

**Introduction to Latinx History and Oral History**  
**Northeastern University Archives and Special Collections**  
**Molly Brown, Reference and Outreach Archivist, [mo.brown@northeastern.edu](mailto:mo.brown@northeastern.edu)**

**Session goal:**

- Help participants feel comfortable researching in archives.
- Introduce participants to oral histories and Latinx collections at Northeastern.
- Introduce participants to archives as a potential profession.

**Session outcomes:**

- Learn how to research in and derive information from archival material.
- Connect the work of archiving and oral history recording to participants' current interests.
- Introduce students to oral history as a way of community documentation.

**Session outline:**

- I. Get settled and ask questions about knowledge about Archives & Oral history
  - A. Everyone go around and introduce themselves
  - B. Discussion questions:
    1. How many of you have been to an Archives before?
    2. When you hear the word Archives what are some of the first words that come to mind?
    3. Whose stuff do you think would be in an Archive?
    4. If you donated your materials what would they look like?
- II. Take tour of Archives
  - A. Discuss the work of being an archivist including information about:
    1. Donations, preservation, processing, reference, outreach. Donation process & labor of maintaining the materials
  - B. Ask participants to think about how oral histories and archives can work together
- III. Activity: Listen to oral history
  - A. What is your reaction to listening to an oral history?
  - B. How do you think listening to this oral history is different from looking at archival documents?
- IV. Activity: Explore Archival records
  - A. What does the history of an organization look like in archives (15-20 minutes)
    1. Move to station with [Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción](#)
    2. Read a document out of the folder and write 2 questions you have for either the document, the author, or the person the document is talking to?  
How does this help you learn the stories?
  - B. What does the history of a person look like in archives (15-20 minutes)
    1. Move to station with [Carmen Pola papers](#)
    2. Read a document out of the folder and write 2 questions you have for either the document, the author, or the person the document is talking to?  
How does this help you learn the stories?
- V. Activity: Share out
  - A. Have participants share their responses to one or several of the discussion questions:
    1. What did you see today that was interesting?

2. What questions do you have about archives?
3. How do you think oral histories and archives can work together?
4. What's something you want to know more about?

**Session material:**

- [Inquilinos Boricuas en Acción records](#)
- [Carmen Pola papers](#)
- [El Planeta bound volumes from Phoenix Media Group records](#)