STANDING ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE REFERENCE DESK

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ABSTRACT: In the course of conducting research at numerous repositories across North America, this archivist encountered some incidents that did not reflect well upon the providers of information service. Believing that we can all learn from the mistakes of fellow practitioners, the author describes some of his more memorable vexing experiences as examples for other institutions to avoid. Following these accounts, he offers possible explanations for deficient reference practices and shares some ideas on how they can be prevented in the future.

When those of us in the archival community get together, we often tell stories about the researchers we have encountered. We will humorously talk about the letters we receive asking for everything we have pertaining to our state's history or a particular subject area. We laugh about the family historian who comes in and declares that s/he is looking up their gynecology (instead of their genealogy). Or we will chuckle over people referring to microfilm as microwave, the different ways the word "archives" is pronounced, and similar mistakes.

Do you know what researchers do when they get together? They often tell unflattering stories about archivists and others in the business of providing information. In the course of conversing with laypersons who frequently access books and records, I have heard some rather amazing accounts of researcher misfortune. Many of the episodes described by these victims are hard for most people in our field to believe because we individually give good service, receive special treatment from our colleagues when we do research, or are not involved with reference functions.

I have learned from firsthand experience, however, that these narrations of journeys into the archival and library twilight zones are true. I made this discovery by, on occasion, leaving my chair as a reference person and standing on the other side of the service desk as a consumer of the products offered by those in our trade. This role reversal has sometimes caused me to witness events that were just as remarkable as anything ever said or done by researchers to archivists.

To illustrate my point about the incredible things our customers may endure, I will describe some of the encounters I have had during the past six years. The examples I give about research institutions fall into three categories:

1. No response.
2. Wrong response.
3. Inadequate response.

To avoid embarrassing some repositories and their staffs, I will not mention any facilities by name.

No Response

I have found that about 7% of my letters of inquiry receive no reply at all, even when letterhead stationery is used. What follows are some of the more extreme examples of the "no response" cases that I have witnessed.

Over a period of eighteen months I wrote five letters to a bilingual public repository in the Province of Quebec seeking information about its holdings. I even addressed these letters to specific members of the staff, having obtained their names from professional directories. Not one of these letters received a reply. My sixth letter to that institution was addressed to the director, and that communication did finally elicit a response. The response was that the facility had nothing relating to my research subject. In my opinion, it should not have required six mailings to obtain such a simple answer. Clearly, the organization needs to review and revise its methods of controlling mail and handling patron inquiries.

Some people of conservative persuasion, learning of my experience with this repository, might think that privatization would help to improve the service of government-funded establishments. Evidence that this belief is in error comes from the fact that I had equal difficulty trying to communicate with a private library/archives that is also in the Province of Quebec.

I wrote this English-speaking organization five times and telephoned it twice in an effort to learn if it had certain materials germane to a research project. During this eighteen-month period I never received an answer to any of my inquiries. I even told a staff person during the second telephone call that I had written many times with no reply, and the woman with whom I was dealing said she could not believe that her institution would ever behave in such a fashion. I am sorry to say that, after making this remark, the woman never called me back with the information I needed as she promised she would. Obviously, this is a facility that needs to improve the way it deals with non-visitor requests.

Quebec wasn't the only Canadian province where "no response" was a problem. In 1989 I telephoned an Ontario repository to ask if it owned certain materials of interest to me. The staff person there did not know, but said he would check on the matter and call me back. While I indicated his proposal to return my call was acceptable, I noted that I was leaving for his part of the country in seven days and thus needed to hear from him by the end of the week (four days hence). He said there would be no problem meeting my deadline. That conversation took place six years ago, and I am still waiting for his message.

Wrong Response

Perhaps worse than no response at all is receiving one that conveys the wrong information. I say this because if there is no reply, no action is initiated by the inquirer. On the other hand, if there is a reply—but it is incorrect—the

researcher almost always suffers as a result of the faulty data. Some more examples from my experiences will illustrate what I mean.

A few years ago I contacted by phone the head of a collection in Wisconsin. I asked him if he had in his holdings any materials of a certain nature relating to a specific topic. His response was, "Sure, we have stuff like that." "Fine," I said, "I'll be up [north] some time to look at it."

