The Finding Aid

Developed and Presented by
Zahra Abedinezhad (abedi.9)
+ Rhiar Kanouse (kanouse.6)
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About Us

Zahra Abedinezhad

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ARCHIVAL PRO

- She has experience working in archives, including...
  - 2023 summer internship in the Ralph Rinzler Folklife Archives at the Smithsonian!

Rhiar Kanouse

SHE/HER/HERS

ARCHIVAL NOVICE

- While she is new to archiving, she is excited to use her teaching experience to explain how the finding aid template can be utilized.

Our Main Objectives

To impart the importance of a finding aid to a collection

To provide you with a finding aid template

To provide instruction on how to use the template

What exactly is a "finding aid"?

- A "finding aid" is a document that describes the contents of an archival collection. It is the first thing a person who wants to study a collection should look at before researching a collection in an archive.
- Every finding aid can be different depending on the type of collection and the info that exists.
- However, following the CFS template will help to organize the collections present throughout the archive in a cohesive way. This will also make access easier for folks using the archives for research.

KEEP IN MIND: A FINDING AID IS ALWAYS A LIVING DOCUMENT. IT NEEDS TO BE UPDATED AS THE COLLECTION ITSELF IS UPDATED.

How can I write a finding aid?

- To write a finding aid, you need to review the collection, briefly. If you are an archivist who physically processed the collection, it definitely can be an easy task. If not, you can consult with the donor of the collection, sources that the collection is acquired from, or general resources.
- For example, when/if you are doing an interview with the collector, you can use whatever information you were able to glean in order to write the finding aid.

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Finding Aid Template

- The following slides break down our finding aid template into smaller sections:
  - Summary of the Collection
  - Content
  - Access and Use
  - Box/Folder Level Descriptions
- You may wish to open the document from the CFS website to follow along.

Finding Aid Template for CFS Archive

by Zahra Abedinezhad and Rhiar Kanouse

Collection Name/Title, Dates [Here you should identify the collection name/title as well as the first date of materials in the collection to the last date (Ex. Margaret Mills,1990-2020).]

SUMMARY OF THE COLLECTION

Collection ID: CFS. [Use an abbreviation of the collection name (Ex. Use "MM" for Margaret Mills).]

Language: [Identify the language(s) used in the collection.]

Physical Description: [Identify the size of collection. (Ex. Size and type of archival boxes used) How much space is needed for preservation? Are there any limitations in terms of the collection preservation, etc.?]

Repository/Location: [Identify the room location: Hagerty 472, Hagerty 468, or Remote Storage], Center for Folklore Studies, The Ohio State University

ABSTRACT

[In a paragraph, describe what is in the collection, including the types of materials that are present.]

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CONTENT

Biographical and Historical Notes

[Here you should identify the artists or tradition bearers whose materials are in this collection. For instance, do you know any information about their professional/folklore life? How was the collection acquired? Was it donated or acquired by somebody at CFS? Be sure to establish the relationship between the collection owner and the archivist who accessioned the collection into the archive.]

Scope

[Expand on the abstract. Explain the content of the collection. How was it acquired? If you can find any information that can be useful for the public and researchers when they look in the archive to find related materials to their research/general interests, you can link some of that information here. For instance, you might point to external pages if they are helpful and related to the content in the collection. (Ex. If a paper is published by Mills and her preliminary fieldwork related to that paper exists in the collection, you can link the fieldwork to the published paper.)]

Research Strength/Suggestions

[Here, you should consider what aspects of this collection can be useful for future researchers. Usually, an archivist does not do in-depth research, but she/he/they is/are enough knowledgeable to say what the research strength of the collection is. You can subjectively suggest some research directions here.]

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ACCESS AND USE

Arrangement notes

[How is the collection organized? How many series are in the collection? Has it been processed, or does it need more processing, etc.?]

Administration

[Who are the people working on the collection currently, or who has worked on the collection? This includes who wrote the finding aid, helped you to gather information for writing the finding aid, etc.]

Using the collection

[Do you have any suggestions on how to use the collection? Where can the researchers access them? Are there any specific conditions that researchers or interested public/communities should know before accessing or while studying the collection? Who should they contact, etc.?]

Preferred Citation

[Name/title of the collection, Center for Folklore Studies Archive, The Ohio State University]

More Information

[Are there any general or specific regulations that the OSU and/or the CFS Archive hold for using and accessing the materials?]

Keywords

[Provide useful keywords for further research or connecting the related archival collections together. One of the ways for adding keywords is to use folklore genres. Some of folklore genres are the following: folk song, folk music, folk dance, verbal folklore, legends, folktales, myth, jokes, proverbs, riddles, urban folklore, women's folklore (or folklife), folk belief, folk art and material culture, etc.]

A helpful resource:
FOLK GROUPS AND FOLKLORE GENRES: A READER

BOX/FOLDER LEVEL DESCRIPTIONS

[Identify each box and briefly describe what the materials are in each box, as well as within the folders (if folders are present).]

Our hope is that...

- Your processing and archival research work will help to develop a greater sense of the archival material that CFS @ OSU holds, making the archive a more accessible and usable public resource.

Thank you for your time!
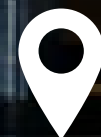
Don't hesitate to ask any questions!

For Archive Access

Kindly contact us in advance of your intended visit.

✉ CFS@OSU.EDU

🌐 WWW.CFS.OSU.EDU

📍 HAGERTY 455A