

# Archiving Labour Party materials



Michael Joseph Savage  
(NZ PM 1935-1940)  
Labour 100 Project

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## Labour 100 Project Workshops

Tēnā koutou – my name is Emma Kelly and I am the Archivist for the Labour 100 Project from September 2016 until September 2017. My task is to encourage past, present and future members of the Labour Party to rummage through their attics and cupboards to find photos, papers and stories of the oldest political party in Aotearoa New Zealand.

Branch records, including correspondence, minutes of meetings; records of fund-raising or other activities; posters; photographs of local Labour Party events or people; any oral history recordings - all are part of the rich history of the Labour Party and worthy of being archived.

We are not creating a new archive, but promoting the deposit of materials in the archive, museum, ngā puna o maumahara or library of choice in your region. My role is to support people's learning about archiving processes, to talk about what they have to ensure things go to the right places, and to liaise with repositories on behalf of those who would like to deposit materials. The focus is grass-roots branch level records and we hope to encourage people to continue seeking materials even after my role has finished by advising them about archiving practice. I will also create an umbrella digital record of where things are so they can be found in the future.

Today we are getting together to consider the basics of archiving, to discuss what you may have, where to next and who are the best archivists/museum and library workers in your local region to discuss your records with. I am also available to discuss further as you begin to look at your materials or those of others.

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## THE BASICS:

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- Store materials out of the sun in well ventilated areas – not on floor, in hot water cupboards, garages or sheds
- Wash your hands before touching records
- Remove staples and metal paper clips and replace with plastic. Don't remove sticky tape.
- If you are digitising files, don't throw out originals without discussing with an archivist first

Once you've got the physical basics sorted, ask yourself the following:

- What is it?
- When is it from?
- Where is it from?
- Why do I have it? (Do I own it?)

This is the beginnings of a listing. It should provide the format, a description, a summary of the contents, the state of the records, any dates available and who owns them (provenance). This will be extremely helpful to your local repository.

The next page shows a good example of a listing from Whanganui Research Library. However please be aware each repository will have its own practices. My notations in red.

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## **NZC PAPERS 31**

### **[Summary]**

**Wanganui Labour Representation Committee 1924-1978 [Title which describes contents]**  
**[Background if known]** Wanganui's branch of the Labour Representation Committee first met on 17 November 1924: delegates from the New Zealand Labour Party, the Waterside Workers Union, Municipal Labourers Union and the Gas Workers Union met in Perrett's Buildings on Victoria Avenue. The organisation aimed to provide a link between local workers and the wider Labour Party. From 1975 onwards, the group became known as the Labour Electorate Committee. Sources: NZC31/1/1 p1-2 (minutes of first meeting).

### **SCOPE [Description]**

The four volumes **[How many are there?]** comprising the collection record minutes of the Wanganui Labour Representation Committee (known as the Labour Electorate Committee from 1975 onwards). **[Useful to know there are two labels for this group]** Also included are lists of officers, a newspaper clipping, handwritten notes and inventories, and related ephemera (such as a printed pledge). **[Describes the formats – types of materials]**

### **SERIES DESCRIPTIONS**

#### **SERIES ONE Wanganui Labour Representation Committee**

Four bound volumes. The earliest entry is dated 17 November 1924, while the latest is dated 16 October 1978. The first covers 17 November 1924 – 16 May 1931. **[Dates are useful]** Inside is a stapled list of officers of the Wanganui Labour Representation Committee and later the Labour Electorate Committee, up to 1992 (staple is rusting). **[State of the physical records]** The second covers 9 April 1931 – 28 May 1938. Glued **[important to know about glue, sticky tape etc]** inside the front cover are lists of Labour candidates, delegates and committee members for the 1935 Municipal Elections, as well as a second copy of the Labour Representation Committee officer list from 1924 – 1974 **[Important to note copies of materials]**. The third covers 21 June 1938 – 19 July 1948. Inside the front cover are several loose newspaper clippings, letters and articles of ephemera **[good to note loose materials]**. The fourth and final volume covers 16 August 1948 – 16 October 1978. Inside the front cover is a bundle of loose typed up papers, comprising a third copy.

Sourced from the Alexander Heritage and Research Library  
<http://whanganuilibrary.com/site/pages/heritage.php>

This description provides enough information for an archivist to understand what it is they are looking at, and for a researcher to consider whether or not they need to look at these files.

Be aware, that depending on the institution there may be a 2 – 3 year delay between deposit and cataloguing of materials. So it pays to keep a digital copy for yourself if you want to use it soon.

It is very useful if you write your memories or known facts about the materials you have on a separate piece of paper which can accompany your materials rather than write on the materials themselves. Do not write on the back of photographs for example. I always use a pencil when working with archive materials as they don't leak ink and I also use cotton gloves.

The following national resources on archiving are extremely useful, as are the specific guides from your local repository:

1. **National Library of New Zealand Te Puna Mātauranga o Aotearoa National Preservation Office**  
<https://natlib.govt.nz/collections/caring-for-your-collections>

#### **GUIDES ONLINE INCLUDE**

Photographs

Books

Artworks on paper

Family collections

Family collections often consist of precious but fragile items: letters, newspaper collections, certificates and scrapbooks. This guide gives advice on protecting these collections.

