arranging (putting the collection into its final arrangement so that it will be ready for researchers to use)

Authentication or documentation (establishing the history and verifying the validity or authenticity of an item or a collection)

Description (preparing finding aids for archival collections)

Conservation (procedures to reverse damage to documents and preserve their longevity)

Inventory (a document that lists in detail the contents of a collection)

Record group (body of organizationally related records) – give examples

Collection (a body of records forming a unit because it was created or accumulated by the same institution, person, or family)

Provenance (tracing the history of ownership of an item or collection and how it came to be in the archives)

There are two very important concepts that guide work in all archives:

Respect des fonds – The archivist treats a collection as an organic whole and does not break it up. An archivist keeps together all records created by one source, whether administrative

or individual, and does not intermingle the records from one collection with another. An archives, unlike a library, is not organized according to a predetermined system of subject classification. We don't create bodies of records grouped around a particular subject, theme, or person. The principle of *respect des fonds* means keeping the records of one National Assembly office or Local Spiritual Assembly separate from the collections of individuals, and individual collections separate from each other. Give examples.

Original order – If it is sufficiently clear and functional, an archivist retains the arrangement that the collection had when it arrived at the archives. You determine that as you do the initial inventory and examine the scope of what the collection contains. The donor's organizational scheme is best, if it makes sense. But sometimes a collection arrives in disarray or its arrangement would make it difficult for researchers to find items. The archivist may then decide to impose a more logical order.

Archival Supplies and Special Techniques

Archivists use specialized materials and supplies to help preserve items as long as possible. There are basic preservation techniques that you can use to avoid causing damage to archival materials and in some cases reverse the effects of previous abuse or neglect.

We take great care in handling documents, not only out of respect, but to make sure that our contact with them doesn't cause any further damage. (**Handout III-1**)

Rule of thumb: Don't do anything in the archives that is not reversible.

One of our most effective tools is the use of acid-free folders and boxes for storage. These come in every conceivable size and configuration. (Show catalogs and samples; **Handout III-2** sources of supplies)

Acid

Acid breaks down fibers and causes paper to become brittle, change color, and eventually turn to dust. Acid can remain in paper after it is manufactured if it is made from wood pulp or contains alum sizing. Acid can be transferred between papers or adjacent objects. That's why we use acid-free folders and containers. Highly acidic material, like newsprint, should not be placed against items free of acid.

The sulfuric acid in polluted air can also damage archival material.

Archival pens to determine acidity of paper

There are methods for neutralizing the acid in paper—aqueous and non-aqueous, primarily with use of sprays now, although there are still some problems with soluble inks. Trying to perfect gases, which will allow to do large quantities of documents at once. These methods should only be employed by a professional archivist or conservator.

Isolate acidic documents physically and/or copy them onto acid-free stock (examples: Telegraph cables and newsprint. Make notes if more treatment is required later.)

We put photographs in protective sleeves and use non-invasive methods to label them. Use gloves to handle pictures and negatives. Check negatives for nitrate (especially prior to 1941). They have nitrate written on them or you can clip a corner off and see if it burns rapidly. Deteriorating nitrate film can spontaneously burn and gives off gases. Red dust is a telltale sign. Make copies on safety film and destroy the originals.

We could get into a lengthy discussion about organizing and preserving photograph collections. It's really the topic of a whole separate workshop. One big don't: Never write on the back of a photograph with a pen (it harms the emulsion on the other side). Place the photo face down on a piece of glass and use a soft #1 pencil to label it on a back edge, or write the caption on an acid-free label and attach the label to the back of the photo.

Demonstrate: Use of gloves, archival mending tape, pH pen, plastic paper clips, opaline pad and gum eraser, removing staples, pins, and other fasteners, encapsulation, bone folder, tying tape.

One of the challenges you face in the archives is preserving a wide variety of media. Photographs, films, videotapes, audiotapes, disc records, artwork, carpets, clothing, leather, scrapbooks, artifacts, and relics all require different kinds of skills and preservation techniques. Tapes need to be rewound on a regular basis and stored with the tail end out, so that the user is required to rewind them in order to play them. Clothing should never be left to hang on hangars. In general, fabrics should be rolled rather than folded. Valuable or historically significant carpets should not be hung on walls, and no artifacts or artwork should be displayed where sunlight can affect them. There are many rules and principles that pertain to preservation of historic materials—if you have questions about specific items, bring them to your individual consultation this evening or contact the BWC Archives for guidance.

Non-manuscript items that require different physical handling may be separated. Oversize materials, routine books (as opposed to rare books or autographed copies), photographs, films, tapes, disc records, etc. are sometimes separated from the collection for specialized storage. Create a separation file and cross reference items, so it will always be evident what collection they are part of.

A note about scrapbooks and newspaper clipping or publicity files. These often present a preservation nightmare, attaching fragile acidic newspaper clippings with glue to pages of scrapbooks that are likewise acidic. If pages are in danger of becoming unreadable, photocopy them onto acid-free paper. Do not attempt to remove photographs that are firmly glued down in scrapbooks. If they only have corner tabs, they can be removed, but Xerox the entire book (in reduced form, if necessary) beforehand, so you capture the order and context of the general album, which will be lost once the photographs are moved.

Incidentally, if you discover original tablets from 'Abdu'l-Bahá or letters from Shoghi Effendi, or relics associated with the Central Figures of the Faith, immediately contact the Bahá'í World Centre Archives for guidance.

Preparing finding aids (and use of automation)

Now comes the fun part—archivists create a variety of finding aids so that they and future researchers can easily see what collections the archives contains and can find them at a moment's notice. The archivist's three main functions are to preserve the archives, arrange them in a logical fashion, and ultimately make them available for use by administrators and researchers.

First, there is the overall inventory or listing of the archives, which you will create and then continue to maintain as new materials are added. This is sometimes referred to as your Guide to the Holdings.

Each manuscript collection, once it is processed, will have its own detailed inventory, which includes a short biography of the person and a list of each box and its contents **(Handout III-3)**. As the collection is processed, the archivist will also prepare catalog cards and/or load details about the collection and cross references into a computer database. It is useful to also include an abbreviated guide entry—in the future Bahá'í archives will want to publish guides to their entire holdings. It will reduce future effort if the guide is written as the collection is being processed and you are most familiar with the materials.

Speaking of use of computers, they can be a boon to archivists and make our work a lot easier. On the other hand, preservation and storage of computer-generated records is yet another specialized area of archives science, and one that we cannot go into in detail here. In general, make sure the people on your National and Local Assemblies are aware that they should never let the electronic version of their documents be the permanent copy. Always print out and file a paper copy. And backup their electronic records on a regular basis. With the rapid advance of CD-ROM technology and the ability to burn CD-ROMs from our personal computers, it is easier and easier to create backup versions of records for intermediate range storage.

Shelve the collection. Remember that you will have already created a system to number or letter your shelves, so you have an easy system for finding things. Another finding aid archivists use is to create a shelf list, so that at any point in time you can see at a glance what is filed on a particular shelf.

SESSION IV: ARCHIVES IN THE LOCAL COMMUNITY

Once the National Bahá'í Archives is on a firm footing, the archivist will be in a position to begin promoting the archives, actively seeking collections, and at the right time and with permission of the National Spiritual Assembly, open the archives for use by researchers. We'll talk about that in more depth in this session.

Another important responsibility of the archivist is to advise the National Spiritual Assembly on appropriate steps to take with regard to helping Local Spiritual Assemblies preserve and maintain their records. The same guidance should also be provided to Bahá'í schools and institutes.

Ways to Develop and Promote Bahá'í Archives

As you begin working in the archives, the word is bound to spread. Make announcements at conventions, conferences, schools and institutes. Place notices in Bahá'í publications about the types of materials and assistance you are seeking.

Biographical questionnaires can be useful in determining if personal papers would be valuable or worth collecting. **(Handout IV-1)**

Be aware of noteworthy people in the community and approach them ahead of time.

Encourage scholars and historians to do oral history interviews with prominent Bahá'ís and talk with them from a professional standpoint about the importance of preserving their personal records. It is a good idea to issue guidelines for Bahá'í book collectors and researchers so that they will know the proper steps to follow when they come across significant collections of personal papers in the course of their work. **(Handout IV-2)**

Solicit the assistance of Auxiliary Board Members and Counsellors, who have the opportunity to come in contact with many different people and communities. **(Handout IV-3)**

Make good use of volunteers in the archives. Train them well and let them assist with the work. They can also make good emissaries for the archives in the larger community.

When the archives is in a condition to be opened for use by researchers, you will need to have a firm access policy in place **(Handout II-13)**, approved by the National Spiritual Assembly, as well as an application for research form **(Handout IV-4)** and a good set of reading room rules **(Handout IV-5)**. You may want to develop a brochure about the archives and its holdings, or at least develop an information sheet **(Handout IV-6)**.

All of this is way down the road, but it's helpful to keep in mind your ultimate goals as an archivist. Knowing where you're headed can give you useful perspective as you labor along that path. Always remember to cultivate and use your contacts with other Bahá'í archivists and professional archives repositories in your community. Join a local archives association, if possible.

Archives in the Local Community

The development of local archives is another measuring stick for gauging the maturation of our Local Spiritual Assemblies. **Handout IV-7** is a tool you can use to survey local communities in your country, gauge their level of understanding, and get a feel for what kinds of records they have.

Archives begin with good record-keeping practices. The key to a good local archives is training Assembly members, and secretaries in particular, about the importance of properly organizing and preserving records as they are generated. If they give thought to the context in which they are operating, it will help give them perspective on the role they have to play in creating and protecting their local archives.

They need to follow the same rules and guidelines the National Archives uses for protecting and safeguarding their archives. (**Handouts IV-8 and 9**) They can use the inventory in Handout 9 to do their initial inventory. **Handout IV-10** talks about what to do if they have collections of personal papers in their archives.

The minutes of the Local spiritual Assembly, of course, are their most important records. They record the development of the Faith and individual Bahá'ís in a given locality.

Make sure the minutes contain complete information: date, names, complete enough details that an outsider could read them and understand what happened.

Should preferably be typed, on high-quality bond paper

Assembly stationery should also be high-quality bond paper

Maintain personal case files separate from minutes

Organize records at the end of each year.

Annual reports become very important and should be done with the same perspective of a researcher (i.e., stranger from outside) as applies to taking minutes.

Keep track of all publicity

Collect photos that document events

Keep records of special teaching programs or events—appoint a chronicler

Mention children's classes and other activities—all aspects of Bahá'í life

Maintain a birth, death, marriage, and enrollment register—reconstruct past years by talking to those who were there. (**Handout IV-11**)

When current records are caught up, go back and organize past years in the same fashion.

Make a record/inventory of everything that is available and what is missing.

Set up records disposition schedule with the Assembly

Also work on:

Reference library for the community

Educating believers about importance of their personal papers (**Handout IV-12**)

Oral interviews (**Handout IV-13**)

Collecting old photographs

Let the National Bahá'í Archives know that you exist and what you have. Stay in touch.

Most of this same information is relevant to Bahá'í schools and institutes, especially the permanent schools like Landegg. **(Handout IV-14)**

Writing Local History

Visualize a group of people sitting around with boxes of miscellaneous materials, trying to reconstruct the history of a community. How hard would that be? Think of how much you can do to make their job easier.

Think of all the things you would like to know about the early believers and the early Bahá'í communities in your country. **(Handout IV-15)**

What do you wish they had written down?

What were their Feasts like, what kinds of things did they consult about at their Assembly meetings?

What was it like for those early believers who were the first in their families to declare and adopt this unheard-of religion? How did they feel about that?

What will answer those questions? Letters, taped interviews, personal papers, early local records.

Remember the intangible things about communities that are not written down.

The special character of the community

The names and experiences of early pioneers

Travel teachers and visitors to the community

How individuals' understanding of the Faith developed as the community grew

The archivist must also think like a historian and collect materials not only on the Bahá'í community but also on the community of which they were a part and what was going on in the outside world at the time.

Importance of identifying photographs

Use acid-free labels or place photo face down on glass and write on back with soft #1 lead pencil. Never use an ink pen or hard pencil to write on photos. Write on edges, not in the middle.

Rectifying past information gaps:

BDME records – verbal sources

Keep looking for missing minutes

Piece together annual summaries of activities (from personal calendars, photo albums, diaries, correspondence, oral histories)

Conduct oral histories with early believers

Put together stories and thoughts on the early years—weave a fabric of memories

Remember to think about growing young archivists and encouraging Bahá'í youth to investigate Archives as a Career (handout)

Take a break and come back for 45 minutes of questions and general discussion.

CLOSING REMARKS:

Thank you for taking the time to come and for taking an interest in Bahá'í archives work.

I know you all have very busy schedules and other very important Bahá'í work to accomplish in your countries. But even any small amount of time that you can dedicate to the work of the archives will be a big step forward and will be abundantly rewarded. You can become the mothers and fathers of the Bahá'í archives in your countries.

If you need assistance with your return travel arrangements, please see Günter.

Closing prayer

QUOTATIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE OF BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

Another necessary and highly commendable undertaking is the founding of a Bahá'í Archives in each of the Bahá'í provincial administrative centers. . . . Anyone who, spontaneously and of his own free will, donates material to the Archives of his National Spiritual Assembly—whether this be Tablets, books, pictures, objects or the like—and especially if his inheritors are not accounted of the people of Bahá, or are not considered by him as trustworthy or reliable, will have performed a highly meritorious act in the sight of God, and his name will be perpetuated in the records of the Spiritual Assemblies and his memory enshrined in the Archives forever.

An Archives has also recently been established in the Holy Land, and whatever Sacred Writings and previous relics the individual believers and the Spiritual Assemblies donate voluntarily to this Archives—in particular those items that are more suitably and profitably collected together in one place, and whose dispersal would be a source of loss and detriment—will remain guarded and preserved in their name in a place set aside for the purpose. With the passage of days, visitors to the Holy Land from all quarters of the globe will have the privilege of viewing these items, and, remembering those faithful servants of the Threshold of Grandeur, will commemorate their mention and offer up prayers on their behalf.

(July 1925 to the Bahá'ís of the East, translated from the Persian)

. . . has suggested to the Guardian that he should ask your N.S.A. to address an appeal to the . . . believers urging them to co-operate with the National and local Bahá'í Archives . . . in their efforts for the collection of Bahá'í sacred relics, and specially the Tablets, and their safe preservation.

As this is undoubtedly one of the most urgent tasks facing the believers at present, he strongly feels it advisable that your N.S.A. should once more impress upon the friends the necessity of their giving full and continued support to the truly valuable work which the National as well as the local Archives Committees are accomplishing for our beloved Faith.

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

(25 September 1936 to a National Spiritual Assembly)

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 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 the community at large.

