PUBLIC RESEARCH LIBRARIES AND ARCHIVAL REPOSITORIES

- New York Public Library a.k.a NYPL (www.nypl.org)

   Each of the research libraries hangs exhibitions that compliment their holdings, and entrance to the libraries and exhibits are free to everyone. They are not lending libraries, but with 16 million titles, chances are they have what you are looking for. The Humanities and Social Sciences Library houses extensive manuscript collections covering a large variety of individuals and institutions that make up the region’s history, as well a large holdings in rare books and visual culture. Strengths also include Russian and Slavic history and culture, the history of Judaism and Jews, and Gay and Lesbian politics, history, and culture in New York. You need to apply to use manuscript holdings, and schedule them in advance.

   The Library for the Performing Arts houses ephemera, interviews, audio and visual recordings, and manuscripts that document the production and circulation of dance, music, and theater, with an emphasis on Europe and the U.S. The Schomburg Center for Research in Black Culture is the premier research collection of the African diaspora. The Science, Industry, and Business Library also has many journals, reports, and publications about the history of business and advertising.

   New York residents can also get Branch Library Access Cards to take books out from the Branch Libraries. The Picture Collection at the Mid-Manhattan Branch Library is a unique collection of images pulled from a variety of sources that researchers can browse and borrow. The Brooklyn and Queens Public Libraries maintain separate catalogs (http://www.brooklynpubliclibrary.org/, http://www.queenslibrary.org). The Brooklyn Collection and Long Island Division house extensive local history resources, and the Caribbean Literary and Cultural Center in Flatbush, Brooklyn and Langston Hughes Community Cultural Center in Corona, Queens maintain community-based collections and exhibits. NYPL Access cards work at the Brooklyn and Queens Libraries to take out materials.


   The Library houses all official New York City government reports as well as records relating to the City Council and city history in general. Access is open to the public, and no notice is required. The Municipal Archives has census, real estate, and vital records for the city as well as the largest collection of English language criminal and court records in the world. Most city departments, the Parks Department or the Departments of Transportation, Sanitation, etc. maintain their own archives as well open to researchers by appointment. New York City is home to five borough historians, whose offices can often serve as a clearinghouse for historical materials and events.

- National Archives and Records Administration, New York Region a.k.a NARA (www.archives.gov/northeast/nyc/)
Federal government records repository. Census and immigration records for the New York region. See especially the Chinese Exclusion files indexed in a large database for research ease.

MAJOR COMMUNITY-BASED REPOSITORIES:

- New York Historical Society (www.nyhistory.org)
- The Bronx County Historical Society Library & Archives (http://www.bronxhistoricalsociety.org/library.html; archives by appointment only)
- The Brooklyn Historical Society (http://www.brooklynhistory.org/default/index.html; library and archives have truncated hours and are by appointment only; see also their list of exhibits)
- New Jersey Historical Society (www.jerseyhistory.org); in Newark, NJ only a 20 min PATH train ride away.

Historical societies have great local history, genealogical, and political manuscripts as well as material culture, local periodicals, and scholarly and popular monographs about their area.

- Lesbian Herstory Archives (www.lesbianherstoryarchives.org)

Home to the largest collection of materials by and about lesbians and their communities in the world. This collection is entirely funded, staffed, created and preserved by the communities it serves.

- The National Archive of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, & Transgender History (www.gaycenter.org)

At the LGBT Community Center. Major repository for LGBT history in the city, region, and nation. Largely comprised of material donated to the center by the communities it serves.

- The Center for Jewish History (www.cjh.org)

Five member organizations share one reading room at the Center, which also has exhibit space on the first and second floors. Researchers are required to obtain a free research card before they can access materials. The member organizations are: the American Jewish Historical Society, the American Sephardi Federation, the Leo Baeck Institute, the Yeshiva University Museum, and the YIVO Institute for Jewish Research. Finding aids are posted on the website. Libraries and large manuscript holdings document Jewish life all over the world with particular emphasis on New York.
MUSEUMS (probably an under-utilized research resource):

- The Metropolitan Museum of Art a.k.a. The Met
  (http://www.metmuseum.org/education/er_lib.asp)
  Collection and research library comprises the most comprehensive collection for studying art from all over the world.

- Brooklyn Museum
  (http://www.brooklynmuseum.org/collections/libraries_and_archives/)
  Major collections include the Museum’s institutional records and the Wilbour Library of Egyptology. See also the Museum’s digital collections.

- American Museum of Natural History a.k.a. AMNH (www.amnh.org)
  Library and museum collections as well as the institutional archives could provide an amazing resource for the history of science, as well as the history of those societies deemed primitive and therefore studied and collected by the museum. The collections at AMNH comprise both institutional records and manuscript collections, including many photographic collections. Research must be pre-approved.

- Museum of Modern Art a.k.a. MOMA (www.moma.org)
  Study centers, library, and archives for using and contextualizing their collection of Modern art, particularly strong photography and film collection.

- The Frick Art Reference Library
  (http://www.frick.org/library/archives_coll.htm)
  Collections held by the library include papers of the Frick family, records from galleries, and scholarly research files, as well as correspondence with artists.

- The Hispanic Society of America (www.hispanicsociety.org)
  Museum and Library dedicated to Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American history and culture, particularly strong in colonial history objects, rare books, and scholarship.

