

## CHECK IT OUT: ARCHIVE CHECKLIST

### At Home

- Do your homework. Search online to find out what archives out there relate to your investigation. See our list of archive resources to find out which archives will be useful to you.
- Once you know where you want to do your research, see if their catalog of records is available online. Knowing the record number when you arrive at the archive can save you precious time.
- Archives often keep odd hours of opening. Know before you go
- Prepare a list of what you want to learn from the materials. Then write, call or email the archivist and let them know your area of interest. They can help you with things you might not have thought of.
- Places like the National Archives have very useful Web sites that can give you a good jumpstart on research.
- Local historical societies and clubs in the community often have notable archives. Check the phone book or call the library in the locality you're interested in.

### At the Archive

- If you're allowed to touch the actual materials, don't quibble if asked to use gloves. Some archivists believe gloves keep document-destroying oils from harming the originals. There are other archivists who believe that gloves do more harm than good.
- Remember, archivists are often thinly-stretched and their time is precious; don't be upset if you're only allowed to make two research requests at a time. It'll make it easier for you to focus anyway.
- Using public records is free. Sometimes, however, you will have to pay for photocopying of material.
- Archival research can be frustrating and at times, dull. You may have to chase a lot of dead ends before you find the nugget you're searching for