(September 1936 to a National Spiritual Assembly)

Complementary in its functions to those of the *Mashriqu'l-Adhkár*—an edifice exclusively reserved for Bahá'í worship—this institution [*Hazíratu'l-Quds*, the seat of the Bahá'í National assembly and pivot of all Bahá'í administrative activity], whether local or national, will, as its component parts, such as the Secretariat, the Treasury, **the Archives**, the Library, the Publishing Office, the Assembly Hall, the Council Chamber, the Pilgrims' Hostel, are brought together and made jointly to operate in one spot, be increasingly regarded as the focus of all Bahá'í administrative activity, and symbolize, in a befitting manner, the ideal of service animating the Bahá'í community in its relation like to the Faith and to mankind in general.

(*God Passes By*, rev. ed., 1974, pp 339-340)

The opening of a new epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Faith, and the beginning of the Six Year Plan are milestones in the unfoldment of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order. As we look backward over goals accomplished, and forward to new challenges, our sense of history is stirred, and we recognize the momentousness of the age in which we live.

Beyond having the vital duty of preserving the Writings of the Central Figures of the Faith and of the Guardian, the Bahá'í Faith is unique among world religions in the degree to which its historical processes have been documented and recorded. Unfortunately, many Bahá'í communities experience difficulty in caring for their historically significant records. Important pieces of our documentary heritage are at risk, or may already have disappeared. Care of archival resources—including the records of Bahá'í individuals and families, corporate bodies and institutions—is an indication of the state of our historical awareness. We too often fail to perceive the significance of what we do, and for this reason give scant attention to preserving the documents of our own, or earlier times.

Bahá'ís have the opportunity—perhaps even the duty—to preserve for future generations an accurate and detailed record of how a major religion entered the world of man and became established in human society. More immediately, history offers all of us a sense of inspiration from the past, as well as a revealing glimpse at our historical roots.

From a letter to National Spiritual Assemblies from the Department of Library and Archival Services, Bahá'í World Centre, 11 June 1986

IMPORTANT CONTACTS

Bahá'í World Center Archives
Box 155
Haifa, Israel 31 001
Phone:
E-Mail: archives@bwc.org

United States National Bahá'í Archives
Mr. Roger Dahl, Archivist
Bahá'í National Center
Wilmette IL 60091
Phone: 1-847-853-2359
E-Mail: archives@usbnc.org or rdahl@usbnc.org

Lois Walker
Box 21
Port St. Joe, FL USA
Phone: 1-850-647-9614
E-Mail: lois@nvdi.com

Günter Maltz
Gorch-Fock-Str. 4
D-29640 Schneverdingen
Phone: (49) 5193-7404
Fax: (49) 5193-52531
E-Mail: guenter.maltz@t-online.de

HELPFUL WEBSITES FOR ARCHIVISTS

List of archival repositories in Europe:

www.uidaho.edu/special-collections/other.repositories.html

International Council on Archives

www.ica.org

[www.ica.org/ISAD\(G\)-pub.pdf](http://www.ica.org/ISAD(G)-pub.pdf) (General International Standard Archival Description)

European Programme: International Council on Archives

www.ra.se/ica/

UNESCO Records and Archives Management Programme

<http://www.unesco.org/webworld/ramp/ramp.htm>

Open Society Archives (Central European University)

www.osa.ceu.hu/

European Commission on Preservation and Access

www.knaw.nl/ecpa/ecpatex/home.htm

Historical Archives of the European Communities

wwwarc.iue.it/eharen/Welco-en.html

History of Archives Development

www.ucl.ac.uk/SLAIS/projects/european.htm

European Guide on Banking and Business Archives

www.euroarchiveguide.org

Society of American Archivists

www.archivists.org

Archival books

www.archivists.org/catalog/catalog/index.html

CATEGORIES OF ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

CORRESPONDENCE

- Letters
- Greeting cards
- Telegrams
- Letter books

DIARIES

OFFICIAL RECORDS

- Minutes
- Annual Reports
- Convention Proceedings
- Conference Proceedings
- Committee Minutes and Records
- Publicity Files

PRINTED MATERIAL

- Certificates
- Awards
- Pamphlets
- Brochures
- Proofs
- Circulars
- Flyers
- Newspaper clippings
- Broadsides and posters
- Programs
- Newsletters

FINANCIAL DOCUMENTS

- Ledgers
- Journals
- Bank statements and checks
- Bills and receipts
- Notes

SCRAPBOOKS AND SCRAPBOOK MATERIAL

MAPS, CHARTS, DIAGRAMS, GRAPHS, LISTS

ARCHITECTURAL DRAWINGS

LITERARY PRODUCTIONS

- Research notes
- Manuscripts
- Reminiscences
- Memoirs
- Reports
- Speeches
- Sermons
- Deepening materials

LEGAL DOCUMENTS

- Contracts
- Petitions
- Agreements
- Briefs
- Depositions
- Insurance policies
- Wills
- Divorce papers
- Inventories of estates
- Mortgages
- Deeds
- Abstracts of title
- Property records

AUDIO RECORDINGS

- Wax discs
- Audio tapes

PHOTOGRAPHIC MATERIAL

- Positive transparency
- Positive print
- Negative print
- Movie film
- Video tapes

COMPUTER RECORDS

- Diskettes
- Zip disks
- CD-ROMs
- Computer tapes
- Printouts

QUESTIONNAIRE FOR INSTITUTIONAL SELF-EVALUATION

(Published in Society of American Archivists Newsletter, Jan 1980)

1. Legal Authority

There must be explicit documentation of an archives' legal status and authority.

- a. Is there documentary evidence of the archives' legal existence (e.g. charter, articles of incorporation, legislative act)?
- b. Does the archives comply with any legal requirements to maintain its authority and status?

2. Purpose

The archives must have a formal statement of its goals and priorities.

- a. Is there a formal statement of the goals and priorities of the archives?
- b. If the archives is part of a larger institution, is the archives' statement of purpose consonant with the purposes of that institution?

3. Governing Authority

The governing authority of the archives should adopt statements of basic policy and establish areas of administrative authority. These policies and administrative procedures are designed to meet the goals and priorities set by the archives.

- a. Does the governing authority (e.g., board of trustees) act as a policy-making body only?
- b. Does the governing authority delegate administrative functions (e.g., budget making and personnel management) to the administrator of the archives?
- c. Is the administrator responsible for reporting to the governing authority of behalf of the staff?

4. Planning and Evaluation

Staff should be involved in both planning and evaluation of the specific goals and priorities of the archives. If the archives is part of a larger institution, the administrator of the archives should be involved in the planning and evaluation processes of that institution as they affect the archives.

- a. Have specific goals and priorities been established within the framework of the archives' statement of purpose?
- b. Does the archives carry out planning and program evaluation?
- c. Is there a formal annual report, supported by records-keeping procedures on acquisitions, processing and use of holdings?

5. Budget and Finance

The financial resources dependably available to the archives must be adequate to carry out its stated purpose. These available resources must be contained in a separate budget for the archives. Staff should have the opportunity to contribute to the budget-making process, and the administrator should be involved at a higher level if the archives' budget is part of a larger budget.

- a. Are the financial resources dependably available to the archives sufficient to carry out its stated purposes?
- b. Does the archives have its own budget?

6. Staff

Every archives must include on its staff at least one person who possesses, through training or experience, professional competence in archives management. The archives must also

have sufficient staff to supply services commensurate with its volume of holdings and the needs of its researchers.

- a. Does the archives staff include at least one member who possesses, through training or experience, professional competence in archives management?
- b. Are the number and training of the staff sufficient to carry out the stated purpose and operational goals of the archives?
- c. Is the proportion of unprocessed collections decreasing?
- d. Are personnel policies such as promotion and dismissal procedures, annual job performance reviews, and grievance procedures clearly delineated?
- e. Is there a manual of procedures used in daily operations of acquisition, processing and reference so that staff members may readily understand procedures in use?
- f. Are salaries and fringe benefits adequate to insure a qualified and effective staff?
- g. If volunteers and other non-regular workers are used in the archives, is their use determined by staff and administrator together to achieve optimum ratio of such workers to supervisory personnel?
- h. Do archives personnel policies encourage the professional development of the staff through continuing education, involvement in professional organizations, and scholarly research?
- i. Are staff prohibited from personal collecting, buying, or selling of material in areas that might result in conflict of interest with the repository?
- j. Are adequate support services, such as microfilming, audiovisual duplicating services, and legal services available as needed?

7. Physical Facilities

The archives should provide adequate and suitable space and facilities for processing, storage, and use of its records.

- a. Does the archives have adequate space for receiving, arranging and describing records and collections?
- b. Does the archives maintain secure storage areas that permit the efficient retrieval of records?
- c. Does the archives have sufficient and appropriate space to house both the volume and the variety of its current holdings?
- d. Have adequate plans been made to insure storage for anticipated growth in holdings?
- e. Does the archives maintain sufficient space for readers in a clean, well-lighted and quiet environment free from distraction?
- f. Does the archives have provisions for handicapped users?
- g. Does the archives have space for readers with special needs (e.g., computers, scanners, tape records, cameras) and equipment or access to equipment for using all the record forms among its holdings (e.g., projectors, lightboxes, microfilm readers, tape decks, audiovisual equipment, computer facilities)?

8. Legal Authority to Receive Records and Acquisitions Policy

- a. Does the archives have the authority to receive the records of the parent institution of which it is a part?
- b. If the archives acquires private papers or records from other organizations, does it have a written acquisitions policy for such materials?
- c. Is the authority to receive records and/or the acquisitions policy reviewed periodically to determine whether they enable the archives to fulfill its obligations to the parent institution or meet the research needs of its patrons?

d. Do the holdings of the archives fit logically into the areas identified in the policy statements?

e. Does the archives have a written plan for improving the documentation in the areas of weakness by targeting persons and groups for collection emphasis and establishing priorities in the acquisition of new holdings?

9. Field Work and Records Management

In order to identify records to be retained or destroyed, the archives should prepare records disposition schedules in conjunction with the other administration subdivisions of the parent institution. Where appropriate, the archives should devise a manuscripts acquisition strategy that will enable it to obtain the types of materials that are compatible with its acquisitions policy.

a. Has the archives surveyed the extant records of the parent institution and prepared suitable records disposition schedules?

b. Does the archives maintain a contact file of information regarding negotiations with individuals, groups, or the several subdivisions of the parent institution?

c. Does the archives inform donors of their rights and responsibilities as well as those of the archives?

10. Appraisal and Accessioning

All acquisitions should be appraised to identify permanently valuable materials. The archives should maintain adequate records to document the acquisitions process and should record wherever possible the provenance of all accessions. The archives may assist donors in obtaining monetary evaluation whenever appropriate, but may not themselves evaluate gifts to their own institutions for tax purposes. The archives should also attempt to secure legal title and copyright to all accessions and these agreements should be recorded in a deed of gift or other instrument.

a. Does the archives maintain a record of accession that records the date of the transaction, the title of the accession, the donor

or office of origin, the volume of the accession, any restrictions concerning access to or use of the materials, and procedures regarding the disposition of unwanted materials?

b. Does the archives maintain records that adequately record the transfer or destruction of all records from the several subdivisions of the parent institution?

c. Does the repository conclude a written gift agreement with each donor specifying provisions regarding property rights, copyright, disposition, and access to the collection?

d. Does the archives avoid restrictions on access that appear difficult or impossible to administer?

e. Does the archives appraise all materials offered or received to ascertain whether they should be retained permanently?

f. Does the repository have procedures for weeding collections at the series, file folder, and item levels?

g. Does the archives assist donors in obtaining financial evaluations of their gifts for tax purposes?

11. Arrangement

Records and collections should be arranged in accordance with basic archival principles, namely the principle of provenance and the principle of original order. That is, records of different offices or origin or from different sources should not be intermingled, and records should be retained, wherever possible, in their original organizational pattern and in their original filing arrangement in order to preserve all relationships. If the original order has been lost, documents and files of documents should be arranged or grouped in a meaningful relation to one another. Documents should be properly boxed and labeled, and stored so that they are easily maintained and readily retrieved.

a. Wherever possible, does the archives arrange records according to the principles of provenance and original order?

b. If the original order has been lost, are records grouped in a meaningful relation to one another at as many as necessary of the following levels: record group of comparable control unit, subgroup, series, file unit, and document?

c. Does the detail of labeling of acid-free folders and boxes conform to the level of arrangement and description?

d. In arranging records, does the archives staff remove extraneous objects, flatten folded records, and note documents requiring repair?

e. Have the photographic and other non-textual records been evaluated and separated from textual records and filed separately, if such separation is desirable?

12. Description

The archives should design a system of finding aids to provide essential information about the holdings for records users, and to enable the archivist to retrieve records. Finding aids should employ the techniques of group and series description rather than item description, and a brief description of all records is preferred to a detailed description of some. The level of description of records depends on their research value, the anticipated level of demand, and their physical condition. Finding aids may include, as appropriate, guides, inventories or registers, card catalogs, special lists, shelf and box lists, indexes, calendars, and, for machine-readable records, software documentation.

a. Does the archives maintain a system of finding aids that provides general control of all its holdings as well as providing for detailed control as necessary?

b. Does the level of descriptive control conform to the research value and appropriate level of arrangement of the records group or collection?

c. Does the archives provide software documentation for machine-readable records?

d. Does the archives record the physical location of records so that staff can readily locate them?

13. Conservation

The archives should maintain environmental conditions at appropriate levels and techniques should be employed to protect, repair, and restore records. The archives should guard against fire, water, light, adverse temperature and humidity conditions, acidic pollution of air, dirt, mold, and vermin. Trained personnel should use only conservation methods that do no harm to records. It is essential that nitrate or other unstable photographic materials be copied on safety film and the unstable originals destroyed.

a. Does the archives maintain temperature and humidity conditions within acceptable ranges?

b. Does the archives maintain an environment free of dirt, mold, and vermin?

c. Does the archives protect records from sunlight and other sources of ultraviolet light?

d. Does the archives avoid storing records directly beneath overhead pipes or roof air-conditioning units, or in areas subject to seepage or flooding?

e. Is the building and all storage equipment, except for records containers, made of steel or other fire resistant material?

f. Does the archives have access to a facility for the repair and restoration of documents?

g. Does the archives allow only those conservation treatments that are reversible and can do no harm to records?

h. Does the archives permit conservation services to be performed only by trained personnel?

i. Does the archives appropriately provide for the deacidification of records before they are repaired?

j. Does the archives provide for copying on safety film of nitrate base photographic materials?

14. Access

The archives must provide opportunity for research into the records it holds. The archives should be open for research use on a regular and stated schedule. It should provide adequate space and facilities for research use and should make its records available on equal terms of access to all readers who abide by its rules and procedures. Any restrictions to access should be defined in writing and carefully observed.

