

# Foundations of Public Health Policy

Capturing Processing Metrics  
and Qualifying MPLP Practices

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# Introduction and Objectives

- Provide access to unprocessed collections that speak to the origins and future direction of our contemporary health care system.
- Facilitate constituency cultivation, including collection development, community building, and the assessment of processing deliverables by different types of researchers.
- Enable workflow documentation (the “meta” part of the project)
  - Categorize processing activities
  - Hard data on the time it takes to complete processing activities employing our brand of MPLP

**The author proposes that instead of trying to maintain an ideal standard of processing, we look at processing as a range of choices along a continuum for each of the four essential processing activities: arrangement, preservation, description, and screening. The continuum runs from the found, or original, state of the material up to the highest possible level of each activity, e.g., a calendared collection where each item is individually filed in an acid neutral folder in an acid neutral box.**

- Megan Floyd Desnoyers -

From the essay, "When is a Collection Processed?"

*The Midwest Archivist* 7 (1, 1982): 5-23.

# MPLP: Applications

- **Prioritization**
  - Adjusting our processing approach to researcher needs
  - Matching collections to levels of practice rather than imposing uniform practice on all collections
- **Initial review and processing plan**
  - Series, subseries determined as a result of initial review and reflected in work plan
  - Plans generally assume processing to level II-B, a refinement of the processing levels drafted by Harvard Committees for a University-wide survey of repository holdings in 2009
  - Labor divided
- **Folder listing is key**
- **Preservation activities**
  - Remove contents from hanging files and “original” folders and re-house in acid free folders
  - Keep photographs with manuscript materials (using sleeves or buffers)
  - Remove sticky notes and discard. (We photocopy any notes that have any “added-value” content and are not just repeating what is on the folder title.)
  - We only remove paperclips and staples if they are obviously damaging the documents.
  - Flag original newspaper clippings for eventual copying to acid free paper and discard. May or may not do this at conclusion of processing.
- **Description**
  - Biographical note authored separately; descriptive elements maintained in Word doc, but actual finding aid authored using XML template
- **Encoding**
  - Minimal “value added” EAD tagging

# Metrics Capture

Microsoft Access database used by all project participants to:

- Log daily activities related to series (or subseries, etc.) to quarter hour
  - Barcoding and Labeling
  - Collection Review and Processing Planning
  - Description
  - Digitization
  - Folder Listing (in spreadsheet)
  - Project Tracking (the amount of time we are taking to track the amount of time it is taking...)
  - Rearranging
  - Preservation Photocopying
  - Preservation Tasks (Misc.)
  - Reboxing
  - Refoldering
- Record amount spent for all activities per record center carton/cubic foot
- Extrapolate amount of time spent per series by adding up time spent on each box in that series
- Track progress on collection as a whole

