

Why Archival Certification?: Professional Development, Continuing Education, and Credibility

SUSAN HAMBURGER

Abstract: The Academy of Certified Archivists (ACA) was established in 1989, and participates in the definition and advancement of international professional archival goals, ethics, and standards. Since 1989, more than 1,000 archivists have been certified by meeting standards of experience and education, and by passing the certification exam. In 2013 the author presented research findings and subsequently published an article on the correlation between archival certification and employment. The current research project is a follow-up study of why archivists seek archival certification. Results from the initial survey suggested that despite most employers not requiring certification, some archivists still sought the credential. To answer the problem statement—what benefits do archival certification offer archivists when most archives do not require certification for employment—the author sought responses from certified archivists. The author developed an online survey which was disseminated between [July 14](#) and [August 18](#), 2014 on the Archives and Archivists listserv. The survey sought to determine why archivists became certified. This presentation addresses the results of the survey including comments from the anonymous respondents, and the implications for the archival certification program.

About the Author:

Susan Hamburger was the Manuscripts Cataloging Librarian at The Pennsylvania State University, University Park until she retired in August 2016. She received her M.A. and Ph.D. in American History from Florida State University, and B.A. in English and M.L.S. from Rutgers University. Dr. Hamburger has published articles in *American Archivist* and *Journal of Archival Organization*, and numerous book reviews, essays in encyclopedias, and book chapters on literary authors, the Civil War, and horse racing. Her broad-ranging archival research interests include grant writing, literary manuscripts, rejected manuscripts in publishers' archives, how researchers search for primary sources, and archival certification. Outside the archives, her scholarly research encompasses African American jockeys, and Bruce Springsteen. She is active in SAA as the senior co-chair of the Awards Committee, former chair of the Waldo Gifford Leland Award subcommittee, and served on the *American Archivist* Editorial Board, and the Committee on Archives, Libraries, and Museums. For the Mid-Atlantic Regional Archives Conference she served as Program Committee Co-Chair (three times), on the Local Arrangements Committee, and as Publications Committee Chair and Webmaster.