

Conference of California Historical Societies Annual Meeting  
Friday, May 29, 2015, 10:30-11:45 a.m.  
Lauren Lassleben

***Thinking Like an Archivist, Part I: Where Should We Start?***

**The core functions performed by archivists include appraisal and accessioning, arrangement and description, reference and access, preservation and security.**

**Archivists have a dual responsibility to their collections and their users. They seek always to strike a responsible balance between preservation and use.**

**How do we decide what to collect? Does your archives have a collection policy?**

*Records and manuscripts appraisal considerations include:*

Who are the records' creators?

What types of records are present?

Why were the records created, and how were they originally used?

What is the approximate date span?

What is the subject matter?

Is there any sort of useful order?

What is the minimal level of archival processing needed to make the collection accessible to researchers?

Does this material have permanent historical value, and is this collection a good fit for your archives? (If not, ideally you will help the donor find a more appropriate repository.)

Are there preservation issues?

Do you have staff with enough experience and subject expertise to handle this collection?

Do you have sufficient storage and work space and acid-free supplies?

Does the collection have various formats, such as photographs, historical objects, audio-visual materials and/or electronic records? How will these be handled?

Take careful and accurate notes throughout the appraisal and accessioning process.

Time for questions and discussion.