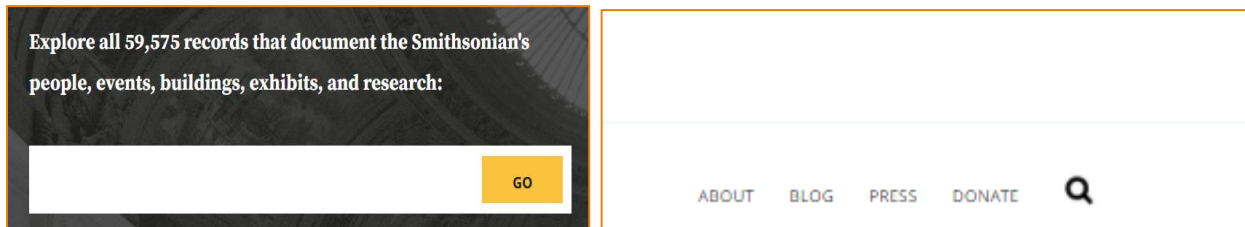


# Guide to Searching the Smithsonian Institution Archives

Last updated 9/16/2022. Contact [osiaref@si.edu](mailto:osiaref@si.edu) with questions.

Begin your research with our search portal! Use the search box on the [Archives homepage](http://siarchives.si.edu) (<http://siarchives.si.edu>), or click the magnifying glass at the top right of any Archives webpage to expand the search box.



Why is it important to learn search strategies for the Archives website?

If you've used other common internet search engines, typing two words in the Archives search box (like **margaret collins**) will not work like you expect.

Read through this document to learn about search operators, search filters and facets, collection and image numbers, and getting the most out of your Archives research!

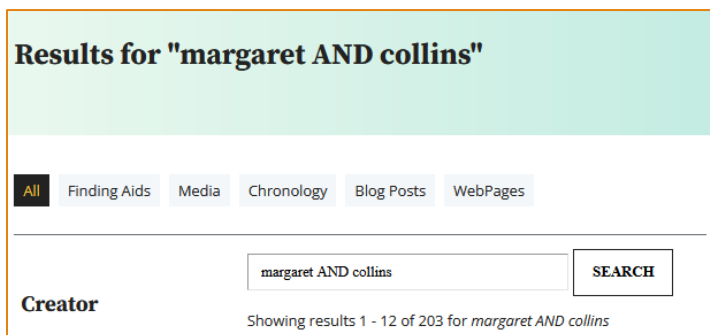
*In the Archives search box, you may enter Keywords, a Collection Number, or an Image Number.*

## Search by Keywords

In your list of search results, you'll find all instances of your search term across our website: in [Finding Aids](#), digitized [Media](#), timeline items from our institutional [Chronology](#), [Blog Posts](#), [WebPages](#) that describe our services, and collection items that have been digitized as [PDFs](#).

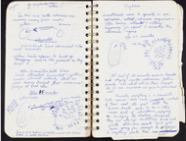

## Multiple Keyword Search

For a search of multiple keywords, separate each word in your search term with **AND** (in all capitals). This will locate the search results that contain all your keywords, in any order. For instance, to search for the words **margaret** and **collins** (in any order), enter the search term **margaret AND collins**.




## Exact Keyword Search

Use quotation marks “ ” around your keywords to search an exact phrase. Using quotation marks “ ” will tell the search engine to pay attention to the exact order of characters. Because of this, the searches “margaret collins” and “collins margaret” will return separate sets of results.

<input type="text" value="margaret collins"/> <input type="button" value="SEARCH"/>	<input type="text" value="collins margaret"/> <input type="button" value="SEARCH"/>
Showing results 1 - 12 of 53 for "margaret collins"	Showing results 1 - 12 of 35 for "collins margaret"
 <p><b>Wonderful Women</b> <b>Wednesday: Dr. Margaret Collins</b> <b>Margaret Collins: Scholar, Civil Rights Activist, and Mentor</b> <b>Date:</b> March 27, 2018 <b>Creator:</b> Lisa Fthenakis <b>Description:</b> During this</p>	 <p><b>Document Authority Document Record/EA</b></p>
<p><b>Date:</b> August 30, 2017 <b>Creator:</b> Effie Kapsalis <b>Description:</b> The 1st African American female entomologist according to the Entomological Society of America. Dr. Margaret Collins held appointments of research associate, assistant professor, and professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, and was instrumental in building the female collection of the National Museum of Natural History. <a href="#">Read more</a></p> <p><b>The Bigger Picture - Page 93</b>   <a href="#">Smithsonian Institution Archives</a></p>	<p><b>Search Results:</b> <a href="#">Collins, Margaret</a> <b>Search Results:</b></p>

## Advanced Search Techniques

You can also combine an exact phrase in quotation marks “ ” with the operator **AND**. For example, “margaret collins” **AND** entomology will retrieve all search results that contain the exact string “margaret collins” as well as the word entomology.

