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Filipino Organizations in Hawai‘i’s History

Hawai‘i’s history resides in its citizens, yet, an authoritative account of Hawai‘i remains to be written. A glaring omission in orthodox histories of Hawai‘i are the many contributions and diverse perspectives of Hawai‘i’s many “ethnic minorities.” This omission is not merely a result of neglect or arrogance – e.g., “history legitimizing the victor” – but, it also results from a research environment deficient in primary and secondary resources representative of these ethnic minorities.

Hawai‘i’s orthodox historical narrative is based on economic relations – Hawai‘i’s industrialization and its role in global capitalism. Yet, in spite of over a century of living and contributing to the life and blood of contemporary Hawai‘i, the perspectives, interests and beliefs of Filipinos remain absent in standard histories. If Filipinos appear in the official history of Hawai‘i at all, they are pigeonholed into a utilitarian immigrant story – contributing their labor to the survival and maintenance of Hawai‘i’s plantations and the modern-day tourist industry. A truly representative history of Hawai‘i, one including the stories and perspectives of more than 25% of its population, requires more resources and information to be made available to students, researchers and new writers of Hawai‘i’s history.

Some of these resources can be found in the records of businesses and state and local governments – as well as in people’s letters, diaries and scrapbooks, where they describe the joys and challenges of their everyday lives. They can also be found within the records of the organizations shaping each community’s identity, whether they are educational, religious, recreational, charitable, social, or mutual aid in nature. Thus, your organization’s records not only provide an understanding of your organization’s history but also its role within the larger context of Hawai‘i’s history. This pamphlet encourages you to preserve your organization’s historical records and provides you with the necessary information to get started.

Writing History

Writing the history of any time or place is an ongoing task of identifying, selecting, processing and interpreting available information. Once a project or topic is considered, the first task a historian does is to identify and gather relevant information. The historian then selects and relates bits and pieces of this collected information to each other, to other collections of information and to ideas held by the historian and other writers. Finally, the historian weaves them all into a good story – no information, no story.

“Usual Suspects”

The orthodox history of Hawai‘i uses information collected and maintained by several public and private institutions, including libraries, museums and archives. Most of these institutions do not actively collect or maintain the bits and pieces of information created and left by ethnic minorities. In fact, compounding this neglect is the institutional practice of only collecting ethnic information that reinforces and supports the accepted historical narrative. By relying on a fixed or narrowly-defined body of primary and secondary resources, standard histories are inevitably biased towards the legacy of “those in power.”

The availability of more information from a wider range of sources on and about Hawai‘i’s ethnic minorities will – because they incorporate more diverse accounts – stimulate the writing of histories that are more accurate, meaningful and useful.

Why Preserve?

The preservation of an organization’s records, papers, photographs, etc. should not be done only for the convenience of historians, even though this purpose most relates to benefiting the larger
community. First and foremost, the preservation of these resources is important for each organization’s identity and, in turn, each individual member within that organization. As time passes, everyone has some connection to some place and to someone else. Preserved resources allow any organization member – now or in the future – who is interested in these connections to retrace and reconstruct organizational histories and claims. New members and officers need to know about previous activities, commitments and decisions. The larger community may benefit from this documentation of how they have used and benefited from civic organizations and activities. References to individual members may be useful for newspaper reports, genealogists, students, etc. Of course, individuals may choose to ignore the contents contained in the preserved resources, but rarely can the resources be accurately and legally recreated if ever they were needed.

Community History and Identity

History gives us a sense of identity – defining who we are and where we have been. An essential part of our identity is the community in which we live. Our community is a product of past experiences which become the basis for our community’s memory. What’s unique about our town, about our organization, or about our family? What distinguishes us from others?

Records are the material expression of a community’s interests and memories, and within the context of those interests, an original record impartially chronicles an event as it occurs. While records may be interpreted differently by different people, the information contained in the records remains constant. Without records from all our communities, our history will be biased and incomplete.

