Exploring the archives for qualitative research studies

Dr. Kathleen deMarrais
Dr. Kathy Roulston
Exploring the archives

https://coe.uga.edu/academics/concentrations/qualitative-research
A warren is a mazelike place where one may easily become lost (perhaps not rabbits!)

**Synonyms & related words:** labyrinth, maze, catacomb, quagmire, web, entanglement
Presentation Outline

- Definitions
- Statement of Principles, Society of American Archivists
- Rules of the archives
- Archives and finding a research topic
- Mapping an archival collection
- Asking questions of the archives
- Working with archivists
- Examples of archival research by qualitative researchers
Archives and Special Collections

- Rare books, manuscripts and documents (e.g., legal records, letters, political documents, minutes, research records etc.)
- Multimedia – video and audio (oral histories, television broadcasts etc.)
- Maps
- Images – moving and still
- Ephemera (e.g., political buttons, stickers, advertising posters)
- Textiles and costumes
- Artifacts (e.g., cameras, video collections, musical instruments)

https://coe.uga.edu/academics/concentrations/qualitative-research
Provenance

Bought of WILLIAM P. DICK & CO.
MANUFACTURERS and Dealers in Sperm and Whale Oils, Candles, Oil Soap, &c.
No. 13 Long Wharf.

OIL ON CANVAS
SUBJECT: MARTIN AMERICAN SCHOOL
TITLE: NANTUCKET WATER SKID.
PAINTED BY C.W. ASHFIELD 1930
AND TAKEN DIRECTLY FROM THE ORIGINAL
WORK ON DISPLAY (NEW BEDFORD) BY C.W.
ASHFIELD. THIS PAINTING DEPICTS THE MEN OF
OF DARK SUNBAM ATTEMPTING TO STRIKE
A SPERM. PURCHASED FROM THE ARTIST: $ 100.00

https://coe.uga.edu/academics/concentrations/qualitative-research
Statement of principles, Society of American Archivists

1. Records in archives possess unique characteristics
2. The principles of respect des fonds is the basis of arrangement and description
3. Arrangement involves the identification of groupings within the materials
4. Description reflects arrangement
5. The rules of description apply to all archival materials, regardless of form or medium.
6. The principles of archival description apply equally to records created by corporate bodies, individuals, or families.
7. Archival descriptions may be presented at varying levels of detail to produce a variety of outputs
8. The creators of archival materials, as well as the materials themselves, must be described.
Grace McCune papers

Descriptive Summary

Repository: Hargrett Manuscripts
Creator: McCune, Grace, 1899-
Title: Grace McCune papers
Dates: 1938-1939
Quantity: 1.0 linear feet (2 document boxes, 1 half box)

The collection consists of the notebooks kept by Grace McCune during the time she was employed by the Federal Writers Project in Athens, Georgia. Also included are copies of many of her interviews. Several of these show editorial remarks by her supervisor. A small part of the collection involves educational classes taken by Grace McCune.

Abstract: ms1478

Biographical/Historical Note

Grace McCune was born on November 29, 1899 to the parents of Daniel J. McCune and Gertrud McCune. As far as her social security number shows, she was born in New Jersey. She lived with her parents and grandfather John McCune. It seems that her mother died fairly early on in her life since she does not appear in the city directories past the year of 1925. She lived with her father who was an Athens Police officer and her grandfather who was a plumber and later became a sales clerk for a grocery store. The house she grew up in, 881 1/2 College Avenue, was owned by her parents, which means that they must have fairly well off during a time of economic upheaval. She would have been considered the daughter in a middle class family. After her father’s death in August of 1926, she began to move around a great deal, as well as change jobs on a regular basis. The combination of her father’s death and the depression had a profound effect on her economic situation. She had a whole array of jobs ranging from a sales clerk to a laundress.

