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INDIANA HISTORICAL SOCIETY COLLECTIONS ADVISOR

A RESOURCE FROM IHS LOCAL HISTORY SERVICES

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SPECIAL EDITION COLLECTIONS MINIVISOR: COLLECTING COVID-19

By Karen DePauw, manager, IHS Local History Services

We all face the new reality of trying to do our work from home as we do our part to slow the spread of COVID-19. With this in mind, we thought it might be helpful to do a short-term weekly mini version called Collections Minivisor to give you some ideas of things you can do from home that still help propel our work with museum collections. These special editions will come out each Wednesday for the next few weeks and won't replace the monthly Collections Advisor, which will still be sent on the first of each month. If you have ideas for content, or if you would prefer not to receive the weekly editions but would like to continue to receive the monthly Collections Advisor, please email collectionsadvisor@indianahistory.org to let us know.



[Indiana Equality Protest, 2011](#) (Courtesy of NUVO, Indiana Historical Society).

As museums and their communities live through this unprecedented time in history, it is easy to get caught up in our lives of trying to make it all work and forget to collect how we are doing just that. A number of museums have asked individuals to document their experiences during COVID-19. There are museums across the country who have set up ways for individuals to donate the items they have created during the pandemic, whether photographs, artwork, or even journals. Many museums have digital story collection allowing community members to simply go online and fill out a form with their personal story of life during COVID-19.

Providing prompts to your community can sometimes help people to view what is happening now as a historic event worthy of collecting. Guide your community in capturing the events of COVID-19. You can do this by offering some guiding questions for people to answer in their journals.

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ONLINE RESOURCES

[Telling Your Story:
Documenting COVID-19
in Indiana](#)
(Indiana Historical Society)

[The COVID-19 Oral
History Project](#)
(Indiana University
Purdue University
Indianapolis)

[History Happening Now:
Share Your Story](#)
(San Diego History
Center)

[COVID-19 History
Project](#)
(Southeast Ohio History
Center)

[Richmond Stories from
Richmond Kids](#)
(The Valentine)

[Rapid Response
Collecting](#)
(Victoria and Albert
Museum)

Offer suggestions of media, whether traditional or social, to collect and how to contextualize it for future generations. You may even give prompts of photos to take or artwork to create. All of these items can then be donated to the museum after the fact. Use, or create, a form for donors to fill out that asks them about the item, why it was created, who created it, where they lived during the pandemic, and any other information about the donor or item that might be useful in the future. Once the pandemic has come under control and it is safe for museums to open back up to the public, consider hosting an exhibit about COVID-19 in your community to show how the museum has captured this moment in time for the future.

Check out the sidebar for links to museums doing this type of collecting initiative for some ideas of how to proceed.

This is a free publication. Anyone may subscribe.

[Local History Services](#)

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