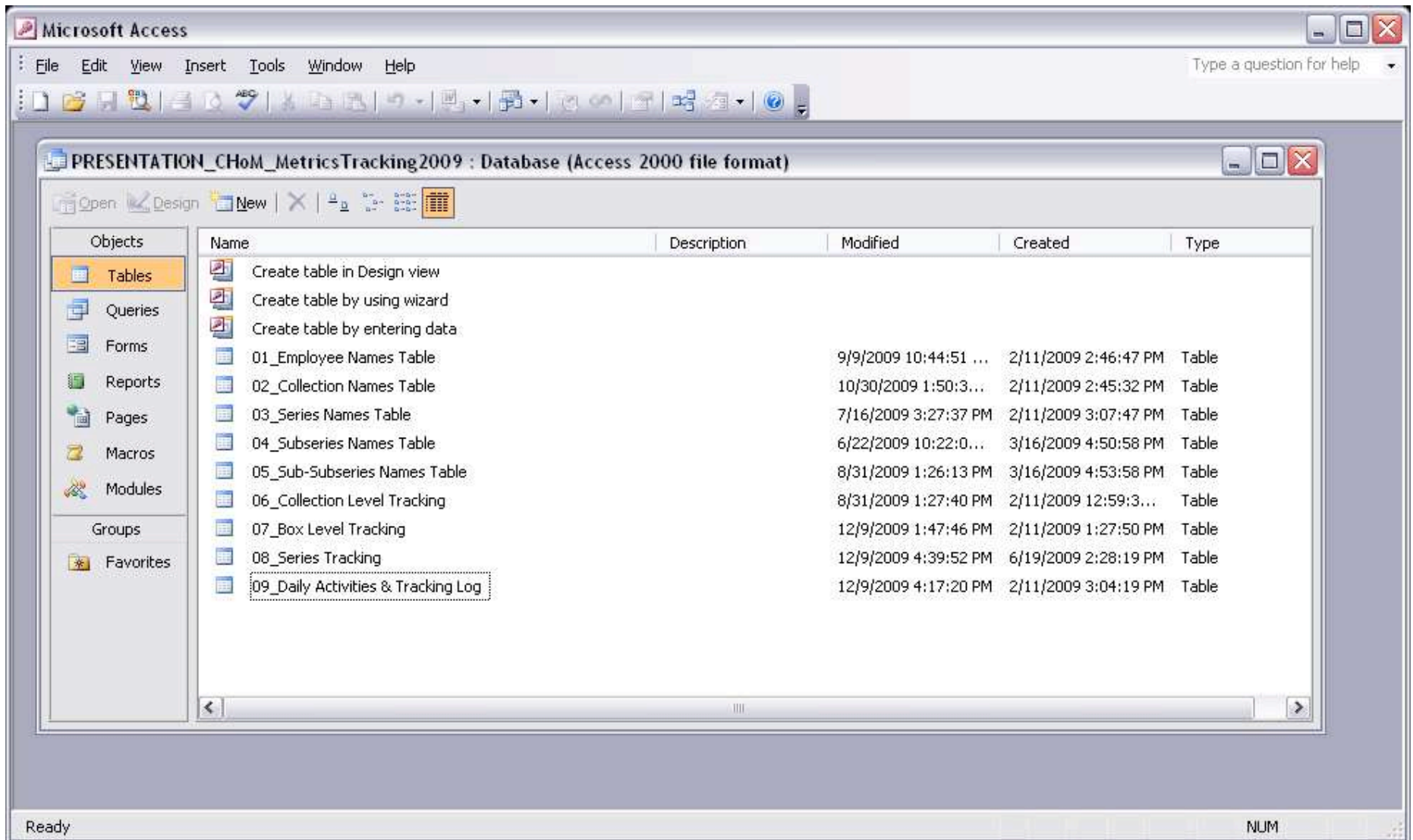
# February Poll...

## Respondents:

- 24.6% do not keep statistics on collections processed in a calendar or fiscal year
- 87.3% do not measure the amount of time they spend on creating processing plans
- 76.8% do not keep statistics on box and folder listing
- 76.4% do not keep statistics on preservation photocopying
- 88.9% do not keep statistics on miscellaneous preservation activities
- 81.8% do not keep statistics on arrangement
- 80.0% do not keep statistics on description
- 54.5% do not keep statistics on creating and encoding finding aids
- 49.1% do not keep statistics on digitization
- 88.9% do not keep statistics on box labeling and bar coding

<http://www.surveymonkey.com/s/MFSQKZX>

# Screenshots...



...Database Tables

Microsoft Access

File Edit View Insert Format Records Tools Window Help

Type a question for help

PRESENTATION\_CHoM\_MetricsTracking2009 : Database (Access 2000 file format)

09\_Daily Activities & Tracking Log : Table

reco	lookup_name_employee	lookup_name_collection	lookup_name	lookup_na	lookup_na	activity_da	activity_description_general-picklist	count_hou
17	Processing Archivist (Dello Iacono, Michael)	Butler, Allan Macy. Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)				20-Apr-09	Rearranging	1
26	Processing Assistant 2 (Ostrowski, Cheryl)	Butler, Allan Macy. Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)				21-Apr-09	Preservation Tasks (Misc.)	1
18	Processing Archivist (Dello Iacono, Michael)	Butler, Allan Macy. Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)				21-Apr-09	Rearranging	1
27	Processing Assistant 2 (Ostrowski, Cheryl)	Butler, Allan Macy. Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)				22-Apr-09	Refoldering	2
28	Processing Assistant 2 (Ostrowski, Cheryl)	Butler, Allan Macy. Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)				22-Apr-09	Preservation Photocopying	1
29	Processing Assistant 2 (Ostrowski, Cheryl)	Butler, Allan Macy. Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)				27-Apr-09	Refoldering	4
30	Processing Assistant 2 (Ostrowski, Cheryl)	Butler, Allan Macy. Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)				27-Apr-09	Preservation Tasks (Misc.)	1
31	Processing Assistant 2 (Ostrowski, Cheryl)	Butler, Allan Macy. Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)				28-Apr-09	Refoldering	2
32	Processing Assistant 2 (Ostrowski, Cheryl)	Butler, Allan Macy. Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)				28-Apr-09	Preservation Photocopying	1
97	Processing Archivist (Dello Iacono, Michael)	Butler, Allan Macy. Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)				28-Apr-09	Description	1
98	Processing Archivist (Dello Iacono, Michael)	Butler, Allan Macy. Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)				29-Apr-09	Description	1.5