She began working for the Federal Writer’s Project in 1938. Her first assignment must have been the Slave Narrative Collection because her interview with Miriam McCommons falls at the beginning of that year. She continued to work for the WPA even after her interviews with the free blacks. 1930’s Race relation in the American South: Relationship of Grace McCune and Miriam McCommons / Jennifer Briggs

http://mgagnon.myweb.uga.edu (Retrieved March 5, 2009)

The Federal Works Project was a program established in the United States in 1935 by the Works Progress Administration (WPA) as part of the New Deal struggle against the Great Depression. It provided jobs for unemployed writers, editors, and research workers. Directed by Henry G. Alsberg, it operated in all states and at one time employed 6,000 men and women. The American Guide series, the project’s most important achievement, included guides for every state and territory (except Hawaii), as well as for Washington, D.C., New York City, Los Angeles, San Francisco, New Orleans, and Philadelphia; for several major highways (U.S. 1, Ocean Highway, Oregon Trail); and for scores of towns, villages, and counties. The state guides, encyclopaedic in scope, combined travel information with essays on geography, architecture, history, and commerce. The project also produced ethnic studies, folklore collections, local histories, nature studies - a total of more than 1,300 books and pamphlets. Encyclopedia Britannica Online http://www.britannica.com

Arrangement

Arranged in chronological order.
Index Terms

Federal Writers’ Project. -- History-Sources
Fredrick, Georgia--Athens--Interviews.
Georgia Writers’ Project. -- History-Sources
Interviews.
McCune, Grace, 1899-- Interviws
McCune, Grace, 1899-- Notebooks, sketchbooks, etc.
Narratives (document genre)
Notebooks.
Slave narratives--Georgia--Athens.

Administrative Information

Preferred Citation
Grace McCune papers, 1938-1939. MS 1478. Hargrett Rare Book and Manuscript Library, The University of Georgia Libraries.

Series Descriptions and Folder Listing

Series 1: Manuscripts, March 1938-August 1939

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<th>Box</th>
<th>Folder</th>
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<td>April 1938</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>April-July 1938</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>May-June 1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td>July-August 1938</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>6</td>
<td>August 1938 (No. 1)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7</td>
<td>August 1938 (No. 2)</td>
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</table>
KNOW THE RULES
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>NAME (PRINT)</th>
<th>FIRST NAME (PRINT)</th>
<th>RESEARCHER CARD NUMBER</th>
</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>Delmarvis</td>
<td>Kathleen</td>
<td>188524</td>
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<thead>
<tr>
<th>SERIES OR COLLECTION NAME</th>
<th>RECORD GROUP NUMBER/ COLLECTION DESIGNATION</th>
<th>ENTRY NUMBER</th>
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<th>BOX/ITEM NOS. REQUESTED</th>
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<th>SHELF</th>
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<tr>
<th>OTHER RECORD IDENTIFICATION INFORMATION [SPECIFY FOLDER TITLE(S)/FILE NUMBER(S)]</th>
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<th>REQUEST REVIEWED BY</th>
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<th>RECEIVED BY</th>
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<th>DATE (MM/DD/YYYY)</th>
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<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>NA 14001 (05-18) Required by NARA 1577</td>
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[https://coe.uga.edu/academics/concentrations/qualitative-research](https://coe.uga.edu/academics/concentrations/qualitative-research)
Archival research entails...

• Researching differently – starting with the available items rather than the research question
• Understanding the idiosyncratic nature of collections
• Dealing with organizational challenges
• Uncovering the gems

https://coe.uga.edu/academics/concentrations/qualitative-research
World War I Casualties: Descriptive Cards and Photographs

**Thomas Evan Walker**

**Residence:** Penns Grove, Salem County, NJ

**Place of Birth:** Penns Grove, NJ

**Cause of Death:** Disease

1 photo; 1 descriptive card; correspondence

Card ID # 3245
OFFICERS PRESENT AND ABSENT, ACCOUNTED FOR BY NAME.

Each officer will be accounted for by name under the following heading and in the order listed: Name, Rank, Date, and Remarks.

NAME          RANK   DATE  REMARKS

Present
Theodore W. Quinn  1st Lt.
Oliver F. Murray  1st Lt.
George L. Beaver  1st Lt. Relieved from duty with Co. June 12/28.