- a. Is the archives open for research use on a regular and stated schedule?
- b. Does the archives have a written statement of its access policies?
- c. Does the archives maintain a written record of restrictions on access to or use of its materials?
- d. Does the archives administer restrictions equitably for all researchers?
- e. Does the archives observe conditions of access or use that it has agreed to or is bound to enforce?
- f. Does the archives have a policy for evaluating whether an unprocessed collection should be made available to patrons?
- g. Does the archives have a written policy outlining circumstances under which records will be loaned?
- h. Does the archives show knowledge of and conformity with applicable laws regarding freedom of information and privacy?

15. Reference

The archives should provide information about its holdings and assist and instruct patrons in the use of those holdings. Staff members familiar with the collections and capable of making informed decisions about legal and ethical considerations affecting reference work

should be available to assist readers. The archives should report its holdings to appropriate publications so that potential users may know of their existence. The archives should assist users by providing photocopies of materials in its possession whenever possible.

- a. Does the archives systematically provide guidance to sources appropriate to the reader's interest?
- b. Does the archives provide for readers written guidelines containing information about policies affecting research use, such as access policies, rules for use of materials, security rules, sample citations, photocopy policies, copyright provisions, and other specific information?
- c. Does the archives make finding aids available to readers?
- d. Does the archives attempt to inform readers of parallel research?
- e. Does the archives have a written policy outlining the amount and kind of information that will be provided from the records for patrons unable to search the records themselves?
- f. Does the archives report its holdings to appropriate cataloging agencies and publications to inform researchers of its holdings?
- g. Does the archives maintain adequate records of its reference services (e.g., the number and types of users, their topics, the collections used, the number and nature of telephone and mail requests, and the number of photocopy orders filled) to permit analysis of reference needs, to provide protection in cases of theft or abuse, and to permit planning and evaluation of reference services?
- h. Does the archives maintain or have access to a collection of general reference tools, manuals, standard monographs, and other reference materials likely to be needed by both staff and patrons?
- i. Does the archives have a written policy outlining its photocopying policies?

j. Does the archives maintain or have access to facilities to make electrostatic, microfilm, or photographic copies, as well as copies of any non-textual records the archives may hold?

k. Does the archives refuse to provide copies when the copy process risks damage to the original?

l. Does the archives conform to the requirements of copyright legislation when providing patrons with copies of records?

16. Security

While making records available to interested patrons, the archives should also take precautions to protect records from theft, damage, and abuse from staff or readers. The archives should develop appropriate policies and procedures to protect against such hazards, and should also develop policies and procedures for dealing with emergencies that may arise.

a. Does the archives have protection against unauthorized entry, fire, flood, and loss of heat to prevent frozen pipes?

b. Does the archives have a written policy for handling possible theft or abuse of records, disorderly persons, medical emergencies, or other emergencies threatening staff, readers, or records?

c. Does the archives have a written disaster recovery plan?

d. Has the archives been advised by local crime prevention and fire prevention units?

e. Does the archives require readers to register, to identify themselves and to sign an agreement to abide by the rules and regulations of the institution?

f. Does the archives require readers to leave coats, briefcases, packages and other belongings outside the reading area in a secure place provided for them?

g. Does the archives control access to and from the reading area?

h. Does the archives close stacks and processing areas to readers?

i. Does the archives provide supervision of the reading area at all times?

17. Outreach Activities

The archives should seek to inform and educate its various constituencies (scholars, students, donors, records creators, and the general public) about its goals, programs, and holdings through exhibits, publications, and educational programs. The archives should seek to stimulate use of archival holdings to augment the public's awareness of its heritage and to assist policy makers. The archives may also serve as an educational laboratory for students at various educational levels.

a. Does the archives organize exhibits to attract and inform one or more of the archives' constituencies?

b. Does the archives insure that exhibited documents are protected from harmful light and heat, theft, and other damages?

c. Does the archives offer, in conjunction with academic departments and other interested groups, cooperative programs that increase and improve the use of archival resources while providing instructional guidance for readers?

d. Does the archives conduct programs such as conferences and fellowships to encourage scholarly use of holdings?

e. Does the archives have a publications program to advance the interests of various programs and to serve as least part of the archives' constituency?

f. Does the archives publicize its activities by reporting to appropriate news media significant accessions, openings, exhibits, staff achievements, fellowship awards, conferences, and other activities?

STORAGE AND PRESERVATION OF ARCHIVES

Your job as archivist is to identify and guard against those things that can cause harm to the archives.

Heading the top of the list is human beings—people

Keep areas locked: no access without permission and under supervision of the archivist

No food or drink in the archives

Wash hands frequently. Use gloves when handling important records and photographs.

Use pencils when working with archives—no ink pens

See guidelines from Bahá'í World Centre—eventually you will be working with acid-free archival materials, removing paper clips, pins, staples, rubber bands, and other extraneous items, and taking other preservation measures.

Heat and humidity

No attics or basements

Temperature fluctuations – cellulose things (paper, wood) expand and contract

15-20 degrees C (60-68 degrees F), with storage areas cooler if possible

45-60% humidity; mold will not grow below 65% humidity. Invest in a good dehumidifier to control humidity.

Air conditioning with good filtration and humidity controls is one of the best investments an archives can make.

If permanent air conditioning is not available, consider portable air conditioners

Water and fire

Protect against flooding and seepage and take every precaution to guard against fire

Avoid proximity to water pipes and make sure heat is reliable to prevent frozen pipes

Install smoke detectors and have baking soda fire extinguishers on hand

Consider purchasing a fireproof safe for more valuable records, artifacts, and items of monetary value, or rent a safe deposit box at the bank

Eventually you will want to develop a disaster recovery plan, so that you can act at a moment's notice in case disaster does strike

A preliminary step that you can take is to make copies of vital documents and store a copy off-site (NSA minutes, property records, etc.)

Vermin

Many types of insects and rodents like to feast on archival material

Especially silverfish

If they are discovered, call in a professional exterminator

Light

The ultraviolet rays in sunlight and fluorescent lighting damage paper and other archival material. Archives should be in a windowless room or windows should be covered up.

Filtering sleeves can be purchased to slide over fluorescent tubes. Materials should never be left lying out during processing where sunlight can reach them, or displayed where they are accessible to sunlight or fluorescent light.

SAMPLE MANDATE

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES COMMITTEE

Purpose

The purpose of the National Bahá'í Archives Committee is to preserve the history of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of _____, its committees and agencies, and of the Bahá'ís of _____ who have contributed or are contributing the national life of the community, by preserving suitable archival material associated with these bodies and persons and to ensure the proper functioning of the National Bahá'í Archives.

Goals

1. Determine policies for acquiring materials suitable for the National Bahá'í Archives.
 - a. Develop and maintain a program to identify and acquire originals or photocopies of Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and letters from Shoghi Effendi
 - b. Develop and maintain a program to identify, acquire and authenticate sacred relics and other artifacts associated with the history of the Bahá'í Faith
 - c. Help develop and maintain a records management program at the Bahá'í National Center to ensure the transfer to the National Bahá'í Archives of administrative records of permanent value.
 - d. Develop and maintain a program to identify and acquire personal papers of Bahá'ís of national import. Personal papers should also be collected that will document the diversity of the National Bahá'í Community by time period, racial, religious and ethnic background, geographical location, occupational or educational background, etc., or a combination.
 - e. Develop and maintain an oral history program to record the personal recollections of Bahá'ís.
 - f. Maintain a collection of printed matter about the Bahá'í Faith by Bahá'ís and non-Bahá'ís, including all literature published by the national publishing trust and its predecessors.
 - g. Maintain a collection of photographs.
2. Determine policies for the accessioning of materials suitable for the National Bahá'í Archives.
3. Determine policies for the processing of materials acquired by the National Bahá'í Archives.

4. Determine the personnel requirements of the National Bahá'í Archives, hire the archivist and monitor his/her work.
5. Maintain suitable quarters for the National Bahá'í Archives, including a reading room for researchers, and a suitable environment for the archival holdings.
6. Develop policies governing access to the National Bahá'í Archives and restrictions on confidential material, with the approval of the National Spiritual Assembly.
7. Develop and maintain security programs to protect the National Bahá'í Archives from theft, fire, vandalism, war, flooding, etc.
8. Maintain a conservation program to restore damaged archival material, using professional conservators when necessary.
9. Develop educational programs and reference materials that will be of assistance to other Bahá'í archives, particularly at the local assembly level. Offer periodic courses to local communities and Bahá'í schools.
10. Develop and maintain exhibit facilities in the National Bahá'í Archives.
11. Prepare the Archives Committee budget, based on input from the archivist.
12. Undertake such other services as may be requested by the National Spiritual Assembly from time to time.

Reporting Procedure

1. Report regularly the progress of the National Bahá'í Archives and Archives Committee to the National Spiritual Assembly.
2. Prepare an annual report to the National Spiritual Assembly.

SEPARATION RECORD

The following item(s) have been removed from the _____
_____ and moved to the portion of the archives
where such materials are stored.

SACRED WRITINGS

RELICS AND ARTIFACTS

BOOKS

PAMPHLETS

PERIODICALS

PHOTOGRPAHS

TAPE RECORDINGS

VIDEOTAPES

OVERSIZE MATERIAL

OTHER

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

(SAMPLE) RECORDS RETENTION AND DISPOSITION SCHEDULE

Department, Office, or Committee:		<u>Approvals</u>	
Department Head:		Departmental/Committee Official	
Date Prepared:		_____	
		(Signature)	
		Archivist	

		(Signature)	
Item No.	Description of Records	Retain In Office	Transfer to Archives

INSTRUCTIONS

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

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

Receipt for Transfer of Organizational Records

Accession Number _____

Received from: _____

Responsible person: _____

the following records:

DESCRIPTION

By _____

Date: _____

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

(SAMPLE) ACCESSION SHEET

Accession Number _____

Received from: _____

Address: _____

Phone: _____

E-mail: _____

the following:

DESCRIPTION

Deed of Gift mailed:

Location:

By: _____

Date: _____

ARCHIVES
of the
NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE BAHÁ'ÍS OF (NAME OF COUNTRY)

DEED OF GIFT

I/We _____, the undersigned, of

grant, convey, and transfer to the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of (Country), 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 (Country) is hereby acknowledged.

NATIONAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY OF THE
BAHÁ'ÍS OF (COUNTRY)

By _____
Archivist

Sample 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]			

SAMPLE ARCHIVES BUDGET

Archives Operations

Description: Acquisition, arrangement, and preservation of valuable archival collections. Providing reference, research, and records management services to the Bahá'í National Centre, other Bahá'í institutions, and individual scholars.

Salaries (archival staff)	\$xxxxx
Benefits	
Supplies and materials (archival and office supplies)	
Equipment (shelving, computer equipment, book cart, etc.)	
Communications (telephone, FAX, computer access fees)	
Postage and shipping	
Professional services (microfilming, conservation work, off-site storage, professional dues)	
Printing, literature, audio and video production (photocopying, brochures, photography, tape copying)	
Capital expenditures (building renovation, etc.)	
Maintenance and repair (of facilities and equipment)	
Subtotal	\$xxxxx

Assistance to Local Spiritual Assembly Archives

Description: Providing assistance to Local Spiritual Assemblies in developing and preserving their local records and archives.

Travel	\$xxxxx
Lodging and meals	
Printing, photocopying, etc.	
Subtotal	\$xxxxx

Archives Committee Expenses

Travel expenses for Archives Committee meetings

Travel	\$xxxxx
Lodging and meals	
Subtotal	\$xxxxx

GRAND TOTAL \$xxxxx

SAMPLE JOB DESCRIPTIONS

National Archivist

Basic Function:

Manages the National Bahá'í Archives, advises the National Spiritual Assembly and the National Bahá'í Archives Committee of the Archives' status, and recommends proposals regarding development, expansion, and utilization of the Archives.

Principal Responsibilities:

1. Responsible for soliciting, acquiring, accessioning, processing, and maintaining all material in the National Bahá'í Archives, including such special materials (i.e., works of art and gifts) as the National Spiritual Assembly chooses to place under the jurisdiction of the Archives.
2. Ensures the preservation and security of the holdings of the National Bahá'í Archives.
3. Determines which records are archival, maintains appropriate accession records, arranges proper storage, and deaccessions materials as necessary.
4. Answers requests for information from The Universal House of Justice, the National Spiritual Assembly, the National Centre Staff, Bahá'í institutions, individuals, and the public, and handles other correspondence.
5. Facilitates access to the National Bahá'í Archives by researchers and administrators and supervises researchers.
6. Prepares reports and an annual budget, monitors expenditures, and keeps the National Archives Committee apprised of the financial status of the Archives.
7. Supervises Archives staff.
8. Advises Bahá'í administrative institutions on how best to store records and on the basic elements of good records management.
9. Monitors the records management program at the Bahá'í National Centre to ensure the transfer to the National Bahá'í Archives of administrative records of permanent value.
10. Makes proposal and policy recommendations to the National Bahá'í Archives Committee and consults with the Archives Committee chairman about the agenda for each committee meeting.
11. Organizes exhibits for Bahá'í conventions, conferences, and institutes.
12. Provides advice and assistance to other Bahá'í archives and conducts training programs.

Assistant Archivist

Basic Function:

Assists the Archivist in the day-to-day functioning of the National Bahá'í Archives

Principle Responsibilities:

1. Assists Archivist in all phases of archival work.
2. Assists Archivist in soliciting collections for the archives.
3. Accessions and processes archival material received by the Archives, including microfilming of collections.
4. Supervises researchers and answers reference questions.
5. Assists Archivist in organizing exhibits.
6. Performs related tasks as assigned.

Archives Clerk

Basic Function:

Responsible for reference services in the National Bahá'í Archives

Principle Responsibilities:

1. In charge of Archives reading room.
2. Supervises and assists researchers.
3. Answers routine requests for information.
4. Answers telephone.
5. Accessions newly-received archival material.
6. Uses computer word processor and database program to complete correspondence, catalog cards, inventories, and other finding aids and to transcribe oral history interviews.
7. Assists Archivist in acquisition of archival material and oral histories.
8. Assists Archivist in providing advice to Bahá'í institutions on their archives.
9. Performs related work as assigned.

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

□ Wilmette, Illinois 60091

ARCHIVES AS A CAREER

Many young Bahá'ís are searching for a profession that will encompass their enthusiasm for the making and preserving of history, especially Bahá'í history, and that will offer unique opportunities to serve the Faith. Shoghi Effendi often encouraged youth to study and be aware of the importance of history. He pointed out in letters to individual believers that the Bahá'í Faith casts an entirely new light upon the study of history and that such study aids in understanding the Bahá'í Faith (see *Bahá'í Youth: A Compilation*, p. 15). Shoghi Effendi's own writings constantly stress the understanding of the events of the Bahá'í era in their historical context. Moreover, he gave the Bahá'í world two major historical works—his translation of Nabil's narrative *The Dawn-breakers* and his own *God Passes By*.

