Archival Issues

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PUBLICATION REVIEWS

EDITORIAL POLICY

Archival Issues, a semiannual journal published by the Midwest Archives Conference since 1975, is concerned with the issues and problems confronting the contemporary archivist. The Editorial Board welcomes submissions relating to current archival practice and theory, to archival history, and to aspects of related professions of interest to archivists (such as records management and conservation management). We encourage diversity among topics and points of view. We will consider for publication submissions of a wide range of materials, including research articles, case studies, review essays, proceedings of seminars, and opinion pieces.

Manuscripts are blind reviewed by the Editorial Board; its decisions concerning submissions are final. Decisions on manuscripts will generally be made within 10 weeks of submission, and will include a summary of reviewers' comments. The Editorial Board uses the current edition of *The Chicago Manual of Style* as the standard for style, including endnote format.

Please send manuscripts (and inquiries) to Board Chair Mark Greene. Submissions are accepted as hard copy (double spaced, including endnotes; 1-inch margins; 10-point or larger type), or electronically (Microsoft Word, WordPerfect, or .rtf files) via 3 ½" diskette or as an E-mail attachment.

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Archival Issues reviews books, proceedings, Web publications, and other materials of direct relevance or interest to archival practitioners. Publishers should send review copies to Publication Reviews Editor Kevin Proffitt. Please direct suggestions for books, proceedings, Web publications, other materials for review, and offers to review publications to the Publication Reviews Editor.

Subscriptions

Subscriptions to *Archival Issues* are a part of membership in the Midwest Archives Conference; there is no separate subscription-only rate. Membership, which also includes four issues of *MAC Newsletter* and reduced registration fees for MAC's two yearly meetings, are $30 per year for individuals and $60 per year for institutions. Members outside of North America may elect to have the journal and newsletter mailed first class rather than bulk mail, at additional cost.

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Please direct inquiries regarding membership and purchase of journal copies to MAC Secretary Menzi Behrnd-Klodt, Klodt and Associates, 7422 Longmeadow Road, Madison, WI 53717. Phone: 608-827-5727; E-mail: menzi.behrnd-klodt@pleasantco.com.

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Archival Issues is pleased to consider exchange ads with other archival publications and with publications of other organizations that may be of interest to our readers.

Awards

Margaret Cross Norton Award

A panel of three archivists independent of the journal's Editorial Board presents the Margaret Cross Norton Award in odd-numbered years (alternating with the New Author Award). The Norton Award recognizes the author of what is judged to be the best article in the previous two years of *Archival Issues*. The award was established in 1985 to honor Margaret Cross Norton, a legendary pioneer in the American archival profession and the first state archivist of Illinois. The award consists of a certificate and $250.

Cowinners were selected for volumes 23 and 24. Francis Blouin was recognized for his article, "Archivists, Mediation, and Constructs of Social Memory," 24:2, 101–112. Blouin's thoughtful and intellectually engaging article states that the role of archives in the formation of social memory is an area of study with wider practical reaches than that of a purely academic exercise. Blouin's article suggests that the study of archives and the representations of history within them bring the question of the integrity of archives to the forefront. The idea that archivists may play more than a completely objective role in the formation of the historical record strikes directly at the core of our theories and practices of archival appraisal and accountability. Through opening this discussion, Blouin opens the possibility for archivists in collections of every size and specialization to carefully consider the larger issues implicit in each collection-related decision that we make.

The other winner of the Margaret Cross Norton Award is Philip C. Bantin for his article, "Strategies for Managing Electronic Records: A New Archival Paradigm? An Affirmation of Our Archival Traditions?" 23:1, 17–34. Our colleagues who develop theoretical solutions for profound problems that face us in fulfilling our professional mandates often challenge us to rethink previously held convictions or develop practical solutions. In recent years, nowhere has this been more apparent than the complex issues facing electronic records. For many in our profession, the very subject "electronic records" seems to be a Promethean task introduced by cruel gods to haunt our dreams and impede our progress. Rarely are archivists presented with such a clear synopsis of the theoretical framework, an analysis of the crucial issues, and a series of practical suggestions as in Phil Bantin's article.

New Author Award

A panel of three archivists independent of the journal's Editorial Board presents the New Author Award in even-numbered years (alternating with the Margaret Cross Norton Award) for articles appearing in a two-year (four-issue) cycle of the journal. The award was instituted in 1993 to recognize superior writing by previously unpublished archivists, and may be awarded to practicing archivists who have not had article-length writings published in professional journals or to students in an archival education program. Up to two awards may be presented in a single cycle. The award consists of a certificate and $250.

For volumes 23 and 24, the New Author Award winner was Mark Shelstad for his article, "Switching the Vacuum into Reverse: A Case Study of Retrospective Conversion As Collection Management," 23:2, 135–153. The article discusses in detail the situation at the American Heritage Center at the University of Wyoming as it undertook the retrospective conversion of the collections' finding aids to electronic format. The project, as is typical of such endeavors, became more than retrospective conversion: it became a massive reappraisal, documentation, and deaccessioning project. The article includes extensive tables on the time required to revise a collection as well as a detailed discussion of the methodology used. It is a well-written and well-documented article on potential problems almost any repository might face when doing retrospective conversion and how one institution responded to these challenges.

THE EDITORIAL BOARD

HOW RESEARCHERS LEARN OF MANUSCRIPT RESOURCES AT THE WESTERN HISTORY COLLECTIONS

BY KRISTINA L. SOUTHWELL

ABSTRACT: Researchers discover manuscript resources in many different ways. Traditional methods of locating manuscripts, such as using printed guides and conducting citation studies, are today often supplemented by the use of electronic bibliographic databases and Internet search engines. Although archivists absorb through the reference process a fair amount of anecdotal information about how manuscript users find their collections, gathering statistical data on which access points are most commonly used can be beneficial for repositories and users alike. The information can be used to evaluate the effectiveness of a collection's access points and outreach programs and lead to improved services for researchers. During the calendar year 2000, the Western History Collections at the University of Oklahoma conducted such a survey of its manuscript users. The results hold significance not only for the Western History Collections, but also for other manuscript repositories that plan to conduct studies on the information-seeking behavior of their users.

Introduction

The manuscript holdings of research repositories are invaluable resources to historians and scholars. Access to manuscript collections traditionally has been provided through in-house card catalogs and guides, published guides to repository holdings, and citations in monographs and journal articles.[1] As a result of the limited avenues for discovery of primary sources, scholars have viewed locating them as one of the most challenging tasks in conducting research.

Since the 1980s, access has been supplemented and improved through the development of electronic bibliographic utilities such as OCLC using the MARC AMC format, which permit researchers to tap into a national database of collection-level descriptions with authority-controlled subject headings. Current developments in manuscript access take electronic media a step further, centering on the emergence of the World Wide Web as an information resource locator via commercial search engines, coupled with the popularity of manuscript repository Web sites. These Web sites are often used as an

extension of the repository's outreach program, offering collection-level descriptions and subject access via HTML or XML/EAD-encoded finding aids.

Given the varied modes of access available to manuscript researchers, the question, "How does the average manuscript user discover the primary sources needed to conduct research?" should be asked. The knowledge of how users locate this information can benefit both manuscript curators and the users of manuscripts. User studies of manuscript researchers are a logical tool to discover this information.

Manuscript curators currently divide outreach efforts among in-house catalogs and guides; published catalogs and guides; local and national electronic databases; repository Web sites; and other outreach activities that disseminate information about collections to potential users. While the general public is often described as having "information overload" from current technology, information professionals experience the other side of this phenomenon as "information-production overload." Statistical, fact-based knowledge about the information-gathering tactics of researchers can help manuscript curators decide how to allocate funds and staff resources among the repository's outreach activities. This information, in turn, can be used to develop user education programs that assist potential researchers with research strategies.

A desire to achieve these goals inspired the staff of the Western History Collections to conduct our own study of how researchers locate our manuscript material. The study was conducted during the calendar year 2000 among all users of our primary sources by means of a brief survey that focused on determining which tools researchers had employed to find the collections. The results of the survey have proven informative for the Western History Collections; these results have implications for other repositories that plan to conduct user studies.

The idea of studying the information-seeking tactics of manuscript users has been addressed in the professional literature for many years, but received significantly increased attention in the mid-1980s. Between 1984 and 1987, Paul Conway, Bruce W. Dearstyne, Elsie T. Freeman, William L. Joyce, William J. Maher, and Mary Jo Pugh published seminal works on manuscript and archives users and their study.[2] Key among these works is Paul Conway's "Facts and Frameworks," published in 1986, in which Conway offered archivists a comprehensive system for learning about users.[3] His proposal was the first to put forward a practical and systematic plan for collecting data on patrons and their information-seeking behavior for the purpose of improving archival access.

Conway and his fellow proponents of archival user studies laid the foundation for today's growing trend toward strategic study of archives and manuscript users. For evidence of this trend one need only look at the program for the 2000 Annual Meeting of the Society of American Archivists, at which two full sessions were devoted to the subject of studying researcher behavior.[4] Advocates of manuscript-user studies have steadily augmented the body of literature created during the 1980s.

Paul Conway's *Partners in Research: Improving Access to the Nation's Archive* (1994) explains in detail the results of his in-depth survey of eight hundred researchers at the National Archives and how they learned the resources they needed were located there.[5] Conway also gave consideration to why patrons used the National Archives and how much experience they had with archives, among other issues. As a result of the com-

bined data, Conway suggested archivists should handle access issues from a "partnership" perspective.[6] In other words, archivists should make print and electronic access tools available to researchers, as well as make themselves available to help patrons make the most of access tools and, consequently, the collections.

Several theses on user studies have been produced recently from the School of Information and Library Science at the University of Carolina at Chapel Hill. Megan E. Phillips's "Usage Patterns for Holdings Information Sources at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Manuscripts Department" (1997) and Shayera D. Tangri's "Evaluating Changes in the Methods by Which Users of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Manuscript Department Learn of the Holdings of the Department" (2000) directly address the issue of gathering statistical data on how patrons identify manuscript holdings in a library.[7] These works are practical examples of how user studies can produce a significant body of statistical data that can be used in the administrative decision-making process for manuscripts and archives.

Similarly, Donna J. Baker's UNC thesis, "Frameworks Revisited: Comprehensive User Assessment System for the Manuscripts Department at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill" (2001), expands upon Paul Conway's 1986 article by studying the effectiveness of UNC's comprehensive system for collection and analysis of information about manuscript researchers.[8] Baker recommends using everyday reference forms and procedures to gather patron data on a regular basis. The data may be sorted and analyzed using any of the database software programs available to consumers today to make the information easier to evaluate and share with other repositories for comparative study.

Appearing concurrently with the UNC theses on user studies was a cluster of articles in *American Archivist* that analyzed electronic access points for archival collections from a user-study standpoint. Kathleen Feeney's "Retrieval of Archival Finding Aids Using World-Wide-Web Search Engines" studied the use of Internet search engines to locate on-line finding aids.[9] In her study, Feeney questioned whether electronic full-text finding aids negated the need for MARC AMC records in bibliographic utilities such as OCLC, since such utilities provide briefer descriptions and thereby fewer subject terms on which readers may hit.[10] Feeney found that although searching a database of MARC records can be challenging due to inconsistent terminology and truncated subject access, searching the World Wide Web for finding aids can be just as difficult, due in part to the vast sea of information available on the Web. Instead of replacing MARC records with on-line finding aids, Feeney suggests that the creation of cooperative databases of finding aids in multiple repositories may be part of the answer. Continued support of MARC records that are linked to these electronic finding aids can supplement the databases.[11]

Following on the heels of Feeney's article was Helen R. Tibbo and Lokman I. Meho's "Finding Finding Aids on the World Wide Web."[12] Tibbo and Meho examined the success rates of six Web search engines in locating selected on-line finding aids. They found that retrieval rates varied greatly among search engines and that no two created identical lists of hits, even when using the same search strategies. Using combinations of search engines with phrase searches instead of simple key-word searches produced the best results. While the studies by Feeney and Tibbo and Meho are not user surveys

per se, they do address the ways manuscript users locate information about collections. Their work is essential to understanding the role the Web currently plays in archival reference.

Evaluation of user queries for archival material is the focus of Wendy M. Duff and Catherine A. Johnson's "A Virtual Expression of Need: An Analysis of E-mail Reference Questions" and Kristin E. Martin's "Analysis of Remote Reference Correspondence at a Large Academic Manuscripts Collection."[13] Duff and Johnson examined E-mail reference questions submitted to multiple institutions to determine the types of questions that manuscript users ask by E-mail and how they formulate their questions. Martin's study, on the other hand, analyzed E-mail, letter, phone, and fax inquiries to assess the impact of making on-line finding aids and E-mail reference service available to users.

Based on her findings, Martin predicts several user trends for the future, including increased use of E-mail to pose reference questions, especially among casual researchers; decreased on-site visits by remote users; and increased use of the Internet to refine searches before contacting the archives.[14] Martin stresses the importance of anticipating the changes increased electronic access will bring and using these opportunities to better orient new manuscript users. Martin also encourages archivists to "use their Web sites as a way to facilitate remote access" and to better serve manuscript users as a whole.[15]

Clearly, there is a history of strong interest in the archival community about studying users and their information-seeking behavior. Published reports of user studies and related research give archivists insight into how users think about the process of locating original materials and how users interact with the framework of access tools that are provided to them. But this information is perhaps best understood within the context of one's own repository. Would the findings of Phillips or Duff and Johnson ring true in a study of Western History Collections' users? Discovering meaning in the differences and similarities among archival user studies is a part of one of the most exciting challenges that exists for archivists today: to contribute to the common body of knowledge about users of our collections so that they may be better served by the modes of access we offer them.

Collection Access Points

The Western History Collections focuses on the history and culture of the American West, with special emphasis on Oklahoma, the Southwest, and the North American Indian. Created in 1927 to support the academic curricula of the University of Oklahoma, the collections comprise three main divisions: the Library, the Manuscripts Division, and the Photographic Archives. In any given year, the three divisions combined respond to between 5,000 and 7,000 on-site and off-site research queries.[16] The Manuscripts Division holds approximately 2,200 primary resource collections on Oklahoma history, Native Americans, and the development of the Trans-Mississippi West. Access to the collections is offered through the standard methods, which may be categorized as electronic, print, and verbal. Collections staff divide their time among maintaining all three methods of access.

Nearly all collections have paper inventories available in-house; more than three-fourths are described at the collection level on the University of Oklahoma's on-line catalog.[17] The manuscript collection descriptions in the on-line catalog are also included in OCLC's WorldCat database. The entry of descriptions in the on-line catalog and OCLC is expected to continue. Electronic access is also offered through Western History Collections' departmental Web site, on which over 130 inventories of Native American and transportation-related collections are available in full text.[18] Western History has received positive feedback from patrons for the full-text inventories, so expansion of this project to include other subjects is likely.

A printed guide to the manuscript collections is available: *Guide to Manuscript Collections, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma*, by Donald L. DeWitt.[19] A cursory search of WorldCat shows that this guide is held in about 60 library reference areas, primarily in the southwestern region of the United States, and is also available on CD-ROM. The printed guide, however, is outdated, as the collections have grown by 20 percent since its 1994 publication. Researchers accustomed to using up-to-date electronic resources demand timely guides as well, so Western History plans to publish an updated version in 2002.

Another paper-format guide is available to on-site visitors. It is an alphabetical, indexed list of manuscript collection descriptions produced in-house with the Statistical Analysis System software (SAS). The SAS guide is updated regularly to include the most recent accessions. This homegrown guide was originally created in the late 1980s. The SAS program, chosen for its ability to handle extensive subject indexing and production of customized reports, is now viewed as unnecessarily complex and has outlasted its usefulness for this function. Collections staff are evaluating new systems to which the guide data may be migrated, such as MS Access or FileMaker Pro.

Verbal communication about the collections is provided through frequent tours to visitors and through bibliographic instruction sessions to undergraduate and graduate-level courses. Instructors of history, anthropology, and art history courses regularly schedule bibliographic instruction sessions to introduce their students to using primary sources in class projects. Information about the collections is also spread through slide presentations given to local public schools and community groups.

Maintenance and improvements for the electronic, print, and verbal methods of access to the manuscript collections demand skill in juggling limited staff and funding. While the Western History Collections has long kept statistics on users and on use of the three divisions for annual reporting purposes, no other surveys of its researchers have been conducted. Occasionally, information regarding how researchers learn of the collections surfaced during the reference interview, but otherwise these details largely remained unknown. Gathering user feedback on access points could help Western History's administration make key decisions regarding the continued expansion of electronic access, updating the published and in-house guides, and related issues.

Methodology

The survey was created primarily to answer a single question: "How did you learn of the Western History Collections' manuscript holdings?" It is a two-sided document

bearing a form letter to the researcher on one side (figure 1), and the survey questions on the reverse (figure 2). The questions included:

- How did you learn of the WHC's manuscript holdings?
- What was/is your topic?
- Why did you choose to use the WHC?
- Did you find the information you needed? If no, why not?
- Did WHC staff recommend other sources at WHC to assist in your research? If yes, were they helpful?
- How did you contact WHC?

The brevity and simplicity of the survey was intended to encourage patron response. The survey was given to reference staff for distribution to all users of manuscripts, both on-site and off-site during the calendar year 2000.

The contact types included letter, telephone, E-mail, and on-site researchers; faxed requests were considered letters. Researchers who visited the library to use materials were given the survey during the initial registration process and were asked to leave the completed survey at the reference desk upon their departure. Self-addressed, stamped envelopes were made available to all who preferred to return the survey by mail, although very few respondents took advantage of this option. A survey and a self-addressed stamped envelope accompanied all written responses by staff to letter, telephone, and E-mail manuscript inquiries. All surveys given to patrons were done so in hard-copy form. E-mail surveys were not provided due to technical difficulties encountered during the design process, but patrons who contacted us by E-mail were mailed hard-copy surveys with an SASE.

