

# SOUTH CAROLINA ARCHIVES MONTH OCTOBER 2015

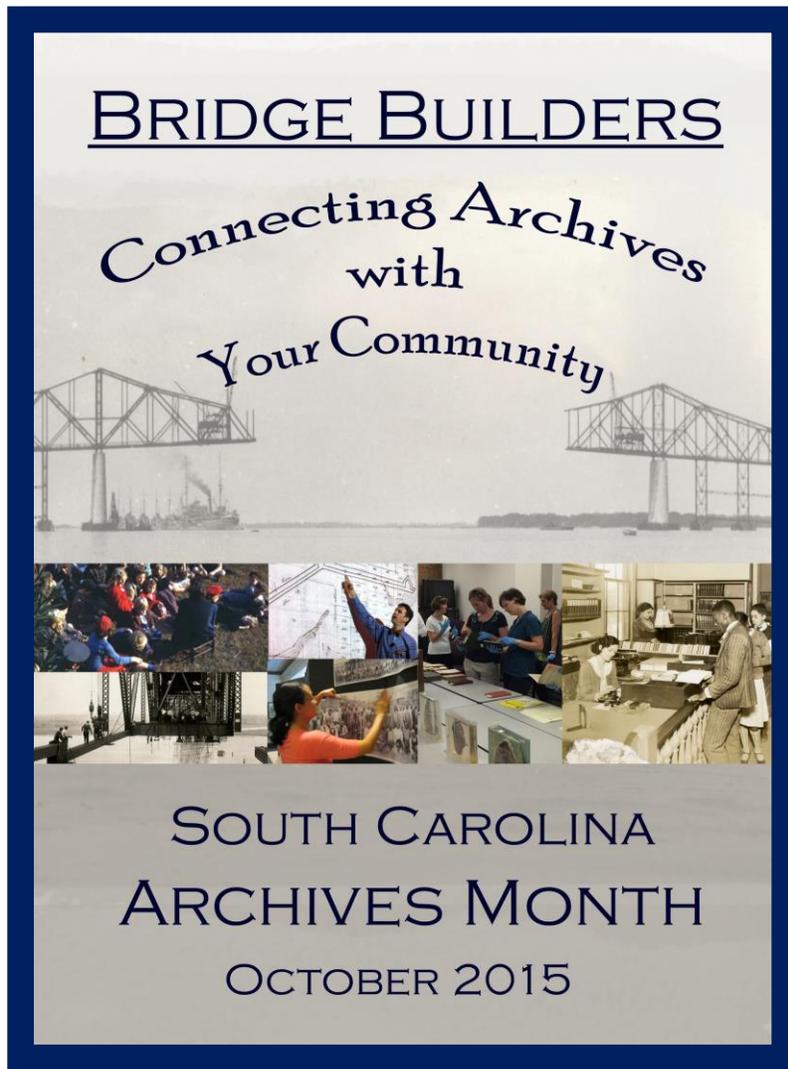
*BRIDGE BUILDERS: CONNECTING  
ARCHIVES WITH YOUR COMMUNITY.*

*TOOLKIT*



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## Introduction

The goal of South Carolina Archives Month is to inform the general public about the diverse array of archival materials held in repositories across the Palmetto State. Sponsored by the South Carolina Archival Association (SCAA), the theme and inspiration for South Carolina Archives month this year is *Bridge Builders: Connecting Archives with Your Community*. All archival and documentary heritage repositories are invited to participate!

The events are a celebration of the work that we and our organizations do, but South Carolina Archives Month is also a time to raise public awareness. By holding exhibit openings, workshops, lectures, open houses, and other related events during October, South Carolina's archives and libraries can make a concerted effort to underscore the importance of our profession to our state's citizenry and public leaders.

When thinking about how you will participate in Archives Month, we urge you to think broadly! Archivists and librarians are encouraged to curate exhibits or host lectures, open houses, and other events that highlight the projects or events where your institution has connected with your surrounding community.