The other purpose for preserving organizational records is the primary motive for conducting these workshops – to help our community form its own identity more accurately and more inclusively. What our community believes itself to be is currently reflected in the orthodox history of Hawai’i. Each community and each individual within a community living in Hawai’i inevitably plays a part in the creation of Hawai’i. Yet, the orthodox history only reflects a single narrative guided by a single set of interests and perspectives. The histories of Hawai’i’s many ethnic minorities must be created and incorporated into a Hawai’i history that reflects reality, i.e., one that is multifaceted, multicultural and diversified.

4 Managing Organizational Records

Non-profit organizations, like for-profit ones, need to retain certain records beyond their current use needs according to regulatory, legal, financial, and operational requirements. Several Federal and State laws contain record keeping requirements. If your organization does not have formal guidelines, you may want to use guidelines prepared by the Collaborative Electronic Records Project at http:\siarchives/si.edu/cerp/cerpindex.htm.

Which records to keep and for how long vary from organization to organization. An organization should retain some records permanently and others temporarily. Most organizations will have more temporary records than permanent. Another reason to keep records for the long-term is for its historical value to the organization. Managing your organization’s documentary heritage may seem like an impossible task, but with proper knowledge of what to keep and how and where to keep it, the task can be managed effectively.

Every organization should assign someone the responsibility to systematically maintain its current records and preserve these records with historical significance. An organization might even include a statement about the importance of historical records preservation directly in its constitution or bylaws. The responsibility may naturally fall to the organization’s historian, but the responsibility may also be
given to the secretary, the president, or director, or someone with a
keen interest in the organization’s history.

The organization historian’s responsibility should include:

• developing policies and procedures for maintaining and
  preserving records
• selecting appropriate storage space or repository
• sorting and organizing the records
• dating all items and identifying photographs and audio-visual
  materials as to who, what, when and where
• request permanent copies of all records that are frequently
  updated such as memberships lists, contributor lists, etc.
• reading records management guidelines such as this one to
  help develop these policies:  http://siarchives.si.edu/cerp/
  RECORDS_RETENTION_SCHEDULE_rev3.pdf

Records of Lasting Value

• Governing documents, such as articles of incorporation,
  charter, constitution, and bylaws, including all amendments
  and revisions
• Meeting minutes, agendas and supporting papers
• Membership lists or directories
• Financial records of origin such as general ledgers, journals,
  and budgets
• Procedure manuals and handbooks

• Building or property records, such as deeds, surveys, and
  architectural drawings
• Legal documents such as contracts and insurance policies
• Publications such as organizational histories, anniversary
  publications, bulletins, newsletters, yearbooks, programs
• Audiovisual materials, such as photographs, audio or video
  cassettes, CD/DVDs, or films of organizational activities
• Publicity, such as newspaper clippings and press releases
  about the organization, its members and its activities
• Memorabilia, such as awards and products used for fund
  raising
• Interviews with founding members, past presidents, etc.

Temporary Records - these generally may be discarded when current
use ceases, unless they are the only records left.

• Acknowledgements
• Applications
• Ballots
• Bank statements
• Bills
• Budget working papers
• Cancelled checks
• Invoices
• Draft versions of publications, articles, speeches
• Maps unrelated to the organization’s property
• Meeting announcements
• Payroll notices
• Receipts
• Reservations and confirmations
• Routine correspondence or memoranda
• Sales literature
• Scheduling of work assignments, work related trips and visits
• Tickets

5 Arranging Your Records

Consider how to arrange your records for easy access and easy execution of your records keeping policy. This is not as complicated as it might seem at first, even if your collection includes materials from several years. Records are either arranged chronologically or alphabetically within each category.

Meeting minutes are generally arranged chronologically, while correspondence can be arranged alphabetically by recipient name or by subject depending on the needs of the organization. On the other hand, it is best to arrange non-permanent records chronologically so that when it is time to discard, you can do it on a folder level rather than having to go through the entire collection.