The study of history, however, vitally depends upon the work of people who attempt to ensure the preservation of historical records. These people are professional archivists. The field of archives administration offers Bahá'ís close contact with history and gives them knowledge and skills that are increasingly in demand throughout the world, both inside and outside the Bahá'í community. The following sections answer frequently-asked questions about archives as a career.

What Is An Archivist?

An archivist is a person whose profession involves acquiring, preserving, and making available for research the original source materials of history. These materials include the records of institutions and organizations, as well as the private papers of individuals. These records and papers provide important evidence of what happened in the past and useful information on how and why events occurred. An archives is a collection of documents carefully selected for their historical value. These documents are usually unpublished and include the working files of institutions and organizations; personal correspondence, manuscripts, notes, and scrapbooks; photographs, maps, film, recordings, historical printed matter, and computer-generated records.

The archivist must discover what historical records and papers exist and where they are; he must also decide whether these records are worth preserving. In order to do this the archivist must have an understanding of the historical background of the documents, the circumstances under which they were produced, and how they relate to other available sources of information. Such an understanding enables him to determine how useful the documents are likely to be to researchers and thus to decide whether they are important enough to be preserved. If the materials are damaged, he must take steps to repair and protect them to ensure their physical preservation. The archivist must also arrange and describe the records to assist the researcher in finding the information he needs. In addition, he must publicize his holdings to inform researchers about their value and potential uses. The archivist often works closely with the researcher to make sure that the researcher has access to as complete documentation of his subject as possible.

Service to others in their search for information and knowledge is the chief goal of the archival profession. The rewards of the work derive from the archivist's being of assistance to many different types of people, including historical researchers, social scientists, students, administrators, journalists, and genealogists. The work also enables the archivist to increase his own knowledge of history. Many archivists take advantage of the historical resources available to them to produce scholarly articles and books.

Where Do Archivists Work?

Archivists may be found working for colleges and universities in archives and manuscript collections and in research libraries; for governmental archival agencies on the federal, state, and local level; for archives of larger businesses and labor organizations; and for private organizations, such as religious institutions, ethnic organizations, and professional societies. They are often part of the professional staff of libraries, historical societies, museums, and records centers. Because archival institutions vary widely in size, structure, and type of holdings, an archivist may be part of a large department, working with other archivists and people involved in different aspects of historical research, or he may be the sole person charged with the preservation of the history of an organization, company, or institution.

What Personal Strengths Are Needed in Archives Work?

The archivist must combine his desire to serve others with a talent for organizing and an ability to express thoughts precisely, both orally and in writing. He must have a fundamental enthusiasm for history and a detective's love for ferreting out seemingly well-concealed facts.

How Can a College Student Begin Preparation For a Career in Archives Work?

A student entering or in college and considering the archival profession should think seriously about majoring, as an undergraduate, in history or one of the social sciences. Whether a student chooses American, European, African, or Asian history, or art, music, science, economic, social, or political history would depend upon his interests and the type of archives in which he would like to work. A history major will give the student a basic background, training, and experience in historical research essential for pursuing studies in archival administration.

What Professional Education Does an Archivist Need?

Professional training for archives work usually occurs on the graduate level. In the past most archivists learned on the job, but it is to the advantage of the beginning archivist to secure as much professional training in school as possible. Very few educational institutions offer formal degree programs specifically in archives administration. However, the number of institutions offering training in archives work is growing. This training usually forms part of a master's degree program in either library science or history. The extent of training varies from one course giving a survey of the field to a sequence of courses including an internship and research in the field. Although at the present there are no generally accepted

standards of minimum academic qualifications and training for professional archives employment, a student wishing to be an archivist can best prepare himself by choosing a graduate school that offers as much opportunity as possible for training in both the theory and practice of archives administration. Whether the training is acquired as part of a master's degree program in history or library science depends primarily on the student's interest. Some students decide to study for both degrees, and more than one graduate school will allow a student to apply his archives coursework towards course requirements for both degrees. A student studying full time can obtain a master's degree in library science in twelve months at most United States institutions, and a master's degree in history in twelve to eighteen months depending on individual institutions' requirements.

Some students are able to supplement their academic training with part-time employment in an archives. Some institutions hire student help on an individual basis and others as part of a work/study program. Depending on the number of hours per week that the student works, such employment may make it necessary for him to pursue a degree over a longer period of time, but the experience provided by the work can be an invaluable part of a student's preparation for a career in archives.

What Other Opportunities Exist for Exposure to Archival Careers?

In addition to courses of study in archival administration forming part of a formal academic degree program, some archival institutions and universities also offer, independently, seminars and institutes in archives administration. These programs, varying in length from one to six weeks, provide practical experience as well as basic introductions to archival principles. They are often open only to those already working in archives and libraries.

Where May Further Information Be Obtained?

A list of educational possibilities in the archives field is maintained by the Society of American Archivists. It can be found on the Society's website at www.archivists.com.

Interested students should contact the educational institutions listed for specific and current information about their programs. Since new programs are coming into being every year, the Society frequently revises its listing.

International opportunities can be found on the websites of national archival associations. A good source of information is the website of the International Council on Archives, www.ica.org. For schools offering archival instruction in the United Kingdom, see www.archives.org.uk/training/

Conclusion

Bahá'ís who choose the profession of archivist as their career will discover that the field gives them an opportunity to serve others while being intimately involved in the preservation of the history of the past and the present. They will find that they will also be able to offer their talents to the Bahá'í community by assisting in the preservation of Bahá'í history on the local, regional, national, and international levels.

ARCHIVES SCHOOLS – EUROPE

United Kingdom (see www.archives.org.uk/training/)

University-level courses available at:

University College London

University of Liverpool

University of Wales, Aberystwyth

University of Wales, Bangor

University College Dublin, University of Ireland

France

Ecolé des Chartes, Paris (see www.enssib.fr/)

Russia

European University at St. Petersburg – Archival Training Center
(see www.eu.spb.ru/en/rep/view14.htm)

ACCESS POLICY

A good access policy will cover several important points. It must balance the desire to use the rich resources of the archives for administrative and scholarly research against the need to protect confidential materials.

Items to address in developing an access policy include:

Records of the National Spiritual Assembly and its agencies should be restricted for a predetermined number of years (in the U.S. 50 years) and require permission of the NSA Secretary for access.

Managers of Bahá'í National Centre offices should have access to their own records.

Make note of other records that are restricted (for example, Local Spiritual Assembly records, official files [as opposed to personal papers] of Counsellors, Auxiliary Board Members, Huququ'llah Trustees, etc.)

Access to Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and letters of Shoghi Effendi should be restricted to copies only, with the originals permanently and safely stored.

Manuscript collections (personal papers) of individuals may be open for research once they have been processed by a professional archivist, unless the donor or the archivist have placed restrictions on them to protect confidential or sensitive information or fragile material. Usually restrictions will have a definite time limit.

Access to historical photographs. The collection should generally be open for use. Develop a clear policy for allowing copies to be made. The archives should make arrangements for copying. Do not loan original photographs, if possible. Once negatives have been made, you can loan the negatives.

Access to relics, artifacts, and works of art and provision for their occasional use as part of displays, under careful environmental conditions. The guiding principle here must be protection and preservation of the items.

Access to audiovisual collections and architectural drawings collections.

Statement about how and when the archives will be open (generally by appointment) and the fact that all researchers must fill out an application for research and sign and abide by the reading room rules. All research should be conducted in the reading room, under supervision of an archivist. Make provisions for National Centre offices may check out archival materials for a limited period, if needed.

Statement that outside researchers and National Centre staff have access to the reading room only. The archives stacks and storage and working areas are closed to everyone except the archives staff.

RECORDS REQUEST SLIP

Name _____ Date _____

Office/Address _____

Phone _____ E-Mail _____

Records desired:

Records checked out by:

Location:

Records checked in by:

SAMPLE COPYRIGHT STATEMENT

- I. The National Spiritual Assembly owns the copyright to the following unpublished material:
 1. Records of the National Spiritual Assembly, its agencies, agents and predecessors
 2. Personal papers of individuals where the copyright was given to the National Spiritual Assembly through the Archives deeds of gift
- II. Guidelines for granting permissions for publication:
 1. To encourage scholarship on the Bahá'í Faith there will be a liberal policy in giving permissions to publish excerpts from the Archives holdings.
 2. All restrictions on confidential or sensitive material will be honored and will usually preclude access and publication. The National Spiritual Assembly will, from time to time, designate which Bahá'í National Center records are considered confidential or sensitive and what restrictions should be placed on them. Restrictions may also be placed by donors of personal papers.
 3. Authors quoting material belonging to the National Spiritual Assembly must, when publishing, use the following form in giving credit: (Name of collection), National Bahá'í Archives, (city and country of NSA). Use of photographs from the Archives must also be acknowledged with the same information and a statement that the photographs are used with permission of the National Bahá'í Archives.
 4. Royalties or fees will usually not be requested unless there is a clear monetary value, for example with literary manuscripts.
 5. Requests to publish extensively from the National Spiritual Assembly records will be reviewed by the National Spiritual Assembly secretary.

SAMPLE STATEMENT OF CONDUCT AND ETHICS

Preface

Standards of professional conduct in the field of archives and collections management do not differ in principle from the standards of conduct expected of all Bahá'ís. However, in order for committee members and employees of the archives to be effective in aiding in the growth and development of various programs at the National Archives uniform standards of conduct are necessary. Therefore, the following statement of ethics has been adopted for the guidance of new members and staff. These standards should be adhered to whenever members act for the National Archives in dealing with donor and public relations, including collecting, researching in the archives, and advising other Bahá'í institutions about correct archival procedures and policies.

Using the Archives

Material in the archives should be used by committee or staff members on the same basis as all other users, and all reading room rules should be followed. Non-accessioned material entrusted to employees or committee members should be promptly delivered to the Archives and should not be used without prior consent of the archivist for any purpose, including personal research or publication. Extreme caution should be used whenever a conflict of interest may exist or be perceived to exist.

Security

Members should be cognizant of security at all times, and be cautious about discussing security arrangements with anyone.

Servicing Researchers

Individuals servicing researchers should be sure to remain impartial and provide the same level of service to all individuals.

Public Relations

Treat committee meetings confidentially, on the same basis as Assembly meetings.

Due reverence should be shown to relics.

The committee members should not make any commitment for the archives without the permission of the archivist.

Finances

Any monies collected for fee-related services should be promptly deposited in the Archives account with the National Treasurer. Under no circumstances should money be accepted from researchers as payment for reference services performed. Persons wishing to make a monetary donation for the benefit of the Archives should be informed of the Archives Endowment Fund and referred to the archivist.

CANADIAN BAHÁ'Í NATIONAL CENTRE ARCHIVES

POLICY STATEMENT

A. Purpose

The Archives office of the Bahá'í National Centre acquires, preserves, arranges and describes, and makes available the records in its care. This includes the records of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, its departments and offices, and its national committees. It also includes some letters of the Guardian, and some relics associated with the Holy Family. Finally, it includes the personal papers of some individual Bahá'ís.

B. Role of the archivist

The archivist is a staff member of the Secretariat, and reports to the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly. The archivist:

1. is responsible for establishing the authority and infrastructure within which to frame an archival program
2. submits to the Secretary of the National Spiritual Assembly:
 - a) all policies for approval
 - b) an annual report
 - c) requests for a budget
3. develops a records management program for the National Spiritual Assembly and its departments and committees:
 - a) consults with key staff in each department about a records classification system that meets the need of that department
 - b) develops a records retention schedule for systematic transfer to the archives and/or destruction of records of the National Spiritual Assembly and its departments
 - c) submits to the National Bahá'í Archives Committee, a committee of the National Spiritual Assembly, the records retention schedule for approval
4. identifies, acquires and appraises records and personal papers of individuals and other organizations within the Bahá'í national community, whose activities are of national import, for preservation in the archives, according to the acquisition policy
5. provides for the proper storage and preservation of letters of Shoghi Effendi, and tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá, and all relics associated with the Holy Family which are held by the archives
6. provides for the preservation of all records in appropriate storage materials, in a temperature and humidity-controlled environment
7. arranges and describes all records within the archives according to an established standard. The Association for Canadian Archivists' *Rules for Archival Description* is the recommended standard
8. facilitates intellectual access to the materials in the archives through preparation of indexes and other finding aids
9. provides access to archives by outside researchers while protecting the confidentiality of some information and the privacy of individuals for specified records and periods of time

10. supervises volunteers and/or archival assistants in their work, when circumstances permit
11. consults with and obtains advice from a national archives committee in the matters of education, acquisition of personal papers, and issues related to public programming, when such a committee exists.

C. Acquisition policy

The archives exists first for the preservation of the records of the National Spiritual Assembly. Other records acquired by the archives should be complementary to the functions of the National Spiritual Assembly. That is, the records and personal papers to be acquired outside the Bahá'í National Centre, or the agencies of the National Spiritual Assembly, should be of a national character. The acquisition of all records by the archives, from either internal or external sources, should be documented. Further detail will be found in the acquisition policy, when finalized.

D. Access policy

The archives is open to staff in performance of their duties at the Bahá'í National Centre. Other research requests will be considered, upon application to the archivist or the National Spiritual Assembly secretary. Materials of a personal confidential nature may be subject to certain restrictions. Further detail will be found in the access policy, when finalized.

E. Records management

Records management plays an important role in transferring records to the archives. The archivist and key staff in each department agree to a classification system that meets their needs, and determine the life span of each series of records. The records schedule will be adapted to meet changes in organizational structure and in functions, and will be approved by the National Bahá'í Archives Committee. Non-active or semi-active records which have been clearly documented and are scheduled for destruction may be kept in a designated area of the archives (or, when circumstances permit, a proper records centre), with destruction dates clearly marked. Once a year, scheduled records will be destroyed.

F. Definitions

Archives are defined as the whole of the records created in the course of conduct of affairs. Such records may occur in many forms and on a wide variety of media.

Records are defined as documents that have participated in a practical activity. Such definition excludes documents kept for information purposes only.

Approved by the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Canada, February 1997

GUIDELINES FOR THE PROTECTION OF ARCHIVAL MATERIALS

The treatment of the Tablets should be such that they remain preserved in their original immaculacy. When being read they should be placed within a second sheet, and thereafter deposited in some special place for safe keeping.