RECORD OF EVENTS

Name A. Jackson in whose hands, at sea, all correspondence, orders, and other official matter shall be considered as confidential and shall not be opened or examined by anyone except the sender and the person to whom addressed. All correspondence shall be kept under lock and key at all times except when being read or copied. No correspondence shall be removed from the ship except by the sender or by the person to whom addressed.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Alfa, John</td>
<td>Cpl</td>
<td>McDonald, Charles F</td>
<td>Cpl</td>
<td>Hylton, Charles</td>
<td>Cpl</td>
<td>Newton, George R</td>
<td>Cpl</td>
<td>Nylander, Art</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bagacina, Robert C</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
<td>Geisbom, Carl W</td>
<td>Cpl</td>
<td>Finney, Frank</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
<td>Parker, Clark R</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
<td>Fisher, Paul J</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Beatty, James</td>
<td>Cpl</td>
<td>Geo, Walter S</td>
<td>Cpl</td>
<td>Purchase, Floyd S</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
<td>Reed, Edgar A</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
<td>Saycid, Leo J</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buck, Vito</td>
<td>Cpl</td>
<td>Shipp, Edward A</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
<td>Shimp, James</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
<td>Smith, Robert R</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
<td>State, Edward</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Buckler, Vito</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
<td>Stein, Frederick W</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
<td>Smolak, Geo C</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
<td>Stone, Robert B</td>
<td>Cpl</td>
<td>Van Beckrich, Arthur E</td>
<td>Pvt</td>
</tr>
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</table>

2. The following names enlisted for Company "B", having completed six months foreign service on the above indicated after their names, are entitled to wear one gold service chevron, as prescribed by orders, C.S.A., A.M.F.:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Rank</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>

Date: 30th, December 1918.
The United Field Signal Battalion had its beginning in the early part of October, 1917, when the first members were ordered to Camp MM, N. J. The trials and difficulties of forming an organization, training and equipping its members constituted a story too long to be told here but probably substantially the same as for all other similar units which later became members of the 1.S.F. in France. After nine long months of hard service, the 27th Division was considered fit for overseas service.

The Signal Battalion sailed from the United States on May 27, 1918, arriving in England after an uneventful voyage. After making its camp for transportation across the Channel, the Division was moved into a base area near London, England, for intensive training with the British troops. In this area the Division was issued technical equipment, partly of British and partly American design. Here the Battalion got its first taste of soldiering under conditions of European battle fronts. Here in trench exercises each company proved its ability to perform its technical functions and the willingness of its men to do their share even though hampered by strange equipment and foreign methods.

After about six weeks the Division was moved to the area in rear of Arques and was assigned as corps reserve to the 17th Corps of the Second British Army. The Battalion occupied another test camp at Morin-le-duc near St. Val, France, about seventeen miles from the front line. After training here about a month and in the meantime taking part in occasional maneuvers, which included the dispatch of the platoons of Company "C" to the actual front, the Division was assigned for a journey of forty-two hours which brought it to Le Perreux, a point near Satory, in southern France.

After obtaining the Division was moved by a series of forced night marches to Dr. Hildel sector (northern sector). The first period of the march covered a distance of about fifteen miles from Le Perreux to Bourgogne. On this time the Division was first supplied at American stations. At this point Company "C" was divided according to its normal distribution, one platoon being attached to each infantry regiment. After enjoying about four days’ hospitality of a friendly big house, the Division was moved to Bourgogne, a distance of about fifteen miles, which was covered by two consecutive night marches. After another short stay the Division continued its movement arriving at Chateauneuf, a distance of about twenty-seven miles. Here the Battalion was supplied with additional motor transportation, technical equipment and rifles. The mounted personnel dismounted and moved to Bielles, a distance of about sixty-two miles. The animal transportation accomplished the same movement in a series of four night marches under most adverse weather conditions. The Division was now immediately in rear of the front held by the 8th Corps of the 1st American Army.

