

Guide to Sorting a Large Collection

As MCHS collections are stored roughly by item type, when sorting a large personal collection that's been donated, it's easiest to sort by item type, starting with larger artifacts first and working down to the document level.

When sorting, if a document describes an artifact or photo, leave the descriptive document with the item it describes.

If portions of the collection appear to have an arrangement that was set up by the donor, leave the items in their original arrangement.

- 1) Sort out the following items first:
 - a) Three-dimensional artifacts
 - b) Cassette tapes / Phonographs / Compact Disks / Digital Media
 - c) Photographs / Slides / Photo albums
 - d) Books
 - e) Magazines
 - f) Newspapers
 - g) Scrapbooks
 - h) Ledgers
 - i) Maps, posters, charts & other large documents

After sorting out these items, there should be personal papers and ephemera left.

- 2) Next, sort the ephemera (booklets, brochures, cards, business cards, calendars, newspaper clippings, etc.) into the following categories:
 - a) Items with an obvious relation to the collection donor or Morrison County
 - b) Items with no apparent connection to Morrison County

- 3) Finally, sort the personal papers into the following categories:
 - a) Personal writings (diaries, journals, notebooks, letters, etc.)
 - b) Financial, business & legal documents
 - c) Genealogical materials (obits, pedigree charts, notes, funeral cards, etc.)
 - d) Health-related documents
 - e) Military records
 - f) School records
 - g) Church & cemetery records
 - h) Government and/or organizational records
 - i) Recipes & household management documents
 - j) Any special topics (hobbies/interests) the donor followed
 - k) Miscellaneous – anything that doesn't fit the other categories

If there is an item that is difficult to sort into an obvious category, ask MCHS staff for assistance.