Lessons learned for community organizations and individuals

- Consult with a variety of stakeholders - in addition to current leaders and members, consult with early leaders of the organization, if possible. Consider potential researchers, as well.
- Bankers boxes often work best for easily transporting paper documents.
- Ask questions:
  - How quickly is the material likely to be processed?
  - Will there be an online finding aid that is accessible to the public?
  - Is a staff member available to respond to questions that might arise as materials are being gathered?
  - Are there related collections that might lead researchers to the organization’s archives?
- Develop a written checklist of materials to include/exclude for the archives. This is especially helpful if a number of volunteers or staff are working with the materials.
- Inform early members and current members of the organization, as well as their families, that this material is being gathered for the local archives. Encourage them to contribute to the archives.
- Mediate the introduction of the archives to current and past members of the organization so as to alleviate any mistrust they may have of a university, historical or cultural institution. This involves the introduction of the formal agreement (deed of gift) forms required for the transfer of material to the archives.
- Utilize the deed of gift form(s) that the archives makes available to donors. This can help alleviate future confusion.

References


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