



Depositing Quaker Meeting Records

Quaker meeting records remain the property of your meeting in perpetuity. But you can ensure they are preserved and accessible by sending them to Swarthmore and Haverford Colleges, who steward records from Quaker meetings across the United States.

What is an “archival record”?

We’re interested in material that has enduring value for the story of your meeting. That may be because it contains important information, or because it reveals something about the meeting’s functions, or (more rarely) because it is a very special artifact.

Generally we steward:

- Minutes of Meeting for Business
- Membership Records (inactive), including birth, death, and burial records
- Summary financial records
- Deeds and other legal documents
- Newsletters
- Committee files from Care and Counsel and Peace and Social Concerns
- Other committee files as a sampling of meeting functions
- Oral histories and documentation of important events (by request)

If material is out of scope we can dispose or donate.

Where are your meeting’s records?

We have a Guide that identifies where active meetings deposit, you can access it at this link: <https://guides.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/quakermeetings/find>

For each meeting, we describe the records we have here: <https://archives.tricolib.brynmawr.edu/> This is a database of "finding aids," or inventories of collections (not digitized images of the records). Users still need to visit the appropriate library to see and use the records.

How often should you send records?

This is based on your meeting’s needs and capacity, although we do ask that deposits be batched: **once per year** is the maximum frequency we can accept.

Because we want to preserve the records’ context, we prefer to receive records in their original order - please do not compile a combined file or bound notebook of all the meeting’s assorted records.

How should you transfer records? Paper or digital?

Archival best practice is to deposit records in the same format in which they were created. For example, we prefer the original typescript of the 1962 minutes to a scanned version of it, and we prefer a .pdf file of the approved 2021 minutes to a printout. We're happy to talk with you more about our digital record preservation workflows!

If you prefer to continue depositing paper records, **regular office paper is fine** for preservation. We don't keep binders or sheet protectors, but there is no need to remove them if your records are already in them. You are welcome to deliver them in person, but many meetings send them via USPS or other carrier.

For digital records, it is preferred to send text-based files as .pdf but it's not required. In addition to text-based files we can accept other media, like audiovisual materials, spreadsheets, or digital publications, if it fits the scope of what we steward. One of the easiest ways to transfer digital records is sharing a link to the Meeting's Google Drive folder, but we can also accept attachments in emails.

As we do not have the capacity to rename files, we request that filenames are meaningful, consistent, and dated (YYYY-MM) to allow them to be computer-sorted. An example format is to include Meeting name, record type, and date (i.e. "Bucks QM minutes 2024-01.pdf", "Bucks QM minutes 2024-04.pdf", etc.) Please let us know if you have questions about how to save or send your digital records.

Who can use meeting records?

We aim to be open, equitable, and transparent in providing access to historical documents. By default, meeting records in the Haverford and Swarthmore archives are available to the general public – anyone who walks through the door may access the records. This is true for electronic records as well: they are accessible on computers and other devices in the Libraries (but not published online).

An exception to our open access policy is Care & Counsel records, which can be restricted (usually 50 years after creation) due to privacy concerns. If you have a concern about other records, let us know and we can discuss an appropriate policy for your materials.

Meeting records can be borrowed by a minute from the depositing meeting.

Contact Us with Questions:

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Friends Historical Library
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