<input and="" entomology"="" type="text" value="margaret collins"/> <input type="button" value="SEARCH"/>	
Showing results 1 - 12 of 23 for "margaret collins" AND entomology	
 <p><b>Wonderful Women</b> <b>Wednesday: Dr. Margaret Collins</b></p>	<p><b>Finding Aid Document</b></p>
<p><b>Date:</b> August 30, 2017 <b>Creator:</b> Effie Kapsalis <b>Description:</b> The 1st African American female entomologist according to the Entomological Society of America. Dr. Margaret Collins held appointments of research associate, assistant professor, and professor at the University of Maryland, Baltimore, and was instrumental in building the female collection of the National Museum of Natural History. <a href="#">Read more</a></p>	<p><b>SIA Acc. 01-038, The Bigger Picture - Page 111</b>   <a href="#">Smithsonian Natural History (U.S.)</a></p>

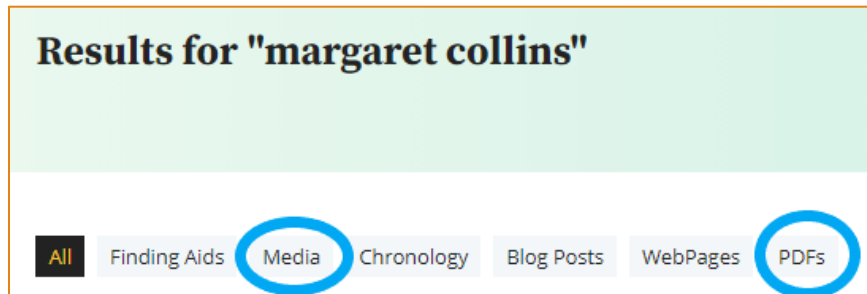
## Search Filters and Category Tabs

On the search results page, you will see links to the category tabs [Finding Aids](#), [Media](#), [Chronology](#), [Blog Posts](#), [WebPages](#) and [PDFs](#).

Click any tab to narrow your results to that genre.

If you're looking for archival collections related to your research topic, you may wish to view [Finding Aids](#) only.

The categories Media and PDFs include collection materials digitized by our staff: photographs, images, drawings, slides and negatives, and scanned documents and field books.



Results for "margaret collins"

All Finding Aids **Media** Chronology Blog Posts WebPages **PDFs**

The Chronology, Blog Posts, and WebPages tabs will show secondary sources about Smithsonian history and our holdings.



Results for "margaret collins"

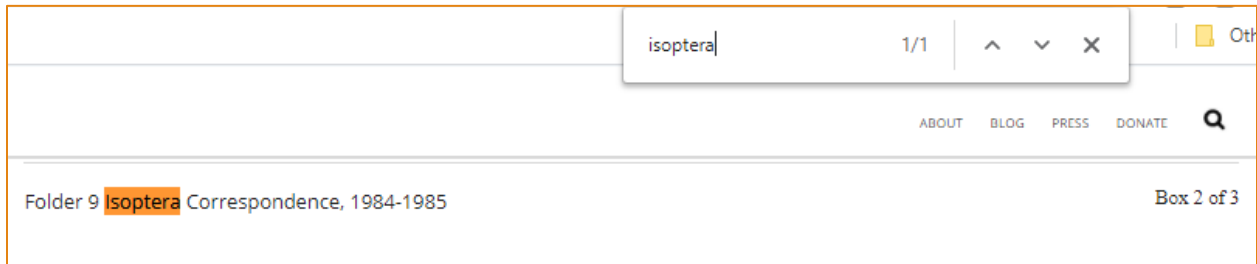
All Finding Aids Media **Chronology** **Blog Posts** **WebPages** PDFs

### Finding Aids

A Finding Aid is a guide to an archival collection. It describes the records in the collection as well as the individual, department, office, unit, or organization that created the records. The final section of a Finding Aid is a Container List, a folder-level inventory for every box in the collection. If you find your search term in the Container List, and want to learn more, note the collection number, box number and folder number (or title) [for your reference request](#).