6 Destroying Temporary Records

When a record is no longer required to be kept according to your records keeping policies, it should be properly destroyed, and the destruction should be documented. Below is an example documentation of records destruction.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Record Category</th>
<th>Format</th>
<th>Date Range</th>
<th>Method/Date</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Vouchers</td>
<td>Paper</td>
<td>2009-2010</td>
<td>Shred, 1/2/13</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Council Mtgs</td>
<td>Tape</td>
<td>2010-2011</td>
<td>Degauss, 1/3/13</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Deleting data and emptying the “recycle” folder or “trash” bin from electronic storage media such as CDs, hard drives, tapes, etc. does not permanently destroy the information. Printers and photocopies with document memory capability may also require data cleaning before sale or disposal. If data is not sensitive or private, simply overwriting the information may be adequate. However, if computers and media are going to be reused or decommissioned, they must be properly cleaned to prevent unauthorized retrieval and use of information, especially if that data includes privacy or security related materials such as personal records, financial data or employee health information.

If an organization becomes involved in litigation or government investigation and is served with a subpoena for *discovery*, the organization has a duty to preserve any and all records that may be relevant to the litigation or government investigation. This duty to preserve is facilitated by enacting a *legal hold*, i.e., the suspension of scheduled disposition or further processing of specific records that pertaining to the legal action. Other records of the organization may continue to be processed normally. Once the legal hold has been lifted, records evaluated, court-ordered treatments applied, the normal retention procedures may resume its natural course.
Preserving Records of Long-Term Value

After identifying and organizing your materials to be preserved, work on storing them properly. The best storage location for your organization’s books, papers, photographs, and prints is a cool, dry, stable environment, e.g., moderate temperature and relative humidity with relatively little fluctuation, clean air and good air circulation, away from light, and good housekeeping (to minimize pest intrusion). The following guidelines will help you identify the best location for your valuables:

- Avoid storing valuable paper collections in garages, attics, basements, “mini-storage” rentals, barns or sheds, all of which are commonly subject to excessive heat and/or moisture problems.

- Avoid storing collections beneath or in close proximity to water sources such as washing machines, bathrooms, and air-conditioning equipment. Moisture and dust encourages mold growth which stains and often causes paper to become brittle.

- Always keep records clean and consider what is in the room or space above your collections.

- Heat accelerated chemical processes causing paper to become brittle and discolored. Avoid hanging valuable photos, documents, or artworks heat sources. Books and boxed documents/photographs with long-term value should be shelved away from heat sources.

- Light – especially natural and fluorescent sources – causes fading and other damage. It is preferable to store items in closed boxes, but items stored in open containers or housed in frames should be shielded from light as much as possible. Keep photos and art (prints, watercolors, and other works on paper) in the dark or subdued light as much as possible. Don’t put valuable books and papers in direct sun or bright light of any kind. Hallways or other rooms without windows are best. Install shades and put up heavy curtains where you can’t avoid windows. If possible, display copies of valuable originals.

- Indoor pollution rapidly damages paper and is a growing problem in energy-conscious spaces with good insulation. Any valuable photograph or artwork on display should be protected by a preservation-quality mat and frame.

Silverfish and firebrats are nocturnal insects that feed on cereals, wheat flour, books, any paper with glue or paste, book bindings and starch in clothing. Even though they can live for months without food, stacks of paper, magazine and books are a savory feast for these insects. Cleaning storage areas and moving materials periodically will reveal the sleeping or hiding insects. Solitary insects can easily be killed, and insecticides can be used for large infestations.

8 Archival-Quality Materials

There are actually no scientific standards defining the term, “archival-quality” and, as found in catalogs and stores, this term can often be misleading. Storage enclosures should not only hold your resources but must also protect against chemical deterioration. When purchasing enclosures, look for specific terms indicating the stability of the enclosure.

Archival-quality materials are not generally available in most office supply stores and usually cost more than regular folders, boxes and other enclosures. They will, however, help preserve valuable materials for generations to come. A list of suppliers is found at the end of this handout.

