

Branch Archives

Your AAUW branch has a story to tell, and your branch records safely preserved, will provide memories for its story.

Historians have long been aware of the importance of organizations like AAUW in women's history. Our records are a valuable link that history, and the records we preserve today become our link the future.

Because much of AAUW's work has been done at the branch and state levels, it is particularly vital that these records be preserved

What to Save:

- Minutes of branch and board meetings
- Newsletters
- Annual directories of members and lists of officers
- Descriptions, programs, photographs, publicity, etc. for your events and projects
- Branch bylaws and policies
- Written branch histories
- Any correspondence that might have historical value
- Financial records for the past 10 years (the IRS has more specific guidelines on how long to store documents, but 10 years is the longest term required for any particular record)
- Articles of incorporation, if your branch is incorporated
- Research reports

Where to Save: Many colleges and universities, local libraries, and historical societies maintain archives and would welcome your contribution to the preservation of women's history. By deeding certain valuable records to an archive, you make the records available to researchers and, since good archives are environmentally controlled, you assure the physical preservation of your material.

Any repository must protect your records. Damage occurs from extremes in heat and humidity. Avoid unfinished attics, which can become too hot in the summer, and basements, which are usually too humid. A spot in your normal living area is best because it is consistently cool and dry.

Storage Containers: Permanent records should be kept in folders and boxes of archival quality. Archival materials are acid-free and prevent deterioration. Use storage boxes that come with a separate lid and punch-out handles for easy carrying.

Be careful not to overfill boxes because this can cause damage when items are removed or re-placed. Under filling also is not advisable because folders need to be supported to prevent damage to their contents. If the box is not full, use archival spacer boards.

Newspaper Clippings: Newspaper clippings should be photo-copied onto acid-free paper because newsprint deteriorates quickly.

Photographs: If you store photographs in albums, be sure to select an album made of acid-free materials and pages. Loose prints can be stored in acid-free paper envelopes, acid-free clear envelopes, or sleeves made from polyester, polypropylene, or polyethylene. Polyvinyl-chloride should never be used.

Scrapbooks: If you are just beginning a scrapbook, be sure to buy one that is of archival quality.

Archivists prefer to store scrapbooks in their whole, original form rather than remove certain photographs or other items over concern for their physical and chemical stability.

Wrap scrapbooks that are not often used in non-acidic paper or store them in document cases kept flat on shelves.

Scrapbooks that are heavily used should be copied to prevent the original from being damaged. Photocopying is not recommended; it is best to photograph each page.

Sources of Archival Supplies: University Products, R.O. Box 101, Holyoke, MA 01041, 800/628-1912 (800/336-4847 in Massachusetts); or Light Impressions, R.O. Box 940, Rochester, NY 14603, 8(X)/828-6216. Details: For further information or a copy of "Preserving Historical Records," call the AAUW Library, 202/785-7763, or the HELPLINE