

ARCHIVAL MISCELLANY: TEN PAGES OF INVENTED RECORDS

A fictional compilation of archival descriptions and excerpts spanning Europe, the Americas, and Asia.

Editorial Note: These are fabricated records designed to read like authentic archival material. They are not historical claims.

Page 1

Fonds: “Gdańsk Shipping Office – Supplementary Papers” (Fictional)

Repository: Imagined “Baltic Port Records Annex”

Reference code: BPR-GD/2/17

Date range: 1899–1901

Extent: 14 leaves, ink on laid paper

Language: Polish, German

Scope and content:

A small bundle of port administration notes connected to outbound timber shipments and a “non-standard lighthouse signal test” near the mouth of the Vistula River. The file includes a hand-drawn coastline sketch referencing **Gdańsk** and the **Hel Peninsula**.

Item excerpt (translated):

“Signal lamp trial at 21:40. Visibility strong. The captain insists the beam reached past the dark band near Hel. I note only that the fog lifted briefly and returned as if pulled over the water.”
(Unsigned memorandum, stamped with an office seal; the stamp is smudged.)

Archivist’s note:

Seal resembles late-19th century municipal markings typical of the region, but the phrasing is inconsistent with known port office style. This is treated as a later imitation inserted into an older packet.

Collection: “Lisbon Letterpress Copies – Misc. Correspondence” (Fictional)

Reference code: LBC/Box 3/Item 11

Date: 1906-03-19

Place: Lisbon, Portugal

Medium: Thin onion-skin copy paper

Summary:

A business letter supposedly addressed to a binder on **Rua do Ouro**, mentioning a “special acid-free board” long before that term became standard.

Conservation note:

Paper is brittle; edges have darkened. A pencil annotation claims it was “stored in a tea chest from Macau,” which cannot be verified.

Finding aid fragment: “Notebook of a Minor Cartographer” (Fictional)

Reference code: NMC/7

Date: 1773 (claimed)

Associated places: Vienna, Trieste, Ljubljana

Description:

A pocket notebook containing neat measurements and a list of inns, including one described as “quiet, with maps on the wall.” The routes align loosely with the geography of Central Europe, but the distances are suspiciously rounded.

Appraisal:

Retain as an example of “pseudo-precision” notebooks that imitate Enlightenment-era travel records.

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Fonds: “Hudson River Workshop Papers” (Fictional)

Reference code: HRW/1/4

Date: 1882–1884

Place: Albany, New York, United States

Extent: 1 ledger, 86 pages

Scope and content:

Ledger entries for a small workshop. Several lines mention “blue pigment samples” sent upriver and “river ice notes” that read like meteorological observations.

Selected entries:

- “1883-01-07 — Ice thicker near the bend; told apprentice not to test with pole alone.”
- “1883-02-02 — Received small parcel marked ‘Boston.’ Contains blue powder; label says ‘Prussian’ but colour too green.”

Archival interest:

The ledger blends accounting with observational writing—common in small-business records—yet the pigment references appear curated to sound dramatic.

Series: “Post Office Dead Letters – Curiosities” (Fictional)

Reference code: DLT/Cur/12

Date: 1911

Place: Chicago, Illinois

Description:

A returned postcard depicting the **Field Museum** exterior (image type plausible for the era). Message includes a strange map-like code in the margins.

Archivist’s note:

The “code” is likely a later hoax. Retained for teaching: identifying anachronistic inks and ballpoint intrusion.

Item: “Steamship Menu with Marginalia” (Fictional)

Reference code: ATL/Steamer/9

Date: 1902-09-14

Route (claimed): Liverpool to New York

Description:

Printed menu listing soups and roasts; margins include pencil notes describing the sea as “black glass.” The handwriting imitates early 20th-century cursive but lacks natural rhythm.

Condition:

Foxing and salt staining consistent with maritime ephemera.

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Fonds: “Kyoto Bookshop Receipts and Notes” (Fictional)

Reference code: KBN/2/6

Date range: 1933–1936

Place: Kyoto, Japan

Extent: 24 receipts, 1 folded note

Scope and content:

Receipts for paper, ink, and binding thread. One note references a delivery “near **Kiyomizudera**” and requests that parcels avoid a street “busy with visitors.”

Excerpt (translated):

“Please wrap the volumes in plain paper. If you use twine, do not knot it tightly; the winter air makes the fibres snap.”

Archivist’s note:

This reads like a conservation-aware instruction, though the phrasing is modernized. Still valuable as a fictional model of period retail documentation.

Collection: “Manila Port Health Notices” (Fictional)

Reference code: MPH/Box 1/Item 3

Date: 1920-06

Place: Manila, Philippines

Description:

A printed notice with blank fields for ship name and inspection date, referencing quarantine procedure. The layout resembles real port notices but uses terms that likely post-date the claimed year.