These Words revealed by Bahá'u'lláh provide a standard for the handling and care of His original Tablets, and may be applied equally to the treatment of all sacred or historical Bahá'í documents and manuscripts. The following guidelines have been prepared by the Archives Office as a means of providing some assistance to both Spiritual Assemblies and individuals who have original Writings or valuable historical materials in their possession.

1. Wash the hands before handling any archival materials, and do not use any hand cream.
2. Avoid touching documents with the hands. A variety of implements can be used for turning pages without using the fingers. A bookbinder's "bone folder", a porcupine quill, or an unused wooden or bamboo chopstick with its end filed to a point, are examples of implements that can be used as page turners.
3. Place documents or books on a clean table while reading them, and do not hold them in the hands. Place a large sheet of clean paper on the table for added protection.
4. For Tablets and other very valuable documents, store each item in a separate folder or clean paper. "Acid-free" paper can be purchased from high-quality stationers or from art shops. Several paper folders and their contents can then be stored in an envelope or a stiff folder.
5. If the documents are torn to *not* attempt to mend them with sticky tape. Place each one in a paper folder, and handle it as little possible. If an item has already been mended with sticky tape do not attempt to remove it. This process requires use of chemicals, and must be performed by a qualified and experienced paper conservator.
6. Do *not* put Tablets or documents into albums, especially not the type with sticky pages. If documents have already been stuck into albums not *not* attempt to remove them. The process of detaching documents from the adhesive pages requires use of chemicals, and must be performed by a qualified and experienced paper conservator.
7. Write identifications for the documents on the outside of their folders, not on the items themselves. Write on the folder *before* inserting the item, not after placing it inside. If an identification has been written on a document do not attempt to erase it, as this process may cause damage.
8. The above points can be applied to the handling and protection of all archival documents and not only to Tablets and other valuable items. However, it may not always be necessary to place each document in an individual paper folder—several documents could be placed together in one folder.

9. Simple covers of clean white paper may be used to protect bound manuscripts. Use “acid-free” paper if available.
10. Folders containing documents should be stored flat (not on edge) in a box. Make sure the box is large enough to avoid crushing the documents or folders.
11. Suitable boxes and folders (“acid-free” are best) may be available from high-quality stationers, art or office supply stores, or from suppliers of equipment for museums.
12. For large numbers of documents several shallow boxes are better than one deep box, as the weight of the documents on top may damage the ones underneath.
13. Store bound manuscripts flat. Place them in separate boxes from other documents, as documents will be damaged by the weight of books on top of them.
14. Store boxes containing Tablets, other papers, or bound manuscripts in a cool, dry place, in the dark. Do not place boxes on the floor.

PRESERVATION SUPPLIERS AND SERVICES

ARCHIVAL SUPPLIES AND EQUIPMENT - SUPPLIES

This list is not exhaustive, nor does it constitute an endorsement of the suppliers listed. We suggest that you obtain information from a number of vendors so that you can make comparisons of cost and assess the full range of available products.

Conservation Resources International

8000-H Forbes Place
Springfield, VA 22151
Toll Free: (800) 634-6932
Telephone: (703) 321-7730
Fax: (703) 321-0629
URL: www.conservationresources.com
Conservation supplies, photographic supplies, general

Gaylord Brothers

P. O. Box 4901
Syracuse, NY 13221-4901
Toll Free: (800) 428-3631 (Help Line)
Toll Free: (800) 448-6160 - ordering
Toll Free Fax: (800) 272-3412
<http://www.gaylord.com>
Archival and library supplies and furniture

Hollinger Corporation

9401 Northeast Drive
P. O. Box 8360
Fredricksburg, VA 22404
Toll Free: (800) 634-0491
Telephone: (540) 898-7300
Toll Free Fax: (800) 947-8814
E-mail: hollingercorp@intersurf.net
URL: www.hollingercorp.com
Conservation supplies, general, archival storage materials

Light Impressions

P. O. Box 22708
Rochester, NY 14603-0940
Toll Free: (800) 828-6216
Telephone: (716) 271-8960
Toll Free Fax: (800) 828-5539
<http://www.lightimpressionsdirect.com>
Albums, film and photo storage, labeling, mounting, slide storage, mat boards, print storage, fine archival storage

Metal Edge, Inc

6340 Bandini Boulevard

Commerce, CA 90040

Toll Free: (800) 862-2228

Email: mtledge@ix.netcom.com

URL: www.metaledgeinc.com

Archival storage materials; designers and converters of innovative packaging

Print File

P. O. Box 4100

Schenectady, NY 12304

Telephone: (518) 374-2334

URL: www.printfile.com

Archival storage products

Talas

568 Broadway

New York, NY 10012

Telephone: (212) 219-0770

Fax: (212) 219-0735

URL: www.talas-nyc.com

General conservation supplies, UV absorbent fluorescent tube shields and plastic film

University Products

517 Main Street

P. O. Box 101

Holyoke, MA 01041

Toll Free: (800) 628-1912

Telephone: (413) 532-3372

Toll Free Fax: (800) 532-9281

Fax: (413) 532-9281

E-mail: info@universityproducts.com

<http://www.universityproducts.com>

Suppliers for conservation, preservation, restoration, and archival quality storage; photo supplies, conservation paper and boards, tapes and adhesives, conservation tools

SAMPLE INVENTORY FOR MANUSCRIPT COLLECTION

M-69

BEULAH STORRS LEWIS PAPERS, 1901-1948

1 box

Beulah Storrs Lewis was born in Utah on January 21, 1881, and died in Los Angeles on November 9, 1947. She was a prominent Club Woman, actress, lecturer and Bahá'í teacher and a close friend of Carole Lombard. She wrote extensively on inspirational subjects.

The donor of the Papers is K. L. Storrs.

CONTAINER LIST

<u>CONTAINER LIST</u>	<u>BOX</u>	<u>FOLDER</u>
CORRESPONDENCE	1	
Albert Clark, 1940		1
James Clark, 1940		2
Sam Clark, 1940		3
Forest Lawn Memorial Park, 1942		4
Kinneys, 1943		5
Carole Lombard, 1940		6
National Teaching Committee, 1940		7
Ramona Supper Club, 1930		8
Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of Salt Lake City, 1944		9
OTHER CORRESPONDENCE	2	
Ella Nash, Letter from Mary Hanford Ford, 1901		1
K. L. Storrs, Letter from Forest Lawn Memorial Park, 1948		2
K. L. Storrs, Letter from National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, 1948		3
LITERARY PRODUCTIONS	2	
Manuscript, "All Days are Mothers' Days," 1926		4
Manuscript, "Friendship"		5
Manuscript, "I Have Made Death Even as Glad Tidings Unto Thee," 1930		6
Manuscript, "Inspired Answer to my Claim of Inspiration," n.d.		7
Manuscript, Autobiography (Draft)	3	1
Manuscript, Biography of Dorothy Baker (Draft)		2

BIOGRAPHICAL QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Full name: _____ Sex: Male ___ Female ___
 2. Date of birth: _____ Place of birth: _____
 3. If deceased, date and place of death: _____
 4. Name of parents: _____
 5. Names of brothers and/or sisters: _____

 6. Marital status: Single ___ Married ___ Widowed ___ Divorced ___
 7. Name of spouse: _____
 8. Date and place of marriage: _____
 9. Name(s) of children: _____

 10. Family members of relatives who are Bahá'ís: _____

 11. Occupation: _____
 12. Education: _____
 13. Racial background: _____
 14. Religious background before you became a Bahá'í: _____

 15. Date and place you became a Bahá'í: _____
 16. Did you meet 'Abdu'l-Bahá and/or Shoghi Effendi? If so, where and when:

- Do you have any written or taped recollections of the meeting(s)?
- _____
17. Have you been on Pilgrimage? If so, when? _____

 18. National or international conferences/congresses you have attended: _____

 19. Spiritual Assemblies and committees you have served on: _____

GUIDELINES FOR BAHÁ'Í BOOK COLLECTORS AND RESEARCHERS ABOUT PERSONAL PAPERS AND ITEMS

Book collectors or Bahá'í scholars conducting research for books often come across or learn about the existence of documents that would be classified as archival collections of an individual Bahá'í—personal papers and belongings, normally of a literary nature. These items do not have to be concerned with Bahá'í matters, especially if they document a person's professional or public life.

National Bahá'í Archives are concerned that all such materials be properly safeguarded, assessed, and transferred to the most appropriate Bahá'í archives, based on the individual's geographic location or record of Bahá'í activity. Archives or archives committees are normally glad to have book collectors function as their “hands in the field,” and are happy to advise collectors about doing an initial appraisal, selecting, packing, shipping, and storing material.

Issues Involved and Questions to Ask

1. Who is the Bahá'í?
 - Biographical data (including personal and family origins)
 - Bahá'í history and service record
 - Professional or community activity

2. Inventory the materials. Always maintain items' original order while doing the inventory, if possible. List the volume and dates or date ranges of such items as:
 - Books (especially those with annotations)
 - Letters of Shoghi Effendi, Hands of the Cause, pioneers, NSAs, LSAs
 - Personal correspondence
 - Photographs, albums, slides, films, or other audiovisual materials
 - News clippings, scrapbooks
 - Tape recordings, records
 - Diaries or pilgrim notes
 - Relics

3. Determine the most appropriate repository or recipient of the collection. Contact the National Bahá'í Archives to apprise it of the collection and consult about the most appropriate location.
 - Are materials from this person already held elsewhere?
 - Where would materials best be used by future researchers?
 - Should an LSA be consulted?

4. Do not remove materials from the premises without securing legal transfer of ownership of the materials from the donor or the donor's family to the appropriate archival repository, noting any restrictions they may wish to place on the collection. The National Bahá'í Archives can provide a sample deed of gift to use as a model, if local archives do not have their own available.

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES COMMITTEE
Bahá'í National Center, Wilmette, Illinois 60091

November 3, 1986

To the members of the Auxiliary Boards

Dear friends,

The attached packet of information has been prepared for you at the request of the Continental Board of Counsellors. It is designed to assist you in consulting with Local Spiritual Assemblies about the importance of maintaining and preserving their local community archives.

The Six-Year Plan calls for accelerated strengthening and consolidation of our national and local communities. National and local archives go hand in hand with that development. Archives foster a sense of purpose and identity. They also serve as an invaluable asset for present-day and future administrators of the Cause.

Because of the close working relationship you as Auxiliary Board Members have with the Local Spiritual Assemblies in your jurisdiction, the National Archives Committee is enlisting your aid to help us disseminate information about Bahá'í archives at the grassroots level and answer basic questions that these local Assemblies may have.

As stated in a recent letter to all National Spiritual Assemblies from the Archives Office at the World Centre, the Bahá'í Faith is presented with the unique "opportunity—perhaps even the duty—the preserve for future generations an accurate and detailed record of how a major religion entered the world of man and became established in human society." We hope that you will help us instill this sense of historical responsibility in local communities, especially our younger ones, so that they will take pride from the start in preserving their history and documenting the growth of the Faith in their areas. In more established communities, it may be relevant to remind the Assemblies that, just as we protect the Faith from external and internal attacks, so must we also protect our records from neglect.

The sheets in this packet are for your use. Please duplicate them at will and give them the widest possible distribution. We thank you in advance for your efforts. The archives staff at the National Bahá'í Center, Mr. Roger Dahl and Mr. Lewis Walker, are available if you have any questions or need further assistance.

With warm Bahá'í greetings,

Members:

Dr. Betty Fisher

Carolyn Henderer

Sarah Lee

Lois Walker, Chairperson

Roger Dahl, Secretary

National Bahá'í Archives committee

Roger Dahl, Secretary

GENERAL QUESTIONS

The Auxiliary Board Members and their assistants can perform a valuable service by impressing upon Local Spiritual Assemblies the importance of safeguarding their records. The following questions can help stimulate discussion about local archives when consulting with Local Spiritual Assemblies.

IS THE ASSEMBLY GENERATING THOROUGH MINUTES OF ITS MEETINGS THAT WILL DOCUMENT THE GROWTH OF THE FAITH IN ITS JURISDICTION?

Minutes should be typed on high-quality acid-free paper (available at office supply stores or stationers. If they must be handwritten, do not use water-soluble ink.

ARE ALL OF THE ASSEMBLY'S INACTIVE RECORDS IN ONE PLACE?

If not, they should be gathered together and stored in a secure, dry place, preferably where there is air conditioning. (Attics and basements are the worst places for archives.)

HAS THE ASSEMBLY CONDUCTED AN INVENTORY OF ITS ARCHIVES?

If not, a records inventory form is included in this packet. It should be completed and a copy sent to the National Bahá'í Archives.

HAS THE ASSEMBLY APPOINTED AN ARCHIVIST?

Each Assembly should appoint an interested person as caretaker of its local archives. This can be the Assembly secretary, another member of the Assembly, or a member of the community. Communities with sizable archives should recommend that this person receive some basic archival training from the National Bahá'í Archives Committee.

DOES THE ASSEMBLY MAINTAIN BIRTH, DEATH, MARRIAGE, AND ENROLLMENT REGISTERS?

This is a goal of the Six-Year Plan. The Assembly should attempt to re-create these registers from its records and minutes as far back as possible and then maintain them henceforth. Sample register pages are available from the National Bahá'í Archives.

DOES THE ASSEMBLY HAVE, OR KNOW PEOPLE WHO HAVE, ORIGINAL TABLES OF 'ABDU'L-BAHÁ OR LETTERS FROM SHOGHI EFFENDI?

If possible, the original Tablet(s) or letter(s) should be sent to the National Bahá'í Archives for safekeeping and a photocopy kept with the Assembly's or individual's papers. If the Assembly or individual wishes to retain the original, a high-quality photocopy on acid-free paper should be sent to the National Bahá'í Archives. In either case, a photocopy will then be sent to the Universal House of Justice.

HAS THE ASSEMBLY INHERITED THE PERSONAL PAPERS OF ANY INDIVIDUALS?

If so, the Assembly should notify the National Bahá'í Archives of the names of these individuals and at least a rough idea of the contents.

DOES THE ASSEMBLY HAVE A COPY OF *GUIDELINES FOR BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES*?

Order forms are included in this packet. Reproduce them as necessary.

QUOTATIONS ON THE IMPORTANCE 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 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 that we are to truly and adequately appreciate the many advantages and facilities which the institution of the Archives offers to individual believers and also 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

Shoghi Effendi

Directives from the Guardian, pp. 4-5

The opening of a new epoch of the Formative Age of the Bahá'í Faith, and the beginning of the Six Year Plan are milestones in the unfoldment of Bahá'u'lláh's World Order. As we look backward over goals accomplished, and forward to new challenges, our sense of history is stirred, and we recognize the momentousness of the age in which we live.