- American Folkart Museum (www.folkartmuseum.org/)
  Very large collection of American folkart objects and artifacts, large research library for contextualizing the collection.
- Museum of the City of New York (www.mcny.org)

Collection focuses on social and cultural (including pop culture) history with a particularly strong emphasis on photography.

- Whitney Museum of American Art (www.whitney.org)

20th century American art, large manuscript holdings and research library.

- The Morgan Library and Museum (www.themorgan.org)

Museum and Library with particularly strong holdings of rare books and manuscripts from the “Western World.” Also Morgan family manuscript materials.

INSTITUTIONAL ARCHIVES:

- Rockefeller Archives Center (http://archive.rockefeller.edu)

Major collections include those of the Rockefeller family and the Russell Sage Foundation, illustrating (among other topics) the history of American philanthropy and social science research.

- Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Library (http://library.cshl.edu/)

Among the most significant collections at this repository is the papers of Dr. James Watson. See also the Library’s blog at: http://cshlarchives.blogspot.com/.


Collections include institutional records.

- Medical Center Archives, Weill Cornell Medical Center (http://www.med.cornell.edu/archives/)

Collections include institutional and patient records, as well as the papers of prominent physicians.

- The Grolier Club (http://www.grolierclub.org/LibraryAMCList2.htm)
The Grolier Club maintains collections related to the history of printing and the book. Non-member researchers must make appointments.

- United Nations Archives (archives.un.org/unarms)

Institutional archives of the UN.

- Alcoholics Anonymous (General Service Office, at 475 Riverside Drive)

Maintains exhibits as well as a searchable archive of historical materials (pre-approval may be required for extensive research projects).

There are many, many institutional archives in the city, ranging from the Woody Guthrie Archives to the J.P. Morgan Chase & Co. Archives. Check the Metropolitan Roundtable Repository Guide.

LOCAL COLLEGES AND UNIVERSITIES WITH SPECIAL COLLECTIONS AND INSTITUTIONAL ARCHIVES:

- Adelphi University (http://libraries.adelphi.edu/special/, in Garden City, NY)
- Barnard College (http://www.barnard.columbia.edu/archives/; see especially their zine collections)
- Brooklyn College (http://library.brooklyn.cuny.edu/archives/; see especially their Record Survey of the Jamaican and Trinidadian Communities)
- City College of New York, CUNY (http://www1.ccny.cuny.edu/library/archives/index.cfm; see especially the Harlem Development Archive and the Russell Sage Collection)
- College of New Rochelle (http://www.cnr.edu/home/library/resources_archives.htm, in New Rochelle, NY)
- Columbia University (http://www.columbia.edu/cu/web/archival/; see especially the architectural drawings at the Avery Library, the Starr East Asian Library, and the archives at the Medical Center. The Butler Library at houses a large number of Oral Histories, as well as many major manuscript collections documenting politics, literature, business, and education in New York and the U.S. more generally, as well as the history and culture of Eastern European émigrés to the area.)
- Hostos Community College, CUNY (http://www.hostos.cuny.edu/library/hcc/archives.asp; see especially the Museum of Contemporary Hispanic Art collection)
- Hunter College, CUNY (http://library.hunter.cuny.edu/archives_new.htm see especially the Centro de Estudios Puertorriqueños, the definitive collection documenting the history and culture of the Puerto Rican diaspora.
- The Jewish Theological Seminary (http://www.jtsa.edu/Library.xml, by appointment only)
- John Jay College of Criminal Justice, CUNY (http://www.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/info/speccoll/; see especially their online exhibit, Crime in New York, at http://www.lib.jjay.cuny.edu/crimeinny/)
- LaGuardia and Wagner Archives, LaGuardia Community College, CUNY (http://www.laguardiawagnerarchive.lagcc.cuny.edu/defaultc.htm, see also their online exhibits, particularly A Nation of Immigrants)
- Long Island University, Brooklyn (http://www.brooklyn.liu.edu/library/about/special.htm)
- Long Island University, C.W. Post campus (http://www.liu.edu/cwis/cwp/library/sc/sc.htm, see especially the Cedar Swamp Historical Society Collection)
- Manhattan College (http://www.manhattan.edu/library/archives/index.html)
- Marist College, Poughkeepsie (http://library.marist.edu/archives/index.html, see their online exhibits)
- Marymount Manhattan College (http://www.mmm.edu/study/resources/library/archives.html, see especially the Geraldine Ferraro Papers)
- Monmouth University, West Long Branch, NJ (http://library.monmouth.edu/spcol/spcol.php)
- New York University (http://www.library.nyu.edu/collections/archives.html, the Fales and Tamiment libraries house large collections documenting the American Left and labor movement, New York’s Downtown avant-garde arts scene, Irish American culture, and the East Coast’s largest collections of Asian American materials. See also the Ehrman Medical Library Archives for records of the School of Medicine [http://archives.med.nyu.edu/])
- Queens College, CUNY (http://qcpages.qc.cuny.edu/Library/collections/archives.php; see also the Louis Armstrong Archive [http://www.satchmo.net/thearchives/])
- Rutgers University (www.libraries.rutgers.edu); see especially New Jersey history, social policy history, consumerism, labor movement, Latin American and Japanese relations with the U.S., and the institutional records of one of the earliest universities in the region.
- Union Theological Seminary (www.uts.columbia.edu/burke_library); see especially Burke Library materials documenting the history of American missionaries.