

TYPE ACTIVITY SHEET: ORGANIZATIONAL RECORDS

Overview:

Just as individuals leave a wide variety of personal artifacts, organizations do as well. Many of these resources are published and reveal a great deal about institutional goals and methods. Annual reports, for example, provide a summary of accomplishments, while minutes and correspondence reflect internal decision-making processes. Pamphlets and posters convey the organization's public image and the means by which it disseminates information. Financial records and solicitations reveal the priorities of the organization and the means by which it attempts to achieve these ends.

In the 19th century, women extended their traditional domestic roles as caregivers to work with charitable organizations in the public arena. These middle-class women subtly used ideas about their "proper place" to justify acceptance of women outside the home. Eventually women became dynamic forces in a vast range of institutions and organizations in every arena of life –business, the arts, philanthropy, education, politics, science, and labor. Women have created the same types of organizational records as men have. This type of artifact enables historians to note similarities and differences between men and women in a common endeavor, an important component to illuminating women's history.

Skill Focus:

Read for detail
Interpret data

For the Teacher:

1. Discuss with students the nature and value of organizational records as an historical source.
2. Have students bring in a record from an organization in which they or their parents are involved. Suggest they look for an annual report, financial record or solicitation, correspondence, or pamphlet.
3. Have students complete Section 1 of the Student Activity Sheet and discuss their results.
4. Provide students with an organizational record from the Jewish Women's Archive collection.
5. Have students complete Section 2 of the Student Activity Sheet and discuss their observations.
6. Provide students with background information for this record and have them complete Section 3 of the Student Activity Sheet.
7. For more specific questions, look at *Discuss this Document* in the individual documents.
8. Discuss students' responses.
9. If time permits, have students do the follow-up Activities in Section 4 of the Student Activity Sheet.

Document List:

First Annual Report, Philadelphia Orphan Society, 1816

Report of the Female Hebrew Benevolent Society, 1835
Program from Jewish Women's Congress, 1893
Flier from the Visiting Nurses Service, c. 1895
Pamphlet from an organization opposed to Women's Suffrage, c. 1910s
Budget, Hadassah Nurses in Palestine, 1913
Campaign letter from the United Jewish Appeal, 1947
Newsletter on behalf of Ethiopian Jews, 1984