Beyond having the vital duty of preserving the Writings of the Central Figures of the Faith and of the Guardian, the Bahá'í Faith is unique among world religions in the degree to which its historical processes have been documented and recorded. Unfortunately, many Bahá'í communities experience difficulty in caring for their historically significant records. Important pieces of our documentary heritage are at risk, or may already have disappeared. Care of archival resources—including the records of Bahá'í individuals and families, corporate bodies and institutions—is an indication of the state of our historical awareness. We too often fail to perceive the significance of what we do, and for this reason give scant attention to preserving the documents of our own, or earlier times.

Bahá'ís have the opportunity—perhaps even the duty—to preserve for future generations an accurate and detailed record of how a major religion entered the world of man and became established in human society. More immediately, history offers all of us a sense of inspiration from the past, as well as a revealing glimpse at our historical roots.

From a letter to National Spiritual Assemblies from the Department of Library and Archival Services, Bahá'í World Centre, 11 June 1986

LOCAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of Spiritual Assembly: _____

2. Date of formation of Spiritual Assembly: _____

If Spiritual Assembly has ever been lost please give date span.

Date(s) lost and reestablished:

3. How far back do your Spiritual Assembly records go?

Minutes _____

Correspondence _____

Treasurer's records _____

4. Do you have a local Bahá'í archives? Yes ____ No ____

5. Where is your archives housed: Private home(s) _____

Bahá'í Center _____

Other (please specify) _____

6. Who is in charge of the archives?

Archivist _____

Archives Committee _____

Spiritual Assembly Secretary _____

Librarian _____

Other (please specify) _____

7. What is the name of your archivist or archives committee secretary?

8. Please indicate contents of archives:	Yes	No	
Relics of Bahá'u'lláh	_____	_____	
Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá	_____	_____	
Relics of 'Abdu'l-Bahá	_____	_____	
Letters from Shoghi Effendi	_____	_____	
Spiritual Assembly minutes	_____	_____	Approx. years: ____
Spiritual Assembly correspondence	_____	_____	Approx. years: ____
Treasurer's records	_____	_____	Approx. years: ____
Personal papers of Bahá'ís	_____	_____	
Names:			
Photographs	_____	_____	
Books	_____	_____	
Newspaper clippings	_____	_____	
Publicity scrapbooks	_____	_____	
Tape recordings (not published tapes)	_____	_____	
Computer files	_____	_____	
Artifacts	_____	_____	
Describe:			

9. Does your community contain any Bahá'ís who have experience as archivists or archival conservators (i.e., those who restore damaged manuscripts)?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please list names and specialties:

Please keep this form with your records and mail a copy to the National Bahá'í Archives.

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

□ Wilmette, Illinois 60091

INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS INQUIRING ABOUT THE NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

The National Bahá'í Archives is the archives of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. The Archives' holdings document the history of the American Bahá'í community and include records of the National Spiritual Assembly and its committees and agencies, personal papers, photographs, tape recordings and a reference library.

The National Bahá'í Archives is located in the lower level of the Bahá'í House of Worship, 100 Linden Avenue (corner of Linden Avenue and Sheridan Road), Wilmette, Illinois. It is open by appointment to qualified researchers Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with an hour closure for lunch. The Archives is closed on holidays and Bahá'í Holy Days.

Permission to examine manuscripts, photographs and printed matter held in the Archives will normally be granted to qualified researchers for specific purposes upon application to the Archivist and upon agreement to abide by the Archives reading room rules. Such permission is granted subject to whatever restrictions have been placed on specific holdings by their writers, donors or depositors or by the Archivist.

The records in the National Bahá'í Archives of the National Spiritual Assembly, its committees and agencies less than 50 years old, Local Spiritual Assemblies and members of the Continental Board of Counsellors and Auxiliary Boards, which have not already been made public, are restricted and require the permission of the National Spiritual Assembly secretary for access. Researchers desiring to see any of these records should contact the Archives staff about acquiring permission.

Before visiting the National Bahá'í Archives, the researcher should first write or call to make an appointment. The researcher should provide the Archives with the specific dates he would like to visit as the Archives may have unscheduled closings.

Only pencils are allowed to be used in the Archives - no pens. Hence researchers should bring a supply of pencils with them.

As the Archives staff is small we cannot do extensive research for researchers but instead recommend that they visit the Archives. We can do a limited amount of photocopying by mail if researchers have very specific requests for documents.

ORAL HISTORY GUIDELINES

1. A successful interview requires previous research on the life and activities of the interviewee. The interviewer should come to the interview with a list of prepared questions or topics to be covered.
2. The interviewer will often want to start the interview by getting some general background and family information from the interviewee. The interview can then proceed chronologically or by topic.
3. The interviewer should be flexible enough to be able to explore unexpected information or a new trail of inquiry not covered by the prepared questions if one should suddenly appear. This is why a good grasp of the subject being discussed is so valuable.
4. A basic purpose of oral history is to fill in gaps in manuscript or printed sources or to elaborate on them. Manuscript material is considered to be archival when it has permanent historical, administrative, or religious value and will be used by researchers in the future. The same criteria apply to oral history interviews.
5. Before the interview begins, the interviewer should discuss with the interviewee any restrictions the interviewee may want to place on the use of the tapes. Archives generally prefer not to have any restrictions, but are willing to accept reasonable restrictions on access or copyright if the restrictions have a definite time limit. A letter detailing any restrictions should be sent with the interview to the archives. Upon receipt of the tapes, the archives will send a Deed of Gift to the interviewee, if one hasn't been signed at the time of the interview.
6. The interviewer should be friendly and courteous.
7. The interviewer may want to do more than one interview if the subject warrants it and the interviewee is agreeable. Several shorter sessions (2 hours or so) are better than long sessions that tire both the interviewer and interviewee.
8. The interviewer should phrase questions carefully and keep them short so that the interviewee is free to express his or her own ideas and knowledge. The interviewer should avoid leading questions.
9. A letter of appreciation should be written afterwards.
10. The interviewer should keep careful records on who is interviewed, when, and where. Each tape should be labeled with the names of interviewer and interviewee, place, and date. Record a short introduction at the beginning of the tape, including this information, before the interview begins.
11. It is generally a good idea to avoid interviewing two or more people at a time. It is easier to keep subjects focused on the questions at hand, there are fewer interruptions and distractions, and this avoids people "walking" on each other by talking at the same time.

QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN RESEARCHING AND WRITING HISTORY OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES

1. When was the Local Spiritual Assembly first formed, incorporated, and other important dates?
2. Names of original and early Assembly members
3. History of the individuals believers and groups that existed prior to the formation of the first Assembly
4. Contacts with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, the World Centre, the National Centre, regional teaching committees, etc. Early Pilgrimage stories.
5. Hands of the Cause, travel teachers, and other notable Bahá’ís who visited the community and how they affected its development
6. History of firesides, proclamation events, and teaching activities in the community
7. Social events (picnics, Holy Day celebrations, fund raisers, etc.) and traditions
8. Pioneers who went forth from the community, both homefront and international
9. Special ties with other communities and details of intercommunity activities
10. Participation of believers in regional, national, and international conferences
11. Growth and development of children and youth activities
12. Intangible aspects of the community’s history. For example, the special character of the community, including the history of the city of which it was a part, how the early believers’ understanding of their roles as Bahá’ís developed, how they perceived themselves in respect to the larger Bahá’í community, etc.
13. Contact and interview older believers in the community/area that may have valuable memories of the early years of the Faith. Discuss preservation of their personal papers.
14. Try to reconstruct birth, death, marriage, and enrollment registers for the early years.

APPLICATION FOR RESEARCH

National Bahá'í Archives
[City and Country]

Name (please print

Address

Local Telephone number

E-mail address

Research Topic(s)

Purpose of Research (i.e. for book, article, etc.)

Names and addresses of researchers will be shared with other researchers upon request. If you do not want your name and address given out check the "no" space.

No _____

Identification (Bahá'í ID card or other identification)

Please present identification, with this form, to attendant.

Date _____ Signature

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES READING ROOM RULES

1. All researchers will sign the attendance log every day, upon arrival at the Reading Room.
2. Briefcases, coats, umbrellas, and other personal belongings must be stored in the rack by the door and not taken to the table. All briefcases, etc. are liable to be searched upon departure.
3. Researchers will use the record request form when requesting records. Please put the title of the collection and the box number needed on the form. Only one box of records may be used at a time.
4. Only pencils may be used in the Reading Room. The Archives staff will be glad to loan one if needed. A typewriter or computer may be used for note taking with staff permission.
5. No marks, writing or erasures are to be made on books or manuscripts. When using material remember that they are often fragile. Please handle them with the care which will protect them.
6. Smoking is not permitted in the Reading Room, nor may food or beverages be brought in.
7. No archival material may be removed from the Archives Reading Room.
8. It is important to maintain the existing order of materials in each folder and box. Please notify a staff member if any papers are apparently misfiled.
9. Researchers needing to photocopy manuscripts or books or have prints made from microfilm should see the Archives staff for instructions on the use of the copiers. Special arrangements must be made with the Archives staff for the copying of photographs.
10. Due to the small Archives staff it may be necessary to close the Reading Room during the lunch hour or at other periods of the day.
11. For the protection of its collections the National Bahá'í Archives reserves the right to restrict the use of those records which have restrictions, which are not arranged or are being arranged or records of exceptional value and fragile documents.
12. The records in the Archives of the National Spiritual Assembly, its committees and agencies, which are less than 50 years old and which have not already been made public, are restricted and require the permission of the National Assembly

secretary for access. The official records of Hands of the Cause, Counsellors, Auxiliary Board members, Huququ'llah Trustees and Local Spiritual Assemblies are also restricted. Researchers desiring to see any of these records should see the Archives staff about acquiring permission.

13. Researchers quoting material belonging to the National Bahá'í Archives should, when publishing, use the following form in giving credit: (name of collection), National Bahá'í Archives, United States.
14. The National Bahá'í Archives should receive a copy of all dissertations, articles or books based on research done in the Archives. When restricted material is used, the National Spiritual Assembly may require that they approve all research before it is published.
15. The following restriction has been placed on the microfilm copies of the original Tablets of `Abdu'l-Bahá and letters from or written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi available in the Archives Reading Room. "Concerning letters that contain information about personal problems, the subjects of those personal problems should not be identified, unless the researcher has gotten permission from the individual(s) involved or the family if they are deceased."
16. The Copyright law of the United States (Title 17, United States Code) governs the making of photocopies or other reproductions of copyrighted material. Under certain conditions specified by the law, libraries and archives are authorized to furnish a photocopy or other reproduction. One of these specified conditions is that the photocopy or reproduction is not to be "used for any purposes other than private study, scholarship, or research." If a user makes request for, or later uses, a photocopy or reproduction for purposes in excess of "fair use," that user may be liable for copyright infringement. This institution reserves the right to not accept a copying order if, in its judgment, fulfillment of the order would involve violation of the copyright law.
17. The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming to the copyright laws which may be involved in his use of any document preserved in the National Bahá'í Archives.

I have read the rules governing the use of material from the National Bahá'í Archives, Wilmette, Illinois, and I agree to abide by them.

Date _____ Signature _____

NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

□ Wilmette, Illinois 60091

INFORMATION FOR RESEARCHERS INQUIRING ABOUT THE NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

The National Bahá'í Archives is the archives of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States. The Archives' holdings document the history of the American Bahá'í community and include records of the National Spiritual Assembly and its committees and agencies, personal papers, photographs, tape recordings and a reference library.

The National Bahá'í Archives is located in the lower level of the Bahá'í House of Worship, 100 Linden Avenue (corner of Linden Avenue and Sheridan Road), Wilmette, Illinois. It is open by appointment to qualified researchers Monday through Friday from 10 a.m. to 5 p.m., with an hour closure for lunch. The Archives is closed on holidays and Bahá'í Holy Days.

Permission to examine manuscripts, photographs and printed matter held in the Archives will normally be granted to qualified researchers for specific purposes upon application to the Archivist and upon agreement to abide by the Archives reading room rules. Such permission is granted subject to whatever restrictions have been placed on specific holdings by their writers, donors or depositors or by the Archivist.

The records in the National Bahá'í Archives of the National Spiritual Assembly, its committees and agencies less than 50 years old, Local Spiritual Assemblies and members of the Continental Board of Counsellors and Auxiliary Boards, which have not already been made public, are restricted and require the permission of the National Spiritual Assembly secretary for access. Researchers desiring to see any of these records should contact the Archives staff about acquiring permission.

Before visiting the National Bahá'í Archives, the researcher should first write or call to make an appointment. The researcher should provide the Archives with the specific dates he would like to visit as the Archives may have unscheduled closings.

Only pencils are allowed to be used in the Archives - no pens. Hence researchers should bring a supply of pencils with them.

As the Archives staff is small we cannot do extensive research for researchers but instead recommend that they visit the Archives. We can do a limited amount of photocopying by mail if researchers have very specific requests for documents.

LOCAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES QUESTIONNAIRE

1. Name of Spiritual Assembly: _____

2. Date of formation of Spiritual Assembly: _____

If Spiritual Assembly has ever been lost please give date span.

Date(s) lost and reestablished: _____

3. How far back do your Spiritual Assembly records go?

Minutes _____

Correspondence _____

Treasurer's records _____

4. Do you have a local Bahá'í archives? Yes ____ No ____

5. Where is your archives housed: Private home(s) _____

Bahá'í Center _____

Other (please specify) _____

6. Who is in charge of the archives?

Archivist _____

Archives Committee _____

Spiritual Assembly Secretary _____

Librarian _____

Other (please specify) _____

7. What is the name of your archivist or archives committee secretary?

8. Please indicate contents of archives:	Yes	No	
Relics of Bahá'u'lláh	_____	_____	
Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá	_____	_____	
Relics of 'Abdu'l-Bahá	_____	_____	
Letters from Shoghi Effendi	_____	_____	
Spiritual Assembly minutes	_____	_____	Approx. years: _____
Spiritual Assembly correspondence	_____	_____	Approx. years: _____
Treasurer's records	_____	_____	Approx. years: _____
Personal papers of Bahá'ís	_____	_____	

Names:

Photographs	_____	_____
Books	_____	_____
Newspaper clippings	_____	_____
Publicity scrapbooks	_____	_____
Tape recordings (not published tapes)	_____	_____
Computer files	_____	_____
Artifacts	_____	_____

Describe:

9. Does your community contain any Bahá'ís who have experience as archivists or archival conservators (i.e., those who restore damaged manuscripts)?

