Introduction to Archives
HIST 5020
Spring 2018
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Today’s Agenda
• Introductions and attendance
• Course Details
  • Schedule and Description (handouts)
  • Book/Readings
  • Assignments
  • Field Trips
  • Etc.
• Visit to 2 UML Archives on campus
• History of Archives (mini-lecture)
• A (Virtual) Archival Tour: from Lowell to Rome (slides)

Course Details
• Schedule and Description (handouts)
• Book/Readings
• Assignments
• Field Trips
• Course Website
• Echo 360
• Practical Details (breaks, bathrooms)
What is an archive?

• "archive(s)”: permanently valuable records of people, business, & government.

• "Archives": organization that preserves records for a specific group (town, university, association, business, church)

• "archives": the building in which archival materials are kept

What is an archivist?

• Professionals who assess, collect, organize, preserve, and provide access to records and information with long-term value.

• Vs. Librarian

• Vs. Records Manager

• Vs. Museum Curator

• Vs. Historian

What do archivists do in an archive?

• Assess

• Acquire

• Organize

• Describe

• Preserve/Secure

• Provide Access
History of Archives

- Pre-history
- Ancient
- Medieval
- Early Modern
- 19th century
- Modern

Pre-historical archives

- Oral tradition
  - Speech, song, chant, dance
  - Priests, bards, poets, elders
  - Preserving history, myth, lore, and legend

Ancient Archives (4000 BCE – 500 AD)

- Sumer & Mesopotamia
- Egypt
- Persia & Alexander
- Classical Greece
- Rome
- Hsia and Han China
- Clay, leather, wood, wax,
- Papyrus, stone...
Medieval Archives (500 AD – 1400 AD)

- Few archives in early medieval (500-1000 AD) or “Dark Ages”
  - Law, oral tradition
  - Barter is common
  - Survival is key, not memory
  - Ambulatory archives with kings

- More archives in High/Late Medieval (1000-1400 AD)
  - Codified laws
  - Written judicial precedent/evidence
  - Ecclesiastical records
  - Banking/commerce records
  - Property records

Renaissance/Early Modern Archives (1400-1800)

- Printing press
- Exploration
- Secularism
- New Monarchies
- Vatican archives, monastic archives, religious orders

- 1618: Swedish Chancellor prepares archive guidelines
- 1632: Baldassare Bonifacio, De Archives

The French Revolution and 19th Century

- Establishment of public archives nationwide
  - 1789: Archives Nationales
  - 1793: Mass. Historical Society
  - 1810: Napoleon borrows other archives
  - 1815-20: Finland, Sweden, Naples, Kingdom of Naples all create archives
  - 1821: Argentina’s national archive
  - 1851: England’s Public Record Office
  - 1859: Public Archives Commission (USA)

- Publication of “national” document series
  - Calendar of State Papers (GB)
  - American State Papers (USA)

- Provenance & “respect des fonds” in 1840-90
  - Maintain original order
  - Don’t mix different series

- Professional training for archivists
  - 1823: École des Chartes (Paris)
  - 1824: Institute for Austrian Kartd Research (Vienna)
  - 1877: St. Petersburg Archaeological Institute
20th Century Archives

• Soviet Union archives (1917)
• U.S. National Archives (1934)
• 1st Presidential Library (1938)
• Post-Colonial archives (1940s-present)
• International Council on Archives (1950)