Results

A total of 427 surveys were distributed to researchers; 169 were received completed. This ratio translates to a 39 percent response rate. The respondents included 71 on-site researchers (42 percent), 38 E-mail researchers (22.4 percent), 33 telephone inquirers (19.5 percent), and 27 letter queries (15.9 percent). These percentages do not perfectly correspond to Western History Collections user statistics for fiscal year 2000, which are 50 percent on-site researchers, 33 percent telephone, 11 percent E-mail, and 4 percent letters.[20] The contact-type breakdown of the pool of survey respondents is skewed slightly in favor of off-site patrons (42 percent on-site, 58 percent off-site), perhaps because off-site patrons were usually required to submit payment by mail for services rendered. It was easy for remote patrons to use the survey's SASE to return their payments, possibly increasing the return rate for this group.

Because the survey instrument did not identify respondents by patron type, annual reference statistics were used as the presumed breakdown of patron groups. According to these statistics for the calendar year 2000, Western History Collections patrons were 57.1 percent independent researchers, 20.5 percent undergraduate students, 13.1 percent graduate students, 6.2 percent faculty, 2.5 percent staff, and 0.28 percent administration.[21] The largest category, independent researchers, includes non-University of Oklahoma-related researchers, as well as genealogists and members of the general pub-

lic. Future surveys of WHC researchers will identify respondents by patron type so that the demographic breakdown of those surveyed can be determined with more certainty.

In reply to the survey question, "What was/is your topic?" a total of 196 responses were given to the following choices:

- Native American studies/history
- Anthropology
- History of the West in general
- Women's studies
- Genealogy
- Other, please specify

As a survey query that invited more than one response, the number of responses was greater than the number of respondents. The researchers selected "Native American studies/history" at 32.1 percent, "Genealogy" at 26.5 percent, "Other" at 22.4 percent, "History of the West in general" at 8.6 percent, "Women's studies" at 6.1 percent, and "Anthropology" at 4 percent. The "Other" category included such diverse write-in topics as literary history; the Chicago, Rock Island, and Pacific Railroad; the history of the University of Oklahoma; Helen Keller; and tornadoes.

The survey question, "Why did you choose to use the WHC?" received 194 responses. Survey choices included:

- Location (proximity)
- Needed resources located at WHC
- Probable resources located at WHC
- Ease of use
- Required by class instructor
- Other, specify

The majority of respondents, at 50 percent, chose "Needed resources located at WHC," indicating that they sought sources already known to them, or at least known to exist at the Western History Collections. It also indicates that the majority of patrons have likely conducted some degree of research about the holdings prior to visiting. Similarly, 22.6 percent chose "Probable resources located at WHC," indicating that researchers come to the Western History Collections with a clear expectation of what they will find. Only 7.7 percent cited "Required by class instructor" as their reason for using the collections. This is a surprisingly low number, as several undergraduate- and graduate-level history and anthropology courses are known to require students to use resources located at the Western History Collections for at least one class paper or project per semester. It is possible that some students who were required to use collection materials checked "Needed resources located at WHC" instead. "Other" was chosen by 7.2 percent, while "Ease of use" and "Location" tied for last place at 6.1 percent. These patron statistics combine to describe the average WHC manuscripts user as an on-site, independent researcher interested in Native American studies who uses the collections with some prior knowledge of the Western History Collections' manuscript holdings.

The majority of respondents, 86.9 percent, indicated that they found the information they needed, while 13 percent did not. Of those who did not, 36.3 percent stated that the

desired resources were not located at Western History; 18.1 percent could not determine whether the resources were located at Western History. The remaining 45.4 percent checked "Other," although the comments associated with this response may be interpreted as an indication that the resources they needed were not at Western History. Most used this comment line to provide information about various impediments to their research progress, especially those interested in genealogy. The results of this section of the survey suggest that a separate study on manuscript user satisfaction would be worthwhile.

The central question of the survey, "How did you learn of WHC's manuscript holdings? (check all that apply)," was placed first in an attempt to ensure that patrons answered it. Researchers were given the opportunity to select as many answers as necessary from these choices:

- Bibliography
- RLIN AMC database
- Referral by another manuscript repository
- WHC Web pages, via OU's on-line catalog
- WHC Web pages, via a search engine or non-OU related site
- Published guide to collections
- Article/book footnotes
- Direct inquiry to WHC
- Other, please specify

A total of 230 responses were given to this question. The results were surprising and initially dismaying. The largest percentage of the 230 responses calculated in the initial analysis of the survey data was 19.5 percent (45), for "Other," which would be useless information unless the patron specified his or her source. Fortunately, a review of these 45 responses provided adequate explanation. An overwhelming majority, 33 of 45, or 73.3 percent of those who checked "Other," specified a fellow researcher, instructor, or other word-of-mouth means as their source. When overall totals are corrected for this anomaly, 33 responses, or 14.3 percent were for word-of-mouth sources. The majority of the remaining "Other" respondents cited sources that should have been applied to different categories. Four of the 45 cited the Internet; six were actually direct inquiries to Western History; one should have been attributed to article/book footnotes; and one cited the National Union Catalog. Clearly, word-of-mouth sources should have been included as a separate choice for this survey question rather than allowing the "Other" category to catch these responses.

The category "Direct inquiry to WHC" received 10.8 percent. This choice was intended for all those who consulted no other source to learn of the Western History Collections' manuscripts, but instead relied on logical inference or guesswork. When the additional six originally reported as "Other" are added, the total rests at 13.4 percent. "Referral by another manuscript repository" was selected by 9.5 percent of respondents and was included to reflect how many referrals we receive from institutions, as opposed to referrals from individuals. The Western History Collections regularly receives referrals from the nearby Carl Albert Center Congressional Archives and the

Oklahoma Historical Society. In future studies, this category should provide space to write in the name of the referring repository for further clarification.

At this point in the data analysis, it is interesting to note that word-of-mouth sources scored far lower in this study (14.3 percent) than in similar studies. Researchers' preference for word-of-mouth sources is a finding common to archival user studies. Both Phillips's study at UNC–Chapel Hill and Conway's study at the National Archives found that approximately 40 percent of their manuscript users relied upon word of mouth to learn of repository holdings.[22] The lack of respondents who cited word-of-mouth sources may be due to the fact that it was not clearly listed as a separate option: the "Other" category caught these answers by default. It is possible that some respondents who chose "Direct inquiry to WHC" were actually referred by a colleague or professor, but did not indicate this on the survey. Or, perhaps it is more practical to consider "Referral by other manuscript repository" as a word-of-mouth response and disregard whether it came from a person or from a repository. After all, patrons experience it only as a referral; the distinction between individual and institutional referral is important only to the surveying archivist. If the results for word-of-mouth sources (14.3 percent) are combined with those for referrals (9.5 percent), the total is 23.8 percent.

Respondents chose the categories for "Article/book footnotes" at 13.4 percent and "Bibliography" at 11.7 percent. These categories are similar in that they are both written sources found in published materials. Using footnotes and bibliographies are traditional paths to locating manuscripts; professors and historians often cite it as the preferred method.[23] Undertaking citation studies in preparation for research can be tedious and time-consuming. It can be overwhelming for the inexperienced researcher, but is relied upon as the "tried and true" means by the experienced. It is important to consider, however, that to the average user the difference between article and book footnotes and compiled subject or author bibliographies is probably indistinguishable. They are simply both citations that lead researchers to the sources they need. If these two categories are combined, they create a much more formidable 25.1 percent total.

This is a significant finding that indicates researchers continue to frequently locate manuscript material using traditional print media as opposed to electronic means. Are researchers still more comfortable using familiar print tools, despite the fanfare that has accompanied the advent of on-line access? Are print tools more readily available to researchers? What are the root incentives and benefits for information seekers to use this informal method? These are questions that must be pursued with subsequent study.

Researchers chose the category "WHC Web pages, via a search engine or non-OU related Web site" at a rate of 15.2 percent, one of the largest single responses in the survey. This was not unexpected, as statistical reports generated by hit counters on WHC Web pages regularly indicate that many of our Web-site visitors locate our pages through major search engines such as Google and Yahoo! These statistical reports indicate that WHC Web pages are typically found through key-word and subject-phrase searches, as opposed to direct searches for the institution's pages. If the four responses erroneously attributed to "Other" as described in the above paragraph are added, the total is actually 16.9 percent.

This finding is significant in terms of the continued maintenance of an Internet presence for the Western History Collections. Since 1998, our Web pages have increased in

number and complexity. In 1999, the Western History Collections began a project to add manuscript collection finding aids to its Web site for Native American- and transportation-related manuscript resources. A total of 131 finding aids have been added to date. When this project began, WHC staff did not know whether these finding aids would be located and used by potential patrons as intended. Many older finding aids existing only in paper format were entered in a word processing program, edited for content, and converted to HTML for display on the Web site. This ongoing project is labor-intensive, although not challenging from a technical standpoint. Evidence that 16.9 percent of patrons utilize the Web pages lends support for their continued development.

It came as a surprise to WHC staff that only 11.3 percent of respondents cited "WHC Web pages, via OU's on-line catalog" as their means of discovery. Employees of the Western History Collections and the Cataloging Department of the University of Oklahoma Libraries have devoted significant time and effort toward ensuring that manuscript collections are included in the on-line catalog. The contents of this catalog are also largely represented on OCLC's WorldCat. Because many patrons arrive at the WHC reference desk with book call numbers in hand, it is evident that they have conducted at least some research via the on-line catalog prior to visiting the collections. It was presumed that seekers of manuscript collections would follow the same pattern if the collection descriptions were included in the on-line catalog.

However, it is possible that not all respondents can distinguish between the on-line catalog and the WHC Web pages, particularly when accessed remotely. Although staff would prefer to be able to distinguish between users of the on-line catalog and users of the Web pages, it may be simpler to design future user studies with a single "Internet access" option, with space or added choices provided for clarification. If both categories for Web access are combined, however, they total 28.2 percent, which eclipses all other categories. Rivaled only by the combined total of footnotes and bibliographies (25.1 percent), it is clear that electronic access, whether through Web pages or through the on-line catalog, is popular with researchers.

Although the statistics for Web access may be combined for comparison to non-electronic access means, it is important to note the difference between users of the catalog and users of the Web pages. If users prefer to locate manuscript information through repository Web pages or have more success locating them in this manner, is it necessary to continue creating MARC records for the on-line catalog? Although on the basis of her research Kathleen Feeney recommends continuing the use of MARC records and linking them to descriptions in electronic databases, this may be feasible only for repositories with the staff and funding to adequately support both projects.[24] Will some repositories choose to eliminate one of the two modes of access? A review of manuscript repositories that face this dilemma is needed.

Related to the discussion about the relevance of MARC records is the result for the category "RLIN AMC database," which received 0.4 percent, or one response. This category was included because from 1988 to 1989, the Western History Collections entered manuscript collection descriptions on RLIN in an effort to expand access to its primary source holdings. Although RLIN is less commonly used today, in the pre-Internet

days it was one of few national electronic databases available for locating manuscript collections.

Only 8.6 percent of those surveyed indicated that a published guide to the collections led researchers to WHC manuscripts. This low rate was unexpected by WHC staff because our daily use of the published guides has led us to view them as indispensable tools at the reference desk. Arrell M. Gibson published the first guide to the Manuscripts Division's holdings in 1960, titled, *A Guide to Regional Manuscript Collections in the Division of Manuscripts, University of Oklahoma Library*, which served researchers for many years.[25] Donald L. DeWitt published *Guide to Manuscript Collections, Western History Collections, University of Oklahoma* in 1994. DeWitt's guide has been an invaluable tool for on-site researchers, for quick reference questions at the desk, and for bibliographic instruction sessions. Although this guide is still in use today, the University of Oklahoma Press will publish an updated version in the fall of 2002.

The decision to publish an updated guide to the collections was made in part because the WHC staff receives regular requests from on-site and off-site patrons to purchase a new copy. DeWitt's guide has been out of print for several years, which has meant that researchers' requests for a current printed guide have gone unfulfilled for quite some time. Thus, the 8.6 percent came as a dismal revelation during the survey data analysis. Some careful thought should be given to this finding. Despite the fact that the guides are always designed for easy use, with alphabetically listed collection descriptions and a subject index, the guides may not be as useful to patrons overall as they should be. This may be a problem of availability of the guides, a lack of knowledge of the guides, a preference for other modes of access, or a combination of these factors. For example, not all researchers have equal access to a copy of the printed guide. Of the approximately 60 libraries in the United States that currently hold DeWitt's *Guide to Manuscript Collections*, most are concentrated in the southwestern region. Those who live outside this region may not be able to borrow a copy of the guide. Furthermore, if researchers are not aware of the existence of such a guide, they may not seek to obtain it. In response to the low percentage of patrons who indicated they used the existing printed guide to learn of UNC holdings, Megan Phillips concluded in her study that it was "probably not worth updating."[26]

I suspect that although researchers do not often use the printed guide to *initially* learn of repository holdings, they do use it to learn of other holdings, especially if they are on-site visitors. It is my opinion, based on experience assisting patrons at the reference desk, that the printed guide is a useful and popular tool for learning about manuscript holdings. On-site visitors use it frequently to find material on their subjects and staff members use it often to assist on-site and off-site researchers. Its popularity as a ready-reference tool should be evident to the casual observer from, if nothing else, its constantly tattered, dog-eared condition no matter how frequently the reference desk copy is replaced with a new one. For the future, perhaps guides should be considered as primarily an in-house access tool instead of for remote users. Rethinking the guide's target audience does not diminish its usefulness to those who are familiar with it and use it often, but a separate study to discover the ways researchers use printed guides is warranted.

Cross-tabulation of the survey results yielded an added pool of information on WHC patrons. When viewed by contact type, it is clear that patrons who contacted us by E-mail were far more likely to have located our resources via the Internet than any other source. Fully 51 percent of survey respondents who contacted us by E-mail selected one of the two categories for Internet access, compared to 31 percent of on-site users, 24 percent of telephone researchers, and 4 percent of those who wrote hard-copy letters. It is not surprising that those who feel comfortable enough to send queries by E-mail would also view the Internet as a useful tool in their search for manuscript collections. Other findings included the fact that researchers who contacted us by E-mail and by letter were usually working on genealogy, at 47 percent each; and those who visited on-site cited Native American studies as the most common topic, at 36 percent. Patrons who telephoned us were more likely to be working on Native American studies (36 percent), and other topics not listed as an official category (39 percent), which were most frequently related to university history.

When the data are broken down by topic of research, the most striking result is that by far the largest percentage (42 percent) of patrons working on genealogy located WHC manuscript resources using the Internet instead of other sources, whereas only 12 percent of those researching anthropology used the Internet. Respondents interested in anthropology most often cited article and book footnotes (50 percent) as their source of information about the collections. Of those who indicated Native American studies as their topic, the mode of discovery was primarily via the Internet, at 25 percent, and thereafter split among bibliographies (16 percent), article and book footnotes (14 percent), and "Other" (usually word of mouth) at 16 percent. However, if bibliographies and article/book footnotes were combined as "citations," they would constitute the largest group for Native American studies, at 30 percent.

The cross-tabulation statistics are interesting due to their specificity of information on particular user groups. They suggest that separate user surveys pinpointing individual groups such as E-mail queries or those studying anthropology could generate more precise data for the Western History Collections to use in planning for future modes of access to materials. This seems particularly appropriate for studying our newest group of researchers: those who use the Internet as their primary means of searching. Little is known about Internet users who seek primary documents. Their expectations, search patterns, and success rates when looking for electronic access points to archives would be helpful information for a repository that plans to develop its Internet resources.

Methodological Issues

This survey is the first study to be done of Western History Collections manuscripts users. As such, it is not a perfect instrument. Several changes to the survey questions could have improved the quality of data received. First and foremost, no testing phase of the survey was completed. A trial run of the survey conducted during the fall semester of 1999 would have pinpointed some methodological problems before the survey began in January 2000. Having reviewed the data from several angles since the completion of the survey, it is clear that having some experience conducting user studies is a

key factor in designing an effective survey instrument. Some of the specific changes to this survey would be to include information about patron demographics that correspond to the information categories listed on our patron sign-in forms so that respondent demographics could be compared directly to our annual statistics. This would also permit tracking the information-seeking tactics of different types of patrons such as students, faculty, and independent researchers. This information could lead to the development of access tools such as on-line pathfinders for specific patron groups. Additionally, the inclusion of E-mail surveys may have improved our return rate by making responses more convenient.

Other changes to the survey focus on construction of the questions to reflect the viewpoint of researchers. In other words, when researchers have difficulty distinguishing two options (such as information found on repository Web pages as opposed to the on-line catalog), the two should be combined into a single option (Internet access), possibly with space provided to elaborate. Although the distinction between the two options may be important to librarians and archivists, researchers may be unable to answer accurately when faced with choices they view as quite similar. For those who wish to study the issue further, using focus groups with one-on-one discussion between archivists and patrons may help. Care should be taken to make the questions as clear and mutually exclusive as possible to ensure proper responses.

The survey should also be designed to produce clear and concise data. The WHC survey permitted multiple answers to single questions, which sometimes made several facets of data analysis more difficult. If questions had been more tightly controlled by asking patrons to choose only *one* category for how they *initially* learned of the manuscript source they needed, the survey results might have been easier to interpret. Similarly, this survey included several questions that were unrelated to the main point. Questions about whether or not patrons located the information needed and if they received helpful recommendations from staff members are certainly worthwhile subjects of study, but they do not add relevant data for our main query.

