

The Use and Availability of Environmental Activism Collections in Academic Archives

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Abstract: As noted by Todd Welch in his seminal 1999 work, “Green” Archivism: The Archival Response to Environmental Research,” archivists have made progress collecting and promoting material documenting new fields that emerged in the 1960s, such as Ethnic and Women’s Studies. However, the same enthusiasm has not been displayed towards archival material related to Environmental Studies, which developed shortly after the “new” Social History. Although Welch observed an upward trend in usage of environmental research, there remains a dearth of scholarship on this collecting focus in archives.

This poster seeks to reveal the current state of environmental research in academic special collections and archives, with an emphasis on materials associated with environmental activism, including environmental justice and environmental racism. The use and availability of archival environmental activism collections will be assessed by a two-fold process. The use of such collections will be evaluated through a citation analysis of related research articles published in Environmental History, the premier scholarly journal in the field of environmental history. The citation analysis will review the prevalence of archival collections sourced and will examine the citations by repository type and material type in order to gain insight into the kinds of items used by researchers. Additionally, academic archives with significant collections related to environmental activism will be surveyed. These selected repositories will be arranged by region and include details such as subject areas covered. Though not extensive, this overview seeks to highlight the availability of relevant materials for scholars. The evolution of environmental research collections and the implications for archival repositories and their patrons will be addressed.

About the author:

Amy F. Stempler is an Assistant Professor in the Library Department at the College of Staten Island (CSI), CUNY. After nearly ten years working in museums, historical societies, and academic Special Collection & Archives, she joined the CSI Library in 2008 as an Instruction/Reference Librarian and became the Coordinator of Library Instruction in 2011. Stempler earned her Master's in History from the George Washington University, and her Master's in Library and Information Science from the Pratt Institute. Her research interests include Green Archives, Judaica Librarianship, and Library Signage.