

**Introduction to Storytelling in Archives**  
**Northeastern University Archives and Special Collections**  
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**Session Goal:**

- Introduce students to methods of researching in archival material.
- Critically engage with the different modes of writing and voices present in archives.

**Proposed Session Outcomes:**

- Students will be able to read and extract information from primary sources.
- Students will gain an understanding of how narratives are built from a variety of archival material.
- Students will be able to locate and select appropriate records to research in for a future assignment.

**Session Outline:**

- I. Introduction to Archives and Special Collections
  - A. Reflective question: What do you think of when you think of Archives?
    1. Discuss what types of materials Archives have.
  - B. Reflective question: What do you think of when you think of Boston's history?
    1. Discuss the social justice organizing history the archives collects.
  - C. Reflective question: What sort of records do you keep and how do you keep them?
    1. Discuss archival organization.
- II. Explore material laid out on tables. Students will be divided into groups
  - A. Give time (10-15 minutes) for independent exploration in boxes and folders.
  - B. Ask students to talk with other group members at table about what they are finding
  - C. Ask students to note down dates, names, and events from the material as well as reflect on what document types give certain pieces of information.
- III. Share back: each group reports their findings and the facilitator records all observations on a Google Doc:
  - A. What information could you glean from your document?
  - B. Whose names came up frequently?
  - C. What were some events and dates of the events?
  - D. What are some connections you are making?
  - E. Pose question to the group: could someone try and tell the full story from this information?
- IV. Group reflection:
  - A. How do archival records help you tell a story in a unique way?
  - B. What sort of information did these records provide, and which types of documents felt the easiest to get information from?
  - C. What other types of records would you like to find to complete the story or answer any questions you have?

**Material pulled from:**

**[Chinese Progressive Association records](#)**

**Group 1:**

- 1992/early 1993: NEMC Proposal for Parcel C Garage and Community Center:  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20177820>

**Group 2:**

- 1994: Comment on the NEMC's Environmental Impact Report—3 lawyers for the Coalition to Protect Parcel C for Chinatown objecting to “numerous deficiencies, inadequacies, flaws, omissions, factual inaccuracies, and misstatements” in the NEMC's report, also requesting translation into Chinese:  
<http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20177798>

**Group 3:**

- 1993-1994: Fliers and press releases for community meetings  
<https://repository.library.northeastern.edu/files/neu:275417>

**Group 4:**

- 1994/early 1995: Translation—Attorney for the Coalition to Protect Parcel C for Chinatown requesting the president of NEMC Real Estate translate the notice of project change into Chinese: <http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20177801>

**Group 5:**

- Photos from organizing for bilingual ballots and voting referendum on Parcel C.  
Example: <http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20186049>

**Group 6:**

- 1998: CPA Newsletter They have control of Parcel C and searching for a developer:  
<https://repository.library.northeastern.edu/files/neu:274109>

**Group 7:**

- Photographs from “recreation day” celebration after Chinatown has control of Parcel C.  
Example A: <http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20188772>  
Example B: <http://hdl.handle.net/2047/d20188776>