

Memo

To: HHA Staff- All
From: Dominique Luster, Preservation Manager
Date: October 19, 2014
Re: New Preservation Policy

The Hip Hop Archives will be implementing a new Preservation Policy which will affect all staff and student workers. Please see and familiarize yourself with the attached Policy and its new Pre-Preservation Survey (this can be found as Appendix A).

The purpose of this new Policy is to clearly state the guidelines regarding the care and preservation of all items placed within the care of the Hip Hop Archives; this is to include ephemera-material, manuscript documents, and digital materials. This document is meant to provide a comprehensive outline of preservation strategies in effect at the Hip Hop Archives and does not attempt to exist as a catch-all manual for every item and every situation. However, all personnel should be thoroughly familiar with the strategies and policies set forth therein and proceed accordingly. Please consult the organizational chart or your immediate supervisor regarding specific concerns or any ambiguities that may arise.

In larger university-wide matters, this document is subservient to that set forth by Harvard University Libraries, which can be found at <http://library.harvard.edu/preservation/conservation-treatment-preservation-advice>

I will be leading an all-staff training on this new Policy; please review the Policy thoroughly and be prepared to address any questions or concerns you have at that time. This event has already been added to your Outlook Calendar.

I look forward to working with all of you as we take this step forward.

Motivation: there will be meeting snacks!



Preservation Policy

The Hip Hop Archives and Research Institute

as a part of the Hutchins Center for African and African
American Research at Harvard University

Prepared by Dominique Luster

LIS 2215 Preservation Management

October 20, 2014

Introduction

Mission Statement

The mission of the Hip Hop Archives and Research Institute is to facilitate and encourage the pursuit of knowledge, art, culture and responsible leadership through Hip hop. Founded in 2002 under the directorship of Dr. Marcyliena Morgan, the Hip Hop Archive is an institutional member of the Hutchins Center for African and African American Research and is hosted at Harvard University. Serving one of the most iconic social and cultural movements since the 1970s, the Hip Hop Archives seeks to promote and encourage the research and scholarship devoted to the “knowledge, art, culture, materials, organizations, movements and institutions of Hip hop.”¹ The Hip Hop Archive and Research Institute works to organize and develop collections, initiate and participate in research activities, sponsor events and acquire material culture associated with Hip hop in the U.S. and throughout the world.² As an integral part of research, the preservation of the Collection is an essential element in the fulfillment of the Archive’s mission.

Collecting Policy

The Hip Hop Archives is committed to collecting archival material that authentically illustrates the advent of Hip Hop culture in the United States, primarily from the 1970s to the present. It is understood and accepted that the front lines of success at the Hip Hop Archives lie at the point of selection and appraisal. Therefore the institution will follow a defined collecting policy and reserves the right to accept or decline certain donations from accession according to variable of

¹ Permanent site subtitle, refer to <http://nextlevel.hiphoparchive.org>

² Directly quoted. A more detailed mission statement as provided by the institution can be found at “Mission” *The Hip Hop Archives*, <http://nextlevel.hiphoparchive.org/about/mission>

factors. The Archive may consider for acquisition any item that has a documented association with Hip Hop culture. As a cultural-based repository, the Hip Hop Archives is not responsible for collecting materials related to Harvard University or any of its affiliated individuals except those that are specifically related to the scholarship of Hip Hop.³

The Director and Head Archivist work continuously to identify potential sources of new materials and have established the appropriate avenues of acquiring these items. As such and for the sake of security, no other staff or student workers are permitted to accept unsolicited materials into the Archive. If approached, direct the donor to the attention of the Head Archivist via email memo.

The Archives will only consider materials for accession that satisfactorily comply with the following factors:

- Materials whose provenance can be reasonably identified and authenticated.
- Materials that have reached the final deposition stage of the records life cycle. This archival threshold can be defined as the point in which the records no longer serves primary use to its creator but now exists as secondary use for subsequent researchers.⁴
- Materials that exhibit secondary value as defined by at least one the following qualities.⁵
 - informational value– provides evidence of information that does not exists elsewhere

³ (Boles 2005, 45) Boles defines a 'Collecting' repository as one contrary to an 'institutional' repository in that it may form its collection around one or all of four categories: geography, subject, specific individual group, event, or era, or media.

⁴ (Schelleberg 2003) See 3rd edition reproduction of Schellenberg's "Modern Archives: Principles and Techniques" for further discussion on the life cycle of records and the archival threshold.

