GUIDELINES
& Examples

BASIC ISSUES

3.1   Archival Arrangements

Major archives typically organize their materials in a multilevel fashion. Each level represents a part of the citation we create when we use their records. The usual levels (from largest to smallest) are these:

RECORD GROUPS .... Commonly, a record group deals with an agency, commission, department, or other bureaucratic division. In some archives, the record group carries only a number; in some, only a name. In others, it carries both. Your citation should follow the practice of the archive whose material you are using. While there, ask for a citation guide. If visiting the repository's website, you may find citation suggestions there.

COLLECTIONS,
SERIES, ETC. .... Large record groups are typically broken down into subgroups—often called *collections, series, classes,* or some similar term. In some archives, these will represent two or more separate levels. They may carry either a title, a number, or both. Some archives prefer that their collections be cited by title only, because their call numbers may change over time. Other archives prefer that the collection numbers be used.

The term *collection* is also used occasionally as part of the name of an archive that has a highly specialized focus. Examples in this chapter include two well-known archives, the Western

Historical Manuscript Collection and the Historic New Orleans Collection—both illustrated within the QuickCheck Models for ARCHIVED MATERIAL: MANUSCRIPT (Series) and PRESERVATION FILM: IN-HOUSE FILM.

FILES .... The term *file* is typically used for a cluster of material contained in one bundle, folder, jacket, or wrapper. A file's label may identify it by name, number, or both. Occasionally, you will have used an entire file and will want to cite the whole. More commonly, your Reference Note will need to cite a specific item within the file.

ITEM OR PIECE .... The *item* or the *piece* is usually the smallest element of the citation. It will be the specific document, letter, etc., in which you found the information you are referencing. The manner in which you cite an item will depend upon the nature of the record. It may be

- **titled**, as in the muster-roll example below—in which case you will copy that title precisely and place quotation marks around it—or

- **untitled**, in which case you will create a generic label that answers such questions as *who, what, when*, and *where*. The bill of sale cited in the QuickCheck Model for ARCHIVED MATERIAL: MANUSCRIPT (Series) illustrates this type of item.

Other archives may subdivide holdings into fewer levels. Consider the Draper Manuscripts, a collection of American frontier materials held by the Wisconsin Historical Society. More than five hundred volumes are divided into fifty-six series. Traditional citations to items within this collection typically follow the pattern shown below:

Source List Entry
Draper Manuscripts. Wisconsin Historical Society. Madison, Wisconsin.

First Reference Note
    1. "Muster Roll of Captain [Joseph] Martin's Company of Pittsylvania Militia in 1774," Series XX, Tennessee Papers, vol. 1, p. 6; Draper Manuscripts, Wisconsin Historical Society, Madison.