Overall, the survey included too many broadly worded questions without adequate guidance for patrons to provide additional information. The survey was designed to be as brief as possible to encourage patron response and was considered a "starter" survey to get WHC on the path to learning more about its users. However, in simplifying the questions, they became too broad and yielded less useful data. Future surveys will be designed with fewer, more tightly focused questions with added sub-questions that help clarify responses. Surveys that concentrate specifically on one issue will likely be more successful.

Summary

The results of this survey indicate that the Western History Collections' typical manuscript user identifies our primary materials through Internet sources and by following citations in books, articles, and bibliographies. The two response categories for discovery via the Internet received 11.3 percent (Web catalog) and 16.9 percent (Web pages), for a combined total of 28.2 percent. This level of interest in repository-supported Web access points is encouraging to libraries that have committed significant staff time to

developing on-line access. Megan Phillips's study of 1997 UNC users found that 8.3 percent accessed holdings information via the Internet. Phillips speculated that Web access would increase in future years.[27] This idea was supported by Shayera D. Tangri's 2000 follow-up study, which found that fully 16 percent of 1999 UNC users utilized the Internet.[28] These numbers and the findings of our study indicate that Web access is quickly growing to a level that easily rivals traditional sources. As researchers continue to become comfortable searching for information on the Web and as libraries expand access to holdings on Web pages, this trend will likely continue.

The second largest category, citations in books, articles, and bibliographies, seems particularly noteworthy because it is such a traditional method of research. The fact that it placed a close second behind the Internet access categories raises questions. Do researchers intentionally locate WHC materials through citations, or does it happen by chance in the natural course of research? Have these researchers already looked for the needed sources on-line but failed to find them? Have they avoided on-line access because they prefer traditional methods of research? If so, is this a characteristic common to people who conduct historical research? Librarians and archivists should give serious thought to why researchers locate the information they need completely independent of the multitude of access tools we create and maintain.

Conclusions

The survey of Western History Collections manuscript users educated staff about the identity and needs of the average patron. The statistics gathered will assist in anticipating user activities and demands. However, the survey also highlighted how much is not known about manuscript users and their information-seeking behavior. As a single survey, it cannot be used to track developing trends in manuscript use without a follow-up study. In order to gain the maximum benefit from user studies, they should be conducted on a regular basis. This study has laid the foundation for such a program of systematic studies for the Western History Collections. Although studies may be done with a stand-alone survey instrument, the more efficient approach is to incorporate selected survey questions into reference registration forms and procedures. As described by Conway and Baker, patron sign-in sheets that include brief questions about information-seeking tactics can generate the needed data.[29] Results can be tabulated yearly with existing repository statistics. As the current reference request forms used at Western History do not include such questions, a redesign of the registration form is necessary.

To make these user studies ultimately worthwhile, the data gathered must be used constructively in planning for technical and reference services. Collecting information about patrons only to shelve it for posterity is pointless, although this is often the fate of library surveys.[30] As Schlichter and Pemberton observed, "Planning and evaluation are not independent processes."[31] In other words, survey data must not be used simply as a descriptive tool for portraying a repository's user community in administrative reports. The data should be used in the administrative decision-making process when serving user needs is being addressed.

Manuscript repositories that actively engage in regular studies of researcher behavior will create a data bank for staff to consult when faced with decisions that affect users.

As in the case of the Western History Collections, decisions to implement new technology such as the application of EAD encoding to finding aids, or to continue existing access points such as printed collection guides, can be aided with this information. This knowledge produces reciprocal rewards for manuscript users and collections staff. When manuscript curators are provided with clues on which access tools are used most by researchers, staff may narrow the focus of their energies on them, and users will thereby benefit from improved access. In this way, systematic user studies can be ultimately used as one of the keys to a successful partnership between manuscript repositories and the manuscript research community.

Figure 1

University of Oklahoma Libraries
Western History Collections
630 Parrington Oval, Room 452
Norman, Oklahoma 73019
405-325-3641

January 3, 2000

Dear Researcher:

Thank you for your recent use of the Western History Collections' manuscript resources.

In the interest of assessing our services, we are conducting a survey of researchers who have used our manuscript collections during the calendar year 2000. Please complete the survey on the reverse side of this letter and return it in the enclosed SASE. Do not hesitate to include any additional comments or concerns that are not addressed by the survey questions. This survey is anonymous.

Thank you for your assistance.

Sincerely,

Kristina L. Southwell
Manuscripts Librarian

Figure 2

University of Oklahoma Libraries
Western History Collections

Research Survey 2000

How did you learn of WHC's manuscript holdings? (check all that apply):

Bibliography
RLIN AMC database
Referral by other manuscript repository
WHC Web pages, via OU's on-line catalog
WHC Web pages, via a search engine or non-OU related site
Published guide to collections
Article/book footnotes
Direct inquiry to WHC
Other, please specify: _____

What was/is your topic?

Native American studies/history
Anthropology
History of the West in general
Women's studies
Genealogy
Other, please specify: _____

Why did you choose to use the WHC?

Location (proximity)
Needed resources located at WHC
Probable resources located at WHC
Ease of use
Required by class instructor
Other, specify: _____

Did you find the information you needed? Yes / No

If no, why not?

Resources not located at WHC
Unable to determine if resources are located at WHC
Other, please specify: _____

Did WHC staff recommend other sources at WHC to assist in your research? Yes / No

If yes, were they helpful? Yes / No

Did you contact WHC by:

On-site visit
E-mail
Telephone
Letter

General comments: _____

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LISTENING TO USERS

BY ELIZABETH YAKEL

ABSTRACT: This paper explores the concept of common ground as it applies to researchers using primary sources. It examines common ground through two activities central to making sense of archives and locating sources: defining what an archives is and identifying and using access tools, and through one type of venue for explicitly establishing common ground: user education. Overall findings indicate that common reference points are often lacking between researchers and archivists. Archivists may also be assuming that users understand more about archival operations and access tools than is warranted. As a result, archivists may be overestimating the expertise of users and their ability to transfer knowledge from one repository to another. Finally, the author urges archivists to enter into a dialog on the purpose, scope, and content of archival user education offerings and work toward the development of a more fully delineated educational curriculum for users of primary sources.

Introduction

> It wasn't a very positive experience ... I kind of gave up on that whole project, because I just, I felt totally like I didn't know what to do. Because I never, I don't know anything about archives ... I don't know if it was because I was looking for a photograph versus ... written source documents or if that was why it was so hard. But it, I haven't been back. And they didn't really, they didn't really want to help me ... it wasn't some major research project; I was just some neighborhood person looking for a picture of my house.[1]

How do researchers make sense of archives and archival access tools? Or perhaps a better research question is, What are the frameworks in the user's head concerning locating and using primary sources? These questions are central to both better reference service and to the design of more effective access systems. The answers to these questions involve how common ground and shared understandings are not just created, but negotiated between archivists and researchers. Without common ground, there is little basis for learning, transfer of that knowledge to other projects, and trust.

Herbert Clark defines common ground as "the sum of ... mutual, common, or joint knowledge, beliefs, and assumptions."[2] Common ground can be difficult to build when shared assumptions about the situation, the meaning of artifacts, and knowledge about language and terminology are not established. As the introductory passage demonstrates, the consequences of not establishing common ground are frustration on the part of the user and negative feelings about the archives. While both researchers and reference archivists bear responsibility for establishing common ground, it is perhaps in the best interest of the archivist to reach out to users and to explicitly establish that common ground exists. The result of this would be not only an initial reference interview that probes the user's questions and helps the researcher to refine his or her inquiry,[3] but also a reference interview that creates common ground by establishing a shared understanding of archival practice, procedures, and particularly a common framework for how artifacts such as bibliographic records and finding aids work as an access system in the repository.

The present study reports on a series of interviews with archival users done in the summer and fall of 2001. The study examines three areas central to making sense of archives and locating sources: 1) defining what an archives is, 2) the identification and use of access tools, and 3) one type of venue for explicit "sensemaking": user education (either during the reference interview or in a more formal classroom setting). Overall findings indicate that common reference points are often lacking between researchers and archivists. Archives, manuscripts, and particularly primary sources abound in a variety of places such as microfilm reading rooms, so even the concept of what an archives is and does may be vague to researchers. Archivists may also be assuming that users understand more about archival operations and archival terminology than is warranted. As a result, archivists may be overestimating the expertise of users and their ability to transfer knowledge from one repository to another. Even among more experienced users, the need to reinforce knowledge and to explicitly inform users that access systems are modified seems to be warranted. Barbara Craig has noted, "While we must remove the 'mystery' which cloaks archival research, we must not at the same time purge the unique character of archival information."[4]

Literature Review

Examinations of users have been a theme in the archival literature for decades. Paul Conway's seminal article "Facts and Frameworks" sets out a methodological agenda for getting at different types of information about use and users, both within the framework of normal archival routines and practices and through means external to those processes.[5] User studies have employed a variety of data collection methods and sources to understand use patterns, user behaviors, and user needs. One approach has been to rely on existing data sources that allow for unobtrusive research. For example, Jacqueline Goggin and Fredric Miller used modified citation analysis methods to examine usage patterns within their collections.[6] Analysis of reference inquiries and the archivist's responses has yielded useful research data for Wendy Duff and Catherine A. Johnson, Kristin Martin, and William Maher.[7] The findings of these studies have provided us with a means of categorizing these data and they uncovered patterns of use and inquiry

that have had generalizable implications for reference services. Interestingly, Duff and Johnson categorized the third largest group of queries in their study as "user education queries." User education queries lacked a clearly defined question and were deemed to need general instruction about the types of records held at an institution and how to locate these records. The response to this type of query goes beyond question negotiation.

More interventionist user studies in archives include surveys of users, such as Kristina Southwell's recent work examining how researchers learned about the collections at the Western History Collection at the University of Oklahoma.[8] This builds on current and previous survey work examining specifically how researchers locate collections by Helen Tibbo and several of her master's students at the University of North Carolina–Chapel Hill.[9] Tibbo's work is multi-institutional and, as such, demonstrates that the trends in the use (and nonuse) of different search tools identified in surveys of individual institutions hold for larger statistically significant samples. In addition to identifying how researchers locate collections, user surveys have been employed in archival settings to collect a variety of other data concerning users: from institutional profiles of user communities to user satisfaction assessments that resulted in information for improving archival services (hours, copying, etc.). These surveys have also collected qualitative data about users' reactions to archival services and have uncovered researchers' attitudes, behaviors, and assumptions.[10]

While the research on archival users has yielded some results that have been incorporated into practice, other archival literature on reference services also provides an understanding of how common ground can be developed between archivists and researchers. Of particular importance are the articles on question negotiation and archival user education. Question negotiation as a component of the reference interview has long been a part of the archival literature. Linda J. Long's article clearly delineates the theory behind and the benefits of question negotiation. Tibbo has extended this discussion into the digital era.[11] Although neither Tibbo nor Long mentions common ground directly, the underlying point of this process is to create a common understanding and meanings between reference personnel and the researcher.

Methodology

The present study is also interested in how researchers identified archives and collections. But, it is more interested in the underlying conceptions and sensemaking involved in the archival research process and how researchers think through their search problems. In light of this research question, a qualitative interview methodology was selected. This research reports on the findings of a series of interviews with users of archives that took place in the summer and fall of 2001. Twenty-six individuals ranging from undergraduates to professional scholars were interviewed. Subjects were recruited through various archives and manuscript repositories and academic departments at the University of Michigan. As such, all interviewees had some college education; most had at least a bachelor's degree. While self-selected, this sample represents archival users with a wide variety of research experience, research topics, and venues for consulting primary sources.

Interviews followed a semi-structured protocol that employed an adapted critical incident methodology. The protocol appears as Appendix A. Subjects were asked to discuss their current or most recent research project involving primary sources. Queries pressed subjects to discuss how they conceptualized the research question, located the repository holding the records or manuscripts, and navigated within that (or those) repository. The interviewer also questioned subjects about how they learned to do archival research and their overall technological skills. Interviews lasted approximately one hour each. The interviews were transcribed and analyzed using Atlas.ti, a qualitative data analysis software that allows for the coding and extraction of major themes and the comparison of these across multiple documents.

Subjects

Information about the subjects is provided to contextualize the actual findings. As noted previously, the interviewees represented a diverse cross section of academic users of primary sources; 21 of the users did primary source research for academic projects. This is not surprising given how subjects were recruited. Four of the interviewees did archival research principally for their jobs and four for avocational reasons such as genealogy or searching for information on a house.[12] Interviewees were also ethnically diverse: 20 were white, three African-American, two Hispanic, and one Asian. The sex distribution was evenly split: 13 men and 13 women. Although interviewees were not asked their age, the median age of interviewees was judged to be in the late 20s. One interviewee was an outlier. This gentleman was in his late 70s and had consulted over 20 archives and conducted multiple projects in the United States and in both eastern and western Europe.

Experience using archives is probably a more key factor in differentiating among the subjects. Interviewees were asked several questions to elicit this information. The two questions that provided the most reliable data concerned the number of archives visited and the number of research projects conducted in archives. Subjects consulted a total of 115 different locations housing primary sources. This should not be interpreted as 115 different formal archival agencies, as will be described later. The term "consulted" includes both actual research visits to formal archives and interactions with archives personnel using telephone, snail mail, and E-mail. The average number of archives consulted was 4.4. This number implies a more experienced subject pool than was true. A better understanding of experience using archives is the median number of archives visited: 2. A total of 9 individuals in the study consulted only one archives (this was the mode). It also should be noted that several individuals used no formal archival institutions (although they did use primary sources). In terms of overall research projects per subject, the average number was 3, the median, 2. Topics of research ranged from biographical inquiries to more broadly defined questions about the evolution of social

movements. Additionally, subjects were seeking records in a variety of different media, including paper, photographs, and architectural drawings.

Findings

Understanding Archives

> Interviewer: How many different archives have you done research in?
> Subject: Can you define archives for me?
> Interviewer: Why don't you define archives for me?
> Subject: Okay. Archives seems to be a special kind of library in which materials are stored that include primary sources that need to be handled with some care, perhaps don't circulate because they're valuable, and maybe there's only one copy of them.[13]

A number of archival theorists have joined Jacques Derrida in thinking about the meaning and significance of "archives."[14] A less metaphysical and more practical conundrum was experienced by some of the interviewees. Actually vetting subjects to interview in the study led to an interesting finding concerning the degree of uncertainty among college-educated people about what archives are. Subjects were unsure if they had ever been in an archives or if they had ever used primary sources. One potential interviewee had requested items from the main library's off-site storage facility and considered that to be an "archival" request. Another subject stated, "I don't know if this counts as a primary source, I don't know what 'archive' technically means."[15]

Perhaps some of this confusion derives from the fact that primary sources are not necessarily in formal institutions or departments designated as archives, manuscript repositories, or special collections. Several individuals interviewed used primary sources on microfilm. Other researchers found and were able to use primary sources not yet in the custody of archives; a number of these documentary collections were in the homes of private citizens.[16] One subject tracked down organizational records not yet formally transferred to the archives (if they were even slated to be transferred).[17] The resourcefulness of researchers to track down records and manuscripts in the "archival underground" surprised me. This ability to do research with primary sources without ever encountering an archives or an archivist may be undermining archivists' abilities to establish an identity and to position ourselves as the core professional group to address issues concerning primary source materials.

The existence of alternative options for doing research in primary sources, perhaps even in competing agencies, is not always benign. One researcher noted that she preferred to use the microfilm copies of primary sources in the library's microfilm reading room because the readers were better and the copies cheaper.[18] Another subject was irate that a manuscript curator had not informed her that one of the books she had been using was also available through the regular library on campus.

> After I got to the end point of finding them realizing that actually one of those books was available through the [name] library just as a book you

> could check out ... but that was frustrating because I thought I had to go to this special collection that has limited hours, you can't Xerox, like there were a lot of problems related to that.[19]

While users may reluctantly expect to have to follow restrictive policies for unique materials, they become frustrated when they feel that an archivist has withheld information and they have not been provided with a full disclosure of the alternatives.

Misconceptions of archives extend to misunderstandings by users on how to identify and locate primary sources. This is partially a result of the inability to conceptualize archives. If one is unable to conceptualize archives, there is an ensuing uncertainty on the part of users as to the boundaries of the search for primary sources. One interviewee was interested in political records and began in a government documents section of a research library.

> I actually didn't quite know where to go for the ... Senate stuff ... and then I realized it was there [in the archives]. [I] ... went over ... to the library and thought that the government stuff would be over here.[20]

This uncertainty and real unfamiliarity concerning where primary sources are housed makes archivists and users very dependent on others: librarians, paraprofessionals sought in increasingly self-service microfilm reading rooms, as well as the current owners of records. Archivists are dependent on these individuals to assist users and point them to the archives or manuscript repository when it is really needed. Users are dependent on others to help them utilize primary sources and to lead them to actual archives if and when it is required. A bad experience with primary sources—either inside or outside a formal archives or special collections—can frustrate users and make their experience using primary sources unpleasant.

Finding Aids

> Interviewer: Have you looked at any of the finding aids at the [archives] for this project?
> Subject: You need to tell me what finding aids are.[21]

One of the interviewing challenges was to negotiate language or archival terminology with the interviewees. This was required to both clarify the questions being asked and to ensure that I would understand the response to questions users were answering. Finding aids were a particularly hard concept to explain without giving away part of the answer. Interviewees variously used the term "guidebook"[22] or "guide"[23] to signify the document genre archivists refer to as a "finding aid." At one point one interviewee and I resorted to a physical description of the finding aids to verify common ground and the same frame of reference.

