

The digital Helen Keller Archive

Definitions

Archive

The word *archives* refers to the permanently valuable records—such as letters, reports, accounts, minute books, draft and final manuscripts, and photographs—of people, businesses, and government. These records are kept because they have **continuing value** to the creating agency and to other potential users. They are the **documentary evidence of past events**. They are the facts we use to **interpret and understand history**.

- *Society of American Archivists; emphasis added*

Collection

n. ~ 1. A group of materials with some unifying characteristic. - 2. Materials assembled by a person, organization, or repository from a variety of sources; an artificial collection.

- *Society of American Archivists*

Digital archival object

Digital archival objects include graphic images, audio or video clips, images of text pages, and electronic transcriptions of text. The objects can be selected examples, or digital surrogates of all the materials in an archival collection or series.

- *Society of American Archivists*

Digital library (archive)

n. ~ 1. A collection of information resources (or archival collections) in electronic format. - 2. A service that uses information technology to provide services similar to traditional libraries (or archives), including selection and acquisition, cataloging, reference, and preservation, to provide access to information (or collections) in electronic format.

- *Society of American Archivists; 'archive' added to definition by Helen Keller Archive*

Filters

Filters are tools used on a website, such as the Helen Keller Archive, or on eCommerce websites, that allow the user to focus searches by topic, category, or other common organizing characteristic.

Materials

Materials are the things found in archives. Materials can be in many different formats: text, images, video, audio, objects, and more.

Physical archive

A material collection of permanently valuable records.

Primary source

Primary Sources are immediate, first-hand accounts of a topic, from people who had a direct connection with it. Primary sources can include:

- Texts of laws and other original documents.
- Newspaper reports, by reporters who witnessed an event or who quote people who did.
- Speeches, diaries, letters and interviews - what the people involved said or wrote.
- Original research.
- Datasets, survey data, such as census or economic statistics.
- Photographs, video, or audio that capture an event.

- Healey Library at the University of Massachusetts Boston

Provenance

The place of origin of something

- Cambridge Dictionary

1. Origin, Source
2. The history or ownership of a valued object or work of art or literature

- Merriam Webster Dictionary

Series

In archives, a Series refers to the most common unit of records, or materials held, in an archival collection. A series of records were accumulated and used together for a specific purpose, during a distinct period of time, and the records in a series are usually arranged in a particular order.

- *Adapted from the National Archives*

Secondary source

Secondary sources are one step removed from primary sources, though they often quote or otherwise use primary sources. They can cover the same topic, but add a layer of interpretation and analysis. Secondary sources can include:

- Most books about a topic.
- Analysis or interpretation of data.
- Scholarly or other articles about a topic, especially by people not directly involved.
- Documentaries (though they often include photos or video portions that can be considered primary sources).

- *Healey Library at the University of Massachusetts Boston*