A month or so later I drove 635 miles to visit the institution. When I arrived, I asked the receptionist if I could see the director. I was ushered into his office, where I introduced myself. I said, "I'm Lee Barnett, from the State Archives of Michigan. Perhaps you remember my call of a month or so ago inquiring about [items of a particular nature]?" He paused for a moment to access his memory, and then said with a flash of recall, "Yes, I do remember that!" "Well," I replied, "I'm here to see that material." With this declaration his face fell and he sheepishly confessed, "I don't have anything like that. I just said I did to get rid of you." While credit should perhaps be given to this person for the candor of his admission, his flippant and ill-advised answer to a telephone call, at what might have been a harried moment, resulted in great inconvenience to a patron.

Another instance of the wrong reply occurred in Michigan. Public employees get Armistice Day off each year, a holiday that I often use for research purposes. One November I telephoned a repository in the southeastern part of our state to see if it was going to be conducting business on my free day. I asked the woman who answered the phone, "Are you going to be open next Wednesday?" She said, "Yes."

"The reason I ask," I continued in an effort to double-check accuracy, "is because state government workers have that day off, and I don't know if you get the day off, too." "No," replied the woman, "we do not get the day off, but we do receive extra pay for working on that day." So, based upon this conversation, I drove 85 miles to the site of this library and archives and found the doors locked: the institution was closed on the day in question. Rather than conferring with some knowledgeable member of the staff to be sure the facility would be open, this relatively new employee made an assumption about her institution's schedule that unnecessarily cost a customer time and money.

Continuing with Michigan cites, a few years ago I made an appointment to examine certain materials in the custody of an institution on the Lake Michigan shore. I drove 177 miles to the doors of this facility only to discover that the staff had forgotten I was coming; the items I wanted to see had not been pulled; and the only person who knew where the materials were was unavailable for the day.

Realizing that the situation was unsalvageable, I asked if I could make an appointment to see the records the next Saturday. We agreed that if I did not hear from them, the appointment date was acceptable (no news is good news). To make sure there was not a repeat of the previous week's confusion, I telephoned them the day before my scheduled arrival to confirm the appointment. "Oh," they said, "we forgot about you. Tomorrow is not a good day. We will call you later and reschedule." Now, five years later, I have yet to hear from them. The public service component of this facility might benefit from improved staff communication and a wall-mounted appointment calendar in a common area.

Some Canadian institutions have also managed to qualify for inclusion in this list of memorable transactions. I wrote one such institution located on the shores of Georgian Bay and asked the director if he had certain records of interest to me. He said that he did, so I drove 383 miles to see the material. When I arrived at the establishment, the director searched his holdings for two hours while I waited for the promised materials. Then, with the facility's records having been thoroughly reviewed, the director admitted with some embarrassment that he could not find a single item relating to my research. His overly optimistic description of his holdings cost me a day's annual leave and two tanks of gas. Unfortunately, he had assumed his collection contained the items I wanted, but he had not checked to confirm this belief until after I arrived.

I had heard that there might be some things of interest to me at a Canadian repository on the shores of Lake Ontario. To find out, I telephoned the collection and inquired if it had materials on a particular subject. The reference person said "Yes, we have a lot of stuff of that nature." "Good," I said, "now how do I get to your place" by car? The young man said that, as a recent hire, he could not give me good directions, but that a colleague of his could.

After this other employee had given me driving instructions, I decided to test the accuracy of the earlier information I had been provided. I said to her, "Your associate claims that you have a lot of material [dealing with a certain topic]. Is that correct?" She replied, "I don't know that we have a lot, but we do have some." Whether a "lot" or just "some," the amount promised was enough to justify an investigatory trip.

So I travelled to this research center (which is 337 miles from Lansing), and when I arrived I was introduced to the specialist in my field of interest. This person (whom no one had contacted or even mentioned when I made my initial inquiry) told me that the institution had nothing in its holdings of the nature I sought. As a researcher, I believe the time to have brought this expert into the picture was at the beginning, and not at the end, of the process.

Unsatisfactory Response

Somewhat related to the wrong response, but not quite as bad, is the "unsatisfactory response." This kind of reaction usually gives the customer what s/he needs, but with an unnecessary amount of aggravation. In describing some cases of this deficiency, I will continue with the Canadian repositories.