Record: 1 of 46 (Filtered)

enter the date of activity

FLTR NUM

...Daily Tracking



Microsoft Access

PRESENTATION\_CHoM\_MetricsTracking2009 : Database (Access 2000 file format)

Open Design New

Objects

- Tables
- Queries
- Forms
- Reports
- Pages
- Macros
- Modules

Groups

- Favorites

Name	Description	Modified	Created	Type
Create form in Design view				
Create form by using wizard				
Form01_Collection Level Tracking				
Form02_Box Level Tracking				
Form03_Series Tracking				
Form04_Daily Activities & Tracking				

**02\_Box Level Tracking**

record\_id: 21

employee: Processing Assistant 1 (Denison, Suzanne)

collection: Baumgartner, Leona, 1902-. Papers, 1930-1975 (bulk). (H MS c305)

boxnumber: 93

boxl\_startdate: 30-Apr-09

boxl\_enddate: 20-May-09

boxl\_totalhours: 1.75

folders\_totalnum: 33

preboxlisting condition:

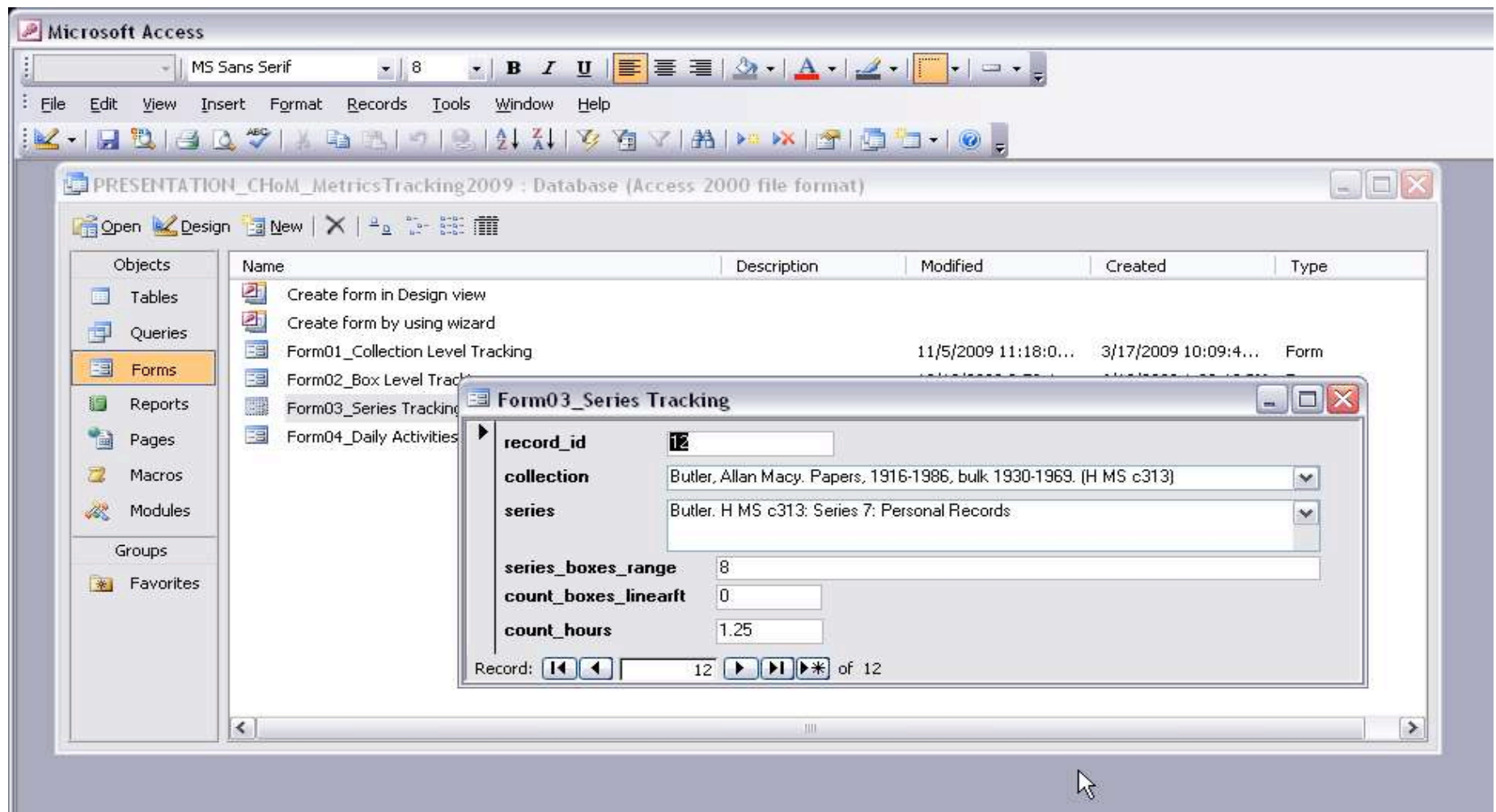
decisions / notes: Refoldering, preservation tasks and listing completed on 30-Apr-09. Preservation photocopying completed on 20-May-09

