



DOCUMENTING AND PRESERVING THE HISTORY OF YOUR MAPLE ORGANIZATION, MAPLE BUSINESS, OR FAMILY SUGARBUSH

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What is Maple History?

Tapestry of history

History with a big “H”

History with a little “h”

Why should we care about preserving it?

- Identity
- Legacy
- Educate and Inform
- Accuracy and Primacy



Documenting and Preserving Your History

Gathering What You Have

Preservation and Storage

Expanding Your History

Who is This For?

- Associations
- Corporations and Large Companies
- Families and Family Businesses



Building an Archive - What to Preserve?

Focus on Original and Unique – AKA Primary Records

- Paper and printed items
- Photographs and slides
- Film
- Artifacts and memorabilia
- Sorting and Organizing (Topics, events, dates, places, etc.)
- Eliminating duplication
- Discarding, irrelevant non-essential material
- Eliminate not specifically relevant to maple history
- Hardest questions - not what to save but what to get rid of

Storage and Preservation Methods

Basic Principals

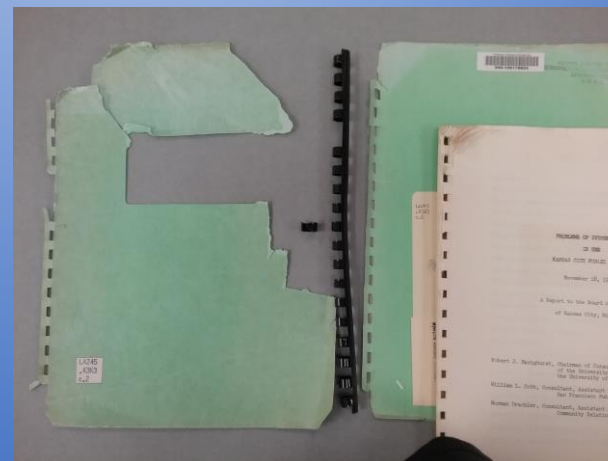
- Organized and labeled in logical manner
- Maintain basic inventory for retrieval and tracking
- File folders, envelopes, and storage boxes
- paper not plastic
- Clean, dry, secure location
- Less handling the better for original documents, especially the fragile items, photographs, and film
- Make photocopies, digital copies, or scans for items that might be handled often

Paper Not Plastic

Try to remove or avoid use of plastics and metals. Over time they will stain and damage items and fail as they become brittle and break down.

Avoid or Remove

- Tape
- Rubber bands
- Staples and paperclips
- Plastic sleeves
- Comb binders
- Three-ring binders



Photograph Preservation

- Get photos out of plastic
- Put photos in labeled paper envelopes or file folders
- Use pencil to label back of photos and envelopes - no pens or markers or sticky labels
- Pencil lead won't bleed and damage photos and written errors can be corrected



Ideal Versus Real

Best Practices - Ideal

- Museum and archival quality materials - University Products, Gaylord, Talas Archival Supplies
- Acid free paper files, envelopes, and containers
- Reinforced paperboard, cardboard, and archival plastic boxes



What is Available and Affordable – Real

- Standard office folders and envelopes
- Bankers boxes or covered plastic storage containers



Do I Practice What I Preach?

I try!



Where to Store or Archive

On-Site Home or Office

- Accessible anytime
- No fees
- Store as much as you chose
- Requires dedicated safe, secure, dry, vermin free space



Off-Site at Existing Library, Archives, or Historical Society

- Outsource to secure site with professional curation materials and standards
- Collections will be available for others to access
- Limits on what and from whom collections will be accepted
- Limited access
- No control over management and handling
- Accession fee or requested donation for curation expenses



Digital Records – The Elephant in the Room

Digital Records - What to Preserve?

- Focus on original digital content you have created
- Similar advice as offered earlier for what print and film materials to save or discard
- Organize and label electronic files logically and with dates

Email

- Email archiving software and apps
- Print to PDF



Preserving Digital Records

Scanning and Digital Duplication - Do It If You Can - Duplication is a Good Thing

Ideal

- Higher Resolution flat bed scanners, scanner copiers, wand scanners
- Optical Character Recognition is ideal and very useful for future reference

Real

- Mobile devices like phones and tablets easy to use and readily available



Preserving Digital Records

Digital Preservation Media

Common and Lasting File Formats

.doc .pdf .txt
.jpg .tiff .mp3

Longevity and Availability of Storage and Playback Devices

- easy to make multiple copies and store at different site -

- Disks (CD-DVD)
- Flash Drives
- External Hard Drives
- Cloud Storage



Association History

What Specifically To Save and Archive?

- Meeting Minutes
- Newsletters
- Event booklets or publications – tours
- Photographs
- Lists of leadership, boards, ambassadors, profiles or biographies
- Annual service awards and competition results
- Newspaper accounts of association events & activities, quotations by and references to members

Association History

Building Histories – What to Search For and Collect?