Compare catalogs to find the supplies you want for the best price. Read
product descriptions; if you have questions about the composition of a product, ask the supplier for details. If you can't get that information, find another supplier.

Paper Storage Enclosures

The ideal way to store papers is in archival-quality folders placed in archival-quality boxes (or in archival-quality folders in metal filing cabinets). It is generally accepted that “archival-quality” refers to materials that are free of the acids and lignin normally found in paper and cardboard and, additionally, are impregnated with an alkaline “buffer” (magnesium or calcium carbonate) that guards against the acids present in the stored items.

Boxes, mats, folders and other paper enclosures for preservation use at home should be “low-lignin” or “lignin-free,” and “buffered” throughout. Lignin should be avoided because it is a component of paper that leads to the formation of acid. The term “buffered” refers to the process of adding a buffering agent during manufacturing to neutralize acids formed over time in the storage materials. “Acid-free” paper and paper enclosures do not always have a buffer added. Furthermore, they may not be lignin-free or low-lignin. Over time these enclosures may become acidic relatively quickly.

While buffered paper enclosures are generally preferred to enclosures that are only acid-free, some drawings and paintings on paper, blueprints, and some photographs may be damaged by the chemicals used as buffers. These items, e.g., albumen, cyanotype, dye transfer, color prints (chromogenic) and textiles, should be stored in neutral (unbuffered), low-lignin enclosures.

Storage enclosures must be durable and provide adequate physical support. Consider the following characteristics apply to enclosure design:

(a) Enclosures should be stiff enough to protect their contents from tears, breaks, slumping, or other distortion.

(b) Boxes should close fully (no gaps or handle holes) with snug lids to exclude abrasives and other pollutants.

(c) The size and shape of envelopes, boxes, folders, or other enclosures should closely match the object or objects they hold.

(d) Book boxes should be custom-made to the dimensions of each book.

Plastic Storage Enclosures

The terms acid-free, buffered, and lignin-free do not apply to plastic enclosures, but look for enclosures made from specific types of plastic. Preservation-grade polyester, known by brand names such as Melinex 516 and Mylar, is the most stable. Polyethylene and polypropylene can be used if they contain no plasticizers. Acetates, which change dimension, are not recommended, and plastic enclosures made from polyvinyl chloride (PVC) should never be used for preservation storage.

Paper or plastic enclosures for photograph should pass the Photographic Activity Test (PAT). This test ensures the enclosure will not chemically react with photographs. Supplier catalogs should indicate whether a photographic storage product has passed the PAT.

Metal Boxes and Cabinets

Baked enamel steel boxes and cabinets are considered archival storage containers, especially useful for photographic slides. However, while sturdier than paper boxes, metal boxes and cabinets should be periodically inspected for dents and scratches which can result in rust.

Labelling Folders and Boxes
Folders should not be overfilled and should be labelled with the general contents (e.g., “Minutes, 1930”). Avoid using nicknames or free-standing first names to identify contents (e.g., “Sam’s letters”) because these notations may not mean anything to future members or officers. Alternative names should be included in item descriptions.

Descriptions of items should be clearly written on separate sheets using a soft lead pencil, an archival-quality ink pen or a laser printer. Descriptions can be stored in the enclosure with the items or separately using a simple system that refers to the enclosures.

Digital form descriptions can be created and stored separately, as above, or attached to each file as embedded metadata. Several “standards” exist for creating metadata including EXIF (Exchangeable Image File Format), IPTC (International Press Telecommunications Council), RDF (Resource Description Framework) and DCMI (Dublin Core Metadata Initiative). The interoperability between the different standards is not completely worked out.

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Specific Media

Paper Resources

Letters, clippings, and other documents should be stored unfolded. Folding and unfolding breaks paper along the fold lines. Storing documents in folders rather than envelopes is recommended, because envelopes can cause damage as items are removed and replaced. Valuable documents that are viewed frequently should be encased in Mylar or polypropylene enclosures.