I told a certain library and archives in Ontario that I would visit on a specific date to begin studying a particular subject. I expected that, having made an appointment some days in advance, the curator would be ready to assist me. When I arrived at the facility, I learned that the staff person had not prepared for my visit due to a "busy schedule" and was unable to even accommodate me as a researcher. He asked if I could come back later in the week to look at the items I wished to examine. I did agree to return to the place at another stage in my travels, but that change in schedule caused me a great deal of inconvenience and lost time by requiring a 240-mile backtrack to revisit the institution.

It is my belief that once a commitment is made to a researcher it has to be honored, except in the most extraordinary circumstances. Any inconvenience in a previously arranged relationship between an archives and a patron should be suffered by the institution, not by the customer. Therefore, rather than forcing me to change my schedule to accommodate his circumstances, I feel the staff

person should have borne the burden of adjustment by staying late at work the evening before or by coming to the office early the next morning to get ready for my visit.

Still another Canadian response found wanting occurred at a repository along the shores of Lake Huron. I arrived there at 10:00 a.m. to do research. The service person had just entered a staff meeting, so I waited 1.5 hours until the session was over before I got any attention. The curator of collections did not know that anyone was waiting for assistance because none of the support staff wanted to interrupt the meeting to tell her a customer was present. In my experience, no staff meeting is so important that someone cannot be spared to help a patron during normal business hours.

Domestically, there have also been some inadequate responses. I once visited a library/archives on the south shore of Lake Superior. After conducting research for nearly a day, I asked the staff if I could have about 300 pages of selected printed materials duplicated and mailed to me. They examined the brochures and booklets in question, and then said that copying would be possible. About a week after I returned home, I received a letter from the institution saying they had reconsidered and would not make the reproductions after all because the records were too fragile. I can understand the need to protect delicate paper, but the time to make that judgment is when the customer is on location asking about copies, not days later when s/he is 391 miles away and thus obligated to make a trip back to take notes.

At one of the universities in New York City there exists a well-known assemblage of business records. I telephoned the head of this collection and asked if I could make an appointment to see the materials on a given Saturday. Permission was verbally granted, and arrangements were supposedly made by the director to accommodate my needs on the weekend. When I showed up to do research, no one on the staff had been told I was coming or had been authorized to give me access to the restricted collection. My request to look at the desired materials was, therefore, initially denied. It was only by the good graces and compassion of the person in charge on that day that I was finally allowed to see the papers I had driven 667 miles to examine. A lack of follow-through, poor communication, or bad organization had almost cost me two days of travel with no intellectual return.

Another unsatisfactory experience occurred at a major archives along the mid-Atlantic coast of the United States. The facility opened at 8:30 a.m., and by 8:40 I had turned in a single request slip for certain records. These materials were to be brought to a central reading room, so I went there to wait for the collection to arrive. By 9:30 nothing had shown up, so I inquired about my order at the service desk. "Wait a little longer," was the answer. At 10:00 I again asked about the situation. "Wait a little longer." At 10:30 I once more went to the desk to check on the situation, and this time I was told to go back to the office where I had turned in my call slip to see if there was a problem.

When I walked in the door at the request station I saw my call slip still resting in the in-box precisely where I had put it. When I asked the receptionist why nothing had been done about it she turned to the page and said, "Why didn't you pull these records?" His response was, "It's not my day to retrieve records; it's X's day." "But X is not here today," replied the receptionist. "Oh," he said, "in that case I'll get the records."

Here was a person who knew there was a patron needing assistance, but he said nothing and did nothing because of a presumption that somebody else would eventually take care of the situation. That unwillingness to take action when a problem was perceived cost me two hours of my vacation time and a quarter of my work day in a part of the country where researcher expenses are very high.

A few years ago I telephoned a special collection at one of the universities in southeastern Michigan. I asked if the facility had a particular journal for a certain time period. The response was affirmative. I said "Great! I'll be down [south] to look at it." The next Saturday morning I drove 63 miles to visit this library and archives with the purpose of examining the periodical. When I got to the stacks, I found the magazine I wanted locked in a caged area. I could actually see the volume on the shelf through the chain-link barrier, but I could not gain access to it.

When I asked the staff to unlock the caged security area and retrieve the book for me, I was told that nobody had a key on weekends. Access to the periodical could be obtained only between 9:00 and 4:00 Monday through Friday (even though the facility was open seven days a week), so I had to make a second trip to the collection in order to see the periodical. As a researcher, it would have been helpful if this fact had been mentioned to me at the time I asked the library if it had the title for which I was looking.

