

**52 ITEMS
To Keep
That You May
Not Have
Thought
About!**



**BY
MITZI PERDUE**

52 Items to Keep—That You May Not Have Thought about!

Why bother to keep your family's records and memorabilia?

Not doing so is like consigning your family's legacy to Alzheimer's Disease. As with Alzheimer's, if you can't remember your past, it's hard to make sense of the present and difficult to plan the future. For that matter, it's also hard to know who you are since so much of a person or an organization's identity is the result of memories.

The records from an archive let family members know that they're part of something bigger than themselves and that the world didn't start with them, and that family members before them faced hardships and got through them. An archive creates a lasting family legacy that will be a blessing for generations to come.

There are two major categories for your archives: business and family. The business items will for the most part be documents, and the family archives can include a large array of items that are important for the family's memories.

BUSINESS DOCUMENTS TO KEEP

Your family business almost certainly won't need all the documents listed here. My two families only use about 75% of them, but I'm aware of families who use most of them.

This list probably isn't complete. If you think of documents that I should add to this list and that others might benefit from, please let me know. I'll add your idea or ideas to the list that follows and give you credit. Just email me at: Mitzi@MitziPerdue.com. I'd look on it as a public service if you would let me know because I'd like this list to be as useful as possible.

CHECKLIST OF COMPANY DOCUMENTS

1. Advance Directive
2. Agreements on how, when and why loans can be made. <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/241295>
3. Buy sell agreement <https://www.entrepreneur.com/article/241295>
4. Archives Contents (Description of what gets saved)
5. Assets
6. Corporate Governance
7. Digital Passwords in Case of Death or Disability.
8. Directory of Family Members
9. Directory of Key Company Officials
10. Estate and Trust Documents
11. Ethical Will
12. Family Code of Conduct
13. Family Constitution
14. Family Council Document
15. Family Education Goals
16. Family Employee Policy
17. Family Genealogy Documents
18. Family History Documents

19. Family Charitable Foundation, the Letter of Donor Intent
20. Family Charitable Foundation Mission
21. Guardianship for Children
22. Last Will and Testament
23. Letters from the Grave to Descendants
24. Medical Treatment Authorization for a Minor
25. Ownership Agreement (Does stock go only to family members who are in the business, or does it go to bloodlines or can in-laws own stock?)
26. Power of Attorney, Financial
27. Power of Attorney, Medical
28. Stockholder Meetings Records
29. Trustees List
30. Trust Documents
31. Vacation Homes Rules and Directions
32. Voting Agreements re Numerical Votes: Which decisions are consensus, which are 3/4 majority, which are simple majority.
33. Voting Agreements by Family Member Status: Which decisions are made by bloodlines alone and which by in-laws as well)

YOUR FAMILY ARCHIVE

WHAT DO YOU PUT IN THE FAMILY ARCHIVE?

Your family's archive can contain materials such as unpublished and one-of-a-kind items, but it also might contain newspaper accounts and in some cases, books written by family members. It will likely include memorabilia and objects such as embroideries or quilts or scrapbooks. It can be the backbone of maintaining the family's culture because it tells "Where we came from" and "What it means to be us."

It also can mean a connection with those who have gone before. In the Perdue archive, there's a valentine someone from Frank's 3rd grade class him. Somehow, it's unreasonably moving to have something tangible from a relative's life that shows that he or she was once a kid. It's a connection his relatives wouldn't have had otherwise.

Some of what will be part of your family's legacy will be the stories the family tells. The stories we tell give us our identity.

It's nevertheless critical to have the stories backed up by records. It's the same principal as the game that we've all played as children. I knew it as "Whisper down the Lane," although you may know it as "Telephone," "Russian Scandal," "Chinese Whispers," or "Operator."

The essence of the game is, one person whispers something to the person sitting next to him who whispers it to the next person. By the time ten or so people have heard the message, the last version has almost nothing to do with the original.

I remember when I played it in 4th grade, "Fifty-nine dollars," turned into "Fifty iron collars." The game is proof of the old Chinese proverb that, "The faintest ink is stronger than the most powerful memory."

Because stories get garbled over time, or they get forgotten entirely, archives are an essential part of your family's culture and identity. You need to keep records and memorabilia if your goal is to have the family last beyond you.

CHECKLIST FOR CREATING AN ARCHIVE:

- ✓ Appoint an archivist. Someone needs to oversee this. In the families I'm closest to, being the Family Archivist, that is, the person in charge of the family's memories, is a high-prestige position. The Henderson Family Archivist, Roberta Henderson, is so esteemed for her work that she's twice won our Service to the Family Award. By the way, being the Family Archivist is a great way for an individual who isn't working in the family business to make an important (very important) contribution to the family.
- ✓ Have your archivist plan how to collect and track the information. If he or she is familiar with FileMaker Pro, email me at mitzi@mitziperdue.com and I'll share a runtime version of the database I use to track three different family archive.
- ✓ Avoid transparent tape, plain glue and metal staples. These can leave stains and residue on your archival documents. I've seen them do their nasty work in as little as ten years.
- ✓ This ought to be too obvious to mention, but oh well, here goes: Have your documents where mice or other rodents can't get at them. It's so disconcerting to see, as I've seen, a letter from your great grandfather "decorated" by a mouse. I'm guessing that the odds of this happening to you are small, especially if you live in a big city in a high-rise apartment.



CHECKLIST FOR ITEMS TO INCLUDE IN THE FAMILY ARCHIVE

1. Artwork such as paintings or sketches
2. Awards
3. Books authored by family members
4. Collections like—who knows?—toy soldiers, sports memorabilia. If it's something that would give future family members an insight into what made a founder or someone in the business tick, include it.
5. Diaries
6. Diplomas
7. Genealogical information such as birth, marriage, and death certificates.
8. Genealogical research
9. Letters (These can be highly evocative. We can almost feel and see the ancestor's presence in their handwriting.)
10. Medical history. This is a little tricky because of privacy issues, but if you can manage it, this can be a gift to future generations in understanding those who came before, and possibly dealing with health issues that they may face.
11. Memberships in for instance, clubs, professional societies, fraternal organizations, honor societies.
12. Military records, such as discharge papers, honors.
13. Newspaper clippings
14. Notes on important business decisions. (The Perdue Archives has hundreds of pages of notes from Frank when he was deciding how to get into advertising. Without these notes, future generations might have no idea of the effort and focus Frank put into being the first to advertise a commodity.)
15. Photographs. Be sure to record who is in it and the date and location if known, and also if known the dates of birth and death of those in it. Record this information even for current photos because otherwise a generation from now, people won't know who is who.

16. Policy Statements
17. Reports
18. Scrapbooks
19. Textiles such as quilts, embroideries or needle point. If you know who made them and when, their value increases exponentially. (In the early 1900, my grandmother made some needlepoint chairs and it almost brings her back as I realize that she made each of those stitches. My sister taped a note to the bottom of each chair, saying who made the needlepoint seats and the date.

Writer and public speaker Mitzi Perdue is the widow of the late Frank Perdue, the chicken magnate. To learn more, go to <http://www.mitziperdue.com> or e-mail her at: Mitzi@MitziPerdue.com.