

Knotty Beginnings

BUILDING THE LACE MUSEUM ARCHIVES

Small museums can successfully build an archive by utilizing a cohort of MLIS interns. By providing a supportive environment focused on collaboration, research, and exploration, the Lace Museum now has a structured archive with multiple projects underway.



Challenges

- Students started with only a theoretical understanding of archival best practices
- Limited time & resources
- Lack of professional archival perspective & insight
- Many preservational issues hidden within the aging collection

Projects

1. Archive Structure & Hierarchy
2. Arrangement & Description
 - at the collection, series, & folder level
3. Metadata Handbook
4. Addressing Imminent Preservation Concerns
 - lace preservation & housing
 - environment assessment, research, & planning
 - temperature
 - mold
5. Collection Research for Outreach

Implications

Many small GLAM institutions lack access to archival expertise while grad students face limited opportunities to gain experience, creating potential for collaboration.

LIS programs & institutions can help out by connecting students with organizations in need while also providing mentorship when applicable.

Internship cohorts allow students to use their strengths & skill sets while tackling problems cooperatively.

In niche subject areas, interns may require extended topic introduction. Institutional experts should provide resources to facilitate this learning curve.

The creation of a central online hub for documents & resources related to establishing & structuring an archive could aid smaller organizations while providing insights to budding archivists.