> Interviewer: Now did you use the finding aids for the [personal] papers ...
> Subject: Yeah [hesitates], meaning the black books that are there?[24]

A number of interviewees also commented on the strangeness of the term: "Even the language, "finding aid," is still foreign to me. Finding what, you know."[25]

If the term "finding aid" is unclear, the ability to use finding aids effectively is also elusive. One interviewee who felt confident using finding aids likened them to "a giant telephone directory ... It seemed to me pretty intuitive. In terms of how you use it and just kind of searching for key words and such. It seemed pretty straightforward."[26] Other interviewees found the finding aids to be less useful. Many of these criticisms seemed to stem from the fact that their searching paradigm was library based and the finding aids violated their expectations.

> ... folks who are designing these print or on-line finding aids do need to take another step back because to me it isn't, it's not even intuitive what's going on. We think of libraries as places where we find what we're looking for, whatever it is ... And I mean, so we grow up with that and we have that model at least in this culture. Finding aids to me still don't fit into that model and make a whole lot of sense ... So, I don't know if I'm suggesting any new organization but to me, whatever organization is used needs to be better presented up front, somehow. And whether that's, whether you can figure out a way for that to come forward in the first five sentences that the staff use to greet a new visitor? That would be ideal. Or whether you somehow put it on a card that lies on top of the shelf where the finding aids are or that greets you on the Web site. It needs to be very much abbreviated, but a big picture needs to be painted right away.[27]

Still other interviewees were much more reflective about finding aids and made very pertinent suggestions to improving this documentary genre.

> I like ... as much specificity as possible. I find it very important, because it helps me be very narrow when searching. I guess too also annotated information ... that too could also help me to deduce, how people [represented in the records] were interpreting information at that time ... And I think having it on-line is essential. I think that's really important.[28]

Users' conceptions of archival access tools varied greatly. While there are no generalizations from this study, the range of frameworks and approaches to using card catalogs, finding aids, and on-line tools is significant because archivists tend to view these tools as monolithic and may not anticipate the multiplicity of ways they are used.

Card catalogs and their electronic counterparts, on-line public access catalogs (OPACs) and integrated library systems (ILSs), as they are now known, are very much part of archival access. One user preferred physical card catalogs because they were more forgiving of spelling errors: "... what I liked with the old system of card catalogs is you didn't have to have the spelling correct necessarily. You could sort of find that stuff in a cross listing and compared with the [Integrated Library] system where you have to get everything exactly right ..."[29] Another interviewee noted the inability to get a broad overview of an entire collection through the card catalog and preferred the finding aid,

"... their card catalog is huge but it's just a whole lot of cards. Yeah, if you had a finding aid, especially on-line, of course you could get a real detailed idea that, 'We have 75 drawings of Greek Revival buildings or whatever.' Whereas in a card catalog you just sit there and flip through all the cards."[30] Particularly evident was the inability of inexperienced archival researchers to make the cognitive association between the representation and actual primary sources: "I just never got past looking at the card catalog ... [I was] either overwhelmed by information or like confused by what I was reading and it didn't, it wasn't like your typical [library] card catalog."[31] Interviewees also commented on the advent of electronic access to finding aids. One interviewee discussed the interface between the analog and digital finding aids, noting that each served different purposes: the digital finding aid featured better searching capacity, while the analog finding aid helped during the actual research process by "filtering" information in the records.

> I think most of their finding aids [are] on-line, and then when I got there and saw them all on a bookshelf about this size; that helped too just to be able to see how big is this that ... I saw on-line ... So that was really nice to be able to see the two things like that. But then to actually open it up I certainly used the text there to help me filter through it all.[32]

Discussions of finding aids often encompassed the entire range of search tools used to identify primary sources. This study is in no way as rigorous as those mentioned above by Southwell and Tibbo, among others. However, my interviewees confirm that word of mouth—colleagues, friends, professors—are a prime source of information about primary sources, followed closely by citations or footnotes. Use of the *National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections* (either in hard copy or on-line), bibliographic databases (Online Computer Library Center or OCLC and Research Libraries Information Network or RLIN), and CD-ROM tools (*ArchivesUSA*) was extremely low, averaging only two respondents each. Likewise, researcher use of on-line finding aids through such services as *Archival Resources* was low. This is particularly frustrating since a portion of the interviewees used RLIN and OCLC for other purposes. In fact, one interviewee had actually cataloged exhibition catalogs in RLIN at one point, but did not know it could be searched for primary sources.[33] However, 11 individuals regularly consulted archival Web sites before they contacted or visited the institution and made use of any on-line finding aids, if available. Most significant, 13 interviewees used ILSs extensively. These findings also support conclusions by Tibbo about these ILSs being gateways.[34] The earlier quotation identifying the paradigm of the library was reinforced in other interviews. This model of searching was very ingrained and automatic. Furthermore, this raises particularly interesting issues concerning earlier adoption of Machine Readable Cataloging (MARC) by archives and special collections and whether those institutions that now implement Encoded Archival Description (EAD) have an incremental advantage in terms of attracting users. What some users have found at institutions that have implemented both MARC and EAD is that they can search the very

familiar library catalog and move seamlessly into on-line finding aids. For those interviewees who had experienced the combination of MARC and EAD, they noted a more seamless and transparent access system.

User Education

> For the novice user, we must replace the mystery of the finding aid with a delight in working with records; for the sophisticated client, mystery must be replaced by respect for the evidence that archival documents can provide.[35]

User education is a natural place to begin the process of building common ground. Archival user education can take place during the one-on-one reference interview or in educational sessions offered by a repository. Although basic manuals such as Pugh promote these sessions, little has been written about the actual curricular content of user education classes.[36] While a substantial number of case studies on the use of primary sources in the classroom have been written, none have provided a detailed account of the archival user education curriculum used during this process.[37] While quite valuable, these articles focus primarily on assisting students in the interpretation of primary sources, not the use of archives as an institution or the search and selection of primary sources. This statement is not meant to belittle the importance of archivists supporting the use of primary sources in the classroom because primary sources are often used to help develop critical thinking skills. The concern here is that a broader delineation of the scope and content of the archival user education curriculum is not occurring in the literature. Additionally, there has been no empirical work evaluating the outcomes of different types of archival user education classes or curricula.

This lack of knowledge about what goes on within the archival user education classroom and the lack of standards for evaluation contrasts with the lively discussions on the purpose, content, and scope of user education in libraries, particularly within college and university libraries. Library user education experienced a remarkable transformation throughout the twentieth century. College librarians have seen their role evolve from that of passive participant in the learning process to a more active teaching role.[38] Since the 1970s, a shift has occurred to emphasize sources of information rather than mechanics of a particular library system. In the last 15 years, the content of that teaching has transformed from bibliographic instruction for resources, indexes, catalogs, and materials in physical libraries to a focus on information literacy for information sources internal or external to the library. This transformation has entailed redefining the entire purpose of library user education.[39] No longer is the focus on curated and preselected sources in the library. Library user education curricula can now include such modules as the interpretation and evaluation of information sources, technological skills to access those sources, and assisting students to develop research questions and strategies.[40] Along with this movement has been a desire to evaluate the effectiveness of library user education programs and to target learning outcomes more strategically.[41] This wide-ranging, outwardly looking, strategic incorporation of library user education into the

educational mission of colleges and universities could serve as a model to assist archives in reconceptualizing their own researcher education efforts.

The previous two sections of this article identified a number of questions that provide a basis for this archival user education discussion. One question is the value and timing of introducing researchers to the more conceptual basis of archives and special collections versus the more practical instruction on "How does the access system work here?" Balancing the need for higher-level conceptual knowledge and lower-level practical information was debated among the interviewees. This debate also needs to take place among archivists: should we be training users to complete their current project in our repository or should we be educating users to think about primary sources and to identify, search for, and use primary sources more generally? Clearly, in an environment when the one-shot archival orientation class is the norm, practicality wins out. But what if archivists thought about user education as a process and in curricular or modular terms? What are the essential building blocks required to create the greatest amount of self-sufficiency possible in researchers using primary sources?

The reference interview is an ideal time for one-on-one user education. In addition to imparting the basics of being a well-behaved archival user, this is an opportunity to begin to introduce higher-level concepts and the overall "big picture" as Interviewee #1 noted. The "intake interview," as another interviewee referred to the reference interview, may be the only opportunity for the reference archivist and the researcher to interact closely. It should not be wasted as a "teachable moment." Multiple interviews mentioned eavesdropping on these reference interactions.[42] The interviewees all commented that it was at times obvious that the researcher did not comprehend all the information. Furthermore, they noted the speed at which the reference archivist talked. This is a cautionary note: what a reference archivist may do hundreds of times a year and has become rote can be totally new information for users. Techniques to help build common ground in a reference interview are cited by Tibbo and include restating things to users to confirm both the archivist's understanding of their question and to elicit from users their understanding of what the archivist has told them. This type of verification does take time, but can be a building block for future interactions.[43]

> You tend to when you're in that job [reference archivist] think people understand more than they do. They don't really talk to the people like they absolutely know nothing about an archive. I sometimes feel like maybe those people leave without finding what they should have found.[44]

To take full educational advantage of initial reference interviews, archives might consider separating the duties of the reference archivist monitoring the reference room from the initial interview process. While this is staff intensive, it may alleviate bottlenecks at the reference desk.

Archival user education is also a lifelong process. "I think after awhile they [reference archivists] just assume I know the ropes or I should know the ropes. And I should know the ropes except that I forget the ropes."[45] Reference archivists may assume that longtime and experienced users "know the ropes" as the quotation above indicates, but information about rarely used access tools and sources needs to be reinforced. More importantly, longtime users need to be explicitly informed about new access tools such

as the existence of both local finding aids on-line[46] as well as new nationally networked tools for locating sources. As noted previously and as is apparent in the work by Tibbo and Southwell, access tools such as *Archival Resources* and *ArchivesUSA* are just not widely known. Furthermore, focusing user education on the here and now (e.g., this repository and this project) often means that access tools for primary sources nationally are not covered.

Just as formal archives and special collections are not the only places where researchers locate and use primary sources, formal repositories of manuscripts and records are not the only ones doing archival user education. Two of the interviewees spoke about actual reference librarians "helping" them locate primary sources. (I say "actual" because most of my interviewees referred to reference archivists as reference librarians.) In one instance, the reference librarian pointed the person to *ArchivesUSA* but not to *Archival Resources*, both of which were available at the institution. This indicates reference librarians are a key group that may also need some archival user education because they are often a first line of inquiry and can lead researchers to or distract them from primary sources.

Interviewees were asked if they had any type of formal orientation to archives and what type of experience this was. For many, their archival user education was not memorable. The concepts and skills demonstrated were not embraced and few interviewees were able to transfer them to later projects. The descriptions of these archival orientations focused on the skills and, at times, the rules of the archives. Little was said about higher-level frameworks or constructs such as provenance. I began asking interviewees if they had ever heard of the term "provenance" and only two were familiar with it. Of those two people, only one was able to define the term. Interviewees were also asked what type of archival user education they would prefer. Had the method been a focus group, an interesting discussion would have ensued. Interviewees were split on the importance of practical and conceptual information as well as the level of the practical information (e.g., how to use the finding aids versus "these are our rules for copying materials"). This content issue is key and perhaps it is also time to rethink the one-size-fits-all approach to archival user education.

Users do bear some of the responsibility for letting archivists know when they are having a problem. I found a widespread reluctance on the part of users to ask reference librarians questions. There seemed to be three reasons for this phenomenon. First, some users felt a need to figure things out for themselves and took pride in their ability to do so even, as one admitted, when this was not logical and wasted time. Other users were anxious and they felt that their questions as well as their actions would make them look dumb and that the reference archivists would think they were idiots.

> It's one of those psychological barriers for me to go into, especially an archive I'm not used to. And even though I've been at the [archives] numerous times I still am a little shaky about, "I'm going to do something wrong. I just know it." [47]

Finally, some users regarded reference archivists as overworked and were reluctant to ask questions, particularly when there were others in need of assistance.

The quotation by Barbara Craig opening this section is a bit misleading. Mystery, delight, and respect are often commingling feelings for novice and experienced users alike. Reference archivists need to acknowledge a greater level of confusion on the part of all users and consciously dispel the mystery. No matter what the level of expertise of the researchers, the awe and an abiding appreciation for the record were apparent.

> I found this little invitation to a cotillion from about 1845 and it had a little ribbon in it. It was just fantastic. And some of those little objects other than the letters themselves that pop up in some of these folders just make you almost want to weep because the accident of their being both preserved and then kept in the library ... 160 years later that's very thrilling.[48]

Conclusions from Listening to Users

Building common ground between researchers and archivists is an ongoing process that needs to be continually reestablished and refined. Unlike libraries, where the paradigm for assistance, access tools, and rules have been inculcated into clients since grade school, archives are in some ways a *tabula rasa* for researchers. Their expectations are in many ways determined by first contacts. The onus is on archivists to establish themselves (ourselves) as the *primary* primary-source professionals and to define archives more broadly within the extended research community. This can be done through archival user education as well as by reaching out to other units that manage primary sources, such as microfilm reading rooms, and to other units that do user education, such as reference departments. The latter group is particularly important because they are often gatekeepers for access to both primary and secondary reference sources and often do the selection of the high-priced access tools (e.g., *Archival Resources* and *ArchivesUSA*) for an entire institution. Reference librarians are also vital because archivists can learn much from existing models of library user education.

Common ground is enacted in the effective use of the variety of access tools available. Unlike the earlier study of finding aids by Michael Stevens, the interviewees in this study used finding aids (guidebooks, guides, the black books) heavily.[49] It is in finding aids that users' representations of archives meet archivists' representations of collections. If these two cognitive representations intersect enough, the user is able to locate and utilize the archives and to identify primary sources that may hold the answer to his or her inquiry. If these representations diverge, the access tools are useless for the researcher. Creating finding aids that are true boundary objects is key.[50] Researcher after researcher noted the intricacies of access systems and it is apparent that finding aids are not the transparent tools for users that archivists intend. One user who had already completed several research projects using primary sources still noted, "I'm not sure I still understand that system"[51] when asked about his understanding of finding aids.

Finally, archival user education needs to come out of its black box. We need to have a better understanding of what goes on in user education sessions and what types of evaluation are done following these sessions. This could lead to a series of best prac-

tices for various populations (genealogists, college freshman, etc.) as well as a reevaluation of both content and scope for archival user education. In terms of lifelong learning, a researcher's ability to transfer knowledge from one archives or manuscript collection to the next and between separate research projects is critical if archives are to build up an expert, committed clientele that can support the archives in other ways. Rethinking the basis of archival user education may also help us integrate it into the educational curriculum at earlier stages, the benefits of which have been advocated both inside and outside of the archival profession. Beginning education on using primary sources earlier can only help future users of records and manuscripts and will initiate the ongoing process of building common ground.

Appendix A: Semi-Structured Interview Protocol

Study Title: Creating Boundaries not Barriers: Improving Researchers' Access to Primary Sources

1. Describe your current research/most recent project using primary sources.
2. What methods are you using to locate information about this subject?
3. What means have been most successful?
4. Describe your experience using archives and primary resources.
5. At approximately how many archives have you done research?
6. Could you describe how you use access tools?
7. What training have you had to locate and work with primary sources?
8. What type of preparation do you do prior to entering the archives?
9. Do you use the Internet to gather information about archives?
10. Describe your use of Web-based information.
11. What would you say is your most reliable type of access tool?
12. What source do you use most often to identify primary resources?
13. How did you find out about [name] repository?
14. In your own words, describe what an archival finding aid does.
15. Have you ever examined archival finding aids on-line?
16. What is your opinion of these sources for information concerning archives?
    a. Colleagues
    b. Reference archivists
    c. Footnotes/citations
    d. Guides to archival collections
    e. National Union Catalog of Manuscript Collections (NUCMC)
    f. Finding aids (paper form)
    g. Finding aids (on-line)
    h. Archival Web sites
    i. Research Libraries Information Network (RLIN)
    j. *Archival Resources*
    k. Online Cataloging Library Consortium (OCLC)
    l. Local Online Public Access Catalogs (OPACS)
    m. *ArchivesUSA*
    n. National Inventory of Documentary Sources (NIDS)

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NOTES

1. Interview #7, lines 35–46.
2. Herbert Clark, *Using Language* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1996): 93.
3. Standard texts and articles have focused on the question negotiation aspect of the reference interview. For example, see Mary Jo Pugh, *Providing Reference Services for Archives and Manuscripts* (Chicago: Society of American Archivists, 1992): 41–53, and Linda L. Long, "Question Negotiation in the Archival Setting: The Use of Interpersonal Communication Techniques in the Reference Interview," *American Archivist* 52 (winter 1989): 40–51. Even in the virtual environment, Helen R. Tibbo also emphasizes "clarifying the question," although many of her techniques for making up for the lack of physical conversational cues (such as tone of voice and body language) are also classic cues used to verify common ground. Helen R. Tibbo, "Interviewing Techniques for Remote Reference: Electronic versus Traditional Environments," *American Archivist* 58:3 (1995): 294–310. While question negotiation is important, I would also suggest that the educational aspect of the reference interview may be just as important.
4. Barbara L. Craig, "What are the Clients? Who are the Products? The Future of Archival Public Services in Perspective," *Archivaria* 31 (winter 1990–1991): 137–138.
5. Paul Conway, "Facts and Frameworks: An Approach to Studying the Users of Archives," *American Archivist* 49:4 (1986): 393–407.
6. Fredric Miller, "Use, Appraisal, and Research: A Case Study of Social History," *American Archivist* 49:4 (1986): 371–392, and Jacqueline Goggin, "The Indirect Approach: A Study of Scholarly Use of Black and Women's Organizational Records in the Library of Congress Manuscript Division," *Midwestern Archivist* 11:1 (1986): 57–67.
7. Wendy M. Duff and Catherine A. Johnson, "A Virtual Expression of Need: An Analysis of E-mail reference Questions," *American Archivist* 64:1 (2001): 43–60; Kristin E. Martin, "Analysis of Remote Reference Correspondence at a Large Academic Manuscripts Collection," *American Archivist* 64:1 (2001): 17–42; and William J. Maher, "The Use of User Studies," *Midwestern Archivist* 11:1 (1986): 15–26.
8. Kristina L. Southwell, "How Researchers Learn of Manuscript Resources at the Western History Collections," paper presented at the Midwest Archives Conference, May 3–5, 2002, Minneapolis, Minnesota. See published version of Southwell's research elsewhere in this issue.
9. Helen R. Tibbo, "Primarily History: Historians and the Search for Primary Source Materials," Proceedings of the ACM IEEE Joint Conference On Digital Libraries, July 14–18, 2002, Portland, Oregon. <http://portal.acm.org/citation.cfm?doid=544220.544222> See also Megan E. Phillips, "Usage Patterns for Holdings Information Sources at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Manuscripts Department" (master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 1997), and Shayera D. Tangri, "Evaluating Changes in the Methods by Which Users of the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill Manuscript Department Learn of the Holdings of the Department" (master's thesis, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill, 2000).
10. Other surveys include Paul Conway, *Partners in Research: Improving Access to the Nation's Archive. User Studies at the National Archives and Records Administration* (Pittsburgh: Archives and Museum Informatics, 1994); and "Research in Presidential Libraries: A User Survey," *Midwestern Archi-*

vist XI:1 (1986): 35–56; and Ann D. Gordon, *Using the Nation's Documentary Heritage: The Report of the Historical Documents Study* (Washington, D.C.: NHPRC, 1992).