⁵ (O'Toole 2000). Originally published as an article in *American Archivists* 56 (1993)

- material value – the original physical attributes of an item provides intrinsic information⁶ such as provenance or relationship to other individuals or items
- cultural value – encompasses a range of symbolic values such as political, religious, historical, ethical, aesthetic, and other similar values.
- The physical state of the materials are within the preservation capabilities of The Archive and do not threaten the environmental safety of the remainder of the collection.
 - Individual consideration will be made regarding items of exceptionally high value

Program Administration

Priorities of the Preservation Program

The primary consideration for the preservation program at The Archives is to create a system of applicable techniques and policies that will be implemented by all staff and with all appropriate materials. This is done by identifying, prioritizing, and eventually treating materials in need of more extensive preservation treatment. The program seeks to maintain appropriate environmental conditions throughout facility to include processing and storage rooms.⁷ Equally as important, the preservation program seeks to provide adequate and continual training for staff, student workers, and researchers at all levels of access.

⁶ n. ~ The usefulness or significance of an item derived from its physical or associational qualities, inherent in its original form and generally independent of its content, that are integral to its material nature and would be lost in reproduction. (Pearce-Moses 2005)

⁷ (Ritzenthaler 2010) Chapter 5 “Creating a Preservation Environment”.

Audience and Usage Supported by Preservation Efforts

Due to its institutional affiliation with Harvard University, The Hip Hop Archives provide a first line of scholastic opportunity for such affiliated researchers. Additionally, external researchers may request an appointment to gain access to the collection. The archival processing staff has added the following research identifying tags in accordance with the usage needs of each item:⁸

- Research Materials - materials of permanent research value.
- Special Collections - rare books, unique materials, items of local significance, or special format or subject collections.
- Digital Collections – electronic files maintained by the library.

Application of Preservation Policies

General Preservation Responsibilities

It is the responsibility of all staff and student workers who come into contact with records of any of the aforementioned categories to uphold the following best practices regarding handling archival materials.⁹ Researchers will also be responsible for respecting these preservation standards and will be instructed and supervised by the reference staff.

- Record any changes of status or location in Database before removing collection for any preservation tasks.
- Collections must be stored in appropriately-sized Hollinger acid-free boxes and folders.
 - Use corrugated boxes for unbound books and non-traditionally shaped materials.
- Carefully inspect materials for structural damage before attempting to handle them.

⁸ (Milner Library 2009) Direct Quote from section 1.4.

⁹Loosely based on (Ritzenthaler 2010). See Chapter 6 “Handling Archival Material”

- Avoid placing potentially harmful or abrasive objects on materials.
- Avoid permanently damaging materials with pens, liquids, uncovered boxes, or direct sun
- Only lay materials on flat surfaces large enough to support the document.
- Use two hands to handle considerably oversized materials and two people to access and transport them.
- Remove metal fasteners and adhesives as compliant with appropriate processing level.¹⁰
- Use provided interleaving paper between exceptionally fragile documents (lightweight (2.5mil) acid/lignin-free 25% cotton fiber)¹¹

Preservation Activity Levels

In reaction to the 2004 Heritage Health Index¹² and professional experience, The Archive will implement risk-and-needs based assessment of collections upon accession and evaluate any major preservation-related tasks outside of those traditionally associated with minimal processing, such as removing letters from envelopes and flattening documents.¹³ This evaluation will be completed by the processing staff using the Pre-Preservation Survey attached as Appendix A to this document to assign a task-level to each collection. All processing staff are responsible for being able to successfully measure the As collections are evaluated for preservation risks, completed forms should be submitted to the Head Archivist for approval and the status of the collection should be updated to “waiting for approval” in the Database.

¹⁰ Consult Greene and Meissner “More Product, Less Process” (*American Archivist* 68, 2005)

¹¹ Hollinger Metal Edge

<http://www.hollingermetalede.com/modules/store/index.html?dept=14&cat=1429&cart=14136586814273268>

¹² (Heritage Health Index 2004) Full website can be found at: <http://www.heritagepreservation.org/hhi/>

¹³ Based on the unpublished Processing Standards of the Archives of American Art written by Barbara Aikens, 2014

- Level 5 - Excellent, contemporary materials, little damage with no further deterioration expected, based on the high quality of the materials.
- Level 4 - Very good, little damage. Future deterioration possible due to the mixed quality of the materials.
- Level 3 - Good, obvious deterioration. Stable but further deterioration possible.
- Level 2 - Fair, deteriorated and further deterioration likely. Some A/V material itself appears to be deteriorating.
- Level - Poor, significant damage or advanced deterioration that makes collection difficult to use.

Collections approved with a Level 5 should be merely be rehoused into appropriate acid-free Hollinger archival boxes and continued onto Finding Aid processing. Processing staff are not expected to spend more than 1-2 hours per linear foot on this task.

Collections assigned to Level 4 should be rehoused and over-sized materials should be separated. If significant changes to the physical extent of the collection are made this **MUST** be thoroughly documented in the MARC record. Additionally, all A/V and digital materials should be placed in standard plastic cases. For the sake of backlog and processing speeds, removing fasteners is not absolutely necessary unless it is causing substantial damage to the item. Processing staff should plan to complete this level of task-management at a rate of 3-5 hours per linear foot.