Don't miss out on this opportunity to showcase a part of your collection! Please share information about your Archives Month event(s) with SCAA by emailing [scarchivists@gmail.com](mailto:scarchivists@gmail.com) and we will post it on our website and publicize via social media! Please put "archives month event" in your subject line. To learn more about South Carolina Archives Month, visit our website at <http://www.scarchivists.org/index.php/advocacy>.



## Quick Facts

**When:** October 2015; to be celebrated in tandem with the SCAA Fall meeting at the South Carolina Department of Archives & History on October 2

**What:** Events, lectures, exhibits, workshops, open houses, and other related happenings that highlight the work and collections of repositories and allied institutions throughout the state of South Carolina

**Why:** An opportunity to highlight current issues, advocate, showcase materials, and give institutions power

**Who:** Being organized by an ad-hoc outreach and advocacy committee consisting of six archivists with financial support from the operating budget of SCAA

**Theme:** Bridge Builders: Connecting Archives with Your Community



## Outreach Groups

The theme of South Carolina Archives Month 2015 is *Bridge Builders: Connecting Archives with Your Community*. This is an excellent time to examine your outreach efforts and identify community groups and individuals that may not normally be part of your service population. Historians and genealogists may be your primary customers, but what about children and school groups, church congregants, or hobbyists? The following list has been compiled to serve as inspiration for reaching out to unusual or underserved audiences. This list should by no means be considered exhaustive - we encourage participants to think broadly!

- Children and young adults
- Homeschooling groups
- Church congregations
- Social justice organizations
- Genealogical societies
- Book clubs
- Senior citizens groups
- College classes
- Civic organizations
- Local businesses
- Hobbyists (Philatelists, Numismatists, Railfans, Knitters, Quilters)
- Sororities and fraternities
- Special event organizers (Farmers market coordinators, Local festival organizers)
- 



Remember, archival services don't have to begin and end at your institution's front door. Don't hesitate to go outside your own walls and take history directly into the community!

## **Programming**

South Carolina Archives Month is an excellent opportunity to invite members of your community into your institution to partake in your resources and services. There are a myriad of possibilities for programming, from the simple to the complex. The theme of South Carolina Archives Month 2015 is “Bridge Builders: Connecting Archives with Your Community,” and we encourage you to plan your programs with that theme in mind. However, programming focused on any aspect of archival theory or practice is beneficial to the promotion of your institution and the profession, in general. With a little creativity and planning, you can produce an event that fits your institution, your resources, and your community.

**Don’t forget to submit all programming dates to the South Carolina Archival Association, so that they can be advertised on the organization’s website and social media outlets! Email your submissions to [scarchivists@gmail.com](mailto:scarchivists@gmail.com) with the subject line “Archives Month Event.”**

### **Event Ideas**

These suggestions are meant to ask as a springboard for your programming. Use these ideas at your own institution, or design a program that is all your own.

#### **Offer an archival class**

Design a class for patrons or other institutional staff on an aspect of archival management. Ideas include: Archiving Basics, Preservation 101, How to Care for Photographs, or Archivally-Sound Scrapbooking.

#### **Host an archival open house**

Allow patrons a rare glimpse into the hidden world of archives by offering an archival open house featuring a tour of areas that are normally off limits to the public. This is a good way to show off items that are too fragile or valuable to normally be used or put on display.

#### **Arrange a public film screening**

Show a documentary or motion picture that has a theme germane to the theme of Archives Month.

#### **Design an exhibit**

Create either a physical or digital exhibit that will show off materials from your collections. This can be something as simple as a display board featuring images from your collections (be sure to use surrogates for security and preservation purposes!).

#### **Arrange a lecture**

Contact a local author or expert who is fluent in a topic relevant to the theme of Archives Month and invite them to speak to the public. This may be accompanied by a book signing and/or a question and answer forum.