Observations

The situations I have mentioned are just some of the bad experiences I have had as a researcher. One should not conclude from these vignettes that my research has been one unbroken trail of tragedy. I can also cite examples of reference service that have gone far beyond what one would normally expect from any institution. But inferior action, not superior conduct, is the focus of this article. Based, then, upon these and other unsatisfactory events, I can make a few generalizations about reference and information specialists.

1. Too many are poorly informed about the contents of their holdings, knowing little more than what their basic computer screens or generalized written descriptions tell them.
2. A number of service personnel are not solicitous or helpful, viewing customers more as a nuisance or distraction, rather than as their main reason for being employed.
3. Apparently, many of our colleagues who work with users seldom do research themselves and do not know what it is like to be on the receiving end of reference service.
4. Individuals who deal with the public sometimes do not focus properly on the question being asked, and rush to make a business-ending response without checking the relevance, accuracy, and thoroughness of their answers.

A few years ago I told these stories and made these observations to a group of archivists. My purpose in doing so was to speak as a fellow professional about some shortcomings that I have witnessed in our craft. Sharing my experiences and impressions would, I hoped, prompt all present to review their own programs to be sure that they contained no elements that could add to my tales of researcher woes. The reactions to my presentation were as surprising as some of the events themselves.

Instead of using my encounters as the basis for a beneficial self-examination, some of my colleagues chose to blame the victim for the episodes. The first responder, for instance, stated that the problems I encountered as a researcher showed that I apparently did not know how to write proper letters of inquiry. This statement was made despite the fact that, to my knowledge, she has never seen a letter written by me and, in any event, even a poorly written letter deserves a reply.

The next archival observer said that my difficulties as a consumer of information services might be attributable to the fact that my research tends to be "out of the mainstream." This hypothesis was put forward even though I never mentioned what subject(s) I was investigating when each of these incidents occurred. Furthermore, such a position seems to say that reference people can be expected to properly handle only simple, and not unusual, requests.

The last commentator, in an apparent effort to defend our profession from criticism, noted that, in contrast to what might have happened to me, he had never experienced such things while doing his research. Despite this remark, and seemingly in contradiction to it, he did concede that nearly every genealogist who has visited an archives could probably tell sorry tales similar to mine.

If these reactions to accounts of bad or deficient reference service are typical of our fellow practitioners, then the archival profession will have a hard time recognizing that it may have some problems with customer relations. Denying that such difficulties exist, or trying to attribute them in some way to the client, will simply ensure the continued presence of flawed policies, practices, or procedures.

In some businesses one can find a sign that essentially says, "If you liked our service, tell others. If you didn't like our service, tell us." The archival community should learn a lesson from this attitude and not dismiss criticism of the profession by trying to discount the source or rushing to excuse such examples as those mentioned in this article. It is possible that we can learn nearly as much from the feedback of our customers as we do from our trade literature, courses within our discipline, and fraternal gatherings.

What, then, do researchers want from our profession? They do not care how many letters are after an attendant's name, nor do they care if the person offering assistance is a certified archivist. They do ask that their human contacts at any institution:

1. Answer their inquiries, whether by mail, telephone, or in person.
2. Respond to their requests promptly. A turn-around time of one week for non-visiting clients is a reasonable goal for most repositories (that is to say that within seven days of the receipt of a request from an outside source, a reply of some sort should be made).
3. Make sure that the replies to their questions are complete and accurate.
4. Treat them like they would want to be treated if they were the ones conducting research.

These are fair and simple rules of conduct for reference persons to follow. Any qualified archivist—with proper expertise in the accommodation of customer needs and with sufficient institutional support—should have no problem meeting these standards. But if we public service specialists cannot fulfill these basic requirements, then the next time we are telling amusing or incredible sto-

ries about some of our patrons, we should not be surprised to learn they are telling similar tales about us.

Solutions

What can an archives or special manuscripts library do to avoid being used as a bad example in an article such as this? The best defense against such an indignity is to remain focused on the main mission of most historical collections: public service. This principal purpose is accomplished first by processing and organizing collections in such a way that their contents are comprehensively described (usually to the folder level) so that staff and patrons alike have full and detailed intellectual access to the material. In many ways, a reference person is only as good as the descriptors, finding aids, inventories, or databases upon which s/he must rely.