11. Linda J. Long, "Question Negotiation in the Archival Setting: The Use of Interpersonal Communication Techniques in the Reference Interview," *American Archivist* 52:1 (1989), and Tibbo, "Interviewing Techniques."
12. This totals 29 because several of the researchers did either academic or work-related primary source research as well as genealogical research.
13. Interview #23, lines 26–34.
14. For example, see Terry Cook, "Fashionable Nonsense or Professional Rebirth: Postmodernism and the Practice of Archives," *Archivaria* 51 (spring 2001): 32; Brien Brothman, "The Pasts that Archives Keep: Memory, History, and the Preservation of Archival Records," *Archivaria* 51 (spring 2001): 48–80; Eric Ketelaar, "Archivalisation and Archiving," *Archives and Manuscripts* 27:2 (1999): 54–61; and Tom Nesmith, "Seeing Archives: Postmodernism and the Changing Intellectual Place of Archives, *American Archivist* 65:1 (2002): 24–42. Among other works, these articles reference Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,* translated by Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1996).
15. Interview #25, lines 17–18.
16. Interviews #4 and #20.
17. Interview #17.
18. Interview #26, lines 41–43.
19. Interview #25, lines 90–94.
20. Interview #18, lines 92–95.
21. Interview #23, lines 112–113.
22. Interview #13.
23. Interview #27.
24. Interview #18, lines 55–61.
25. Interview #1, lines 609–610.
26. Interview #6, lines 178–180.
27. Interview #1, lines 562–575.
28. Interview #6, lines 212–220.
29. Interview #20, lines 37–39.
30. Interview #12, lines 380–383.
31. Interview #7, lines 93–96.
32. Interview #3, lines 178–183.
33. Interview #27.
34. Tibbo, *Primarily History*, 5.
35. Craig, 138.
36. Pugh, 41–53.
37. For example, see Marcus C. Robyns, "The Archivist as Educator: Integrating Critical Thinking Skills into Historical Research Methods Instruction," *American Archivist* 64:2 (2001): 363–384; Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, "An Exploration of K–12 User Needs for Digital Primary Source Materials," *American Archivist* 61 (1998): 136–157; Anne J. Gilliland-Swetland, Y. Kafai, and William Landis, "Integrating Primary Sources into the Elementary School Classroom: A Case Study of Teachers' Perspectives," *Archivaria* 48 (1999): 89–116; Ken Osborne, "Archives in the Classroom," *Archivaria* 23 (1986–1987): 16–40; Laurie Lounsberry McFadden, "Making History Live: How to Get Students Interested in University Archives," *College and Research Libraries News* 59:6 (1998): 423–425; James W. Hopkins and Duane Reed, "Teaching historical methods through the archives. United States Air Force Academy," *Colorado Libraries* 19 (summer 1993): 35–37; and Patricia L. Adams, "Primary Sources and Senior Citizens in the Classroom," *American Archivist* 50:2 (1987): 239–242.
38. Evan Farber, "College Libraries and the Teaching/Learning Process: A 25 year Reflection," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 25:3: 171–177.
39. Virginia M. Tiefel, "Library user Education: Examining its Past, Projecting its Future," *Library Trends* 44:2 (fall 1995): 318–339.
40. Judi Repman and Randal D. Carlson, "Building Blocks for Information Literacy," *Education Libraries* 25:2 (2002): 22–25; Wenxian Zhang, "Developing Web-enhanced learning for information fluency: a liberal arts college's perspective," *Reference & User Services Quarterly* 41:4 (2002): 356–63;

and Sonia Bodi, "How do we bridge the gap between what we teach and what they do? Some thoughts on the place of questions in the process of research," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 28:3 (2002): 109–114.

41. For example, see Peggy L. Maki, "Developing an Assessment Plan to Learn about Student Learning," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 28:1–2 (2002): 8–13; Elizabeth Wall Carter, "'Doing the best you can with what you have:' lessons learned from outcomes assessment," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 28:1–2 (2002): 36–41; and Katherine K. Dunn, "Assessing information literacy skills in the California State University: a progress report," *The Journal of Academic Librarianship* 28:1–2 (2002): 26–35.
42. Interviews #12, #13, #25, #26, and #27.
43. Tibbo, "Interviewing Techniques for Remote Reference," 305.
44. Interview #12, lines 413–416.
45. Interview #26, lines 183–184.
46. Interview #14.
47. Interview #18, lines 436–438.
48. Interview #26, 472–476.
49. Michael Stevens, "The Historian and Archival Finding Aids," *Georgia Archive* 5 (winter 1977): 64–74.
50. The concept of "boundary object" comes from Susan Leigh Star and James R. Griesemer, "Institutional Ecology, Translations, and Boundary Objects: Amateurs and Professionals in Berkeley's Museum of Vertebrate Zoology, 1907–39," *Social Studies of Science* 19 (1989): 387–420. A boundary object is an artifact or document that has meaning in two communities and part of the meaning converges in order that the two communities can communicate across any cultural, intellectual, economic, etc., divides. For a fuller discussion of boundary objects in the reference process, see Elizabeth Yakel, "Thinking Inside and Outside the Boxes: Archival Reference Services at the Millennium," *Archivaria* 49 (2000): 140–160.
51. Interview #3, line 151.

REMEMBERING ALMA MATER: ORAL HISTORY AND THE DOCUMENTATION OF STUDENT CULTURE

BY ELLEN D. SWAIN

ABSTRACT: For over a half century, archivists have debated the role of oral history in archives and libraries. While most agree that oral history is a valuable resource, many see its practice as an "extra" activity involving extensive funding, training, and time. When undertaken with careful planning and research, however, oral history offers endless possibilities for the academic archives. Through discussion of an alumni oral history project at the University of Illinois' Student Life and Culture Archival Program, this article illustrates how oral history not only strengthens the research potential of existing collections, but also enhances traditional archival activities, such as collection development and user service. In turn, oral history presents new avenues for outreach programming on the campus, in the community, and beyond.

For decades, archivists and historians have deliberated the role and use of oral history in documentation strategy and research. While some argue that the practice promotes a more inclusive history by capturing the experience of the "common" individual, others point to its subjective nature and its reliance on fallible memory. James Fogerty convincingly illustrates that oral history supplements existing records to "fill in gaps."[1] However, expense, time shortages, and required training are admitted deterrents to undertaking its practice in the archives.

It is true that oral history has limitations: interviews must be analyzed critically in the context of other documentary sources due to the unreliability of human memory and interviewer and interviewee biases. Oral history projects are time-consuming and require appropriate funding, training, and research preparation. Although this article will not attempt to resolve the debate concerning oral history's place in archival practice, it will illustrate how an oral history project can have an immensely positive impact on the entire archives operation. The University of Illinois Archives' investment in an alumni oral history project not only added invaluable and unique documentation to the Archives' holdings, but also benefited more traditional archival duties such as collection development, user service, and outreach in unsuspected and far-reaching ways.

Oral History and the Archives

The modern field of oral history in the United States largely owes it beginnings to historian Allan Nevins who, in 1948, founded the Columbia University Oral History Research Office, one of the earliest and most notable oral history programs in the country. By the mid-1950s, oral historians promoted oral history's value to archivists with limited success. Initially used as an archival documentation strategy to supplement records of prominent historical figures, by the 1960s and 1970s oral history became a widespread tool of the social history movement to document women, minorities, and others who previously had been excluded from the historical narrative.[2]

Archivists responded to the growing use of oral history during this period by debating its value as a reliable source. Historian Barbara Tuchman took archivists and others to task for adding to the explosion of modern paperwork with poorly conducted oral history documentation.[3] James Fogerty answered this criticism by pointing to the poor quality of existing documentation, noting that oral history "blended with archival research, may be crucial to complete understanding of information in the papers and is the only way to add information that the papers do not contain."[4] Bruce Bruemmer agreed that the "nature of modern documentation demands oral history as a component of historical research" as it fills in gaps and is a good hook to primary resources.[5]

Archivists also argued over their role in the process. Some extolled archivists' neutral, objective position as collectors and curators, not as creators, of records. Others, such as Society of American Archivists (SAA) President Gerald Ham, challenged archivists in 1975 to adopt a more active and creative role in documenting history.[6] By the mid-1980s and 1990s, oral history was becoming more accepted by the archival profession. In 1981, the SAA's oral history committee became a professional affinity group and in 1983 it organized as a section.[7] Bruce Bruemmer's 1991 article concerning the need for access to oral history led to an NHPRC grant to fund the SAA publication *Oral History Cataloging Manual* by Marion Matters in 1995. Since the mid-1990s, archival discourse on the subject has moved away from debate over oral history's validity to focus on ways in which digital access to sound recordings can be accomplished.

Illinois' Oral History Project: A Case Study

The Student Life and Culture (SLC) Archival Program at the University of Illinois Archives began planning for an alumni oral history project in the fall of 1999. Mandated to document student experience and culture at the University of Illinois and on the national level, the SLC program was founded in 1989 with funding from the foundation of alumnus and fraternity leader Stewart S. Howe, 1928. A full-time archivist administers the program with support from two graduate students and volunteers. Known for its outstanding national fraternity collections, the SLC program is dedicated to documenting all aspects of student life—academic, social and cultural, religious, political, professional, military, and athletic—that contribute to the total student experience in higher education.

Documenting student experience is not an easy task, even with a full-time staff person devoted to the cause. Student organizations come and go. Some groups keep records;

many do not. The fact that student officers in many organizations change each semester only complicates collection development and outreach efforts. As a result, it is difficult to keep up with this ever-changing population's attitudes, experiences, and involvement in campus activities. Although the program has collected material actively since the early 1990s, holes and gaps in the collections inevitably exist.

Therefore, in the fall of 1999, the Student Life and Culture archivist initiated plans for an oral history project concerning University of Illinois (UI) student life during the late 1920s and 1930s. Three issues motivated the project: the significance of the period, both nationally and at the UI; the lack of archival holdings concerning students in the 1930s; and the advanced age of possible participants.

The significance and impact of the Great Depression on student life is substantial. Helen Horowitz and Calvin Lee explore its effect on campuses in their studies of student cultures in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.[8] Yet few firsthand student accounts or full treatments in secondary sources exist. In addition, the period is important for UI history due to a critical policy change in student administration initiated just prior to the retirement of Dean of Men Thomas Arkle Clark.

The first dean of men in the United States, Clark was nationally regarded as a leader in the field of student administration and discipline and famous for advocating a hands-on policy for dealing with students. His rules were strict and plentiful. Shortly before Clark's retirement in 1931, University President Harry Chase loosened student policy, allowing more freedom for and demanding more accountability and responsibility from students.[9] This administrative transition, coupled with the effects of the Depression on student experience, made the 1930s a significant period in the university's history. The plan to interview students who graduated in the 1920s in addition to interviewing those who graduated in the 1930s would allow for comparison between student experiences under the two UI campus administrations and within periods of economic stability and devastation.

Although the archives had official student administrative office records, some student organization materials, and student publications, little existed in the way of scrapbooks, student correspondence, or diaries. The students' voice was missing from the archives. Importantly, alumni who graduated during this period were well into their eighties and nineties. Those who were freshman during Clark's last year in office were at least 87 years old. If the archives did not record their student experiences and reflections now, these accounts would be lost.

The first crucial step in the project was to conduct research. The SLC archivist began by contacting and visiting experienced oral historians on campus and at other universities; reading oral history literature, texts, and publications; and studying archival sources and secondary works concerning UI student life and national history during the period.[10] Planning for costs, determining attainable goals, exploring equipment options, and ascertaining the availability and interest of alumni were early activities. After months of planning and consideration, she submitted a proposal to the university's Campus Research Board for funding.

During the years 2000–2001, the proposal outlined that the SLC archivist would interview 30–35 alumni who had graduated from the university between 1928 and 1938. The proposal requested cassette tapes, a tape recorder, a transcription machine, gradu-

ate-student wages to transcribe the tapes, and minimal travel money, totaling $4,520. Unfortunately, the proposal was submitted near the end of the fiscal year when monies were short. The board approved $500 to cover equipment costs. With the encouragement of the chair, the SLC archivist then applied for and received $3,000 for undergraduate-student wages from the University Library Research and Publication Committee. The library also funded the archivist's participation in the SAA's oral history workshop in Denver, Colorado, in August 2000. Tapes and some travel expenses would be covered by the SLC program's budget.

In addition, the SLC archivist was required to submit a third proposal to the university's Institutional Review Board (IRB), which approves all research involving human subjects. The IRB determined that the project was exempt from institutional review and granted its approval in short order. Fortunately, this review went quite smoothly. In recent years, increased regulation by IRBs in social science research involving human subjects has become problematic for those conducting oral history. Formed in 1974 by the National Research Act (PL 93-348), IRBs traditionally focused on ensuring the rights and protection of subjects involved in scientific and medical studies. However, as oral historian Linda Shopes explained, historians are increasingly "required to submit their interviewing protocols for review by IRBs, as principles and practices designed to protect subjects of biomedical and behavioral research are misapplied to humanistic forms of inquiry."[11]

Curiously, IRBs at different institutions review oral history proposals with differing levels of intensity. While the UI review quickly deemed the archives project exempt, oral historians at other institutions such as Illinois State University and Michigan State University have had difficulty working under IRB constraints. Rarely prohibiting projects, many IRBs instead require needless modifications such as maintaining the anonymity of interviewees, which may alter the historian's research. In 2000, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) prepared a report recommending that universities make a concerted effort to recruit more social scientists to serve on IRBs that review their work.[12]

After securing IRB approval for the project, the archivist sought and received the university legal counsel office's approval of an interview copyright release form. This form is crucial in securing access to the interviews for future researchers.[13] The next step was to formulate questions based on the historical research. Although the SLC archivist planned to use the data she gathered for her own research, she wanted to make sure that the interview questions were not narrowly designed to fit her needs; rather, she wanted interviewees to speak to a wide range of issues and subjects. It was important to capture students' total experience but at the same time, not cover "everything" for fear of conducting interviews that did not address anything substantially.

Questions concerned life before entering the university; academic study; the Depression and economy; social life; rules and regulations (including the influence of Dean of Men Thomas Arkle Clark); diversity of the student body; religious atmosphere; and life after the university.[14] The archivist shared her questions with the university historian who provided comments and offered suggestions.

The greatest obstacle in project planning was selecting an interview pool. The Alumni Association and the University Foundation were helpful in providing alumni lists and

contacts. However, it was important to rely on other sources as well. Interviewing alumni with strong connections to the University Foundation would result in an interview pool biased by the high financial status or pro-university outlook of the interviewees who supported the institution. Fortunately, the Alumni Association's "living alumni list" for graduates during the project's period included all alumni, not just those who belonged to the Alumni Association. For the years 1928–1938, this listing included 5,272 graduates who were living in all corners of the United States and abroad.

Oral history literature did not address well the issue of statistical selection of a representative interview pool.[15] After consultation with several oral historians, the archivist relied on the snowball technique: interview one participant, obtain names from that person, interview those contacts, etc. Five months into the project, the local newspaper ran a story about the project that resulted in a flood of interested alumni, which helped diversify the interview pool by including participants from a variety of economic levels. Although the process of choosing alumni was somewhat random, primarily by word of mouth, the archivist also directly contacted alumni to ensure that the interview pool was as representative and diverse as possible in terms of major course of study, ethnic background, and social involvement in activities on campus.

Also important was locating interviewees from different areas of the country in order to broaden the scope of the pool. By the project's end in summer 2001, the SLC archivist had interviewed 44 alumni who graduated between 1927 and 1939 and resided in six states: Illinois, Indiana, Kentucky, Ohio, Florida, and Colorado. Of these interviewees, 17 lived two hundred miles or more from the university. Two speaking engagements in Florida and Colorado for the university Alumni Association allowed the archivist to connect with interviewees in those areas at low cost as the Alumni Association paid for plane fare and lodging. In addition, several local alumni sent the newspaper article to possible participants in other areas who then contacted the archives.

