The archives of the Migration Institute of Finland as a source of information
What archive?

- From the very beginning the activities of the Migration Institute of Finland (MIF) have included the maintenance of a cultural heritage archive
  - This archive is referred to as the Migration Collections
What archive?

- Strong emphasis on documenting emigration and expatriate Finnishness

→ Also immigration-related data has accumulated since the 1990s though collecting hasn’t been systematic thus far.
General statistics on Migration Collections

• Ca. 1000 Archive / Collection creators

• Approx. 2113 **accumulative events** (= donations, depositions, acquisitions, reproductions) by April 2021
  • yearly average: 45
General statistics on Migration Collections

• **Origin of the material: geographic distribution**
  - United States 50 %
  - Australia 15 %
  - Canada 10 %
  - South America 10 %
  - Asia, Africa, Europe 15 %
General statistics on Migration Collections

• In total, the Migration Collections contain materials from nearly 60 countries.
Archive / Collection creators

- Migrants as private persons
- Associations, clubs and organizations established by migrants
- Descendents of migrants abroad (2nd and 3rd gen.)
- Friends and relatives of migrants
- Other individuals from abroad; friends of Finland interested in the topic of migration
Archive / Collection creators

• People interested in migration: genealogists, writers, journalists etc.

• Migration researchers: research data

• Finnish associations and organizations with connections to expatriate Finns (f. ex. Finland Society)

• Finnish authorities, other archives and museums with contacts to expatriate Finns or immigrants
Main data groups
Official documents

• Travel documents
  • Passports, tickets, etc.

• Naturalization documents

• Certificates related to different life stages

• Official letters

• Work documents
  • Pay slips, union membership cards, etc.

• Deed documents
  • etc.
Private letters

- 15 000 +

- The most used data group in the archive (among researchers)

- A noted collection: Around 6000 deposited original migrant letters from the collection campaign organized by the Southern Ostrobotnia Student’s Club of the University of Helsinki.
Excerpt from Joseph Johnson's letter to his wife, Carolina. London, England, 1862. This is the oldest private letter in Migration Collections.
Diaries

- Total amount in the archives: ca. 40
- Travel diaries: 50%
- Time span: 1899-2006
Diaries

Pages from a tour diary of a Finnish-American musician John Rosendahl, 1930.
Memoirs and autobiographical writings

- Total amount in the Migration Collections: ca. 30

- Large variations in scope: from a few pages of notes to hundreds of pages of manuscripts
Memoirs and autobiographical writings

Excerpt from memoirs of an Ingrian priest, pp.302-303
Interviews

• On recordings and / or in transcripts
  • Recording formats: mp3, CD, cassette, minidisc, dat-tape, reel-to-reel

• Total length of recordings over 700 hours

• Recordings by MIF: 30-40 %
Interviews

Olavi Koivukangas (director, MIF, 1974-2009) interviewing Kalevi Havukainen, a farmer, in Australia, 1981.
Photographs
Photographs

- More than 26,000 prints in the physical collection
- About 12,000 images in born-digital form
- Photographs are our most requested data group
  - Media, professional and amateur researchers, exhibitions, theater performances, etc.
Organizational documents

• Active organizing typical for expatriate Finns around the world
  • "Finland-societies", political organizations, sports clubs, cultural associations, temperance societies etc.

• Histories of these associations and organizations stored in Migration Collections in various scope: from isolated minutes to complete archives:
  • Examples of the latter: Cultural Asociación Kaleva (Spain), Finland Society of Tully (Australia), Central Committee of the Finnish Societies of Greater New York (USA)
Organizational documents

Excerpt from the rules of “Suomen Heimoseura” of Mount Isa. Australia, 1935.
More data groups...

• Other sound recordings
  • Music recordings (including several hundred phonograph records)
  • Radio programs

• Research data

• Clippings

• Ephemera

• Audio-visual data
  • Raw materials
  • Television programs
  • Documentary films

• Emigrant newspapers
Pictured is Carl Pellonpää, a Finnish American TV presenter. He hosted a weekly program called Finland Calling for 53 consecutive years (1962-2015).

Our archive has received from Mr. Pellonpää more than 500 hours of program material.
Artifacts

• Historical collections: Ca. 3,200 objects (tools, textiles, travel trunks, household instruments etc.)
• Art collection: about 250 paintings, sculptures and textile works
Digital materials

• Why digitize our archives?
  • We want to ensure the **preservation and usability** of archive material; it is therefore a matter of following the basic principles of archival management!
Digital materials

• The digitization work progresses!
  • Comprehensive digitization of key data groups: 60% of letters, more than 80% of photographs
  • The goal for the near future is to improve the online accessibility of digitized materials
Using the archives

• The Migration Collections is an archive open for everyone, and its materials are mostly available for everyone.

• Currently, the best information about the materials in our archive is available through the nationwide Finna search service (finna.fi) and by contacting the archivist directly.
Using the archives

• Physical materials can be researched at the premises of the MIF

• Copies of digital material can be provided for remote use (cloud service, e-mail)

• A user agreement is drawn up for the use of the archive material, which defines e.g. the purpose of the use and the conditions for publishing
Using the archives

• Digitization done as a result of a material request is free of charge

• For photocopying a small fee is charged

• Taking pictures of the materials with your own camera is allowed
Contact us!

• Archivist Jarno Heinilä:
  • e-mail: jarno.heinila@migrationinstitute.fi
  • phone: +358 40 631 3042

• More information about the archive on our website:
  https://siirtolaisuusinstituutti.fi/materials/archives/

Collection policy of the Migration Collections:
https://siirtolaisuusinstituutti.fi/wpcontent/uploads/2021/01/siirtolaisuusko
koelmat_hankintapolitiikkaeng-lyh.pdf