

Bringing Archives to the Classroom

Author Information:

David Cook
Montgomery County Archives,
Montgomery County Alabama
101 South Lawrence Street
Montgomery, AL 36104

Subject /Grade Level: 12th Grade American Government

Overview: This lesson uses several student-centered learning approaches to teach students about archives. Students will create their own personal archival collections, then process those collections just as an archivist do in real life. Students will then form an exhibit based on their collections. The goal of this lesson is to teach students about archives and the day-to-day work of an archivist.

Objective: Students will learn the importance of archives and the many roles it plays in our government.

Alabama Dept. of Education Curriculum Standard:

IL (K-12)	1. The student who is information literate accesses information efficiently and effectively. • Recognizes the need for information. • Recognizes that accurate and comprehensive information is the basis for intelligent decision making. • Formulates questions based on information needs. • Identifies a variety of potential sources of information. • Develops and uses successful strategies for locating information.
IL (K-12)	7. The student who contributes positively to the learning community and to society is information literate and recognizes the importance of information to a democratic society. • Seeks information from diverse sources, contexts, disciplines, and cultures. • Respects the principle of equitable access to information
TC2 (6-8)	11. Use digital tools and strategies to locate, collect, organize, evaluate, and synthesize information. Examples: • locating—Boolean searches, graphic organizers, spreadsheets, databases

- collecting—probeware, graphing calculators
- organizing—graphic organizers, spreadsheets
- evaluating—reviewing publication dates, determining credibility
- synthesizing—word processing software, concept-mapping software

SS2010 (7) Civics	4. Describe structures of state and local governments in the United States, including major Alabama offices and officeholders. (Alabama) • Describing how local and state governments are funded (Alabama)
-------------------	---

SS2010 (7) Civics	5. Compare duties and functions of members of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Alabama's local and state governments and of the national government. (Alabama) • Locating political and geographic districts of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of Alabama's local and state governments and of the national government (Alabama) • Describing the organization and jurisdiction of courts at the local, state, and national levels within the judicial system of the United States (Alabama) • Explaining concepts of separation of powers and checks and balances among the three branches of state and national governments (Alabama)
-------------------	---

NSCG Standards (5-8)

I. How Does the Government Established by the Constitution Embody the Purposes, Values, and Principles of American Democracy?

4. Who represents you in local, state, and national governments?

Time Needed: Three Hours

Day 1: The teacher should introduce the lesson using step 1 and begin the lecture about archives in step 2.

Day 2: The teacher should introduce the “create your own collection” assignment to the class and allow students to work on it in class and finish it at home

Day 3: Students will begin working in groups to create their exhibits based on their collections. Give time to finish away from class.

Day 4: Students should be prepared to present their exhibits.

Materials Needed:

- A Computer with internet access
- LCD Projector
- Folders

- Labels

Procedures:

- Step 1: The teacher should first ask the class if they know what archives are, then show the following video: [What are Archives?](#) After the video the class should have a brief discussion about what archives are.
- Step 2: The teacher will give a brief lecture on the role of archives in government and what archivists do. This webpage will help answer the question: [what are archives?](#)
- Step 3: Students will work on an assignment creating their own collection based on these [directions](#).
- Step 4: Students will work on a group assignment creating an exhibit based off of their collections using these [directions](#).
- Step 5: Students will wrap up their lesson on the archives, if possible, by taking a field trip to their local county archives for a tour.

Accommodations/Modifications: Students who are uncomfortable in whole group situations should be given an opportunity in small group to voice their opinion.

Assessment: Students should be evaluated based on their participation. The collection assignment should be graded based on presentation, organization, mechanics (punctuation/grammar), and content. The exhibit assignment should be graded based on presentation, cohesiveness, content, and teamwork/participation.

Creating your own Collection

This assignment is intended to help students learn more about archives and their role in government. To begin the activity each student will get a folder to keep their collection in. Students will also write the name of their collection (i.e. the John Dowe Collection) on the folder. After each student has named their collection they will then proceed to fill their collection with anything related to themselves; photographs, social media posts, letters, notes, etc. After each student has completed their collection they will then create a finding aid from the template below. After creating their finding aid and adding it to their folder, each student's collection is "archived" with the collections of the rest of the class and made available for view between classmates. This assignment can be used to help students learn more about each other, as well as help the teacher learn more about them. It will also help them learn about the role of archives within our government and how to create and read a finding aid. Students are graded based on their presentation, organization, mechanics (punctuation/grammar), and content.

