

Pieces of Suffolk University's History



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Class Assignment:

The selection of documents before you were drawn from the records of Suffolk University and the Suffolk University Oral History Project. They all relate to different aspects of Suffolk University's history.

Here's what to do:

- Pair up and take 15 minutes at each station to review the documents.
- Report back to class observations about the archival records.
- Give a general description of what you have, using the station questions as a guide.

“Pieces of Suffolk History” Resource List

Station 1: Gleason Archer

From MS108 Gleason Archer Papers

- A. Selections from Gleason Archer's personal Journal, 1917-1920
- B. Letter from Hiram Archer to Gleason Archer, 4/16/1899
- C. Radio Transcripts on “Suffolk University Scholarships,” 7/9/1939

Station 2: The Ram

From the Suffolk University Archives

- A. Selections from the *Suffolk Journal*: vol. 5, no. 10, 12/16/1948; vol. 7, no. 12, 4/20/1950
- B. Photograph: Hiram the Ram onstage with Clifton A. Tatro, Michael Linquata, Charles Tsapatsaris, Charles Law, no date
- C. *The Beacon Yearbook*: 1967 and 1990

Suffolk University Oral History Project

- D. Mike Linquata Oral History interview recording

Want to learn more about Suffolk's history? Consult the following resources:

- David Robbins' *A History of Suffolk University*
- University Photographs, University Archives
- University Publications, University Archives
- Suffolk University Oral History Project, University Archives

Station 1: Gleason L. Archer



Suffolk University's founder, Gleason Leonard Archer was born on October 29, 1880, in Great Pond, a remote outpost in northeastern Maine. The Archer family was poor so at the age of thirteen Gleason was sent to work in a nearby lumber camp. Eventually, Gleason was able to leave the lumber camp to attend high school and later college at Boston University.

In 1903, Archer struck up a conversation with businessman George Frost on a train bound for Boston. By the time the stagecoach reached the railway station, Frost had learned of Archer's dream to become a lawyer and offered to pay for his education. With Frost's support, Archer graduated from Boston University in 1906 with a law degree. In response to Frost's generosity, he started "Archer's Evening Law School", a law school for non-traditional students. The first class met at his apartment at 6 Alpine Street in Roxbury, Massachusetts, on September 19, 1906.

By December 1908 enrollment had increased enough that Archer could leave his law practice to devote all of his energies to the growing Suffolk School of Law now located in downtown Boston. The school further expanded with the formation of the College of Liberal Studies (1934) and the School of Business Administration (1937). Archer remained at Suffolk University until his retirement in 1948.

In addition to his career as an educator, Archer was a radio broadcaster for NBC in the 1920s, an amateur historian, focused on colonial New England history and his ancestry as a Mayflower descendant, and active in the Progressive political party. He wrote prolifically and on a variety of topics including law textbooks, the first comprehensive history of radio and books about history. In retirement Gleason Archer established a successful blueberry farm in Pembroke, Massachusetts, and was the director of the Pembroke Historical Society. Archer died of cancer on June 28, 1966.

Questions

1. According to the letter dated April 16, 1899, who is committed to helping Gleason Archer go to school and how?
2. In the radio transcript dated July 9, 1939, how much did Gleason Archer pay for a room in Boston in 1902? How does that compare to your room and board rates today?
3. In the radio transcript dated July 9, 1939, how do Gleason Archer's ideas about the necessity of a college education compare with those of today?
4. Read a little of Archer's journal. Why is he writing?
5. What topics does he cover in his journal and how does he describe them?

Station 2: The Ram



Just how did a Ram become Suffolk University's mascot? Little was know about the how it was chosen, or how this live ram came to Suffolk University. Read the following documents and answer the questions below:

Questions:

1. What is the ram's name? Who is it named after?
2. Name some ways the ram evolved over the years:
3. Describe how the live ram pictured above came to campus:
4. Who was the coach of the sports teams at that time?

Interested in Doing Archival Research?

Types of Projects:

- Research papers
- Internships
- Honors thesis

Resources at the Suffolk University Archives:

(more info at: www.suffolk.edu/archive)

Collection information

- The Congressman John Joseph Moakley Papers
- John Joseph Moakley Oral History Project
- The Jamaica Plain Committee on Central America Collection
- Enemies of War Collection
- Gleason L. Archer's Personal Papers
- The Mary P. Burke U.N. Women's Conference Collection
- The Harry Hom Dow Papers
- Suffolk University Oral History Project
- Records of Suffolk University

Research tools

- Bibliographies and indices
- Finding aids: a detailed guide to a collection with descriptions and folder lists.

Research guides: highlight resources in our collections where you can find information on the following topics

SMART Catalog: browse or search through our online catalog available at www.suffolk.edu/archive/smart

Potential Topics to Research

- Busing/Boston Public Schools Desegregation
- Chinese Immigration
- Congress: Leadership, Rules Committee etc.
- Congressman John Joseph Moakley
- Grassroots activism
- History of Suffolk University
- History of radio
- Historic Preservation
- Human Rights
- Immigration Issues
- Consumer Affairs: Fire-safe Cigarettes, Food Labeling Act
- Environmental Issues:
 - Boston Harbor Islands, Boston Harbor Clean-up, Hazardous Waste sites
- Fair Housing - Anti-snob Zoning
- Health and Medical Research: Organ Donation, Food Labeling Act
- Massachusetts politics
- Political Campaigning
- Women's empowerment and equality
- U.S. Foreign Policy towards El Salvador and Cuba

What is an Archive?

- It's the place
- It's the stuff

What are primary sources?

- Unique materials
- Necessary for original research
- First hand account
- Un-interpreted data
- Correspondence, a memo or agenda
- Photographs, video or audio recordings

What is archival research?

- A way to improve critical thinking skills
- An opportunity to add new knowledge to existing scholarship
- An important addition to a resume
- Researcher draws his own conclusions from what he sees



What is different between archives and libraries?

Archives	Libraries
Unique materials	Published materials
Collections organized by creator	Collections organized by subject
Closed stacks	Open stacks
Non-circulating materials	Circulating materials
Primary sources	Secondary Sources



Archival collections:

- Represent the point of view of one person or organization
- Have a hierarchical structure
- Are described by finding aids
- Contain a variety of records, such as, correspondence, news clippings, objects/artifacts, photographs and audio/visual materials

How do I do Archival research?

- Do all secondary source research first, build a knowledge base about your topic
- Investigate what has been written about your topic
 - Use bibliographies
 - Consult a reference librarian
 - Search the Web
 - Use subject guides
- Call the Archives to set up a reference appointment
- Read a finding aid to learn more about a collection
- Search the SMART catalog (www.suffolk.edu/archive/smart)
- Have an Archivist get you started on your research

Contact Us

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