**Host a book discussion**

Choose a book with a South Carolina theme and schedule a public discussion. Develop a series of topics, questions, and insights to engender conversation. You may even invite the author to participate, if s/he is local. This can work well with either fiction or nonfiction titles.

**Invite the community to “Ask An Archivist”**

Allow patrons to make an appointment for a one-on-one instructional session with the resident archivist, curator, or librarian. These sessions can allow for personal guidance on subjects such as research methodologies, materials preservation, and local history topics.

**Coordinate a field trip**

Partner with an area institution or tourist attraction that has historical themes. Arrange to meet with community members at the site and take a guided tour. Possible sites include:, plantations, historic sites, museums, or churches.

**Design a scavenger hunt**

Scavenger hunts are often quite popular with children and families. You can design a small-scale hunt within the walls of your own institution, or, if you're in a more urban area, you can partner with local businesses, parks, churches, and community members to create a large-scale hunt.

**Organize an “Antiques Roadshow”-style event**

Invite patrons to bring in personal items about which they would like to consult a professional, such as family papers, photographs, and heirlooms. This event can be staffed solely by in-house professionals, or you may wish to invite the participation of local experts, such as antiques dealers, art appraisers, and historians.

**Program Planning**

When planning your Archives Month programming, there are many factors to keep in mind. Be sure that the scope of your programming is in keeping with resources available at your institution. There are many factors to consider to ensure that your event is a success.

**Budget**

Funding is often the most obvious factor to keep in mind when developing your programs. Map out all possible expenditures associated with an idea before you proceed with any arrangements. You may also wish to partner with other institutions or community groups to help mitigate costs. Experts and business owners may be willing to donate services or goods in exchange for the publicity that comes with program participation.

**Staffing**

Keep in mind that the majority of the work will probably be done in-house. Therefore, be aware of other institutional programs, services, or classes taking place within the month of October to which your staff may already be committed. Take care not to overextend your manpower.

**Facilities**

Keep in mind your physical space when planning your events. Know beforehand how many people can comfortably fit in your public spaces, as well as how many are allowed to be in those spaces per your local fire codes. If you expect a large crowd or if the area is quite small, you may wish to limit the number of spaces available for the program and have interested parties register beforehand. Be certain to have enough chairs and tables to meet your needs. Test any equipment you may need (such as projectors, screens, laptops, etc.) in advance of the program. As with any other day of operation, it is imperative for staff to know all pertinent emergency procedures and the location of emergency exits and supplies.

**Materials**

Materials for programming can sometimes constitute a “hidden cost,” so remember to include them in any of your calculations. For example, if you are coordinating an instructional session, be certain to have all materials your “students” may need, including handouts, worksheets, and pencils. If you plan on serving refreshments at any programs, keep in mind costs not only of the food, but also associated materials, such as plates, napkins, and utensils.

**Advertising**

It can be very disheartening to expend valuable resources to coordinate an event, only to have low attendance. Effective publicity is vital to ensure the success of your program. Consider utilizing both traditional modes of publicity (such as flyers, calendars, and brochures), as well as social media and more “modern” forms of outreach. For more detailed information on public relations, please see the next section.

## **Public Relations**

Effective public relations are imperative to ensure a successful Archives Month experience. This is an opportunity to publicize not only specific events, but your entire institution, your department, your services, and your profession. Your public relations campaign can be as minimal or as complex as your resources and ambitions allow and can utilize an array of various advertising techniques such as those outlined in this section.

### **Traditional Publicity Materials**

This is perhaps the most readily accessible form of publicity, and often the most effective. Using standard software (such as the Microsoft Office suite) and with minimal expense, you can create materials that can be displayed in your institution and distributed throughout your community. Examples include: Brochures, Flyers, Posters, Postcards, and Calendar of Events.