Finding Aid Template

The _____ Collection
Processed and arranged in [year]
[Place, and address]
Processed by: _____

Collection Creator [The person that created the materials making up the collection]:

Collection [title]:

Collection Dates [If for example the records in the collection date from 2011 to 2017, you could put down 2011-2017 as answer]:

Collection Size [extent]:

Repository [Name of the archives and where it is located]:

Reference Code [reference code of collection. If this the only collection in the archive you could number it 001.]:

Languages and Scripts [If for example the materials in the collection are written English, you would write “English” as the answer]:

Administrative/Biographical History [this section is for information about the creator of the collection]:

Scope and Content this section gives us information about how big the collection is and what sort of materials it contains]:

System of Arrangement: This collection is organized into _____ series [Collections are often organized by chronology and/or types of material. So for example, one series might contain text messages, another series might consist of photographs, and another series might have concert tickets]:

Series I:

Series II:

Series III:

Inventory [Here is where you briefly list the contents of each folder or box. You do not have to describe every item. For example: Folder 1: Photographs, 2011-2017]

Finding Aid Example:

The Montgomery Genealogical Society Collection

Processed and arranged in 2015 and 2016

Montgomery County Archives, Courthouse Annex III, Montgomery, Alabama, 36104, (334)-
832-7173

Processed by: Dallas Hanbury

Collection Creator: Montgomery Genealogical Society

Collection: Montgomery Genealogical Society Collection

Collection Dates: ca. 1994-2016

Collection Size: 3.71 Linear Feet

Abstract: The Montgomery Genealogical Society Collection is a collection of publications, maps, books, pamphlets, and other materials related to the aforementioned organization, created by it.

Repository: Montgomery County Archives, Courthouse Annex III, Montgomery, Alabama, 36104, (334)-832-7173

Reference Code: 2015.007

Languages and Scripts: The entire collection is recorded in English.

Administrative/Biographical History: Founded in 1978, the Montgomery Genealogical Society (MGS) supports research on individuals possessing some sort of connection to Montgomery County, Alabama. In addition to its genealogical research function, the MGS also functions as a community/social organization that currently (as of February 22, 2016) meets bi-monthly at the Figh-Pickett House, located at 512 South Court Street in Montgomery, Alabama. An active organization, the MGS creates a wide variety of materials as a by-product of conducting its business. It also purposefully produces various publications to disseminate genealogical information about Montgomery, County Alabama history to its members and the public.

Scope and Content: This collection consists of issues (printed on paper) of the “Montgomery Genealogical Society Quarterly,” an organizational pamphlet, books, and maps. The “Montgomery Genealogical Society Quarterly” issues range from 1994 to 2015. The range is not complete. However, it does have every issue published between summer 2008 and July 2014. The pamphlets provide a brief history of the Montgomery Genealogical Society, a list of society-produced publications for sale, a description of benefits of membership, as well as a form to apply for and instruction on how to join the Society. In February 2016, Montgomery Genealogical Society Member Terry Ingram donated a volume titled *The Heritage of Montgomery County, Alabama*. The book contains information about various subjects pertaining to Montgomery County. These subjects include: officers and participants of the Montgomery County Heritage group, as well as individuals who helped create the book; history of Montgomery County; communities and towns within Montgomery; historic buildings; businesses; medical; military; civil rights; churches; cemeteries; schools; organizations; arts-theater-events; professional people/public officials; public agencies/institutions; parks and recreation; sports; restaurants; sites, scenes and memories; family stories; tributes, memorials and business advertisements. Ruth Ott, also of the Montgomery Genealogical Society, in February 2016 donated a highway map of Montgomery County created in 2002. The map documents the location of several cemeteries within Montgomery County.

