Davidson College Archives and Special Collections 101

A Beginner’s Guide to Archival Research at Davidson College
A Tour in Photographs

You can find the Archives and Special Collections on the 2nd Floor of the E.H. Little Library.
Welcome to the Archives Reading Room

Be sure to leave your belongings in a locker. Only note papers and research materials are permitted inside.
Amelia knows the rules.
Reading Room Rules

1. Researchers must sign in for each visit.
2. Only note papers and research materials are permitted at work tables (Brief cases, backpacks, coats, and other items must be left in the designated area.)
3. Smoking, eating and drinking (including water bottles) are not permitted in the Reading Room.
4. Only pencils may be used when working with original materials.
5. Researchers will be allowed access to one archival box at a time.
6. Maintain the existing order of records.
7. Return all materials to the archivist when you are finished.
8. The researcher assumes full responsibility for conforming with the laws of libel, copyright, and literary property rights when quoting or publishing archival materials.
Please sign in when you arrive.
Materials will be pulled and ready for you.

You will be using a variety of sources. Archives staff will help you identify what you need.

Archival materials cannot be checked out - plan to spend time working in the reading room!
Meet the Staff

Jan Blodgett, Jim Harris, Sharon Byrd (Front)
What makes archival research unique?

- Archives and Special Collections houses a great variety of formats, including:
  - Rare Books
  - Photographs
  - Scrapbooks
  - Posters,
  - Audio-visual materials
  - Maps
  - And, of course, boxes upon boxes of paper records relating to the history of Davidson College, as well as the town of Davidson.
What makes archival research unique?

- Our materials are housed separately because they are generally difficult or impossible to replace. Thus, we do not circulate materials outside the reading room.
- Archivists treat unpublished and non-book materials as collections, based on who or what entity created or collected the materials.
- Collections might consist of:
  - Records of an organization
  - Personal papers of an individual
  - Correspondence between family members
As you begin, plan your research early!

Retrieving materials may take some time.
Finding Specific Materials
Some step by step sources to examine:

1. Registrar’s/Admission’s Records: To find names and class years of specific individuals of interest

2. Alumni Files: To gather individual biographical material

3. **The Davidsonian**: To find highlights of the experiences of Davidson students

4. **Quips and Cranks**: For images of Davidson students of interest
Some step by step sources to examine:

5. Davidsonia Files (D-Files): For general context on a particular area of interest

6. **Manuscript/Record Group Collections**: To find student organization records, faculty committee reports, admission reports, etc.

7. **Audio-Visual Materials**

8. **Photograph Collection**
Having trouble?
ASK QUESTIONS!

We are here to help YOU!
Sample scenario:
East Asian Students at Davidson

1. Use **registrar record** to determine to find out when East Asian students attended Davidson. After the 1960s, you need to look at Admission records (RG 7/1.2) to determine the demographics to study closer.

2. Using the **alumni catalogue (to 1927)** or the **Davidson College catalogue**, search by class years to find the names and home city of the East Asian students at Davidson.
Sample scenario: East Asian Students at Davidson

3. Search in **Alumni Files** as a start to learn more biographical information about selected individuals who highlight the experience of the East Asian students at Davidson.

4. Also consider examining *The Davidsonian* or *Quips and Cranks* to find images or activities of a student
Sample scenario:
East Asian Students at Davidson

5. Search **D-Files** for the **Asian Studies Concentration** if interested in academic interest in East Asia at Davidson College
   a) Look at **Scholarships at Davidson College- Richardson (Foreign) Scholars** and **International Students**

6. Consider searching for Asian students in the **Archives database**
   a) Use keywords such as: **Asia, Asian, China, Chinese, Japan, Japanese, Korea, Korean, International Students, Richardson Scholars**
Sample scenario:
East Asian Students at Davidson

Record groups are limited, but include:

a) Records of Asian Culture and Awareness Association (RG 6/14.67) – Recent (2000-) student activity relating to East Asia, and Asian awareness


c) College Communications - Publicity Files - International Students (RG 5/7.3a, Box 13)

d) International Students Association (RG 6/14.47)

e) Office of International Students Records, 1948- (RG 6/5)

f) VP for Business and Finance – Historical Records – Richardson Scholars (RG 4/1.4, Box 8)

g) Admission and Financial Aid – Publications – Scholarships – Richardson Foreign Student (RG 7/1.2, Box 1)

h) Financial Aid – Publicity Files – Scholarships – Richardson Foreign Student (RG 7/2)
You never know what you might find....

A search of the alumni catalog found that **Evander Bradley McGilvary** (Class of 1884) was the first East Asian student at Davidson, from Siam. Checking his alumni file revealed, he was not Siamese, but the son of American missionaries.

A further search found that **Paul Chih Meng** (Class of 1921) was Davidson’s first Chinese student.
Paul Chih Meng (Class of 1921)

Quips and Cranks (1921):
Senior Yearbook Entry

Meng in November, 1955
Meng’s Book *Chinese American Understanding* is in the Davidsonia Room.
Be sure to take careful notes while conducting your research!

Keep track of your sources, and see our website for how to cite them:
http://forum.davidson.edu/archives/information/citing-archival-sources/
To recap the process:

- Gather Keywords
- Use D-Files
- Ask the Archivist about sources
- Gather Important Dates
- Check Registrar and Admission files
- Locate Student and Organization Records
- Check Alumni Files
- Check for photographs and Oral Histories

The research is process is not linear!

Information found in one source frequently will lead you to new sources, or to approach an earlier source in a new way.
If you still have concerns about archival research, ASK QUESTIONS!

We are here to help YOU!