

Community Archives as an Alternative Approach to Palestinian Records

LAURA DALY

In light of recent events in Ukraine and ongoing turmoil experienced by many international communities, there has never been a more critical time to consider new ways to approach the archival record when traditional methods fall short.

To address the challenges of traditional, institutional approaches to Palestinian records I have been researching the development of Palestinian community archives. These non-traditional archives are created by Palestinians (or the Palestinian community plays an active role in its collection, appraisal, or curation) and typically contain digital content on a variety of topics (music, daily life, history, culture, gender, genealogy, geography, etc.) within a Palestinian context.

These types of collections are important for the preservation and ongoing documentation of Palestinian identity, culture, and history. They also present an interesting solution to many of the challenges of existing collections such as description, access, and fragmentation.

In order to illustrate these points, my presentation will consist of a brief overview of the current challenges juxtaposed against an analysis of some of the potential benefits of non-traditional approaches. Research on existing community archives and two case studies will also be presented--a newly emerging Palestinian community archive and a well-established one. These case studies will provide real-world examples of some of the challenges and successes experienced by Palestinian community archives along with some ideas for future development. A final point will conclude with recommendations on what further research is needed.

About the author:

Laura Daly is a graduate student in the University of Alabama's Master of Library and Information Studies program pursuing a specialized certification in archives. Her interest in the intersection of archival work and the middle east began as an undergraduate student when she had the opportunity to attend the Hebrew University of Jerusalem for a summer and eventually received a B.A. in Ancient Near Eastern Studies from Brigham Young University in 2013. Since attending UA, she has been an active member of the nonprofit organization Librarians and Archivists with Palestine which seeks to advocate for information workers in Palestine and the representation of the Palestinian community in the archival record. Beginning in the Fall of 2022 she will be completing an internship with Duke University Library's Marshall T. Meyer's Human Rights collection and will be graduating in 2023.