Collections assigned to a Level 3 should be rehoused and special attention should be made to verify the stability of materials. If the mixed nature of the item types (ex. papers mixed with paintings) will exacerbate deterioration, these items should be separated into different folders.

Content-devastating (ONLY) tears and residual damage should be corrected as much as possible. Simple corrugated boxes may be applicable at this level. All digital media should be tested for quality and playability. The Head Archivist should be notified of all media that appears to be corrupted or obsolete, so that the Weissman Library Digital Archivist may be contacted. It is expected that the majority of collections accessioned into The Archives will be assigned this task-level. Processing staff are expected to complete preservation tasks at this level at a rate of 8-12 hours per linear foot.

Level 2 Preservation Tasks are theoretically the most complex situations processing staff should experience at The Archive due to its Collection Policy. Collections assigned to a Level 2 should receive as much attention as appropriate to ensure the access of the materials. Please consult your supervisor for more specific guidance.

Any collection assigned to a Level 1 will be transferred to the Weissman Preservation Center as their preservation needs are above the capabilities of The Hip Hop Archive and its host, the Hutchins Center. This physical transfer for the materials will be arranged and coordinated by the Head Archivist.

Best Handling Practices for Photographic Materials¹⁴

Due to the rapid technological changes in photography, preservation tasks for these items can often (but certainly not always) require additional care. The first step is to identify the estimated

¹⁴ Based on the unpublished "Care of Photographic Materials" instructions written by Erin Kinhart, Federal Archivist at the Archives of American Art, 2014.

age of the photograph; this will help to determine the amount of intervention needed by the processing staff. Damaged and/or vintage photographs dating before 1950 individually should be interleaved with provided MicroChamber Interleaving paper (.0025-.0028 in., 65 g/m²¹⁵). Due to their unique chemical makeup, personal photographs dating between 1980 and 2000 should be interleaved IF they are mixed with other acid-sensitive materials. Contemporary photographs, copy prints, and bulk sets do not need to be interleaved. Photo albums should be considered on a case-by-case basis to determine whether the structure should be partially or fully dismantled. However, in general it is safe to assume that the adhesive will eventually accelerate the rate of deterioration for the item. Therefore, if appropriate remove easily separateable photos from their photo-album page and interleave it behind the item.

¹⁵ Conservation Resources International LLC
http://www.conservationresources.com/Main/section_15/section15_03.htm

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Name:

Date:

Collection Title

Current Extant

Deed Signed Date

Type of Collection (please select most appropriate)

Personal Papers

Family Papers

Business Records

Research Collection: Subject-based

A/V Materials

Ephemera/ Memorabilia

Other

Grant Collection or Selected Project (Digitization)?

Survey of the Collection

Date Completed

Rate the Physical Condition of the Majority of the Collection

Excellent, contemporary materials, little damage with no further deterioration expected, based on the high quality of the materials.

Very good, little damage but future deterioration possible due to the mixed quality of the materials.

Good, expected deterioration and further deterioration possible.

Fair, deteriorated and further deterioration likely. If bulk of collection is AV, some AV media itself appears to be deteriorating.

Poor, significant damage or advanced deterioration that makes collection difficult to use.

Survey of Collection Materials

Biographical Materials

Life Records/ Legal Documentation	Address Books
Certificates/Awards/Diplomas	Resumes
Interview Transcripts	Interview Recordings
Other	

Administrative Files

Minutes/Agendas	Committee Files/ Member Lists
Constitution/ By-laws	Annual Reports
Business Records	A/V Material
Other	

Artist Files and Paper-based Materials

Letters/ Emails	Diaries /Journals
Illustrated Letters	Cards
Notebooks	Lectures/ Speeches
Published/Unpublished Books	Scrapbooks
Other	

Types of Paper-Related Materials

Wood-pulp paper	Papyrus	Craft/ Cardboard
Parchment/Vellum	Xerox	Facsimile
Modern Pen Ink	Print/Typewriter Ink	Paint/ Crayon/ Marker
Other		

Printed Material and Artwork

Newspapers	Performance Flyers/ Posters
Sketches/ Drawings	Sketchbooks
Paintings	Large Posters
Other	

A/V Media Type

Sound Recordings

DVD

Other

Video Recordings

CD

Motion Picture Films

Older Disk Format

A/V Materials Of:

Publicity

Performance

Other

Documentary

Radio/TV

Interview

Homes Movies/Personal

General Value of A/V Materials

Commercially Released/ Easily Obtainable

TV /Radio Broadcast

Unique, Archivaly Valuable

Additional Notes

Please list all items to be separated for extensive conservation consultation

Please include any additional notes concerning the preservation of this collection.