The pool comprised 21 men and 23 women. Two of the alumni were African-American and one alumna was Jewish. The small number of minority students from the period made finding a diverse selection of alumni quite difficult. For instance, in 1930, there were 138 African-American students enrolled at the UI out of 10,730 undergraduates. In addition, approximately half of the interviewees were members of a fraternity or sorority in college. This high percentage of Greek participants was unplanned. Although this composition would support a comparative study of fraternity and independent life, it is problematic for drawing conclusions about the economic status and representative experience of the entire student body.

Two undergraduate students transcribed the interviews, each of which averaged one and one-half hours. After the SLC archivist proofread the copy for mistakes, the students typed a second draft, which was then sent to the interviewee for comments. One of the biggest problems with this process was that interviewees edited their interviews excessively though they had been asked to limit editorial remarks. Some alumni felt that they had not spoken well grammatically or that they "sounded dumb." Many wanted the transcript to read as a well-prepared speech. Only one interviewee refused to sign the copyright agreement unless the transcript were corrected as he wished and the tapes destroyed. He felt he had "sounded uneducated."

The elderly age of the interviewees was another issue. Since interviewee ages ranged between 85 and 95 years old, many had faltering memories and a few suffered from mild cases of dementia. Certainly, these problems affected the quality of the interviews, although a number of the more elderly participants conveyed their interesting experiences and thoughts with great eloquence.

Interviews also sparked emotion as interviewees described deep hurts and remembered loved ones and friends who had passed away. Albert Spurlock, 1938, an African-American alumnus, spoke with great feeling when describing the discrimination he experienced in the community and at the university. Austin Dyson, 1937, invited the archivist to interview him months after his wife Elaine's death. Remembering their time together at the UI was a tearful, difficult event. To ease his grief, Dyson decided to compile a family history for his children partly based on his and his wife's college diaries, copies of which he later donated to the archives. And, of course, there were other problems inherent to any oral history project: barking dogs, doorbells, interruptions to run to get a photograph or a yearbook. One interviewee's wife accidentally tripped on the tape recorder cord sending the machine off the table and across the floor. In spite of any technical difficulties, the staff had transcribed all interviews by the summer of 2002.

Enhancement of the Research Collection

Proponents of oral history have justified its use by pointing to problems with official records and many personal papers in collections. Archival collections have documented the administrative and official activities and policy of the university to the exclusion of other "smaller" but important voices on campus. In addition, the mass proliferation of twentieth-century paper documentation, largely due to technological advances, has questionable research value. Historian Arthur Schlesinger decreed in 1967 that "the rise of the typewriter has vastly increased the flow of paper and the rise of the telephone has vastly reduced its importance." Helen Samuels amended this statement in 1992 by suggesting that "the copy machine has increased the paper flow, while electronic mail and database systems have further altered our means of communication," which in turn has created "significant alterations in the documentary record."[16] The "blending of archival research with oral history," explains James Fogerty, "may be crucial to complete understanding of information" in the papers.[17]

Samuels and William Maher, authors of the SAA's two university and college archives manuals, underline the critical importance of oral history to the academic archives. Samuels explains that, "if archivists perceive their responsibility as documenting an institution, then the intervention to create or ensure the creation of records must be an integrated part of their documentary mission." Maher also insists that "once the archival program is on solid footing the main question for the academic archivist should be how to obtain resources for this critical supplement [oral history] to archival work."[18]

The impact of the UI alumni project on the archives' research collections and programming has been substantial. As anticipated, the interviews "filled in" gaps by adding depth and dimension to the existing archival collections. The interviews' content addresses a wide range of research areas. The archivist's initial interest in President

Chase's relaxation of rules was supplemented by issues such as female students' unhappiness in course offering and career options, the relationship between the fraternity and independent students on campus, and the lack of political interest and activity on campus during the period.

One example of how the SLC alumni interviews have informed, added human voice to, and enhanced understanding of the official archival records in the archives centers on the practice of segregated food service on campus in the 1930s. In her report on "Boarding and Housing Conditions of 'Colored Students' of the UI" in 1929–1930, Dean of Women Maria Leonard reports:

> At present these girls have the opportunity of eating the noon meal at the cafeteria in the Woman's Building. Aside from this, whenever they are hungry, they must either cook for themselves, make a long trip downtown to the Illinois Central Station, or else undergo the humiliation of waiting in a restaurant near the campus until the desired food is cooked or prepared and take this food home, generally to be eaten cold.[19]

When Erma Scott Bridgewater, 1937, entered the university in 1934, she experienced this segregation firsthand. She comments about the experience:

> There was no place for us to eat on campus. There were restaurants, but we couldn't eat in them. So what I did, Pamisano had a wagon outside, out in front of the library, and he sold candy and apples. And that was my lunch ... a Mr. Goodbar and an apple, and [I'd] take it into the library to the restroom and eat it.[20]

The Dean of Women's files contain a letter concerning the closure of the Alpha Delta Theta house during the depths of the Depression. The dean opted to have renting sororities fold and move into sororities that were paying mortgages in order to keep the larger sororities solvent. Dean Leonard indicated in a letter to staff that it was most prudent to close the sorority, even though she acknowledged that President Kathryn Hansen and the other Alphas were making a valiant effort to stay afloat.[21]

Sixty-seven years later, Kathryn Hansen, 1934, tells her side of the story:

> A number of sororities that had built new houses and were heavily mortgaged and were unable to get new members found that they would have to close. Dean Maria Leonard recommended that since Alpha Delta Theta rented and we were operating financially, we should move into one of these houses having operating problems. We were pressured by the dean to follow her recommendations.[22]

Another interesting comparison is found in the student affairs records that provide student employment statistics and list student jobs during the early Depression. The alumni interviews complement these records by providing personal accounts of the types of employment available. For instance, Mary Kay Peer lived in her parents' boardinghouse and took in typing all four years of college. Many of the male interviewees worked in the fraternity houses as waiters and kitchen help. Junette Peale took residence in a professor's home and babysat for food and board. Other interviewees worked

in the campus fire station, served as janitors, or were door-to-door salesmen to stay in school.

Alumni memories of Thomas Arkle Clark, the famed Dean of Men, also added to the historical record in the archives. Interviewees overwhelmingly stated that students, as a general rule, didn't question or disobey authority (although several explained how students acquired liquor without the dean's knowledge). Most agreed that Clark was a respected but feared figure; to be summoned to his office was a stressful occasion. Some respected him more than others. William O'Dell, 1931, was caught on campus in a car, a terrible violation of campus policy. Clark suspended him in April of his senior year, one month before graduation, requiring him to return to campus for the fall semester to earn his degree. Decades later, O'Dell spoke angrily about the dean's unwavering adherence to the rules.[23] On the other hand, Royal Bartlett, 1931, was impressed that Clark had "gone to bat" for him to secure reimbursement from a local dry cleaners for a lost suit. Interestingly, only one interviewee specifically mentioned a change in student administration policies upon Clark's departure.[24]

The archives has no firsthand accounts about the period from African-Americans, except for the interviews of the two participants in the oral history project. The recollections of Albert Spurlock, 1938, an African-American student in the architecture department and a varsity track member, addressed the discrimination he experienced when traveling with the team to other Big Ten schools and of the lack of opportunities for African-Americans in architecture. Freshman rhetoric classes most often use Albert Spurlock's interview for research assignments.

Impact of the Project on the Archival Program

The oral history project has increased use of UI's archival materials. Even before the project's completion, researchers, including faculty, students, administrators, and the media, began using the interviews for research on a variety of subjects. Scholars from other universities used interviews to study regulations for women and gender roles on campus. An author conducting background research for a novel on a sorority student investigated a number of interviews with alumnae who were in sororities. A library-school graduate student used material from the interviews for an exhibit assignment. The freshman rhetoric department has integrated the SLC oral histories and its other collections wholeheartedly into its curriculum, thereby introducing first-year students to the rich history of their new university. Instructors require first-year students to choose a primary source from the SLC archives, then describe and analyze the item in the context of other primary and secondary sources. Students have used the oral history interviews to investigate or add context to primary sources such as a newspaper article on the roller-skating craze at UI in the late 1920s, a dance program, the Dean of Women's curfew regulation posting, and a photograph of the annual freshman cap burning.

Other oral history researchers include a local newspaper columnist writing on the plight of minority students at the university and in the community during the 1930s. The Alumni Association's magazine editor included an interviewee's comments on roller-skating in her "Memory Lane" article. Archives staff have used the interviews as well. The SLC graduate student, funded by a local historic preservation group to write UI

fraternity chapter histories for the archives, has relied on the oral histories for a number of his essays. The SLC archivist highlighted excerpts from the interviews in exhibits and integrated their stories and photographs into her UI student history slide show presentations to alumni and community groups.

With each new use, researchers become acquainted with the archives and explore other resources it holds. Biographical pages with interview excerpts and photographs for 15 of the 44 interviews posted on the SLC Web site and publicized in the newspaper article have also increased use. Although Web-site development was not part of the initial proposal, the archivist, SLC graduate assistant, and undergraduate transcriber worked together to highlight as many of the interviews as possible. A goal is to enhance access to the interviews by providing on-line audio clips and transcript indices.

Although the oral history project has enhanced our knowledge of the period and facilitated research, its impact on other aspects of archival work is of almost equal importance. Contact with interviewees has netted six new collections of alumni and student papers. Included are four diaries, written by an alumni couple (separately) during their student days on campus (1934–1937), which contain daily accounts of this couple's activities and discussion of their priorities and aspirations. Other materials include the personal papers of an alumna and faculty member, scrapbooks, photographs, artifacts such as Albert Spurlock's letterman sweater (one of the first varsity sweaters awarded to an African-American at the university after World War I), postcards, and yearbooks.

Because of project publicity, the archives also has become more visible on campus and in the community. In March 2001, the local paper ran a Sunday feature story on the project, complete with interview quotations and numerous photographs of interviewees and the campus. The article also issued a "call for interviewees." The response was overwhelming with 23 phone calls over the course of the next week. In addition to the local media, the campus' faculty/staff newsletter and the Library Friends newsletter ran stories about the project that resulted in interviewee volunteers and raised awareness of the program.

Importantly, the project has enabled the SLC archivist to develop valuable relationships and connections on campus and in the Champaign-Urbana area. The Alumni Association and University Foundation now regularly call when they hear of alumni records that might be of interest to the archives. The archivist has been asked to provide presentations about the archives to the local historical society, the county genealogical society, and alumni clubs. Through these presentations, alumni, the local community libraries, and the county museum are more knowledgeable about the UI archives' collection holdings concerning local community history and genealogy.

Conclusion

The UI alumni oral history project has added new depth to the archives' student life and culture collections by providing a perspective that written documents do not convey. The project has increased use of the archives' collections, and raised awareness of its collection needs and programs on campus, in the community, and beyond. Of course, this type of project demands a substantial time commitment and financial support. For-

tunately, the SLC archivist could rely on two SLC graduate assistants to assist with daily archival tasks during the project year. She also conducted many of the interviews on weekends and on designated three- to four-day trips to reduce her absence from the archives. Importantly, the project received support from both the campus and the library. This investment will have long-lasting effects not only on the research quality of collections, but also on the entire archival program. An oral history project requires a commitment of finances and time, it is true. If the academic archives can address these challenges, oral history's benefits and possibilities for the archival program are well worth the effort.

Appendix 1

UI Student Life, 1928–1938: Oral History Project
Questions

Background
Please state your full name and birth date.

Would you talk about your childhood and early family life?:
- Where did you grow up? How big was your family?
- What did your parents do for a living?
- Where did you go to high school?
- Do you remember the Stock Market Crash (1929) (when applicable)?
- How did the Depression affect your family (when applicable)?

What is your earliest memory of or first association with the University of Illinois?
Why did you choose the University of Illinois for your schooling?
How many, if any, other members of your family attended/graduated college?
How many of your high school classmates went on to college?

Education
What was your major and why?
What did you hope to do with this major upon graduation? Did you?
Who were your favorite professors? Why were they valuable to your education?
What types of classes did you take and where were they held?
Can you characterize the physical facilities (classrooms, etc.)?
What was the relationship between students and faculty? Did you associate with them outside the classroom?
What were the main strengths and weaknesses of your university education?
Do you think you would have profited more educationally at another institution?

Rules/Administration
Would you talk about rules and restrictions for students: Prohibition, smoking, cars, dating?
How did the rules for men and women differ?
Do you remember Dean of Men Thomas Arkle Clark/Fred Turner?
- What were your impressions of him?
- He is said to have had a spy system. Do you know anything about that?
- Do you remember Clark's death in 1932? How did the campus react?
- How did the student body view him? Was he visible and accessible?
- What was his role on campus?

Do you remember the Dean of Women Maria Leonard?
- What were your impressions of her?
- How did the student body view her? Was she visible and accessible?
- What was her role on campus?

How would you characterize the moral code on campus?
Did religious affiliation figure prominently in student life?
Any impressions of Presidents Kinley, Chase, Willard?
Does the person who is president of the university have any/much influence on the life of students?

Appendix 1 (continued)

Social/Extracurricular Life
Where did you live and why?
Did you belong to a sorority/fraternity? Why or why not?
What were some of the activities in which Greeks participated?
How were Greeks viewed on campus? How were Independents viewed on campus?
Did Greeks and Independents interact? If so, in what ways?
What were the activities/organizations in which you were involved?
Specific questions about these activities and organizations: *Daily Illini*, Mask and Bauble, etc.
How important were athletics and Homecoming activities?
What did you do for fun and where?
How did the Depression influence or shape student activities?
What did you wear to class?

Financial
How were you able to attend the University of Illinois?
Was your higher education a priority for your parents?
Did you have a job while you were in school?
Do you remember the Stock Market Crash? How did the campus respond? Did you talk about it in your classes?
How did the Depression affect your family?
How did it affect your life at the university financially, socially, and academically?
Did you have a job at school? If so, how did you secure this employment?
Student Employment Bureau 1932–

Diversity on Campus
What was the ethnic and religious make-up of the student body? What were your friends' backgrounds?
How were minority students treated? Were you aware of discrimination at UI or in Champaign-Urbana?
Did African-American and Jewish students interact socially with other students on campus?
How did Catholics and Protestants interact?

National
Were you aware of national happenings/current events while you were in school?
If so, which ones? (for example, presidential election between Hoover and FDR, 1932)
Were you or other students involved in politics? Was the student body largely Republican or Democrat?
Were there any "radical" political activities among students and faculty?

Life after College
Did you and your family attend commencement ceremonies?
What did you do after graduation? Could you find a job?
What career did you choose?
How have your education and student life experience influenced your later life?

Appendix 2

INTERVIEW AGREEMENT

Tape recordings and transcripts resulting from interviews conducted for the Student Life and Culture Archival Program of the University of Illinois Archives become part of the Student Life and Culture Collection at the University of Illinois Archives, and they are made available for use consistent with the University's mission regulated according to any restrictions placed on their use by the interviewee and/or interviewer. Participation in the Program is entirely voluntary.

***

We, the undersigned, have read the above. The interviewer affirms that he/she has explained the nature and purpose of this oral history research. The interviewee affirms that he/she has consented to the interview. The interviewee and interviewer hereby give, grant and assign all rights, title and interest including copyright, of whatever kind from this information and interview to the University of Illinois Archives.

Date of interview_____

_____	_____
Name of Interviewer	Name of Interviewee
_____	_____
Signature	Signature
_____	_____
Address	Address
_____	_____
City State Zip	City State Zip

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1. James E. Fogerty, "Filling the Gap: Oral History in the Archives," *American Archivist* 46:2 (1983): 148–157.
2. For discussion of oral history, the archives, and the social history movement, see Ronald J. Grele, "Directions for Oral History in the United States," in *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, 2nd ed., ed. David K. Dunaway and Willa Baum (Walnut Creek, London, New Delhi: Altamira Press, 1996): 64–65; Frederic M. Miller, "Social History and Archival Practice," *American Archivist* 44: (spring 1981); and Dale C. Mayer, "The New Social History: Implications for Archivists," *American Archivist* 48: (fall 1985).
3. Donald Ritchie, *Doing Oral History* (New York: Twayne Publishers, 1995): 132.
4. Fogerty, 150.
5. Bruce H. Bruemmer, "Access to Oral History: A National Agenda," *American Archivist* 54:4 (1991): 496.
6. F. Gerald Ham, "The Archival Edge," *American Archivist* 38:1 (1975): 9, 13.
7. The Society of American Archivists Records 1936–[ongoing], UWM Manuscript Collection 72, Golda Meir Library, University Manuscript Collection, University of Wisconsin–Milwaukee.
8. Helen Lefkowitz Horowitz, *Campus Life: Undergraduate Cultures from the End of the Eighteenth Century to the Present* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1987); Calvin B.T. Lee, *The Campus Scene, 1900–1970: Changing Styles in Undergraduate Life* (New York: David McKay Co., 1970).
9. For discussion of Clark's prominence, see Terrence Finnegan, "Promoting 'Responsible Freedom': Administrators and Social Fraternities at the University of Illinois, 1900–31," *History of Higher Education Annual*, v.9, 1989, 33–59. Chase made his case to the alumni in "As President Chase Puts It," *Illinois Alumni News* (December 1932): 82.
10. For sources on use and role of oral history in the archives, see Fogerty, 148–157; Dale Treleven, "Oral History and the Archival Community: Common Concerns About Documenting Twentieth-Century Life," *International Journal of Oral History* 10:1 (1989): 50–58; and Bruce H. Bruemmer, 494–501. For "how to" instructions, see Ritchie.
11. For background history concerning IRBs, see Michael Gordon, "Historians and Review Boards," *Perspectives* (American Historical Association newsletter) 35:6 (1997): 35–37; Linda Shopes, "Historians and Institutional Review Boards: An Update," *Perspectives Online*, October 2001.
12. This increased attention to all research involving human participants has been fueled by the 1999 death of a patient undergoing experimental gene therapy at the University of Pennsylvania. The scientists administering the experiment may not have secured informed consent. In addition, the National Institutes of Health suspension of federally financed research at eight institutions between October 1998 and July 2000 and an increase in the amount of biomedical research being conducted by drug companies without any regulatory oversight have heightened IRBs' scrutiny of all projects involving human subjects. Jeffrey Brainard, "The Wrong Rules for Social Science?" *The Chronicle of Higher Education* (March 9, 2001); Jeffrey G. Charnley, "Michigan State University's Sesquicentennial Oral History Project," paper presented at the Oral History Association Annual Conference, Durham, North Carolina, October 13, 2000; American Association of University Professors, "Protecting Human Beings: Institutional Review Boards and Social Science Research," AAUP Report, <http://www.aaup.org/statements/Redbook/repirb.htm>; for additional information, see Alan Bliss, "Chapter

10-3: Oral History Research," in Robert J. Amdur and Elizabeth A. Bankert, *Institutional Review Board: Management and Function* (Sudbury, MA: Jones and Bartlett, 2002): 415–418.