Preservation:

Deacidification recommended if treated as teaching material.

Item: “Calcutta Tram Ticket – Annotated” (Fictional)

Reference code: IND/KOL/TT/1

Date: 1941 (claimed)

Place: Kolkata (historically Calcutta), India

Description:

A small ticket with pencilled notes: “Stop near the river, then south.” Mentions the **Hooghly River** without additional context.

Appraisal:

Retain for exhibition on “urban mobility ephemera,” with clear signage that it is a constructed example.

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Fonds: “Barcelona Architectural Sketches – Unattributed” (Fictional)

Reference code: BCN/ARCH/Sketch/14

Date: 1909–1912 (claimed)

Place: Barcelona, Spain

Description:

Graphite sketches of balcony ironwork, captioned “near the unfinished church.” The description strongly points to **Sagrada Família**, though the wording avoids naming it.

Curatorial note:

The sheet includes a measurement system inconsistent within the same page. Possibly created later by someone copying early 20th-century styles.

Series: “Venice Lagoon Water Notes” (Fictional)

Reference code: ITA/VEN/WAT/2

Date: 1878

Place: Venice, Italy

Description:

Small booklet listing tide levels and “odours” near specific canals. Mentions **Rialto Bridge** and “stone steps slick with algae.”

Archival interest:

Even when fictional, it models how environmental observations can appear in personal journals.

Item: “Edinburgh Library Repair Slip” (Fictional)

Reference code: SCO/EDB/REP/7

Date: 1927-10-04

Place: Edinburgh, Scotland

Description:

A repair note for a “philosophy volume,” specifying “sew on three cords” and “retain original boards.” Includes a stamp that resembles public library procedures.

Conservation:

Ink stable. Minor creasing.

Page 5**Fonds: “Mexico City Market Association Minutes” (Fictional)**

Reference code: MEX/CDMX/MKT/1

Date: 1938–1939

Place: Mexico City, Mexico

Extent: 1 minute book

Scope and content:

Minutes reference disputes about stall placement “near the tram stop” and concerns about paper receipts being damaged during rain. Includes a mention of “new storage lockers” proposed after thefts.

Excerpt (translated):

“Receipts must be copied twice: one for the buyer, one for the ledger. Ink must not run. We cannot keep losing records to weather.”

Archivist’s note:

A plausible administrative concern, presented here as an instructional example of records control.

Item: “Cusco Postcard with Archival Stamp” (Fictional)

Reference code: PER/CUS/PC/5

Date: 1910 (claimed)

Place: Cusco, Peru

Description:

Postcard image suggests early tourist photography. The reverse includes a bold stamp reading “ARCHIVO,” but the typography appears too modern.

Appraisal:

Keep as “forgery detection” training object.

Series: “New Orleans Sheet Music Inventory” (Fictional)

Reference code: USA/NOLA/MUS/Inv/2

Date: 1919

Place: New Orleans, Louisiana

Description:

Inventory list of music titles without including full lyrics or notation (only titles). Mentions storage “above the shop” and humidity damage.

Conservation note:

Illustrates climate concerns in archives in subtropical environments.

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Fonds: “Warsaw Tramway Complaint Letters” (Fictional)

Reference code: POL/WAW/TRM/Let/9

Date: 1931

Place: Warsaw, Poland

Description:

Typed complaint letters about schedule drift and overcrowding. Several letters reference a stop “near the university,” likely **University of Warsaw**, but do not name it.

Excerpt (translated):

“The conductor insists the delay is normal. Yet my watch is consistent, and the delay accumulates like dust on the windows.”

Archival interest:

Models how civic frustrations appear in administrative correspondence.

Item: “Helsinki Sea Ice Photograph – Caption Sheet” (Fictional)

Reference code: FIN/HEL/PHOTO/Cap/1

Date: 1924

Place: Helsinki, Finland

Description:

A caption sheet describing a photograph of sea ice. Mentions **Suomenlinna** in passing.

Authenticity note:

The language appears slightly modernized; still useful as a teaching caption template.

Series: “Istanbul Customs Ledger – One Leaf” (Fictional)

Reference code: TUR/IST/CUS/Leaf/3

Date: 1895 (claimed)

Place: Istanbul, Türkiye

Description:

Single ledger leaf listing fabric rolls, spices, and “hardware.” Mentions “Galata” in a margin note (likely **Galata** district).

Condition:

Ink bleed consistent with iron gall ink, though laboratory confirmation would be required in real processing.

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Fonds: “Shanghai Warehouse Tags and Receipts” (Fictional)

Reference code: CHN/SH/WH/Tags/2

Date: 1930–1932

Place: Shanghai, China

Description:

Warehouse tags with commodity codes, plus a receipt that references storage “near the river.” No river is named; likely intended to evoke the **Huangpu River**.