Secondly, all institutions must recognize the significance of reference people to their clientele as well as to their own images. Probably no other position in our profession has more contact with the public. Through this interaction, reference staffs assume a disproportionate role in defining the public perception of our craft and establishing the reputations of their employers. Those colleagues who daily aid the consumers of our products do, by their behavior and performance, to a large degree determine the impressions that people form of the archival community and the importance of its work.

Reference people are the ambassadors that archives use to represent themselves to the "outside world." In this capacity, staff serve at various times as hosts, teachers, tour guides, security guards, promotional agents, and customer service specialists, among other roles. With these wide-ranging responsibilities and frequent public exposure, no institution can afford to make reference a low-level priority without risking serious damage to its name. With few exceptions, the most crucial interface between records keepers and their constituents will occur in the archival reading room.

Given the important nature of this high-visibility position, the individuals selected to perform public service should at least be ones who enjoy working with and assisting others. In addition, they should be the kind of people who are motivated to read on a regular basis (and on their own time, if necessary) the literature that is generated about the practice of reference techniques and the material published about the particular subject areas in which their collections specialize. Finally, those chosen for reference duty should be among the most experienced on the staff because so much of the business must be learned on the job.

However, not all reference skills can be acquired through practice, exposure to public contact, or by reading literature pertaining to our trade. Archival service techniques can be enhanced by attending training sessions and workshops that focus on the subject, or by pursuing self-improvement efforts through instruction at the college level. Within this educational mix, a number of reference staff will find themselves in situations where reports and papers are often a course requirement. Writing class assignments (and, later, even articles) based upon the holdings of one's own institution will, in the course of conducting the necessary research, do much to improve an archivist's familiarity with the collections over which s/he presides.

Those individuals who feel their reference performance is deficient—but who, for some reason, cannot use occupational training or advanced education to build their skills—may be able to improve their situations by finding a respected information provider who will agree to serve as a mentor. In this regard, I was fortunate to replace one of the best public service specialists in the business. Inheriting her philosophy of conscientiously attending to the needs of clients, being exposed to her effective research techniques, and acquiring the highly efficient and well organized operation she had developed over the decades was most beneficial for me as one just starting out in the profession.

Receiving, as I did, a smoothly functioning reference unit from a predecessor is most helpful, but it cannot prevent the service of that office from deteriorating somewhat when the veteran specialist leaves. The former employee's familiarity with the holdings will be unmatched by his or her replacement for many months or years. To conclude as fast as possible the period during which a newcomer is learning about the collections, I suggest that the successor spend any free time (usually meaning lunch breaks and weekends) systematically examining every map in the archives and reading the descriptions of every processed accession. This extra effort will be very rewarding to any person who wishes to maximize the degree, accuracy, and speed with which they can respond to researchers' needs.

Skilled reference personnel, assisted by good paper or electronic inventories and by location guides with extensive scope and content notes, could have eliminated many of the unfortunate encounters I had when visiting archives and special collections. But even if these basic ingredients are in place, difficulties can still arise if an institution has poor control over its external communications. This deficiency, I believe, accounts for the lack of any response to so many of my letters and telephone calls.

To prevent patron requests from being lost or forgotten, archives need only develop a consistent, organized system for handling such inquiries. Any telephone call that is not fully dealt with while the patron is on the line should be written up on a work sheet for completion at another time. Before ending the conversation, name, address, phone number, and other particulars should be reviewed with the customer to double-check for accuracy. Later, when the client's question is finally answered, the work sheet should be filed as a record of what was done, by whom, and when.

Letters of inquiry should be handled by one person who is responsible for coordinating all actions dealing with correspondence. This monitoring job may include such activities as logging in and out all requests received by post, assigning them to staff for action, proofreading draft responses, and arranging for such clerical duties as typing and filing. This level of control is necessary if any heavily-used institution wants to be certain that the business it conducts by mail is handled in an efficient and comprehensive fashion.

Another element of customer relations that should be watched carefully comes under the heading of truth in advertising. Some of the bad experiences I had were attributable to people trying to oversell their programs by promising or implying more than their collections could deliver. It is fine to try to stimulate business by encouraging people to use our holdings. That effort, however, must take care not to over-enthusiastically entice clients to visit under what subsequently turn out to be unintentional false pretenses.