13. See John Neuenschwander, *Oral History and the Law* (Carlisle, PA: Oral History Association, 2002).
14. See Appendix 2.
15. For a brief discussion of selection procedure, see Ritchie, 62–63. See also David Lance, "Oral History Project Design," in *Oral History: An Interdisciplinary Anthology*, ed. David K. Dunaway and Willa K. Baum (Walnut Creek, CA: Altamira, 1996): 135–142.
16. Helen W. Samuels, *Varsity Letters: Documenting Modern Colleges and Universities* (Lanham, MD and London: SAA and Scarecrow Press, 1992): 9.
17. Fogerty, 150.
18. Samuels, 13; William J. Maher, *The Management of College and University Archives* (Metuchen, NJ and London: SAA and Scarecrow Press, 1992): 338.
19. "Boarding and Housing Conditions of Colored Students of the University of Illinois, 1929–30," Dean of Women Records (RS 41/1/3, box 4), University of Illinois Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
20. Interview with Erma Scott Bridgewater, Champaign, Illinois, March 22, 2001, University of Illinois Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
21. Maria Leonard to Mrs. Ansel Hemenway, September 21, 1933, Dean of Women Records (RS 41/3/1, box 2), University of Illinois Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
22. Interview with Kathryn Hansen, Urbana, Illinois, December 5, 2000, University of Illinois Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
23. Interview with William O'Dell, Fort Myers, Florida, March 18, 2001, University of Illinois Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.
24. Interview with Royal Bartlett, Denver, Colorado, November 7, 2000, University of Illinois Archives, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign.

CLASHING DISCIPLINES: ORAL HISTORY AND THE INSTITUTIONAL REVIEW BOARD

BY RACHEL VAGTS

ABSTRACT: Archivists are finding that, often for the first time, our institutions are taking a closer look at the way we conduct research and questioning the very methods that we have used for many years. The primary body that does that inquiry is often the institutional review board (IRB). A review concept originally designed by and for the sciences, the IRB and the archivist often find themselves at odds when they first meet. This paper offers an example of how you can work with your IRB to come to an acceptable solution, satisfying the theory and practices of archival administration while remaining within the confines of the review board regulations.

In an age of increasing regulation, it has become difficult to keep up on all the current standards, whether it's the latest tax code or new practices for immigration and naturalization. This is also true in the vast field of institutional research. Archivists are finding that, often for the first time, our institutions are taking a closer look at the way we conduct research and questioning the very methods that we have used for many years. The primary body that does that inquiry is often the institutional review board (IRB). A review concept originally designed by and for the sciences, the IRB and the archivist often find themselves at odds when they first meet. It is my intent to share the experiences I had at my institution as well as those of several others, not so much as a cautionary tale, but as an example of how you can work with your IRB to come to a satisfactory solution, satisfying the theory and practices of archival administration while remaining within the confines of the review board regulations.

IRBs have been a requirement of institutions receiving federal funding for research since 1966, with a major revision implemented in 1991. The 1991 regulations, *Title 45, Part 46 of the Code of Federal Regulations, Protection of Human Subjects*, are known as the "Common Rule" or 45 CFR 46. Developed by the Department of Health and Human Services, the Common Rule is also followed by 16 other federal departments.[1] The main reason for the development of IRBs was to make sure that test subjects had given informed consent for studies or experiments and are treated ethically. This concern goes back to the Nuremberg Code of 1948, which created standards for judging the physicians and scientists who did experiments on concentration camp prisoners.[2] In addition to requiring a review board, the Common Rule also sets up conditions for exempt research and research that is eligible for an expedited review by one IRB member.

In her remarks before the National Bioethics Advisory Commission on April 6, 2000, Linda Shopes, former president of the Oral History Association and a member of the American Historical Association Council, stated that "the biomedical and behaviorist frameworks within which 45 CFR 46 was developed have resulted in IRBs' evaluating oral history projects according to standards and protocols not appropriate for historical research, thereby calling into question the underlying assumption of peer review."[3]

The first time I heard about an IRB was in early June 1999. The secretary of the Luther College faculty, who formerly served as archivist, apprised me of a resolution that had passed at the last faculty meeting of the year. Two members of the psychology department had proposed that my institution put into place a board they would call the "Human Subjects Review Board." This IRB would have jurisdiction over all research being done at the college, including the oral histories that are regularly conducted by students in our history department.

Not long after this, I heard again about the regulatory board from the history professor who supervised the oral history program. She had grave concerns about what this oversight might mean for her students' research. The proposal gave the board far-reaching authority to approve, change, or not approve any and all research involving human subjects at the college. The policy was based on several principles, including the concept of informed consent and the potential for a subject to remove him- or herself from the experiment at any time. These elements were cause for concern for both of us because they went beyond the boundaries of regulating research into the area of setting archival policy.

As I began researching these boards, I found that there were other institutions that were having difficulty explaining how their oral history program might be affected by the stringent requirements of the review board. The requirements for informed consent and for research participants to be able to remove themselves from the experiment at any time added layers of bureaucracy to the process of documenting events through the use of oral history.

Last year, a stuttering study conducted by researchers at the University of Iowa found itself on the front page of national newspapers. The study, conducted in the 1930s, used children living in a state-run orphanage to prove that negative reinforcement could cause children to stutter. While the researchers' initial theory—that children could be taught to stutter—was proven, there was never any effort after the study was concluded to correct their speech. The study was supervised by noted speech pathologist Wendell Johnson, but was never published because even then his colleagues suspected what a barbaric study it was and how it might be viewed negatively in the wake of the Nazi human studies in the concentration camps.

After the study became widely known, the University of Iowa issued an apology for the experiments and noted that the university now has strict procedures that would prevent this type of research on humans in the future. In the age of the IRB, a study like Johnson's would never have been allowed to take place.

Review boards were also in the news in June 2001 when a woman died while participating in an asthma study at Johns Hopkins University. According to university records, the study had not received full approval from the university's review board. The United States Office for Human Research Protections halted any further experiments at the

university until an outside panel could examine what had happened.[4] The external review board faulted the university for not providing adequate oversight of the experiments. Although the researcher was at fault for using contaminated samples, the harshest criticism was for the review process that they described as "dangerously overburdened and decentralized."[5]

Incidents like these and others in the late 1990s have led IRBs to become more vigilant in their review of research projects. Unfortunately, that vigilance has had a negative effect on a great deal of social science research, including oral histories.

The oral history community first began to confront the IRB situation in 1998. Concerned by a potential negative effect on their community, the American Historical Association, the Oral History Association, and the Organization of American Historians corresponded with approximately seven hundred IRBs. They provided the review boards with their standards of practice and asked that the standards be considered when the boards reviewed oral history projects. In addition, they persuaded the government to include oral history among those research activities that are eligible for expedited review.

Many of the concerns of the oral history community were well-founded. Review boards were often attempting to make substantive changes in research projects. They were asking researchers to submit detailed questionnaires prior to conducting any interviews. Sometimes they would ask the historian to maintain narrator anonymity on both the tape and the published work. Finally, some review boards asked that the oral history tapes either be destroyed or retained in the researcher's private possession after the project was completed.[6] Any of these conditions would severely hamper the continued collection of oral histories by an archival institution.

In May 2001, the American Association of University Professors (AAUP) published a report titled "Protecting Human Beings: Institutional Review Boards and Social Science Research." The report was prepared in conjunction with the American Anthropological Association, the American Historical Association, the American Political Science Association, the American Sociological Association, the Oral History Association, and the Organization of American Historians. The report was written both for researchers and for IRBs responsible for implementing government regulations over social science research.[7]

Among the concerns of social science researchers was that their work was being judged against a model designed for science and medical research. The IRBs were originally designed to protect vulnerable human beings such as those in the Wendell Johnson study. Most research done by social scientists does not pose a threat of physical or emotional harm to those involved. Although the experiment might cause the subject some unease, embarrassment, or discomfort, these are all acceptable under the Common Rule as emotions that are "ordinarily encountered in daily life."

Following its study, the AAUP made a number of recommendations. Their work on this issue has helped the government better understand how social scientists conduct research and how that research is different from many scientific and medical studies. The broadening of research that can be approved under the expedited review process is a successful example of this change.

The AAUP has also fought for better representation of social scientists on IRBs. This helps not only in the initial review, but also in cases that might be appealed. The AAUP also calls for better education of researchers. The associations asked that there be campus-based seminars, symposia, and opportunities for new researchers to talk with veterans of the IRB process. The report also calls for social scientists to be vigilant about their rights, to call into question when they think a review board is infringing on their rights. Finally, the AAUP recommended that IRBs consider having academic departments give preliminary approval for a project. This would help departments be more aware of the process and help them guide their researchers through the IRB process.[8]

The situation at Luther College could have been easily resolved, but several factors worked to complicate the matter. Our first problem was that the review board was not familiar with the archives program and our policies. The board was made up of faculty from the three divisions of science, social science, and humanities, a representative from the dean's office, and a member of the board of regents who was a medical doctor. None of the representatives on the board had any substantive experience with oral history. This required us to educate the board before we could request their approval for our program.

An integral element of the review board's policy is that a research subject should be able to remove him- or herself from the study at any point. While my opinion as archivist was that the oral history interviewee could stop the interview or choose not to place either the tape or transcript in the archives, our board wanted subjects to be able to remove their interviews from our collection at any point in the future.

That option was unacceptable to me. It was essentially requiring that we put all oral histories on deposit in perpetuity. Without clear-cut rights to the interviews, I stated that we would not accept them and it would ultimately end what had been a successful research tool for the archives. If we said that oral histories could be removed, despite having a deed of gift, then what would stop anyone from retrieving material they had given to the archives at any point in the future?

I went to the hearing with the history faculty member who had been instrumental in our oral history program. Among the questions we faced was that of a student who might participate in an interview, only to ultimately have a career in politics. The board wanted to know why we would not remove an interview that could be potentially embarrassing. I informed the board that we could place restrictions on an interview before it was placed in the collection, but it was not standard archival practice to have a policy of adding restrictions later or allowing for materials to be removed from the collection after a deed of gift had been signed.

In preparation for our hearing, I did some research into what other institutions had done about working with their IRB. Queries to the archives and oral history Listservs garnered assistance from Professor Charles Lee, the executive director of the Oral History Program at the University of Wisconsin–La Crosse. Professor Lee provided us with a copy of his informed consent document. During the course of the hearing, we offered to draft our own consent document for use in addition to our customary release forms.

This document seemed to answer the questions of the board and there was no further discussion about removal of archival property from the collection. Further, the board

stated that for similar classroom projects a brief notification to the board was all that would be necessary for their continuing approval. If a student were going to do a full-scale project such as for a senior paper, then the student would be required to submit a presentation for approval before the board.

I felt that the determination of the board was very fair. It did not encroach on the ownership issue in the archival collection and also did not put up an unnecessary impediment to continued oral history research. I think it was important for a student doing significant research (i.e., the senior paper required for each of our students) to go through the full process. If our students go on to do graduate-level research, they will benefit from having already experienced the process.

One shortcoming of the review boards' increased vigilance is their lack of visibility. Not only was I not apprised of our board before it was instituted, but I learned of other administrative offices that were not aware that they now fell under the jurisdiction of the board. The review board needed to do a better job of educating the college on the extent and goal of their role in college-related research.

An article in the *Chronicle of Higher Education*, "The Wrong Rules for Social Science?" focused again on the IRBs' call to keep the names of their interview subjects anonymous or to destroy the tapes after they have been transcribed. In addition to the request to screen questions beforehand, some IRBs have encouraged researchers to not ask questions that might embarrass the subject.[9]

The federal regulations do not call for these measures. Instead, these measures are developed by the boards themselves. Under the expedited procedure, a researcher can have a project approved by just one member of the board, but often that member will insert untenable restrictions on the project. This extends the amount of time that it takes to begin what are often already lengthy projects.

According to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* article, many social scientists are not submitting their projects to the boards. This is sometimes a deliberate action by researchers who believe the regulation is a violation of academic freedom and First Amendment rights, but it is also sometimes the result of ignorance of the regulations.

At Indiana University, Dr. Carole Nowicke consulted the IRB for permission to conduct a Tuba-Euphonium Oral History Project. The IRB would not accept the oral history consent form that had been used by the university's Center for the Study of History and Memory. After rewriting the form five times, the consent form is now four pages long and requires participants to sign or initial the material in nine places. In a meeting with the IRB, the question of whether or not participants could remain anonymous came up.[10] Anonymity is common in scientific research, but nearly impossible in oral history where much of the meaning of the interview is incumbent upon knowing the identity of the person and his or her context in history.

At Western Kentucky University, Dr. Erika Brady took a proactive role. The IRB became interested in the work she was doing in folklore and requested a review of her research. She reacted by having herself appointed to the board. Having someone familiar with humanities research was essential to the board's understanding of how humanities research differs from the sciences. She also surveyed other programs and found out how they had worked with their IRB. Finally, she reviewed the release form her program used and revised it to conform more closely to the requirements of the IRB.[11] By

being proactive, one can demonstrate one's willingness to work with the IRB to come to a mutually agreeable solution.

At Luther College, the one regulation our board added to our proposal concerned the informed consent document. This was a cause of concern for the member of the history department. Our procedures already call for us to talk with the person being interviewed about signing over the interview rights to the archives. Now, in addition, we have a page-long document that makes sure subjects are giving their informed consent. It is similar to a document an individual might read and sign before participating in a psychology experiment. The document reads as follows:

> I give my informed consent to be interviewed about my life experience. I consent to publication of this interview, and other legal uses, as limited by the policies of the Luther College Archives.
>
> 1. I have been informed that the general purpose of this interview is to document my personal history.
> 2. I have been informed that there are no known expected discomforts or risks involved in my participation in this interview.
> 3. I have been informed that there are no "disguised" procedures in this interview. All procedures can be taken at face value.
> 4. I have been informed that the interviewer will gladly answer any questions regarding the procedures of this interview.
> 5. I have been informed that I am free to withdraw from the interview at any time without penalty of any kind.

Archivists' concern with such documents is not uncommon. Mary Larson, assistant director of the Oral History Program at the University of Nevada at Reno, said that "the formal tone of documents can put off some people, especially those lacking education or language skills."[12] At Luther College, we tend to work with older people in town, and the consent form could potentially be confusing and unnecessarily frightening to them.

In its report to President Bush, the National Bioethics Advisory Commission addressed the issue of informed consent. In its final report issued in August 2001, the commission stated that it was important that the informed consent process match the research being proposed. The informed consent process should be neither a conversation between the researcher and the subject nor simply a form to be filled out. The National Bioethics Advisory Commission also recognized that a signed consent form could be problematic for some types of research, including social science research. They agreed that the basic process of informed consent needed to take place, but that it was possible for an IRB to agree to a documentation format other than signed consent forms.

Ultimately, the IRB process has had some positive and negative effects on our oral history program. According to the head of Luther College's IRB, the decision to approve the oral history program in its expedited form was largely based on reading the policies and procedures of the Oral History Association and recognizing that they were similar to the policies of the IRB.

The Luther College IRB document calls for the principal investigator to explain to the subjects, prior to their participation, the objectives of the research, the procedures

to be followed, and the potential risks and benefits. The Oral History Association requires that interviewees be informed of the purposes and procedures of oral history in general and of the aims and anticipated uses of the particular projects to which they are making their contributions. The IRB regulations state that the investigator should respect the privacy of subjects. They should protect confidential information provided, advising subjects in advance of any limits upon their ability to ensure that the information would remain confidential. In regard to confidentiality, the Oral History Association states that interviewees should be informed that they would be asked to sign a legal release. The interviews would remain confidential until interviewees had given their permission for their use. The interviewer also has the responsibility of apprising interviewees of their rights to edit the interview, restrict access, retain copyright, and to know of the expected disposition and dissemination of all forms of the interview, including electronic distribution.

Additionally, the policies and procedures of the Oral History Association call for interviewers to be sensitive to their interviewee to guard against exploitation. They should apprise interviewees of their right to not answer any questions that make them uncomfortable and, if they wish, to remain anonymous after the interview. All of these policies dovetail with the regulations of the IRB.

These examples of difficult negotiations with IRBs are not rare. More stories have begun to appear in publications, such as the article "Don't Talk to the Humans: The Crackdown on Social Science Research," which appeared in the September 2000 issue of *Lingua Franca*. Christopher Shea's article included numerous examples of researchers who had struggled to adjust their research style to the requirements of the IRB. On Listservs, this topic continues to be discussed every few months as colleagues share their "war stories."