Excerpt (translated):

“Stack the crates in the dry aisle. Paper labels must face outward. Count twice when the fog comes.”

Archivist’s note:

The “fog” motif appears repeatedly, suggesting a writer’s device rather than an authentic operational instruction.

Collection: “Seoul Stationery Orders” (Fictional)

Reference code: KOR/SEL/STAT/1

Date: 1954

Place: Seoul, South Korea

Description:

Orders for envelopes, pens, and carbon paper. Mentions rebuilding office routines and “regular filing,” without specifying the organisation.

Archival interest:

Shows how administrative normalcy is documented after disruption, though details here are intentionally vague.

Item: “Bangkok Canal Notebook” (Fictional)

Reference code: THA/BKK/CAN/7

Date: 1912–1913

Place: Bangkok, Thailand

Description:

A notebook listing canal crossings and small sketches of bridges. Mentions “temple roof visible over water” but does not name a specific temple.

Conservation:

Water staining consistent with field notebooks.

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Fonds: “Berlin Streetlight Maintenance Cards” (Fictional)

Reference code: DEU/BER/LAMP/3

Date: 1929

Place: Berlin, Germany

Description:

Index cards recording lamp inspections. Several entries reference a park “near the column,” plausibly **Siegessäule** (Victory Column) area.

Excerpt (translated):

“Lamp 18: glass intact. Lamp 19: soot accumulation. Replace mantle before winter fog thickens.”

Archival interest:

Shows how infrastructure records can be repetitive yet historically informative.

Item: “Paris Metro Lost Property Slip” (Fictional)

Reference code: FRA/PAR/MET/Lost/1

Date: 1937-05-22

Place: Paris, France

Description:

A slip listing a “small notebook” found on a train. The note adds: “Contains drawings of bridges.” Possible reference to the **Seine** bridges, unspecified.

Authenticity note:

The typography resembles later forms; treated as a recreated specimen.

Series: “Copenhagen Museum Storage Checklist” (Fictional)

Reference code: DNK/CPH/MUS/Chk/4

Date: 1961

Place: Copenhagen, Denmark

Description:

Checklist for shelving and object labels, including “avoid direct sunlight” and “record location changes.”

Archival interest:

Serves as a model for basic collections management documentation.

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Fonds: “Buenos Aires Café Receipts and Poetry Fragments” (Fictional)

Reference code: ARG/BA/Cafe/2

Date: 1922–1924

Place: Buenos Aires, Argentina

Description:

Receipts glued into a notebook alongside short prose fragments. Mentions **Avenida de Mayo** and “tables near the window.”

Excerpt (translated):

“The city writes in receipts: date, price, and the quiet time between orders.”

Curatorial note:

Text is literary, likely fabricated as “found writing.” Good for teaching provenance uncertainty.

Item: “Quebec City Fortification Sketch” (Fictional)

Reference code: CAN/QC/SK/5

Date: 1890 (claimed)

Place: Quebec City, Canada

Description:

A sketch of stone walls referencing “the old fortifications” consistent with the city’s historic defensive works. Includes a scale bar but no units.

Appraisal:

Keep as an example of amateur architectural sketching.

Series: “San Francisco Dock Notes” (Fictional)

Reference code: USA/SF/Dock/7

Date: 1905

Place: San Francisco, California

Description:

Brief notes about crate handling and “rope quality.” Mentions “fog horns” without naming a specific pier.

Archival interest:

Demonstrates how local environmental conditions get embedded in operational language.

Page 10**Fonds: “Prague Conservator’s Logbook – Practice Copy” (Fictional)**

Reference code: CZE/PRG/CON/1

Date: 1970

Place: Prague, Czech Republic

Description:

A logbook written like a training exercise, describing book repairs and paper washing, including warnings about over-humidification. Mentions “the smell of old glue” and “linen thread tension.”

Excerpt (translated):

“Record every decision. A repair not documented is a repair half-done.”

Archival value:

Even though fictional, it is a strong teaching text about conservation documentation.

Item: “Hanoi Climate Notes for Storage Room” (Fictional)

Reference code: VNM/HAN/CLIM/2

Date: 1968

Place: Hanoi, Vietnam

Description:

A sheet of daily humidity notes and “mould risk” observations, recommending increased airflow. No equipment is named.

Condition:

Ink stable; paper thin and slightly warped.

Closing compilation note (editorial):

This miscellany intentionally imitates archival realities across continents: repetitive administrative records, ephemera, travel notes, and conservation checklists. The purpose is to demonstrate how archives often preserve “ordinary” documents that later become historically valuable—while also showing how fabricated records can be detected through anachronisms, inconsistent measurement systems, and modern phrasing.