System of Arrangement: This collection is organized into two series:

Series I: Publications

Subseries I: “Montgomery Genealogical Society Quarterly”

Subseries II: Pamphlets

Subseries III: Books

Series II: Maps

Location of Originals: Montgomery County Archives; Vault 116, Bay 11A

Physical Characteristics and Technical Requirements: The materials making up this collection consist of books, paper-based maps, paper-based quarterly publications, and paper-based organizational pamphlets.

Access Points:

Montgomery (Ala.)

Montgomery County (Ala.)

Montgomery County (Ala.)- -Genealogy

Montgomery (Ala.) - -history

Montgomery (Ala.)- -maps

Montgomery (Ala.)- -Social life and customs- -19th century

Montgomery (Ala.)- - Social life and customs - -20th century

Montgomery (Ala.)- -Buildings, structures, etc.

Ingram, Terry

Ott, Ruth

Conditions Governing Access: Collection is open for research

Accruals: Future accruals expected. In February 2016 Montgomery Genealogical Society Member Ruth Ott donated a 2002 highway map of Montgomery County that shows where many cemeteries in the county are located. Also in February 2016, Montgomery Genealogical Society Member Terry Ingram donated a publication titled *The Heritage of Montgomery County, Alabama*.

Acquisition Info: Montgomery Genealogical Society Member Terry Ingram donated the publication titled *The Heritage of Montgomery County, Alabama*. Montgomery Genealogical Society Member Ruth Ott donated a 2002 highway map of Montgomery County that shows where many cemeteries in the county are located.

Alternative Forms: None.

Additional Finding Aids: None.

Appraisal Process: The Montgomery County Archives' (MCA) mission statement notes the MCA collects non-government records, as long as they pertain to the history of Montgomery County. The MCA acquired the MGS Collection for this reason.

Custodial History: The Montgomery Genealogical Society materials were in the possession of Montgomery Genealogical Society members until their transfer to the Montgomery County Archives.

Preferred Citation: (Box number, Folder number [or if necessary, item title/description], The Montgomery Genealogical Society Collection, Montgomery County Archives; Montgomery, Alabama.

Processing Information: In December 2015, Montgomery County Archivist Dallas Hanbury began processing the collection. He finished in February 2016.

Conditions Governing Reproduction and Use: It is presumed corporate and individual copyrights have been retained by copyright owners. Copyright restrictions apply. Users of materials should seek necessary permissions from the copyright holders to comply with U.S. copyright laws.

Related Materials: The Montgomery County Historical Society Collection at the Montgomery County Archives.

Separated Materials: None.

Bibliography:

Montgomery Genealogical Society, Inc., "Our History," Rootsweb, accessed February 22, 2016, <http://www.rootsweb.ancestry.com/~almgs/history.html>.

Inventory

Series I: Publications

Subseries I: "Montgomery Genealogical Society Quarterly"

Box 1:

- Spring 1994-Fall 1994
- Fall 1995-Spring 1996
- Summer-Fall 1996
- Spring 1997
- Winter 1997-Spring 1998
- Fall 1998-Winter 1998
- Fall 1999
- Summer 2000-Spring 2005
- Winter 2005-Winter 2007
- Summer 2008-Summer 2009

Box 2

- Fall 2009-December 2016

Subseries II-Pamphlets

Box 1

- Montgomery Genealogical Society pamphlet

Subseries III: Books

Box 1

- Montgomery County Heritage Book Committee, *The Heritage of Montgomery County, Alabama* (Clanton, AL: Heritage Publishing Consultants, Inc., 2001).

Series II: Maps

Box 1

- General Highway Map: Montgomery County Alabama, 2002

In Classroom Exhibit

Separate students into groups after they have completed the creation of their own collection. Have each group create an exhibit based off of their collections. The exhibits can include any medium used within each student's collection including music, YouTube videos, and social media posts. Students are also allowed to serve as a representation of a "wax figure" of themselves and answer questions related to certain topics. To preserve classroom time, each group is allowed to work on their exhibit outside of class. After each group has finished their exhibits, the groups must elect one person to serve as chief tour guide of the exhibit, who will introduce the exhibit to the "visitors", while the rest of the group, who are not "wax figures" will serve as guides of a specific area of the exhibit. This assignment will give students an opportunity to practice speaking, listening, and presentation skills. Students are graded based on presentation, cohesiveness, content, and teamwork/participation.