Yes _____ No _____

If yes, please list names and specialties:

ARCHIVAL STANDARDS FOR SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY ARCHIVES

The National Bahá'í Archives has prepared the following standards for the guidance of Spiritual Assemblies in organizing their local archives. The purpose of the standards is to ensure that the records and papers possessed by the Spiritual Assembly are preserved and safeguarded. Many of these records and papers are unique; hence, if they are destroyed much valuable information will be irretrievably lost. If older spiritual Assemblies with historically significant archival collections are not able to meet these standards, they can temporarily deposit their archives collections in the National Bahá'í Archives.

- I. **MINIMUM ARCHIVES STANDARDS.** The following are minimum standards for a local archives. They focus just on preserving its collections and do not presume that the archives is actively supporting scholarly or administrative research.
 1. **Storage Space.** Records should be stored in a facility that can be locked and be reserved specifically for the archives collections. It could be a file cabinet, wall cabinet, closet, or room(s).
 2. **Storage Environment and Safety.** The archives storage space should be in a protected environment:
 - a. Stable temperature and humidity (maximum 40-60% relative humidity, 68 degrees Fahrenheit/20 degrees Centigrade)—avoid basements and attics
 - b. No insects or rodents
 - c. No threat of flooding or seepage and away from water pipes
 - d. No threat of fire
 - e. Fire extinguisher(s) readily available
 3. **Contents of Archives.** The local archives should contain the inactive permanent records of the Local Spiritual Assembly and its committees and agencies and any personal papers of Bahá'is that have been donated. The local archives may contain:
 - a. Minutes
 - b. Annual reports
 - c. Significant, unique correspondence
 - d. Financial records and ledgers
 - e. Publicity scrapbooks or files
 - f. Local bulletins or calendars
 - g. Committee records
 - h. Records from teaching campaigns, including posters and flyers
 - i. Membership records
 - j. Photographs
 - k. Audiovisual materials
 - l. Printed or published materials appropriate for reference use with the archival collections
 - m. Personal papers of individuals

- n. Oral history interviews
- o. Relics and artifacts
- p. Rare books
- q. Computer-generated records

4. Acquisition of Archival Material

A record of all items and collections donated to the Spiritual Assembly for its archives should be maintained, listing the name of donor, description of the donation, date of donation, and any restrictions on access or use.

A Deed of Gift form should be developed and issued for all donations involving transfer of legal ownership. Two copies of the deed of gift, signed by an Assembly officer, should be sent to the donor. The donor should sign one copy and return it to the archives. The other copy is their official receipt.

The Assembly should also send a letter with the deed of gift, warmly thanking the donor for his or her donation.

A policy should be established for the regular transfer of non-current Assembly records to be placed in the archives. The records of the Spiritual Assembly itself and its committees are of the utmost importance and are the primary source for documenting the growth and development of the Faith in that locality.

Each collection of records and personal papers should be maintained intact and separate from each other. An inventory that lists the contents and date range of each collection should be filed at the front of the material, with a second copy maintained in a master notebook for easy reference. If the papers of very prominent Bahá'ís are offered, the Assembly should consult with the National Bahá'í Archives about whether such papers would more appropriately be retained at the National Bahá'í Archives.

5. Responsibility for Care of Archives.

The local archives should be under the exclusive control of an appointed archivist or archives committee, which should maintain an inventory of the archives collections and ensure that they are not lost, stolen, or misplaced. Either Assembly officers or members, or community members could be appointed.

II. STANDARDS FOR ACTIVE ARCHIVES. If the local archives plans to actively support scholarly or administrative research pertaining to the history and development of the Spiritual Assembly and its local community, it should meet not only the minimum standards listed above but also the following:

1. **Arrangement of Archival Collections.** The collections of local records and personal papers should be properly arranged, in acid-free boxes and folders, with appropriate finding aids, according to standard archival practice. (See *Guidelines for Bahá'í Archives*)
2. **Support of Research.** Space for students and visiting scholars will need to be provided, and the use of records and other archival material should be under the supervision of the archivist/archives committee. An access policy approved by the Spiritual Assembly will be required to protect confidential records. Finally, a guide to the holdings of the archives should be prepared.
3. **Archives Staff.** An ongoing training program for the appointed archivists/archives committee is essential to allow for the turnover of volunteer archivists. The National Bahá'í Archives stands ready to assist in the development of the training program.
4. **Upgrading of Archives Physical Facilities.** The following guidelines apply.
 - a. Install smoke detectors or heat sensors to detect fires
 - b. Install, if possible, an automatic fire extinguishing system, usually a sprinkler system
 - c. Install a security alarm system to protect against break-ins and thefts
 - d. Install steel, baked enamel shelving (not wood)
 - e. Consult with National Bahá'í Archives or a local university archives about additional preservation measures that can/should be taken
 - f. Facilities to allow researchers to make photocopies, use scanners, cameras, and other equipment should be considered

SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY RECORDS IN LOCAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

Why Have a Local 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 Bahá'í Archives is indeed a most valuable storehouse regarding all the aspects of the Faith, historical, administrative, as well as doctrinal.” (From a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi to a National Spiritual Assembly, September 25, 1936)

The Spiritual Assembly, as a permanent body, is responsible for maintaining all its records, including minutes, correspondence and financial records, throughout its existence as a Bahá'í institution. Each officer, therefore, on completing his or her term of office, shall turn over to the Assembly all records pertaining to the business of the Assembly.

What Types of Records Are Suitable for the Archives?

The Bahá'í Archives houses the official, inactive records of the Spiritual Assembly, its officers and committees. In addition, the Archives houses other archival material concerning the Bahá'í Community, such as relics, personal papers of Bahá'ís, photographs, tape recordings, local Bahá'í bulletins and newspaper clippings.

Which Assembly Records Should be Kept Permanently in the Archives?

Spiritual Assembly records having permanent historical or administrative value should be placed in the Archives when no longer needed in the current business of the Spiritual Assembly. This can be done once a year after Ridván. Other records can be disposed of.

<u>Disposition of Inactive Records</u>	<u>Placed in Archives</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>
Annual Reports	X	
Minutes	X	

<u>Disposition of Inactive Records</u>	<u>Place in Archives</u>	<u>Destroyed</u>
Feast Letters		X
Other routine mailings from the Bahá'í National Center		X
Unique correspondence with National Assembly,		

Bahá'í National Center or other Bahá'í Institutions	X	
Correspondence with Individuals	X	
Routine advertisements, etc. from non-Bahá'ís		X
Birth, Marriage and Death Registers	X	
Cash or Financial Journal	X	
Annual Financial Report	X	
Other Financial Records		X
Local Committee Reports	X	
Local Bulletins, Newsletters or Calendars	X	
Local Publicity Files or Scrapbooks	X	
Personal Status Case Files	X	
Local Membership Lists or Directories	X	
Enrollment, change of address, etc. forms		X
Duplicate annual reports, minutes, bulletins, etc.		X
Photographs of Spiritual Assembly, Bahá'í community or community activities	X	

Who Should Be In Charge of the Archives?

The Spiritual Assembly should appoint someone to be responsible for its archives. This can be the Assembly secretary, another Assembly member, or a member of the community can be appointed archivist.

How Can Missing Records Be Identified?

An annual inventory of the Archives should be made and a copy presented to the Spiritual Assembly. The inventory can be compared with the previous inventory to ensure that no records are missing.

Should Researchers Be Allowed in the Archives?

The Spiritual Assembly should establish an access policy for their inactive records. The Assembly will need free access to its records when researching questions before the Assembly. Private research should require the permission of the Assembly or the person in charge of the Archives and researchers should be shown only non-confidential material. Records should be kept of all those using the Archives and of all files borrowed, to ensure that such material is eventually returned.

What Should Be Considered in Storing and Protecting Records?

Records should not be stored in places such as attics and basements where they will be subject to high temperatures, temperature and humidity fluctuations, or water damage. It may be necessary to store very valuable records in commercial storage space, such as safe deposit boxes. Protection against the following enemies of records should be kept in mind when storing records: 1) Fire 2) Flooding 3) Excessive humidity (over 68%) causing mold 4) High temperatures (over 80 degrees F; 27 degrees C) 5) Sunlight 6) Insects and rodents 7) Rubber bands, paper clips and scotch tape 8) Theft and borrowed records never returned.

What Should Be Done with Personal Papers of Bahá'ís?

Some Spiritual Assemblies will be given the personal papers of Bahá'ís. These may consist of letters, books, photographs, relics, diaries, personal recollections or manuscripts. Any collection of personal papers should be kept intact and not interfiled with the Assembly records or other personal papers. For further information see the National Bahá'í Archives personal papers information sheet.

When An Assembly is Lost, What Should Be Done with Its Records?

If possible, they should be stored by a former Assembly officer or member, or by a reliable member of the community until the Assembly is reformed. If none of these alternatives are available, the Assembly records and other archival material should be sent to the National Bahá'í Archives for storage. The Assembly's library, including publications like *American Bahá'í*, should *not* be sent to the National Bahá'í Archives.

LOCAL SPIRITUAL ASSEMBLY RECORDS INVENTORY FORM

1. Name of Spiritual Assembly: _____

2. Date of Inventory: _____

3. Location of Records: _____

4. Type of Records (record date range (i.e. earliest and latest dates) and number of folders/boxes for each category of records)

Minutes:

Annual Reports:

Correspondence with National Assembly:

Correspondence with Bahá'í National Center:

Correspondence with Auxiliary Board:

Correspondence with Local Spiritual Assemblies:

Correspondence with Individuals:

Correspondence with Public:

Other Correspondence:

Personal Status Case Files:

Other Subject Files:

Financial (Cash) Journals:

Contribution Receipts:

Committee Reports:

Records of Local Committees:

Local Bulletins/Newsletters/Calendars:

Membership lists/directories:

Publicity Files or Scrapbooks:

Photographs:

Personal Papers of Individual Bahá'ís (specify names):

Other (specify):

PERSONAL PAPERS IN LOCAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

These guidelines are designed for local Spiritual Assemblies who do not have an organized, functioning local Bahá'í archives but who have been given the personal papers of a Bahá'í or Bahá'í family.

What are Personal Papers?

They are the papers accumulated by individuals or families during their lifetime. The papers can include:

Letters	Copies of drafts of talks,	Diaries
Photographs	books, articles, courses, etc.	Legal records
Financial records	Books or other printed matter	Scrapbooks
Tape recordings	Personal articles, like clothing,	Relics
Computer files	jewelry, etc	Artwork

Why are Personal Papers Important?

Personal papers are important to historians and other scholars because they often contain information not found in institutional records. They document the life of the individual who accumulated them and so are important to biographers. Personal papers also contain valuable material about other Bahá'ís and Bahá'í institutions and communities. They help scholars understand the feelings, motivations, and personal qualities of Bahá'ís and Bahá'í communities.

How Should Personal Papers Be Handled?

First, each collection of personal papers should be kept intact and separate from other personal papers and from the Spiritual Assembly records. They should not be interfiled with other collections. A record should be kept of whose papers they are and who donated them to the Local Spiritual Assembly. Each collection of personal papers should be given a title, consisting of the name of the individual or family creating the papers, the term "Papers" and the date range of the papers. (For example, "Lilly Smith Papers, 1940-1965") If an individual's Bahá'í library has also been received, the Bahá'í books can be placed in the local Bahá'í reference library. However, books containing handwritten notes or autographs should remain with the personal papers.

Second, each collection of personal papers should be placed in its own box(es) and labeled with the collection title. Personal papers should be stored in the same location as the Assembly records to reduce the risk of being misplaced. The storage location should be one that will protect the papers from dampness, flooding, fire, rodents, insects, high temperature, and theft.

What Should Be Done with Original Tablets of ‘Abdu’l-Bahá Or Letters from Shoghi Effendi?

If possible, the original Tablet(s) or letter(s) should be sent to the National Bahá’í Archives and a photocopy kept with the collection. If this is not possible, a photocopy should be sent to the National Bahá’í Archives. It is important that either the original or a photocopy be sent to the National Bahá’í Archives, both for its own files and so that photocopies may be sent to the Universal House of Justice.

Should Personal Papers Be Reported to the National Bahá’í Archives?

Yes, the National Bahá’í Archives would like to know about personal papers in local Bahá’í archives. This will allow the National Bahá’í Archives to better assist local Bahá’í archives and will also be of value to researchers working at the National Bahá’í Archives. Please send to the National Bahá’í Archives the title of the collection and its size (i.e., number of items, folders or boxes).

Occasionally a Local Spiritual Assembly will be asked to transfer a collection of personal papers to the National Bahá’í Archives. The papers may contain material of national or international significance that belong more appropriately in a national Bahá’í archives rather than in a local Bahá’í archives. Other times the papers may be a separated part of a collection already in the National Bahá’í Archives. In such cases it is preferable for the entire collection of papers to be located in just one archives and not scattered in several locations. In most cases, photocopies of the records can be made and retained in the local archives. There will also be occasions when Local Spiritual Assemblies are asked to lend collections to the National Bahá’í Archives to be microfilmed.



