

Help us Protect the Records



Orientation for Researchers at the Baldwin County Department
of Archives and History

You must complete this orientation in order to perform Research at the Baldwin County Department of Archives and History. After you read this pamphlet you will:*

Complete the Research Registration Form, agreeing to follow all of the Research Room Rules and Procedures.

Please note:

The Baldwin County Department of Archives and History made this available for your convenience.

Welcome to the Baldwin County Department of Archives and History

- After reviewing this orientation you will.....
- Better understand your role in the safeguarding and preservation of our records.
- Know our reference rules, procedures and practices.

Researcher Responsibilities

- Researchers share an obligation to protect the records that are made available to the public.
- Your obligation includes, protecting the records from danger or mishandling as well as from accidental or intentional removal and
- Immediately reporting any violation of policy or suspicious behavior to a staff member.

Federal Law and Penalties

- Federal law, under Title 18 U.S.C., provides **penalties of up to 10 years in Federal prison** for:
 - Removal or attempted removal of records
 - Embezzlement
 - Knowingly receiving stolen records
 - Willfully damaging Baldwin County assets
- **The Baldwin County Department of Archives and History is duty bound to protect the records of Baldwin County.**
- **Violators will be prosecuted to the fullest extent of the law.**

Please be advised. You are required to follow all Baldwin County Department of Archives and History policies and any direction given by staff when you conduct research at this facility.

- You are required to follow all Baldwin County Department of Archives and History policies and any direction given by staff when you conduct research at this facility
- While performing research, you are subject to: Security monitoring in all public areas, Exit searches of personal property
- Quality control auditing of documents to ensure all documents or media are present and in their proper order
- Additionally – any items brought into the Research Room are subject to inspection
Prohibited items must be removed or will be confiscated
- If you do not follow the Research Room rules, are disruptive to other researchers, or are abusive to the staff, your research privileges can be temporarily or permanently revoked

Research Room Rules

- All Researchers must complete a Research Registration Form and present a government issued photo ID
- No one under the age of 14 will be permitted in the Research Room
- No food or drink of any kind (this includes candy, gum, mints, etc.) is permitted in the Research Room).
- Secure outer garments and other personal items in the lockers provided outside the Research Room
- Set cell phones to silent. Step outside to receive or make calls

Prohibited Items

Not permitted in the Research Rooms:

- Food or drink
- Coats, overcoats, jackets, or other types of outerwear
- Hats, caps, or scarves (religious head coverings are permitted)
- Large purses, fanny packs, briefcases, suitcases, handbags, backpacks, bags, equipment bags, computer cases, etc.
- Envelopes, notebooks, pads, binders, folders
- Pens, markers, or Post-it notes
- Auto-fed Scanners
- Flash photography or artificial light source
- Copies are available (for a fee)
- Multiple CDs or DVDs
- Staff provides pencils, notepaper, and other supplies in the Research Rooms

Permitted Items in the Research Room

- Computers, cameras, laptops, tablet computers
- Religious head coverings
- Small kerchiefs or handkerchiefs
- Coin purses or pocket-size wallets
- Cell phones or smart phones
- Sweaters and sweatshirts with or without hoods (only indoor wear)
- Clear plastic bag no larger than 10 x 10 for holding items

Before you begin your Research

- Complete the research form
- Store your personal property in a locker
- Have any papers you need for your research inspected and approved by research staff
- Lockers are provided for temporary use and must be emptied by the end of the research time. Any property stored in the lockers is subject to random inspection

Using the records

- The records you are using are irreplaceable original documents
- All researchers are subject to electronic surveillance while on the premises
- While you are using the records, You are responsible for their safety and security
- Remember, You help us protect the records:
- Please report any activities that may endanger Baldwin County's holdings

Using the records

- Staff will intervene if they see you are not following procedures or document handling guidelines (This is normal and part of our job)
- Whenever archival records are handled, they are at risk
- It is important that you handle materials carefully to prevent damage

Keep the records as they are

- Use One box at a time and One folder at a time!
- You must follow this rule to make sure that records are kept in order
- Disarranged records lose their usefulness for future researchers.
- If you believe the records are out of order, you must let the Research Room staff know.
- DO NOT REARRANGE THE RECORDS!
- DO NOT TRY TO FIX A PROBLEM BY YOURSELF!
- When you are finished using the records, make sure the records charged out to you are complete and in the order you received them

When handling records

- DO – Leave a clear space on the table for the records
- Support records fully on the table
- Lay the folder flat, and review the documents one at a time
- Consult one folder at a time, and turn one page at a time
- Hold records lightly but securely when turning pages
- DO NOT - lean on, write on, fold anew, trace, or handle the records in any way likely to cause damage
- Do not let documents overhang on table edges – documents can accidentally break off or tear
- Do not flip or fan through records

Basic Preservation

- Handle records carefully to avoid causing tears and breaks
- Never remove staples or other fasteners. If the fastener is interfering with your use of the records, consult the staff member
- Work with gloves as required by the staff
- Do not use lotions or hand sanitizers immediately before handling records since these can leave stains or cause inks to smear
- Never moisten fingers before turning pages

Special Preservation Issues

- Handle Documents and folders one at a time
- Consult one folder at a time and turn one page at a time
- Do not flip or fan through records
- Do Not remove records from their clear plastic sleeves
- Records are in clear plastic sleeves to protect weak or damaged items
- Consult staff if sleeves contain more than one document
- If you receive an oversized document that is larger than your table, do not open it
- Consult with Research Room Staff
- Use two hands when handling oversized documents

Cotton Gloves

- “Shouldn’t I use cotton gloves when handling historic records?”
- Not necessarily
- Cotton gloves can hinder dexterity and snag textual documents and therefore are not required when handling these records.
- When handling photographs or magnetic media, check with the Research Room staff – you may be required to use white cotton gloves, which we provide.

Taking Notes

- No pens.....ever!
- If you need to take notes, use pencils (which we provide along with paper) and your laptop computer
- Keep your notes separate from the records
- Always be careful not to damage the materials you are using
- Do not lean on, take notes on top of, or place any items on records

Making Copies

- Notify Research staff if you need copies including your personal scanner or camera
- The staff will inspect the records, determine if they may be copied and how, and provide you with further instructions
- If the records can be copied:
 - Use colored paper to differentiate your copies from originals
 - Remove the originals when finished
 - Staff will make sure that you have not accidentally combined originals with your copies

This complete your orientation to performing research at Baldwin
County Department of Archives and History

- By Signing the Research Registration Form, you agree to follow all of our
Research Room Rules and Procedures

Thank You!

- The Orientation is finished
- If you have not already done so, please take your photo ID to the Research Room staff and complete a Research Registration Form
- We wish you success in your Research!
- Please Note: The Baldwin County Department of Archives and History has made this orientation available for your convenience. You are required to review this presentation in person and sign the Researcher Application prior to conducting Research.