Record: 19 of 200

detail the decisions you made with regards to processing this series (refoldering, putting loose papers in folders, leaving paperclips, etc.)

NUM

...Box-Level Tracking



*...Series-Level Tracking*

Microsoft Access

File Edit View Insert Format Records Tools Window Help

Type a question for help

### Collection Level Tracking Form

## COLLECTION LEVEL TRACKING

record\_id Collection Name

1 Butler, Allan Macy. Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313)

Start Volume	End Volume	Initial Review Complete?	Start Date For Initial Processing Plan	End Date for Initial Processing Plan
8	8	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	06-Apr-09	14-Apr-09

**Collection Contents**  
Includes correspondence, court reports and transcripts, news clippings, administrative records, article drafts, reports, meeting minutes, committee records, conference materials, lectures and speeches, notes, military records, medical notebooks, research data, charts, drawings, and photographs resulting from Butler's activities as a physician, lecturer, professor, and contributing member of professional organizations in Massachusetts.

**Arrangement Prior to Processing**  
The collection had little to no arrangement prior to processing.

**Condition of Collection Prior to Processing**  
Overall, the paper in the collection is in fair condition. There are rusty paper clips and staples as well as some plastic fasteners. The folders are tattered and worn, and there are several groups of records in plastic bags. There are very few newspaper clippings that are causing damage to adjacent papers, and will need to be photocopied.

**Summary of Processing Approach**  
Since no clear arrangement was present, I based the processing plan loosely around his CV, since he performed multiple activities based only on the appointment he held at the time. Most papers related to his political activities, namely the subversive citizen's trials and health care reform. So I proposed to organize the papers in series according to his primary activities--professional, research, and political--and arrange them either alphabetically or chronologically, depending on the series.

**Arrangement Post Processing**  
Entire collection will be processed at level II-B (folder level)  
I. Professional Records--organized alphabetically by institution, folders within subseries arranged alphabetically by folder title  
A. Agency for International Development. U.S. State Department

**Condition of Collection Post Processing**  
Rusty paper clips and staples were removed, plastic fasteners were left as is. The collection was rehoused in acid-free folders and boxes. Records in plastic bags were removed and foldered and newspaper clippings were photocopied. All reprints were discarded.

**Post-Listing Comments - Project Archivist**  
The Butler collection had little to no arrangement, but several series emerged after reviewing the materials. Due to the method used to process the papers, it was difficult to come up with a name index for the finding aid, as well as to identify the restricted records. I gave the processing assistants instructions to flag any restricted material (and information on what is considered a personal or university record), but it may be that some restricted

**Post-Listing Comments - Processing Assistant 1**

**Post-Processing Comments - Processing Assistant 2**  
(Cheryl) A.M.B. collection lacked any clear organization when it first arrived. It was necessary to rearrange it into series and then arrange the folders within each series, either alphabetically or chronologically. Michael did the bulk of the arranging. The most difficult part was determining the sequence of activities, i.e. refolding, preservation, boxlisting, etc. most beneficial to capturing the metrics necc. for this project. For instance, while refolding I had to go

