

STUFF IN A BOX



~~History~~ Your story at the New York State Library

~A Donor's Guide ~

The New York State Library in Albany holds many collections of written, visual, audible, and electronic records, each one a thread in the rich fabric of New York's history. But history is more than just the record of famous names and great events. History is the story of *your* life.

Using the diaries, letters, scrapbooks, photos, newspapers, postcards, maps, and all the "stuff in a box" that people collect, researchers piece together the story of communities, families, organizations, and events from the colonial era down to our own times. You can add your story to this record.

What to keep?

Just about anything can be part of a collection. You may think it's not interesting to an outsider, but even the smallest scrap can reveal an important historical truth. A few suggestions:

- Letters (don't forget the envelopes which may have dates or other information), postcards, e-mails, greeting cards
- Photos (dated and people and places identified if possible), slides and photo albums
- Audio tapes, home movies and videos
- Diaries, journals and scrapbooks
- Certificates (birth, confirmation, bar/bat mitzvah, marriage, death)
- School records: report cards, diplomas

- Membership records: unions, clubs and fraternal organizations
- Military papers
- Real estate records, wills and estate papers
- Paintings, drawings, needlework, sheet music
- Family newsletters (often sent around holidays)
- Newspaper clippings of your family or people you know (especially if they are dated and the publication is noted)

But I'm saving it for my family...

It's never too soon to think about donating your papers to a library. Your collections will be protected, organized and cataloged so that family members as well as researchers can access them for generations to come. A phone call, a letter or email message can start the ball rolling. Let us know what you have. We can discuss the collection and its contents, and if the State Library isn't the best fit, we'll even help you find another repository.

In most cases, donations start with a site visit. If possible, we'd like to come and see the papers and get sense of how much material there is, its general condition, and where it's stored. It also helps us to talk with you and get a feel for what the papers mean to you and your family. Finally, we'll schedule a convenient time to pick up your papers.

The deed of gift

A "deed of gift" is a simple, one-page document that legally transfers ownership of your papers to the library. In some cases—usually to protect privacy—you or your family might want to seal certain records restricting access for a specified time—say 25 or 50 years. All of this is part of the deed of gift.

The image shows two overlapping copies of a "Deed of Gift" form from the New York State Library. The top copy is the front side, and the bottom copy is the back side.

Front Side (Top Copy):

THE STATE EDUCATION DEPARTMENT THE UNIVERSITY OF THE STATE OF NEW YORK, ALBANY, NY 12242
 NEW YORK STATE LIBRARY
 Manuscripts and Special Collections
 110 N. STATE ST.

Manuscripts and Special Collections
 Deed of Gift
 To the
 New York State Library

The Manuscripts and Special Collections of the New York State Library gratefully acknowledges the gift and correspondence from:

Name: _____
 Address: _____
 Telephone: _____
 Email: _____

Of the following papers and/or other materials:

Description

I, the donor, hereby make a gift of, and assign, to the Regents of the University of the State of New York, and to the New York State Library, these papers and/or other materials and any further additions they may make to them.

Title to these papers and/or other materials is transferred to the New York State Library upon the signing of this deed of gift.

I relinquish any library rights in these unpublished papers and/or other materials or those which may be added to the collection at a later time.
 (Over)

Back Side (Bottom Copy):

It is my wish that these papers and/or other materials, donated to the New York State Library, shall be available for researchers in accordance with the policies and procedures for research in the Manuscripts and Special Collections, except for the following limiting conditions:

In addition, I agree that these papers and/or other materials may be reproduced, exhibited and/or published. I agree that persons granted access to these materials may make single copies of items for research purposes.

Signed, _____
 Date _____ Donor _____

_____ Date _____
 For the New York State Library

The deed of gift

Tax-deductible gifts?

Some gifts made to non-profit agencies, including libraries, may be tax deductible. The first step in finding out if your donation qualifies you for a deduction, is to contact an accountant or tax professional. Then, you will need to obtain a professional appraisal of your donated papers to establish their “fair market value.” The State Library can provide a list of fee-based, independent appraisers in the Capital Region.



Appraisers examining a collection

Preserving your collection

When your collection arrives in the Library one of the first steps in “processing” is re-housing the contents in protective boxes, folders and enclosures. These are made of special chemically inert materials, which will help keep unstable media from deterioration.



Photo negatives as originally received in plain paper envelopes and old metal file drawers



Negatives re-housed in “safe” archival folders and boxes

Storing the collection

Once the collection is re-housed it is stored in specially-constructed shelving in our climate-controlled storage area.



