

The importance preserving history

RHIMINGHISTU

by Barbara Sedlock, Lead Librarian and Coordinator of Metadata and Archives

The Allen County Museum in Lima asks to see the records of Defiance College's archaeological digs from the 60s and 70s. San Francisco State University asks for information on former DC football coach Vic Rowen for a documentary. The child of an alumni couple asks for a copy of the program from the DC theater production of Mourning Becomes Electra during which his parents met. The Office of Sports Information asks for help

> verifying DC's football season

These are all requests that the Library staff has used the Defiance College Archives to answer in recent months. And, needless to say, all of the above are examples of the continuing value of the College Archives.

scores from the past 100 years.

Where else, after all, would this information be found?

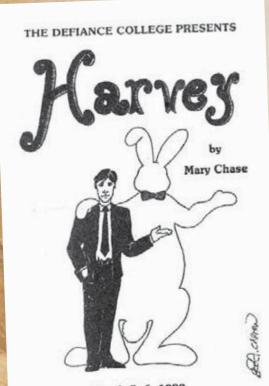
A college archives maintains files of noncurrent records of the institution which have continuing value. For Defiance College, these include Oraculum yearbooks, Tom-Tom and Defender student newspapers, an Image Bank of over 18,000 original printed and digital photos and slides; former students' scrapbooks, campus newsletters, Board of Trustee minutes, athletic, theater, and music programs; academic catalogs, and many others.

Here are some examples of how Library staff used these archival documents to answer some of the questions in the first paragraph:

- we scanned and sent copies of photos of Rowan to the documentary maker
- a scan of the theater program had already been made for DC Memory, so we emailed a copy to the alumni's child
- information on DC's past football records was found in Oraculum yearbooks, various DC student newspapers, and a file of original newspaper clippings about the College that spans the 1940s through the early 80s, and those items were forwarded to the athletic department

Without an archives, without a systematic, organized, accessible collection of documents from a college's history, answering these kinds of questions would be next to impossible.

Archives which contain historical documents are important outside of the academic world, as well. An example from the popular media happened a few years ago when documentarians wanted to make a film about Walt Disney, one which eventually aired on PBS's American Experience series, titled Walt Disney. The makers were not expecting to receive cooperation from the



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life would have been a lot less interesting.

This is an example of how an archives can provide the fodder for historians to do their work. And the study of history is part of Defiance College's liberal arts-based curriculum, which holds that a "classroom based in the liberal arts is the centerpiece from which students form connections and discover new ways of viewing and exploring the world".

We know that the liberal arts tradition is grounded in seeing the world from multiple viewpoints. Without an archive, without the work of libraries, our views about the world would be severely limited as each document lovingly archived provides another window through which to understand the world.

In 1984 Historian David McCullough said: History is a guide to navigation in perilous times. History is who we are and why we are the way we are.

The College Archives in the Pilgrim Library curates the historical documents from Defiance College's history, and provides primary source material for students of history and community members. An archives provides documentation on what we were in the past, and can give guidance on what the College can become in the future.

Left: Front page of the May 22, 1964 Defender that announced former DC coach Vic Rowen would return to campus to lay the cornerstone for the new Physical Education (now Weaner) Center.

Opposite: Theater program from a 1989 production of "Harvey." View the whole program online, along with over 4,000 other documents from the Archives on the DC Memory website: memory.defiance.edu

Below: DC students doing an archaeological dig at the Brooke Site near the Power Dam outside of Defiance, 1971.

Disney organization, a company well-known for fiercely protecting its brand, but in the end the company consented. In newspaper interviews, director Sarah Colt cited the importance of archives in creating the film: "It's a visual medium. If you can't use archives, you can't make a documentary." Once permission was given to use the archives, the documentary makers were able to include film footage of Disney recording Mickey Mouse's voice, scenes of film cels from Snow White being created, and photos of Disney and staff discussing film storyboards and acting out scenes. If these materials had not been saved in the corporation's archives and made available, the documentary on Disney's