Since newsprint (the paper used in newspapers) contains acid, you should photocopy clippings for preservation. Ideally, the paper used for photocopying should meet the American National Standard for Permanence of Paper for Publications and Documents in Libraries and Archives, ANSI/NISO Z39.48-1992 (rev. 1997). Refer to the North American Permanent Papers (NAPP) website listed in this manual’s reference section for a list of permanent papers.

To remove staples or old paper clips from documents (especially if they’re rusty), slide a piece of stiff plastic (e.g., polyester, polypropylene) under the fastener on both sides of the document. Slide the paper clip off the plastic or bend the edges of the staples up and pry it out with a pair of tweezers or a thin knife. The plastic protects the paper from abrasion and from damage by your tools. Do not use a staple remover, because it is likely to tear the paper.

Photographs

The best film and print media to use for photographic preservation remains silver-based black and white film and paper that has been properly processed and stored. Although improvements in technology have extended the life of color prints and negatives, color film materials do not last as long as traditional silver-based materials. Most color prints and negatives fade over time and while color slides tend to last longer than negatives, they are also susceptible to fading.

Save your negatives; they are the originals. Negatives allow you to make new prints, and they can be digitally scanned. They should be handled carefully and stored in Mylar or polypropylene sleeves. Slides can be stored in their boxes, carousel trays (if kept in a sealed container) or archival-quality slide enclosures. If you have slides, photo CDs, movies or videos, be sure to save the hardware needed to view them as changing technology often makes specific hardware difficult to find. Film-based movies can be digitized for easier viewing.

Exposure to light degrades photographs and prints. Dark storage is especially important for keeping color prints from fading. Studio produced photographs are usually not properly processed, so they are prone to changes in color or fading. If possible, keep an extra copy in dark storage if you intend to display the photograph.
An existing photo album is like a diary or scrapbook of its creator, so in general, do not take it apart. Sometimes the album might contain notes or handwriting of the person who made it.

Repairing or Restoring Damaged Items

The only safe and reliable way to repair or restore a damaged item (torn, water damaged, mold damage, etc.) is to employ the services of a professional conservator.

10 To Digitize or Not to Digitize

The use of digital cameras and computers have made the creation and viewing of photographs and documents easier. However, a digital product presents new challenges for long-term preservation, the most important challenge being linked to its very creation. Rapid changes in technology makes the viewing or reloading of older digital products difficult or, sometimes, near impossible. This obsolescence of digital formats can happen with products that are only a couple of years old.

Since the physical medium on which digital products are stored and the item’s file format must be read by specific hardware and software, preserved digital products must continually be refreshed and transferred to updated hardware and software standards – unless, of course, you keep older hardware and software (“legacy systems”) available and in working condition to access your older files.

If this situation were not bad enough, the physical medium on which digital products are stored (CDs, DVDs, hard drives, digital tapes, etc.) are prone to failure even when operating and stored under the most ideal conditions. In spite of advertised claims to long-term permanency, all physical media being used today have limited working lifespans. While well preserved paper materials are susceptible to environmental catastrophes, they do not experience digital media’s
problem of obsolescence.

Ideally, several copies and periodic copying (“refreshing”) of a collection should be maintained. To maintain the useful life of computer/digitalized materials, the following basic steps are suggested:

- Routinely back up all important files at least weekly and store a duplicate backup copy in a location other your working location. Hard-drive crashes, heat, fire and flood will damage digital files and the machines that read them.

- Migrate your files whenever you upgrade your equipment (especially data-reading devices) or use new software. Import older files to formats that your newer software can read. It might be preferable to convert files to emerging “universal” standards, e.g., ASCII/Unicode (text), TIFF (images) and PDF (Adobe portable document format). Although migration to newer formats risks the losing of information or functionality, all replicated data should be migrated to newer formats.

- Standard for digital audio and video files are not well established, although audio files stored as non-compressed WAV or AIFF files may be read by most computer operating systems.

- The metadata created for digital resources may also be affected by changes in software. Whenever possible, metadata should be stored as ASCII or in SGML or XML, which are ASCII-derived.

