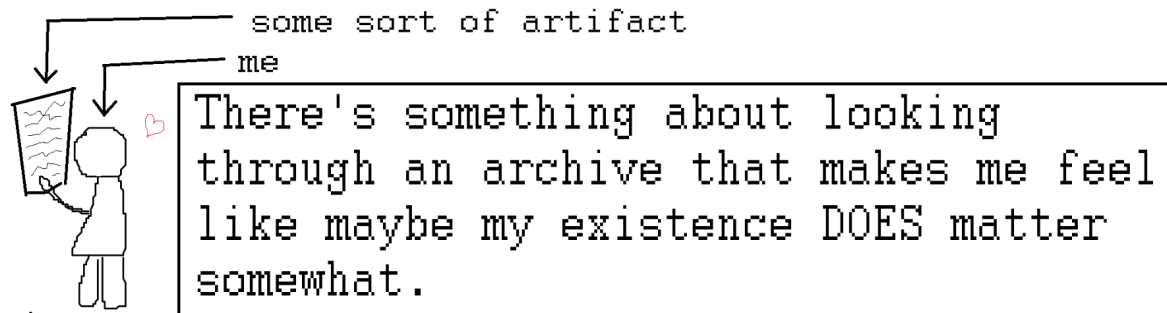


archive silliness(?)

(you tell me)

(and some seriousness)

clark lastname



(the internet archive, the riot grrrl collection, phoenix files, the frankly speaking archive, the physical olin archives, little documents that my friends and i have put together, you name it)

So why don't I have an archive to show you right now?

* I feel both too connected and too disconnected from Olin right now. I won't feel comfortable starting to make an actual archive until after I graduate & can have a safe distance from it. Frankly, I'm tired of trying to do stuff for Olin, even though I haven't really done that much.

* I am going to library school in Fall '23. This will give me a good non-Olin perspective on all the stuff that's happened here, which I really need. It will also give me the skills and best practices to maintain collections. Yes, you need skills to be an archivist.

Instead, I have a bunch of rants about archival and "Olin culture" for you.

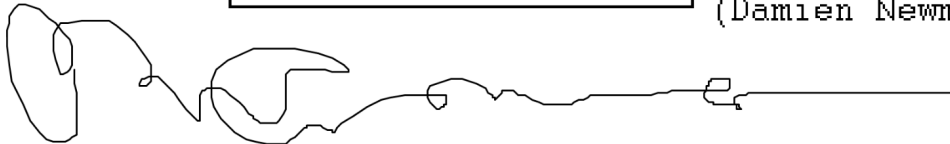
(NOOOOOOO! Not the "Olin culture" analysis again!)

"I think the covert function of an archive is to make things more complex, to **complicate**, to serve as a counterbalance to the reductive and endlessly repeated sound bites that constitute much of what we are told is 'history'."

- Lisa Darms, senior archivist at NYU and founder of the Riot Grrrl Collection

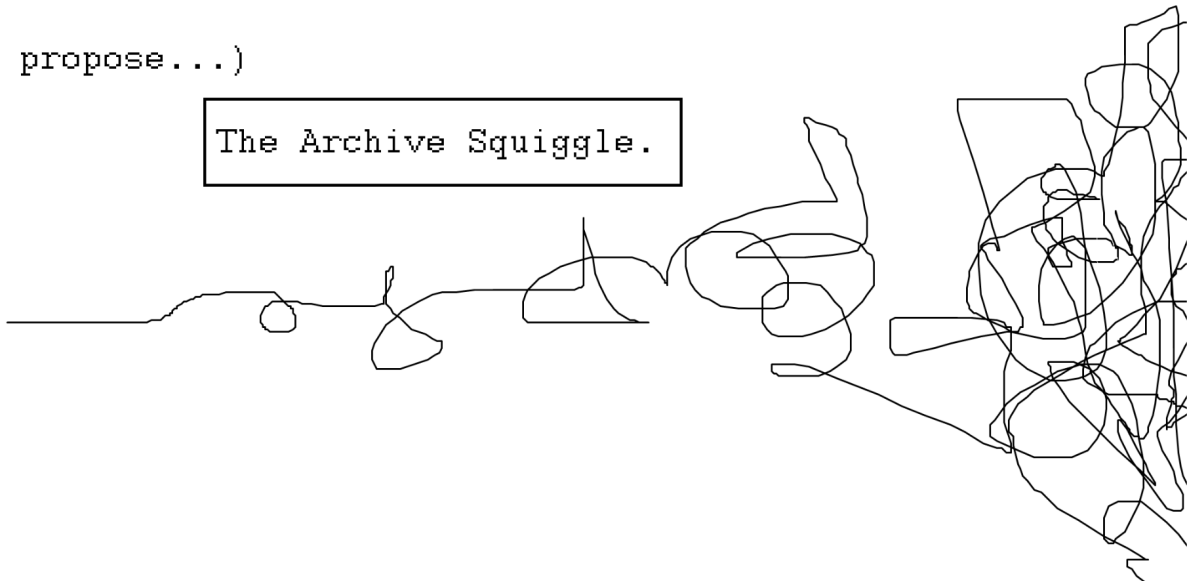
The Design Squiggle.