But the solution does not lie in railing against the IRBs, but rather in learning to work with them. The work of the Oral History Association provides a strong foundation for archivists and historical researchers to make their claim that their methods are in line with the basic requirements of 45 CFR 46. Follow the example of Dr. Erika Brady at Western Kentucky University: join the IRB, if possible. If you cannot do that, work with the members to understand the elements of your research. Go prepared when you meet with the board and show them forms that other IRBs have accepted as examples. Provide them with the Oral History Association's guidelines. This kind of preparatory work can assist in a more positive interaction with the IRB.

Of course, it is still possible that the IRB will put undue requirements on your project, as the board did at Indiana University. In that case, it is important to work to maintain your project and hope that, in the future, the situation can be renegotiated with the IRB.

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NOTES

1. The National Endowment for the Humanities is not one of the 17 participating agencies.
2. American Association of University Professors, "Protecting Human Beings: Institutional Review Boards and Social Science Research," *Academe* (May-June 2001): 56.
3. Linda Shopes, "Institutional Review Boards Have a Chilling Effect on Oral History," *Perspectives Online*, September 2000, <http://www.theaha.org/perspectives/issues/2000/0009/0009vie1.cfm> (September 9, 2002).
4. Susan Levine and Rick Weiss, "Hopkins Told to Halt Trials Funded by U.S.," *Washington Post*, July 20, 2001, sec. A, p. 1.
5. Amy Argetsinger, "Panel Blames Hopkins in Research Death," *Washington Post,* August 30, 2001, sec. B, p. 3.
6. American Association of University Professors, 57.
7. American Association of University Professors, 55.
8. American Association of University Professors, 67.
9. Jeffrey Brainard, "The Wrong Rules for Social Science?" *Chronicle of Higher Education*, March 9, 2001, p. A21.
10. Carole Nowicke, "Institutional Review Boards," October 1, 2002. E-mail to the author.
11. Kelly Feltault, "Institutional Review Boards," June 29, 1999, h-oralhist discussion list on-line posting, <http://h-net.msu.edu/cgi-bin/logbrowse.pl?trx=vs&list=h-oralhist&month=9906&week=e&msg=S4BvbgGt%2bIprs0qWsU1zyw&user=&pw=> (September 19, 2002).
12. Brainard, A21.

PUBLICATION REVIEWS

Creating and Documenting Electronic Texts. By Alan Morrison, Michael Popham, and Karen Wikander. Oxford, Great Britain: Oxbow Books, 2000. $18.00. 63 pp. Glossary and bibliography. Soft cover.

Creating and Documenting Electronic Texts is one in a series of publications produced as part of the Arts and Humanities Data Service (ADHS) Guides to Good Practice. Authors Alan Morrison, Michael Popham, and Karen Wikander are clear about their objectives. Their aim is to take users through the basic steps involved in undertaking a text-encoding project. Their focus is on text, broadly defined. They make several good assumptions: that the reader wants long-term options that are not software dependent, that involve open architecture, and that are "practical and cost effective." Their intent is not to be comprehensive. The authors do not focus on the specifics of rapidly changing technology but rather on the key issues and decisions involved in encoding projects. This is appropriate to the brief introductory overview they aim for. However, it is disappointing to a reader looking for a more thorough coverage of the topic.

The guide has seven chapters, each addressing key concerns, discussing the issues in roughly the same order that anyone implementing a project should. The book begins the way any good project begins: with analysis. They encourage asking such questions as, What is the project scope? What is its purpose? How will people use the result? The answers to these initial questions lead to more specific issues involving selection. They also point out the external factors that need to be considered such as community concerns, funding agencies' concerns, and the compatibility of users' needs and project goals.

This series of questions leads to ever more specific document analysis. Before trying to provide access to a group of items, the authors suggest looking at one item and at its history, condition, provenance, and circumstances of creation. Its provenance is critical for authority, especially with manuscript materials. Furthermore, they suggest selecting a sample for each type of physical object and labeling the features to encode. Both of these steps are critical in preventing future problems.

Once the intellectual process is covered, the authors go on to the physical process of digitization, including scanning, OCR (Optical Character Recognition), and rekeying. Morrison, Popham, and Wikander explain the technical process and endorse the idea that the highest quality digital images are produced from the scanning of the original object. Without falling into the trap of recommending a one-size-fits-all solution, they provide an overview of the capabilities and qualities of various digitization equipment options; provide a quick review of software, image types, file formats, and terms (resolution, bit depth); and include good information on OCR and rekeying.

In the chapter on markup, the key to reusability, they encourage the reader to evaluate goals and determine which method of markup meets those goals. The text outlines three different types of markup. The first relates to formatting instructions found on the physical item. The second has to do with formatting issues such as the use of bold, italics, centering, and bulleted lists, which are tied to the software that creates the text. Third is

generalized, nonproprietary markup, which can be used by various platforms across time and systems and which enables encoding according to content.

Next they focus on visual/presentational markup vs. structural/descriptive markup. Visual structure is paramount in presentational markup. PDF documents are examples of a visual/presentational markup. The authors point out that if presentational style is the reader's only concern, this can be a good option, but if the document "needs to cross platforms or the project objectives require control over the encoding or document preservation," these will not work. They offer a nice discussion of HTML as a manageable subset of SGML and point out that if documents have short-term value or if users are unconcerned with structure, HTML can be a good choice.

The section on SGML/XML and TEI (Text Encoding Initiative) focuses on the structural descriptive markup, which the authors feel is most suited to arts and humanities projects. The chapter provides an overview of SGML and its virtues, namely that it is a standard not tied to proprietary encoding. While providing a brief history of TEI, created to address the need for a common text-encoding scheme, they also supply resources for further information. As SGML (with the exception of TEI) has not been embraced by the academic community to which this text is oriented, they go on to focus on the potential of XML, which has built upon the lessons learned from attempted SGML implementations.

The chapter on documentation and metadata focuses on two currently used metadata models, Dublin Core and TEI Header, and goes into detail about the use and intent of specific tags. They emphasize the comprehensive nature of TEI to document electronic text and its vast potential, but point out that its wide variety in implementation has hindered its use as a standard. They are more optimistic about Dublin Core because its 15-element set is broad and comprehensive enough to be of use to wide audiences.

The book concludes with a "summary" that surprisingly does not revisit previously addressed points. Instead, they outline the 10 steps of an ideal project. This can be a good way to cover topics the authors were not able to address earlier. But it is potentially confusing to readers that new points are brought up at the end.

Creating and Documenting Electronic Texts provides a good summary of the issues involved in beginning a text-encoding project. A good introductory volume is needed for those starting to plan similar projects. The book's order mimics the decision-making process and is helpful in outlining which decisions need to be made. While users will want more specific answers, it is impossible to provide them in an introductory text because those answers depend entirely on project goals. The authors do a good job of outlining the issues and, if readers are focused on textual projects, they will find this volume extremely helpful. However, those considering projects that are more visual or that combine text and images will be disappointed that those issues are not addressed.

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Sorting Out the Web: Approaches to Subject Access. By Candy Schwartz. Westport, Connecticut and London: Ablex Publishing, 2001. $32.95. 184 pp. Index, illustrations, and references. Paperback.

Sorting Out the Web addresses the challenges of providing access to networked resources in an information environment that is "complex, rich, volatile, and frequently frustrating" (p. 112). "Sorting" is an apt analogy since Schwartz's focus is not on strategies for searching and navigating the vastness of Internet sites in general but rather on means of partitioning harvested portions of the Web to facilitate meaningful resource discovery. She offers an overview of concepts, techniques, current developments, and the literature from the perspective of the professional resource organizer.

Schwartz's thesis is that time-tested library processes for knowledge representation and information retrieval—selection, description, organization, location assistance—can be applied to on-line resources as fruitfully as to the more traditional library materials. Her discussion, in fact, is oriented toward means of capturing and taming those portions of the Web that comprise materials of substantive content and long-term importance, how to, in effect, build a "library" of networked resources and present that library to potential users. Although the context is not explicitly stated, the tenor of the discussion suggests that such a collection will most frequently be hosted by an academic or cultural institution, perhaps as an extension of its OPAC, and will present materials of interest to that community.

Any writing about the status of the Web is, of course, subject to almost instant obsolescence. Schwartz acknowledges this problem and addresses it by encouraging the reader to focus on the concepts and principles of subject access and resource organization that remain valid even as specific applications evolve.

A brief introductory chapter sets the stage by noting the changes in information availability wrought by electronic representations of materials, with the consequence that end users can now interact directly with retrieval systems without the types of mediation traditionally supplied by libraries and librarians. Rather than viewing this development as a harbinger of librarian obsolescence, she sees librarians partnering with other knowledge experts in guiding users through a chaotic environment.

Chapter 2 defines metadata, likens their creation to the library practices of cataloging and representation, and stresses their utility in supporting discovery, retrieval, and resource sharing by "providing searchable representations of Internet resources" (p.16), particularly if in multiple applications their creators adhere to the same interoperable standards. Schwartz notes in particular their use in creating and maintaining "subject gateways," and in fact the next two chapters expand on this theme by discussing means of organizing and accessing groups of selected resources whose compilers add value through applying descriptive metadata. Chapter 2 also briefly reviews some of the better known "bibliographic" metadata projects and tools, including OCLC's CORC (Cooperative Online Resource Catalog), the Dublin Core, markup languages (HTML, SGML, XML, EAD, TEI), and the Resource Description Framework (RDF). It concludes by noting that "metadata standards development has made possible a wealth of opportunity for resource sharing and interoperability" (p. 39).

Chapter 3, "Classification," discusses some approaches to classifying Internet resources, taking as its premise that "displaying Internet resources in a systematic topical arrangement" has the same effect as does a library classification scheme in permitting the user to navigate through a diverse universe by browsing groups of related materials. Schwartz argues strongly in favor of applying standard, familiar, library-based classification schemes to the organization of harvested Internet resources. The advantages of these schemes (widely used and familiar, readily browseable, able to broaden/narrow/filter, with multilingual access, richly developed and well maintained, available in machine-readable form), she feels, strongly outweigh their shortcomings (overly academic, slow to change, not always intuitive). She concludes the chapter by encouraging more research in the application of library classification principles to the characteristics and needs of Internet resources and their users. The bulk of the chapter constitutes an introduction to several projects in North America and Europe that have applied classification schemes to the organization of Internet resources, in particular the Dewey Decimal System (or verbal representations thereof) and, to a lesser extent, the Library of Congress classification structure and some topically specialized classification schemes.

The next chapter discusses the role that is or can be played by controlled vocabularies in resource discovery and, again, reviews a sampling of projects and applications. As supplements to free-text searching, Schwartz finds controlled vocabulary to be particularly applicable in databases that do not contain full texts of documents; that contain non-text items; or in situations where one wishes to achieve greater recall and/or precision in search results than may be afforded by natural language. She contrasts the browseability and precision of precoordinate indexing (the indexer characterizes the content by bringing preferred terms together) with the richness of access points attained via post-coordinate indexing (the indexer assigns individual terms, which the user's search query collocates). Despite their potential, she feels that controlled vocabularies lose effectiveness in an on-line environment. The applications presented in this chapter make it evident that they are most useful when a subject list or thesaurus is presented, either to click on a term for immediate access to relevant materials or to guide the user in selecting search terms.

Chapter 5 consists of an overview of search engines: the two basic types (classified and query based); how they acquire their content; variations in the elements of the captured Web pages that the search engine indexes; search features and defaults; the types of parameters used to rank search results by relevance; and some of the literature on search engine performance evaluation. An appendix to this chapter summarizes tips compiled by search services and users. Although Schwartz touches only briefly on how classification schemes and controlled vocabularies might affect search engine functions and options, the reader can begin to imagine some scenarios. Noting that "the product of a query in current search engine circumstances is often poorly ordered and bewildering" (p. 121), she suggests that exploring methods whereby users can customize their results and "define an information space through which they can browse" (p. 127) may be more fruitful than attempting to further refine the current generation of general-content search engines. The chapter concludes with an introduction to the concept of subject gateways.

The concluding chapter takes a quick look at current and emerging trends in information retrieval, including machine-aided indexing to improve efficiency and consistency, automated text processing to cluster and rank results, text mining to expose patterns and relationships, and visualization interfaces to sort and cluster search results graphically. Schwartz anticipates a future in which traditional and automated techniques for resource organization increasingly reinforce each other and sees this as the arena in which the principles and practices of subject analysis can play a major role.

It's a little difficult to assess the target audience for this book. It is explicitly intended as an overview of the concepts and tools that support subject approaches to networked resource discovery and, as such, is too abbreviated to appeal to those knowledgeable enough to want to delve deeply into the topic. On the other hand, in a number of places it is perhaps too opaque—or assumes too much prior knowledge—to satisfy the uninitiated. It is most useful probably to students in library and information sciences who will read it in conjunction with supporting literature and discussion and to the many library/archives practitioners who are neither ignorant of nor immersed in this area of endeavor but who want to improve their overall awareness of issues, applications, and trends.

The text is generously illustrated with charts and images of Web pages. Rather than footnotes or a formal bibliography, there is at the end of each chapter a list of sources that discuss in greater detail the specific topics and projects presented in that chapter. Quotations within the chapter are credited via a parenthetical reference to the author's name and the date of the cited work. Many of these sources are articles retrieved from the Web; the citations include their URLs. No URLs are given, however, for the projects and applications discussed in the chapters' text. Schwartz has also pledged herself to maintain (during her working life) her personal Web pages that provide links to projects, sites, references, and other Web-based resources mentioned in the text or pertinent to it. The address of the Web page relevant to each chapter appears at the end of the list of references for that chapter.

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Visualizing Subject Access for 21st Century Information Resources. Ed. Pauline Atherton Cochrane and Eric H. Johnson. Urbana, Illinois: Graduate School of Library and Information Science, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1998. $45.00. 176 pp. Introduction, illustrations, bibliographies, index. Hardcover.

Using the Internet as the first example of what will happen during the next century with "globally distributed information resources" (p.1), *Visualizing Subject Access* deals with questions of how technology can respond to the problems of subject access. This volume is a collection of papers presented at the 34th Annual Clinic on Library Applications of Data Processing, held at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, March 2–4, 1997. Several individual chapters or portions of chapters are available on the Web. As suggested by the editors, to fully understand many of the presentations requires linking to the URLs listed in the volume.

The conference dealt with a specific series of questions concerning interface and navigational tools and how these coincide with traditional library classification schemes. For example, what is needed and what digital tools already exist to answer the user's needs? Many of the chapters demonstrate that subject access is a question that technology alone cannot solve. Research is required into the processes of information-seeking patterns and cognitive thinking.

Bob Zich's "Visualizing Digital Libraries" points out many of the searching drawbacks faced by computers. Current Web search engines use a linear presentation that, at best, presents the hit list ranked by percentage of relevancy. Zich suggests instead a linkage to relevant Web sites, relevant E-mail-Listserv posts, and the names of experts in that topic. The cues should include color, sound, and visualizations that are inspired from the traditional systems of libraries and card catalogs.

Zich reinforces the point made in earlier articles by Roland Hjerppe and Bryce Allen that searching styles differ for different researchers. Hjerppe notes that some may search by words, others by visual clues. Subject access, particularly as it moves into an on-line environment, needs to take these variables into account. An example of this is that while *Visualizing Subject Access* discusses the value of graphic retrieval, the examples presented in the case studies are primarily text based.

Bryan Allen's "Visualization and Cognitive Abilities" discusses the cognitive process in two parts: spatial and language/symbols. In his research Allen uses specially designed databases, indexes, word maps, and a data presentation screen to determine their effects on user searching. While the study was incomplete, early results showed that the use of a word map did not significantly reduce search time for users. There was, however, much less time spent browsing the subject-heading list. All of Allen's navigational tools are text based but more attention is paid to spatialization. Allen urges further studies into the visualization and navigation of subject access systems.

Many of the studies on retrieval confirm several previously held ideas about searching patterns. Nicholas Belkin, in his analysis of the Rutgers Information Interaction Laboratory, notes that people use varied "normal" searching strategies. Belkin also notes that people prefer systems that they understand how to operate because this leads to greater user satisfaction and because interactive systems that allow query expansion are more effective. Belkin's research echoes Raya Fidel and Michael Crandall's study that

examines filtering criteria used by individuals at Boeing utilizing a bulletin board report system. Participants in the study filtered reports based on the relevance of subject matter, the newness of information, and familiarity with the topic. There was not, however, much uniformity in what defined a relevant subject.

Thesauri and vocabulary play a large role in word retrieval in a networked environment, even as many chapters suggest that navigational tools need to step beyond a strict word-association subject retrieval. Jessica Milstead's "Thesauri in a Full-Text World" provides a history of thesauri in a print-based library past. She points out that, with a growing number of machine-aided indexing terms, the system will continue to use thesauri and it is, therefore, worth the effort to adapt them to the twenty-first century. Searchers also demand indexing, not only at a bibliographic level, but in an increasingly full-text environment. Milstead cites the thesauri's hierarchical design, particularly the use of BT and NT, which is not always known to the researcher nor necessarily relevant to the topic. Current textual analysis software will soon be able to show hierarchical relationships.

A second article by Joseph Busch looks specifically at the Getty thesauri and how data can be similarly structured to generate search terms across multiple databases. The Getty has attempted to use similar types of terms in its *Art & Architecture Thesaurus*, *Union List of Artist Names*, and *Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names*. Some potential components recommended by RLG for a new vocabulary server have included associative links, equivalent links, notes, and other resource links (Web pages, images, etc.).

This volume—and conference—raise many more questions than answers about the problems of subject access. It does a good job in linking subject retrieval to other fields such as information technology and a study of cognitive processes. The biggest problem, however, is that because many of the presentations are designed for computer systems or are sample database projects, they are not best presented in the traditional bound-volume format.

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