- Like original materials, store records in environmentally stable locations.

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eFIL Archives

The eFIL: Filipino Digital Archives and History Center of Hawaii is a project of the Filipino-American Historical Society of Hawaii. Its mission is to digitize materials on and about the Filipino experience in Hawaii and to make these materials available to the general public via the internet. By providing access to these primary and secondary resources (some of which are out-of-print), people in Hawaii and around the world are able to understand more about the Filipino experience in Hawaii and be able to contribute to a more representative history of Hawaii.

eFIL is actively soliciting donations of family and institutional records and resources that shed light on the Filipino experience in Hawaii. Since eFIL is a digital archives and not a repository, donated materials will be digitally reproduced, stored and processed. Original materials will be returned to their owner. Public access to the digital forms will be discussed and an agreement between donors and eFIL will be signed.

If you are interested in donating to us, please view our website at http:\ \efilarchives.org to examine how our resources are made available to the public. Our contact numbers and email addresses are also located on the website. You are encouraged to contact us before discarding any of your records and resources.

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Suppliers

Conservation Resources International  
5532 Port Royal Road  
Springfield, VA 22151  
Phone: 800-634-6932/703-321-7730 Fax: 703-321-0629  
www.conservationresources.com
Glossary

**AIFF** (Audio Interchange File Format) is an audio file format standard used for storing sound data for personal computers (especially Apple Macintosh) and other electronic audio devices.

**Albumen** is derived from chicken eggs and used as a substrate for light-sensitive compounds in photographic film negatives and paper. It was used until gelatin became popular in the 20th century.

**ASCII/Unicode.** ASCII (American Standard Code for Informational Interchange) codes and Unicode represent text in computers, communications equipment and other devices that work with text. ASCII is a subset of Unicode, which uses non-Romanized characters.

**Buffered** products contain an alkaline substance with a pH of over 7.0 added during manufacturing to neutralize acids or to counteract acids that may form over time. The most common buffering substances are magnesium carbonate and calcium carbonate.

**Cyanotype** is an old monochrome photographic printing process producing a cyan-blue print.

**Dye-Transfer** printing of photographs resembles the mechanical printing process magazines used for color pictures. The dyes in a dye transfer print are very stable.

**JPEG** (Joint Photographic Experts Group) is the most common compressed image format used by digital cameras and other photographic image capture devices.

**Lignin** is a compound found in plant cell walls providing the strength in wood. As it degrades it is responsible for paper, especially newsprint, becoming acidic and turning brown with age.

**Metadata** is “data about data” and describes an individual datum, a content item, or a collection of data. It is used to facilitate the understanding and management of data.

**PDF** (Portable Document Format) is a format created by Adobe Systems for document exchange. PDF is a fixed-layout format used for representing two-dimensional documents that is independent of the application software, hardware and operating system.

**Plasticizers** are additives giving hard plastics flexibility and durability. Some plasticizers evaporate and concentrate in an enclosed space; the “new car smell” is caused mostly by evaporating plasticizers.
TIFF (Tagged Image File Format) is a file format for images, including photographs and line art, that contains image data in a lossless format, making TIFF files a useful method for archiving images. Unlike standard JPEG, TIFF files can be edited and resaved without suffering a compression loss.

WAV (Waveform audio format) is a Microsoft and IBM audio file format standard for storing an audio bitstream on PCs.

References

Don’t Throw It Away!: Documenting and Preserving Organization History. By Sandra Florand Young, with revisions by Douglas Bicknese and Julia Hendry. Special Collections Dept. (University Library), Jane Addams Hull-House Museum, College of Arch. and the Arts, The University of Illinois at Chicago, 2006.


Preserving Your Organization’s Records. Prepared by the North Dakota State Historical Records Advisory Board.


North American Permanent Papers. For a list of permanent paper, see the NAPP website: http:\\palimpsest.stanford.edu/byorg/abbey/napp.

U.S. National Archives & Records Administration. For more on preserving resources. http:\\www.archives.gov/preservation.

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