A related facet of the truth in advertising problem, springing from equally innocent origins but just as damaging to the reputation of an institution, is a false sense of authority on the part of the reference staff. In some instances I have had public service personnel tell me, from what they thought were accurate memories, that their holdings contained certain materials germane to my research. It was only after driving to their facilities that we both learned their recollections were wrong. To prevent these distressing situations from occurring, it is better to take a few minutes to check the original sources in question than to risk wasting a few hours or even days of a trusting customer's time.

On other occasions, the information providers were probably correct in recalling the existence of certain materials but, when required to produce them, they could not remember which collection(s) held the item(s) of interest to me. Their efforts to track down the desired records might have been more successful had they learned from previous researcher contacts. When, in the course of serving a client, things are encountered that are not reflected in the existing access tools, a note should be made of the discovery and the fact placed in some kind of collections management system. At the State Archives of Michigan, we began forty years ago to put these kinds of data in a quick-reference file for future use. Today, this means of rapidly finding obscure information in our holdings has grown from annotations on a number of 5x8-inch cards into fifty-three circulars covering a wide variety of subjects.

In fairness to some reference staff, their inaccurate characterizations of the available materials or their inability to find things attributable to their collections could have been the consequence of poor access tools to the institution's holdings. Inadequately described collections, or deficient information retrieval systems, can make even a good public service employee look bad. However, when reference specialists are handicapped by the existence of poorly processed materials, the situation seldom results in a client being wrongfully encouraged to visit an archives. Instead, because the reference person has not been provided with a clear picture of the archives' contents, inquiring patrons are usually told that nothing of pertinence exists. As a researcher, I frequently wonder how many resources I have missed because my contact person at a given repository did not have the means necessary to find extant materials for which I was looking.

Another method of preventing or correcting inferior reference performance is to seek input from outside sources about the quality of services being provided. This can be done through the use of such simple techniques as a suggestion box, patron comment cards, or researcher exit questionnaires. For more elaborate efforts, archives associated with governments, universities, or even large corporations can approach their controlling entities and request that trained staff from appropriate offices within the institution do a systems analysis or a performance audit of reference operations.

A less elaborate way of evaluating reference service is to compare one's own techniques with those of other establishments. This can be done naturally in the course of conducting personal research, or just by visiting other institutions and observing how they deal with clients who telephone or appear on site. Seldom have I gone to another archives without discovering something bad that I want to avoid in my behavior with clients or something good that I want to make a part of my reference routine.

Conclusions

Good reference service is not a difficult goal to achieve if it is given a high priority by any facility. But when, in the allocation of resources and emphasis, public service begins taking a back seat to more glamorous but less essential aspects of an archives' functions, then institutions risk becoming negative subjects of researcher lore about unforgettable experiences. Conceding that anyone can make mistakes that result in customer irritation, my experiences tend to indicate that the worst offenses occur at those places where reference activities are considered to be of secondary importance.

The attention of some facilities apparently gets drawn away from archival fundamentals and on to more high-profile, but peripheral, undertakings. The best and most experienced staff are given other assignments, deemed to be more significant by management, with reference duties falling to less skilled individuals. Even when a talented person is left to function in a reference capacity, often the only way they can be rewarded for outstanding performance is to be promoted out of direct contact with the public and into an administrative position.

This article has been written as a warning signal that some institutions need to review their commitment to serving the needs of researchers. When these thoughts—and the bases for them—were expressed to fellow archivists a few years ago, the words seemed to be discounted as being somehow in error, exaggerated, or the product of my own peculiar circumstances. To the contrary, however, the flawed conditions I described were probably somewhat mitigated from the norm because most of the institutions I dealt with knew I was a colleague and were possibly on their good behavior or giving me favors as an associate. One can only speculate on the kind of treatment received by the general public who cannot benefit from the advantages of extended professional courtesies.

Ignoring or discounting the messenger in this instance does not eliminate the problems recounted here, but simply ensures that they will continue to exist and, perhaps, even grow. This mild note of alarm comes from a supporter of the archival community who has the best interests of the profession in mind when raising the issue of inadequate reference service. If the cautionary words of an ally and promoter of our mutual cause are disregarded, then even less likelihood exists that the complaints expressed by outsiders will be heard. Should the constructive criticism of friends and constituents be taken seriously, however, it is quite unlikely that archivists will have to read an article like this in the future.

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