Previous to this time the Signal Battalion had provided telephone communication throughout the Division by utilizing existing telephone systems. In a certain sector near Bielles the telephone personnel of the Signal Battalion
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>File No.</th>
<th>Last Name</th>
<th>Army Serial No.</th>
<th>First name and Initials</th>
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<tr>
<td>102823</td>
<td>WALKER</td>
<td>2405920</td>
<td>Thomas E.</td>
<td>510</td>
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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Rank</th>
<th>Organization</th>
<th>Cause of death</th>
<th>Date of Death</th>
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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Date of Burial</th>
<th>Place of Burial—Unconfirmed</th>
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<tr>
<th>Authority File No. D</th>
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<th>Authority File No. D</th>
<th>Disinterred and Reburied: Date In:</th>
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<tr>
<th>Emergency Address: Mrs. Anna H. Walker, Mother 162 Main St., Penningrove, N. J.</th>
<th>Notified Emergency Address</th>
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<td>162 Main St., Penningrove, N. J.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Grave Marker</th>
<th>Name Peg</th>
<th>Cross</th>
<th>Head Board</th>
<th>Bottle</th>
<th>Ident. Tags</th>
<th>Buried with body</th>
<th>On grave marker</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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3-7872

G. R. S. Form 13—Revised Jan. 20-40
October 24, 1996

Frank Gannon
New York, New York
Via Fax

Dear Frank;

Thank you for agreeing to be interviewed while in California the week of November 3rd. Mark Barnette, our producer, the camera crew and I will meet you at the Miramar Hotel in Santa Monica, at 2 pm on November 7, 1996.

We seek information from people who knew and worked with Richard Nixon during the post-resignation period. His frame of mind is of particular interest. Was he bitter and resentful? At whom was his bitterness directed?
A VISIT TO A FLOWER SHOP

Written by: Miss Grace McCune
Area 6 - Athens

Edited by: Mrs. Sarah M. Hall
Area 6 - Athens
and
John N. Booth
Area Supervisor
Federal Writers' Project
Areas 6 and 9
Augusta, Georgia
March 3, 1939
Exploring a topic of interest

- Survey what exists (e.g., multiple archival collections)
- Produce a bibliography of secondary literature
- Make use of finding aids
- Work through collections in conjunction with finding aids
- Get to know collections (Stanley, 2017)

Mapping an archival collection

• What is included and excluded in a collection and how are its boundaries configured?
• What are the contents concerned, overall themes and concerns?
• What would be helpful to record on first examining a collection (for instance, by writing notes or making an entry in a database?)
• Should digital photographs of any documents be made, if this is permitted by the archive concerned? If so, of what – and why?
• Are the contents either in whole or part relevant to your particular research topic? Where might you go next? (Stanley, 2017, p. 48)


https://coe.uga.edu/academics/concentrations/qualitative-research
Asking questions of items (e.g., documents)

- Who authored the document?
- When and for what purpose?
- In what context was the document produced?
- From what perspective is the document constructed?
- How is the document arranged?
- How does the document function?
- How is the document being consumed?

Working with archivists
Examples of topics explored by qualitative researchers


Using archives qualitative research projects

Exploring archived projects:

(1) develop descriptive studies,
(2) undertake comparative, follow up or restudies of prior topics;
(3) re-analyze data or complete secondary analysis of data;
(4) examine studies with a view to exploring research design and advancing methodological discussion;
(5) verify findings from other studies; and
(6) use data for teaching and learning.

The “allure” of the archives

The allure of the archives entails a roaming voyage through the words of others, and a search for a language that can rescue their relevance. It may also entail a voyage through the words of today, with the perhaps somewhat unreasonable conviction that we write history not just to tell it but to anchor a departed past to our words and bring about an “exchange among the living.” We write to enter into an unending conversation about humanity and forgetting, origins and death. About the words each of us uses to enter into the debates that surround us (Farge, 2013, pp. 123-124).

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Dr. Kathy Roulston at roulston@uga.edu