**Complexity Ranking** 3: Moderately complex

Record: 3 of 15

Form View

NUM

...Collection-Level Tracking



# STATISTICS

## “Small” Collection

Allan Macy Butler Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313) = 80.75 hours for 7.5 cubic feet

• Collection Review and Processing Planning	=	16.00 hours
• Refoldering	=	17.00
• Folder Listing	=	06.00
• Rearranging	=	06.00
• Decription	=	25.00
• Preservation Photocopying	=	03.00
• Preservation Tasks (Misc.)	=	03.00
• Barcoding and Labeling	=	01.00
• Project Tracking	=	03.75

Project archivist

= 48.50 hours

Part time employee/LHT

=

32.25

*Average amount of time per cubic foot: 10.75 hours*

## “Large” Collection

Baumgartner, Leona, 1902-. Papers, 1930-1975 (bulk). (H MS c305) = 396.25 hours for 89 cubic feet

• Collection Review and Processing Planning	=	74.50 hours
• Refoldering	=	104.50
• Folder Listing	=	90.50
• Rearranging	=	31.75
• Reboxing	=	02.00
• Decription	=	21.00
• Digitization	=	07.50
• Preservation Photocopying	=	26.75
• Preservation Tasks (Misc.)	=	28.50
• Barcoding and Labeling	=	00.50
• Project Tracking	=	08.75

Project archivist

= 109.50 hours

Part time employee/LHT 1

=

188.50

Part time employee/LHT 2

= 098.25

*Average amount of time per cubic foot: 4.5 hours*

### **“Small” Collection by Series**

Allan Macy Butler Papers, 1916-1986, bulk 1930-1969. (H MS c313) = 7.5 cubic feet

Series 1: Professional Records	1.50 cubic feet	4.25 hours
Series 2: Research Records	0.75	1.00
Series 3: Lecture, Speech, and Conference Files	0.25	1.00
Series 4: Activism and Political Activities Records	3.00	4.25
Series 5: Writings and Publications	1.00	1.75
Series 6: Correspondence	0.50	1.50
Series 7: Personal Records	0.50	1.25

Total number of folders in collection: **208**

**Average time: 2 hours per cubic foot**

\* Does **NOT** include collection review, processing plan, description, and digitization.

### **”Large” Collection by Series**

Baumgartner, Leona, 1902-. Papers, 1930-1975 (bulk). (H MS c305) = 89 cubic feet

Series 1: Professional Activities Records	12 cubic feet	27.25 hours	
Series 2: Professional Correspondence and Working Files	27	88.25	
Series 3: Speeches, Conferences, Lectures and Related Records		18	35.75
Series 4: Writings and Publications	13	44.25	
Series 5: Personal Records	19	55.50	

Total number of folders in collection: **3342**

**Average time: 30 - 40 minutes per cubic foot**

\* Does **NOT** include collection review, processing plan, description, and digitization.

# Assumptions

Useful for estimating workflow for collections when the following conditions apply:

- Similar accessioning procedures
- Similar physical condition
- Similar types of records
- Minimal presence of analog/digital video, recordings, records, etc. (anything not paper-based)

We have started to use this database to track the work of our individual processing archivists (those not working in teams) and on different types of collections of varying sizes to compare results.

This will enable us to create a “matrix” of conditions for ranking average amounts of time to do what.

# Why?

- More accurate estimates regarding the amount of time to process collections
- More accurate estimates for the type of staffing needed per project
- More accurate estimates for the amount of time it takes to process different types of records
- More accurate preservation statistics
- More accurate budget and grant proposal development
  - Number of hours on average needed for professional staff
  - Number of hours on average for LHTS/paraprofessionals/grad students
  - More realistic assessment of how project labor can be divided
- **Return on investment**
  - We need to think about the relationship between our investment in description and how useful that description is to researchers
  - What is the cost – in time and money – of providing access

# Scholarly Engagement Study

**Qualitative and quantitative assessment underway regarding the delivery of folder lists in advance of full finding aids:**

- Study exercise and post-exercise interview administered to new and experienced researchers, public health professionals, public health graduate students, and information professionals
- Research/reading room survey questionnaire containing questions from part one of exercise regarding access preferences

One response:

*This is a very difficult choice for an archivist, who also happens to do some research. While I think that providing researchers with bibliographic data and administrative history, as well as some sense of the organization and history of the ownership of the collection, is useful and eventually necessary, it is more immediately important to provide access.*



# Thank you!

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