### **News Outlets**

Contacting your local news outlets can help your campaign reach a wider market. Create a press release and distribute it to your local newspapers and television and radio stations. A sample press release is included in this section, which can be modified for your own purposes. Many community news outlets have local interest programs or articles to which you may be able to contribute (for example, Lowcountry Live! in the Charleston area).

### **Community Outreach**

Look for opportunities to take your message and your promotional materials out into your community. Set up an informational table at local fairs, farmers' markets, and community events. Ask permission to display posters or flyers on the message boards at local community centers or clubs. Contact local schools or PTAs to advertise programs designed for children.

### **Mayoral Proclamation**

Submit a formal request to the office of your local Mayor asking her/him to issue an official proclamation in support of South Carolina Archives Month. This is an excellent way of drawing attention to Archives Month and your institution, as well as adding official legitimacy and precedent to the endeavor. A sample request for mayoral proclamation is included in this section, which can be modified for your purposes.

### **Social Media**

Social media sites afford an excellent opportunity to reach large groups of people with relatively little effort or expenditure. You can create free accounts on sites such as Facebook, Twitter, Tumblr, and Wordpress to distribute your marketing materials. To ensure the greatest results from social media, be sure to update content on a regular basis.

## Sample Press Release

### FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

**[City], S.C (September 4, 2015) - [name of institution] in conjunction with the celebration of South Carolina Archives Month, October 2015**

**In conjunction with the celebration of South Carolina Archives Month**, the [name of institution] announces [insert description of event, exhibit, etc.]

The goal of South Carolina Archives Month is to inform the general public about the diverse array of archival materials held in repositories across the Palmetto State. All archives are encouraged to participate by curating exhibits, lectures, open houses and other events that highlight South Carolina's rich cultural heritage.

The South Carolina Archival Association (SCAA) is a statewide association of individuals interested in the management of, preservation of, and access to South Carolina's historical records. SCAA membership is diverse, including those who work in historical societies, museums, colleges and universities, and churches, to those in state, county, and municipal governments, and ranges from volunteers to full-time professional manuscript curators and archivists. SCAA encourages statewide repositories of historical materials to celebrate South Carolina Archives Month throughout October by promoting special activities or exhibits that highlight the role of archives in the state.

Archives preserve records of permanent historical, cultural, or evidentiary importance, providing a means through which present and future generations may gain knowledge of and maintain continuity with the past. Archivists organize, describe, preserve, and provide access to these records.

For more information about South Carolina Archives Month, visit the webpage of the SCAA website at <http://scarchivists.org> or email your questions to [president@scarchivists.org](mailto:president@scarchivists.org).

## Sample Mayoral Proclamation Request

Date

Mayor [   ]  
Address  
City, State Zip  
E-mail:

Dear Mayor [   ]:

I am writing on behalf of [*your institution*] to ask you to join the South Carolina Archival Association cultural heritage institutions across South Carolina and the United States in declaring the month of October to be South Carolina Archives Month. American Archives Month is a collaborative effort by professional organizations and repositories around the nation to highlight the importance of records of enduring value.

Much of our state's rich and diverse history is contained in the records created by and for South Carolinians. In the course of daily life, individuals, organizations, and governments create and keep information about their activities. Archivists are professionals who assess, collect, organize, preserve, maintain control of, and provide access to the portions of this information that have lasting value. South Carolina's archives contain over 300 years of exceptional resources from hand-written correspondence to one-of-a-kind maps and plats as well as current electronic information technology.

Archives Month is a time to focus on the importance of records of enduring value and to enhance public recognition for the people and programs that are responsible for maintaining our communities' vital historical records. This year, [*your institution*] plans to [*insert short summary of your Archives Month plans*].

We hope you will join us during Archives Month by issuing a Proclamation for this special celebration. If you have any questions, please contact me at (xxx) xxx-xxxx.

Sincerely,

[Your name]  
[Your institution]  
Address  
City, State Zip  
email  
t: xxx-xxx-xxxx  
website address