

Donating Your Records Individuals

At some point in our life, we find ourselves sorting through family records that have been given to us or that we have created. It can be a difficult process determining what is worth keeping and what can be disposed. There are a number of reasons one may keep an item and emotional attachment is often the most compelling factor. Yet, personal records are a very important part of the OJA's collection mandate as they provide a unique individual perspective on Jewish life in Ontario.

Archivists are trained in appraising records for their **archival value**, which establishes whether or not records meet the criteria for long-term preservation. However, there are some simple steps you can take to determine what records might be of interest to the OJA.

Records of value can consist of a range of material, but they are generally **those records that substantially document the various aspects of a person's life**. Each individual possesses different amounts and different types of records.

Records that the OJA may be interested in can include (but is not limited to):

- photographs
- personal correspondence
- diaries and journals
- speeches
- writings
- artwork, drawings, doodles
- occupational/professional records
- organizational or business records
- videos and films

Generally, the OJA is not interested in:

- duplicates in any format where the original exists
- poor quality photographs with little or no identification
- sundries like cheque stubs, receipts, loose envelopes, or bank books (unless they are unusually significant)

- travel documents like airline tickets, brochures or museum guides
- personal identification documents like old passports and driver's licenses
- unused items, such as notebooks, exercise books, and ledger books
- plaques and other mounted items (unless they are unusually significant)
- published books and religious texts
- material originating outside of Ontario unless it is significant to the history of the person or family documented in other records

When in doubt, don't throw it out!

Please **contact** the OJA with your questions or if you require a site visit

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THANK YOU!