Folders 4-5 Curricula Vitae, 1992-1996	Box 2 of 3
Folder 6 Termite References, undated	Box 2 of 3
Folder 7 Women's Committee Grant, 1994	Box 2 of 3
Folder 8 Exhibit - Women's Committee, 1994	Box 2 of 3
Folder 9 Isoptera Correspondence, 1984-1985	Box 2 of 3

When you click on a [Finding Aid](#) from the search results page, your search term will not automatically be highlighted. Use the Find function of your browser (CTRL+F) to locate your search term within the document.



### Additional Filters

There are more filters to narrow your search on the left-hand side of the search results page. Just be aware of a few quirks!

#### Creator

The [Creator](#) filter will limit your results to materials created by a specific individual, department, office, unit, or organization. *We are currently re-indexing our collections, so this filter may not give you an exhaustive list of results. Instead, use an exact search phrase with quotation marks " " in the search box to cover as many of a creator's collections as possible.*




#### Select Date Range

Use the [Select Date Range](#) slider to narrow your results to a particular date range. Click [Submit](#) to view your list of refined results.

**Select Date Range**

Show items from 1970 to 1990



**SUBMIT**

## Search by Collection Number

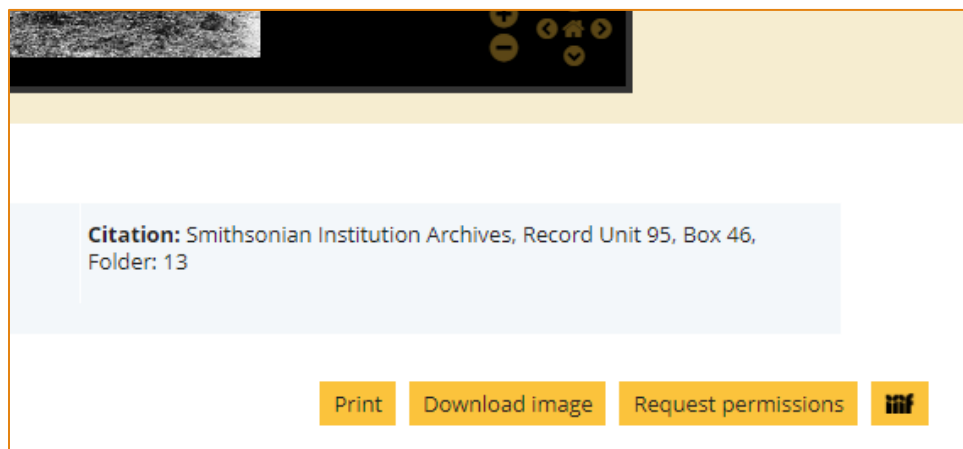
If you already know which collection you're interested in, use the formatting below to find the collection's [Finding Aid](#) (collection guide). Include quotation marks around your search term.

- Record Unit 34 → **"000034"**
- Record Unit 321 → **"000321"**
- Record Unit 7002 → **"007002"**
- Accession 06-225 → **"06-225"**
- Accession T89040 → **"T89040"**

To search by collection number, the search engine requires six characters inside the quotation marks.

## Search by Image Number

If your citation or image file comes from Archives collections and includes a string of numbers, or numbers and letters, you probably have an **image number**! Enter the **image number** in the search box to locate the image's item record, metadata, and [to ask our staff about permissions](#).



**Citation:** Smithsonian Institution Archives, Record Unit 95, Box 46, Folder: 13

Print Download image Request permissions iif

Archives image numbers, also known as image IDs or local numbers, may use any of the following formats:

2002-12143

MAH-1238

OPA-124

SIA\_000095\_B62\_F16\_018

SIA2011-2821

## Contact Us

To request access to materials, or for additional help, [contact the reference team](#):

<https://siarchives.si.edu/what-we-do/reference-inquiries>, or [osiaref@si.edu](mailto:osiaref@si.edu).

## Other Resources

Looking for archival collections held by other Smithsonian units? Use [Smithsonian Online Virtual Archives](#) (SOVA): <http://sova.si.edu>.

Looking for specimens, objects, or works of art held by a Smithsonian museum? Use the [Collections Search Center](#): <http://collections.si.edu>.