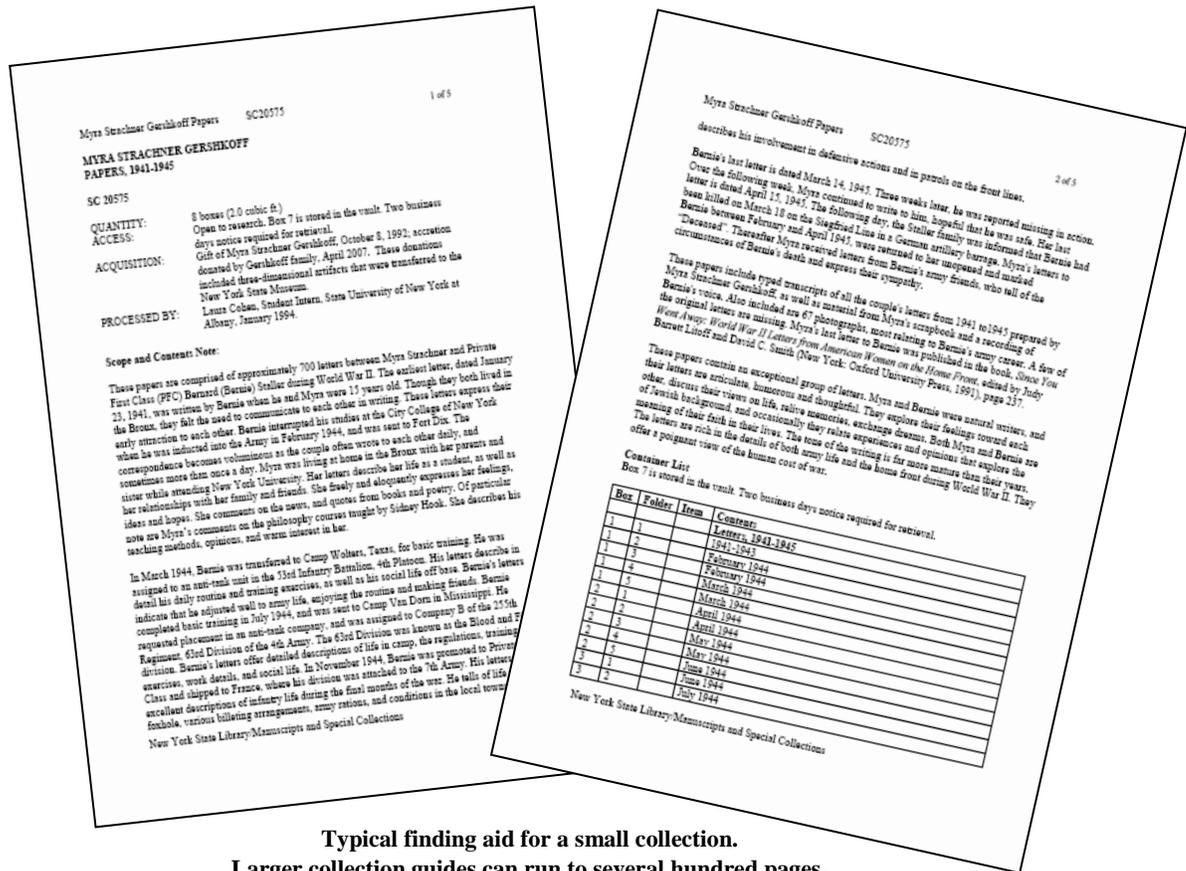
Storing the re-boxed and carefully labeled documents

Making the collection user-friendly

One of the first steps in making the collection available to researchers is to inventory the contents of each box.



The inventory will eventually lead to the creation of a “finding aid”— a descriptive guide to the contents of the collection.



Typical finding aid for a small collection.
 Larger collection guides can run to several hundred pages.

Completed guides can be consulted in the library and on the State Library's website:

<http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/msscfa/>

An online catalog entry contains a brief description of the collection and a link to its finding aid.

[eLibrary GRAC] Eviction

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CATALOG INFO DEK FOUR RECORDS DIGITAL COLLECTIONS EBOOKS

NEW SEARCH BACKWARD FORWARD REQUEST EXIT

Search Result -- Quick Search

Viewing record 1 of 1 from catalog "blossom sisters".
[Jump to location availability information](#)
 Check here to mark this record for Print/Capture

SC22853
 Blossom Sisters papers, 1932-1953
 Blossom Sisters.

Author: [Blossom Sisters](#).
Title: [Blossom Sisters papers, 1932-1953](#).
Quantity: 6 boxes (2 cubic feet)

Historical Note: Dorothy Blossom was born Dorothy Eleanor Leamon in Williamport PA, and died in Kingston, NY in 1999. At the time of her death she resided in Gardiner, NY, with her sister Helen, under their birth name Leamon.

Abstract: The papers of Dorothy Blossom (a.k.a. Dorothea Blossom, Dorothy Dunhill) and Helen Blossom (a.k.a. Helene Blossom) document their careers as dancers and comedienne, first on the vaudeville circuit, and later as part of USO shows entertaining armed forces personnel at remote stations during and just after World War II. The collection contains a significant body of personal correspondence from Theodore H. ("Ted") Richmond to Dorothy Blossom between 1933 and 1935. During the period covered by the correspondence, Richmond managed theatres in Boston, Massachusetts, and (briefly) Schenectady, New York.

Abstract: Numerous press clippings document the Blossom Sisters' USO touring experiences, and to a lesser extent, their early vaudeville work. Significantly there are several mimeographed and/or printed armed forces base newsletters from bases around the world. Scripts for comedy sketches and longer dramatic pieces, along with heavily annotated orchestra charts and music scores, complete the record of the sisters' performing career. The remainder of the collection is made up of personal photographs, greeting cards, and ephemera.

[eLibrary GRAC] Eviction

Finding aids: Unpublished finding aid in repository.

Personal subject: [Blossom, Dorothy](#).

Personal subject: [Blossom, Helen](#).

Personal subject: [Leamon Family](#).

Corporate subject: [United Service Organizations for National Defense](#).

Subject: [World War, 1939-1945--War work](#).

Personal author: [Leamon, Dorothy Eleanor](#).

Personal author: [Leamon, Helen](#).

Electronic access: [Finding aid: http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/msscfa/sc22853.htm](http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/msscfa/sc22853.htm)

Call Numbers for:	Copy Material	Location
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Researchers can access the library catalog onsite or via the internet



INTERESTED IN DONATING *YOUR* COLLECTION?

Be a part of New York's History!

Write:



The New York State Library,
Manuscripts and Special Collections
11th Floor, Cultural Education Center
Albany, NY 12230

Call: (518) 474-4461



Or email  to: mscrolls@nysed.gov

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