- Formation of the Association (how, why, where, when, who)
- Notable members (hall of famers, leadership roles in IMSI or NAMSC, state ag hall of fame, extension specialists)
- Notable sugarbushes
- Notable equipment manufacturing and inventors
- Notable equipment sales and dealerships
- Notable maple products companies, syrup buyers, and packers
- Government and university research in that area - researcher profiles, research sites

Association History

Make it an Association effort – a call to membership to contribute

Newsletter history corner

Don't need to write a book - sometimes a paragraph or a few sentences

Create something to which people can continue to add over time

An encyclopedia of state maple history

Mini-history projects for students, scouts, youth ag groups, ambassadors

Corporate History

What Specifically To Save and Archive?

- Minutes, annual reports, charter, bylaws, company newsletters
- Employee rosters, personnel records
- Catalogs
- Advertisements
- Newspaper accounts with mention of company
- Correspondence
- Manuals handbooks
- Photographs and films
- Plans and blueprints
- Memorabilia
- Records of research partnerships and philanthropy

Corporate History

Building Histories – What to Search For and Compile?

Company beginnings

Founders, leadership, BOD profiles and biographies

Important events, milestones, and hardships

Consolidations – expansions

Physical locations

Timelines

Oral histories of older and past employees

Corporate History

Valuable to messaging and is meaningful to company culture identity, and accountability

Preserve and present company legacy in maple industry

Informed leadership and building shared interests and community within a company, sharing the history with new employees

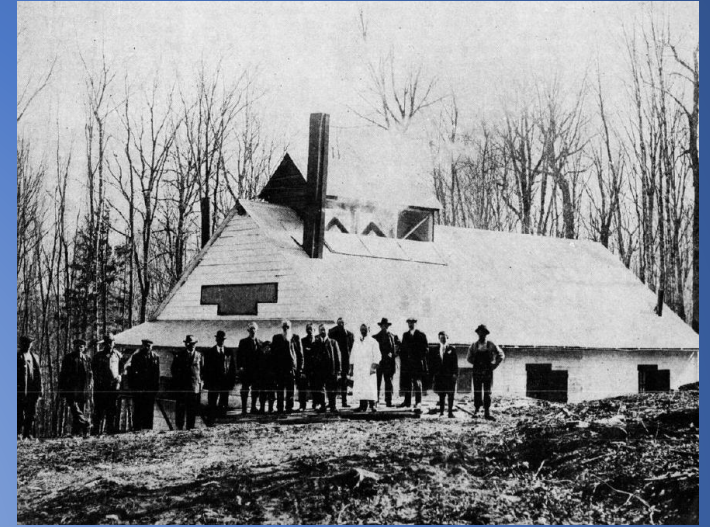
Customers want to know and often make decisions based on their views and perceptions of history of a company

Without documented history it is difficult to counteract or prevent the spread incorrect information

Family Business History

What Specifically To Save and Archive?

- Photographs and films
- Annual production records
- Awards and competition results
- Catalogs
- Advertisements
- Newspaper accounts
- Memorabilia



Family Business History

Oral histories very important

A lot like doing genealogy

Create timelines

Consider creating photo record today



Oral History Considerations

What Kinds of Questions to Ask

- How did their maple operation get started?
- How it changed, grew, or shrunk and why?
- Where did they learn to make syrup and maple products?
- Where or how did they sell the maple products they made?
- Memories or stories of life in their sugarhouse and sugarbush?
- Who helped with the work?
- What visitors usually came by?
- Memories of boiling with friends and family and sharing the sugaring experience?
- Thoughts on changes they witnessed in the maple industry
- What was the most memorable or important change they experienced in their time in the business?
- Who are other people from their area that were involved and made impacts to maple from years ago that we should know about and remember?
- Were they involved in maple associations and attending state and international meetings and how did that impact their maple operation and the maple industry around them?



Conducting Oral Histories

Digital Audio Recording Devices

- Digital recorders
- Mobile phone apps
- External microphones

Video Recording

Audio File Formats – MP3 and MP4

Automatic Transcription Apps - MS Word



Newspaper Archives and Online Research

Google - <https://news.google.com/newspapers>

Chronicling America - <https://chroniclingamerica.loc.gov/>

Newspapers.com – <https://www.newspapers.com/>

Newspaper Archive - <https://newspaperarchive.com/>

Internet Archive - <https://archive.org/>

Many State Lists and Databases

National Library and Archives of Québec BANQ -

<https://numerique.banq.qc.ca/ressources/details/RJQ>

Documenting and Preserving Maple History

Takeaways

It does not have to be fancy

Keep it simple

Take your time, think it through

There is no wrong way to do it, the only wrong way is to ignore it and not do it



Contact Information



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