



Rhode Island COVID-19 Archive

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About These Materials

The Rhode Island COVID-19 Archive (RICA) is a joint partnership between the Rhode Island Historical Society (RIHS) and the Providence Public Library (PPL). RIHS and PPL are aiming to create a crowdsourced digital archive to document and share the COVID-19 experience in Rhode Island. RICA is a state-wide "people's archive," dedicated to getting as many voices and perspectives as possible to tell the story of the pandemic.

These materials guide students through a set of activities that will allow them to explore current entries in the archive as well as providing them with prompts to create their own potential entries to contribute.

Learning Objectives

Students will learn what an archive is and why collecting human experiences matters

Students will become familiar with navigating a digital archive and identify what stories records in archives help tell.

Students will examine their own experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic and create an entry that tells their story to future generations to potentially be contributed to the archive

Definitions

Archive- a place to store historic records that provide information about a specific group of people, institution, or place. Physical archives can be accessed in person or sometimes online if the archive materials have been scanned.

Digital Archive- an archive that only exists digitally and can be accessed digitally.

Crowdsourced- to obtain information by enlisting the help of a large number of people, typically via the Internet.

Intentional Collecting- Collecting information for an archive while keeping in mind stories that the collector wishes to be told and gaps in existing archives. For example, many American archives do not contain records about the experiences of people of color. So today, many American institutions aim to collect records that can speak to those stories.

Activity 1: What is an Archive?

The Rhode Island COVID-19 was designed to collect and share the experiences of all Rhode Islanders during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, archives come in all different shapes and sizes. In this lesson, we'll explore some local archives to see what we can find about the *Gaspee Affair* and how archives relate to one another.

1. Visit the [Rhode Island Historical Society's collections page](#) to see what is in their archive. Use the filters at the bottom of the page to narrow your search for items related to the *Gaspee Affair*. After you've spent some time browsing, fill out the "Rhode Island Historical Society" section of the graphic organizer below.
2. Now, visit [Providence Public Library's Digital Collections](#) page. Use the search features on this page to search for items related to the *Gaspee Affair*. After you've spent some time browsing, fill out the "Providence Public Library" section of the graphic organizer below.

	<p>What were you able to find in this archive related to the <i>Gaspee Affair</i>? What type of historical records were available?</p>	<p>What were you able to learn about the <i>Gaspee Affair</i> from this archive?</p>	<p>Who do you think decided to keep and archive the records you explored? How do you think it was decided to keep these records?</p>
<p>Rhode Island Historical Society</p>			

Providence Public Library			
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3. Now, choose any topic you like. See what you can find about that topic in the Rhode Island Historical Society Archive and what you can find about it in the Providence Public Library Archive. Complete the graphic organizer below as you search.

List your topic here:	What types of records were you able to find about this topic in this archive?	What were those records able to tell you about this topic? What did you learn?	What questions do you still have? Were there objects you wish you had found to answer those questions?
Rhode Island Historical Society			
Providence Public Library			

7. What stories do you think your personal archive tells? Are there gaps? Can you fill them? What types of records help your archive tell its most important stories?

Making Masks

Visit [this contribution about making masks](#).

1. This person is now using their sewing machine to make masks but they used to use it to make quilts. Why do you think they decided to make masks with their own fabric instead of buying masks?

2. This item shows us that the purpose of this person's sewing machine changed. Has the purpose of any of your own items changed during quarantine? How so?

Activity 3: Creating Your Own Contribution for the Rhode Island COVID-19 Archive

The poem that you explored in activity 2 is titled “[Dear Future Generations](#).” All of the information shared in that item is written from the perspective of someone sharing their experiences with people in the future. If you were going to share your experiences during the COVID-19 pandemic with future generations, what would you share? How would you share it?

Create something that could be shared with future generations that describes your experiences in quarantine. You can write, draw, record a video or audio, etc. It can be long or short. When you’re all done, we encourage you to share your completed project on the COVID-19 Archive. You can submit your project here:

<https://ricovidarchive.org/contribution>. Even if you don’t want to submit it to the archive, please share your project and thoughts on this activity with us at education@rihs.org.

Other Activity Options

- Interview an older person in your life (record a phone call or virtual meeting) and ask them to tell you about a recipe they are cooking that makes them feel comforted during this time. Try cooking that recipe yourself.
- Send a message to yourself a year ago and yourself a year from now. What do you want those two versions of you to know / remember?