(Damien Newman)



(I propose...)

The Archive Squiggle.



Why would you want to complicate Olin? Isn't it already complicated enough?

At Olin we're surrounded by marketing -- of the college, of ourselves. This makes sense, since Olin is trying to legitimize itself as a college. At some point, though, we have to draw the line: What is a pitch, and what is an honest assessment? If we don't distinguish between those things, or regularly acknowledge the different factors that affect why we're communicating a certain way, pitches and honest discourse are collapsed into one muddled single story.

At Olin we have churn -- people are accepted, stay here for 4 years, and then leave. This, combined with the incredible busy-ness we're known for, does not lead to a great environment for feeling like part of a rich history.

things you could do individually:

Read every Frankly Speaking. Talk to alumni just for fun. Poke around in phoenixfiles.olin.edu. Walk around Olin buildings and look at objects in there you've never looked at before. Ask Callan and Maggie about the physical archives. Eventually you'll find some stories that no one wants to talk about anymore (e.g. the MAC renovation that almost happened). Or something that people are excited to talk about again. Or something that changes your whole view of the college.

things you could do communally:

Frankly Reading SLAC event - look through old FS articles and talk about them

Library archives SLAC event - like Frankly Reading, but with the library archives :) Alejandro Paz ran this in the 2021-2022 school year.

Olin History Day: like Build Day / Build Week, but full of explorations of Olin history. Could be an optional thing.

Having a dedicated "archivist" role in clubs and some informal groups. This involves not just making sure newly generated information is preserved, but also revisiting old stuff and talking through it with the group. This strategy proved useful with my ADE team -- we had plenty of old work to revisit.

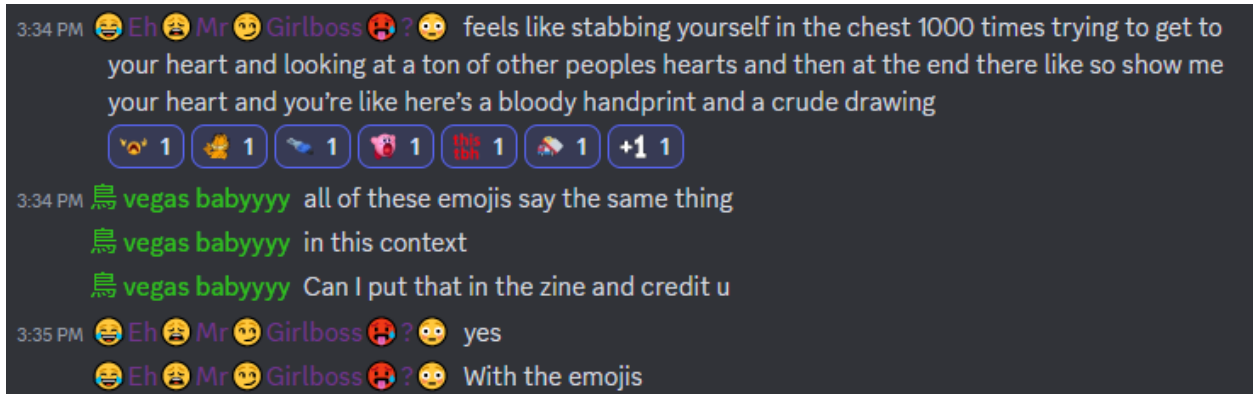
Investigate together:

What conditions need to be met for shared memories to be kept alive? How does Olin meet or fail to meet those conditions? How might it meet those conditions?

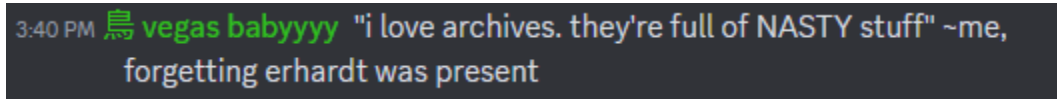
What types of shared memories do we consider most important? What kinds of information are most likely to get thrown away during times of collective forgetting (e.g. the Online Year)?

How do power structures at Olin (yes, they are here) affect how information is preserved, both formally and informally?

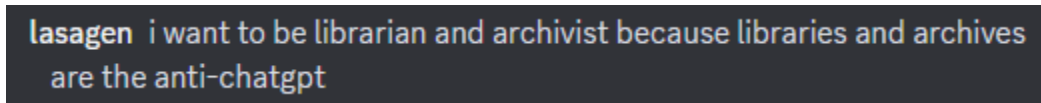
Appendix: Some Discord Comments



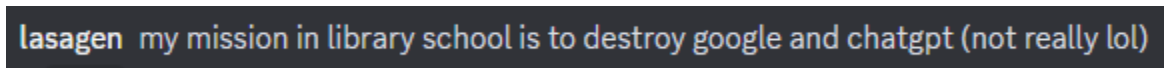
Melissa Anthony '22 (purple) and me (green), talking about how it feels to make this zine



Me again, during ADE.



On how the single-agent model of knowledge ChatGPT gives us is the opposite of the complicated tangle of relationships between info sources we see in archives.



The (not really lol) was a lie.