BAHÁ'Í BIRTH REGISTER

**Bahá'í
ID #**

Child's Full Name _____

Date and Time of Birth _____

Location of Birth _____

Mother's Full Name _____

Father's Full Name _____

Verified by Civil Birth Certificate # _____

Issuing Jurisdiction _____

Recording Spiritual Assembly _____



BAHÁ'Í BIRTH REGISTER

**Bahá'í
ID #**

Child's Full Name _____

Date and Time of Birth _____

Location of Birth _____

Mother's Full Name _____

Father's Full Name _____

Verified by Civil Birth Certificate # _____

Issuing Jurisdiction _____

Recording Spiritual Assembly _____

*O God! Educate these children.
~'Abdu'l-Bahá*



BAHÁ'Í DEATH REGISTER

Full Name of Deceased _____

Date of Death _____

Date and Place of Birth _____

Address at Time of Death _____

Date of Funeral Service _____

Spiritual Assembly Officiating _____

Name, Address, and Telephone of Presiding Funeral Home

Burial Location _____

Names and Addresses of Next of Kin

*O Son of the Supreme! I have made death a messenger of joy to thee.
Wherefore dost thou grieve?
~Bahá'u'lláh*



BAHÁ'Í ENROLLMENT REGISTER

Enrollee's Full Name _____

Address at Time of Enrollment _____

Local Bahá'í Community _____

Parents (if Bahá'ís) _____

Special Remarks: _____

Enrolling Assembly or Body _____

Bahá'í ID number issued _____

~~~~~

**Enrollee's Full Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Address at Time of Enrollment** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Local Bahá'í Community** \_\_\_\_\_

**Parents (if Bahá'ís)** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Special Remarks:** \_\_\_\_\_

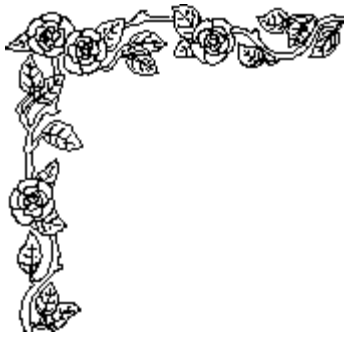
\_\_\_\_\_

**Enrolling Assembly or Body** \_\_\_\_\_

**Bahá'í ID number issued** \_\_\_\_\_







IV-11

### REGISTER OF BAHÁ'Í MARRIAGE

**Bahá'í Bahá'í**  
**Yes No ID #**

**Bride's Full Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Groom's Full Name** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Ceremony** \_\_\_\_\_

|                        |               |                        |               |
|------------------------|---------------|------------------------|---------------|
| <b>Bride's Parents</b> | <b>Bahá'í</b> | <b>Groom's Parents</b> | <b>Bahá'í</b> |
|                        | <b>Yes No</b> |                        | <b>Yes No</b> |

|       |       |       |       |
|-------|-------|-------|-------|
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |
| _____ | _____ | _____ | _____ |

#### Witnesses

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

**Location of Ceremony** \_\_\_\_\_

**Was the Bahá'í ceremony the legal ceremony?** Yes \_\_\_ No \_\_\_

**If so, Spiritual Assembly officiating** \_\_\_\_\_

**If not, type of legal ceremony** \_\_\_\_\_

**Civil License Number** \_\_\_\_\_ **Jurisdiction** \_\_\_\_\_

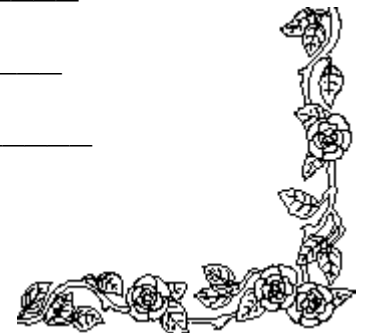
**Names of any children by previous marriages**

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

*O Thou kind Lord!*  
*Make Thou this marriage to bring forth coral and pearls.*  
 ~'Abdu'l-Bahá



## NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

□ Wilmette, Illinois 60091

### DONATING PAPERS TO THE NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES

#### National Bahá'í Archives

Personal papers are an important source of information for scholars about the history of the Bahá'í Faith. They often contain information not found in the records of Bahá'í institutions. Moreover, when such papers come from many different individuals they help to document the diversity of the American Bahá'í community. Personal papers donated to the National Bahá'í Archives will eventually be processed, arranged, and opened to research. They will become part of a Bahá'í archives, referred to in a letter written on behalf of Shoghi Effendi as “a most valuable storehouse of information regarding all aspects of the Faith, historical, administrative as well as doctrinal.”

As the archives of the National Spiritual Assembly of the Bahá'ís of the United States, the collections of the National Bahá'í Archives relate to the history of the Bahá'í Faith, primarily for North America but also covering Central and South America, Europe, Asia, Africa and Australasia. At present, the Archives is located in the lower level of the Bahá'í House of Worship, Linden and Sheridan, Wilmette, Illinois. It has a staff of professional archivists. The Archives' storage areas are environmentally controlled and protected against fire and theft. The Archives has a reading room for the use of scholars researching its collections.

#### Archival Material Sought by the National Bahá'í Archives

The National Bahá'í Archives has been given the responsibility to locate original Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and letters from Shoghi Effendi and obtain either the original letters or good photocopies. The Archives also actively seeks the papers of Bahá'ís who have contributed to the history of the Bahá'í Faith on the national or international level or who lived during the early years of the Bahá'í Faith in America. Information on the whereabouts of any such papers is appreciated.

Personal papers are the material accumulated during the course of one's life. The types of material found in personal papers can vary widely but materials of particular interest to the National Bahá'í Archives include:

|                                                                                     |                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Original letters, including Tablets of 'Abdu'l-Bahá and letters from Shoghi Effendi | Literary manuscripts, such as drafts of talks, books, articles, poetry |
| Personal and family correspondence                                                  | Personal recollections                                                 |
| Diaries                                                                             | Scrapbooks                                                             |
| Photographs                                                                         | Relics and some personal belongings or artifacts                       |
| Printed matter, including annotated books                                           | Financial and legal records                                            |

When collecting personal papers, the National Bahá'í Archives is interested in materials relating to an individual's non-Bahá'í as well as Bahá'í activities. Personal papers are more valuable to the Archives and scholars if they document an individual's entire life, including areas that may not be strictly Bahá'í related, such as one's occupation, relationship with non-Bahá'í family members and friends, hobbies, and the like.

### **Donating Archival Material**

The National Bahá'í Archives is also interested in acquiring papers of a personal nature, such as letters with close family members or friends and diaries. They contain information that is important to scholars if they are to understand the motivations, feelings and personal qualities of Bahá'ís and the changes the Bahá'í Faith has wrought in their lives.

The National Bahá'í Archives is conscious of the need to balance the interests of historical scholarship and the privacy of individuals. Therefore, donors can restrict access to any material of a personal and sensitive nature in their papers. These restrictions, which are for specific time periods, such as 20 years or the life of the donor or another individual, can either close the sensitive material to all research or require that the interested researcher obtain the written permission of the donor to use the restricted material. If a donor would like to place a restriction on his papers this should be discussed with the archivist before the papers are donated.

When personal papers are donated to the National Bahá'í Archives, legal ownership of the papers is transferred to the National Spiritual Assembly. The Archives uses a deed of gift to record this transfer. The deed of gift is signed by both the archivist, on behalf of the National Spiritual Assembly, and the donor. Copies are kept by both parties. The deed of gift also records any restrictions on the collection. If the donor wants to have returned any material which the Archives finds it does not want, this should also be noted in the deed of gift. Donated printed matter not needed by the Archives or the National Bahá'í Library may be given to other Bahá'í libraries or sold, with the proceeds going to the Archives Endowment Fund.

While many people find it convenient to send their papers in one or more batches during their lifetime, thus relieving themselves of moving or storage arrangements, others make provisions to leave their papers to the National Bahá'í Archives in their wills. In either case, the Archives requests that the papers not be weeded and items discarded prior to their delivery since individuals may not realize the historical value to some seemingly unimportant items.

## ORAL HISTORY GUIDELINES

1. A successful interview requires previous research on the life and activities of the interviewee. The interviewer should come to the interview with a list of prepared questions or topics to be covered. Some interviewees will request to see the list of questions ahead of time so that they can be better prepared to talk.
2. The interviewer will often want to start the interview by getting some general background and family information from the interviewee. The interview can then proceed chronologically or by topic.
3. The interviewer should be flexible enough to be able to explore unexpected information or a new trail of inquiry not covered by the prepared questions if one should suddenly appear. This is why a good grasp of the subject being discussed is so valuable.
4. A basic purpose of oral history is to fill in gaps in manuscript or printed sources or to elaborate on them. Manuscript material is considered to be archival when it has permanent historical, administrative, or religious value and will be used by researchers in the future. The same criteria apply to oral history interviews.
5. Before the interview begins, the interviewer should discuss with the interviewee any restrictions the interviewee may want to place on the use of the tapes. Archives generally prefer not to have any restrictions, but are willing to accept reasonable restrictions on access or copyright if the restrictions have a definite time limit. A letter detailing any restrictions should be sent with the interview to the archives. Upon receipt of the tapes, the archives will send a Deed of Gift to the interviewee, if one hasn't been signed at the time of the interview.
6. The interviewer should be friendly and courteous.
7. The interviewer may want to do more than one interview if the subject warrants it and the interviewee is agreeable. Several shorter sessions (2 hours or so) are better than long sessions that tire both the interviewer and interviewee.
8. The interviewer should phrase questions carefully and keep them short so that the interviewee is free to express his or her own ideas and knowledge. The interviewer should avoid leading questions.
9. A letter of appreciation should be written afterwards.
10. The interviewer should keep careful records on who is interviewed, when, and where. Each tape should be labeled with the names of interviewer and interviewee, place, and date. Record a short introduction at the beginning of the tape, including this information, before the interview begins.

11. Place the tape recorder in a position so that the interviewer can easily see the progress of the tape, and keep a close eye on time so that the tape does not run out, causing lost material. Keep a pen and paper handy to jot down additional questions that come to mind in the course of the interview.
12. It is generally a good idea to avoid interviewing two or more people at a time. It is easier to keep subjects focused on the questions at hand, there are fewer interruptions and distractions, and this avoids people “walking” on each other by talking at the same time.
13. Following the interview, be sure to ask the interviewee if he she has pertinent documents or photographs related to the interview that they would like to donate to the archives either for permanent retention or for duplicating purposes.
14. When the interview is transcribed, include a brief biographical sketch of the person at the front of the interview, a list of topics discussed as a table of contents, and an index of key words at the end of the interview. Appropriate documents and photographs can be scanned and included in the interview.

**NATIONAL BAHÁ'Í ARCHIVES**

□ Wilmette, Illinois 60091

**ARCHIVAL STANDARDS FOR BAHÁ'Í SCHOOLS AND INSTITUTES**

The National Bahá'í Archives has prepared the following standards for the guidance of the permanent Bahá'í schools and institutes in deciding how to handle their archives. The purpose of the standards is to ensure that the records and papers possessed by the Bahá'í schools, which are records of the National Spiritual Assembly, are preserved and safeguarded. If these standards cannot be met, the school or institute should temporarily deposit their archives collections in the National Bahá'í Archives. For further reference, consult the manual *Guidelines for Bahá'í Archives*.

- I. **MINIMUM ARCHIVES STANDARDS.** The following are minimum standards for a school archives. They focus just on preserving its collections and do not presume that the archives is actively supporting the school's educational programs.
1. **Storage Space.** Records should be stored in a facility that can be locked and be reserved specifically for the archives collections. It could be a file cabinet, wall cabinet, closet, or room(s).
  2. **Storage Environment and Safety.** The archives storage space should be in a protected environment:
    - a. Stable temperature and humidity (maximum 40-60% relative humidity, 68 degrees Fahrenheit/20 degrees Centigrade)—avoid basements and attics
    - b. No insects or rodents
    - c. No threat of flooding or seepage and away from water pipes
    - d. No threat of fire
    - e. Fire extinguisher(s) readily available
  3. **Contents of Archives.** The school archives should contain the inactive permanent records of the school or institute and any personal papers of Bahá'ís that have been donated. The school archives may contain:
    - a. Minutes
    - b. Annual reports
    - c. Significant correspondence
    - d. School programs
    - e. Course materials
    - f. Planning documents
    - g. Reports
    - h. Year end financial reports or statements
    - i. Architectural and property maintenance records
    - j. Photographs
    - k. Audiovisual materials

- l. Printed or published materials appropriate for reference use with the archival collections
- m. Personal papers of individuals
- n. Oral history interviews
- o. Relics and artifacts
- p. Rare books
- q. Computer-generated records

#### 4. **Acquisition of Archival Material**

A record of all items and collections donated to the school or institute for its archives should be maintained, listing the name of donor, description of the donation, date of donation, and any restrictions on access or use.

A Deed of Gift form should be developed and issued for all donations involving transfer of legal ownership. Two copies of the deed of gift, signed by a school officer, should be sent to the donor. The donor should sign one copy and return it to the archives. The other copy is their official receipt.

The school/institute should also send a letter with the deed of gift, warmly thanking the donor for his or her donation.

A policy should be established for regularly transferring school records to the archives. The records of the school or institute are the primary source for documenting the growth and development of that institution.

Each collection of records and personal papers should be maintained intact and separate from each other. An inventory that lists the contents and date range of each collection should be filed at the front of the material, with a second copy maintained in a master notebook for easy reference. If the papers of very prominent Bahá'ís are offered, the Assembly should consult with the National Bahá'í Archives about whether such papers would more appropriately be retained at the National Bahá'í Archives.

#### 5. **Responsibility for Care of Archives.**

The school archives should be under the exclusive control of an appointed archivist or archives committee, which should maintain an inventory of the archives collections and ensure that they are not lost, stolen, or misplaced. Either existing staff or volunteers could be appointed. The archivist or archives committee should keep the school/institute Council and the National Bahá'í Archives informed of the status of the archives.

**II. STANDARDS FOR ACTIVE ARCHIVES.** If the school archives plans to actively support the courses and scholarship of the school or institute, it should meet not only the minimum standards listed above but also the following:

1. **Arrangement of Archival Collections.** The collections of school records and personal papers should be properly arranged, in acid-free boxes and folders, with appropriate finding aids, according to standard archival practice. (See *Guidelines for Bahá'í Archives*)
2. **Support of Research.** Space for students and visiting scholars will need to be provided, and the use of records and other archival material should be under the supervision of the archivist/archives committee. An access policy approved by the Council will be required to protect confidential records. Finally, a guide to the holdings of the archives should be prepared.
3. **Archives Staff.** An ongoing training program for the appointed archivists/archives committee is essential to allow for the turnover of volunteer archivists. The National Bahá'í Archives stands ready to assist in the development of the training program.
4. **Upgrading of Archives Physical Facilities.** The following guidelines apply.
  - a. Install smoke detectors or heat sensors to detect fires
  - b. Install, if possible, an automatic fire extinguishing system, usually a sprinkler system
  - c. Install a security alarm system to protect against break-ins and thefts
  - d. Install steel, baked enamel shelving (not wood)
  - e. Consult with National Bahá'í Archives or a local university archives about additional preservation measures that can/should be taken
  - f. Facilities to allow researchers to make photocopies, use scanners, cameras, and other equipment should be considered



## **QUESTIONS TO CONSIDER WHEN RESEARCHING AND WRITING HISTORY OF LOCAL COMMUNITIES**

1. When was the Local Spiritual Assembly first formed, incorporated, and other important dates?
2. Names of original and early Assembly members
3. History of the individuals believers and groups that existed prior to the formation of the first Assembly
4. Contacts with ‘Abdu’l-Bahá, Shoghi Effendi, the World Centre, the National Centre, regional teaching committees, etc. Early Pilgrimage stories.
5. Hands of the Cause, travel teachers, and other notable Bahá’ís who visited the community and how they affected its development
6. History of firesides, proclamation events, and teaching activities in the community
7. Social events (picnics, Holy Day celebrations, fund raisers, etc.) and traditions
8. Pioneers who went forth from the community, both homefront and international
9. Special ties with other communities and details of intercommunity activities
10. Participation of believers in regional, national, and international conferences
11. Growth and development of children and youth activities
12. Intangible aspects of the community’s history. For example, the special character of the community, including the history of the city of which it was a part, how the early believers’ understanding of their roles as Bahá’ís developed, how they perceived themselves in respect to the larger Bahá’í community, etc.
13. Contact and interview older believers in the community/area that may have valuable memories of the early years of the Faith. Discuss preservation of their personal papers.
14. Try to reconstruct birth, death, marriage, and enrollment registers for the early years.