

“Everyone Has an Archive:
Organizing and Inventorying the Treasures You Own”

Notes to PowerPoint Slides

Georgette Mayo, Processing Archivist, Avery Research Center

What is an Archive?

As per the National Archives, “an archives is a place where people can go to gather firsthand facts, data, and evidence from letters, reports, notes, memos, photographs, and other primary sources.”

<https://www.archives.gov/about/info/whats-an-archives.html>

Preservation: Start with the Basics

- Avoid bright light sources or direct sunlight
- Maintain a consistent room temperature (between 68-76 degrees F and 73-78 degrees recommended for the summer) and moderate humidity 30-50% recommended to prevent mold, dust mites, and respiratory issues.
- Keep objects clean and clean them with care.
- Guard against insects and pests.
- Avoid excess moisture.

- **“How do eat an elephant? One bite at a time!”** That is how I want you to approach organizing and inventorying your collection, hobbies and/or treasures. Do it for a limited period each time (fifteen minutes or a half an hour each time until completed).

Organizing

- First, know what you have. Decide whether you want to keep it, pass it on to a loved one, sell it via consignment or an online selling platform like EBay or Poshmark, or donate to a charity/thrift shop.
- Depending on your collection or hobby, organization can be as simple as sorting and categorizing.

- Locations: Where do you store your treasures? Are they grouped together or scattered? Show off your collection!
- If your collection is already sorted, make sure the materials you are using are still in good shape. Check periodically that the materials you use for storage are clean. Bubble wrap when left out of a box gets dirty overtime and needs to be changed.
- Clean your treasures: before you proceed, research the best ways to clean
- Consult a conservation profession if you are not certain how to clean fine art, decorative objects, and/or rare books. James Davis, Bindery Director and Conservator at the Charleston Library Society is a good person to ask.

Inventorying

- **Reasons for creating an inventory:**

Knowing what you have, preventing purchase mistakes (buying duplicate items)

Insurance policies and purposes

Writing your will

For your family to know what you have; have a discussion with your family to find out what they would be interested in keeping

Knowing what your parents and children hold and collect

Ways to inventory:

Digital Inventories:

iCollect Everything app: Just what it says

“My Collection” app: Great for general objects (Free)

“Tellico:” books, bibliographies, videos, music, video games, coins, stamps, trading cards, comic books, and wines. (Free)

LibraryThing: Great for books

Open Wardrobe: Great for clothing and accessories including jewelry

Pros: Accessible via desktop computer and mobile phone

Provides a way to take a photograph and connect with your of your artifact

Portable via your phone

Fun to use

Cons: Do not allow Artificial Intelligence (AI) to take over, write your own description of your artifact

Does not provide a paper copy

Updates to app might throw a person off,

Raises privacy concerns; who else is seeing your collection

Remembering passwords

Computer Inventory:

Excel spreadsheet

Word document

Pros: You have the control for creating item descriptions and accessibility

Easy to make photocopies

Cons: Being proficient in creating and using Excel

Photographs must be created

Make sure you provide a photograph image of the item you are describing for your records and insurance policies!

Paper:

Composition notebook

Obtain photos from your phone from free websites: "Free Prints"

Pros: Affordable

You have control over the description of your artifact

Can make this a family project

Can create copies to provide to family

Can store in a safe or deposit box

Cons: Time consuming

Photographs must be created

Where to keep your inventory:

Safe deposit box-Bank vaults and Home version

Keep multiple paper versions with family members/trusted friends

Reasons for your collection:

- Collecting memories through your artifacts
- What is the story associated with this item: Artifacts lead to stories: from travel, gifts, family treasures passed down, an impulse purchase
- Chronicling a narrative for your treasures to pass down the reason for your collection.

Notes on Last PowerPoint Slide:

Shameless promotions!!! Yes, we have a podcast, *The Avery Messenger*, available on YouTube and your favorite streaming platforms, audio only.

Feel free to contact me via email with your questions: mayog@cofc.edu