Marae photographs

A guide to handling, storing, and displaying photographs around your marae.

Digital images

Some tips for extending the life of your digital photographs.

Sound recordings

Sound recordings are easily damaged, but by taking precautions you can extend their lifetime.

Digitisation of heritage audio collections

You may want to digitise your audio collections to make them more accessible, but it's also an essential step in preserving that material for the future.

2. **Lest We Forget** –designed for the centenary of the great war but useful for our purposes. It is a guide to saving materials including letters, diaries, memoirs, ephemera (pamphlets, books, posters), Photographs and negatives, digital materials, souvenirs and trinkets  
<http://ww100.govt.nz/save-new-zealands-memories-of-war>

“Before giving the material it is helpful to find out all you can about the person concerned; or if the material is from your own life (for example memoirs of conversations with a father or other relative who served or was alive during wartime), try to record the relevant dates and, in the case of photographs, name the people if you can. If you are able to do so, write this background up yourself. If not, make sure that you tell the archivist or librarian or curator the information. Future users of the material will be very grateful if they understand the context of what they are looking at.”

**Discussion and hands on practice:**

Examples of each format

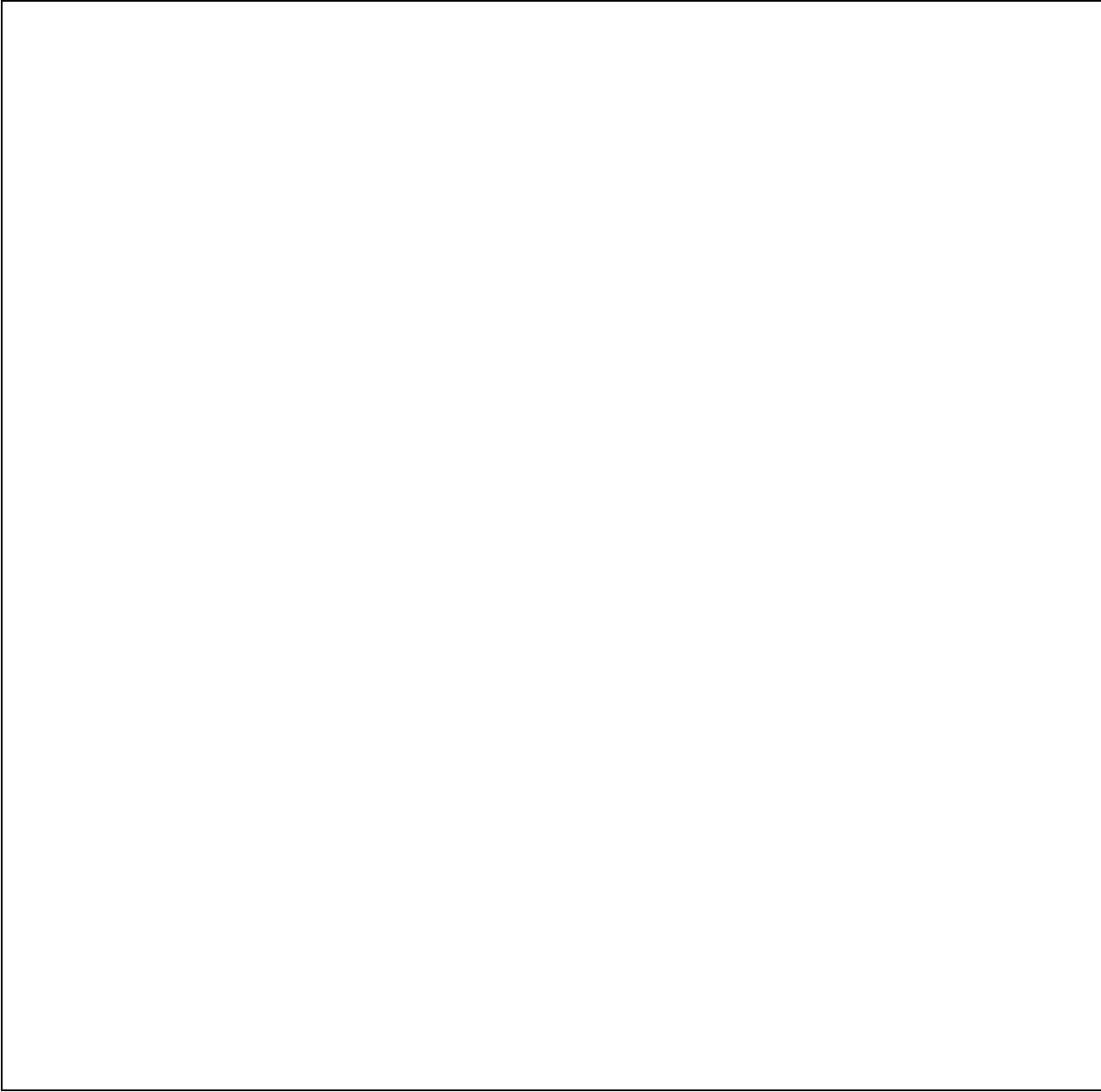
Hands on practice of handling materials

Questions about handling materials

Digitisation is not a magic process!

**Your notes:**

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